

# **GLOBALISATION AND ASIAN YOUTH : A DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE**

**by  
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## INTRODUCTION

Asia<sup>1</sup> has experienced dramatic social, economic, demographic and cultural transformations in the last two decades. These transformations have impinged especially forcefully on Asia's youth population who, in many respects, have been a bridging generation between the old and the new. They differ greatly from earlier generations in many ways – they are the first generation to have grown up in the post colonial era, have universal primary education, been exposed to mass media and, importantly, they have been the first to grow up in the era of globalisation. This paper takes a demographic perspective to examine some of the impacts of globalisation on youth in Asia. As is the case in considering the effects of globalisation on the total population, the effects on youth have been both positive and negative but it may well be that these impacts have been felt more sharply by youth than by other lifecycle groups in the region. The paper begins by briefly examining the recent rapid growth of the Asian youth population<sup>2</sup> and assesses the likely future changes. It then moves to discuss some of the dimensions of globalisation which have impacted on Asian youth. These include the economic effects, the influence of increased mobility, especially international mobility and some of the socio-cultural effects associated with the penetration of western models and ideas through the proliferation of mass media. Separation of the effects of globalisation from the impacts of other processes is difficult since they are complex and multi-dimensional and it is inevitable that some of the impacts discussed here are associated with other processes such as the development of education, urbanization, structural change, etc. as well as globalisation.

In examining the impact of globalisation on youth the most obvious level of analysis is the individual and it is of major importance to examine impacts at this most disaggregated of levels. However it is also necessary to examine some of the wider effects of the influence of globalisation on Asian youth. For example, if the net effect of globalisation is the exacerbate migration of the “brightest and the best” among Asian youth to OECD nations, the effects on the young migrants themselves will be predominantly beneficial. However the impact of the loss of these people may

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<sup>1</sup> Asia is defined here as the countries extending from Afghanistan in the west and Japan in the east.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations define youth as persons aged between 15 and 24.

be negative for their families, communities, regions or countries. To some extent the loss of their human capital may be compensated by remittances and other positive effects of their social and financial capital in the OECD country. However there may well be net losses. Hence, in considering the effects of globalisation on youth it is important to look beyond the perspective of the direct impacts on young Asians themselves. These wider impacts may be particularly significant given the key role that the current generation of Asians will play in the prosperity and destiny of their countries over the next four decades.

At the outset we need to stress that Asia is not only the largest of the world's major regions, with 57.5 percent of the world's total population and 57.7 percent of the world's youth population in 2000, but it is also the most diverse of regions. Countries in the region range from tiny Brunei (300,000 people) and Maldives (300,000) to China (1.3 billion), India (1.01 billion) and Indonesia (212 million), which are three of the world's four largest countries<sup>3</sup> and account for more than 40 percent of the globe's inhabitants. It has some of the world's poorest nations such as Nepal (Gross Domestic Product Per Capita in 2001 of US\$1,310), Bangladesh (US\$1,610), Pakistan (US\$1,890), Myanmar (US\$1,027) and Laos (US\$1,620) to wealthy nations such as Japan (US\$25,130), Hong Kong-China (US\$24,850) and Singapore (US\$22,680). There are vast nations such as India and China and tiny countries which are virtual city-states such as Singapore. Inevitably, in this paper, there will be generalisation across the region but it must be borne in mind that there is huge variation between countries and also within nations. Moreover, while the effects of globalisation have been ubiquitous in the region, there is some intercountry variation in the nature and extent of the impact.

## **ASIA'S CHANGING YOUTH POPULATION**

Asia has experienced substantial demographic change as both a cause and consequence of the social and economic transformation of the region (Hugo 2005a), which has profoundly shaped the

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<sup>3</sup> Asia has 6 of the largest 10 countries.

size of the Asian youth population. Shifts in fertility, and to a lesser extent mortality, have been profound influences on age structure. For much of the last half century, Asia's age pyramid has been dominated by the child age groups due to high fertility and relatively high mortality. However the onset of rapid, widespread and substantial fertility decline has seen a significant reduction in the dominance of younger age groups. In this context, it is important to examine the trajectory of the growth of the youth population. Table 1 depicts the changes in the 15-24 age group, which have occurred, and are anticipated to occur, between 1960 and 2040. This depicts the passage of what has been called the "Asian Youth Bulge" (Fuller and Hoch 1998). As Westley and Choe (2002, 57) point out, the "youth bulge" .... "is the result of a transition from high to low fertility about 15 years earlier. The youth bulge consists of large numbers of adolescents and young adults who were born when fertility was high followed by declining numbers of children born after fertility declined".

**Table 1: Asian Population Aged 15-24, 1960-2000 and Projected 2020 and 2040**  
Source: United Nations, 2003

Year	Population Aged 15-24		Annual Percentage Growth Per Annum
	Number ('000)	Percent	
1960	283,539	17.34	
1980	489,013	19.43	2.76
1985	565,195	20.52	2.94
1990	610,458	20.25	1.55
2000	615,201	17.64	0.08
2020	669,315	15.60	0.42
2040	653,518	13.79	-0.12

Note: Excludes Western Asia

Table 1 indicates that in 1960, Asia's youth population numbered 284 million and comprised 17 percent of the total population. However, over the next two decades they grew very rapidly and by 1985 they had more than doubled in number and reached a peak of 21 percent of the total population. Subsequently, the growth of the age group has been lower as the effects of the decline in fertility have been felt. Hence, in 2000 the Asian youth population had reached 615 million but their proportion of the population declined to 18 percent. The outlook for the future is for the youth

population to increase slowly to 658 million in 2040 when they would make up 14 percent of the total population.

The youth bulge phenomena has occurred in most Asian nations. Table 2 indicates the actual numbers aged 15-24 in each Asian nation over the 1950-2030 period. Most show rapid increases over the last half century and project slower growth or even small decline in the next 30 years. Table 3 shows the actual and projected annual growth rates, which makes these variations clearer.

**Table 2: Asian Countries: Population Aged 15-24 Years (In Thousands) 1950-2030**  
Source: United Nations, 2003

Country	1950	1970	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Afghanistan	1,552	2,361	2,607	4,202	5,986	7,828	10,188
Bangladesh	7,583	11,882	22,598	28,000	33,840	37,275	40,026
Bhutan	139	192	313	407	552	664	824
Brunei	9	24	48	56	71	68	64
Cambodia	843	1,313	1,801	2,445	3,568	4,160	5,112
China (ex. HK, Mac.)	101,339	158,205	251,310	198,946	218,699	183,701	183,918
China, Hong Kong (SAR)	448	777	896	986	854	804	851
China, Macao (SAR)	39	62	57	61	78	47	45
East Timor	85	116	142	134	138	177	231
India	69,278	100,363	163,865	190,107	218,177	224,702	214,426
Indonesia	15,941	21,255	37,627	42,268	42,703	41,452	40,532
Japan	16,396	19,831	18,788	16,098	12,636	12,136	11,133
Laos	345	517	781	1,024	1,370	1,588	1,819
Malaysia	1,097	2,094	3,414	4,198	4,910	5,152	4,894
Maldives	14	24	40	60	79	101	129
Mongolia	142	239	459	537	607	516	539
Myanmar	3,209	5,100	8,206	9,530	10,197	9,990	8,862
Nepal	1,579	2,209	3,471	4,408	5,746	7,078	8,078
Pakistan	7,467	11,162	20,126	27,156	36,114	44,655	53,511
Philippines	3,583	7,193	12,472	15,377	18,165	19,205	18,095
Republic of Korea	3,786	5,686	8,753	7,718	6,591	6,063	5,666
Singapore	183	451	563	500	654	566	435
Sri Lanka	1,389	2,441	3,214	3,632	3,352	3,110	3,137
Thailand	3,950	6,808	11,770	11,756	10,896	11,300	10,285
Vietnam	5,175	6,936	13,479	15,843	18,074	15,039	15,899

