

TOWARD BETTER AGEING SOCIETY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE SYSTEM BASED ON SOCIO CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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TOWARD BETTER AGEING SOCIETY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE SYSTEM BASED ON SOCIO CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Ageing society has been an issue for developing nations in South East Asia. After the so-called "demographic bonus", the fact that the proportion of ageing society keeps increasing poses questions regarding the ability of these nations to address this issue. In 2025, for instance, the percentage of society above 60 years of age will reach 19.2% in Thailand, 13.3% in Malaysia, 13.1% in Indonesia and Singapore, 13% in Vietnam and 11.2% in Brunei Darussalam. The trend will keep increasing until 2035 and 2050. In 2035, Indonesia will have 48.2 million of senior citizens or 15.8% of the total number of population with annual growth average of 3%. For Indonesia case, government has issued various policies, such as Senior Citizens Welfare Act, Government Rules, Social Service Program for Seniors (Home Care, Day Care Service, Social Assistance for Neglected Seniors, Social Service during Emergencies, Strengthening Program for Early Seniors, Productive Economics Business, Social Aid for Social Homes, Senior Home Renovation, as well as Social and Health Security). However, due to huge amounts of senior citizens growing in urban, rural and remote areas with various socioeconomic conditions, it seems that government will be unable to adequately provide physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. Current alternative is to maintain existing sociocultural-based family and community service systems which is supported by effective government social and empowerment programs for the elderly.

Key Words: Senior Citizens, Family and Community Service System, Socio Cultural Perspective

Introduction

Indonesia, together with ASEAN member states, will face difficult demographic challenges regarding the increasing number of senior citizens in 2025. The increase, on the positive side, is the fruit of successful developments in terms of increasing life expectancy due to improvement in prosperity and health sector. On the other side, however, the increasing number of senior citizens also pose negative social, economic, health and political impacts which must be solved.

From economics perspective, increasing number of senior citizens is perceived as an increase in non-productive age group (60 years old and up) with comparison with productive group (25 years old and up), which will form dependencies and economic burden. Productive age group is perceived as benefitting economics and supporting economic growth compared to non-productive age group, even though many senior citizens still actively work productively to provide for their families.

The increasing number of elderly group demands a bigger government role in providing protection for the vulnerable. What roles are desired from government? Does government have to create an excellent protection model so that all elders' physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs are

met? Or should government push family and community-based services more which are already undergoing?

In Indonesia's case, even though the government has shown commitment and created programs related to seniors through various institutions and ministries, government seems to be unable to reach majority of seniors needing at least their four requirement aspects by looking at the increasing number of seniors in rural, urban and isolated island areas with differing socioeconomic conditions.

The paper will look at population's ageing trend and general condition of seniors in Indonesia and ASEAN, roles of Indonesia's government and alternative thinkings in forms of family or community-based potential development with current existing local cultures with additional supports from government's social service program and empowerment which can be the most viable solution to address senior needs while waiting for development of more integrative senior citizen social system.

Method and Materials

The presence of seniors starts to become a common phenomenon and an interesting issue due to its impact to various society aspects, whether it is economics, social, health or even politic. Therefore, qualitative research method is used where the research subject is the Indonesian government, since Indonesia is the largest nation in ASEAN suitable for study case of how ASEAN state members face challenges regarding senior citizen services with research object of policies and strategies for senior citizens services. Research is also analytical to explain and analyse causal relationship among variables which are problem of senior citizens and policy and strategy to address the problem. Data collection process is performed with various methods, which are (i) literature review of various documents, reports, researches and books related to the topic, (ii) observation is conducted by observe directly cases related to seniors either seniors within their family or Social Welfare Institution (senior home care) and (iii) interview with resource persons especially analysis/opinion of senior citizens' researcher.

