

**OBSERVATORY ON AGEING**

**LEISURE**

**AND**

**RECREATION REPORT**

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# Report on Leisure and Recreation Observatory on Ageing

## Executive Summary

### **BACKGROUND**

The percentage of population aged 60 years and over stood at 12.3% in 2012 compared to 9.1% in the year 2000 and 8% in 1990. The Mauritian population continues to show an ageing trend and it is therefore crucial that we fully understand the implications of an ageing population. It is imperative that we take the necessary steps to enhance our physical and institutional infrastructures, as well as the decisional framework, so as to take good care of our elders.

Researchers have found that a person who is active during leisure time would lead to a better quality of life. However, based on records available from day care centers and the social welfare division in Mauritius, only a few of our elderly persons participate in physical and other leisure activities set up by the parent ministry. This implies that there might be some existing barriers among the elderly persons to participate in those activities.

The primary aim of this study is to identify and examine the constraints presently being faced by elderly persons with regards to their participation in activities organised for them by the Ministry for Social Security, National Solidarity & reform institutions. Identifying these barriers will be helpful to the Ministry in revamping its approach with regards to the leisure and recreational activities presently being organised for our elderly. This study takes a deep insight into the leisure behaviours of our elderly, the difficulties they presently encounter, as well as their proposal for the future. The identification and elimination of the leisure barriers/constraints will bring elderly persons with quality leisure which is accessible to them and will also improve their level of satisfaction with regards to their quality of life.

### **METHOD**

A sample of 250 elderly people (male and female) aged  $\geq 60$  to 80+ years has been selected through the convenience sampling technique to take part in an interview. For data collection purpose, a research instrument, in the form of a structured interview schedule was developed. Questions set pertained mainly to key aspects in the participation of our elderly in leisure activities organised by the Ministry and were related to factors such as their health, finance, daily schedule, level of awareness, ease of access, as well as hindrances, motivators and suggestions for improvements in the future.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Health conditions is not a deterrent for participation in leisure activities

In spite of the fact that 72.8% of respondents reported to be suffering from at least a disease/ illness and 6.4% of respondents even reported to be suffering of physical impairment/s, an overwhelming majority of the elderly queried (80%) were clearly of the opinion that these health issues were not acting as a deterrent for participating in leisure and recreational activities. On the contrary, a high proportion of our elderly considered leisure activities as being of utmost importance, in spite of their poor health.

### Finance does impact on level of participation

When financial position is cross-tabulated with membership in senior citizen associations, a significant relationship is noted. Indeed, amongst those reporting an excellent/ good financial position, 74% reported to be a member of a senior citizen association or day care centre. However, it is the case for only 40% of those who reported their financial situation as being fair. The figures go down to 31.8% amongst those who considered their finance to be bad/ very poor. The same trend is noted with regards to membership of other clubs involved in leisure activities as well.

### Daily activities is not a deterrent

In spite of the fact that women put in much more hours in terms of household chores and personal care than men, this does not act as a deterrent for their participation in leisure activities organised by the ministry. In fact, based on data analysed, no significant relationship has been established between hours of free time and participation in leisure activities. Indeed, whilst 60% of the elderly who reported 3 hours or less as free time were members of senior citizens organization, it was the case for 62% of those who had between 4-6 hrs of free time daily. However, amongst those with 7 hrs or more of free time, only 20% reported to be a member of a senior citizen association. In spite of their daily commitments, the elderly are, in general, able to find time for leisure activities.

### Our elders attach a lot of importance to leisure activities

When queried with regards to the importance of leisure in their life, it is clear that, irrespective of their age, gender, marital status, and whether they live in town or villages, the elderly attach a lot of importance to it. Indeed, for some 85% of men and 79% of women, leisure was reported as being important or very important. The most popular activities amongst our elders are: Watching TV (76.71%) Listening to radio (42.57%) followed by Morning Walk (38.55%), Gardening (26.91%) and Visiting relatives (26.51%). However, when these leisure activities are dissected on a gender basis, the most popular leisure activities (over and above TV and Radio which are common to both men and women) are as follows: For Men, Gardening (12%), Gentle Physical exercise (10%), visiting relatives (9%) and jogging (5%) are the most popular activities. For women, visiting relatives (10%) is followed by Gardening (9%), Shopping (6%) and Dance (5%).

This study also reveals that there are a number of activities which are presently being 'under-exploited' and which could be very enriching and entertaining for our elders. Indeed, the survey carried out with our elderly shows that activities such as playing (or learning to play) musical instruments, Yoga, Singing, Tai Chi, Fishing, Physical exercise and drawing all have the potential to entertain more of our elderly whilst maintaining their physical and emotional well-being.

## **Level of awareness and ease of access can still be improved**

The overall level of awareness with regards to leisure activities organised by the parent Ministry stood at 85.20%. This is a clear indicator that the parent Ministry is doing a good job in terms of visibility with regards to leisure activities organised. Still, with regards to place of stay, there is a minor distinction in terms of level of awareness for those living in urban (88%), semi-urban (85%), and rural areas (84%). Also, even if a high percentage of respondents are aware that the parent ministry has set up leisure activities for them, information pertaining to all the specific courses/ programmes available is not reaching all of the potential consumers of these services. There is therefore a need to put in additional efforts to ensure that each and everyone is given the opportunity to participate in activities organised, especially in the rural areas.

As far as ease of access is concerned, whilst more than ¾ of our elderly have the required information pertaining to centres where the elderly meet, there is still some work to be done at this level to ensure that the remaining 20-25% are also made aware of same. When asked whether the center is close to their place of residence, and easily accessible, 90% of those who were aware of its location pointed out that it was close and accessible. However, out of the 10% of negative responses obtained, the geographical breakdown was as follows: Urban: 4%; Semi-Urban:4.5%; Rural: 1.5%. This denotes that the centres are considered as being slightly more close and accessible in rural areas as compared to the semi-urban and urban regions.

## **Membership/ Level of Participation is quite low**

Out of 250 elderly persons queried, only 60% reported that they were taking advantage of the leisure facilities that have been set up for them by the parent ministry. The level of membership of senior citizens associations stood at 65% amongst males queried, but was only of 57.7% amongst females. However, health and physical impairments are not the main factors explaining the high level of non-participation in leisure activities. As far as the place of stay is concerned, there is a clear demarcation with regards to the level of participation in semi-urban and urban areas as compared to rural areas. Indeed, whereas membership in citizens association and Day Care Centres stood at 40.2% and 49% respectively in semi-urban and urban regions respectively, 83.2% of respondents living in rural areas reported to be a member of a senior citizen association or day care centre. As such there is a need for a more aggressive campaign in urban regions so as to enlist more participation of the elderly. In that respect, a participative approach can be adopted, taking into account the hindrances and motivators of the elderly living in urban/ semi-urban localities, so as to devise ways to tackle them.

With regards to leisure activities which are more popular amongst our elders and in which they report to be more interested in, and participating more actively, responses obtained are as follows:

1. Outing
2. Camping
3. Indoor games
4. Literacy and other indoor activities

These activities remain popular across the different age group, and no significant change is noted, gender-wise or in terms of place of stay (urban, semi-urban and rural).

## **Main hindrances and motivators**

Given that some 38.4% of respondents reported that they were not participating in any leisure activity at all, whilst others were also facing a number of hindrances making participation in leisure activities difficult, It was therefore essential to analyse the main elements impeding on the participation of our elderly in leisure activities. Hindrances identified can be classified under 5 themes as follows:

- (i) Health and disability issues (28.05%)
- (ii) Interest issues (24.39%)
- (iii) Lack of Time (18.7%)

- (iv) Accessibility (13.01%)
- (v) Others (15.85%)

Therefore, in order to target a higher percentage of participation amongst our elderly in leisure activities organised for them, it is inevitable that a multi-pronged approach is required. This has to be in line with the difficulties being faced on the ground by our elders. As such, hindrances cannot be tackled in a generalized way.

On the other hand, friends and the family are two very important motivators in one's decision to engage in leisure activities. As such, informative sessions or other forms of communication can be addressed to relatives, encouraging them to register their elderly parent/s for leisure activities. Active members can also play an important role in bringing the elders in their immediate surroundings to join. On the other hand, professional advice can have a positive or negative influence, based on the health of the elderly. As professional advice is generally taken much more seriously than friends and relatives, information about leisure activities organised through the Ministry of Social Security can also be channeled through the local health centres/ dispensaries.

## **Proposals and suggestions for the future**

Based on responses obtained from the elderly, the latter are pressing for more information about facilities available and activities organised; more transport facilities and access service so as to ease their movement from their place to the centres; more of recreational centres; the involvement and support of friends and relatives; and the organisation of new activities for them.

What emerges out of this study is that the state is doing a lot already with regard to the organization of leisure activities of our elderly. However, there are a few areas where the intervention of the state needs to be reviewed and/ or upgraded so as to be in a better position to provide an improved service level to the public. A more targeted and participative approach can also prove to be very useful in improving the participation rate of our elderly. Active-ageing strategies have to be worked out. The role of the Day Care Centres have to be thoroughly reviewed and the necessary physical and human resources provided so as to re-visit the service delivery at the local level based on the realities on the ground, and the adoption of customer-oriented strategies.

