Impact of Changing Population Age Structure of Asian Countries on Labour Market

Sixty percent of the world’s estimated total population of 7.3 billion today live in Asian countries, which occupy 30 percent of the Earth’s land area. Asia’s population (including Arab countries) will increase from 4 billion in 2010 to 4.8 billion by 2030. But temporal variations in the onset of fertility decline in the Asian countries have resulted in wide variations in their age structure. Some Asian countries (such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh in South Asia) have a proportionately large young population entering the labour force and have the potential to reap benefits emanating from a young age structure. On the other hand, countries like Japan and Korea with a large proportion of the aged have to think of innovative measures to stay vibrant and productive in the coming years. I will analyse data for selected Asian countries to understand the implications of the changing population age and sex composition for the structure of their labour force and their impact on the labour market. I will discuss policy issues emanating from them such as the need to provide young entrants to the labour force with the relevant skills and type of education for working in technologically-advanced and knowledge-based sectors. With the increase in life expectancy and healthy old-age living, issues of employability of the aged, increase in retirement age, hiring and retaining women in work, and provision of old-age support in demographically-advanced countries within Asia will be discussed. Sustained fertility decline that has created labour shortages in some countries can be alleviated through the migration of young workforce from poorer countries to the rich countries and be beneficial to both. However, issues such as resistance and unwillingness of countries and employers to hire migrant workers merit discussion in the prevailing socio-political and cultural contexts of both the sending and receiving countries. Women’s participation in work and feminization of inter-country migration flows will also be discussed.

by Professor Leela Visaria
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Leela Visaria holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Princeton University and is currently an honorary Professor at Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR), Ahmedabad, India. During 2002-2004 she served as the director at GIDR. She has researched in historical demography, health, family planning, education and demographic transition. Her articles have appeared in several peer-reviewed scholarly journals. She has authored, co-authored and edited seven books including Twenty-first Century India: Population, Economy, Human Development and the Environment (edited jointly with Tim Dyson and Robert Cassen), Oxford University Press, 2004; Abortion in India: Ground Reality (edited with Vimala Ramachandran), Routledge Press, 2007; and India’s Family Planning Programme: Policies, Practices and Challenges (jointly with Rajani Ved), Routledge Press, 2016. During 1994-2008, she served as a coordinator of HealthWatch, a network of non-governmental organizations and researchers. She was awarded the National Professorship by Indian Council for Social Science Research during 2008-09. She was also elected as the first President of Asian Population Association during 2009-10.

Chaired by: Dr Abhijit Visaria, Postdoctoral Fellow, Asia Research Institute (ARI), NUS
Date: 3 March 2017, Friday | Time: 12.00nn - 1.30pm
All are Welcome! Refreshments will be served. Registration is required.
Register at https://goo.gl/forms/9jkpNVznw43gkzF83 by 2 March 2017