**Table 3: Asian Countries: Annual Growth Rates For Age Group 15-24 (Percent) 1950-2030**

Source: United Nations, 2003

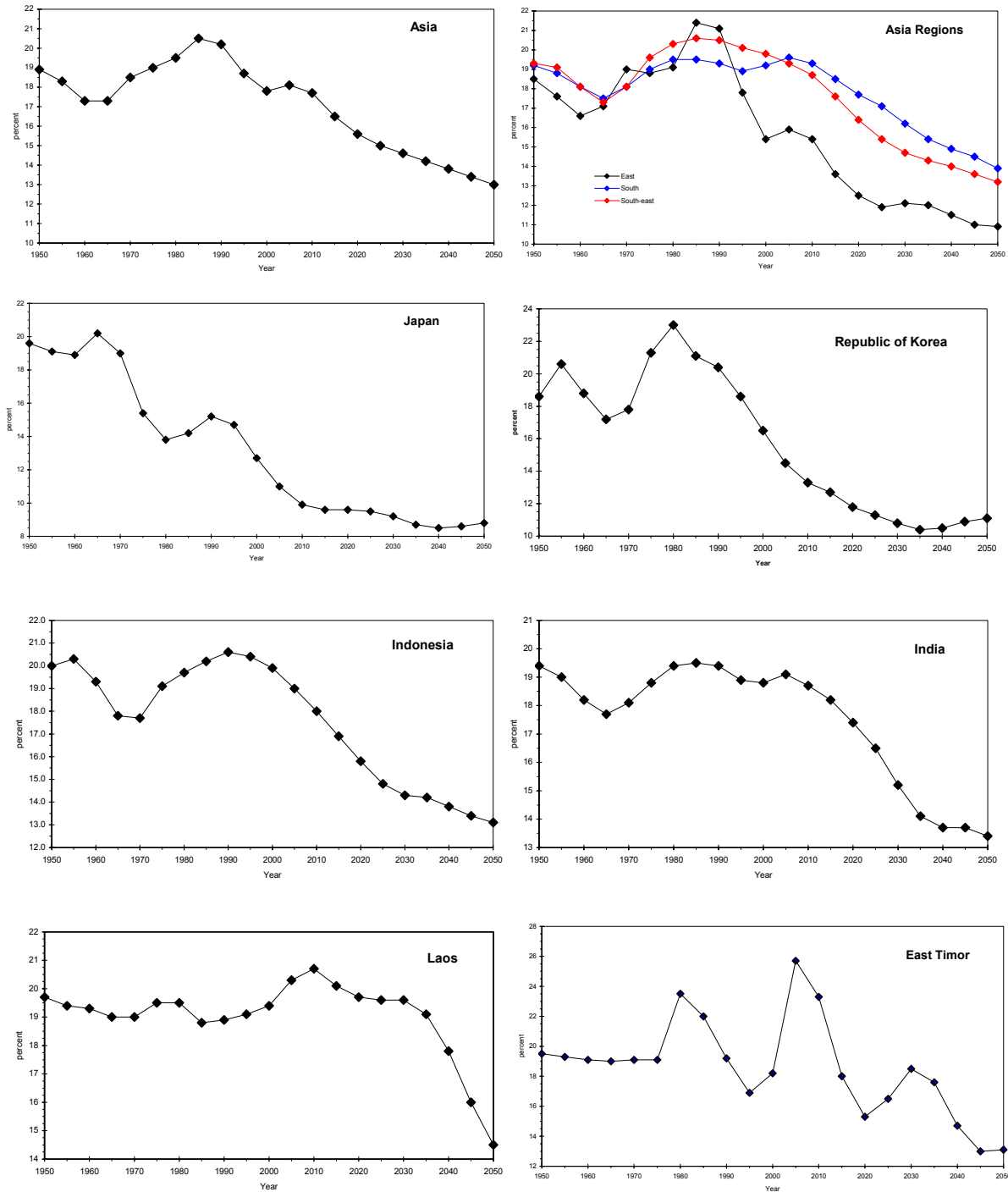
Country	1950-1970	1970-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030
Afghanistan	2.61	0.52	6.12	4.25	3.08	3.01
Bangladesh	2.83	4.51	2.39	2.09	1.02	0.74
Bhutan	1.91	3.15	3.00	3.56	2.03	2.41
Brunei	8.33	5.00	1.67	2.68	-0.42	-0.59
Cambodia	2.79	1.86	3.58	4.59	1.66	2.29
China (ex. HK, Mac.)	2.81	2.94	-2.08	0.99	-1.60	0.01
China, Hong Kong (SAR)	3.67	0.77	1.00	-1.34	-0.59	0.58
China, Macao (SAR)	2.95	-0.40	0.70	2.79	-3.97	-0.43
East Timor	1.82	1.12	-0.56	0.30	2.83	3.05
India	2.24	3.16	1.60	1.48	0.30	-0.46
Indonesia	1.67	3.85	1.23	0.10	-0.29	-0.22
Japan	1.05	-0.26	-1.43	-2.15	-0.40	-0.83
Laos	2.49	2.55	3.11	3.38	1.59	1.45
Malaysia	4.54	3.15	2.30	1.70	0.49	-0.50
Maldives	3.57	3.33	5.00	3.17	2.78	2.77
Mongolia	3.42	4.60	1.70	1.30	-1.50	0.45
Myanmar	2.95	3.05	1.61	0.70	-0.20	-1.13
Nepal	1.99	2.86	2.70	3.04	2.32	1.41
Pakistan	2.47	4.02	3.49	3.30	2.37	1.98
Philippines	5.04	3.67	2.33	1.81	0.57	-0.58
Republic of Korea	2.51	2.70	-1.18	-1.46	-0.80	-0.65
Singapore	7.32	1.24	-1.12	3.08	-1.35	-2.31
Sri Lanka	3.79	1.58	1.30	-0.77	-0.72	0.09
Thailand	3.62	3.64	-0.01	-0.73	0.37	-0.90
Vietnam	1.70	4.72	1.75	1.41	-1.68	0.57

The variations in timing need some extra comment. Figure 1 depicts the proportion of the national population of six countries made up by 15-24 year olds over the 1950-2050 period. In Japan, fertility decline began in the 1950s so that the proportion aged 15-24 peaked in 1965 then declined dramatically. In Korea, fertility decline commenced in the 1960s so that the youth peak occurred in 1980. In India and Indonesia, fertility decline began in the 1970s so the youth peak was in 1990. In Laos, fertility decline did not begin until much later so it is anticipated that the peak will occur in 2010. East Timor, on the other hand, has experienced massive disruption and mortality in its population in recent decades so it has experienced fluctuations in the proportion made up by the youth population. Despite these variations, Westley and Choe (2002, 57) has pointed out between ... “1960 and 2000, the number of adolescents and young adults doubled or more than doubled in

nearly every country in Asia. The only exceptions were China, Japan, North Korea and Kazakhstan.”

**Figure 1: Selected Asian Countries: Proportion of the Population Aged 15-24, 1950-2000 (Actual) 2010-2040 (Projected)**

Source: United Nations, 2003



There are some substantial differences between the three main sub regions of Asia. This is apparent in Table 4, which fixes 1995 as 100 and relates the number of persons aged 15-24 over the 1970-2020 period to that level. In East Asia, the youth peak occurred in 1990 and will decline over the first twenty years of the twenty first century. In Southeast and South Central Asia, the peak numbers will not occur until 2020 although the growth will be more rapid in South Central Asia.

**Table 4: Growth and Decline of Adolescent Populations, ESCAP Subregions, 1970-2020**  
Source: Jones 1997

1995 = 100	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010	2020
East Asia							
10-14	90.0	128.8	99.5	100	113.9	102.4	97.7
15-19	93.1	109.5	125.1	100	100.6	103.0	96.7
20-24	58.1	72.0	103.6	100	80.0	91.7	82.6
Total 10-24	78.8	101.1	108.9	100	96.8	98.5	91.6
South-Central Asia							
10-14	59.4	74.8	88.1	100	107.1	118.6	121.6
15-19	56.8	75.7	93.5	100	113.9	130.0	138.5
20-24	50.4	70.9	90.6	100	107.2	131.4	146.1
Total 10-24	55.9	73.9	90.6	100	109.3	126.2	134.5
South-East Asia							
10-14	67.3	84.6	95.0	100	104.2	110.9	107.5
15-19	58.1	77.9	96.0	100	105.4	113.7	117.2
20-24	48.4	72.1	92.4	100	104.3	115.1	123.1
Total 10-24	58.3	78.4	94.5	100	104.6	113.1	115.7

Xenos, Kabamalan and Westley (1999, 2) point out that the pattern of growth of the youth population varies with the peak and magnitude of fertility decline experienced by a nation ... “The youth bulge tends to be large in countries where fertility drops quickly from a very high to a very low level, for instance in China. The speed of the transition also varies widely – from less than 20 years in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea to more than 50 years in the Philippines, where the youth share of the total population has remained near its peak of 20 percent for two decades.” In China, the youth population grew 2.5 times between 1950 and 1990, but in the Philippines, it grew by 3.3 times over the same period.

Some writers have defined “youth bulge” as a situation in which at least 20 percent of a national population are aged 15-24 and a youth deficit occurs when the proportion falls below 15

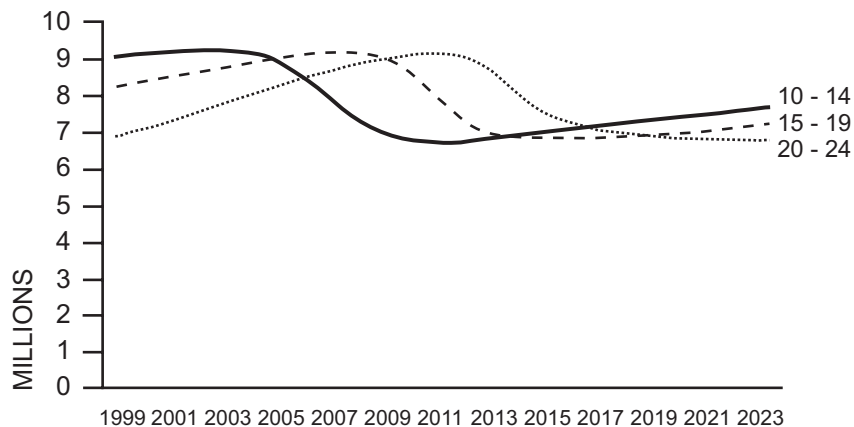
percent. Writers have ascribed particular problems to societies experiencing these bulges and deficits. On the one hand, countries experiencing youth bulges are considered to be more volatile since the large numbers of young people coming into the labour market may be frustrated by the status quo (Fuller and Hoch, 1998). On the other hand, where there are youth deficits there may be problems of labour shortage (Xenos 2001).

Fuller and Hoch (1998) have expanded upon the youth bulge hypothesis. They have calculated a youth bulge index for the main regions of Asia. It is the total number of youth bulge years (the sum of countries with growth bulges) in each five years divided by the number of countries. The index is highest (3.22) in Southeast Asia and lowest in South Asia (2.29) with East Asia (3) falling in between. They show how in individual countries the incidence of the youth bulge coincides with political unrest in those countries. In addition, they demonstrate how this can occur at the sub national level in regions of Asian countries.

The passage of the youth bulge in an individual country is depicted in a single country (Vietnam) in Figure 2. This shows that the decline in fertility in Vietnam over the last decade will see the numbers aged 10-14 decline from 9 to 7 million over the first decade of the twenty first century. Similar declines in those aged 15-19 and 20-24 will occur subsequently.

**Figure 2: Viet Nam: Projections of Adolescents and Youth Population, 1999-2024**

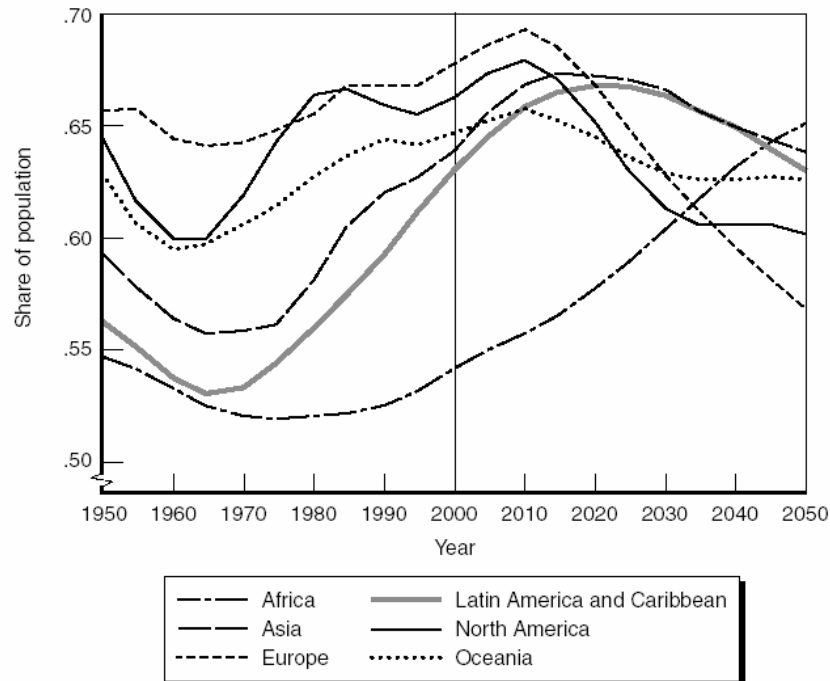
Source: Haub and Huong, p. 12



The Asian youth bulge represents “a ‘boom’ generation – a generation that is larger than those immediately before and after it – that is gradually working its way through nations’ age structure” (Bloom, Canning and Sevilla 2003, xii). The passage of this bulge through the age structure can produce a “demographic dividend” of economic growth when the bulge passes into the working age groups, and as a result, the workforce grows faster than the overall population. This increases the proportion of the national population within the working ages, and as Bloom, Canning and Sevilla (2003, xi) point out ... “assuming that policies to take advantage of this are in place. In fact the combined effect of this large working age population and health, family, labour, financial and human capital policies can effect virtuous cycles of wealth creation.” Figure 3 shows that the share of population in working ages has varied and will vary in the future between different world regions. It indicates that the increase in Asia’s demographic dividend has coincided with the era of globalisation of the last two decades. Moreover it will continue to increase for the next decade or so but will begin to decline in the late 2020s.