## Introduction

During the twentieth century, life expectancy rose dramatically amongst the world's wealthiest populations from around 50 to over 75 years. According to UN statistics for the period 2005 - 2010, Japan (82.6 years) has the world's highest life expectancy followed by Hong Kong (82.2 years) and Iceland (81.8 years). The world average is 67.2 years and the UK average is 79.4 years. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors including improvements in public health, nutrition vaccinations and medicine. Mauritius is no exception to this rise in life expectancy. Indeed, from 58.75 years in 1960, life expectancy at birth grew to 69.5 in 1990 and reached 73.5 in 2012. Not only are we living longer than previous generation, but there is also encouraging reports showing positive trends with regards to healthy living. David Cutler, the Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics at Harvard University and author of many studies in the area of life expectancy and longevity reports that “the period of time in which we are in poor health is being compressed until just before the end of life. So where we used to see people who are very, very sick for the final six or seven years of their life, that’s now far less common. People are living to older ages and we are adding healthy years, not debilitated ones”.

In the Mauritian context, the population continues to show an ageing trend as depicted by Table 1 below:

YEAR	Male	Female	Total	%
<b>1962</b>	15,300	21,428	36,728	5.4
<b>1972</b>	21,708	27,466	49,174	6.0
<b>1983</b>	30,118	38,416	68,534	7.1
<b>1990</b>	37,806	47,694	85,500	8
<b>2000</b>	45,217	59,319	104,536	9.1
<b>2012</b>	67,102	87,267	154,369	12.3
<b>2032</b>	134,034	168,261	302,295	23
<b>2052</b>	158,912	199,975	358,887	30.2

Table 1: Population aged 60 and above  
(Adapted from The 2012 Family Planning and Demographic Yearbook )

The percentage of population aged 60 years and over stood at 12.3% in 2012 compared to 9.1% in the year 2000 and 8% in 1990. Given the growth in our elderly population that is being forecasted by our national demographic trends, it is crucial that we fully understand the implications of an ageing population and take the necessary steps to enhance our physical and institutional infrastructures, as well as the decisional framework, so as to take good care of our elders.

It is important for a caring nation to ensure that, over and above the rise in life-expectancy, our elders maintain a healthy living and benefit from a good quality of life. Thus the ‘happy-life expectancy’ measure and the ‘years of healthy living’ index need to grow in parallel with our life expectancy figures. In that respect, the emergence of leisure as a central aspect of the health of our citizen must be explored. Researchers have found that a person who is active during leisure time would lead to a better quality of life. However, based on records available from day care centers and the social



welfare division in Mauritius, only a few of our elderly persons participate in physical and other leisure activities set up by the parent ministry. This implies that there might be some existing barriers among the elderly persons to participate in those activities. There is therefore a need to identify those barriers that hinder the elderly persons from participating in leisure activities.

The primary aim of this study is to identify and examine the constraints presently being faced by elderly persons with regards to their participation in activities organised for them by the Ministry for Social Security, National Solidarity & reform institutions. Identifying these barriers to participation in leisure activities will be helpful to the Ministry in revamping its approach with regards to the leisure and recreational activities presently being organised for our elderly. This study therefore sheds light on the leisure behaviours of our elderly, the difficulties they presently encounter, as well as their proposal for the future. The identification and elimination of the leisure barriers/constraints will bring elderly persons with quality leisure which is accessible to them and will also improve their level of satisfaction with regards to their quality of life.

The legal framework for the protection and well-being of the elderly in Mauritius fall mainly within the following Acts: THE NATIONAL PENSIONS ACT of 1976; THE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME ACT of 2003; THE PROTECTION OF ELDERLY PERSONS ACT 2005 Act No. 16 of 2005 and the SENIOR CITIZENS COUNCIL ACT of 1995 (amended in 2011)

## Methodology

This study aims at taking a deep insight into the barriers hindering our elderly from participation in outside leisure activities. In order to reach this goal, sub-objectives have been set, and they are as follows:

- Analysing whether the health condition of our elderly is a deterrent.
- Considering Financial Issues and whether it impedes on level of Participation
- Taking stock of daily activities of our elderly and their involvement in leisure activities
- Examining the Importance our elderly attach to leisure
- Studying the level of awareness with regards activities organised for the elderly as well as the ease of Access to these leisure activities
- Evaluating the level of Participation, and identifying the hindrances and motivators
- Take stock of the views of the elderly on current activities organised as well as of their Proposals/ Improvements/ Suggestions for the future

### Population, sample and data-collection

This study focuses on people within the 60-80+ age group. Based on statistics from the Family Planning and Demographic Yearbook of 2012, the population within this age group constituted 12.3% of the population and consisted of 154369 persons. The breakdown is as follows:

Age-group	Number of people	% of population
60-64	58471	4.7
64-69	35868	2.9
70-75	24017	1.9
74-79	18096	1.4
80 & above	17917	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154369</b>	<b>12.3</b>

Table 2: Mauritius elderly population, 2012  
(Adapted from The 2012 Family Planning and Demographic Yearbook )

Given the tight time-frame for conducting the study, and for convenience purposes, it was decided that a sample of 250 elderly people (male and female) aged  $\geq 60$  to 80+ years would be selected to take part in an interview. For this purpose, a research instrument, in the form of a structured interview schedule was developed (see annex 1). Questions set pertained mainly to key aspects in the participation of our elderly in leisure activities organised by the Ministry and were related to factors such as their health, finance, daily schedule, level of awareness, ease of access, as well as hindrances, motivators and suggestions for improvements in the future.

So as to ensure that the data-collection exercise is done in a standard and scientific way, appropriate training of the field officers has been provided by the team leader and Mr. Peedoly from the Mauritius Research Council.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was also carried out to ensure that the questions are clear to one and all. Subjects for the pilot study were elderly persons visiting our day care centres. Modification of the research instrument was made, based on feedback obtained during this exercise.

**Access and Collection of Data**

The convenience sampling method was applied to identify the 250 elderly persons aged 60 to 80+years who would be requested to participate in the data collection exercise. The regions identified, and the sample for each region was as follows:

<b>URBAN - Rose-Hill, Vacoas and Port-Louis. persons</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>SEMI-URBAN- Henrietta, Camp Levieux and St Pierre (La Laura, Malinga etc.) persons</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>RURAL- Poste De Flacq, Bel Air, Chemin Grenier/Surinam, Coteau Raffin and Triolet</b>	<b>75 persons</b>

The survey was conducted by interviewing elderly persons at their residential places in the regions listed above. The sample was obtained by using the Basic Retirement Pension Lists and selected on a random basis. One in every 70 persons listed was selected, using the pay-site code registers of the regions under reference.

The sample size of 250 used is representative of the whole Mauritian population, consisting mainly of Basic Retirement Pensioners (BRP), BRP living alone and those visiting Elderly Day Care Centres. Selected persons were informed through a letter that was individually hand-delivered and only those who were willing to participate in the survey have been interviewed. The Data Collection process took place from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 to the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2013

**Composition of the Team working on Leisure and recreation of the elderly**

- Team Leader: S.Kullean (Senior Social Security Officer)
- Members
  - Mr. S.Munjhureea (Higher Social Security Officer)
  - Mrs. N.Bundhoo (Higher Social Security Officer)
  - Mrs. K.Sawaruth (Higher Social Security Officer)
  - Mrs. F.Bakurally (Higher Social Security Officer)
  - Mr P. Motah (STM intern)

### **Difficulties encountered**

The working team met with the following limitations/ constraints/difficulties during the data-collection exercise:

1. *The study was limited by the relatively small sample size (250 participants).*
2. *Some respondents, who had low educational level, found it difficult to understand and answer the questions.*
3. *Reluctance on the part of certain persons to reveal information. They believed that the field-officers were trying to probe into their personal life and financial situation.*
4. *Lack of cooperation on the part of some respondents, some even refused to participate and there has been unwillingness to answer questions in some cases.*
5. *Difficulties of access to some remote locations.*
6. *A few participants did not complete the exercise due to lack of interest the data-collection process.*
7. *Warm welcome by certain elderly persons but reluctance on the part of their children even though they have been made aware of the purpose of our visit.*

### **Data-Processing**

Data collected was coded, processed and analysed through the use of the SPSS software (version 16). The main findings obtained are presented in the following section.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Demographic Profile

This part of the analysis attempts to describe the respondents in terms of their socio-demographic profile, such as age, gender, education, income level, area of residence among others. The use of bar charts as well as their respective frequencies gives the end-user a true picture of the respondents.

#### Background information about respondents

The first part of the demographic profile deals with the gender proportion. Here, the ratio of female to male interviewee is 1.47 to 1. Indeed, out of 250 respondents, 101 are males and 149 females (Table 3 below). As a result, the study has captured more female participants, reflecting the fact that the women to men population stood at 1.3 to 1 in 2012 in the 60+ age group. With regards to the different age-groups, the sample was representative of the different age brackets and declined with age, thus being more or less representative of the trend in the actual population (Table 4 below).

