

New Role of Elderly in Newly Industrializing Countries — As an Example of the Republic of Korea —

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I. Introduction

During the last three decades, efforts to deal with population problems in Korea have been focused largely on reduction of population growth. The national population control program has been a major means of achieving this goal. Between the early 1960s and 1990, evidences from a national survey in 1991 indicate that the percent of current use on contraception rose from about 12 percent to 80 percent and the total fertility rate fell to 1.6, representing one of the most rapid fertility transitions

in the developing world. In conjunction with this rapid reduction in fertility, mortality also improved significantly during this period. Thus, Korea has virtually completed the demographic transition from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates during the some period.

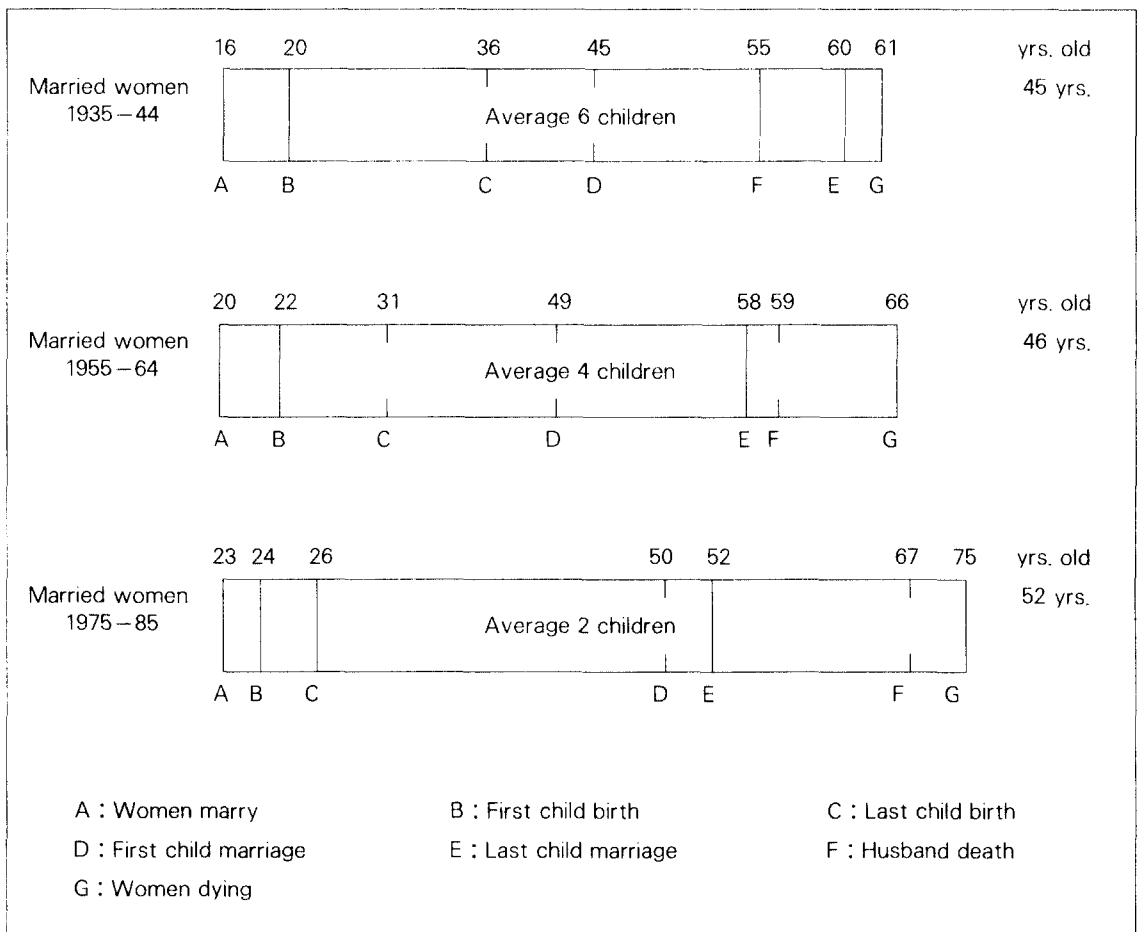
It is widely recognized that Korea has reached demographic maturity and has also achieved remarkable economic development at the same time. The world's demographic history shows that the demographic transition which almost every industrialized country has gone through from a predominantly rural, illiterate socie-

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ty with high birth and death rates, to a predominantly urban, educated society with low birth and death rates-usually takes well over a century. But in Korea, that process has taken only a few decades. Comparison of so called the Demographic Transition Index(DTI) by world region reveals distinct pattern, namely Western Developed, Asian NICs, ASEAN, Latin America and African region as shown in

