

**21st Population Census Conference
19 – 21 November 2003
Kyoto, Japan**

Analysis of the 2000 Round of Censuses

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE ELDERLY IN MALAYSIA**

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELDERLY IN MALAYSIA

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Ageing had basically been a phenomenon of population trends in the developed, industrialized nations since some three to four decades ago and was in fact primarily the result of successful efforts to lower fertility levels and increase longevity. However, the developing world is increasingly experiencing the same trend of higher growth in the numbers and proportion of the elderly. Thus the challenges to plan and prepare for an ageing population is a growing concern in many nations. Social institutions and government policies need to adapt to changing age structures to cater for an ever-increasing demand for the needs of the elderly.
- 1.2 This paper provides an overview of the ageing trends in Malaysia and focuses on socio-economic characteristics of the elderly. As a fast developing nation, addressing the needs of different social, economic and demographic groups is vital to balanced growth in the nation and therefore, understanding past, present and future trends among the older population has been an especially growing concern over the last decade or so. The areas of socio-economic characteristics that have been included in the paper are especially relevant to create an awareness as to the pace of planning and implementation of initiatives necessary for the elderly population in Malaysia
- 1.3 The information used in this report is derived primarily from the population censuses of Malaysia, as well as demographic statistics derived from vital registration data.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Malaysia is a South-east Asian nation with a population of 25 million (2003 estimate). It constitutes two regions i.e. Peninsular Malaysia (situated south of Thailand) and the 2 largest states of Sabah and Sarawak - referred to as East Malaysia - separated by the South China Sea and located at the north of Borneo island. A total of 15 states make up the country, each with their respective elected state governments. The federal government is a parliamentary democracy comprising a House of Representatives (elected) as well as a Senate (appointed). Malaysia also has a constitutional monarchy. The nation attained independence from Britain in August 1957 and in the 46 years as a sovereign nation, has achieved much economic and social progress.
- 2.2 The population of Malaysia is multi-racial, made up of several ethnic groups, comprising of Malays and other indigenous groups (63%), Chinese (24%) Indians (7%) and 1% "Others", as well as over 5% of non-Malaysian citizens who mainly comprise immigrant labour. Significant changes have taken place in the Malaysian population structure over the last few decades mainly as a result of the "demographic transition" experienced since the 1960's and '70s which saw decline in birth rates from 36.1 in 1965 to 23.2 in 2002. Improving health conditions has also resulted in longer life expectancies and the annual death rate has dropped from 7.5 in 1965 to 4.4 in 2002.

3. POPULATION TRENDS AND PATTERNS

- 3.1 As is the case in most nations of the world, a review of factors of population change in Malaysia would inevitably lead to a discussion of issues such as birth rates and total fertility rates, infant mortality, age at marriage, etc. which throw light on *fertility* trends and their effects. However, together with fertility trends, the ageing of the Malaysian population is increasingly seen as an important component of the demographic profile and a gradually changing pattern in the population age structure warrants thorough investigation of the demography of ageing, as well as the long term implications of these trends.

- 3.2 Malaysia's population may still be considered 'youthful'. Although the full impact of an ageing population has not hit Malaysian society as yet, the indications of an ageing population are being recognised and much is being done to study and plan for the impending changes. Government participation has been timely in ensuring that this segment of the population is cared for and their potential utilized in the coming years. The National Senior Citizens Policy passed in 1995, provides a basis for planning and implementing appropriate measures. The demand for care and services for the elderly is clearly being recognised and effective implementation of policies is becoming crucial.
- 3.3 The actual age used in the definition of 'senior citizens' or 'elderly' has differed among researchers and writers. However, the United Nations World Assembly On Ageing held in Vienna, 1982, used **'60 years and over'** as the cut-off in deliberating ageing trends. Consequently, Malaysian policy makers have adopted this demarcation and is officially used in planning for senior citizens. This paper has thus used the same age cut-off to refer to senior citizens in Malaysia.
- 3.4 The number of senior citizens in Malaysia almost doubled over the twenty years from 1970-1991 from 546 thousand persons in 1970 to 1.03 million persons. The numbers have increased by another 35 per cent over the last 10 years to 1.4 million persons or 6.3 per cent of the total population in 2000 (Table 1). Based on population projections, the number of senior citizens is likely to more than double to 3.4 million in the next twenty years.