Data was also disaggregated on a marital status basis so as to be in a position to analyse and compare leisure activities and the level of participation of the different groups (Table 5 below). Place of stay was also collected (Table 6 below) so as to be in a position to compare the views of respondents from an urban, semi-urban and rural background. As far as the financial situation of respondents is concerned, respondents were asked to identify their financial position on a scale ranging from poor to excellent and to select the category representing their monthly income (Figure 1 below):

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	101	40.4	40.4	40.4
	Female	149	59.6	59.6	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Gender of respondents

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	60-64 years	86	34.4	34.4	34.4
	65-69 years	78	31.2	31.2	65.6
	70-74 years	53	21.2	21.2	86.8
	75-79 years	20	8.0	8.0	94.8
	80* years	13	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Age-groups of respondents

**Marital Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	13	5.2	5.2	5.2
	Married	134	53.6	53.6	58.8
	Widow/er	91	36.4	36.4	95.2
	Divorced	4	1.6	1.6	96.8
	Separated	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Marital status of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	51	20.4	20.4	20.4
	Semi-Urban	92	36.8	36.8	57.2
	Rural	107	42.8	42.8	100.0

Table 6: Place of Stay of Respondents

Please select the category representing your average monthly revenue

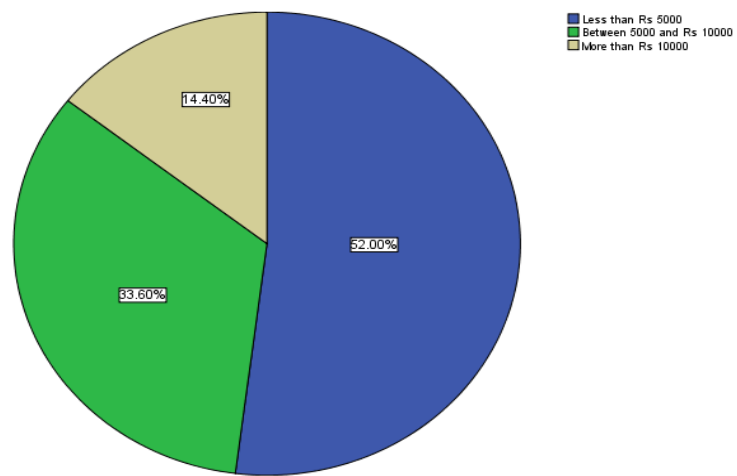
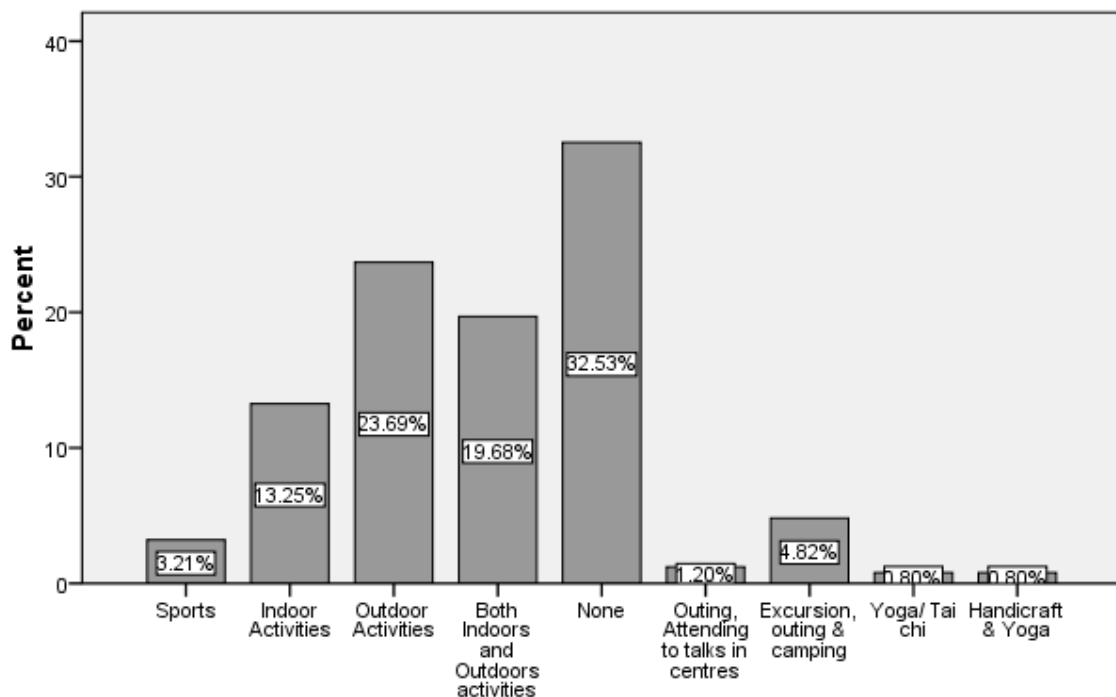


Figure 1: Average monthly revenue of respondents

## Health condition and participation in leisure activities

Respondents were queried with regards to the leisure activities they have been practicing in the past. Some 32.53% pointed out that they were not engaged in any such activities before. Indeed, many Mauritians are unable to do so during their active life, given the tight working schedules and their family commitment. Still, some 23.69% pointed out they used to practice outdoor activities; 19.68% mentioned indoor and outdoor activities and 13.25% reported to be engaged in indoor activities only (Figure 2 below).

### What are the leisure activities you have been practicing in the past?



### What are the leisure activities you have been practicing in the past?

Figure 2: Past leisure activities

When queried about their present health status, responses obtained are worrying, given that 72.8% of respondents reported to be suffering from at least a disease/ illness, and only 27.2% reported that they were in good health (Figure 3 below). 6.4% of respondents even reported that they were suffering of a physical impairment (Figure 4 below).



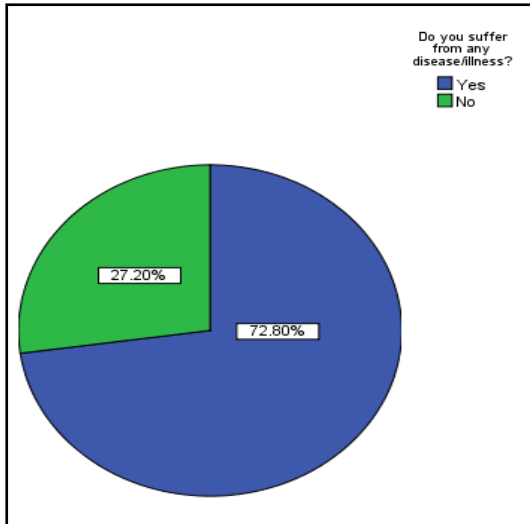


Figure 3: Health conditions

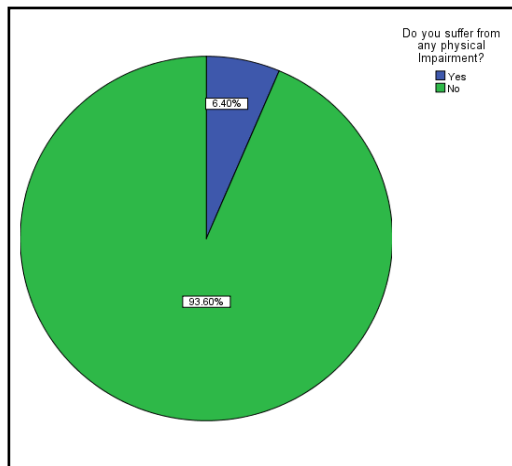


Figure 4: Physical Impairment

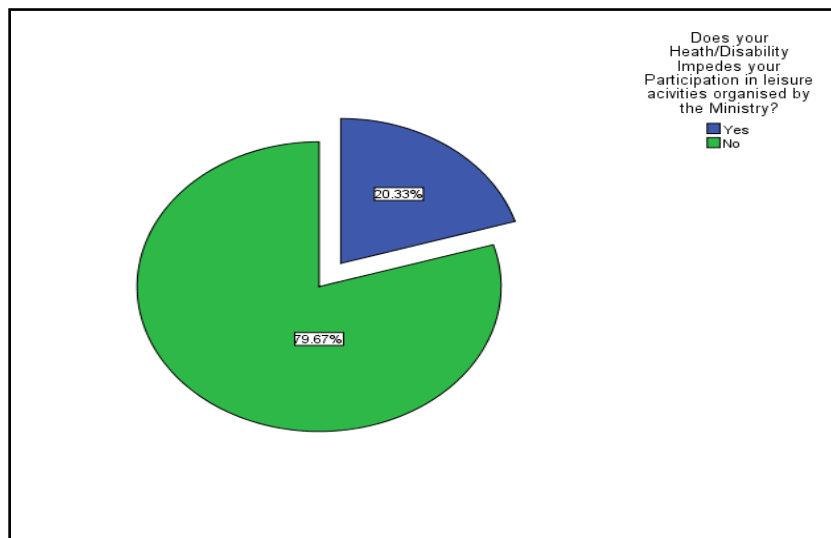


Figure 5: Health/ Disability and Participation

**Age \* Does your health condition prevent you from participating in leisure and recreation activities? Crosstabulation**

		Does your health condition prevent you from participating in leisure and recreation activities?		Total
		Yes	No	
Age	60-64 years	14	72	86
	65-69 years	13	65	78
	70-74 years	8	45	53
	75-79 years	3	17	20
	80* years	8	5	13
Total		46	204	250

Table 7: Age, Health condition and participation in leisure activities

It is important to outline the fact that, in spite of their health status, an overwhelming majority of the elderly queried (80%) were clearly of the opinion that these health issues were not acting as a deterrent for participating in leisure and recreational activities (Figure 5 above). Amongst those in the 60-79 years group, only 16% reported that their health condition was a deterrent for their participation in leisure activities. However, the situation is drastically different for those who are of 80 years and above where 61.5% of the respondents reported that their health condition was impeding on their participation in leisure activities (Table 7 above).

