

Reframing Social Protection within Development Paradigms: A Study of Malaysia's Survivors' Pension Scheme

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ABSTRACT

The interplay between social protection strategies and economic resilience, particularly in mitigating poverty, has gained substantial prominence within developmental and welfare policy frameworks. Notably, survivors' pension schemes stand out for their critical support to poor families grappling with the aftermath of losing primary earners. This study provides an overview of Malaysia's Survivors' Pension Scheme, an integral facet of the national social safety net designed to aid families mourning the loss of breadwinners.

This study contrasts evaluations of the scheme's outreach and efficacy beneficiaries, thus offering a comprehensive overview of its socioeconomic impacts. Employing a detailed amount of information regarding the scheme's coverage, distributive metrics, and fiscal expenditures, coupled with beneficiary, this enables a thorough overview of the Survivors' Pension's operational mechanisms and its broader socio-economic repercussions on recipient families.

Initial study affirms the Survivors' Pension Scheme's essential role in diminishing financial vulnerability and countering social exclusion among qualified families. The study reveals marked enhancements in income stability and a decrease in poverty rates among recipients. Nonetheless, the study also identifies pressing concerns regarding the scheme's reach and future viability, exacerbated by demographic trends and economic limitations. The Survivors' Pension Scheme is identified as a pivotal element of Malaysia's social protection infrastructure, effectively safeguarding at-risk populations from economic challenges. However, the findings prompt the need for strategic reforms to augment the scheme's inclusivity and ensure its fiscal sustainability.

Proposed reforms encompass broadening eligibility conditions, revising benefit allocations, and amalgamating the Survivors' Pension with a more encompassing universal social protection framework. This study advocates for ongoing monitoring of the scheme's modifications and their socioeconomic effects, evidence-based approach to social policy innovation.

Keywords: Social protection; Survivors' pension; Social safety nets; Economic resilience; Social security systems; Policy reform; Income stability

INTRODUCTION

The social protection framework in Malaysia aims to address the needs and vulnerabilities of its population, including providing support for individuals facing various risks such as poverty, unemployment, disability, and old age. In line with global trends, Malaysia has recognized the importance of social protection in

addressing poverty and vulnerability. This recognition has led to the establishment of various social protection programs in the country, including the Survivors' Pension. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is designed to provide financial assistance to the dependents of deceased breadwinners. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is part of the country's efforts to ensure social assistance and address poverty and vulnerability. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia aims to provide a safety net for families who have lost their main source of income due to the death of a breadwinner. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia provides a monthly pension to eligible beneficiaries, including widows, widowers, and children of the deceased breadwinner. It aims to alleviate the financial burden faced by these families and provide them with a steady income source [1]–[4].

The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is an important component of the country's social protection system. It plays a crucial role in providing support and assistance to families who have lost their primary breadwinners. The program recognizes the impact of such loss on the financial stability and well-being of these families and seeks to mitigate the economic hardships they may face. The program also aims to prevent further social exclusion and vulnerability by ensuring that these families have access to necessary resources and support. Furthermore, the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is implemented within a broader social protection framework that includes other programs such as healthcare coverage and poverty alleviation programs. These programs work together to provide a comprehensive social safety net for individuals and families in Malaysia, addressing various forms of risk and vulnerability. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia aims to bridge the gap in social protection coverage, as more than 50% of the economically active population is not covered by any formal social security system. The program recognizes the need for financial support for vulnerable populations, including those in the rural and informal sectors and the unemployed. This program is a vital step towards achieving more inclusive social protection and reducing poverty and vulnerability in Malaysia [5].

The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is necessary to cover a larger number of localities and beneficiaries to effectively reduce the vulnerability of the older population. The expansion of the program, while crucial for addressing the needs of a growing population, presents challenges in terms of its fiscal cost. Implementing the Survivors' Pension program is a necessary and important step in expanding social protection in Malaysia to ensure that vulnerable populations, such as those in the older population, are adequately supported and protected. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the older population and providing financial support to families who have lost their primary breadwinners [6].

