

THREE MEGA-DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract:

This article discusses three mega-demographic trends in Indonesia, which have and will have important social, economic, and political implications. Any development planning needs to seriously consider these trends, namely, an ever-growing population, an emerging rapidly aging population, and emerging highly mobile Indonesians within the country and migrating out from the country.

Below are the **Introduction**, **Outline**, and **Conclusion** of the paper.

Complete reading can be found in

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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has seen a complete transformation of demographics in many developing countries. This transformation has brought about some new emerging trends, including aging population (i.e., increasing number and percentage of older persons) and changing population mobility (Brown & Braun, 2008; Lutz, Sanderson & Scherbov, 2008). Indonesia is not an exception to this experience. Furthermore, as with the other two large developing countries of China and India, Indonesia's population is very large and has been growing and will continue to grow. These three mega-demographic trends in Indonesia have been and will be occurring in the context of the heterogeneity of its population, and have been enhanced by the process of democratization since 1998 and decentralization since 2001. The trends will also change the ways in which social development progresses.

In 2000, 189 countries agreed to adopt the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight key global goals development. These countries set the development goals and target date of 2015, using 1990 figures as the base year, and they emphasize people-centred development in their agenda. The eight MDGs cover eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and establishing a global partnership for development.

There are many things, including the three mega-demographic trends, that may affect the achievement of the MDGs and produce policies that go beyond the MDGs in Indonesia. This article examines these three trends, taking into account heterogeneity at subnational levels, and shows possible implications for some MDGs and beyond. We start by discussing Indonesia's ever-increasing population, followed by the second trend (aging population) and the third trend (changing pattern of population mobility).

The data used are mostly statistics from population censuses and surveys collected by Indonesia's Statistical Board (Indonesia Statistics).

OUTLINE

First Trend: An Ever-Growing Giant Population

Demographic Momentum, Not a Population Explosion

A Global Economic Magnet

Second Trend: Aging Population

Issues Related to the Aging Population

Older Persons: New Challenges and Emerging Asset

Third Trend: Changing Pattern of Population Mobility

Dynamics within Indonesia: Changing Pattern?

Exploring the World

Going Back Home

Luring Foreigners

CONCLUSION

A Giant Population

Because fertility has been relatively low, the government of Indonesia should not pursue a low-fertility policy, which would accelerate aging population and be accompanied by a shortage of young labour and an increased caretaking burden. Rather, the government should view the growing population as an asset. Indeed, with relatively high and stable economic growth (around 6 percent a year) and better education, Indonesia's population has already become a magnet for profit-making foreign businesses. The perceived abundant availability of "untapped" natural resources is also adding to Indonesia's increased attractiveness to foreign business.

Indonesia should be careful not to engage in extensive borrowing and overconsumption, as this may jeopardize households' financial health. Indonesia should also be careful not to exploit all its natural resources. Environmental protection, not simply economic growth, should be an important consideration when exploiting natural resources. Otherwise, business activities, including foreign ones, may hamper the achievement of the seventh MDG related to environmental sustainability. Aside from these precautions, Indonesia could invest a large amount of money to achieve the MDGs, particularly reducing poverty and the income-wealth inequality, as well as in attaining environmental sustainability.

Older Persons as an Emerging Asset

The increasing population of older persons should not be viewed as simply a rising market for health-care services. Rather, the government, community, family, and business sector should encourage active ageing to make older persons healthy, independent, and productive. Such programs use a life-course approach to make all citizens healthy, independent, and productive. By doing so, older persons will not be a burden to society but can be an asset. A society with a large number of older persons can draw on those older persons as a competitive advantage. A successful active aging program would also help reduce poverty among older persons.

Rising Instant Connectivity

In the decade of 2000-2010, Indonesians were less likely to leave their place of residence. However, circular migrating and commuting has been on the rise. The availability of faster, more convenient transportation and communication may have reduced the need to migrate to other provinces and districts. Further studies should explore this phenomenon to see whether the trend will continue in the future.

Although the number of migrants indicates a declining trend, connectivity has increased. The availability of information technology is likely to produce wider and instant connectivity among Indonesians wherever they live, even in other countries.

These changes have broad social, economic, and political implications, including the achievement of the MDGs particularly consequences of combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases. Broadening the labour market through mobility may increase Indonesians' options for decent and gainful employment, as well as improve gender equality and empowerment. Finally, increased connectivity will create a more open and vibrant Indonesian society, at home and overseas.