

POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE GROWTH AND PATTERNS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

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The paper shows that the diverse labor dimensions prevailing in the ASEAN region can be attributed to changes in the structure of the society and economy in the course of recent economic development. It observes the considerable variety in the growth of the population and its effect on the labor force in the ASEAN region which has exhibited continuous growth during the last two decades, though at quite different speeds.

The paper details the similarity and diversity in the level and type of labor force participation rates. A common feature shared by ASEAN countries is a general pattern in the age-specific participation rate of men. In contrast, the women, aside from participating in the labor force at a much lower level than men at almost all ages, display diverse patterns of participation over the working age range. Lastly, the distribution of the labor force according to major industrial sectors in the six ASEAN countries is presented, noting the extremely low proportion of 1.6 per cent of the labor force in agriculture in Singapore contrasted by Thailand's 72.5 per cent, and the similar proportion of the workforce in agriculture in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Introduction

The combined population of the six ASEAN countries in mid-1983 amounted to 278.5 million, which ranks as the third largest next to China and India. It is larger than the population of the United States with 230.1 million, and much more than twice the 119.3 million in Japan. Within the ASEAN region itself, Indonesia is way ahead with a population of some 159.4 million, which is already larger than the population of Japan. At the other extreme are Brunei with only 0.2 million persons and Singapore with 2.5 million. The Philippines and Indonesia are of almost the same size, with 52.1 million and 50.0 million, respectively. Next comes Malaysia which accommodates the remaining 14.7 million.

With a total land area of about 3 million square kilometres, the population density in the ASEAN region works out to 90 persons per

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square kilometre. The distribution of the population among the six countries has not been in close accordance with the proportionate distribution of land area so that wide differences in population density exist among them. The small city-state of Singapore has a population density of 4,049 persons per square kilometre, way ahead of its ASEAN neighbours. In fact this density is nearly 23 times that of the Philippines which has the second highest figure of 153 persons per square kilometre. Lower densities are found in Thailand and Indonesia, 91 and 83 respectively, both not much different from the overall density for the whole ASEAN region. Malaysia has a lower density of 45 persons per square kilometre, and the lowest density of 36 persons is found in the new ASEAN member, Brunei.

Table 1 — Land Area and Population in ASEAN Countries, 1983

Country	Land Area (sq. km)	Population ('000)	Persons per sq. km.
Brunei	5,765	209	36
Indonesia	1,919,443	159,434	83
Malaysia	329,749	14,736	45
Philippines	300,000	52,096	174
Singapore	618	2,502	4,049
Thailand	542,373	49,568	91
Total	3,097,948	278,545	90

Too much significance should not be placed on the above density figures since they are expressed in terms of the total land area regardless of the proportion of usable land. In the case of Singapore almost all the 618 square kilometres are usable land, but this is certainly not so in the other countries which have sizeable proportion of inaccessible and uncultivated deep jungles, mangrove swamps, and mountains. It should also be mentioned that within each ASEAN country there are pronounced differences in population density among the various regions in the country. In Indonesia, for example, some two-thirds of the population are concentrated in the island of Java which has only 7 per cent of the country's land area; for every square kilometre there are about twenty-five times more people living in Java than in other areas. Another feature of the ASEAN population that is relevant to our topic of discussion is that some 80 per cent of the people stay in the rural areas, depending on agricul-

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tural activities for their livelihood. At the individual country level, the proportion of rural population amounted to 86 per cent in Thailand, 80 per cent in Indonesia, 71 per cent in Malaysia, 64 per cent in the Philippines, and 36 per cent in Brunei. Singapore is the exception with a negligible proportion residing in the rural area.