UNDERSTANDING SURVIVORS' PENSION SCHEMES

Survivors' pension schemes are a crucial component of social protection systems in many countries, including Malaysia. These schemes provide financial support to the families of deceased individuals, particularly those who were the primary income earners. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia recognizes the impact of the loss of a primary breadwinner on families and aims to alleviate the economic hardships faced by these families. The program acknowledges the vulnerability of certain populations, such as those in the rural and informal sectors and the unemployed and seeks to provide them with the necessary resources and support to meet their basic needs. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is crucial in order to reach a larger number of localities and beneficiaries, as well as to address the increasing vulnerability of the older population [7]–[10].

Expanding the program will require careful consideration of the fiscal cost, as projections indicate significant increases in program expenses in the short, medium, and long terms. However, it is important to note that despite the expansion of the Survivors' Pension program, there are still challenges in terms of coverage. More than 50% of the economically active population in Malaysia is not covered by social

security, including survivors' pension schemes. To ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the Survivors' Pension program, it is crucial for Malaysia to address the imbalances in its pension system and improve coverage for all segments of the population, including the rural and informal sector workers and the unemployed [10]–[14].

The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia aims to provide financial support to vulnerable populations, particularly families who have lost their primary breadwinners, and to reduce their vulnerability by ensuring they have a source of income to meet their minimum needs. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia reflects the government's commitment to reducing vulnerability among the older population. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is a crucial component of the social protection system, providing financial support to families who have lost their primary income earners and helping to alleviate economic hardships. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is necessary to address the growing imbalance between the population entitled to a retirement pension and those who reach age 60 or older. This expansion is essential to ensure that more people have access to financial support in their retirement years, especially those who are most vulnerable and may not have other sources of income. Without better planning and preparation for retirement life, the financial readiness of Malaysians for their retirement days could worsen. Therefore, it is imperative for the Malaysian government to prioritize the expansion and improvement of social security programs like the Survivors' Pension, as well as to encourage individual savings and financial planning for retirement. In order to address the challenges and improve the effectiveness of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, it is necessary for the government to expand coverage to include a larger number of localities and beneficiaries, particularly those in the rural and informal sectors and the unemployed. Moreover, it is crucial for the government to consider the fiscal cost of the program and explore different scenarios to determine its long-term sustainability [15]–[18].

The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is essential to ensure that vulnerable populations, particularly families who have lost their primary breadwinners, have access to financial support and are not left in a state of vulnerability. The expansion of the program, with the aim of covering a larger number of localities and beneficiaries, focuses on diminishing the vulnerability of the older population. However, this expansion represents a challenge in terms of the fiscal cost of the program. Using population projections for the next decades, it is crucial to calculate different scenarios to determine the costs of the program. Additionally, it is important to consider the needs and expenses of retirees, especially those living in urban areas with high living costs. Therefore, it is imperative for the Malaysian government to prioritize the expansion and improvement of social security programs like the Survivors' Pension, as well as to encourage individual savings and financial planning for retirement. Moreover, the government should consider implementing a budget-financed universal social pension to provide financial security for all Malaysians in their retirement years. The expansion of the program, alongside the implementation of a budget-financed universal social pension, is necessary to address the existing gaps in social security coverage and ensure that all Malaysians have access to a reliable and adequate source of income in their old age. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is essential to ensure that vulnerable populations, particularly families who have lost their primary breadwinners, have access to financial support and are not left in a state of vulnerability[6], [17].

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SURVIVORS' PENSION IN MALAYSIA

The eligibility criteria for Survivors' Pension in Malaysia vary depending on the specific program and its requirements. In general, Survivors' Pension is available to individuals who have lost their primary breadwinners, such as spouses or parents, and who meet certain age and income criteria. These criteria may include being a Malaysian citizen or permanent resident, reaching a certain age (such as 55 years old for the MySalam program), and having a household income below a certain threshold. Some programs may also

have additional criteria, such as being a registered member of the Social Security Organization or having contributed to the Employees Provident Fund. In order to ensure the adequacy of the CPF savings system in Singapore, it is important to consider the expenditure side of the lifetime budget of the elderly and estimate the present value of retirement consumption. This can be done by calibrating subsistence and medical expenses of the elderly, forecasting cohort survival probability by age and sex, and generating yield curves to discount future cash flows. Furthermore, it is crucial to address the coverage gap in social security programs in Malaysia. This can be achieved by expanding the eligibility criteria for Survivors' Pension to include a broader range of individuals, such as those in the informal sector and unemployed individuals [13], [19].

Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the Survivors' Pension program is sustainable in the long term. This can be done by conducting population projections to determine the future costs of the program and exploring different scenarios to manage these costs effectively. To address the challenges of an ageing population, Malaysia can consider implementing measures to increase eligibility ages for state pensions, abolish early retirement arrangements, and shift some of the risk and responsibility for an adequate standard of living after retirement from the government, employers, and pension funds to individuals and private households. One possible solution is to promote financial literacy and education among individuals to help them make informed pension-related decisions that are in their best interest. In conclusion, the adequacy of social security programs in both Singapore and Malaysia depends on various factors such as eligibility criteria, coverage gaps, sustainability, and the ability to meet the future consumption needs of the elderly [20].

BENEFITS OF THE MALAYSIAN SURVIVORS' PENSION

The Survivors' Pension in Malaysia provides financial support to individuals who have lost their breadwinner and are facing financial difficulties. This pension ensures that the surviving family members have a source of income to meet their basic needs and maintain their quality of life. Additionally, the Survivors' Pension helps to alleviate poverty among vulnerable groups, such as widows, children, and elderly dependents. The Survivors' Pension also promotes social protection and reduces the vulnerability of the older population in Malaysia. By providing financial assistance to those who have lost their primary source of income, the Survivors' Pension helps to alleviate poverty and improve the overall well-being of individuals and families left behind after the loss of a breadwinner. However, it is crucial to evaluate the coverage of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia and ensure that it includes a broader range of individuals, such as rural and informal sector workers, to ensure that no one is left behind in terms of social security coverage [7], [10].

Furthermore, it is important for the Malaysian government to regularly review and update the Survivors' Pension program to keep up with the changing needs and demographics of the population and ensure that it remains an effective and sustainable social protection measure. To meet the challenges of an ageing population, eligibility ages for state pensions have increased, early retirement arrangements have been abolished, and a substantial part of the responsibility for retirement income has shifted to individuals. The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia plays a crucial role in providing financial support to individuals who have lost their breadwinner and are facing financial difficulties. The program helps to alleviate poverty and improve the overall well-being of individuals and families left behind after the loss of a breadwinner [13], [14], [21].

The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia is a vital social protection measure aimed at providing financial support to individuals who have lost their breadwinner and are facing financial difficulties. It ensures that vulnerable groups, such as widows, children, and elderly dependents, have a source of income to meet their basic needs and maintain their quality of life. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension

program in Malaysia is a critical step towards diminishing the vulnerability of the older population. The expansion of the program, however, presents a challenge in terms of its fiscal cost. To ensure the sustainability of the program, it is important for the Malaysian government to carefully assess the costs and benefits of expanding the Survivors' Pension program and explore funding options to ensure its long-term viability [12].

The expansion of the program, with the aim of covering a larger number of localities and beneficiaries, focuses on diminishing the vulnerability of the older population. The expansion of the program, with the aim of covering a larger number of localities and beneficiaries, focuses on diminishing the vulnerability of the older population. However, this expansion represents a challenge in terms of the fiscal cost of the program. To address the challenges posed by the changing needs and demographics of the population, it is essential to thoroughly evaluate and adapt the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia [10], [17].

The Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia must be continuously evaluated and adapted to meet the changing needs and demographics of the population, while also considering the fiscal sustainability of the program. To ensure the long-term viability of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, it is crucial for the government to carefully assess the costs and benefits of expanding the program and explore alternative funding options. To ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, it is crucial for the government to carefully assess the costs and benefits of the program expansion and explore sustainable funding options. To ensure the long-term viability and effectiveness of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, it is crucial for the government to carefully assess the costs and benefits of expanding the program and explore sustainable funding options [10], [18], [22].

