

## **THE POST RETIREMENT ACTIVITIES OF 'YOUNG OLD': A COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Major areas in which the elderly have face problems are income maintenance, medical and health, adjustments to changing rules and status; and loneliness and emptiness. And the retirement from active employment which is an important land mark in life can be considered as a status change. But, it does not cut a person off from others; rather it places them back in the common stream of "unemployed" though on a new basis. It is one of the life's major traumas for some individuals, and for others it is a smooth transition into a different way of life, depending on a person's health, financial security and above all his attitude towards new found leisure. For those who have not planned their future, sticking onto their previous standard of life could be quite impossible. If they are not clear about how to spend time effectively their physical as well as mental health will be affected adversely. It was reviewed that women as a whole, adjust more easily to retirement than men. The role change is not as radical for them because they have always played the domestic role. Men on the other hand have less readily available means of deriving satisfaction to replace that which their work provided. Hence a study was undertaken to gather information on the activities of retired people to have a clear picture of their time spending patterns and whether it is effective or not.

The aim of the present study is to elicit the activities of "young old" who has retired from active employment with the additional objectives of finding out whether the retired men and women have differences in their mode of spending time after retirement from active employment. Survey method was adopted for the study and a prepared questionnaire was administered as a tool to collect the necessary information from 20 males & 20 females to the 55-65 ages from lower middle income group with adequate educational qualification as the subjects of study. All were married and were living with spouse and other family members. Most of them had taken up new jobs after retirement & a few of them were self employed after retirement. Regarding the post retirement activities majority of the subjects were found to exercise and yoga to maintain their health. TV watching, reading and listening to music were the major hobbies. Majority of them were interested in creative activity and were involved in different religious and voluntary organizations. Many subjects had household production of different kinds mainly taken up to supplement the family income. All of them were involved in household activities. Generally women subjects spent less time for hobbies. Those who were financially secure and could spend leisure at their will mainly considered themselves as self reliant and independent.

Key words: Retirement, Elderly, Young old, Post-retirement Activities

## **Introduction**

Progress in science has increased human longevity. We find numerous people beyond the middle age and into the old age in our midst existing happily. Senior citizens are the focal point of many discussions these days as many people sympathize or pity them to be living in a society filled with children smarter than their old parents.

Retirement is an important land mark in life. But, it does not cut a person off from others; rather it places him back in the common stream of 'unemployed' yet on a new basis. It is one of the life's major traumas for some individuals, and for others it is a smooth transition into a different way of life, these depends on a person's health, financial security and above all his attitude towards new leisure.

Having to remain idle is a social problem, especially for a person who had worked life long. Hence unless their mind is preoccupied with some engagement and involvement, their health is likely to be affected adversely resulting in a number of ailments and life would prove to be a burden to them. If not physically ill, the 'young old' retired people in the age group of less then 65 years may be energetic and bubbling with enthusiasm to be active and useful.

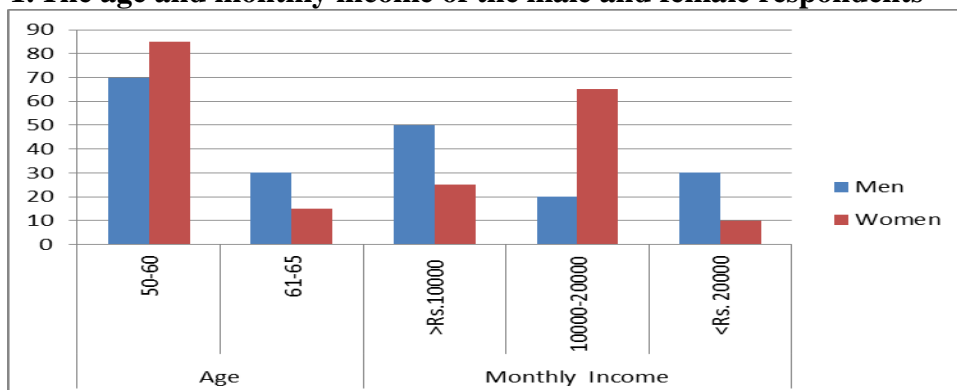
The problem of utilization of free time after retirement usually is a matter of major concern in the mind of most of the retired persons. The mode of time utilization depends heavily on personal energy and financial status. If they are not clear about how to spend time effectively their physical as well as mental health will be affected adversely. Women as a whole, adjust more easily to retirement than men. The role change is not as radical for them because they have always played the domestic role, whether they were married or single, throughout their working lives in addition to their vocational role. Men on the other hand have less readily available means of deriving satisfaction to replace that which their work provided, and as a result, they adjust less well to the role change necessitated by retirement.