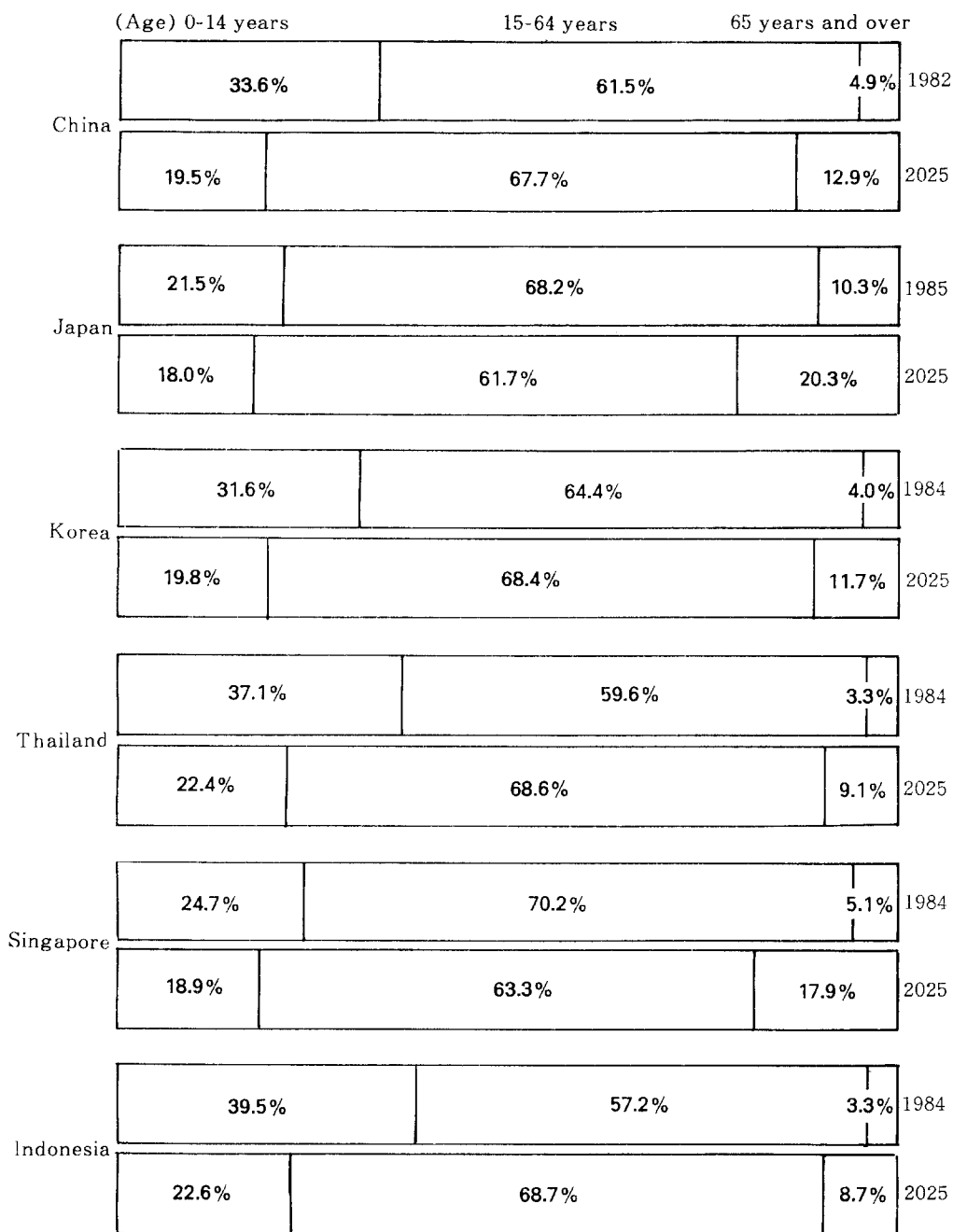
Table 1. Even though the table provides evidence of contrast by the region, Asian NICs are reaching nearly completion of demographic transition which means that approaching to 1.0 comprises completion of demographic transition in conventional term.

The aging process in Korea has been accelerated by the rapid reduction in fertility as it called as latent effect of changing



Source : Park, I.H., Estimate Life Cycle, *Changes in Korean Family Structure*, Chapter 5, KIPH, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 1987. d.

Figure 1. Life Cycle



Population aging means not only an increase in the proportion of people over 65 years old but also changes in the proportions of children (0-14 years old), and the working-age (15-64 years old) population. Such changes in the population structure affect the economy, society, etc., in a variety of ways.