**Figure 3: Share of Population in Working Ages by World Region, Actual 1950-2000 and Projected 2010-2050**

Source: Bloom, Canning and Sevilla, 2003



The demographic dividend is delivered primarily through three mechanisms (Bloom, Canning and Sevilla 2003, 39).

- Labour supply – the numbers available to work are larger. Also women are more likely to enter the workforce as family size decreases, hence, since the Asian youth bulge is associated with low fertility, female workforce participation is likely to be high while the young and the old consume more than they produce.
- Savings – working age people tend to have a higher level of output and also a higher level of savings.
- Human capital investments – with smaller numbers of children and cultural changes there will be greater investment in education, health, etc. Hence, primary and secondary enrolment ratios are increased.

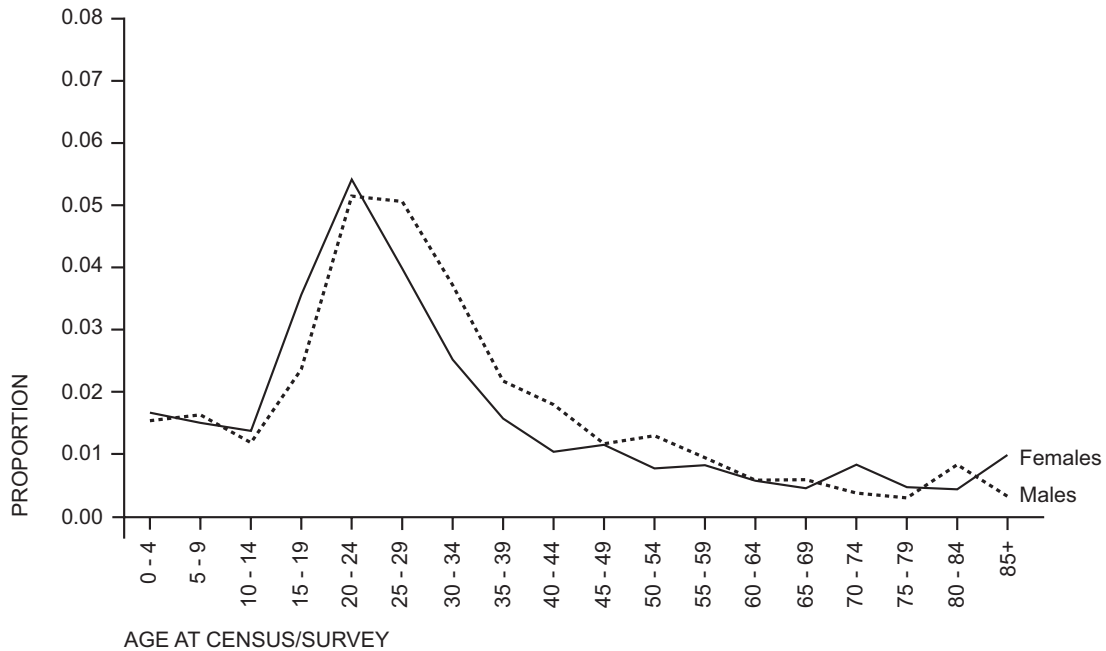
However, as Bloom, Canning and Sevilla (2003, 42) indicate, for these mechanisms to be effective there needs to be a favourable policy environment. Moreover, the decline in economic growth rates following the Asian economic crisis of 1997-98 threatens to reduce the favourable economic impact of the demographic dividend in Asia.

## **ASIA'S YOUTH AND MOBILITY CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH GLOBALISATION**

One of the most dramatic changes in Asia's population in recent decades has been an exponential increase in personal mobility and globalisation has been one of the major drivers of this (Hugo 2006). While the immobility of Asians has always been a myth, the extent to which people in Asia move on both permanent and non-permanent bases within and between countries has multiplied. In no group have these changes been so pronounced as in the Asian youth population. In assessing their life chances, most Asian young people are no longer confined to the opportunities in their local area as was the case with many in earlier cohorts. Perhaps the most universal feature of population mobility is that it is selective of young adults. For example, Figure 4 shows the age-sex pattern of inter provincial migration in Indonesia and it is apparent that peak migration occurs in

the adolescent ages. However, in Asia it is non-permanent circulation within nations which is of increasing significance and in this movement too youth is predominant. In both permanent and non-permanent migration, there has been an increasing focus on the rapidly growing urban areas in the region (Hugo 2004).

**Figure 4: Indonesia: Proportion of Recent Migrants By Age and Sex, 1990 to 1995**  
Source: Muhidin 2002



Globalisation has certainly had an impact in contributing to the increase in mobility within Asian countries both through the economic changes it has wrought which has resulted in shifts in the number and spatial distribution of job opportunities but also through its effects in making people more aware of opportunities outside of their immediate home.

However, perhaps the greatest change in mobility in Asia over the last two decades has been the growth of international population movement. In the early postwar decades there was little international migration in and out of Asian nations but now almost all Asian countries are influenced in a significant way by that movement. Migration between countries takes many forms – there is a big flow to OECD nations and the Middle East as well as within Asia, circular as well as

permanent flows, legal as well as undocumented migration, forced as well as voluntary movement. As with internal migration, it is young adults who dominate in the accelerated migration. The predominance of young adults in international migration is evident, for example in Table 5, which shows Asian born migrants in Australia at the 2001 census who had arrived in Australia in the five years before the census. Migration from less developed nations in Asia to OECD nations and, to a much lesser extent more developed countries in Asia, has increased substantially in recent years.

**Table 5: Australia: Migrants from Asia Arriving Between 1996 and 2001**

Source: ABS 2001 Census

Birthplace	Number Aged	% Aged	Total
	15-24	15-24	Migrants
South-East Asia	36,434	37.2	97,914
North-East Asia	28,452	29.2	97,526
Southern and Central Asia	12,069	21.9	55,163
Total Asia	76,955	30.7	250,603

Table 6, for example, shows the substantial increase in the Asian-born in the last two decades in the three traditional migration countries of Canada, the United States and Australia but Figure 5 shows that there are now also substantial Asian communities in European nations. This south-north

**Table 6: Australia, United States and Canada: Growth of the Asia-born Population, 1971 to 2004 (Thousands)**

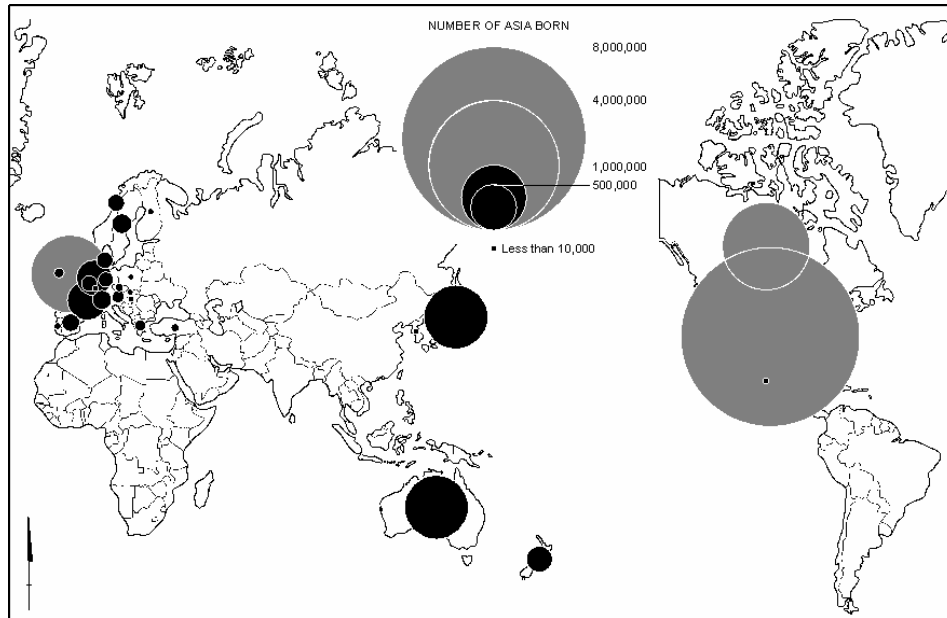
Source: OECD 1995, ABS 2001 Census; ABS 2005; US Bureau of the Census 2001 and 2004 Current Population Survey; Statistics Canada, Census of 1971 and 2001

	Australia	USA	Canada
1971	167.2	824.9	131.8
1971-1981 % p.a. increase	8.3	11.9	15.2
1981	371.6	39.8	541.2
1981-1991 % p.a. increase	8.3	7.0	7.0
1991	822.2	4979.0	1,064.8
1991-2001 % p.a. increase	1.8	4.8	5.8
2001	982.5	7,970.0	1,878.0
2001-2004 % p.a. increase	5.1*	0.6	
2004	1,209.7	8,115.0	

\* Growth in Estimated Resident Population born in Asia, 2001-2004

migration is highly selective both in terms of age and in terms of skill with several destination countries having specific criteria to ensure that most settlers have those characteristics.