Table 1: Past, present and future trends of senior citizens, Malaysia, 1960-2020

Year	Number of senior citizens ('000)	Per cent of total population	Growth rate of:	
			Elderly population	Total population
1960	386.6	4.8	-	-
1970	546.1	5.2	3.5	2.6
1980	745.2	5.7	3.1	2.3
1991	1,032.3	5.9	3.0	2.6
2000	1,398.5	6.3	3.4	2.6
2010	2,134.9	7.4	4.2	2.2
2020	3,439.6	9.9	4.8	1.9
2030	4,933.4	12.0	3.6	1.7

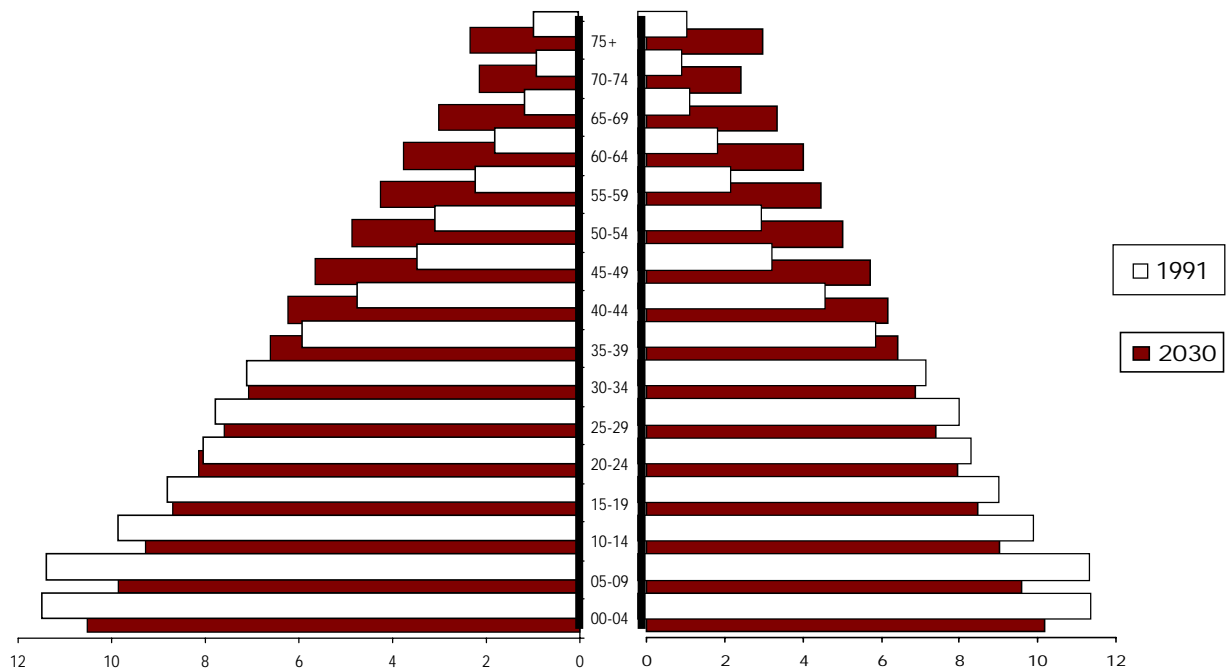
- 3.5 The proportion of elderly Malaysians will grow from 6.3 per cent in 2000 to 12.0 per cent or 4.9 million persons by the year 2030, thus doubling in proportion, but more than tripling in numbers over the 30 year period. When growth rates of the total population are compared with growth rates of the population aged 60 years and over, a continual ageing pattern of the population is inevitable, assuming prevailing trends persist.
- 3.6 An overview of the age-structure of the population for the past four censuses between 1970-2000 reveals a significantly decreasing proportion of population in the younger ages and a corresponding increase in the older age groups (Table 2). In fact, the proportion of the population above age 15 shows increases in all the sub-groups, indicating a continuing ageing trend in the coming years.