Figure 2. Changes in Population Structure

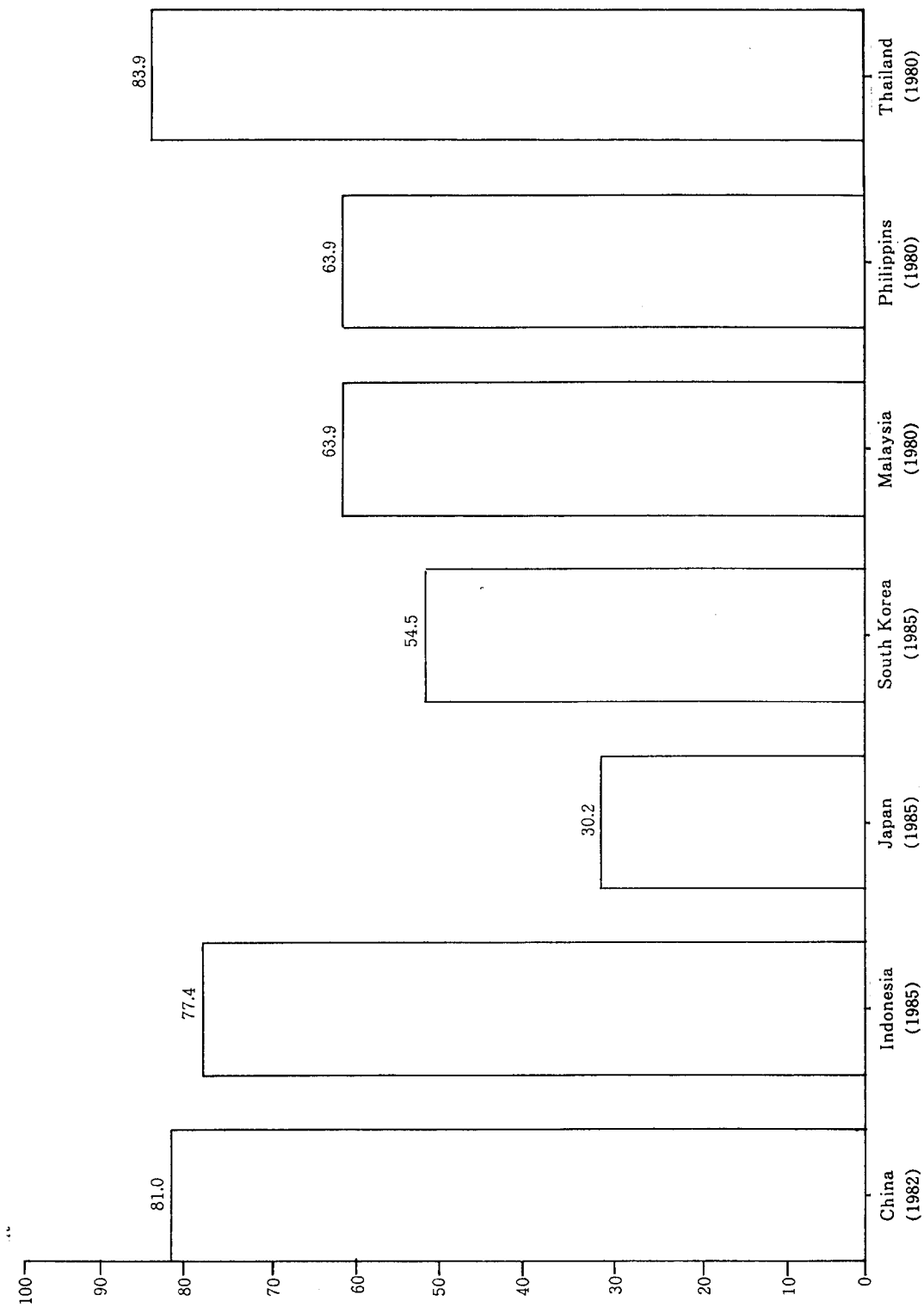
Labor force participation by people aged 65 years and over



Note : China is represented by Wuxi City, Jiangsu Province.

Compared with Western countries, the proportion of aged people working tends to be in Asian countries.

Figure 3. Aged People Working



Source : United Nations, 1989, Demographic Yearbook 1987, New York.

Figure 4. Percentage of those Aged 65 and over Residing in Rural Areas in Selected Asian Countries in Recent Years

Table 1. Comparison of demographic transition index

Asia · Pacific	D.T.I.	Europe	D.T.I.
Japan	1.00	North Europe	
		Denmark	1.02
NICs		Finland	0.96
Hong Kong	0.98	Iceland	1.00
Singapore	0.95	Norway	0.95
Taiwan	0.85	Sweden	1.03
Republic of Korea	0.95	England	0.99
China	0.73		
		West Europe	
ASEAN		Austria	0.93
Malaysia	0.60	Belgium	0.96
Thailand	0.57	France	0.97
Philippines	0.55	Germany	1.01
Indonesia	0.43	Netherlands	1.01
		Switzerland	0.96
Africa	D.T.I.	Latin America	D.T.I.
Nigeria	0.26	Brazil	0.68
Egypt	0.48	Mexico	0.66
Ethiopia	0.16	Argentina	0.87

Source : L.J.Cho, *Asia and Pacific Economic Development and Transition*, Tokyo, 1989.

age structure. In this context, there has been growing concern over potential problems and needs that may arise from increase in the number and proportion of the elderly population as related to the rapid socio-economic changes experienced during the past three decades. The successful execution of the 5-year Socio-economic Development Plans has promoted industrialization and urbanization and, also, expanded the nuclear family system in Korea. As a result, the traditional values and norms concerning the aged also have changed sig-

nificantly. In this paper, an attempt is made to describe the general features of the present situation of the Korean elderly by reviewing several aspects of the aging phenomena in Korea, namely, the demographic, family, social welfare aspects and new roles of the elderly in future time to come.