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SURVIVORS' PENSION

The application process for the Survivors' Pension in Malaysia involves several steps. Applicants must first gather all the necessary documents, such as identification proof, proof of relationship with the deceased, and relevant financial information. They then need to fill out the application form and submit it along with the required documents to the designated government agency or office. The government agency (SOCISO) will review the application and assess the eligibility of the applicant. If approved, the applicant will start receiving the Survivors' Pension benefits on a regular basis. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Survivors' Pension Program is to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted. This can include periodic reviews of the program's impact on beneficiaries, its financial sustainability, and the overall effectiveness of its implementation [6].

The government should also consider conducting stakeholder consultations to gather feedback and input from beneficiaries, experts, and other relevant parties. The findings and framework of the study will be useful for Malaysians in preparing for proper retirement planning in their lives. Additionally, the study can serve as a guideline for the government and policymakers, as well as banking and financial institutions, in meeting the needs and demands of the market. The expansion of the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia presents both costs and benefits that must be carefully assessed. The costs include the fiscal burden of providing pension benefits to a larger number of beneficiaries, while the benefits include the reduction of vulnerability among the older population [17].

CHALLENGES FACING SURVIVORS' PENSION BENEFICIARIES

Survivors' Pension beneficiaries in Malaysia may face various challenges that need to be addressed. Some of these challenges include [7], [8], [10], [13], [19], [23]:

A. Limited financial resources:

Many Survivors' Pension beneficiaries may struggle financially as the pension amount may not be sufficient to cover their living expenses, especially with the rising costs of living.

B. Lack of financial literacy:

Some beneficiaries may not have the knowledge or skills to effectively manage their pension funds and make informed financial decisions.

C. Poor health and lack of access to healthcare:

Some beneficiaries may have health issues that require medical attention, but they may not have the means to afford proper medical care due to limited financial resources.

D. Lack of social support:

Survivors' Pension beneficiaries may experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially if they have lost their spouse or loved ones.

E. Lack of employment opportunities:

Some Survivors' Pension beneficiaries may face difficulties in finding employment or generating additional income, which can further impact their financial situation and ability to sustain their livelihoods. To address these challenges, it is important for the government to provide financial education and literacy programs for Survivors' Pension beneficiaries. These programs can empower beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage their pension funds, make informed financial decisions, and plan for their future.

Furthermore, there is a need to improve access to affordable healthcare for Survivors' Pension beneficiaries. This can be done through the establishment of healthcare programs or initiatives that provide affordable or subsidized medical services to this vulnerable group. Additionally, social support networks should be established to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation among Survivors' Pension beneficiaries [11].

This can be done through community programs, support groups, or initiatives that promote social interaction and inclusion. Furthermore, efforts should be made to create employment opportunities and support entrepreneurship among Survivors' Pension beneficiaries. By creating job training programs, providing financial incentives for businesses to hire older individuals, and promoting entrepreneurship among Survivors' Pension beneficiaries, they can have additional sources of income and improve their financial stability. To address these challenges, it is important for the government to provide financial education and literacy programs for Survivors' Pension beneficiaries. These programs can help improve their understanding of financial concepts, retirement planning, and wealth management. Additionally, targeted financial education efforts should be implemented to address the widespread financial illiteracy among older individuals, particularly women, minorities, and the least educated members of society. These efforts can help ensure that Survivors' Pension beneficiaries have the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed financial decisions and secure a comfortable retirement [12].

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN MALAYSIA

The prospects of social protection in Malaysia, particularly for survivors' pension, are promising. There is a growing recognition of the importance of retirement planning and adequate savings, especially as Malaysia is expected to become an aged nation in the next two decades. The government and policymakers are

increasingly focused on developing policies and programs to address the challenges faced by survivors' pension beneficiaries, such as low coverage, inadequate pensions, and insufficient financial literacy. Measures are being taken to increase social support for retirement savings and enhance financial knowledge and management abilities [23].

In addition, targeted efforts are being made to address the specific needs of certain groups, such as women, minorities, and the least educated members of society. These efforts aim to ensure that all survivors' pension beneficiaries have the opportunity to secure a comfortable retirement and improve their financial stability by promoting entrepreneurship and providing resources such as financial education and access to financial products and services. The implementation of tax incentives to promote additional savings for old-age income protection, along with improvements in public education and awareness about retirement planning, will play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of social protection for survivors' pension in Malaysia [11].