## Financial Issues and Level of Participation

### Finance

Respondents were asked to give a rating to their financial position. Some 38.4% reported that it was excellent/ Good, 44% that it was fair and 17.6% that it was bad / very poor (Table 8 below)

**Rate your own financial position**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	5	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Good	91	36.4	36.4	38.4
	Fair	110	44.0	44.0	82.4
	Bad	42	16.8	16.8	99.2
	Very poor	2	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Financial Position

When financial position is cross-tabulated with membership in senior citizen associations, a significant relationship is noted. Indeed, amongst those reporting an excellent/ good financial position, 74% reported to be a member of a senior citizen association or day care centre. However, it is the case for only 40% of those who reported their financial situation as being fair. The figures go down to 31.8% amongst those who considered their finance to be bad/ very poor (Table 9 below).

**Rate your own financial position \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

Count

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Rate your own financial position	Excellent	3	2	5
	Good	68	23	91
	Fair	66	44	110
	Bad	14	28	42
	Very poor	0	2	2
Total		151	99	250

Table 9: Financial Position and membership

This correlation is confirmed by the Pearson correlation test, where a correlation of 0.284 is noted (Table 10 below) between financial position and membership of senior citizen association or day care centre.

**Correlations**

		Rate your own financial position	Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?
Rate your own financial position	Pearson Correlation	1	.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?	Pearson Correlation	.284**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10: Financial position and membership of senior citizen association correlation

This relationship is noted with regards to membership of other clubs involved in leisure activities as well. Indeed, whilst 25% of those with a financial situation reported as excellent/ good were members of such clubs, it was the case for only 11.3% of those with bad/ very poor financial status (Table 11 below).

**Rate your own financial position \* Are you a member of any club involved in leisure activities?**

**Crosstabulation**

		Are you a member of any club involved in leisure activities?		Total
		Yes	No	
Rate your own financial position	Excellent	2	3	5
	Good	22	69	91
	Fair	9	101	110
	Bad	5	37	42
	Very poor	0	2	2
Total		38	212	250

Table 11: Financial position and membership of any club

The implication, therefore, is the need for the ministry to put in even more effort to ensure that the elderly are able to benefit from leisure activities organised for them, irrespective of their financial status. The challenge, however, is to devise strategies and to review policies so as to give the opportunity to those who are working or who have family commitment to benefit from the activities of the parent Ministry. In that process, one of the key steps that need to be undertaken is a thorough evaluation of the daily activities of the Day Care Centers. Indeed, by carrying out an analysis of the range and depth of activities presently being offered by these centers, as well as a comprehensive review of the physical infrastructures and human resources committed to these centers, the parent ministry will be in a better position to make an optimum use of these centers, based on the requirements at local level.

## Daily activities and involvement in leisure activities

When queried with regards to their daily schedule, and the number of hours they spend daily on household chores and personal care, it is clear that women put in much more hours than men. Indeed, Figure 6 below clearly outlines the fact that a higher number of women reported a daily schedule of 10 hours or more (52%) as compared to 35% of men only. However, whereas 17% of Men reported 6 hrs or less for those activities, only 6% women reported to be in this category (Figure 6 below).

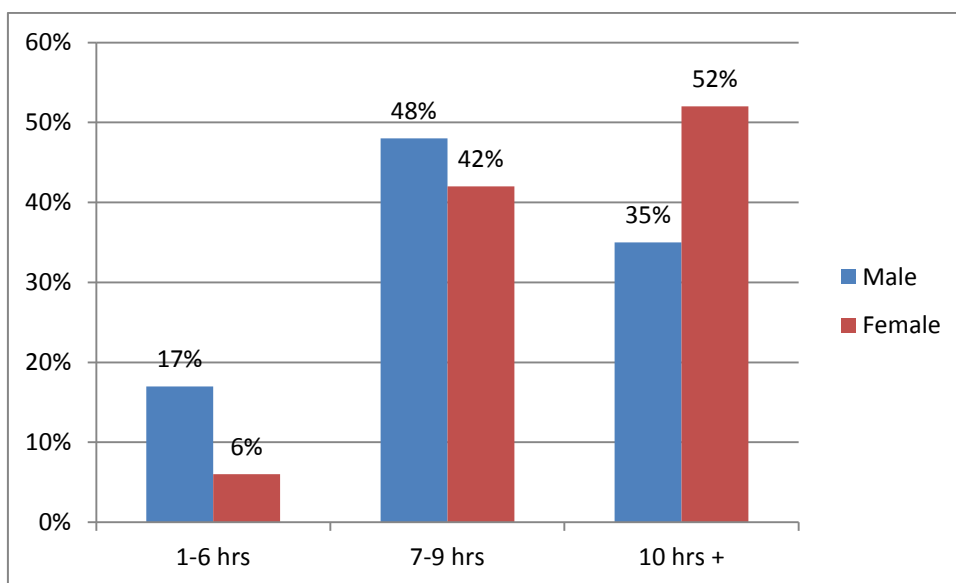


Fig 6 : Hours spent daily on household chores

The implication, therefore, is that women put in longer hours in household activities than men, and this inevitably has an impact on the amount of free time they have for themselves. Indeed, whilst only 47% of Male respondents reported have 3 hours of free time or less daily, it was the case for 58% of female respondents. On the other hand, whilst 15% of male respondents reported having 6 hours or more of free time daily, this was the case for only 3% of women queried. This is depicted in Figure 7 below:

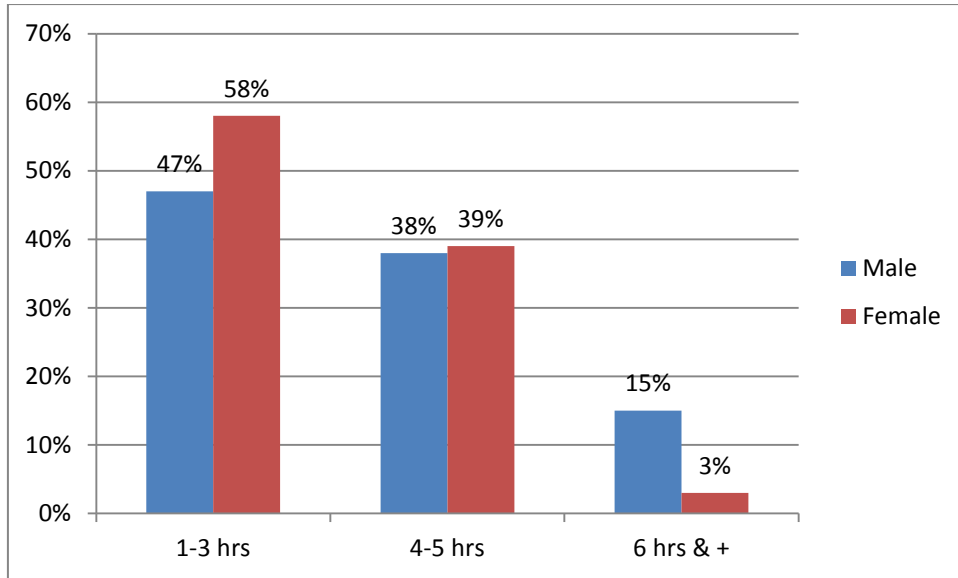


Figure 7: Gender and free-time

Does more free time imply more time spent in leisure activities organised by the ministry? Figure 8 below does not identify any significant relationship between the two variables. Whilst 60% of the elderly who reported 3 hours or less as free time were members of senior citizens organization, it was the case for 62% of those who had between 4-6 hrs of free time daily. However, amongst those with 7 hrs or more of free time, only 20% reported to be a member of a senior citizen association.

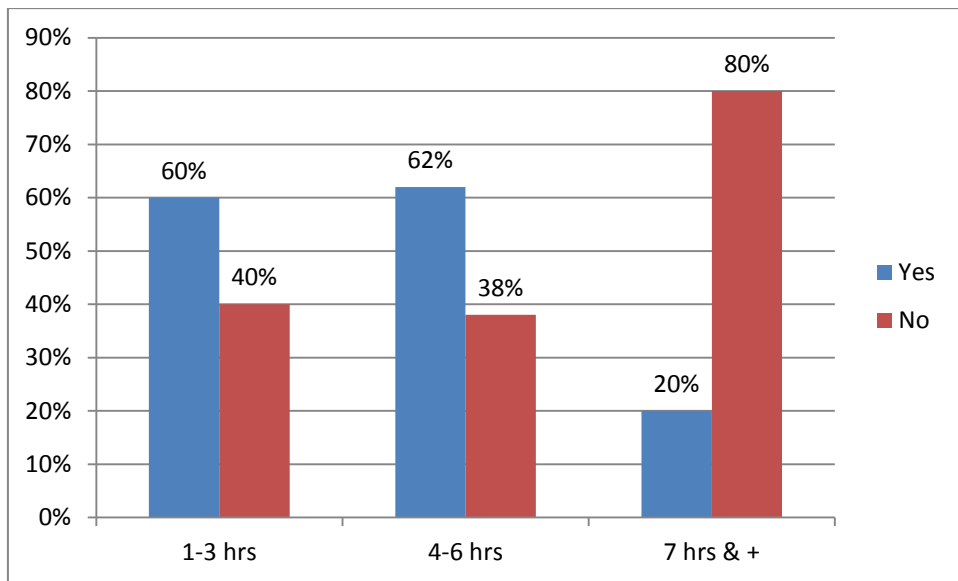


Figure 8: Free time and membership in senior citizen associations

The Pearson correlation test confirms the weak relationship between the two variables, with a significance of 0.104 only (Table 12 below). As such, participation in the activities of the ministry is not heavily dependent on the hours of free time that the elderly have daily, given that the involvement of the elderly is not directly related to his / her number of hours of free time.