II. Demographic Aspects of Aging

There has been a significant increase in the number and proportion of the elderly

population during the last three decades. Those aged 65 and over increased from 0.7 million (2.9 percent to total population) in 1960 to approximately 2.1 million (5.0 percent to total population) in 1990, which means an increase of about 1.4 million elderly people during the last three decades. Moreover, it is projected that an additional 4.2 million will be added by the year 2020 in which the number of the elderly will reach approximately 6.3 million and the proportion will be 12.5 percent of the total population by that year (Table 4).

As it can be seen from the table, the growth rate for the elderly population is much greater than for the young, working age population, whose (aged 14 and less) growth rate will be negative, reflecting the influence of the rapid reduction in fertility. The growth rate for the working age population (aged 15 to 64) will also continue to decline, but unlike the other age groups, the annual growth rate for the elderly is relatively constant at about 4 percent, indicating that the elderly population is expected to increase rapidly in the near future.

Even though the total dependency ratio is expected to decrease, due mainly to the rapid decline in the young dependency ratio, the old dependency ratio is expected to increase steadily. As a result, the index of aging, which is the percentage of those 65 and over in relation to those under 15, will increase significantly. As it can be seen in the table, while the elderly population was only about one-fifth of the young

population in 1990, the elderly population will increase to about four-fifths of the number of the young population by the year 2020. This suggests that taking care of the elderly dependents will become a heavy burden for the working age population in the near future.

The aging of the population in Korea seems to differ from that experienced in Western countries. The aging of the population did not begin with the initial decline of fertility in the early 1960s when the birth rate declined slowly. The effect of the decline in the birth rate during that period was offset by the decline in mortality so that the age structure remained more or less stable. It was only after the late 1970s that the Korean population, aging process initiated by the drastic decline in fertility which occurred after the baby boom cohort passed its active childbearing period.

Unlike the Western experience, tempo of aging process, once begun, proceed more rapidly. It took about a century for Western countries to increase their proportion of older people from around 5 to 12 percent, but Korea will increase its proportion of older people at the same rate in less than half of that time, with in only 30 years from 1990 to 2020. In this sense, Korea can be identified as one of the 'nascent' aging countries as can be seen in Table 2.

Another important dimension of population aging is sub-national area disparities. Table 4 shows provincial (including major

Table 2. Empirical and expected tempo of ageing

Country	Proportion of 65 and over		Years required
	Year reach	Year reach	
	7 per cent	7 per cent	
England	1930	1975	45
France	1865	1995	130
Japan	1970	1995	25
Republic of Korea	2000	2025	25
U.S.A.	1930	1975	45
Germany	2000	2025	25
China			

Source : a) Welfare Whitepaper, Japan, 1985.

cities) distribution of expected elderly proportion based on recent population projections by subnational areas. Glancing at this table, one may be quite surprised by the presence of a considerable provincial variation on proportion of aged population. As expected, five major cities represent lower proportion of the aged, where as those situated in remote areas indicate as high as more than 20 percent in few decades later.

In general, those urban centered provinces tend to have a higher proportion of the working age population among the total population mostly because of excessive in-migration in that age category, hence aging process is slow. On the other hand, those provinces which are distant from the major cities and are traditionally agricultural oriented tend to indicate a reverse trend. Over-centralization rather than decentralization still prevails in the

Southern part of Korean peninsula in the area of population and manpower distribution

III. Family Aspects. of Aging

Traditionally, the economic and emotional needs of the aged in Korea have been met by their families as the high value placed on filial duty in the past exerted absolute authority over the younger generation according to Confucian philosophy. As Korean society becomes industrialized and urbanized, the family as a social unit undergoes change in its structure. Also the traditional family, value system, i.e., filial duty and family care for the elderly, is gradually disappearing. Related with these social changes, the elderly in Korea lose their power over children and become less able to adjust to the rapidly changing socio-economic environment. In this sec-

Table 3. Projected change in age composition, 1960-2020

Year	Population by age groups (000)				Proportion			Mean age	Index of aged pop.	Index of ageing
	Total	0-41	15-64	65+	0-41	15-64	65+			
1960	24,989	10,729	13,438	822	42.9	53.8	3.3	23.4	6.1	7.7
1966	29,160	12,684	15,515	961	43.5	52.2	3.3	23.4	6.2	7.6
1970	31,435	13,241	17,515	961	43.5	53.2	3.3	24.0	6.1	7.8
1975	34,679	13,208	20,264	1,207	38.1	58.4	3.5	24.8	5.9	9.1
1980	37,407	12,656	23,305	1,446	33.8	62.3	3.9	26.2	6.2	11.4
1985	41,056	12,655	26,771	1,741	30.6	65.2	4.2	27.1	6.5	13.9
1990	43,601	11,868	29,709	2,025	27.2	68.1	4.7	28.3	6.8	17.1
1995	45,962	11,598	31,968	2,397	25.2	69.6	5.2	29.7	7.5	20.7
2000	48,017	11,078	33,969	2,972	23.1	70.7	6.2	31.7	8.8	26.8
2010	51,028	10,084	36,664	4,282	19.8	71.8	8.4	35.0	11.7	42.5
2020	52,473	9,259	37,445	5,772	17.6	71.4	11.0	37.2	15.4	62.3