Result and Discussion

Condition of Senior Citizens in Indonesia

What is called globally "demographic revolution" or "demographic shift" has occurred where the number of senior citizens has dramatically increased to cause the increasing proportion of senior citizens throughout the world. Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore are the examples of nations with high percentage of elders (30%, 12.7% and 9% respectively). Generally, elders are defined as someone who are 65 years and older. Even though various definitions of elders/ elderly exist among experts, Indonesia considers elders in accordance with Act 13 Year 1998 regarding Welfare of Elders in Section 1 Article 1 Paragraph 2 as someone who is 60 years and older either man or woman. World Health Organization (WHO) sets the ages between 60 and 74 years for both man and woman to be defined as elders. The elders in Indonesia are classified into three different classifications: ready-to-work, needing preparation, needing special assistance. In terms of empowerment, elders in

Indonesia are classified in preparation (age 50), pre-elder (age 50-60), young elder (age 60-70) and adult elder (age 70-80) (Haryono Suyono 2013:57-58).

Demographic transition also dramatically occurs in Indonesia. Compared to between 1950-1970 when it was still considered the babyboom era, in 2035 elders in Indonesia will reach 15% which is almost double compared to 2017 according to 2010 Population Census projection (Central Statistics Agency (BPS 2017). Nation with elders more than 7% is already considered as old-structured (Toni Hartono 2013: 45). In absolute value term, elders in Indonesia is predicted to reach 30 million in 2025 and 40 million in 2030, exceeding the number of citizens under age 15 on the same periode.

In accordance with Central Statistics Agency (BPS) 2017, the main characteristics of elders in Indonesia are as follow: (i) Within almost five decades, the percentage of elders in Indonesia approximately doubles (1971-2017) which is 8.97% (23.4 million) with 1% more of elderly women compared to elderly men (9.47% compared to 8.48%), (ii) elders in Indonesia are dominated with the group age of 60-69 (young elders) with 5.65% of the Indonesia citizens, whereas the rests are filled with 70-79 group age (medium elders) and 80+ group age (old elders), (iii) In 2017 there are 5 provinces with senior citizen structure above 10%, which are Yogyakarta (13.9%), Central Java (12.465%), East Java (12.16%), Bali (10.79%) and West Sulawesi (10.37%), (iv) The increasing number of elders in each year automatically gives effects of increasing households with elders. Within the last four years, elderly households increase by almost two percents (from 24.5% to 26.35%). Therefore, it can be said that one of four households are elderly household, (v) As part of Indonesian citizens, productive or not, the existence of elders still holds important contributions, especially within households. Some of them is still trusted and assumes the head of household role to take social and economic responsibilities of the household members' well-being. Head of household is the highest role within the household structure hierarchy, and more than 60% of elderly households set elders as the head of households. An interesting thing from this phenomenon is the role of women assuming the head of household role with the percentage of 35.45%. If linked with the life of elderly women in the past familiar with gender discrimination issues, that focus on domestic works and minimal education and knowledge, then this phenomenon cannot be taken for granted. Previous researches state that households commanded by elderly women tend to have relatively lower economic status, (vi) 2017 Susenas Data shows that almost 60% of elders in Indonesia have a significant other, where the rest does not, due to being single, divorcing while still alive and divorcing due to death. Living status with Indonesia elders is dominated with elders living in big families, both with family and three generations with the percentage of 62.64%. The status of living together at least pictures ideal conditions of elder households in Indonesia, where the inter-generational transfer rotation is working properly. If children can provide economic support to elder life necessities, then elders can also provide child care supports (elders' grandchildren). (vii) Another interesting thing is the existence of elders living alone with the percentage of 10% and the percentage of elderly women is higher compared to elderly men. More elderly women live alone compared to elderly men with difference of almost 10% (14.37% compared to 4.75%). According to