Correlations

		How much time free time you have for yourself ?	Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?
How much time free time you have for yourself ?	Pearson Correlation	1	.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.100
	N	250	250
Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?	Pearson Correlation	.104	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.100	
	N	250	250

Table 12: Free time and membership correlation



## Importance attached to leisure

In respect to leisure activities practiced by the elderly in the past, the main activities mentioned are outlined in Table 13 below:

ACTIVITY	Male (%)	Female (%)
None	16	44
Outdoor	40	13
Both indoor and outdoor	23	17
Indoor activities	8	17
Camping/ Outing/Excursions	7	1
Sports	6	4

Table 13: Leisure activities practiced in the past

Topping the list is 'None', with 33% of responses. The percentage of people reporting that they have not been practicing any activity in the past is much more significant amongst women (44%) than men (16%). It can also be noted that men who have been active reported to be involved in outdoor activities and sports (47%), whereas only 17% of women queried pointed out that they involved in those activities. In fact, women were much more concentrated in indoor activities (17%) than men (8%).

With regards to activities in which they have recently participated, the main activities mentioned are summarized in Figure 9 below. It can clearly be seen that the main leisure activities mentioned by the elderly are: Watching TV (76.71%) Listening to radio (42.57%) followed by Morning Walk (38.55%), Gardening (26.91%) and visiting relatives (26.51%)

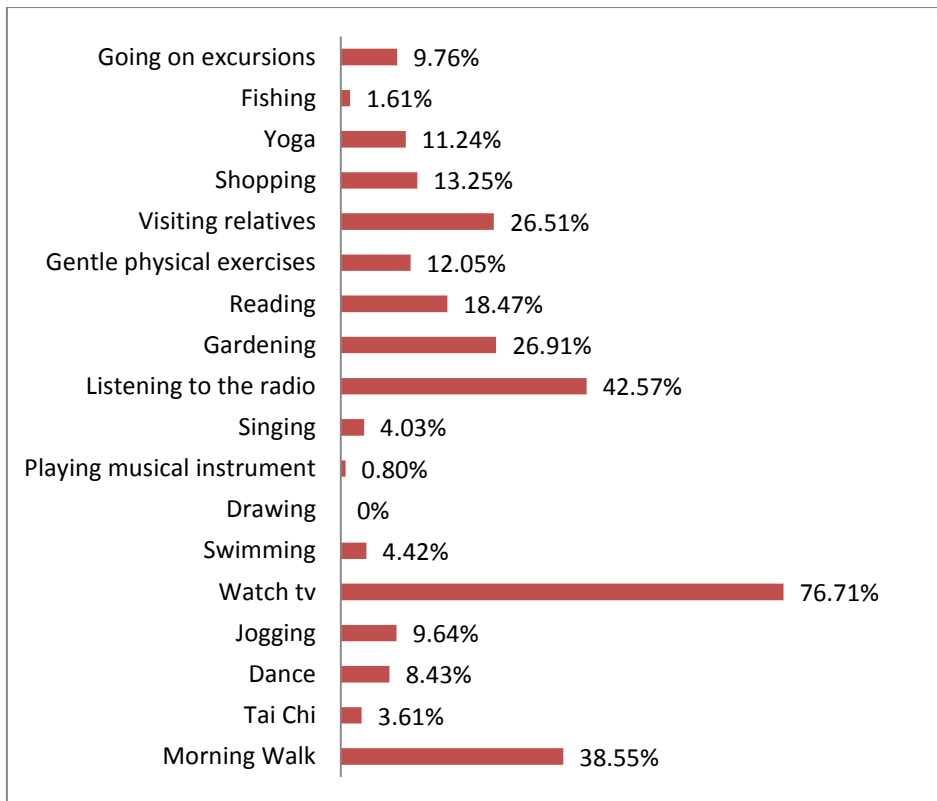


Figure 9: Recent leisure activities

When these leisure activities are dissected on a gender basis, the most popular leisure activities (over and above TV and Radio which are common to both men and women) are as follows: For Men, Gardening (12%), Gentle Physical exercise (10%), visiting relatives (9%) and jogging (5%) are the most popular activities. For women, visiting relatives (10%) is followed by Gardening (9%), Shopping (6%) and Dance (5%).

When queried with regards to the importance of leisure in their life, it is clear that the elderly attach a lot of importance to it. Indeed, for some 85% of men and 79% of women, it was reported as being important or very important (Table 14 below).

**In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life \***

**Gender Crosstabulation**

Count		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life	Not important at all	4	6	10
	Relatively unimportant	3	9	12
	Neutral	8	16	24

	Important	22	41	63
	Very important	64	75	139
Total		101	147	248

Table 14: Gender and importance of Leisure

The importance attached to leisure was constant, irrespective of marital status (table 15 below), age (table 16 below) and place of stay (Table 17) below.

**In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life \* Marital Status Crosstabulation**

Count

		Marital Status					Total
		Single	Married	Widow/er	Divorced	Separated	
In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life	Unimportant	0	2	8	0	0	10
	2	3	4	5	0	0	12
	3	2	11	9	1	1	24
	4	4	36	21	2	0	63
	Very important	4	80	47	1	7	139
Total		13	133	90	4	8	248

Table 15: Marital status and importance of leisure

**In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life \* Age Crosstabulation**

		Age					Total
		60-64 years	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-79 years	80+ years	
In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life	Unimportant	4	3	0	1	2	10
	2	2	5	3	1	1	12
	3	3	11	8	2	0	24
	4	19	20	13	8	3	63
	Very important	57	39	28	8	7	139
Total		85	78	52	20	13	248

Table 16: Age and importance of leisure

**In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life \* Place of stay Crosstabulation**

Count

		Place of stay			Total
		Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural	
In general, give a rating to the importance of leisure activities to your life	Unimportant	0	1	9	10
	2	4	4	4	12
	3	9	10	5	24
	4	20	26	17	63
	Very important	17	51	71	139
Total		50	92	106	248

Table 17: Place of stay and importance of leisure

From the above, it is clear that our elderly, irrespective of their age, gender, marital status and whether they live in town or villages, attach a lot of importance to leisure activities. The question that needs to be raised, at this stage, is their level of satisfaction with regards to the way they occupy their free time at present. To this question, responses obtained shows that the majority of respondents (52%) are not fully satisfied with their present leisure activities (Table 18 below)

**How satisfied are you with the way you occupy your free time at present?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unsatisfied	6	2.4	2.4	2.4
	2	21	8.4	8.4	10.8
	3	38	15.2	15.2	26.0
	4	65	26.0	26.0	52.0
	Fully satisfied	120	48.0	48.0	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 18: Satisfaction with free time

However, this study also reveals that there are a number of activities which are presently being ‘under-exploited’ and which could be very enriching and entertaining for our elders. Indeed, the survey carried out with our elderly shows that activities such as playing (or learning to play) musical instruments, Yoga, Singing, Tai Chi, Fishing, Physical exercise and drawing all have the potential to entertain more of our elderly whilst maintaining their physical and emotional well-being. These activities are best practiced in groups, and the onus is therefore on the ministry to put in more effort to ensure that these activities gain in popularity amongst our elderly, over and above the traditionally popular leisure activities. By carrying out an extensive review of the activities of the Day Care Centers and establishing their strengths, their weaknesses and their needs at local level, the parent ministry will be in a position to implement tailor-made programmes based on the requirements of the clients at local level.

## AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES ORGANISED FOR THE ELDERLY

The overall level of awareness with regards to leisure activities organised by the parent Ministry stood at 85.20% (Figure 10 below). As such, it is clear that the parent Ministry is doing a good job in terms of visibility with regards to leisure activities organised.