**Figure 5: Asians in OECD Countries**  
Source: OECD Database on Immigrants and Expatriates

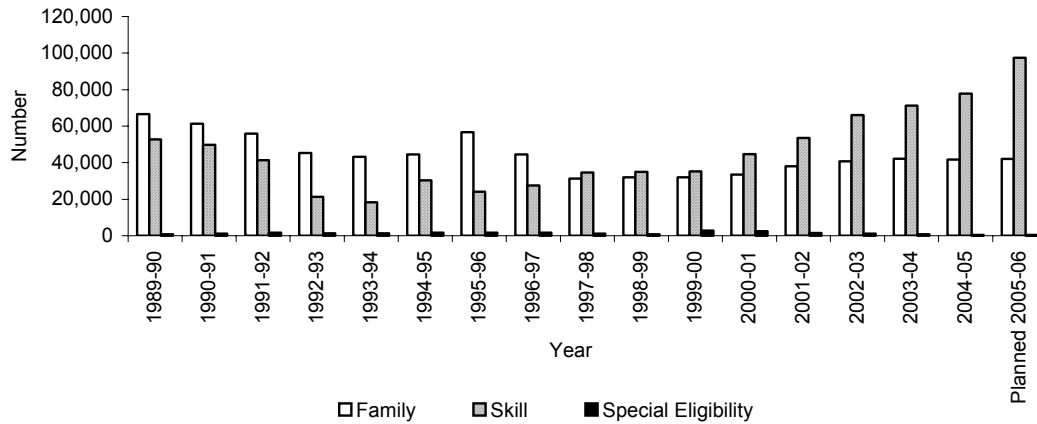


One of the most salient features of globalisation has been the internationalisation of labour markets, especially in highly skilled areas. This has been partly driven by demographic necessity whereby fertility decline has meant a drastic reduction in the numbers of locals entering the labour market (Hugo 1998). However it also has been driven by globalisation which is leading to increased competition among OECD nations for skilled people who can contribute significantly to national prosperity. The result has been an increased focus on skill in selection of settlers. Hence, Figure 6 shows how in Australia the proportion that skilled migrants have made up of settlers has increased from 43.8 percent in 1989-90 to 64.9 percent in 2004-05. The result is that, while the opportunities for migration to OECD countries have increased for Asian youth and such immigration is easier than ever before, this applies only to those with high levels of human capital and the option for those who are unskilled to migrate to OECD nations has declined. Hence, as

with several elements in globalisation options have increased for some while they have decreased for others.

**Figure 6: Australia: Migration Program Outcomes by Stream, 1989-90 to 2004-05 and Planned, 2005-06**

Source: DIMIA *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects*, various issues



One dimension of south-north migration of particular significance for Asian youth has been student migration. Table 7 shows that UNESCO estimates put the number of Asian students

**Table 7: Foreign Students by Country of Origin, 1998 to 2003**

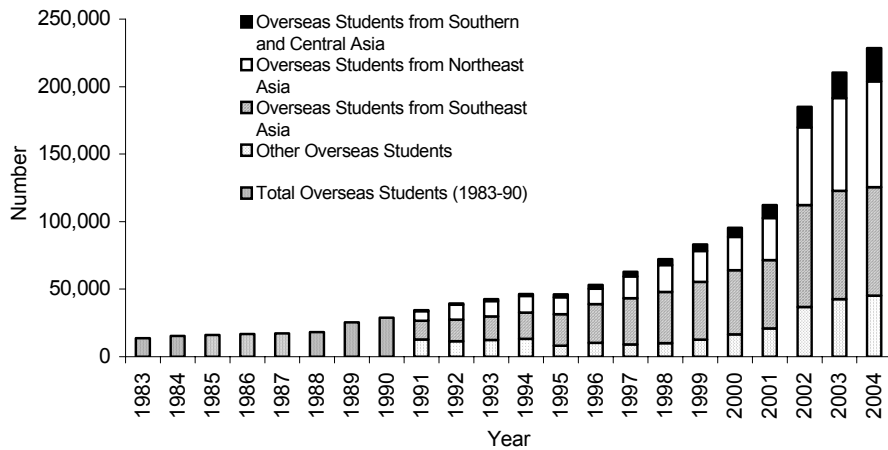
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics,

[http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?URL\\_ID=5187&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201](http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?URL_ID=5187&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201)

Country of Origin 1998 to 2003	Number
Bangladesh	26,566
China	470,598
Hong Kong (China), SAR	96,950
India	207,480
Indonesia	101,418
Japan	190,517
Korea, Democratic People's Rep.	42,513
Korea, Republic of	213,986
Malaysia	133,377
Nepal	14,943
Pakistan	45,047
Philippines	17,004
Singapore	78,468
Sri Lanka	24,014
Thailand	66,243
Turkey	181,965
Viet Nam	31,610
Other Asia (incl. Western and Central)	676,841
<b>Total Asia (incl. Western and Central)</b>	<b>2,619,540</b>

studying outside their home country over the 1998 to 2003 period at 2,619,540. Moreover those numbers have increased exponentially in recent years as the exponential number of Asian students studying in Australian universities attests (Figure 7). However there is an increasingly strong nexus

**Figure 7: Overseas Students in Australian Universities, 1983 to 2004**  
Source: DETYA *Selected Higher Education Student Statistics*, various issues



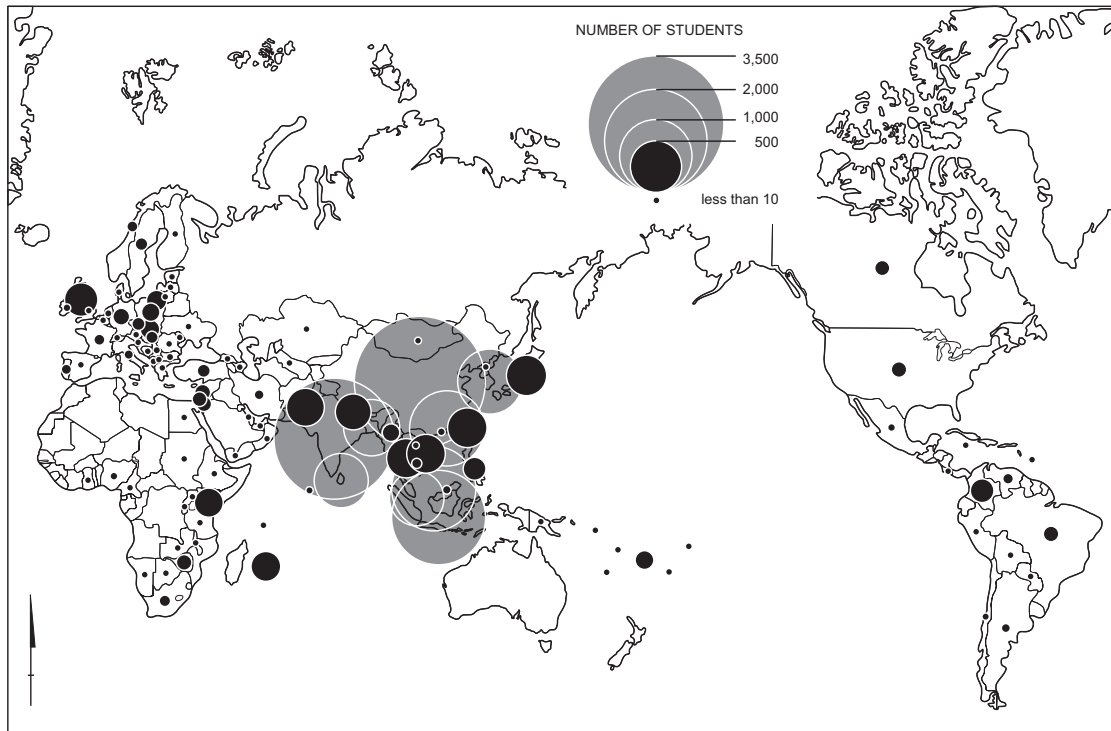
between student migration and eventual settlement in OECD nations. Indeed in 2004-05 some 16,485 people on Student Visas in Australia successfully applied for permanent residence and Figure 8 shows that the majority of these were Asian young people.

Another form of south-north migration which is increasing in significance among Asian young people is marriage migration. International marriages are increasing not only because of increased global travel which increases the likelihood of partnering with a foreign person. Two other elements are increasing the numbers of Asians (predominantly women) who are marrying foreigners in more developed nations ...

- The shortage of women in some countries and regions of countries (especially rural areas) due to sex preferences or outmigration of women.
- The cultural changes among local women which sees many no longer willing to accept unequal roles with men.

**Figure 8: Australia: Overseas Students Transferring to Permanent Residence by Country of Citizenship, 2004-05**

Source: DIMIA unpublished data



This is facilitated by the development of a marriage migration industry in the region which facilitates the recruitment of brides in countries such as Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. In Taiwan the practice has increased such that currently 32.2 percent of marriages are to foreigners and 13.4 percent of births are to foreign women (Tsay 2004, 198). For the young Asian women who are the main group involved in this mobility the effects have been mixed. While they have been liberating and successful experiences, others have been exploited. A study of Vietnamese women marrying Taiwanese men (Hugo and Nguyen Thi 2006) has demonstrated some of these effects. Table 8 shows that more than three quarters of the 630 young women interviewed had married under age 35. It is shown that many were unhappy with their life in Taiwan due to language barriers, expectations they will work extended hours as carers of husbands' parents and having to adopt an inferior position in the family as well as in Taiwanese society.

**Table 8: Ages When Married (N-630)**

Source: 2004 Survey

Age	Percent
15-17	0.3
18-22	70.5
23-29	26.0
30+	3.2

The largest international migration which has influenced Asian youth, however, has been the massive increase in international labour migration both documented and undocumented (Hugo 2005b). This form of movement is open to a wider spectrum of young people than is north-south migration since there is demand for unskilled and semiskilled workers as well as skilled workers and while there is no certainty concerning the accuracy of the numbers, Table 9 indicates that