Source : 1) *Population and Housing Censuses, Economic Planning Board, 1960-1985.*

2) Population projections based on 1985 Population Census, *National Bureau of Statistics, EPB, March, 1986.*

Table 4. Proportional changes of aged population based on sub-national area projections, 1985-2045

	1985	1995	2005	2015	2025	2035	2045
Whole country	4.69	6.27	8.63	10.31	13.76	17.31	19.07
Cheju	5.24	6.47	8.96	11.26	15.06	19.85	22.45
Chonbuk	5.91	8.69	12.07	13.75	16.41	19.58	21.28
Chonnam	6.32	9.33	13.05	14.73	18.01	21.85	23.89
Chungbuk	6.22	7.88	10.22	11.04	14.55	18.19	19.77
Chungnam	6.55	9.44	13.73	15.23	18.84	23.07	25.47
Inchon	2.96	4.19	5.96	8.01	12.37	16.43	18.41
Kangwon	5.22	7.19	10.07	11.49	15.39	18.86	20.39
Kwangju	3.41	3.76	5.11	6.22	8.99	13.01	14.11
Kyonggi	4.22	8.09	7.03	9.21	13.74	17.93	20.04
Kyungbuk	6.99	9.29	12.01	13.26	16.56	20.07	21.85
Kyungnam	5.07	5.75	6.98	8.15	11.49	14.43	16.04
Pusan	2.63	3.95	5.89	7.98	11.59	14.73	16.36
Seoul	2.94	4.02	5.85	7.81	11.17	14.42	16.06
Taegu	3.07	4.36	6.43	8.44	11.93	15.52	17.16
Taejoen	3.44	3.81	5.21	6.58	9.52	12.42	13.56

Source : Choe, Ehn Hyun, et al. 1989. *Population Projections by Sub-National Area, 1985-2050*.
Korea Institute for Population and Health.

tion, several dimensions in the family aspects of aging in Korea are reviewed.

1. Family Life Cycle

Due to the reduction in fertility, the improvement in the mortality rate, and the socio-economic development, the Korean family life cycle experienced dramatic changes as it can be seen in Figure 1 (Park, 1987), i.e. the time interval between the marriage of the last child and the death of the husband has been increasing over the last 40 years. For example, a cohort of women married during the 1934-45 period experienced the death of their husbands 5.8 years before the marriage of their last child, and women were expected to die almost at the same time as their last child married, but due to the decline in fertility and the development of the medicine and, hence, improved mortality, the time intervals have lengthened. It is expected, therefore, that the recent cohort of women will experience longer empty nest stage than those of earlier cohorts. In this sense, special attention should be paid to the elderly who are in the empty nest stage.

2. Living Arrangements

Weakening of traditional family functions in caring for the elderly paralleled with changes in the family structure have been observed in recent Korea. Owing to the fertility decline and expansion of the nuclear family system, the average number of household members has decreased. Furthermore due to urbanization and

industrialization, more women participate in the labor market outside of their homes. This creates further problems in caring for the elderly because women played a role as the primary providers of care for the elderly at home. The prevalence of the nuclear family system has increased the number of the elderly-only households, accounting for 5.2 percent of the total households in Korea in 1990.

As Table 5 shows, nearly half of the elderly aged 60 and over in 1984 maintained a traditional stem family system by living together with their eldest son's family, but about one-third of the elderly population co-reside with sons other than the eldest or maintain independent living arrangements. This means a degeneration from the traditional concept that one's eldest son is obliged to reside with his parents. The proportion of the elderly living with their eldest sons was found to be the lowest in metropolitan areas and the highest in rural areas. This indicates that modernization and urbanization may have a significant impact on the elderly living arrangements.

Even though an increasing number of the elderly may maintain non-traditional type of living arrangements, about 76 percent of them resided with their off-springs in 1984. The elderly expressed the opinion that the most desired type of living arrangement is the extended family system, indicating that strong familism among the elderly still prevails in Korea. Actually, about 83 percent of the elderly desired "the whole family to live together"

Table 5. Comparison of the Elderly Living Arrangement

	(%)				
	Japan	U.S.A	U.K.	R.O.K.	Germany
Your spouse	77.4	49.4	46.3	53.4	45.4
Man	92.1	68.2	63.7	81.1	68.0
Woman	64.4	36.6	33.1	34.7	32.8
Married son	33.3	1.0	0.8	39.4	4.1
Married daughter	8.6	2.7	0.9	3.4	3.4
Spouse of son/daughter	26.8	1.3	0.9	6.9	3.9
Unmarried son/daughter	16.3	11.8	7.9	18.8	8.0
Grandson/granddaughter	33.3	4.3	58.0	43.4	4.9
Other relative	4.3	4.6	2.6	1.4	3.8
Someone other than relative	0.2	3.7	0.8	0.5	2.4
No one, live alone	5.6	35.1	44.8	11.3	38.3

Source: JARC SURVEY, 1991.