Table 2: Percentage of the population in major age groups, Malaysia, 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2000

Age group	1970	1980	1991	2000
0-14	44.9	39.6	36.7	33.5
15-44	40.7	45.6	47.6	48.8
45-59	9.2	9.2	9.9	11.6
60-74	4.4	4.6	4.6	5.0
75+	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.3

- 3.7 This trend in the age structure is also evident in population projections. The age-pyramid shown in Table 3 for the years 1991 and 2030 depicts the expected trend in the population structure as the shape moves towards a pyramid with a much smaller base.
- 3.8 It has generally been recognised that even among the elderly, different age groups display different characteristics and are not homogenous in their needs. A breakdown into two groups, namely, the 'young-old' (those aged 60-74 years) and the 'old-old' (those aged 75 years and over), recorded 277 thousand persons in the old-old category (20 percent of the elderly) in the 2000 Census and this group is projected to be 1.1 million in the year 2030 (22 percent). As larger numbers of the elderly population move into the old-old category, there will consequently be a greater need for facilities and care of the aged.

Table 3 : Age - Sex Pyramid, Malaysia , 1991, 2030



3.9 Some indicators of age calculated for Malaysia as shown in Table 4, provide an idea as to the status of the Malaysian population in terms of the demographic profile on ageing. The **median age** of the population of Malaysia increased over six years between 1970 and 2000, from 17.4 years to 23.6 years, reflecting a progressively older population. The **dependency ratio** reflects the burden of support that is placed on the working age population (15-59 years). The trend is clearly towards an increasing burden of support on the working age population with the ratio declining from 82.6 in 1980 to 64.3 in the year 2000. **Old age index**, depicting the proportion of elderly over the young age group (0-14 years) shows significant increases over the 30 year period from 11.7 in 1970 to 18.5 in 2000. This index is also indicative of the decreasing proportion of the young as a result of declining birth rates which have fallen from 32.4 in 1970, to 22.8 in 2000. **Life expectancy**, is an indicator of the number of years a person is likely to live at the time of birth. Life expectancy at birth for Malaysia for the year 2000 is an average of 72.6 years (or 70.2 years for males and 75.0 years for females) and has risen

Table 4: Age and related demographic indicators, Malaysia, 1970-2000

Indicators	1970	1980	1991	2000
Median age	17.4	19.6	21.9	23.6
Dependency ratio	100.4	82.6	74.0	64.3
Old age index	11.7	14.3	16.0	18.5
Life expectancy:				
Male	61.6*	66.4*	69.2	70.2
Female	65.6*	70.5*	73.4	75.0

* For Peninsular Malaysia only

3.10 The sex ratio among senior citizens in Malaysia was 91.4 in 2000 (Table 5). Sex ratio among the elderly in 1970 (108.4) reflects the ageing of the male dominated immigrant population that was characteristic in the pre-World War Two era in Malaysia and thus shows a higher male bias due to the presence of early migrants among senior citizens. However, a greater balance in the sex ratio had taken place by the time of the 1991 Census. Interestingly, a trend towards higher ratios is indicated among the young-old and it is possible that higher life expectancies among males is a contributory factor, whereas among the old-old, women still live longer.

Table 5 : Sex ratio for senior citizens by age group and ethnic group, Malaysia, 1970-2000

Age group	1970	1980	1991	2000
Total (60+)	108.4	97.2	89.6	91.4
60-74	112.4	98.2	91.7	94.7
75+	89.5	93.4	82.2	79.2

3.11 Malaysia's multi-ethnic population composition displays different demographic characteristics among the various groups and a cursory look at the elderly population by major ethnic groups (Table 6), reveals that the Chinese have the highest proportion of senior citizens at 8.8 per cent. The prevalence of low mortality rates, high life expectancy (both of which increase the absolute numbers of senior

citizens) and low fertility (which reduces the proportion of the young population), have been characteristic of the Chinese population over a longer period than for other ethnic groups. In fact, all other groups are below the 6 per cent level which is considered the benchmark of an ageing population. The Bumiputera and Indian elderly have increased at a slower rate and constitute 5.7 per cent and 5.6 per cent of their respective groups, in the year 2000.

