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GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN WORK AND INCOME AMONG OLDER MALAYSIANS

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INTRODUCTION

The population of Malaysia is ageing gradually. Between 1970 and 2010, the proportion of the population aged 60 or older to the total population increased from 5.2 per cent to 7.9 per cent. The number of older persons increased more than fourfold from a little more than half a million in 1970 to 2.25 million in 2010. By 2020, the number of older persons is projected to reach 3.2 million out of a population of about 32 million. The various ethnic groups in Malaysia are at different stages of ageing. In 2010, 12.2 per cent of the Chinese were aged 60 or over as compared to 6.2 per cent of the other indigenous groups, 7.3 per cent among the Malays and 7.9 per cent among the Indians.

Since 1970, life expectancy had gone up from 66.5 years to 71.9 years for the males and 71.0 years to 77.0 years for the females (Department of Statistics, 2001 and 2011). Life expectancy at age 55 is about 21.5 years for males and 24.5 years for females. Gender differentials in life expectancy have given rise to feminization of the older population.