" in 1981 (Gallup Polls, 1984), but this wish for co-residence with family members changed a lot during the 1980s and the proportion had declined to 61.4 percent in 1990 (JARC, 1991), reflecting the fact that attitudinal changes were occurring in the pattern of co-residence with their children. More and more elderly want to maintain independent living arrangements as long as they can afford them.

As young people moved in mass into urban areas, the elderly left behind in rural areas have suffered from a shortage of farm hands and a feeling of alienation. The elderly in urban areas have also suffered from a loss of social roles in their

homes and communities, and hence, feel alienated. The alienation among the elderly usually comes from the loss of social roles and familial care. They usually spend their time in the community centers for the elderly, which do not provide sufficient social services to eliminate their feelings of the alienation

3. Family Support

Most aged Koreans, except those who can support themselves, are expected to be supported by their families, particularly by their children. The family can provide emotional as well as economic support. Traditionally, this relationship has been

considered as a norm according to the Confucian philosophy.

According to the survey results conducted by JARC (Japan Aging Research Center) in 1990, unlike other countries, the aged in Korea are in favor of co-residing with children who are the most desirable caretakers when the elderly are bedridden due to illness, while children living separately are favored next. This result indicates that the Korean elderly consider that children is the most important sources of help when they need care. (Table 6)

As a consequence of the industrialization

and urbanization, the function of the family in caring for the elderly within the household has weakened. Generally, the elderly in Korea are retired from the private or public sector at about the age of 60. However, very few of the retired elderly receive any kind of pension. In this sense, the loss of income to maintain themselves becomes the most distressing factor for the elderly. So weakened support from the family and an inadequate pension system result in a poor quality of life for the elderly.

Table 6. Present Sources of Living Expense

	(MA) (%)				
	Japan	U.S.A.	U.K.	R.O.K.	Germany
Earning from work	34.1	21.6	8.8	37.4	7.1
Public pension (national pension, welfare pension, etc.)	81.2	84.5	89.8	3.4	82.6
Private pension (corporation or company pension, individual pension, etc.)	7.8	33.4	52.8	0.5	26.2
Withdrawal from savings	22.7	24.0	25.8	6.0	14.4
Yield from property (dividends, interests, rentals, and so on)	13.9	43.1	8.1	8.4	10.9
Support from son(s) and daughter(s)	18.9	2.6	2.3	73.6	3.6
Relief or livelihood assistance/supplementary benefits	1.4	3.0	12.1	3.2	1.3
Other	3.2	8.0	4.1	2.2	6.3

Source : JARC Survey, 1991.

- ods to maintain their good health;
- (5) Providing counselling services to older people regarding various problems such as sense of loneliness or isolation common to the elderly;
 - (6) Providing opportunities to the elderly to participate in various social services and activities for community development;
 - (7) Helping older persons to secure employment in accordance with their desire and ability work;
 - (8) Providing opportunities for older persons to associate and interact with younger people in order to eliminate problems caused by the generation gap;
 - (9) Providing opportunities for older persons to pass their traditional knowledge and culture in general to the younger generation;

On the other hand, continuous efforts were devoted by the government. The social services for the elderly have been delivered by the civil servants in the local units of the ministry of Internal Affairs. Since they are not professional social worker, there have been many problems associated with delivery of in-kind personal social services to the elderly. The government assigned approximately 2,000 social workers to the local units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the end of year 1991 in order to enhance quality of public assistance program in which large proportion of the beneficiaries are the elderly. It is expected the number of workers will

reach 4,000 in 1993 according to the 7th Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan(1992-1996). However, the more important movement by the government will be creation of the local social service offices separated from the local unit of the Ministry of internal Affairs. Conducting a demonstration project for establishing independent local social services offices is also included the 7th Five Years Socio-Economic Development Plan.

The local social service offices are expected to integrate various social welfare program and are administered by professional social workers. Therefore, the delivery and quality personal social services to the elderly are expected to be improved with the establishment of the local social service offices.

VI. New Role of the Elderly

1. Problem of ageing in newly industrializing society are more related to societal factors than to personal or familial factors, therefore the efforts toward to find solution should be initiated by society or government. This means that the fundamental solution of the problem cannot be undertaken by individuals or families. However, the Korean government policy on solving the problem of ageing has been generally based on a premise that ageing is a personal or family problem rather than a social problem, and thus solvable through family efforts. This position had been strongly supported by the traditional value

industrialization of Korean society. This is an unfortunate phenomenon since the alienation of any segment of a population including older people from their community or society in general is detrimental for the well-being of that society.