Table 6: Percentage of senior citizens within ethnic group, Malaysia, 1991 and 2000

Major ethnic groups	1991	2000
Malaysian citizens		
Bumiputera*	5.4	5.7
Chinese	7.6	8.8
Indians	5.4	5.6
Others	6.9	4.8
Non Malaysian citizens	2.7	3.1
Total	5.9	6.3

Includes the majority ethnic group "Malays" and "Other Bumiputera (Indigenous)" groups

- 3.12 The projected senior citizen population for the year 2020, reveals that the low fertility levels experienced among the Chinese and Indians in Malaysia, will significantly impact the age structure and result in a doubling in proportion of the elderly within these two ethnic groups over the next twenty years. The Bumiputera senior citizens, on the other hand, are projected to increase at a comparatively slower rates from 5.7 percent in 2000 to 8.0 per cent in 2020. Higher fertility levels among the Bumiputera (CBR of 25.4 compared to 17.4 for Chinese and 20.6 for Indians in the year 2000) is likely to contribute to this trend, as a larger base of the younger population is prevalent for this community.

Table 7: Percentage of senior citizens within ethnic group and age cohorts, Malaysia, 2000

Major ethnic groups	Young-old (60-74 years)	Old-old (75+ years)	Total	Old-old (1991)
Malaysian citizens				
Bumiputera*	80.0	20.0	100.0	18.5
Chinese	80.9	19.1	100.0	26.1
Indians	83.0	17.0	100.0	17.7
Others	76.8	23.2	100.0	22.2
Non Malaysian citizens	69.7	30.3	100.0	21.7
Total	78.8	19.8	100.0	21.2

3.13 An observation of age cohorts of senior citizens in the 2000 Census among the various ethnic groups in Malaysia, indicates lower proportions of 'old-old' among the Indian community as compared to the other groups. When compared to the proportion of the 'old-old' at the 1991 Census, the Bumiputera and 'Others' are seen to have a small increase, whereas the Chinese and Indians indicate a decline among the 'old-old'. The Chinese have especially experienced a decline in the proportion of this cohort and is likely to have been caused by higher percentages of the younger population moving to the 'young-old' cohort.

4. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

4.1 Family structure of Malaysian society is fast changing as a result of modernization and urbanization of the population. It has already been recognized that changing traditional roles of women, increased educational opportunities (especially for women), delayed age at marriage, and smaller family size, are characteristics that have contributed to the social implications on ageing.

4.2 A look at marital status patterns for senior citizens compared to the rest of the population reveals, understandably, that widowhood is especially high since higher levels of marital dissolution takes place with the death of either spouse among older couples. Table 8 shows that almost one in every three senior citizens was classified in the 'widowed' category at the time of the 2000 Census.

4.3 Of particular interest is the contrast between widowed male elderly, who constituted only 11 per cent of male senior citizens and female widowed who constituted close to half (46 per cent) of the female elderly. As seen earlier, females experience longer life expectancy, resulting in significantly larger proportions and numbers of widowed females especially in the 'old-old' age band. While among old-old males 73 per cent were married and 23 per cent were widowed, a completely reverse pattern was observed for females, with 27 per cent married and 68 per cent widowed.

Table 8 : Percentage distribution of senior citizens by marital status, sex and broad age group, Malaysia, 2000

Marital Status	Male			Female			Total		
	60-74 years	75+ years	Total	60-74 years	75+ years	Total	60-74 years	75+ years	Total
Never married	2.2	1.9	2.2	2.0	1.4	1.9	2.1	1.7	2.0
Currently married	88.3	73.0	85.5	56.0	27.3	49.9	71.7	47.4	66.9
Widowed	8.6	23.4	11.3	39.3	68.0	45.5	24.4	48.4	29.2
Divorced	0.9	1.6	1.0	2.6	3.2	2.7	1.8	2.5	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.4 The implication for planners and policy makers is that there needs to be some emphasis given towards the care of older women, as spouses tend to be the main care-givers for elderly males. In the Malaysian context, educational levels and economic independence still lag far behind for elderly women compared to elderly men.

