

Ageing Population, Social Services And Assistance In Turkey

- Uzman Yusuf YÜKSEL*
- Uzman Tuncer KOCAMAN*

Abstract

Population projections indicate that the constantly increasing and young population structure of Turkey is changing and the population structure of Turkey has started to converge the population structure of developed countries especially in terms of fertility and age structure. The demographic transition, that means a transition from high fertility and high mortality to low fertility and low mortality, changes the age structure. In this process, young age groups are constantly decreasing, working age group is increasing up to year 2040 and starts to decline and old age group is constantly increasing. Both changes in age and demographic structures directly and indirectly affects economic and social aspects. Demographic transition provides some opportunities (e.g. the working age population reaches the highest level) and bears some risks (e.g. ageing population) that Turkey has not confronted before.

By taking the demographic changes into consideration, Turkey should review social policies for elderly. In this framework, this article studies the demographic changes of Turkey up to 2050 and current situation of social services and social assistance. Social services and social assistance subtitle of the article analyzes both current situation and recent structural and institutional implications. The last subtitle of the article analyzes the main policy papers and their objectives and priorities towards elderly. The article also highlights the importance of the efforts for having a National Plan of Action on Ageing at the very beginning of the ageing process.

Özet

Nüfus projeksiyonları Türkiye'nin genç ve sürekli büyüyen nüfus yapısının değişmekte olduğunu ve özellikle doğurganlık ve yaş yapısı itibarıyla gelişmiş ülkelere benzemekte başladığını göstermektedir. Yüksek doğurganlık ve yüksek ölümlülük düzeyinden düşük doğurganlık ve düşük ölümlülük düzeyine geçiş anlamına gelen demografik geçiş süreci yaş yapısını değiştirmektedir. Bu süreçte, genç yaş grupları sürekli olarak azalmakta, çalışma çağı nüfus ise 2040'a kadar sürekli olarak artmakta ve daha sonra düşmeye başlamakta ve yaşlı nüfus ise sürekli olarak artmaktadır. Yaş yapısındaki ve demografik yapıdaki bu değişimler ekonomik ve sosyal alanları doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak etkilemektedir. Demografik geçiş bazı fırsatlar yarattığı gibi (çalışma çağının en yüksek düzeyine ulaşması gibi) Türkiye'nin daha önce karşılaşmadığı bazı riskleri (nüfusun yaşlanması gibi) ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Söz konusu demografik değişimleri göz önünde bulundurarak Türkiye yaşlılara yönelik sosyal politikalarını gözden geçirmek durumundadır. Bu çerçevede, bu makale 2050 yılına kadar Türkiye'deki demografik değişimler ile sosyal hizmetler ve sosyal yardımlar alanlarındaki mevcut durumu incelemektedir. Çalışmanın sosyal hizmetler ve sosyal yardım alt başlığı Türkiye'deki mevcut durumu ve son dönemdeki yapısal/kurumsal uygulamaları incelemektedir. Son alt başlık temel politika dokümanlarında yaşlılara yönelik olarak belirlenen politikaların amaçlarını ve hedeflerini incelemektedir. Çalışma, ayrıca, yaşlanma sürecinin başında hazırlanan Yaşlanma Ulusal Eylem Planı'nın önemine dikkat çekmektedir.

*DPT

Note: The article does not reflect the ideas of SPO. All the responsibilities related to this article belong to the authors.

Ageing Population, Social Services And Assistance In Turkey

1. Population Prospects

According to the results of the census conducted in 2000 the population of Turkey was 67,8 million and population growth rate was 15.1 per thousand for the 1990 – 2000 period. Projections done by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) show that total population of Turkey is about 73 million in 2006 and will reach to 77 million by the year 2010. Estimates show that, in the year 2025 and middle of this century total population will reach 88 and 96 million respectively.