Population Growth

In examining the pattern of population growth in the ASEAN region, one cannot fail to notice the common characteristics left behind by the Japanese occupation of these countries during the Second World War. It is widely known that the rate of population growth generally slowed down during the extremely difficult years under the Japanese regime when the birth rate was somewhat lower on account of postponement of marriages and/or birth and the death rate unusually high because of a breakdown of medical facilities, neglect of public health measures, and severe undernutrition and malnutrition. With the return of normal peacetime conditions in late 1945, the death rate began to fall rapidly and the birth rate rose and remained persistently high, causing the rate of population growth to accelerate in all the ASEAN countries. During these early postwar years there occurred a so-called baby boom in most of these countries, with varying magnitudes and times of occurrence. According to the data shown in Table 2, the average annual growth rate recorded during the first fifteen years or so amounted to 5.7 per cent in Brunei, 4.4 per cent in Singapore, 3.2 per cent in Thailand, 3.1 per cent in the Philippines, 2.7 per cent in Malaysia, and 2.1 per cent in Indonesia. The extremely high growth rate recorded in the two smallest countries, Brunei and Singapore, may be partly attributed to the net inflow of people from the neighbouring state of Malaysia.

The 1960s, in contrast with the immediate postwar period, was characterized by a slowing down of the rate of population increase as the earlier sharp downward trend in the death rate weakened and the decline in the birth rate, which commenced in the late 1950s, gathered momentum. This slackening in the growth rate appeared to have been severe in Brunei with a drop of 1.2 percentage points to 4.5 per cent per annum as well as in Singapore where it was reduced by 1.1 percentage point to 2.3 per cent per annum. Thailand experienced an appreciable drop in the growth rate from 3.2 per cent to 2.7 per cent per annum. In Malaysia the growth rate was reduced by 0.2 percentage points to 2.5 per cent, and in the Philippines too the reduction was minor, falling from 3.1 per cent to 3.0 per cent.

Table 2 — Population Growth in ASEAN Countries, 1947-1981

Year	Population ('000)	Increase ('000)	Annual Growth Rate (%)
Brunei			
1947	40.7	—	—
1960	83.9	43.2	5.7
1971	136.3	52.4	4.5
1981	192.8	56.5	3.5
Indonesia			
1950	77,207.0	—	—
1961	99,019.0	19,812.0	2.1
1971	199,183.0	22,164.0	2.1
1980	147,490.8	28,307.3	2.3
Malaysia			
1947	5,754.5	—	—
1960	8,118.0	2,363.5	2.7
1970	10,439.4	2,321.4	2.5
1980	13,136.1	2,696.7	2.3
Philippines			
1948	19,234.2	—	—
1960	27,087.7	7,853.5	3.1
1970	36,684.5	9,596.8	3.0
1980	48,098.5	11,414.0	2.7
Singapore			
1947	938.1	—	—
1960	1,646.4	708.3	4.4
1970	2,074.5	428.1	2.3
1980	2,413.9	339.4	1.5
Thailand			
1947	17,442.7	—	—
1960	26,257.9	8,815.2	3.2
1970	34,397.4	8,139.5	2.7
1980	44,278.4	9,881.0	2.6

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It would appear that the pattern of population growth in Indonesia did not follow those of the other countries described above. The figures in Table 2 show that the rate of population increase has remained essentially unchanged in Indonesia during the 1950s and the 1960s. Its annual growth rate remained at 2.1 per cent during the periods 1950-1961 and 1961-1971. Of the three factors determining the growth rate at that time, we can discount migration which has always been negligible in Indonesia. It was mentioned earlier that, as in other ASEAN countries, the death rate in Indonesia has been declining in these early years, but the extent of the decline is not known because of the paucity of data for the whole country. For the same reason, the birth rate at that time was also difficult to ascertain. However, the absence of a slackening in the rate of increase up to 1971 seems to suggest that the death rate has not been declining as fast as in the other countries and that the birth rate had remained high, if not increased.

