

POPULATION AGEING IN FISHING COMMUNITY: GENDER ISSUES AND POLICY CONCERN

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Population demographics indicate that Malaysia will achieve the aged nation status by 2035, where more than 15% of her population will be comprised of people aged 60 years and over. Malaysia's ageing population is unique in the sense that the multiethnic composition of her population ages at different rates due to varying socio demographic conditions. The average life expectancy at birth for Malaysia in 2008 was 71.6 for males and 76.4 for females (provisional value, [http: www.statistics.gov.my](http://www.statistics.gov.my)). Life expectancy at age 60 in 2005 was 17.2 years for males and 19.6 for females (DOSM, 2008). Rural urban migration contributed to the ageing of rural population particularly the fishing sector. According to the Labor Force Survey 2008, there were 122,100 persons working in the fishing sector compared to 130,500 in 2004. In 2010, according to the Fishery Department, there were 125,632 fishermen working on 48,745 licensed fishing vessels, an increase of 14.4% as compared to 2008. Socio economics census conducted by the Fishery Development Authority of Malaysia revealed that there were 22,020 fishermen in 2008, and 75% were traditional fishermen. The traditional fishing community are already aged community whereby there were 15.3% of them 60 years old and older. Higher proportion of those in the traditional fishing industry aged 60 and older (17.5%) compared to those in the commercial fishing (8.5%). With 58.2% of the fishermen age 40-59 in 2008, the fishing industries can be expected to be dominated by older fishermen. This paper will discuss the population profile and trend of the fishing community and their implications on the industry. The paper will also discuss the strategies to ameliorate the impending implication of population ageing to support the critical role of fishing industry as producer and exporter of fresh fish and fish products.

Key words: demography, population ageing, policy implication.