The demographic structure of Turkey has started to become similar to those of the developed countries with the developments in the fertility level and the age structure. The total fertility rate was nearly 7 children per woman in the middle of twentieth century. According to the Turkish Demographic and Health Survey, carried out in 2003, it declined down to 2.23 children. The latest estimates in the year 2006 put life expectancy at 74 years for females and 69,1 years for males.

As a result of sustained decreasing fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, Turkey's population is started to ageing. According to the estimates, the percentage of people aged 60 and over is 8.7 in 2006 and the percentage will be 9.3 and 13.5 in the year 2010 and 2025 respectively. It is expected that the percentage of old age will exceed the percentage of young age by the year 1940 and consequently, Turkish population will lose characteristic of young age structure and the percentage of old age will be 23.2 per cent in 2050.

In terms of absolute numbers that is greater concern for policy making, the elderly population in Turkey comprises about 6,2 million people in 2006. The figure is expected to reach **7,1 million in 2010, 11,9 million in 2025 and 22,4 in 2050. Although today, the percentage of elderly is not too high, it can be said** that the number of old age persons are more than total population of some European countries. This amount of old age population will undoubtedly mean considerable pressure on the social and economic services provided to this group of the population.

Table: 1- Selected Demographic Indicators

	1950-55	2000-05	2025-30	2045-50
Total Fertility Rate (per woman)				
World	5.02	2.65	2.23	2.05
More Developed Regions	2.84	1.56	1.72	1.84
Less Developed Regions	6.17	2.90	2.31	2.07
Turkey	6.85	2.22	1.94	1.79
Crude Death Rate (per thousand)				
World	19.5	9.0	8.9	10.1
More Developed Regions	22.4	10.2	11.5	13.0
Less Developed Regions	23.8	8.7	8.4	9.6
Turkey	23.5	6.2	7.5	10.8
Life Expectancy at Birth (years)				
World	46.6	65.4	71.1	75.1
More Developed Regions	66.1	75.6	79.5	82.1
Less Developed Regions	41.1	63.4	69.6	74.0
Turkey	43.6	70.9	74.0	76.5

Source: (1) United Nations, World Population Prospects, The 2004 Revision Volume I, ST/ESA/SER.A/244, New York, 2005.

(2) Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 1950 General Population Census.

Table: 2 -Median Age and Percentage Distribution Aged 0-14, 60 and over

	1950	2000	2025	2050
Percentage aged 0-14				
World	34.2	30.0	24.3	21.0
More Developed Regions	27.3	18.3	15.0	15.5
Less Developed Regions	37.6	32.8	26.0	21.8
Turkey	38.3	30.0	22.1	17.7
Percentage aged 60 and over				
World	8.2	10.0	15.0	21.1
More Developed Regions	11.7	19.4	28.2	33.5
Less Developed Regions	6.4	7.7	12.6	19.3
Turkey	5.9	8.2	13.5	23.2
Median Age (years)				
World	23.6	26.5	32.0	36.2
More Developed Regions	28.6	37.4	44.1	46.4
Less Developed Regions	21.4	24.3	30.0	35.0
Turkey	19.2	24.4	33.3	39.9

Source: (1) United Nations, World Population Ageing, 1950-2050, ST/ESA/SER.A/207, New York, 2002.

(2) Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 1950 General Population Census.

(3) Population Projections, Turkish State Institute of Statistics, August 2005.

2. Social Services and Social Assistance

Turkey is a society who looks after their elderly with their traditions and customs. The big majority of the elderly live with their children, the ones who live apart are in close contact. Because of this culture of harmony of family life helps to solve most of the problems of elderly but there is need for institutional care. This culture includes, as if it is for that the old person can continue his/her house and family life's duty and responsibility as in the past, too, it is for all the individuals of the family to be educated, informed and to be made conscious.

Turkey has been implementing several policies and programs towards ageing population. These policies have been implemented through the functioning of various organizations and through social assistance programs that are mainly financed by the government budgets and donations.

Due to reasons such as growing urbanization, migration, poverty and to some extent changes in the cultural structure of families, the need for social services and social assistance are increasing substantially. But there are important problems

emerging from disorganized institutional and financial structures, among institutions, which constitute obstacles in the smooth implementation of social services.