The 1970s saw a continuation of the deceleration in the rate of population increase in the ASEAN countries. But Indonesia again stands out as the only exception with an acceleration in the population increase from 2.1 per cent during 1961-1971 to 2.3 per cent during 1971-1980. This was due to a steeper fall in the death rate than in the birth rate. The slackening in the growth rate continued to be pronounced in the two small countries of Brunei and Singapore, being reduced by 1.0 percentage point to 3.5 per cent in Brunei and 0.8 percentage point to 1.5 per cent in Singapore. Unlike the 1960s the slowing down in the growth rate in the 1970s was not that conspicuous in Thailand but became more marked in the Philippines. In the 1970s Brunei still experienced the highest growth rate but by then Singapore was recording the lowest growth rate. The Philippines was registering the second highest growth rate, followed by Indonesia and Malaysia, both of which experienced almost the same rate of increase.

Since the flow in international migration in the ASEAN region is very insignificant nowadays, the present rate of population growth in the six countries is primarily determined by the magnitude of natural increase which is in turn dependent on the prevailing birth and death rates. A comparative analysis of this aspect of population growth is presented in Table 3 for the year 1983. It should be noted that some of these figures are rough estimates. In Singapore, where the data are most accurate, the crude birth rate in 1983 was 16.2 per thousand mid-year population, which was almost half that recorded in the other five countries. In these countries the birth rate falls within a

narrow range of around 30 per thousand, with 28.2 per thousand in Thailand and 32.0 per thousand in the Philippines. The crude death rate, on the other hand, varies from a low of 3.9 per thousand in Brunei to 12.9 per thousand in Indonesia. Of more significance is the resultant differences in the rate of natural increase among the six countries. Due to the low birth rate, the rate of natural increase in Singapore was only 10.9 per thousand population. The second lowest rate of natural increase of 17.4 per thousand was in Indonesia, but this was due to the high death rate of 12.9. The natural increase rate was 25.9 in Brunei, 25.2 in the Philippines, 22.2 in Malaysia, and 20.6 in Thailand.

**Table 3 — Birth Rate, Death Rate and Population Growth
in ASEAN Countries, 1983**

Country	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate	Crude Rate of Natural Increase
Brunei	29.8	3.9	25.9
Indonesia	30.3	12.9	17.4
Malaysia	28.6	6.4	22.3
Philippines	32.0	6.8	25.2
Singapore	16.2	5.3	10.9
Thailand	28.2	7.6	20.6

Labour Force Growth

Table 4 gives the figures for the size of the labour force and the annual growth rates by sex for the last three population censuses conducted in the ASEAN countries. A common feature of the table concerns the sex composition of the labour force. There were clearly more men than women in the labour force in all the ASEAN countries at every census, but the proportion of women seemed to vary somewhat. In most of the countries the proportion of women has in fact increased over the years. For instance, in Singapore it rose from 18.0 per cent in 1957 to 25.8 per cent in 1970 and to 34.5 per cent in 1980, and in Malaysia it went up from 24.5 per cent in 1957 to 32.6 per cent in 1970 and to 33.7 per cent in 1980. The situation was

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Table 4 — Growth of Labour Force by Sex in ASEAN Countries, 1957-1980

Country	Labour Force ('000)			Annual Growth Rate (%)		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Brunei						
1960	24.8	20.6	4.2	—	—	—
1971	41.1	34.2	6.9	4.70	4.72	4.62
1981	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indonesia						
1961	34,574.9	25,020.5	9,544.4	—	—	—
1971	40,100.1	26,832.4	13,267.7	1.49	0.70	3.35
1980	51,191.5	34,486.0	16,705.5	2.47	2.54	2.33
Malaysia						
1957	2,164.9	1,635.1	529.8	—	—	—
1970	3,429.7	2,312.2	1,117.4	3.60	2.70	5.91
1980	4,923.8	3,265.8	1,657.9	3.68	3.51	4.02
Philippines						
1960	8,536.0	6,352.4	2,183.6	—	—	—
1970	12,297.3	8,367.3	3,928.1	3.72	2.79	6.09
1980	18,543.0	*	*	4.19	*	*
Singapore						
1957	480.3	393.8	86.5	—	—	—
1970	726.7	539.2	187.5	3.24	2.45	6.13
1980	1,116.0	730.6	385.4	4.38	3.08	7.47
Thailand						
1960	13,837.0	7,144.8	6,692.2	—	—	—
1970	16,850.1	8,910.7	7,939.4	1.99	2.23	1.72
1980	21,088.4	11,721.3	9,367.1	2.27	2.78	1.67

* Not Available

quite different in Thailand where the proportion of women has always been at the high level of nearly half the labour force, though showing signs of falling slightly over the years. The proportions slipped from 48.4 per cent in 1960 to 47.1 per cent in 1970 and finally to 44.4 per cent in 1980.