4.5 The 2000 Population Census revealed that some 51 per cent of the senior citizens had received no schooling at all (Table 9). This is all the same, a significant improvement since 1970 when 3 out of every 4 senior citizens were without schooling. The increasing proportion of the elderly who have had full secondary education (from 1.2 per cent in 1970 to 4.4 per cent in 2000) as well as tertiary

Table 9: Percentage distribution of senior citizens by educational level, Malaysia, 1970 - 2000

Level of schooling	1970	1980	1991	2000
Never attended school	75.0	73.2	63.1 ⁺	51.3 ⁺
Primary level	22.3	23.1	31.5	37.4
Lower secondary level	1.3	1.8	2.4	4.9
Upper secondary level	1.2	1.5	2.1	4.4
Tertiary	0.3	0.4	0.9	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

+ Includes "Unknown" cases

education (from 0.3 per cent to 2.0 per cent respectively) is encouraging. Involvement of senior citizens in social, economic or community activities would differ in the context of their education attainment. With greater emphasis being given by planners to encourage greater independence of future senior citizens, as well as to provide opportunities for their involvement in the labour force and social development, their educational profile at various time periods will be a pertinent issue.

- 4.6 The proportion of elderly females with no schooling remained high at 65 per cent, as compared to 36 per cent for males, in 2000 (Table 10). However, improvements over the last decade is significant with at least 28 per cent having had primary schooling. Present day educational levels for females among the younger generation in Malaysia is equitable to that of males and thus an increasingly higher proportion of female elderly with higher levels of schooling is envisaged in the years ahead.

Table 10: Percentage of senior citizens by educational attainment and sex, Malaysia, 1991, 2000

Level of schooling	1991		2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Never attended school	44.4	79.8	36.4	65.0
Primary level	47.2	17.5	47.2	28.4
Lower secondary level	3.5	1.4	6.8	3.2
Upper secondary level	3.4	1.0	6.6	2.4
Tertiary	1.5	0.3	3.1	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.7 It is evident that the educational levels of the younger senior citizens is increasingly improving as more of those with schooling as well as with higher attainment, enter the senior citizen category. Table 11 also shows that education among females in the 'old-old' cohort is significantly lacking and reflects the tendency of the early decades of the last century when women were not given any priority for education. Even among the 'young-old,' 61 per cent of the elderly females are without education. The level of education among males in the 'young-old' cohort looks more promising, with half of them having had at least primary education and about 11 percent having completed secondary and higher education. As expected, even among the 'old-old' males, more than half had no schooling; however, some 5.4 per cent had received secondary or higher level education.

Table 11: Percentage of senior citizens by educational attainment, sex and age cohort, Malaysia, 2000

Level of schooling	Males		Females	
	Young-old	Old-old	Young-old	Old-old
Never attended school	32.4	53.9	60.9	80.4
Primary Level	49.5	37.0	31.7	16.1
Lower secondary level	7.5	3.8	3.6	1.6
Upper secondary level	7.3	3.7	2.8	1.3
Tertiary	3.3	1.7	1.1	0.6

The Family

4.8 Changes in Malaysian society brought about by modernization and development have generally resulted in changing household and family structures, such as a smaller family size and an increasing trend towards nuclear family households. These developments have an effect on the family role as care-givers to the elderly. As for senior citizens themselves life changes are experienced as they retire from employment, lose their spouse, decline in health and have dispersing families. Patterns of living arrangements among the elderly have implications for the social needs of future cohorts of senior citizens.

4.9 The average household size declined from 5.2 persons per household in 1980 to 4.6 persons in 2000. The prevalence of extended families is on the decline, from 58 per cent in 1991 to 49 per cent in 2000 (Table 12), and traditional inclination towards married children living with their parents will be less of a social feature in coming years. Some 7 per cent (or 94 thousand) of the elderly lived alone as single-member households and a much higher percentage was observed for females compared to males. Elderly living in nuclear families increased from 31 per cent in 1991 to 38 per cent in 2000. Among the senior citizens who lived as nuclear families, 14 per cent lived as a couple alone.

Table 12 : Percentage distribution of senior citizens by household type and sex, Malaysia, 2000

Household type	2000			1991
	Male	Female	Total	
Single member	4.3	9.0	6.8	6.8
Nuclear family household	47.9	28.1	37.6	30.6
Extended family	43.8	54.1	49.2	57.8
Related members	2.9	8.0	5.6	3.5
Unrelated members	1.1	0.8	1.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

5.1 The issue of economic activity among senior citizens is an important one as it has direct bearing not only on the well-being of the elderly, but to a large extent, also addresses the issue of dependency on the younger, economically productive segment of the population. Participation in the labour force not only ensures financial independence but also contributes overall to the economy of the population, although in a small proportion.