2.1. Social Services

The formation of a social security system in Turkey, in the modern sense, dates back to over 50 years. The article 60 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey states, "everyone has the right for social security. The State takes the necessary measures to provide this security and establishes the required organizations." Based on this decree, three main social security institutions have been established by the state to provide the social security rights. Social security system has been structured under three major social insurance funds in Turkey. These are The Civil Servants Pension Fund for civilian and military public employees, The Social Insurance Institution for wage earners employed on contractual basis, and The Social Security Organization of the Self-Employed for self employed including craftsmen, artists and artisans, small business owners working on their own

Turkey's population pyramid given below shows the elderly population is increasing both in number and in ratio in Turkey.

Figure 1. Turkey's Population Pyramid 2000.

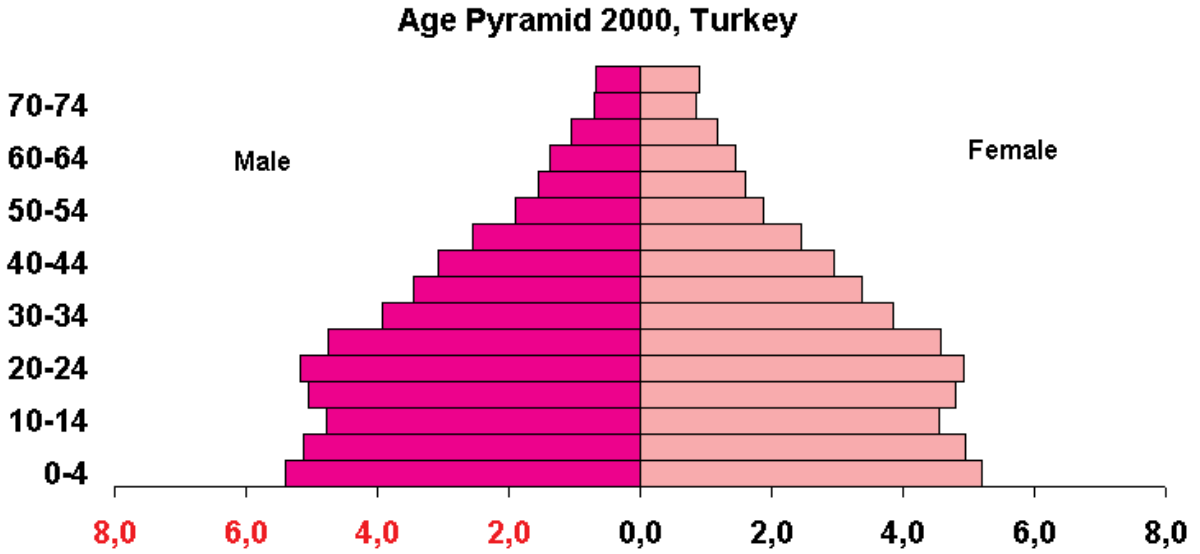
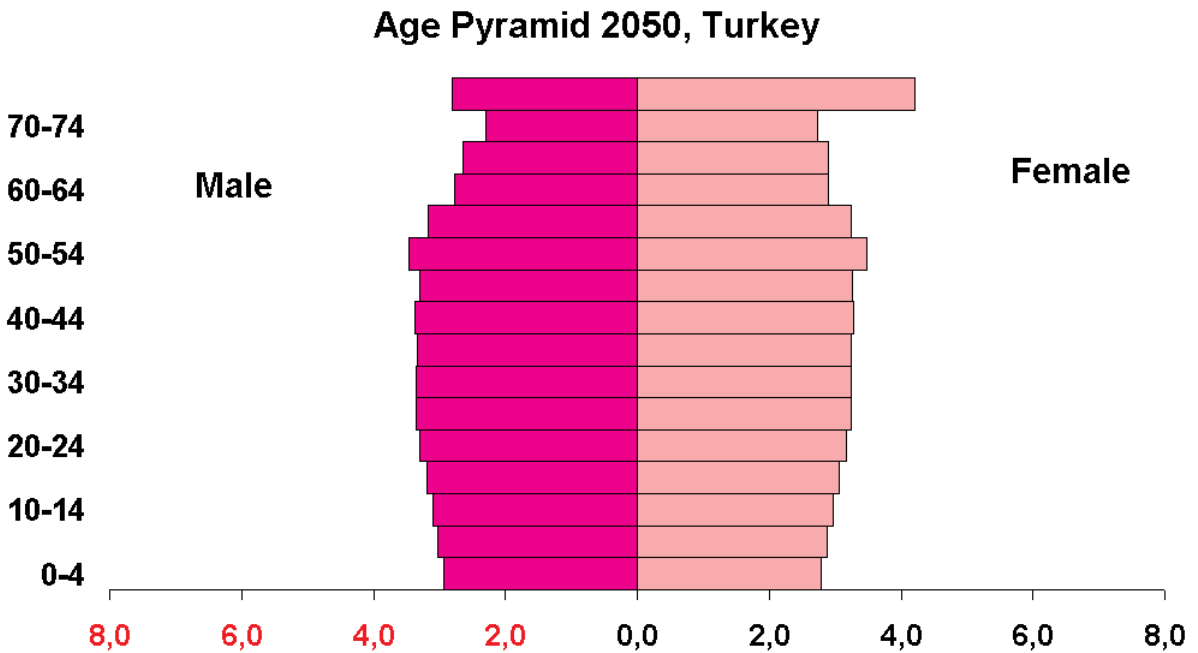


