



Social Security for the Elderly: Experiences from South Asia

S. Irudaya Rajan

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This book overviews the issue of population ageing in five countries in South Asia and projects the emerging scenarios. With a new field survey, it also documents existing policies and programs on pensions and social security, and examines their fiscal implications for the economy and society.

Ageing of population is an inevitable consequence of the process of demographic transition. Being ahead, the developed regions of the world have long experienced its consequences; but the developing world is only now facing the travails of population ageing. Though the population under the age of 15 years in 2000 was estimated to be 3.3 times the size of the population of 60 years and above, the elderly are expected to surpass the number of children under 15 years by the year 2050. Among the elderly, it is the oldest old—those aged 80 years or more, whose numbers would increase most rapidly. Much of this growth would take place in the poor countries of the world.

Five South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal) account for 100 million elderly persons in the beginning of 21st century and it is expected to reach 400 million in 2050. What are the fiscal implications of this tremendous growth for sustaining pensions and social security schemes in South Asia? Are these countries in need of pension reforms? Would these countries be able to provide good health care for the growing population of elderly persons afflicted by multiple diseases and disability? Experts from leading economic research institutions address the issue with a new survey conducted in each country. The book, in effect:

- 1. Assesses the ageing scenario in five countries in South Asia: past, present, and future;
- 2. Reviews existing policies and programs on pensions and social security for the elderly;
- 3. Reports the findings of a sample survey in each of these countries conducted for this work in order to assess the nature, magnitude, and adequacy of various forms of pensions and social assistance;
- 4. Suggests broad-based comprehensive pension and social security policies in South Asia.

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