Table 13: Percentage distribution of employed senior citizens by employment status, Malaysia, 1980, 1991 and 2000

Employment Status	1980	1991	2000	Per cent distribution of total population (2000)
Employer	3.7	3.4	4.1	3.3
Employee	22.4	20.6	25.9	71.8
Self-employed	59.1	70.7	66.8	23.3
Unpaid Family Worker	14.8	5.3	3.2	1.6
Total Employed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent of senior citizens who are employed	32.9	23.9	22.8	

5.2 The 2000 Census of Malaysia estimates that only 23 per cent of the population over the age of 60, are employed and this is a decline from 33 per cent in 1980. Table 13 reveals that of those employed, the majority, or 67 per cent are self-employed while another 26 per cent are employees. The proportion of Unpaid Family Workers have significantly dropped over the last 20 years (from 15 per cent in 1980 to 3 per cent in 2000) and this is attributed to the fact that agricultural activities, which generally account for a high percentage of family workers, have overall declined in the Malaysian economy and this is especially observed among the older population.

This trend also accounts for the decline in the percentage of those who are self-employed, since 1991. It should be noted that the increase in the self-employed category observed for the elderly in 1991 was due to a movement to other non-agricultural occupations, particularly in sales.

Table 14: Percentage distribution of employed senior citizens by employment status, Malaysia, 1991, 2000

Employment Status	1991		2000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Employer	4.0	1.2	4.4	2.6
Employee	21.7	16.4	25.6	27.1
Self Employed	72.7	63.1	68.2	61.2
Unpaid Family Worker	1.6	19.2	1.8	9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.3 The increase in the proportion of employees is indicative of an increasing willingness to take on service and sales jobs from employers, as well as perhaps a slowly growing population of senior citizens who are better educated and thus are able to find employment in the labour market. Interestingly, Table 14 shows that this is more significant among the female elderly whose proportion rose from 16 percent in 1991 who were employees, to 27 per cent in 2000. The slowly rising proportions of senior citizens who are employers is an encouraging trend as a reflection of both better economic participation as well as economic independence.

5.4 Changing occupational patterns can be observed among the older population in Malaysia and the most obvious trend that is seen in Table 15 is the decline in the involvement of senior citizens in agricultural activities from 60 per cent of the employed in 1991 to 51 percent in 2000. However, when compared with the participation of the overall employed population aged 15-64 years in agriculture, it is evident that this activity is still significant among the elderly. Also of interest to note is that higher proportions of the senior citizens are active in the category

“Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers” (8.9 percent) as compared to the overall population (6.9 per cent). This is of course an expected trend as occupations of this nature generally require the experience and long service that come with age.

Table 15: Percentage distribution of senior citizens by occupation and sex, Malaysia, 1991 and 2000

Occupation	1991	2000	Distribution for total employed population aged 15-64 years
			2000
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	4.9	8.9	6.9
Professionals	1.0	1.6	5.7
Technicians & Associate Professionals	10.6	3.1	12.0
Clerical Workers	1.0	1.3	9.7
Service Workers and Shop & Market Sales Workers	5.6	11.6	13.1
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	60.0	51.0	14.2
Craft & Related Trades Workers	4.5	5.5	9.2
Plant & Machine-operators & Assemblers	3.8	5.5	16.0
Elementary Occupations	8.4	11.4	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.5 Clerical occupations are not particularly popular among the elderly, although there is an increasing trend to move into service and sales occupations, probably more on a cottage industry basis. Semi-professional occupations (technicians and associate professionals) is also recording declining participation among the elderly.

5.6 Occupational distribution of senior citizens by gender reveal that the decline in agriculture is particularly among the elderly female (Table 16), who recorded a 15 percentage point decrease between 1991 and 2000. A significant shift has been to Service and Sales occupations by both male and female elderly. Noteworthy is the

fact that both male and female senior citizens are increasingly involved as 'Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers.'