Figure 2. Turkey's Population Pyramid 2050.



account, and people working independently in the agricultural sector.

The ratio of population covered by the programs of the three social insurance institutions are 91.4 per cent and the ratio of population under social insurance coverage in term of health services as 91 per cent in 2005.

Legal definition of social services in Turkey is; “Social services are systematic, programmed services with the objective of helping individuals of families deprived through no fault of their own but on account of their environment to avoid and solve material, moral and social inadequacies and social problems and to improve their living conditions”.

Governors are in charge of the implementation and coordination of the social services in provinces. In this field, there are Social Services Councils in the provinces whose members include mayor; representatives from people and public institutions and the governors head these councils. Additionally there are non-governmental organizations like associations and foundations under all social service institutions.

Many organizations have been created apart from programs of the three social insurance institutions, in particular The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, which is the main responsible agency of social services and social assistance and which form the institutional structure of efforts to combat poverty.

The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency is the largest social assistance organization of Turkey. Social Services and Child Protection services have been served by means of its provisional directorates in all provinces. This Agency publicly owned social services has the authority to give guidance to other public center organizations and to assist privately owned social services institutions in their work, to issue permits and conduct supervisory services.

This Agency is responsible to support people whose living conditions are bad due to their economic situation and people who don't face economic problems but who are in need of professional services. It provides support to

children, adolescents, aged and disabled persons and families.

The elderly lacking economic means, having no relations legally required to support them or such relatives unable to do so due to economic constraints are admitted free of charge to public nursing homes. The non-paying elderly also receive medical care free of charge and are paid a monthly allowance as pocket money. In addition to meeting the daily needs of the elderly in nursing homes, efforts are made to provide such services as medical care and treatment, assistance with psychological and social problems, development of social relations, ensuring continuation of active state and nutrition compatible with their state of health.

In order to provide institutional care for the elderly in Turkey, there are 63 nursing homes managed by The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency serving around 7 thousand older persons. In addition of this centers, in the 28 nursing homes and rehabilitation centers managed by the several ministry and municipalities, serving around 4,7 thousand older persons in 2005.

Apart from several ministry and municipalities, 28 elderly homes belong to non-profit organizations, 60 to private sector, 7 to ethnic groups, as a total, services have been providing in 95 elderly homes by non-profit organizations.