During the last two decades or so, the labour force in the ASEAN countries has been growing continuously though at quite different speeds. During the first intercensal period Brunei recorded the highest growth rate of 4.70 per cent per annum, which coincided with the extremely rapid rate of population increase observed earlier. The second highest, 3.72 per cent, was very much lower and was recorded by the Philippines. This was followed closely by Malaysia with 3.60 per cent and Singapore 3.24 per cent. At the bottom of the scale, Indonesia registered the smallest growth in its labour force, 1.49 per cent, and Thailand was only slightly better with 1.99 per cent. The latest intercensal period witnessed a faster growth of the labour force in all the ASEAN countries as well as a narrowing in the differences in the annual growth rates among these countries. Singapore, with its high economic growth and liberal import of foreign workers, experienced the highest increase of 4.38 per cent per annum. Relatively lower rates were again recorded by Indonesia with 2.47 per cent and Thailand with 2.27 per cent. An intermediate rate of 3.68 per cent was recorded in Malaysia.

The figures for the males and the females exhibit a more complicated pattern of growth rates. First of all, the faster rate of increase in the second intercensal period occurred among the males in all the countries. But this was not so in the case of the females which experienced a more rapid increase in Singapore only. There was a slowing down in the rate of increase in the labour force in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Another interesting aspect of the figures shown in Table 4 can be observed by comparing the growth rate for the males and the females. During the first intercensal period the labour force grew faster among the females than the males in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. The same trend was observed during the second intercensal period in Malaysia and Singapore. In Indonesia the male labour force grew faster during this period, and in Thailand the same trend prevailed during the two intercensal periods.

Participation Rate

The labour force participation rates shown in Table 5 refer to

the percentage of economically active persons to the total population from the relevant cut-off age upwards. This rate, also known as the refined activity rate, measures the extent of participation of the population in economic activities. We will first examine the rates for both sexes combined. These figures display a downward trend in Indonesia and Thailand, the latter experiencing a very marked drop from 79.9 in 1960 to 75.0 in 1970 and 65.8 in 1980. In Indonesia the downtrend was rather gentle, being edged down from 54.1 in 1961 to 49.9 in 1971 and 49.6 in 1980. Brunei also recorded a fall in the participation during the first intercensal period. A completely different trend was recorded in Malaysia and Singapore where the participation rate went down during the first intercensal period but went up during the latest period. The ups and downs of the overall participation rates reflect the net balances of the changing male and female rates, and it is necessary and more meaningful to examine the figures for each sex separately.

The male participation rates followed a downtrend movement in all the six ASEAN countries during the first intercensal period. During the second period a continuation of this downtrend occurred in Indonesia and Thailand, and in Malaysia and Singapore the rate went up but not to its original level. The general fall in the male rates is a manifestation of the tendency towards diminishing participation in the labour force by males in the young and old age groups on account of prolonged schooling and earlier retirement in the context of modern economic and social development. The female rates did not display the same trends. There was a continuous rise in the rates during the two intercensal periods in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. In the Philippines the female rate also went up during the first period, and in Brunei the rate did not change significantly during the same period. The situation in Thailand was quite unique with a pronounced fall in the female rate during the last two decades. The rising trend in the participation of women in economic activity in the ASEAN countries where participation was originally low may be attributed to the higher educational attainment of women, the greater job opportunities for women, and the changing attitudes towards working women.

