



## From Editor

Population over 60 years is doubling rapidly in almost all regions of the world. This pace of population ageing is unprecedented and by now or in the coming decade in many countries as per UN data the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than 5 years. This demographic shift occurring at different pace and with varied intensity in the regions of Africa, Asia and Europe, forms the background of the articles in this issue of the Journal. The different countries face major challenges to ensure that their health and social systems are ready to make the most of this demographic transition. Some of these concerns are reflected in this special issue on old age bringing international perspectives related to theory and practice together.

In the articles included here by various experts contributing from different countries from the various regions of the world, namely Africa, Asia, and Europe the focus is on the need to designing active ageing policies on the one hand which is clearly stated by Marvin Formosa from Malta in his article here, and on the other facing the inevitability of one's death as pointed out by Marcin Muszyński, Arkadiusz Wąsiński & Artur Fabiś from Poland, to discussing adult literacy programs and the use of technology in which Saadia Amjad & Samina Rafique from Pakistan bring emphasis on for the wellbeing of older persons and at the same time as Isaac Kabelenga comments on the accusations on older people for the practice of witchcraft in Zambia which greatly undermines their status in families and communities. While the consequences of such abuse in certain parts of Africa and elsewhere too are harmful to the dignity of older men and women but there are also instances in certain parts of the world as stated by Natasa Todorovic, Milutin Vracevic, Dejana Stanisavljevic & Natasa Milic from Serbia in their article in this issue on intergenerational solidarity indicating respect to older people.

Ageing brings various changes in the lives of older people and at times towards their later years both older men and women need institutional care. In some societies

there are emerging different options for housing the aged and one of the options which is getting popular in ageing societies is the concept of senior living communities as pointed out by Anupriyo Mallick in his article on India included in this issue. Living arrangements of older people are of much discussion in recent times especially in terms of the need for long term care which is making heavy demand on governments to provide for in all ageing countries. As Kim Mee Hye, an expert from Korea comments in her article presented here we need to review long term care policies quite critically. A big emerging concern in ageing societies is the growing incidence of elder abuse both in family and institutional settings. Are our societies ready to combat the problem of elder abuse is a big question mark and one of the solutions seems to be to have robust retirement policies which safe guard the interests of older people. As an expert from Japan Masa Higo indicates in this issue retirement reforms is a must for ageing societies in order to cope with changing needs of the society. It is observed in various contexts that life satisfaction issues are pivotal for the wellbeing of older people. But in many instances there are problems in achieving this. In their article Işıl Kalaycı and Metin Özkul from Turkey bring focus to this crucial issue which requires thinking especially with regard to the impact of various social processes such as urbanization, industrialization, migration and other aspects of social change affecting ageing societies and having diverse consequences on the lives of older people. In discussing changes affecting societies we are in current scenario impacted by COVID 19 which is causing havoc with lives of people all over the world and older people are most vulnerable to this pandemic. In this issue the last two articles one by Sam Togba Slewion from Liberia and another by Chandrakala Diyali from India reflect on this concern from different perspectives providing an interesting theoretical and empirical understanding to the phenomena. All the articles included in this issue of the Journal enrich us with varied perspectives, concerns focusing on different challenges and responses to old age.

Old age is now an experience which many in different countries go through unlike it was few decades back and especially in parts of Africa and Asia. People all over are living longer with life expectancy steadily increasing in all regions. In fact in many parts of the world people are living beyond 80s and 90s and healthier than in the past. In parts of Asia in particular the time taken for population ageing is much shorter than that in countries of Europe. Consequently there is less preparation for people and governments to plan for old age in many developing countries and specifically in the Asian region as much as it is in Latin and South American countries. While there are many challenges to face as populations age there are also numerous opportunities available to those living longer and for governments to plan for this fast emerging resource. Additional years bring longer chances for employment, pursuing social and economic activities, using opportunities for further learning and engaging in desirable activities at the individual level as well as in families and communities. While it is true that older people can be a useful societal resource, an important precondition lies in their health. Thus active ageing policies are both conducive for individuals and

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for societies in the long run. Governments must plan for the health of their citizens in young and old age as well as reduce disability by not only tackling it at the individual level but by also creating enabling environments in the society. Supportive mechanisms become important for people at all ages but more so in later years when certain socioeconomic and health related vulnerabilities may set in.

Old age means different things to people and there are many variations in what people feel is part of their later years. While individuals can prepare and manage their old age to some extent a lot depends on societal responses, reactions, and socioeconomic challenges accompanying the experience. It becomes important for governments to have policies and programs which enable people at all ages to have quality of life and be protected from abusive environments. A pertinent concern relates to be able to cope with life transitions whether it relates to retirement, socioeconomic changes in life situations, relocation from places, positions and engagements, and adjust to new environments be it age related or adapting to psychosocial circumstances. Certain developments in most ageing countries relating to emergence of lifelong learning, establishment of retirement communities, provision for long term care facilities, technological aids, protection against elder abuse, preparation for later life health and social crises and end of life care, improving intergenerational solidarity, providing social security, improving coping mechanisms and much more are all part of facing old age related matters.

This edition of the journal on old age touches on some of the concerns highlighted above by providing international perspectives considering different theoretical and empirical discourses prevailing in various countries getting across culturally and geographically outlined practices. This edition of the journal also has 2 reviews of books recently published which contribute towards enhancing our knowledge on old age issues from a contemporary international perspective. Besides the above mentioned articles there is also one relevant Report related to innovative forms of activation and education of seniors in Poland. This is an example of new trends seen in current scenario of ageing societies for the welfare of older people. Hope you will enjoy reading this issue as much as I gained by putting it all together for wider readership.

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