

Ageing Patterns and Concerns in the Arabian Gulf: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Arabian Gulf countries have norms and rules different from others: having an exodus of male immigrant labor contract holders of age 20-60 years as a floating population. Such a demographic scenario camouflages population ageing. However, it is observed on examining vigilantly, not only in the native population but also in the general population. This research on population ageing in the Arabian Gulf examines ageing scenario and concerns through analyses of international databases (US Census Bureau and United Nations) and national level databases (Censuses and Surveys) apart from a review of published research. Transitions in demography and epidemiology lead to gains in life expectancy and thereby reductions in fertility, leading to ageing of the population in the region. Even after bringing adult immigrants, indices and age pyramids show an increasing ageing trend in the total population, demonstrating an ageing workforce. Besides, the exclusive native population analysis reveals a trend of expansive pyramids (pre-transitional stage) turning to constrictive (transition stage) and cylindrical (post-transition stage) shapes. Age-based indices such as the index of ageing, age dependency ratio, and median age confirm this trend. While the feminine nature of ageing is vivid, gains in life expectancy and causes of death in old age, indicating co-morbidity compression, are concerns to ageing. Preparations are in demand to cope with ageing from different dimensions, as explained in the United Nations Plans of Action. A strategy of strengthening informal care with supportive semi-formal and supplementary formal care networks would alleviate this crisis associated with population ageing.

Keywords : total versus native population, indices of ageing, age pyramids, feminine nature, comorbidity compression, strategic interventions

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