**Table 9: Asian Countries: Estimates of Stocks of Migrant Workers in Other Countries**

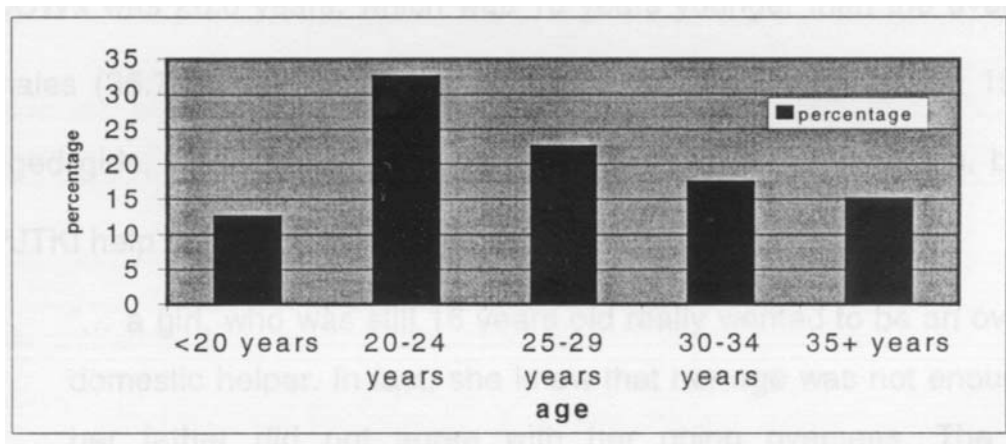
Origin Countries	Number	Main Destinations	Source of Information	Year
<b>Southeast Asia</b>				
Burma/Myanmar	1,100,000	Thailand	<i>Migration News</i> , December 2001	2001
Thailand	340,000	Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia	<i>Migration News</i> , March 2002, Scalabrini Migration Center 1999	2002
Laos	173,000 <sup>b</sup>	Thailand	<i>Migration News</i> , January 2005	2004
Cambodia	200,000	Malaysia, Thailand	Scalabrini Migration Center 2000	1999
Vietnam	400,000	Korea, Japan, Taiwan	<i>Migration News</i> , October 2005	2005
Philippines	8,083,815	Middle East, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan	Go, 2006	2004
Malaysia	250,000	Japan, Taiwan	Asian Migrant Center 1999	1995
Singapore	150,000 <sup>a</sup>		Yap, 2006	2005
Indonesia	3,500,000 <sup>a</sup>	Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Hong Kong	<i>Migration News</i> , January 2006	2004
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,196,815</b>			
<b>South Asia</b>				
India	3,100,000	Middle East	<i>Migration News</i> , April 2003	2002
Pakistan	3,180,973	Middle East, Malaysia	Scalabrini Migration Center 2000	1999
Bangladesh	3,000,000	Saudi Arabia, Malaysia	<i>Migration News</i> , July 2002	2002
Sri Lanka	1,500,000	Middle East, Malaysia	<i>Migration News</i> , October 2005	2005
Nepal	4,000,000	Middle East, India, Malaysia	<i>Asian Migration News</i> , May 2003	2003
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,780,973</b>			
<b>North East Asia</b>				
China	550,000	Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Africa	Ma, 2006	2005
North Korea	300,000	China	<i>Migration News</i> , June 2002	2002
South Korea	632,000	Japan	<i>Migration News</i> , August 2002	2002
Japan	61,000	Hong Kong	Stahl and PECC-HRD, 1996; Iguchi, 2003	2000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,723,000</b>			

- a. Documented  
b. Undocumented

perhaps 30 million Asians are involved in this type of mobility. Moreover it is apparent, as with other forms of mobility, that this movement is highly selective of young adults. Figure 9, for example shows that the under 25 age group predominated among a survey of returning overseas contract workers (OCWs) in Indonesia. It is also worth mentioning that in several of the Asian OCW sending countries females are dominant among the migrant workers as Table 10 indicates.

**Figure 9: Age Distribution of Returning Female OCWs in 1999**

Source: Pujiastuti 2000



**Table 10: Selected Asian Outmigration Countries: Proportion of International Labour Migrants Who are Women**

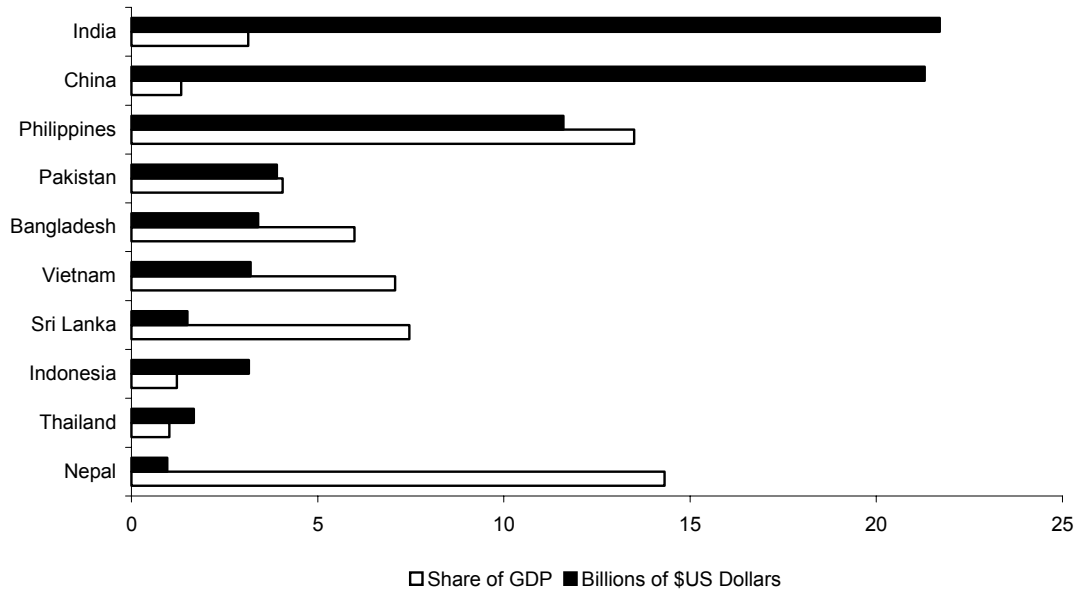
Country of Origin of International Labour Migrants	Year	Number of Workers Sent	Percent Women	Source
Philippines	2005	704,586	74.3*	Philippines Overseas Employment Administration 2005 and <a href="http://www.poea.gov.ph/statistics.html">www.poea.gov.ph/statistics.html</a>
Sri Lanka	2004	213,453	65.5	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment <a href="http://www.slbfe.lk/feb/Statistics/stat1.pdf">http://www.slbfe.lk/feb/Statistics/stat1.pdf</a>
Thailand	2005	128,612	17.7	Chalamwong 2006, 18
Indonesia	2004	382,514	78.0	Soeprobo 2006, 7
Bangladesh	1999	268,182	0.1	Siddiqui 2003, 16
Vietnam	2000	30,000	15.0	Dang <i>et al.</i> , 2003, 28

\* New hires in 2004

The experience of Asian youth in international labour migration is mixed. For many it undoubtedly is a not positive experience. Most are motivated by the desire to earn money for their

families in their home country and they are in general successful in doing so. Figure 10 shows that remittances are not only substantial contributions to many Asian nations foreign exchange earnings but in some cases they represent a significant proportion of GDP. Clearly in these countries, young adults are making a crucial contribution not only to national and regional economies but also to the economies of families. Moreover it has been shown (Hugo 2003) that these flows are often directed to some of the poorest areas in Asian nations where they are having a significant effect. Moreover there is evidence that in many cases international labour migration has been a positive influence on young Asians in terms of their gaining experience, self-confidence, acquiring skills and attitudes beneficial to their future development.

**Figure 10: Asia: Remittances in \$US and as a share of GDP by Country, 2004**  
Source: World Bank, 2006; World Bank Key Development Data and Statistics Online Database, *Asian Migration News*, 2005; Firdausy, 2005; Chalamwong, 2006, Asian Development Bank, 2005

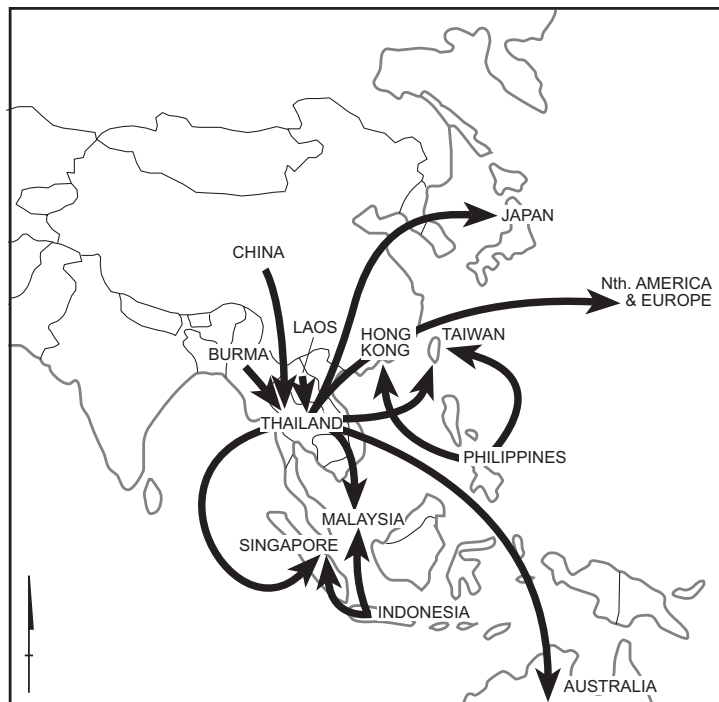


Nevertheless such positive experiences are by no means universal and there is considerable evidence of OCWs being exploited in a range of ways before, during and after their period in the destination country. Levels of protection are often inadequate especially in the case of the large

number of undocumented labour migrants (Battistella and Asis 2003). Some of the greatest exploitation is experienced by female OCWs, especially those in very vulnerable working situations such as the several million involved in domestic and caring work (Yeoh and Huang 1999) and those involved in the entertainment and sex industries (Jones 1996; 2000). While some nations (e.g. Philippines) have been very active in putting in place protections for their large number of OCWs, others (e.g. Indonesia) have not been able to do this.

Trafficking is one area of international migration which impinges particularly on Asian youth, especially young women. Trafficking in the region is widespread (Jones 1996, 2000). It is often associated with the commercial sex industry. It is frequently associated with extreme poverty and Figure 11 shows how widespread the movement of sex workers (not all trafficked) in the Asia region is. It predominantly involves Asian youth and while exploitation is substantial, all involved should not be seen as victims. Lim (ed.) (1998) has shown the significance of the sex industry

**Figure 11: Southeast Asia: Main Flows of Sex and Entertainment Workers**



in the region and how many women involved are not victims but are bonafide workers who are able to use working in the industry as a way to establish themselves. Nevertheless the extent of exploitation in this area is substantial and often involves the young people involved being deprived of rights and exploited in a number of ways.

There is an increasing body of opinion among development agencies (e.g. the World Bank (Ellerman 2003; Lucas 2003) Asian Development Bank (2004), International Labour Organisation (Martin 2004), USAID (Johnson and Sedaca 2004), DIFD (House of Commons 2004) and the IOM (2005)) that migration can be an engine for economic development in poor nations. This is because it is seen that migrations such as those discussed above can have positive impacts in home countries through the following ...