Differences in the present levels of participation in the labour force in the ASEAN countries are reflected in the figures for the latest year. The higher participation rate for both sexes combined was still recorded in Thailand with 65.8 in 1980. This was way ahead of Singapore with 55.9, Malaysia with 52.6, and Indonesia with 49.6. Looking at the figures for each sex separately, it would appear that

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the present regional variation in the extent of labour force participation is of much greater magnitude among the women than the men. The female rates range widely from a high of 57.4 in Thailand to a low of 32.6 in Indonesia, while the male rates vary from 74.5 in Thailand to 68.4 in Indonesia. It should be pointed out that the rates given in Table 5 may have been affected by changes in the concepts and procedures adopted to collect the statistics in the population censuses and also by changes in the age composition of the groupings in the working age range.

Table 5 — Labour Participation Rates by Sex in ASEAN Countries

Country	Total	Males	Females
Brunei			
1960	55.5	86.1	20.1
1971	53.3	80.2	20.0
1981	*	*	*
Indonesia			
1961	54.1	79.8	29.3
1971	49.9	68.7	32.1
1980	49.6	68.4	32.6
Malaysia			
1957 ⁺	51.5	74.8	26.2
1970	49.4	66.3	32.3
1980	52.6	70.1	35.3
Philippines			
1960	47.8	71.1	24.4
1970	49.0	68.1	30.6
1980	*	*	*
Singapore			
1957	49.0	76.6	19.3
1970	46.6	67.6	24.6
1980	55.9	72.0	39.3
Thailand			
1960	79.9	82.7	77.2
1970	75.0	80.4	69.8
1980	65.8	74.5	57.4

* Not available

+ For Peninsular Malaysia only

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An idea of the variation of labour force participation over the working age range may be obtained from Table 6 which shows the age-specific participation rates for each sex separately. It should be pointed out that the figures for Brunei and the Philippines refer to 1971 and 1970 respectively, while those for the other four countries refer to the latest census year 1980. In every ASEAN country the participation for almost every quinary age group is decidedly higher among the men than among the women. Another common feature found among these countries is that the participation rate for men

Table 6 — Age-Specific Labour Force Participation Rate in ASEAN Countries

Age Group	Brunei 1971	Indonesia 1980	Malaysia 1980	Philippines 1970	Singapore 1980	Thailand 1980
Males						
10 — 14	—	12.6	8.9	21.0	1.6	25.4*
15 — 19	32.9	47.6	48.2	52.4	47.5	65.8
20 — 24	86.5	79.3	90.9	76.0	93.4	86.7
25 — 29	97.1	92.2	96.7	87.6	97.2	95.7
30 — 34	97.7	95.1	97.5	90.3	97.9	96.6
35 — 39	98.0	95.6	97.6	90.6	98.0	96.9
40 — 44	97.2	95.0	97.2	90.5	97.6	96.3
45 — 49	97.1	93.9	96.1	89.7	95.7	96.0
50 — 54	94.9	89.7	92.2	87.1	89.6	92.2
55 — 59	88.1	84.8	78.1	85.8	70.7	86.0
60 — 64	80.9	77.0	69.4	79.3	52.5	67.9
65 and Over	63.2	54.3	48.9	56.5	28.6	40.5
Females						
10 — 14	—	9.5	6.5	13.1	1.7	25.6*
15 — 19	11.2	31.1	34.0	31.5	50.7	62.4
20 — 24	30.2	33.2	52.8	34.4	78.4	69.2
25 — 29	24.4	36.1	44.1	35.8	58.7	69.8
30 — 34	20.3	38.5	40.8	36.2	44.2	69.9
35 — 39	19.4	42.3	43.1	38.3	37.1	70.4
40 — 44	19.6	45.1	44.2	40.0	33.2	69.4
45 — 49	20.3	46.2	42.3	38.7	26.5	67.4
50 — 54	21.6	44.7	37.7	36.5	20.4	62.5
55 — 59	22.8	40.1	32.6	33.4	14.5	55.2
60 — 64	18.8	32.0	26.7	28.6	11.3	38.9
65 and Over	11.6	18.8	19.0	17.7	6.4	17.7

* Refers to age group 11 — 14.

generally rises steeply at the teenage group to nearly the maximum in the early twenties and then moves up very greatly to reach the peak of above 90 per cent in the late thirties, after which it declines gradually at first and then somewhat faster after the fifties. This pattern merely reflects the conventional attitude that men are expected to engage in economic activity the moment they are ready to do so and to continue working until they reach retirement age. The differences that exist among the male rates are relatively minor; the only exception concerns the much lower participation at the very young and old ages in the nonagricultural country of Singapore.