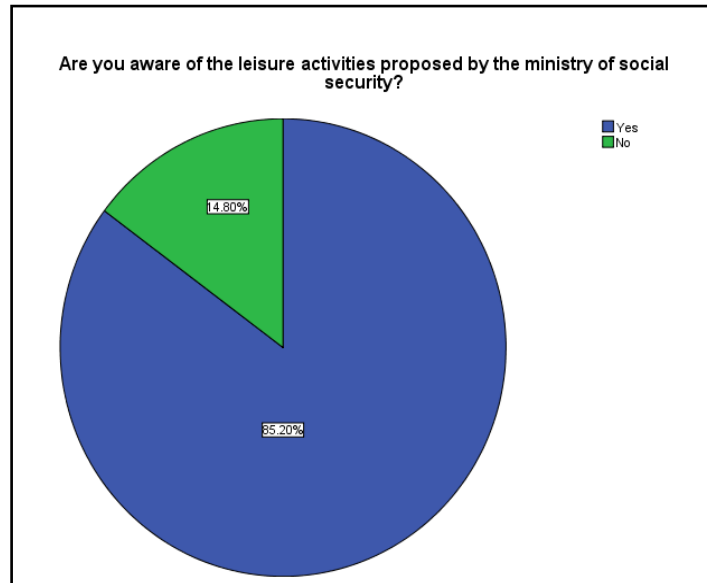


Figure 10: Awareness of leisure activities

Results obtained tend to show that the information flow is positive and significant, irrespective of age as depicted by Table 19 (below). From this table, it has to be noted that the highest % of positive responses as far as awareness with regards to leisure activities is concerned was the 80+ group (92.3%), followed by the 70-74 age-group (90.5%).

**Age \* Are you aware of the leisure activities proposed by the ministry of social security? Crosstabulation**

		Are you aware of the leisure activities proposed by the ministry of social security?		Total
		Yes	No	
Age	60-64 years	69	15	84
	65-69 years	66	12	78
	70-74 years	48	5	53
	75-79 years	16	4	20
	80* years	12	1	13

**Age \* Are you aware of the leisure activities proposed by the ministry of social security? Crosstabulation**

		Are you aware of the leisure activities proposed by the ministry of social security?		Total
		Yes	No	
Age	60-64 years	69	15	84
	65-69 years	66	12	78
	70-74 years	48	5	53
	75-79 years	16	4	20
	80* years	12	1	13
Total		211	37	248

Table 19: Age and awareness

With regards to place of stay, there is a minor distinction in terms of level of awareness for those living in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. This is depicted in Figure 11 below

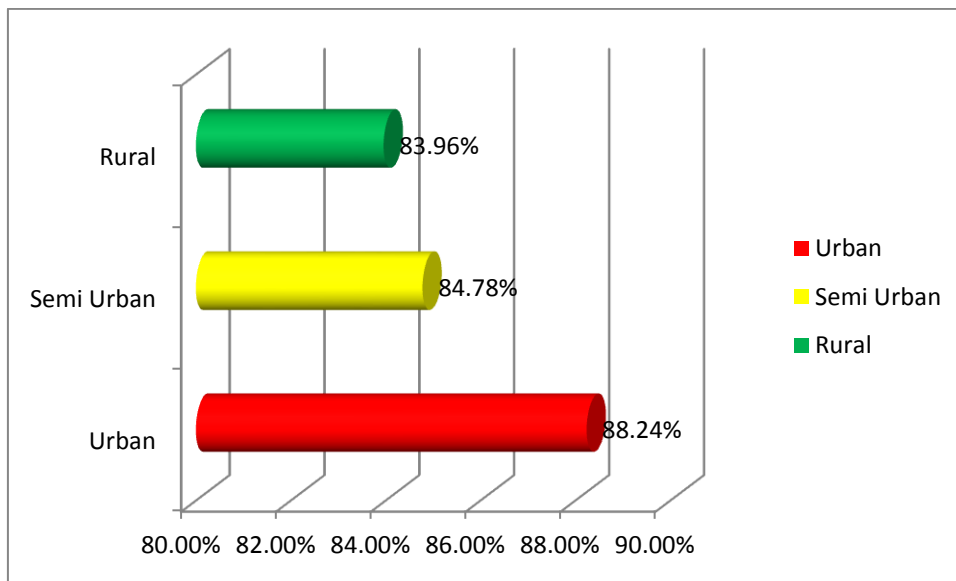


Figure 11: Place of Stay and awareness

**Educational level**

By cross-tabulating the educational level of respondents and the level of awareness, the chart follows a 'normal' path starting at 71.43% for those who have never been to school, and reaching 100% for those having completed tertiary education (Figure 12 below).

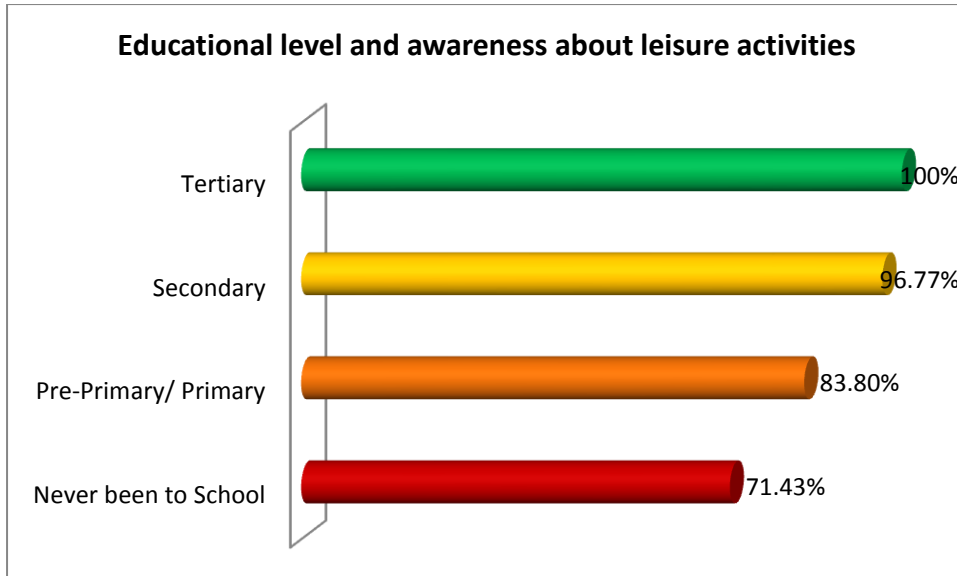


Figure 12: Education level and awareness

When asked to give examples of activities organised for them by the parent ministry, 16% of respondents were not in a position to do so. Of those who were able to give at least an example, the main activities to which the elderly referred to are as follows (in this order):

1. Camping,
2. Outing/ Excursions
3. Handicrafts
4. Indoor games and activities.

These activities were mentioned by some 80% of respondents. Only 4% of the elderly queried mentioned activities other than those four activities outlined above.

Thus, even if a high percentage of respondents are aware that the parent ministry has set up leisure activities for them, information pertaining to all the specific courses/ programmes available is not reaching all of the potential consumers of these services.

However the level of awareness with regards to activities organised by the parent Ministry is much higher as compared to activities organised by other public institutions. When queried about same, only 46.8% replied positively (Table 20 below) and only 44.9% were able to mention examples of activities organised for them.



**Are you aware of leisure activities organized by other public institutions?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	117	46.8	46.8	46.8
No	133	53.2	53.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 20: Awareness of activities of other institutions

Still, there is a need to put in additional efforts to ensure that each and everyone is given the opportunity to participate in activities organised, especially in the rural areas. In that process, therefore, there is a need to organize sensibilisation campaigns at local level so as to ensure that the elderly have the required information pertaining to activities organised and are also encouraged to join and participate in activities organised for them. Active members of the elderly associations and day care centre, being of the same age-group and generally having more free-time can play a key role in conveying information and in accompanying/ encouraging those who are reluctant to join.

## Ease of Access to leisure activities

Over and above the level of aware with regards to leisure activities, it is important that the leisure activities organised are easily accessible. For this purpose, the pre-enrollment factor is essential. Indeed, our elderly need to have the necessary information pertaining to the steps to be followed so as to get enrolled in an activity. 80% of the respondents replied positively when asked whether they are knew the place where leisure activities are organised for the elderly in their locality, and 76% were even able to identify the centre with more precisely. Thus, whilst more that ¾ of our elderly have the required information pertaining to centres where the elderly meet, there is still some work to be done at this level to ensure that the remaining 20-25% are also made aware of same.

**Do you know how someone who wants to participate in any of the activities of the Ministry of Social Security can do so?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	200	80.0	80.0	80.0
No	50	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 21: Information about leisure activities

**Where are these activities practiced in your locality?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Elderly Day Care Centre	59	23.6	23.6	23.6
Social Welfare Centre	53	21.2	21.2	44.8
Not aware	60	24.0	24.0	68.8
Municipality Complex	5	2.0	2.0	70.8
Senior Citizen Association	5	2.0	2.0	72.8
Community Centre	51	20.4	20.4	93.2
Multi-purpose Complex	6	2.4	2.4	95.6
Women centre	1	.4	.4	96.0
Village Hall	10	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 22: Where practiced?

Respondents were also queried with regards to the accessibility of these centers. Thus when asked whether the center is close to their place of residence, and easily accessible, 90% of those who were

aware of its location pointed out that it was close and accessible. However, out of the 10% of negative responses obtained, the geographical breakdown was as follows: Urban: 4% Semi-Urban:4.5% Rural: 1.5%. This denotes that the centres are considered as being slightly more close and accessible in rural areas as compared to the semi-urban and urban regions.