WHO (1977), elders who are living alone is a high-risk group requiring special attentions (Illiffe et al, 1992). Issues related to elders living alone become more interesting if we know factors leading to this phenomenon, whether living alone is part of life choice due to being childless, no significant other, no family, or displaced or neglected from their big family. To answer this question, in-depth researches are required regarding the lives of elders. (viii) The number of illiterate elders living in rural areas are higher compared to in urban areas. Looking from the gender perspective, the number of illiterate elderly women is double the number of illiterate elderly men. From the age perspective, the number of illiterate elders is higher on older age groups. Economic factor also has a role in elders' literacy competency. Around 31.63% of elders with 40% lowest economic status are illiterate. Elders living in households from 20% highest spending have the smallest number of illiterates. Economic status mentioned here can be measured with monthly per capita expenditure approach, with assumption that per capita expenditure in each month is equal to income. (ix) In general, most of elders is uneducated. Highest percentage is within elementary school education and below (do not pass elementary school or never go to school). Almost one-fifth of elders never go to school. That number is still higher compared to the percentage of elders without junior high school diplomas and higher, (x) The number of sick elders in 2017 is 26.72%. It means that in 100 elders there are 27 sick elders. Within the last three years, the number of sick elders keep decreasing. However, the relative decrease is not too big. Compared to 2015, the number of sick elders decreases by two percents.

Within the Indonesian context of building and located within the dynamics of enormous economic and sociocultural changes, then elder conditions are also complex and vary in different areas or provinces. Considering the elder groups of ready to work and needing preparation are predicted to be as high as 85%, then new paradigms are needed for the roles of elders, that they are not useless and unproductive social groups but are proactive elders with their own roles in developments. Senior citizens in Indonesia, through their own movements, realize that must change their images by enabling their own selves as potential elders ready to work with efforts to prepare themselves and expand effective work networks.

Programs by Indonesian Government

Facing potential issues related to elders, government shows commitments in various forms such as the creating of Acts, Rules or programs ran by related Ministries. In 1998, government issued Act 13 regarding Welfare of Elders as an effort to increase the well-being of elders which were previously limited to giving assistances to the elders living in nursing houses as mandated by Act No. 4 Year 1965 which was perceived as not relevant anymore. Rights of elders are considered equal in society. The rights to increase social well-being include religious and spiritual service, health service, work opportunity service, education and training services, ease in using public facilities, ease in legal service and assistance, social protection and social assistance.

Efforts done by government are highlighted in the table below:

Tabel 1. Efforts by Indonesian Government for Welfare of Elders

	Efforts Done By	Description
1	Regulations	Act No. 13 Year 1998 regarding Welfare of Elders
		Presidential Decree No. 43 Year 2004 regarding Efforts to Increase Elders Social Welfare
		Presidential Decision No. 52 Year 2004 regarding National Committee for Elders
		Minister of Home Affairs Decree No. 60 Year 2008 regarding Creation of Regional Committee for Elders and Society Empowerment of Regional Handling of Elders
		National Action Plan for Elders Welfare Year 2003, renewed in 2008 by Social Ministry
		Act No. 11 Year 2009 regarding Social Welfare
2	Programs by Social Ministry	Nursing House / Non-Nursing House Social Services
		Pelayanan Sosial Panti/Non-Panti
		Productive Economy Enterprise (UEP)
		Joint-Enterprise Group (KUBE)
		Day Care/Home Care, Social Assistances for Neglected Elders (ASLUT), Social Security for Elders (JSLU), Social Services Institutionalization
3	Programs by Health Ministry	Society Health Center for Elders (Posyandu Lansia)
		Society Health Security (JAMKESMAS)
		Society-Based Health Efforts (UKBM), Information Counseling
4	Planned Parenthood Coordination Agency (BKKBN)	Elder Family Counseling (Bina Keluarga Lansia, BKL) - self-sufficiency and consolidation of family functions for three generations
5	Ministry of Home Affairs	Elder KOMDA
6	Ministry of Public Works	Mandate of Act No. 28 Year 2004 regarding Buildings and Accessibilities
7	Ministry of Transportation	Accessibilities programs for the use of public facilities and public transportation reduction for elders

Compiled from various sources

Cultural Perspectives in Developing Family-based and Community-based Elder Services

Data from Social Ministry states that 2.1 million elders are neglected and 1.8 million elders are potentially neglected. The neglectness is especially meant for somebody who 60 years or more due to certain factors which limit the ability to fulfil one's needs physically, spiritually or socially. Neglected elders are those who have no relatives or have relatives who are not willing to take care of the elders. Included is elders who live with their children or family, however they do not work productively according to their potentials. Government programs, especially through Social Welfare Institution (*Panti*), are not adequate in terms of reaching all elders who need help. The management of *Panti* also requires funding, therefore the only elders who can enjoy the services are elders who can afford them.