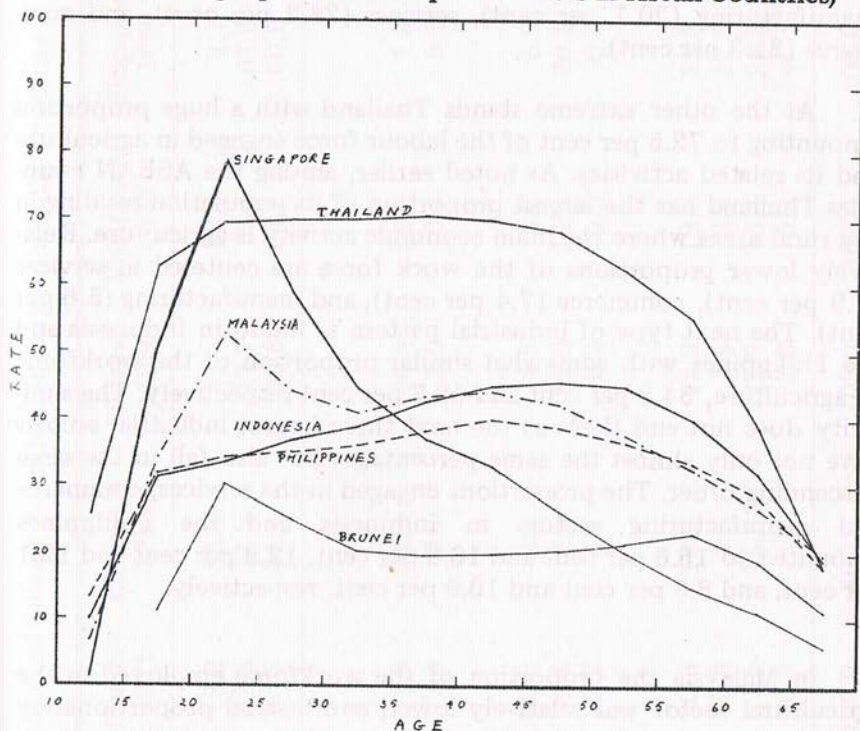
Apart from participating in the labour force at a much lower level than men at almost all ages, the women display a completely different pattern of participation over the working age range. Furthermore, Table 6 also reveals that there appears to be a diversity in the pattern of age-specific participation rates among the women in the ASEAN countries. First of all, we can distinguish the pattern of participation rates into those with a single peak and those with two peaks. The single-peak pattern exists in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. In Brunei the female participation rate rises quickly to reach the peak of 30.2 per cent in the early twenties and after that it falls regularly to 19.4 per cent in the late thirties, and then rises again to 22.8 per cent in the late fifties. In Malaysia the up-down movement takes place within a narrow age range, reaching the peak of 52.8 per cent in the early twenties, dipping down to 40.8 per cent in the early thirties, and rising again to 44.2 per cent in the early forties. This two-peak pattern is a result of women withdrawing from the labour force on account of marriage and/or child care and reentering the labour force in subsequent years.