- Remittances represent a substantially larger financial flow between more and less developed nations than foreign direct assistance (FDA) and it is more effective because it goes directly into the hands of the families of the migrants.
- Skilled migrants can facilitate foreign direct investment (FDI) from their destination to their home country as they gain influence. They also can facilitate trade by providing a bridgehead for exports from their home country.
- They can be a means for technology transfer as well as social remittances from the destination to the origin.
- Those that return can bring back the experience and contacts which they have accumulated at the destination.

Clearly such positive developmental effects will be predominantly delivered by young people who migrate. However it is clear that all of the effects of migration are not positive and beneficial to home communities. In particular ...

- Most obviously the migrants can represent a loss to their home community because:
  - they have skills which will be beneficial to development.
  - they are involved in providing services (e.g. health) which are in short supply.

- the country has invested in their education for no return.
- Countries can become dependent on remittances which can result in Dutch disease where they do not make the structural adjustment necessary for the local economy to become competitive (Athukorala 1993; Tiglao 1997; Quibria 1996).
- There are real social costs associated with the separation of family members.

Whether or not the positive effects outweigh the negative effects is influenced especially by policy in both sending and receiving nations although as yet there seems to be some reluctance on the part of destination countries to factor in the developmental consequences of migration to their migration policy (Hugo 2005c).

The increasing scale and diversity of international migration has opened a vast range of new possibilities to Asian youth. In some countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka, it is common place for young people to aspire to work, study and, in some cases, settle in foreign nations. A recent United Nations (2000) study has pointed to the increasing labour force age deficits that European countries will face over the next few decades so that, undoubtedly, there will be an increase in the number of opportunities for Asian youth in OECD nations. Moreover, the proliferation of migration networks and the developing international migration industry are increasingly facilitating international youth migration. However, international migration also is creating a number of challenges for Asian youth and their home countries. The increasing involvement of criminal groups and the growth of trafficking and undocumented migration targets predominantly young people and especially women. Migrants are often open to exploitation in destinations. Some Asian nations are suffering substantial outflows of their most qualified and brightest young people although there is increasing debate about whether this results only in brain drain effects with remittances, return migration and other positive developmental effects being identified (Hugo 2003).

## **ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GLOBALISATION ON ASIAN YOUTH**

The youth stage of the life cycle is of pivotal significance not only from the perspective of individuals but also in terms of national development. This is a crucial period for human resource development since it is the time when people make key decisions influencing their lifetime of work and they make the transition from education to work. The present generation of Asian youth differ greatly from previous cohorts in the way in which they are making those key transitions. In what ways have globalisation impinged on Asian young people as they enter the labour market and seek to earn a living. There is no doubt that globalisation has provided substantial opportunities for economic growth in the Asian region as countries have been able to take advantage of things like plentiful and cheap labour in order to develop export oriented manufacturing to produce goods for the world, especially the OECD countries where companies have been forced by production costs to move offshore in order to remain competitive in contexts where there is little or no tariff protection. This has created many millions of new job opportunities initially in the “tiger economies” of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, than in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia and more recently South Asia, China and Indo China. Iguchi (2006) has shown that in 2004 there were 2.4 million Asians employed in other Asian countries in the offshore operations of Japanese companies and this is a downturn from the heyday of offshore Japanese involvement in the mid 1990s. There are of course many more employed in companies which supply goods and services to those operations let alone the multiplier effects associated with the spreading of those 2.4 million workers. Undoubtedly too there have been benefits to Asian youth in that this investment has seen many young Asians being given training in association with their working for FDI companies. There can be no question that the reduction of formal barriers to international trade, acceleration of international financial flows, greater economic integration and increased access to information greatly expanded the job opportunities available to young Asians in particular sectors of the economy. Undoubtedly too these factors have disproportionately impinged upon Asian youth. There has been an important gender dimension to these impacts in that many of the new job

opportunities created by globalisation have been targeted to women, especially in manufacturing. Hence, millions of young women across the region moved from rural areas to take up jobs in factories producing electronics, clothing, toys, etc.

Despite these clear beneficial effects there are also a number of associated effects which have not been so positive. These include the following ...

- The working conditions in these enterprises were frequently less than favourable involving long hours, low wages, low protection, low levels of job security, poor work conditions, etc.
- The foreign companies have in some cases proved to not be committed to staying in the countries in the longer term with many moving on to cheaper labour countries.
- The loss of young people in some rural areas has led to a decline in the prosperity of some rural communities.
- The Asian Crisis of 1997 proved the fragility of much of this economic growth especially in countries like Indonesia which in many ways has yet to recover. The effects of the crisis were especially felt by young people many of whom lost their jobs in the new industries (Solomon and Scuderi 2002, 36). While the causes of the crisis are several undoubtedly it demonstrated the fragility of the economic gains of globalisation in the region. The effects on Asia youth of the subsequent reform measures associated with IMF rescue packages had a negative effect on social and welfare spending in Asia. In Indonesia, for example, (Solomon and Scuderi 2002, 37)

“The Helen Keller International reports that 60% of Java’s youth are affected by anaemia, a key sign of malnutrition and cause of permanent mental impairment.

Diarrhoea rates have double in young people and women.”

One of the most important considerations in discussing the economic effects of globalisation on Asian youth, however, is to recognise the economic benefits of globalisation on Asian youth were distributed unevenly. Moreover both the positive and the negative economic effects have been disproportionately felt by “young people, particularly young workers, farmers and students”

(Solomon and Scuderi 2002, 36). Those to miss out most of all on the benefits include the poor, the lesser and uneducated, rural and more remote communities who cannot compete effectively for the new jobs. Others to be effected are those in jobs which disappear because they can be done in other countries more cheaply.

It is not only that globalisation's benefits have been distributed unevenly but the consciousness of this inequality is increasing. As Yap Kioe Sheng (2004, 97) points out ...

“... most people in Southeast Asia, especially youth and especially people in urban areas, have had some education. Now the information revolution makes it possible for almost everyone, again in particular in urban areas, to know what happens anywhere else in the world and to compare one's situation with that of others.”

He goes on to suggest that this has the potential for encouraging conflict and that the globalisation process is raising expectations among youth which if not fulfilled can be a source of instability.

While there has undoubtedly been a massive improvement across the region in the enrolment ratios and most Asian youth now have received education and are literate there are sharp differentials in levels and types of education. Yap Kioe Sheng (2004, 47), for example, has questioned the *quality* of education given in South East Asian countries ...

“The gradually emerging knowledge society stresses the importance not just of knowledge but also of creativity to find new answers to new challenges, and of the ability to deal with constant change. Education in many parts of Southeast Asia does not prepare youth for this situation, because the culture, values, and norms are not always geared toward the development of such knowledge and attitudes.”

In such contexts it is not just those with little education and training who are left behind but educated youth whose knowledge, skills and attitudes do not fit the needs of the globalising economy.

Perhaps partly due to these factors youth unemployment is increasing in many Asian nations. Typically in Asian nations unemployment levels in the past have been low although the extent of

underemployment was high. However in more recent times unemployment levels have increased especially for youth, the more educated and urban populations. The case of Indonesia is indicative. Table 11 shows that unemployment in Indonesia is strongly concentrated in youth age groups and that youth unemployment increased sharply as a result of the 1997 financial crisis. Moreover, Table 12 shows that unemployment in Indonesian urban areas is highest among those with post school education.

**Table 11: Indonesia: Unemployment Trends by Age, Pre- and Post-Crisis Indonesia (% in each category)**

Source: Ahmed 1999

Age	Post-Crisis		Pre-Crisis	
	1998	1997	1996	1994
Youth (15-24 years old)	17.1	15.5	15.5	13.6
Adult (25 years old & older)	2.3	1.7	1.8	1.6

**Table 12: Indonesia: Unemployment Trends By Education, Pre- and Post-Crisis Indonesia (% in each category)**

Source: Ahmed 1999

Skill Levels	Post-Crisis		Pre-Crisis	
	1998	1997	1996	1994
No schooling	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4
Primary school not completed	1.3	1.0	1.0	0.9
Primary school	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.3
Junior high school (General)	7.5	6.0	6.8	6.3
Junior high school (Vocational)	7.4	5.6	6.9	6.2
Senior high school (General)	15.3	14.1	14.9	16.9
Senior high school (Vocational)	13.3	11.3	11.3	11.0
Diploma I/II	6.4	6.8	8.5	8.8
Diploma III	11.8	9.7	10.2	10.6
University	12.2	11.8	13.9	14.8

Asian cities not only have disproportionate concentrations of young people. Those young people are disproportionately highly educated and often have very high levels of unemployment. Some have argued that this can lead to the development of a large disaffected group who feel disenfranchised and not able to get good jobs in manifestly expanding areas of the economy. When this is allied to a perception of corruption and nepotism at high levels in some nations, it can lead to

discontent, protest and opposition to the status quo. Hence, the conflicts against authority in some Asian countries tend to be started by young urban based people.

A study in the Philippines showed that the economy was not able to absorb the 800,000 young Filipinos entering the labour force each year (Rixhon 2004, 60). Among the problems that were identified were skill mismatching, the financial constraints of technical institutions, limited access to technical education, unfair terms of employment (some 70 percent of employed youth in the Philippines are thought to work under exploitative terms, characterised by low pay, long hours of work and lack of tenure and employment benefits), youth's attitudinal shortcomings that are unmet by government training institutions, limited complementarity among efforts by government, private non-profit and business to attack the complexity of youth unemployment.

The work situation of Asian youth has been transformed in the globalisation era and in some cases, this has exposed young Asians, especially women, to a higher degree of risk of exploitation in the workplace than was the case in the past. To take the example of young women, there are a number of work contexts, which have emerged, in recent years with a significant degree of risk. These include ...

- One feature in many Asian cities has been the high level of foreign and domestic investments in labour intensive manufacturing to take advantage of the cheap malleable labour force in countries like Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, etc. Many of the jobs created are targeted at young women who are seen to be more amenable to control, nimble fingered and cheaper than male counterparts. In many such contexts, young women are exploited through long hours of work, poor conditions, low levels of pay, low security (many are discharged if they marry, get pregnant or at older ages) and are exposed to sexual exploitation.
- The so called entertainment industry has expanded exponentially in the region and while it is incorrect to portray all or even most young women involved to be victims (Lim 1998), there is considerable exploitation in the area.

- Women in the region have become increasingly involved in international labour migration of various types, which also can involve some exploitation. This exploitation occurs at the recruitment stage, in the travel phase and at the destination. One particularly vulnerable group are the millions of women from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, etc. who work in foreign nations as domestic workers. Since they work in the homes of their employers and hence are often not subject to the labour laws of the countries they work in they are often vulnerable to being overworked, mistreatment, having poor working conditions and sexual interference (Hugo 2004).