Public counseling centers for the elderly are being established, to serve persons aged 60 and over, living with their families or alone. The beneficiaries of these centers are those who are living in their own houses or are living with their families or do not desired to be left alone at home. They are provided counseling services to meet social and psychological needs, assistance with house cleaning, certain health needs, bathing, home repairs, shopping, paying bills and assistance with such tasks as the elderly might have difficulty in doing by themselves. These centers give an opportunity to the older people to be together with other older people and to participate to some social and daily activities. There are three public

counseling centers in different provinces and 1.5 thousand old persons are benefiting from these centers.

2.2. Social Assistance

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) Household Income Survey that has conducted in 2003, while the ratio of population that is below the poverty line, which includes food expenditures in total population, was 1.35 per cent in 2002, declined to the level of 1.29 per cent in 2004. The food and non-food poverty rate that is also defined as the complete poverty rate was 26.96 per cent in 2002 and decreased to 25.6 per cent in 2004.

In Turkey the rate of poverty among elderly (60 and over) is 24,43 percent. The poverty rate among elderly differs according to settlement. The poverty rate of elderly is 33.63 per cent in rural areas while 16.21 per cent in urban areas. The poverty of aged population may also conclude with ignorance and social exclusion.

The need for social services and assistance in our country continues in an increasing manner because of such reasons as migration, urbanization, changing family structure, population increase and unemployment. While the ratio of total social assistance expenditures in GDP was 0.86 per cent in 2005.

The main objective of social assistance programs is to provide a safety net for the poor and elderly who are not covered by other social security programs. Although the proportion of older population is not too high, several programs have been designed aimed at older persons who are not covered by social security programs. Social assistance programs given below are providing support in cash or kind.

The General Directorate of Social Solidarity and Assistance Fund (Fakir Fukara Fonu) was established 1986. The main purpose of establishment is to reduce income disparity, support low-income sections of the community, develop social policy, strengthen the social welfare

system and so reinforce social stability. The Fund provides support in kind and in cash to needy people. It allocates available resources through over 900 foundations organized at provinces. People are subject to evaluation on assets and means they have in hand in order to be qualified for assistance. In the year 2004, 4.6 million people have benefited from social aids, support in kind and cash, cloth, health, heating housing, health and education services by The Social Solidarity and Assistance Fund.

By the year 2004, 1.047,341 people have benefited from social assistance under the category of elderly, invalids and disabled, in accordance with Law numbered 2022 on Granting Pension for Indigent People Over 65 Years Old, for those requiring special care and who are helpless.

People who are not covered by the health insurance schemes and needy people under poverty line in Turkey are being benefited from Green Card Programs that provide free health services by the Law numbering 3816, as of 1997. This program provides free in-patient health services for the poor people. In 2005 around 13 million people are covered by this program beneficiaries are granted green card.

3. Policy Dimensions of Ageing Population

The population pyramid of Turkey will turn into a "pillar" shape pyramid within 40-45 years as shown in the Figure 1. And this demographic change will result in some risks and some opportunities. Before the ageing of Turkish population, we have a period that the young and elderly share is low. This period brings low dependency ratios and so opportunities for economic growth. Countries that have achieved to use the "demographic window of opportunity" by proper economic and social policies are able to manage the risks and disadvantages of ageing populations. The key intervention areas of this period are education, employment, social security and health policies for the coming years and decades.

Turkish Government are becoming much more aware of the consequences of ageing and its likely impact on especially social policy has grown significantly after the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin in 2002 (MICA). Turkey intends to enable her pensions, health and long term care systems to continue to perform her social objectives and retain her financial sustainability when the pressures from ageing rise. In recent years several major reforms have already been carried out to make health system effective and to increase the effectiveness of the social security system, social pension system and studies to improve income distribution, social inclusion many are being continued by the Turkish Government.

The most important problem of social security organizations is that revenues can not meet the expenses. While the ratio of the amounts of transfer from the budget to social security organizations in GDP was 2.6 per cent in 2000, this ratio was increased to 4.8 per cent in 2005. In addition, the social security system also has such problems as the inability to cover the entire population, different rights and obligations provided by organizations, inadequate information system infrastructure and inefficient operation of the supervision mechanisms in the system.