A closer examination of the figures for the other four countries shows that there are significant differences in the single-peak pattern of participation rates among the women in these countries. As is already well-known, the Thai women record extremely high participation rates, rising quickly to 62.4 per cent in the 15-19 age group and remaining well above this level up to the 50-54 age group. The Singapore women also display an unusual pattern, rising very rapidly from 1.7 per cent to the peak of 78.4 per cent in the early twenties and then descending quite conspicuously to relatively low levels in the fifties and sixties. The Philippine and Indonesian women appear to exhibit somewhat similar patterns; the participation rates move up moderately to slightly above 30 per cent in the 15-19 age group and then rises gently to the peak of 40.0 per cent in the 45-49 age group in the Philippines and 46.2 per cent in the 45-49 age group in Indo-

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nesia. The variety of female participation rate patterns may be attributed to the diverse economic, social and cultural factors in the ASEAN countries affecting the participation of women in economic activity.

(Female Age-specific Participation Rates in Asean Countries)



Industrial Structure

The distribution of the labour force according to major industrial sectors in the six ASEAN countries is presented in Table 7. In interpreting these figures we should take note that a preponderance of employment in agriculture is often considered as one of the conspicuous marks of the underdeveloped economy, and hence the relative share of the agricultural sector in total labour force is widely used as an indication of economic development. The transformation of the economy from one dominated by agriculture to one by nonagricultural industries, yielding greater output per unit of labour and employing a major share of the labour force, is generally

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regarded as indispensable for achieving satisfactory levels of income and material well-being of the population. In this lies the significance of the extremely low proportion of 1.6 per cent of the labour force engaged in agriculture in Singapore which has a per capita income many times those in the other ASEAN countries, except Brunei. In this city-state, heavy concentration of the labour force is found in manufacturing (30.1 per cent), services (28.2 per cent), and commerce (21.3 per cent).

At the other extreme stands Thailand with a huge proportion amounting to 72.5 per cent of the labour force engaged in agriculture and its related activities. As noted earlier, among the ASEAN countries Thailand has the largest proportion of its population residing in the rural areas where the main economic activity is agriculture. Relatively lower proportions of the work force are centered in services (7.9 per cent), commerce (7.4 per cent), and manufacturing (5.6 per cent). The next type of industrial pattern is found in Indonesia and the Philippines with somewhat similar proportion of the workforce in agriculture, 54.8 per cent and 52.7 per cent respectively. The similarity does not end there as the next three largest industrial sectors have not only almost the same percentages but also fall in the same descending order. The proportions engaged in the services, commerce and manufacturing sectors in Indonesia and the Philippines amounted to 15.6 per cent and 16.6 per cent, 12.9 per cent and 12.1 per cent, and 8.5 per cent and 10.9 per cent, respectively.

In Malaysia the proportion of the workforce employed in the agricultural sector was relatively lower, and instead proportionately more workers were found in the services and manufacturing sectors. Some 40.4 per cent of the workforce were working in the agricultural sector, and 22.9 per cent in services and 13.0 per cent in manu-

facturing. In recent years many manufacturing concerns were established in Peninsular Malaysia, especially in Selangor and Penang. The importance of oil in the economy of Brunei was reflected in the industrial structure of the labour force. Unlike the other ASEAN countries, Brunei has an appreciable proportion of the workforce (7.3%) engaged in the mining and quarrying sector. Besides, significantly larger proportions were working in the services sector with 37.5 per cent and in the construction sector with 20.2 per cent. The agricultural sector managed to absorb only 11.9 per cent of the labour force. The differences in the industrial structure of the labour force can be conveniently summarised into three broad national groups, viz. primary, secondary and tertiary. These figures, also shown in Table 7, underline more precisely the different kinds of industrial structures.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper we have observed the considerable variety in the growth of population in the ASEAN countries on account of different levels of mortality and fertility. Differential population growth and economic progress have in turn resulted in the labour force recording different rates of increase in these countries. We have also noted the similarity and diversity in the level and type of labour force participation rates as well as in the industrial structure of the labour force among these countries. The diverse labour force dimensions prevailing in the ASEAN region are largely the product of changes in the structure of the society and economy in the process of economic development in the recent past. It is therefore to be expected that the nature of problems in the field of manpower is not identical for each country, nor does it necessarily remain the same for any particular country over a period of time.

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