Therefore, the Korean government and people have begun to take steps to eliminate the undesirable social trend common in industrializing societies. The Korean government has passed a law to promote the welfare of older people and declared the "Charter for Older People" to restore their respected position in their communities. Meanwhile, the Korean people started a vigorous campaign mainly led by the elderly to promote their well-being. As a result of this movement, a nationwide organization (the Korea Senior Citizen's Association) for the elderly was organized in 1982.

There are 2.9 million elderly who are aged 60 or over in the Republic of Korea in 1990. This makes up approximately seven percent of the total Korean population. At present, roughly one third of the elderly population are members of the Korea Senior Citizen's Association (KSCA). This national organization and its local chapters are engaged in various activities and programmes to enhance the well-being of older persons although most of these programmes are still in the trial stage. It is anticipated that the organization (KSCA) and its local chapters will have a tremendous impact on the senior citizens in the Republic of Korea.

KSCA is composed of the national association with headquarters located in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, 13 regional association offices in metropolitan and provincial areas, 226 township association offices in small cities or local districts and 7,363 local chapters located in city neighbourhoods or rural villages. There are a president and four vice-presidents in the central headquarters. Under the president, there is a board consisting of 30 members who participate in the major decision-making process at the national level. It is known that there are 20,000 Senior Citizens Clubs (Kyung Ro Dang) in local area and among them only 266 places are becoming active with community level activities for the elderly.

The goal of KSCA is to promote the well-being of the Korean elderly by integrating them into their community. More specific objectives to be accomplished by each local chapter are :

- (1) Providing sites and opportunities for the elderly to get together for social and recreational activities;
- (2) Providing the life-long adult education programmes to promote knowledge and skills useful for their adaptation to the rapidly changing social environment for the elderly;
- (3) Providing learning experiences to older people to enrich their later life and to help them to feel their life is worthwhile and meaningful;
- (4) Promoting older persons' health by providing them with opportunities to learn or practice knowledge or meth-

employees has been compulsorily insured. Farmers and fisherman including self-employers and workers of the establishment that has less than 10 employees are voluntarily insured. However, socio-economic characteristics of the farmer and fisherman are not properly reflected to the contribution scheme. This situation causes the problem that farmers and fisherman are, in fact, left excluded from the benefits of public pension system.

The government has implemented some programs to improve the income of the elderly in poverty, which include administrative and financial support to operate 264 job placement agencies and 152 communal work places for the elderly (Choe and Lee, 1991).

However, it should be noticed that provision of adequate pension benefits for the elderly will start from 2008 since the pension system require 20 years of vesting period for the beneficiaries to receive full old age pension.

b. Medical Insurance System

The Medical Insurance System in Korea derives its origin from the Medical Insurance Law enacted and promulgated in 1963. However, the medical insurance scheme on a compulsory basis had not been enforced for well over a decade on account of the immaturity of the contemporary socio-economic situations.

Meanwhile, according to the growing recognition of social security caused by the rapid economic development, the Medical Insurance Law was entirely amended in

December 1976 to compulsorily cover employees of workplaces designated on the basis of their number of employees. Since then, the coverage has been gradually expanded, in 1981, from factories or organizations employing 500 workers or more to those employing 100 workers or more.

As of January 1988, the persons covered under the medical insurance in Korea was 68 percent of the whole population. If the poor and needy under the public medical assistance were added, the total coverage was 78 percent. By July 1989, whole population in Korea was covered under the medical insurance system both in urban and rural areas of the country. Under the medical aid system, the government absorbs all medical charges for the persons who have income below the poverty level and thus can not bear their own medical expenses. Most of the beneficiaries from the medical aid system are the elderly. It is recommended for further development of health care system for the elderly to establish hospitals for the aged for caring geriatric diseases.

V. Role of NGO and Government Support

Traditionally older persons in the Republic of Korea have been active participants in community affairs and have taken a leading role in the community development. Lately, however, these older persons who used to be an integral part of their community are being isolated from major social activities as a result of the rapid

IV. Social Welfare Aspects

Recognizing the necessity for the old age welfare policy, the Korean Government constituted a Social Welfare Law for Aged on June 1981 to promote and improve better living arrangement and to maintain better health for the elderly (Social Welfare Law, No. 3453). In this segment, the contents of the social welfare system in Korea is briefly described as the following order, 1) Social service, 2) Public aid, and 3) Social and health insurance system.

1. Social Service System

Social welfare system giving preference to the elderly started on Parents' Day in May, 1980. It provided legal advice, Social Welfare Centers and Counselling Service operated by civilians voluntarily working through private sector. The preferential system includes fifty percent discount of public fees, such as admissions to museum, national parks, old palaces, temples, theaters, public baths, etc. Welfare centers for the elderly were established in 22 places to consult and to provide job opportunities for them. Nursing homes and facilities for the elderly are operating in 8,942 places, and also 758 local schools for the elderly were established for their further education.