Overall, the future prospects for social protection and survivors' pension in Malaysia are promising as the government and policymakers recognize the importance of retirement planning and financial literacy for the well-being and financial security of retirees. The findings also indicate that targeted efforts should be made to improve financial literacy and education among the Malay and Muslim groups, who are among the least financially literate and most risk averse. In conclusion, there is a need for effective measures to increase social support for retirement savings and enhance financial knowledge and management abilities in Malaysia [11].

Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Survivors' Pension Programs [12], [22], [23]:

A. The government should develop and implement measures to increase social support for retirement savings, such as providing tax incentives or matching contributions for individuals who contribute to their own retirement savings accounts.

B. Financial education programs should be implemented to enhance the financial knowledge and management abilities of survivors' pension beneficiaries. Targeted efforts should be made to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, minorities, and the least educated members of society, by providing resources, support, and targeted financial education programs to improve their financial literacy and ability to manage their retirement savings effectively.

C. The government should work on improving public education and awareness about the importance of retirement planning, particularly focusing on social life planning. Measures should be taken to promote entrepreneurship and provide resources for individuals to access financial education and financial products and services. Financial services providers should specifically target the Malay and Muslim groups, who are both interested in financial services but also have lower financial literacy levels and higher risk aversion.

D. The government should collaborate with financial institutions and community organizations to offer culturally sensitive and tailored financial education programs to improve the financial literacy of the Malay and Muslim groups.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS' PENSION MODELS

In order to improve the social protection system for retirees, Malaysia can draw lessons from international survivors' pension models such as those implemented in countries like Australia, Singapore, and Germany. These countries have implemented comprehensive survivors' pension programs with various features, such as automatic enrolment, employer contributions, and tax incentives, which have successfully encouraged

private retirement savings [10].

Measures that have been effective in other countries, such as automatic enrollment and employer contributions, should be considered for implementation in Malaysia's survivors' pension programs to encourage more individuals to contribute to their own retirement savings accounts. For the Survivors' Pension program in Malaysia, it is crucial to develop and implement measures that can increase social support for retirement savings and enhance the financial knowledge and management ability of workers, ultimately leading to increased engagement in private retirement savings [13].

Additionally, offering a tax incentive for individuals to save for old-age income protection could be a promising policy option for the Malaysian government. This incentive can encourage individuals to save more and ensure that they have sufficient income during retirement [22].

Given the potential of boomer women as a lucrative segment for financial services, it is important for financial marketers in Malaysia to seize this opportunity and develop targeted financial products and services for this group. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of boomer women, financial marketers can tailor their offerings to cater to this segment effectively. The findings of the study on financial literacy, financial behavior, and retirement planning behavior among Malaysian government officers suggest that there is a high level of financial literacy among government officers in Malaysia. As Malaysia is expected to become an aged nation in the next two decades, it is crucial for the government and policymakers to prioritize retirement planning and ensure that adequate savings options are available to all individuals [22].

Overall, it is important for Malaysia to prioritize the development of policies and initiatives that increase social support for retirement savings, enhance financial knowledge and management abilities, and provide incentives for individuals to save for their old-age income protection. In summary, the findings of the study on financial literacy, financial behavior, and retirement planning among Malaysian government officers indicate that there is a need for increased understanding and promotion of retirement planning among Malaysians, particularly those with lower financial literacy and higher risk aversion [19].

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SURVIVORS' PENSION ON MALAYSIAN SOCIETY

The introduction of Survivors' Pension in Malaysia has had a significant economic impact on Malaysian society. It has provided a crucial safety net for individuals and families who have lost their primary breadwinner, ensuring that they are not left financially vulnerable [11].

This has helped to alleviate poverty and reduce the burden on social welfare programs. Additionally, Survivors' Pension has also contributed to the overall economic stability of the country by promoting financial resilience and preventing intergenerational poverty. Furthermore, Survivors' Pension has had positive effects on consumer spending and economic growth, as beneficiaries are able to maintain their purchasing power and continue contributing to the economy. Overall, Survivors' Pension has played a vital role in providing financial security for individuals and families in Malaysia, contributing to the well-being of society and fostering economic stability and growth [19].

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