Interesting aspect that 62.64 elders in Indonesia live together with big families show supports most readily available are closest families. Cultural values in major Indonesian tribes, such as Java, Sunda and Bali, foundationally still place "elderly" in a respected position due to knowledge and

experience. Therefore, the possibility to neglect elders is small. In Javanese culture, for example, the roles of elders are stated in three “ur”, which are (i) *tutur*: knowledge. Elders are pictured as someone full of knowledge and life experiences, (ii) *Wuwur*: money, elders do not concern money anymore. Money for them is something that is not a final goal. (iii) *Sembur*: morals from vast experience, lots of moral stories that can be shared to younger generations. Elders are sources of morals. Norms and social values in Indonesia with strong traditional values still place elders in high positions as sources of advice and blessings. Elders are highly respected in ceremonies and everyday lives.

In Bali society, government’s nursing home program is argued as not supportive to continuity of families and local cultures. As stated by Prof. Luh Ketut Suryani, the founder of Wredha Sejahtera Foundation (YWS) in Bali, *“We would like our government to re-consider their master plan to build nursing home, because it’s destroying our culture as there will be no more connection and feeling of responsible from the families, communities and the elderly themselves. That is our dream that our elderly people can have a place to meet, learning, activities and transfer their knowledge and experiences to the next generation”*. Within the Balinese traditional culture, elders are needed to be respected and seen as role models. Balinese culture also teaches ‘let passed away elders still stay with one’s family’. The experience of JWS that opens branches in entire districts, subdistricts and villages in Bali since 1988 shows that elders can be happy, useful, joyful and prosperous through involvements in various physical and mental activities, such as the establishment of Senior Citizen Center where elders can talk and entertain other fellow elders and teens while simultaneously providing life advice. Another idea is ‘elder campus’ within society where elders can come to gather, sing and talk regarding various recent social issues while doing breathing exercises together and plan art parades, even develop healing abilities.

In Indonesia generally, there is still found “three generations in one roof”, which means that one household contains three generations household members that live together. This is where elders are respected and taken care of. Family-based service model is better to be pushed and supported because this model is the most realistic for Indonesian society in general with specific profile of elders mentioned above. Programs by government proven to be beneficial for elders, such as health security, transportation, elder-friendly cities and Society Health Center for Elders (Posyandu lansia), must be constantly evaluated and improved so that Indonesia can find proper form of social services which are more integrative and guarantee all elders, especially those who are weak, impoverished and unreachable.

Conclusions

Facts regarding the explosion of senior citizens or the rapid growth of senior citizens within the Indonesian and ASEAN society structure has been recognized by government and society. Complexity of problems related to elders are also recognized by various parties (non-governmental organizations, academics, administrators, government, families) with appearance of various problems which must be

solved in accordance with elder classifications and their socioeconomic hierarchy. Considering that 85% elders are first and second classification, therefore proper empowerment strategies are required. Services for elders with old paradigms are not suitable anymore because what is important right now is to make elders as part of developments capital through special empowerment strategies. Considering local cultural values of society still respects the presence of elders within a family, as shown with 62.64% of elders staying together with family, therefore cultural perspective is better be the forefront in developing family-based or community-based services for elders. For now, strategies for family-based and community-based elder services development will become more effective if equipped with various service programs and effective government empowerment such as Society Health Security, *Posyandu Lansia* (Society Health Center for Elders), Productive Economy Enterprise, Joint-Enterprise Group and elders-friendly cities. Indonesia should develop elder service programs specific to local socioculture condition in each region without uprooting elders from their local culture roots.

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Declaration

I do hereby that the paper titled “Toward Better Ageing Society in Southeast Asia Strengthening Family and Community Service System based on Socio Cultural Perspective” is original and the research has not been published previously in the same form elsewhere. It will not be submitted anywhere else for publication.

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