2. Public Aid System

The basic law for the public aid gives benefits to those people over 65 who are

living alone only when their family has no capability to support. The methods of relief include providing nursing homes for the helpless people, and giving out cash benefits and medical aid to support themselves. There are special measures for disabled veterans over 65 and their families.

Medical examinations for the elderly started in 1983, and are now provided to 200,00 elderly per year. Low-income persons can get a medical examination free of charge once every other year, but from 1989, a second detailed examination is also given. To disabled veterans over 65 (about 4,900), the government gives compensation support, medical care, and resettlement funds.

3. Social and Health Insurance System

a. National Pension System

As part of social support systems, the social insurance program is to provide pension benefits for the elderly to cover financial difficulties after retirement. The government administration planned and prepared a basic document for implementing national pension scheme in 1973, but implementation of the original plan was postponed until 1987. However, there were pension schemes implemented for workers in particular jobs such as government officials (1960), military personnel (1963), and school teachers (1974). Those who benefit from above system are only about six percent of the nation as a whole.

From January 1988, industrial workers of the establishment that has more than 10

of filial piety that emphasizes family responsibility in taking care of the elderly. The general guiding principal of government policies for the elderly until 1980th usually discussed as “care by the family first, and consecutively social security second” (Choi, 1992).

In recent year, along with economic development and general public opinion toward to improve social welfare policies, approximately 30 percent of social welfare budget were allocated for elderly program in FY 1991 government budget. It is becoming a new challenge that government is realizing that government have to deal with aged problems reflecting public opinion.

2. Higher education as well as improvement of economy and society stimulate people's wish to continue learning, and longer life span enables people to spend more leisure time. In their context, in the future, so-called “Life-long Education Society” where people can freely learn at any stage of life has to be considered. For the aged people, such environment which enables them to lead a full life without feeling lonely and meaningless should be built into them gradually. In the local community and in the neighbourhood of their homes, the close cooperation between all the social, educational and other related facilities is essential for people to learn voluntarily so that one can reach to higher vocational capability or self-refinement. A variety of volunteer activities can help the aged to participate in the community

life, and also narrow the generation gap and form a unified and active community life for all.

3. At least, two kinds of volunteer activities are becoming active in the limited number for the Korean local communities. The first is organizing to teach Chinese subscript by elderly in the local community for the younger generation in volunteer basis without any fee involved. Learning Chinese subscript in Korean life is important for younger generation to understand not only the Korean publications but also Japanese and Chinese publications as well.

4. Teaching filial obligation of the younger generation is another aspect of new role for the elderly. There are wide range of filial duty to be conveyed in usual social life of Korea and most of traditional customs are affected by the Confucian family system. Informal class or lectures arranged by the elderly could provide good opportunity for younger generation to learn about moral etiquette such as ceremonial procedures and various types of festivals. In doing so, one can expect to retain historical and traditional culture in the community. There are several kinds of festivals annually conducted for the ancestor worship.

5. A new role of parental care taker has emerged for individuals in the “post-parental” stage. Although the nests of these individuals have been emptied of

children, they are being refilled both psychologically and physically with aging kin. Most of these individuals though, will survive to experience still another family life-cycle stage. The 'reempty nest' occurs after the death of aged parents. As a consequence of broad-scale demographic trends, young people today are more likely to have older persons belonging to their kinship network than any earlier point in history. Grand-children may be important to older persons. The closest contact exists between contiguous generations.

The family is still the principal source to support for the aged. It is in the home that the aged would find himself more at ease. It is therefore important that family support system should be strengthened in order to provide community based services and economic benefits such as tax deductions to those families which take care of elderly. Communities should be encouraged to form voluntary and mutual aids organizations in providing support for the elderly as well their families.

6. Extension of retirement age and re-employment of elderly takes place in recent year are mostly in private sectors of labor market partly affected by shortage of appropriate manpower.

7. Sustainable community based activities can be initiated by Governments the private sector, or by communities themselves. Joint non-government and governmental endeavours such as village commit-

tees which ascertain the needs of the elderly and organize services around them.

VII. Conclusion

The burdens to take care of the aged become pressing due to rapid increase in the number and proportion of the elderly population in Korea. The majority of the aged in Korea prefer support to be rendered by their families. Among the aged who need care, their family is still one of the primary concerns in Korean society. This tendency were reinforced because of the inadequate provision from the social support system in Korea.

However, due to the rapid industrialization and urbanization, the elderly in Korea are experiencing changes in the family structure, the loss of their economic and social status, and emotional dissatisfaction because of the digression of their relationship with their families. These attitudinal changes and conflicts between generations create potential problems in the care of the elderly; majority of them need help to maintain decent life in later years.

Given that the elderly in Korea have played a significant role in the rapid economic development in Korea, they deserve to be supported from the government as well as from their family. Therefore, even though the primary obligation for the elderly care is still imposed on the families of the aged in Korea, more adequate social support will be necessary for the aged.

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