Towards eliminating problems in the social security system; the Law on Social Security Institution and the Law on Social Insurance and Universal Health Insurance, which were prepared with the aim of gathering social security institutions as one single organization and establishing health insurance, were enacted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Works for setting up sound criteria towards the determination of persons and groups to benefit from social services and assistance have been started. However, due to the lack of collaboration among organizations and insufficient qualified personnel within the system, services cannot be provided to those really in need at the desired level. In addition, the need for the development of collaboration with voluntary organizations in social services and assistance still continues to exist.

3.1. The Ninth Turkish Development Plan (2007-2013)

Selected main policies and objectives concerning old age population that have been taken place in the section of The Strengthening Human Developments and Social Solidarity of The Ninth Turkish Development Plan (2007-2013) have been given below;

- The basic purpose of the policies in the area of human development and social solidarity will be to rise the quality of life and welfare of society through ensuring that all segments of the population sufficiently benefit from the basic public services and a multidimensional social protection network. For the provision of basic public services, especially education and health services, and to ensure the development of social protection network and inclusive social security system; providing social services with increased efficiency, improving income distribution, enhancing social inclusion and fighting with poverty, protecting and strengthening culture and developing social dialogue will be the main priority areas.

- Home care services targeting the elderly will be supported, and the number and quality of nursing homes will be increased with regard to institutional care.

- It will be ensured that all segments, primarily including the central administration, local administrations and non governmental organizations, work in coordination in the implementation of policies targeting the prevention of poverty and social exclusion and in relevant services such as education, housing and employment.

- The shortage of qualified personnel in the area of social services and benefits will be eliminated and the quality of the existing personnel will be raised.

- Activities of local governments and nongovernmental organization in the area of social services and assistance will be supported.

3.2. Turkish National Plan of Action on Ageing

The Regional Implementation Strategy of the 2002 Ministerial Conference on Ageing provides valuable insight for determining priorities and policies on the needs of older persons in Turkey. Within this context, a National Committee has been set up to prepare a national program of action on ageing. Recently, preparation of The Turkish Draft National Plan of Action on Ageing has been completed and The State Planning Organization is continuing the adoption process of the draft Plan. The High Planning Council will discuss the document and it is expected that this document would be adopted by the Council at the end of 2006.

5. Conclusion

It should be mentioned here that Turkey like other aged countries will anyway have to face with some financial burdens and problems to offset the ageing problem. For this reason Turkey that is a country not under big pressures of ageing problem has to take necessary steps in advance to make easier the ageing problem in near future and to be ready handle ageing. Turkey should share the experiences of these countries and has to conduct more detailed studies concentrating on ageing and its problems in the future.

While some solutions for the problems of ageing people are searched all around the world, we wanted to get an opportunity to make up for the deficiencies in this subject in Turkey. In this respect, international cooperation and experience sharing is essential for national policymaking and capacity building. Turkey tries to use the advantage of observing the policies of aged countries. While learning from country experiences we take into consideration the principal that there is no single solution or policy that can be applied to all countries.

Kaynaklar

- State Planning Organization, 2005 Annual Program.
- State Planning Organization, The Ninth Turkish Development Plan (2007-2013).
- State Planning Organization, Turkish National Plan of Action on Ageing (Unpublished).
- Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 1950 General Population Census.
- Turkish State Institute of Statistics, Population Projections (1990-2050), August 2005.
- Turkish Statistical Institute, Household Income Survey 2003.
- United Nations, World Population Ageing, 1950-2050, ST/ESA/SER.A/207, New York, 2002.
- United Nations, World Population Prospects, The 2004 Revision Volume I, ST/ESA/SER.A/244, New York, 2005.

Web Sites

- www.shcek.gov.tr
- www.dpt.gov.tr
- www.tuik.gov.tr
- www.un.org