**Place of stay \* Is it close to your place of residence and easily accessible? Crosstabulation**

Count

		Is it close to your place of residence and easily accessible?			Total
		Yes	No	Not aware	
Place of stay	Urban	37	8	6	51
	Semi-Urban	56	9	27	92
	Rural	88	3	16	107
Total		181	20	49	250

Table 23: Place of stay and accessibility

## Membership/ Level of Participation

It has to be pointed, at the very outset, that the level of participation in activities organised by the Ministry is quite low. Indeed, out of 250 elderly persons queried, only 60% reported that they were taking advantage of the leisure facilities that have been set up for them.

**Gender \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

Count

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Male	65	36	101
	Female	86	63	149
Total		151	99	250

Table 24: Gender and membership

When queried with regards to their state of health and whether it acted as a barrier with regards to their participation in leisure activities, it can be seen from Table 25 below that this is not at all the case, given that out of the 151 respondents who were taking advantage of the leisure activities organised for them, 72% reported that that they were not in good health.

**Do you suffer from any disease/illness? \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

Count

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Do you suffer from any disease/illness?	Yes	108	74	182
	No	43	25	68
Total		151	99	250

Table 25: Disease/ Illness and membership

**Do you suffer from any physical Impairment? \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Cross tabulation**

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Do you suffer from any physical Impairment?	Yes	7	9	16
	No	144	90	234
Total		151	99	250

Table 26: Physical impairiness and membership

Even amongst the 16 elderly who reported to be suffering from physical impairments, there were 7 who were still taking participating in the activities organised by the parent ministry, in spite of their health condition.

Thus, it is clear that health and physical impairments, even if they seem to be major barriers in participation in leisure activities at first sight, are not presently acting as major deterrents preventing our elderly who are willing to take advantage of activities organised for them.

An analysis of membership of senior citizens associations and day care centers on a gender, age and place of stay basis provides us with a deeper insight into the participation pattern of our elderly. From table 27 below, it can be seen that whilst the level of membership stood at 65% amongst male queried, it was only of 57.7% amongst female.

**Gender \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Male	65	36	101
	Female	86	63	149

**Gender \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

		Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Male	65	36	101
	Female	86	63	149
Total		151	99	250

Table 27: Gender and membership

From an age perspective, participation level for the 60-64 age group stood at 59.3%. It increases to 64.1% within the 65-69 range and even to 67.9% amongst the 70-74 age group. Participation level then goes down to 60% amongst the 75-79 group and to 15.4% amongst the 80+ cohort. This is depicted in Table 28 below:

**Age \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre? Crosstabulation**

			Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
			Yes	No	
Age	60-64 years	Count	51	35	86
		% within Age	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
	65-69 years	Count	50	28	78
		% within Age	64.1%	35.9%	100.0%
	70-74 years	Count	36	17	53
		% within Age	67.9%	32.1%	100.0%
	75-79 years	Count	12	8	20
		% within Age	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	80* years	Count	2	11	13
		% within Age	15.4%	84.6%	100.0%

Table 28: Age and membership

As far as the place of stay is concerned, there is a clear demarcation with regards to the level of participation in semi-urban and urban areas as compared to rural areas. Indeed, whereas membership in citizens association and Day Care Centres stood at 40.2% and 49% respectively in semi-urban and urban regions respectively, 83.2% of respondents living in rural areas reported to be a member of a senior citizen association or day care centre. As such it is clear that a more aggressive campaign need to be set up in urban regions so as to enlist more participation of the elderly. In that respect, a participative approach can be adopted, taking into account the hindrances and motivators of the elderly living in urban/ semi-urban localities. Day Care centers, operating at local level have a key role to play in that process, enlisting the support and collaboration of the local community, and involving its active members to provide local level solutions to local level issues and needs.

**Place of stay \* Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?**

**Crosstabulation**

			Are you a member of any senior citizen Association or Day Care Centre?		Total
			Yes	No	
Place of stay	Urban	Count	25	26	51
		% within Place of stay	49.0%	51.0%	100.0%
	Semi-Urban	Count	37	55	92
		% within Place of stay	40.2%	59.8%	100.0%
	Rural	Count	89	18	107
		% within Place of stay	83.2%	16.8%	100.0%

Table 29: Place of Stay and membership

With regards to membership of other clubs organizing leisure activities for the elderly, the level of participation stood at 15.2% only (Table 30 below), as compared to 60.4% for activities organised by the parent ministry. It is important to point out that 65.8% of those who reported to be a member of any other club were also a member of senior-citizens associations.

**Are you a member of any other club involved in leisure activities?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	15.2	15.2	15.2
	No	212	84.8	84.8	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Table 30: Membership of other clubs

When it comes to leisure activities which are more popular amongst our elders and in which they report to be participating more actively, responses obtained are as follows:

5. Outing
6. Camping
7. Indoor games
8. Literacy and other indoor activities

These activities remain popular across the different age group, and no significant change is noted, gender-wise or in terms of place of stay (urban, semi-urban and rural).

Main Leisure activities		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Outing	97	38.8
	None	96	38.4
	Camping	30	12.0
	Attending to talks in community Centre	2	.8
	Literacy and other activities	7	2.8
	Indoor activities	12	4.8

Table 31: Main Leisure activities

However, it is clear that some 38.4% of respondents are not participating in any activity at all. Others are also facing a number of hindrances, making participation in leisure activities difficult. One of the primary objectives of this study is to take a deep insight into the factors impeding on the participation of our elderly in leisure activities organised for them. This is examined in the following section.



## Hindrances

What are the main factors impeding on the decision to participate in leisure activities organised by the ministry? Figure 13 below provides a summary of those hindrances, and it can clearly be seen that health/ disability is the most important element impeding on the participation of our elderly.

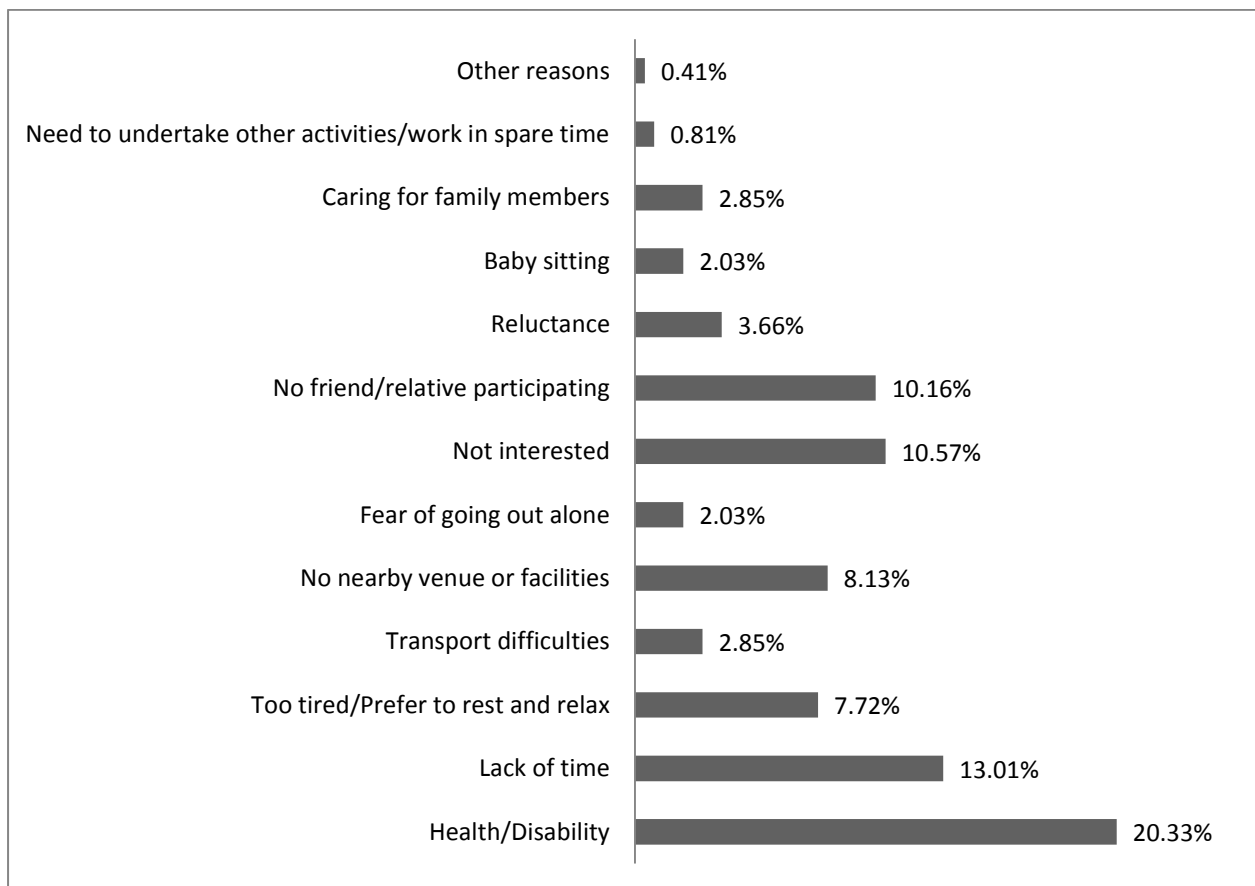


Figure 13: Main hindrances

Given that all the statistics tend to show that, over time, the years of healthy living of our elder is going to rise, this element (as a hindrance) is likely to decline in the future. However, it is important to devise strategies so as to target the other factors mentioned as hindrances by the elders namely (i) Lack of time (13.01%) (ii) Lack of interest (10.57%) (iii) No friend/ relative participating (10.16%) and (iv) No nearby venue and facility (8.13%)

In order to address the issue in a coherent way, hindrances affecting participation in leisure activities can be classified under the 5 main thematic below:

**Health and Disability: 28.05%**  
 Health issues 20.33%  
 Tired / Prefer to relax: 7.72%

**Interest: 24.39%**  
 Reluctance: 3.66%  
 No Friend/ Relative: 10.16%  
 Not interested: 10.57%

**Time: 18.7%**  
 Lack of time: 13.01%  
 Caring for family member/s:  
 2.85%  
 Baby-Sitting: 2.03%  
 Undertaking other activity/  
 work: 0.81%

**Accessibility: 13.01%**  
 Fear of going out alone: 2.03%  
 No nearby venue: 8.13%  
 Transport difficulty: 2.85%

**Others/ None: 15.85%**  
 Others: 0.41%  
 None: 15.44%

In order to target a higher percentage of participation amongst our elderly in leisure activities organised for them, it is inevitable that a multi-pronged approach is required. This has to be in line with the difficulties being faced on the ground by our elders. Hindrances cannot be tackled in a generalized way. The gender element is a useful example of the need for specific strategies to tackle those hindrances.