Table 16: Percentage distribution of senior citizens by occupation and sex, Malaysia, 1991 and 2000

Occupation	Males		Females	
	1991	2000	1991	2000
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	5.3	9.4	3.5	7.1
Professionals	1.0	1.8	0.9	1.0
Technicians & Associate Professionals	11.0	3.0	8.9	3.8
Clerical Workers	1.2	1.3	0.5	1.6
Service Workers and Shop & Market Sales Workers	5.8	10.8	4.8	14.8
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	58.6	51.1	65.3	50.7
Craft & Related Trades Workers	4.6	5.9	4.4	4.0
Plant & Machine-operators & Assemblers	4.4	6.1	1.7	2.9
Elementary Occupations	8.0	10.7	10.0	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.7 Table 17 on the distribution of senior citizens by the industrial sector they are involved in, again reveals that although agriculture remains the main activity (50 per cent in 2000), it is fast declining in importance. A shift is gradually occurring in greater involvement in manufacturing, wholesale & retail trade, transport, storage & communication, as well as in public administration & defence. A comparison with the distribution of the national level economically active population aged 15-64 years, reveals similar proportions of senior citizens engaged in wholesale & retail trade (about 13 per cent), hotels & restaurants (about 6 per cent). An increase in the proportion of the elderly in construction activities, from 2.8 per cent to 4.4 per cent, is noteworthy.

Table 17: Percentage distribution of senior citizens by industry, Malaysia, 1991, 2000

Industry	1991	2000	Distribution for total employed population aged 15-64 years
			2000
Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry	60.0	50.0	14.4
Fishing	2.6	2.4	1.3
Mining & Quarrying	0.3	0.2	0.3
Manufacturing	5.5	7.2	22.5
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.1	0.2	0.7
Construction	2.8	4.4	7.3
Wholesale & Retail Trade	12.8	13.4	12.5
Hotels & Restaurants	5.4	6.1	6.0
Transport, Storage & Communications	2.7	4.3	6.0
Finance	0.4	0.6	3.2
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	0.8	2.0	3.4
Public Administration & Defence	1.7	4.0	9.9
Education	0.6	1.5	6.5
Health & Social Work	0.7	0.9	2.3
Other Community Social & Personal Service Activities	2.8	1.8	1.7
Private Household with Employed Persons	1.0	1.0	1.9
Extra-territorial Organisation & Bodies	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.8 In terms of gender differences, female senior citizens have increased their participation in wholesale & retail trade, hotels & restaurants, and in manufacturing (Table 18). Meanwhile, males are mainly in wholesale & retail trade, manufacturing, construction, transport, storage & communication, as well as in public administration & defence.

Table 18: Percentage distribution of senior citizens by industry and sex, Malaysia, 1991, 2000

Industry	Males		Females	
	1991	2000	1991	2000
Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry	58.2	49.7	66.5	51.2
Fishing	3.3	2.9	0.2	0.3
Mining & Quarrying	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0
Manufacturing	5.3	6.8	6.2	9.0
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	3.5	5.3	0.2	0.7
Wholesale & Retail Trade	13.3	13.4	10.9	13.4
Hotels & Restaurants	4.8	4.9	7.5	11.0
Transport, Storage & Communications	3.4	5.2	0.2	0.8
Finance	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.4
Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	1.0	2.2	0.2	1.3
Public Administration & Defence	2.0	4.5	0.6	1.8
Education	0.6	1.3	0.5	2.3
Health & Social Work	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.9
Other Community Social & Personal Service Activities	3.0	1.7	2.1	2.1
Private Household with Employed Persons	0.4	0.3	3.5	3.6
Extra-territorial Organisation & Bodies	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.9 The trend in economic activity among the elderly in Malaysia, is a slowly changing pattern that is closely tied in with changes in social conditions and educational attainment of the elderly.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The demographic and social trends of population ageing in Malaysia is moving at a quicker pace than observed 10 years ago, as is evident in the data collected in the 2000 Census of Malaysia. These indicators are of course the basis for planning and preparing for the well-being, as well as optimizing the potential, of future senior citizens in the country. The overall trends reveal an increasingly ageing population that will continue to grow both in numbers and proportion.

- 6.2 The senior citizens of Malaysia are growing at a faster rate than the total population and will more than double in numbers from the current 1.4 million to 3.4 million in 2020. Females are the majority among the elderly. Education levels are rising and this has implications in terms of the possible economic involvement of senior citizens. The traditional pattern of the older population being primarily involved in agriculture has significantly changed and their participation is now in more varied occupations.

- 6.3 Changing social characteristics such as nuclearization of households, higher education levels, and economic issues such as changing occupation trends, are factors that affect the population as a whole and will eventually contribute to the overall scenario of the future elderly.