## **SOCIAL IMPACTS OF GLOBALISATION**

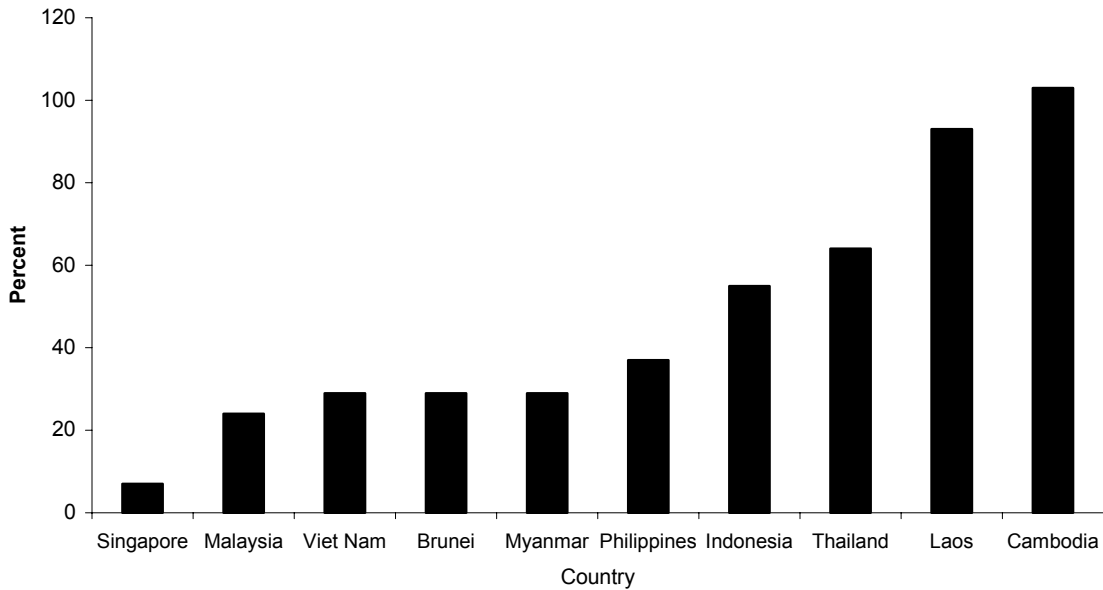
The youth stage of the life cycle is critical from a social perspective since it is the time when young people make key decisions in terms of their life style, living arrangements, partnering and family formation. There are decisions among Asian youth which have been significantly effected by globalisation. Moreover globalisation has facilitated the spread of Western cultural practices and exposed them to different ways of doing things. Undoubtedly this has seen them challenge many traditional authority structures and perhaps also experience disorientation caused by the dilemmas of day to day experience of clashes between traditional and modern values and norms (Yap Kioe Sheng 2004).

One of the features of the behaviour of contemporary Asian youth which has been identified by commentators (Xenos and Kabamalan 1998; Xenos *et al.* 2001; Westley and Choe 2002; Gubhaju 2002) is increasing level of risk behaviour among them compared to previous generations. One important area is in sexual risk taking (Westley and Choe 2002, 61) although Asia differs significantly from Sub Saharan Africa in the incidence of premarital sex. Gubhaju (2002, 104-5) has shown that pre marital sex is clearly on the rise in Asia despite strong traditional norms opposing it in many nations. Moreover, the risky sexual behaviours of adolescents are compounded by a widespread sexual double standard, which accepts, or even encourages, promiscuity among

men but strictly restricts women's sexual behaviour. Figure 12 presents data drawn from national surveys indicating the proportion of women in their early 20s who had sex by the time they were 18. While early marriage is a factor, it is apparent that pre marital sex is of significance in Asia.

**Figure 12: Percent of Women Aged 20-24 Who Had Sex by Age 18, Selected Asian Countries**

Source: Haub and Huong 2003

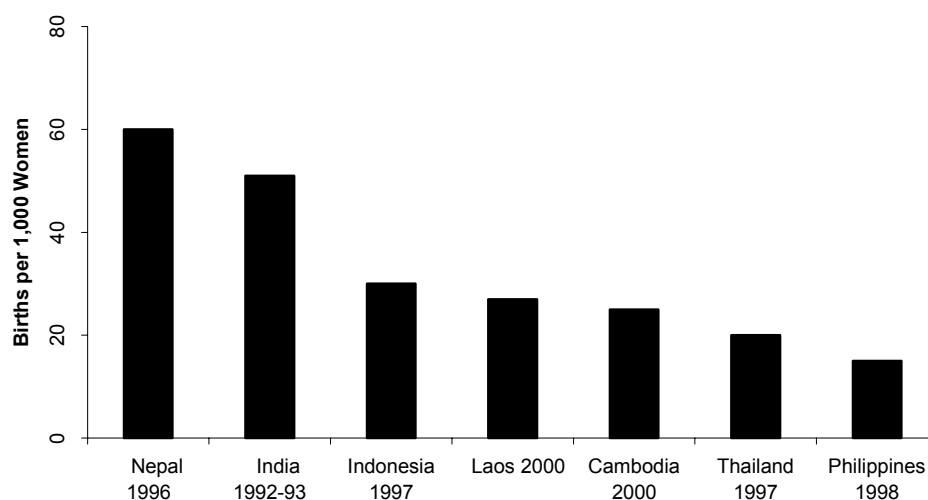


Teenage pregnancy has reduced in Asia with the increase in the age at marriage and increased contraceptive prevalence but Figure 13 shows that even among Southeast Asian countries there is considerable variation. Teenage births put both mother and child at greater risk on average than births to older women. Hence, Table 13 shows that infant mortality rates in several Asian countries are significantly higher than for births to mothers aged less than 20 than for women aged 20-29.

Although teenage birth rates are generally falling in Asia, there is evidence that, levels of sexual risk taking among young people is increasing (Westley and Choe 2002, 61). This has increased concern about Asian youth contracting HIV and other STIs. Gubhaju (2002, 107-9) has

**Figure 13: Births per 1,000 Women Aged 15-19 in Southeast Asian Countries**

Source: Haub and Huong 2003



**Table 13: Infant Mortality (deaths per 1,000 live births) for Children of Mothers Under Age 20 Compared with Children of Mothers Age 20-29: Various Countries in Asia**

Source: Westley and Choe 2002

Country and year	Deaths per 1,000 live births	
	Mother less than 20	Mother 20-29
Bangladesh 1999/2000	103	70
India 1998/99	93	63
Indonesia 1997	63	47
Nepal 1996	120	80
Pakistan 1990/91	121	91
Philippines 1998	41	33
Sri Lanka 1987	35	33
Thailand 1987	41	34
Vietnam 1997	46	34

Note: Infant mortality is expressed as the number of deaths before age 1 year per 1,000 live births. Women who give birth in their teens are likely to come disproportionately from disadvantaged socio-economic groups where infant mortality tends to be high for a variety of reasons. Yet the relationship between mother's age at birth and infant mortality holds up even after controlling for relevant socio-economic variables.

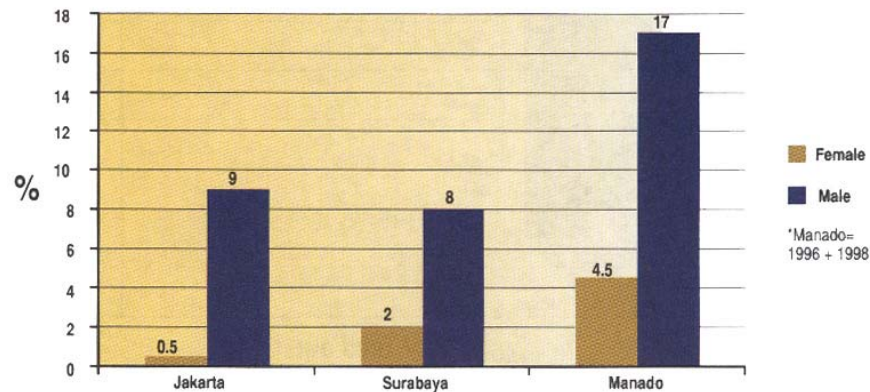
identified the following factors which are leading to an increase in risky health related behaviour among adolescents, especially unmarried adolescents ...

- limited access to information regarding the risks of sexual activity and contraception
- peer pressure

- inadequate access to youth-friendly health services
- economic constraints

In Indonesia not a great deal is known about the sexual behaviour of youth, but Figure 14 shows rates of sexual intercourse among high school students in three cities. It is apparent rates are

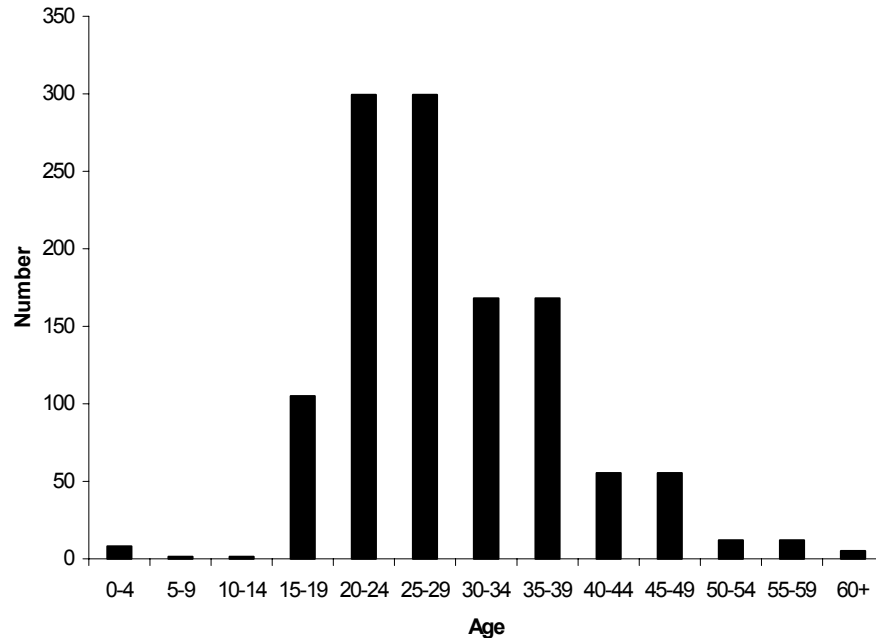
**Figure 14: Indonesian Cities: Sexual Intercourse Among High School Students, 1997**  
Source: Kaldor *et al.* 2000



much higher among males than females. Figure 15 shows that the peak incidence of HIV infection in Indonesia is in the 20s age group and there are significant numbers in the 15-19 age group. It is important to point out that there is low use of condoms among sexually active youth in Asia. This is apparent, for example in Indonesia (Hugo 2002). Westley and Choe (2002, 62) found that there were disturbingly low levels of condom use among sexually active young people in Asia. They do point out, however, that there is some good news in the Thailand case where intensive policy interventions have seen a spectacular increase in condom use and a decline in incidence of STIs. An interesting study of youth in Vietnam (Haub and Huong 2003) says that although data are limited, there is evidence of increasing STD incidence among young people and youth are an increasingly important group in the rapidly growing HIV infected population. They also point out that sexual abuse of female teenagers now poses a serious problem in Vietnam as does teenage rape and an increase in the proportion of sex workers who were under 25 years of age. They explain that young Vietnamese, especially rural youth have little access to information on reproductive health.