Indeed, whilst 9% of Male pointed out that lack of time was a hindrance for participating in leisure activities, it was the case for 15.5% of women. On the other side, whilst only 6.1% of women preferred to relax than to participate in activities organised, it was the case for 10% of men. It is interesting to note that transport was not a problem for both women and men, and did not constitute a major hindrance for participation in leisure activities. The elderly (irrespective of gender) were also not afraid of going out on their own. However, whilst 10.1% of female respondents considered the lack of

nearby venue to be a major hindrance, only 5% of male respondents were of that opinion. Lack of interest in the leisure activities organised by the Ministry was of 11.5% for women and was 9% for men, and lack of friends/ relatives was mentioned by 10.1% of men and 10.2% of women. Baby sitting was mentioned as a hindrance by 3.4% of women and 0% of men.

## Motivators

Of those who have expressed their opinion on the importance of the influence of one's social environment in positively or negatively influencing their decision to participate in leisure activities, the following trend is noted:

	FAMILY	FRIENDS	SOCIAL SUPPORT	PROFESSIONAL ADVICE
<b>+/-positive</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>43.2</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>31.2</b>
<b>+/-negative</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>25.6</b>

Table 32: Role of Social Environment

From Table 32 above, it is clear that friends and the family are two very important motivators in one's decision to engage in leisure activities. The implication, therefore, is that informative sessions or other forms of communication can be addressed to relatives, encouraging them to register their elderly parent/s for leisure activities, or it can also go through active members, who can be encouraged to bring the elders in their immediate surroundings to join. On the other hand, professional advice can have a positive or negative influence, based on the health of the elderly. However, as professional advice is generally taken much more seriously than friends and relatives, information about leisure activities organised through the Ministry of Social Security can also be channeled through the local health centres/ dispensaries.

### Importance of friends in the participation of elderly

An element that need to be underlined, however, is the major difference noted about the importance of friends in one's decision to participate in leisure activities organised by the ministry or not. Indeed, whilst it is considered as a crucial element for 69.8% of respondents from rural areas, only 44.4 % of respondents from semi-urban areas considered it to be so. However, the figures for 'friends a key motivator for one's participation' goes down to 18% only in Urban areas. This is outlined in Table 33 below. It is therefore a clear indication that interventions at the local level so as to boost participation in leisure initiatives need to take into account the social environment, and strategies in that direction can be devised on a regional basis, based on the realities on the ground.

**Place of stay \* Can your friends act as motivator to encourage you to participate in the leisure activities of the Ministry for Social Security?**

**Cross tabulation**

		Can your friends act as motivator to encourage you to participate in the leisure activities of the Ministry for Social Security?		Total
		Yes	No	
Place of Stay	Urban	9	41	50
	Semi-Urban	40	50	90
	Rural	74	32	106
Total		123	123	246

Table 33: Friends as motivator

However, friendship as a motivator cut across the gender element, as it is mentioned by 52.5% of men and 48.3% of women (Table 34 below)

		Can your friends act as motivator to encourage you to participate in the leisure activities of the Ministry for Social Security?	
		Yes	No
Gender	Male %	52.5	47.5
	Female %	48.3	51.7

Table 34: Gender and friends as motivator

## PROPOSALS/ IMPROVEMENTS/ SUGGESTIONS

A summary of the main proposals made by the elderly in terms of improvement for the future is proposed in Table 35 below. Based on responses obtained, the elderly are pressing for more information about facilities available and activities organised; more transport facilities; more of recreational centres, and the organisation of new activities

HOW CAN THE MINISTRY ENHANCE ITS ACTIVITIES PRESENTLY ORGANISED FOR THE ELDERLY?	COUNT
Organisation of sensitisation campaign for the elderly	74
Provide more facilities to the elderly (Transport Facilities, access facilities to different places etc	45
No idea	43
Construction of more recreational and elderly Day Care Centers	39
By the organisation of new activities	23
Regular meetings with elderly. Games at national level and competition.	8
More of Free transport for outings	6
By providing counselling	5
Provide equipment for training (e.g. Football, Cookery, Music)	4
By giving elders the importance and empower them to serve the society from the experience they have acquired.	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>

Table 35: Enhancing leisure activities

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has shed light on the factors causing the low level of participation of our elderly in activities organised for them at the level of the parent ministry. The key elements that need to be noted are outlined in this section, as well as the measures that the parent ministry can take to promote a higher level of participation of our elders.

### Conclusions

Whilst health does not seem to be a deterrent for the participation of our elderly, financial conditions does have a role to play. Indeed, those who are financially more secure report a higher level of participation in leisure activities than those who are striving to make both ends meet.

There is a significant difference in activities Men are interested in and involved in, as compared to Women's activities. In addition, women report to be devoting much longer hours to household chores and therefore have less free time for leisure. However, this study points out that participation in the activities organised is not heavily dependent on the hours of free time that the elderly has daily. It also underlines the fact that our elderly attach a lot of importance to leisure activities, irrespective of their age and gender.

A number of 'under-exploited' leisure activities have been identified, and these could prove to be very entertaining and enriching for our elderly. In terms of awareness with regards to leisure activities organised for them, the information flow is positive and significant, even if there is still some room for improvement in the rural areas. In terms of ease of access, however, respondents from rural areas seem to be better-off as compared to those living in semi-urban or urban areas.

The level of participation is quite low (60%). A significant level of variation is noted between semi urban (40.2%), urban (49%) and rural areas (83.2%). The activities that our elderly prefer (Outing & Camping) remain constant across the different age groups, gender and place of stay

The main hindrances noted refer to health and disability issues (28.05%), Interest in participation (24.39%). Lack of time (18.7%) and accessibility issues (13.01%). On the other side, the main sources of motivation having the potential to improve the level of participation relate to the support and encouragement from friends and relatives.

### Recommendations

From the above, it is clear that a number of steps need to be taken so as to tackle the issues raised effectively. The main proposals in that respect are provided below:

There is a need for a targeted approach for sensitization programmes so as to improve the level of participation of our elderly. This targeted approach also need to cater for the different needs of our

elderly in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, but also need to take into account the age factor, gender and level of education.

The main hindrances identified need to be worked upon separately so as to ensure that strategies are devised to remedy to each of these effectively.

It is also important to review the present activities of our Day Care Centres. Indeed, given that Day Care Centres have a pivotal role to play in terms of service delivery and enhancing the level of participation of our elderly in leisure activities, it is crucial to make a thorough assessment of their present physical and human resources so as to ensure that these centres cater for the needs of their customers. In that respect, it is crucial to ensure that these adopt a more customer-based and flexible approach so as to make optimum use of resources.

Our elderly who are presently participating in activities organised by the Ministry can be encouraged to disseminate information pertaining to facilities available and encourage those who are reluctant to join. When elderly persons interact with their peers and receive an invitation from them to join the elderly association, they are more likely to respond in a positive way.

In that process, it is also essential to lay emphasis on an active ageing process. Given that financial consideration has been identified as a hindrance from participation in leisure activities, income generating leisure activities/ hobbies need to be identified and tested on a pilot basis at the level of the Day Care Centres. It is also important to ensure that the knowledge of our elderly is transferred to the younger generation. This can take the form of an 'Atelier du Savoir'. Our skilled elderly can in fact be provided with a stipend to coach the youngsters who are willing to learn from them. It can be in terms of job skills, but also in terms of musical, artistic or cooking skills.

### **Concluding remarks**

Given that Mauritian population continues to show an ageing trend, it is crucial that we fully understand the implications of an ageing population and it is imperative that we take the necessary steps to enhance our physical and institutional infrastructures, as well as the decisional framework, so as to take good care of our elders. From this study, it is clear that there are many leisure opportunities for our elderly, and that the parent Ministry is putting in a lot of effort to encourage them to take advantage of these. However, several factors are impeding the active participation of our elders. This study sheds light on the steps to be taken so as to tackle the hindrances they presently face and to motivate a higher percentage of our elderly to make the most of opportunities available to them.



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