

International Conference on  
Population and Development in Asia: Critical Issues for a Sustainable Future  
20 – 22 March 2006, Phuket, Thailand

**Abstract**

**Changing Demographics, Emerging Risks  
of Economic-Demographic Mismatch and Vulnerabilities Faced  
by the Aged in South Asia:  
A Review of Situation in India and Pakistan**

Moneer ALAM  
Institute of Economic Growth, India

Mehtab S. KARIM  
Department of Community Healthy Sciences,  
The Aga Khan University, Pakistan

This paper rests on the premise that a great deal of the insecurities faced by older persons in India and Pakistan is an outcome of their ongoing economic-demographic changes. Demographically, for instance, both countries are moving to become old and young simultaneously: old, because of their fast declining mortality and added life span, and young owing to their past fertility and its momentum. By implication, older adults would need income and health securities, while the working age young would look for employment opportunities in high productivity formal economy. The ongoing economic changes in both countries are however failing to comply at either level - i.e., no - or at best negligible - public pillared income security net for the aged, and almost a jobless growth rate posing serious labour market issues to the growing pool of potential job seekers. Many of these issues, especially the lack of quality employment, may not leave people with enough transferable resources for their ageing dependents - a big fraction of them, as evident from this analysis, are goaded by their poor past and unfavourable health outcomes. This may particularly be true for the countries of South Asia sub-region including India and Pakistan. Protective subsidies are therefore a must, for which finances need to be generated through special measures including cess and higher taxes on health hazardous commodities like paan masala.