**Figure 15: Indonesia: Age Structure of the Population Reported with HIV Infection, November 2000**

Source: Directorate General CDC and EH Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia, 2001



Despite the longstanding family planning program, young people have limited knowledge of contraception. Indeed, throughout Asia, the family planning programs, messages and information are often targeted to, and almost entirely focussed on married people, especially married women.

Other areas of risk behaviour among Asian youth, which are increasing, are smoking, drinking and drug use. As Westley and Choe 2002, (61-2) point out ... “Young men are much more likely than young women to drink, smoke or use drugs. They are also likely to start these risk behaviours at younger ages than women.” Taking smoking for example, Figure 16 shows that only in Indonesia and China is the proportion of young males who smoke larger than in the United States. In both nations smoking is clearly a major health problem among young people. It will be noted that in each of the selected countries the incidence of young women smoking is much lower than in the United States.

**Figure 16: Percentage of Boys and Girls Age 15-19 Years Who Currently Smoke in Nine Countries of Asia and the United States**

Source: Westley and Choe 2002

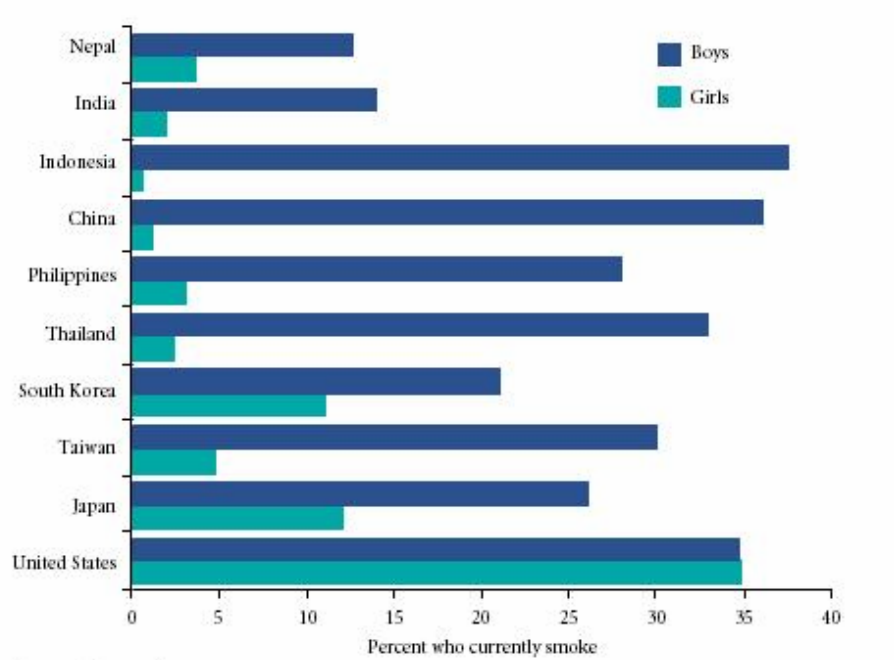


Table 14 shows the incidence of drinking, smoking and drug use among youth in selected Asian countries. These are low reported rates of drug use but such data are extremely difficult to collect. There can be no doubt that drug use is increasing in significance especially in urban areas.

**Table 14: Percentage of Boys and Girls Age 15-19 Who Currently Drink, Smoke, or Use Drugs: Various Countries in Asia**

Source: Westley and Choe 2002

Country and year	Drink		Smoke		Use Drugs	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
China 2000	37	9	36	1	na	na
India 1998/99	2	1	14 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	na	na
Indonesia 1988	2	0	38	1	1	0
Japan 2000 <sup>b</sup>	39	31	26	12	na	na
Nepal 2000	21	11	12	4	na	na
Philippines 1994	47	12	28	3	2	0
South Korea 2000	46	51	21	11	3	3
Taiwan 1994	na	na	30	5	na	na
Thailand 1994	43	16	33	2	6	1

Information not available.

<sup>a</sup> Includes chewing tobacco.

<sup>b</sup> For ages 15-18 only.

In Indonesia one estimate of drug users puts it at 2 percent of the population (4 million people) and the number in Jakarta at 1.3 million (Utomo *et al.* 2001). There has been an upsurge in young people with drug overdoses being reported in hospitals in the Indonesian capital. A surveillance survey of 400 intravenous drug users (IDUs) in Jakarta (Utomo *et al.* 2001) found that 90 percent were male and 95 percent aged less than 30. Almost half were in some form of education and most were unmarried. Some 62 percent of males and 50 percent of females reused needles. More than a half of respondents were sexually active with 50 percent with casual partners, 35 percent commercial partners and 15 percent with regular partners and use of condoms were low.

Alcohol use varies considerably with culture and religion. Table 14 shows that among males aged 15-19, the proportion who have drunk alcohol in India and Indonesia are very small. This is a reflection of the impact of religion reinforced by culture, although in some community studies it would seem that the use of alcohol among youth, even in these areas is increasing. On the other hand, in Philippines, South Korea and Thailand almost a half of young males drink alcohol although the rates are lower among females generally. There is less intercountry variation in smoking although the gender differences are greater with young women more likely to smoke in more developed countries.

Perhaps the most dramatic reflection of problems among youth is the incidence of suicide. Indeed, the increasing incidence of suicide among youth in more developed contexts is one of the most pressing problems in some such societies. Table 15 presents data on youth suicide for several Asian nations and compares them with the situation in some developed countries. It is clear that there are wide differences with culture, economic and social situations, but several patterns are interesting. For most of the Asian countries represented, male youth suicide is lower in Asia than in more developed nations. Only Sri Lanka, among the countries listed, has a level of male youth suicide above the levels in Australia and New Zealand. However it will be noted that the situation is quite different for young women. Indeed, in each of the countries listed, female youth suicide is greater than is the case in Australia. Again rates are highest in Sri Lanka.

**Table 15: Suicide Mortality of Young Adults Aged 15-24 in Selected Countries and Areas**  
Source: Ruzicka 1998

Country/area in ESCAP Region	Year	Suicides per 100,000		Male to Female Ratio
		Males	Females	
Bangladesh	1980-1996	9.3	19.6	0.5
China (rural)	1992	17.4	36.7	0.5
China (urban)	1992	5.6	10.6	0.5
Hong Kong	1994	9.5	8.7	1.1
Singapore	1994	11.7	10.2	1.1
Sri Lanka	1986	77.0	48.0	1.6
Republic of Korea	1994	11.0	5.9	1.9
Japan	1994	12.0	5.1	2.4
Australia	1990-1992	26.0	5.0	5.0
New Zealand	1990-1993	39.0	6.0	6.0
Highest suicide rates in countries of Europe:				
Russian Federation	1994	49.0	9.0	5.0
Lithuania	1994	46.0	12.0	4.0
Finland	1994	46.0	8.0	6.0
Latvia	1994	40.0	4.0	10.0
Estonia	1994	38.0	10.0	4.0

Some of the best data on suicide in Asia has been collected in the Matlab field station surveillance project which has been carried out continuously in Bangladesh over several decades. Table 16 shows the suicide data for the surveyed communities over the 1980-1996 period. It will be noted that the peak age group for suicide of both men and women is clearly in the 20-29 category.

**Table 16: Suicide Mortality in the Matlab Field Station of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B): 1980-1996 Annual Rates per 100,000**  
Source: Ruzicka 1998

Age	Male Suicides	Average Annual Rate	Female Suicides	Average Annual Rate	Male to Female Ratio
10-19	15	3.6	38	9.7	0.37
20-29	38	15.6	48	18.5	0.84
30-39	8	4.6	7	3.4	1.35
40-49	6	4.5	5	3.6	1.25
50-59	9	8.7	4	3.6	2.41
60+	7	6.1	2	1.9	3.21
All ages	83	7.0	104	8.6	0.81

Indeed, the rates are substantially higher than for other age groups. In other nations (e.g. Singapore, Hong Kong and Korea), suicide rates increase with age while in others (e.g. Sri Lanka) there is a “U” shaped incidence pattern with high suicide in the youth and elderly ages is evident (Ruzicka, 1998).

One of the major globalisation impacts on the contemporary youth generation in Asia which differentiates them significantly from earlier generations has been in their exposure to mass media. Table 17 shows the pattern of daily exposure to various media among the urban youth in one of the least developed nations of Asia, Nepal. It will be noticed that the rates are very high for electronic media and even in this poor nation there are significant rates of internet usage.

**Table 17: Daily Exposure to Television, Radio and Newspapers Among Urban Youth (Ages 14 to 22), By Sex and Marital Status: Nepal, 2000 (Percentage)**

Source: Thapa and Mishra 2003

Media Type	Male		Female		Total
	Single	Married	Single	Married	
Television	98.8	94.7	99.3	92.4	97.8
Radio	95.7	90.3	94.0	84.9	93.2
Newspaper	87.6	64.6	83.9	37.3	77.4
Internet	25.7	6.1	19.4	6.0	21.8
Any one	99.9	98.2	99.4	96.5	88.1
All except the Internet	86.1	63.7	81.5	35.3	75.5
All four	16.7	1.8	11.4	0.9	11.7

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult to exaggerate the significance of Asia’s contemporary youth generation who will play a crucial role in shaping the regions future prosperity, sustainability and stability. They have been the first generation of young people to feel the full impact of globalisation and partly, as a result of this, they are strongly differentiated from earlier cohorts passing through this lifecycle stage. The effects of globalisation have been both positive and negative both in the region generally but especially among the youth population who arguably have been impacted by globalisation more than any other group. Globalisation presents both challenges and opportunities to Asian youth. The

key point seems to be that globalisation promotes opportunities for some but by no means all and its negative fallout is disproportionately experienced by other groups. The policy challenge here is daunting if the positive benefits of globalisation are to be maximised and dispersed more widely and its negative impacts reduced.

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