Hence a study was undertaken to elicit the leisure time activities of 'young old' who has retired from active employment. Survey technique is the method selected for a comparison between the post retirement activities of 'young old' men and women for which a questionnaire is developed and administered to the subjects. Forty 'young old' aged between 55-65 are identified, out of which 20 each were men and women who have retired from active service and belonged to middle income group from Ernakulam.

## Results of the study

### • General Information

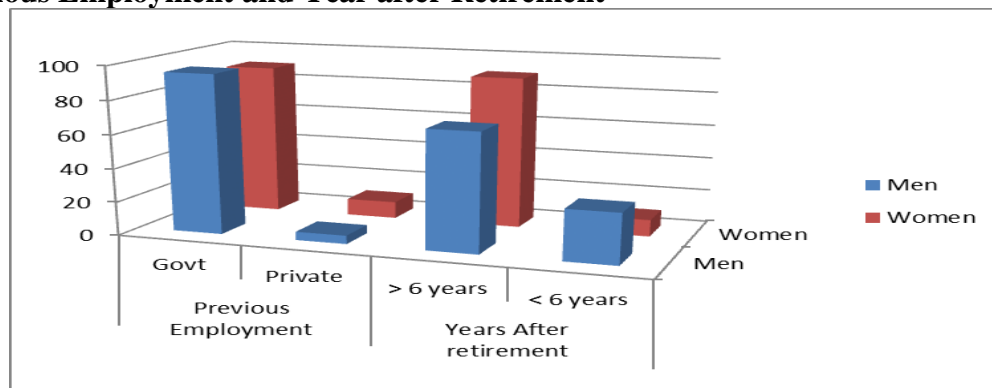
#### 1. The age and monthly income of the male and female respondents



There were 70% males and 85% females belonging to the 55-60 age category and 30% males and 15% females respectively in the 61-65 categories. All were married and were living with spouse and other family members.

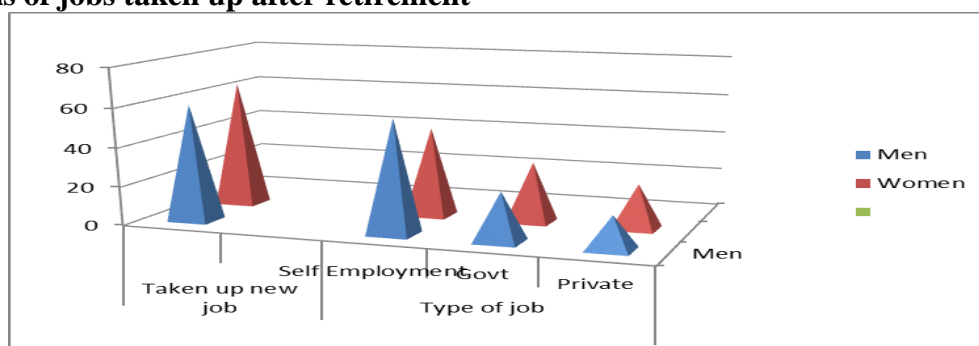
On analyzing the monthly income it was found that almost all belonged to the middle income group. 50% males and 25% females earned less than Rs.10, 000 per month. 20% males and 65% females earned between Rs.10, 000- 20,000 and 30% males and 10% females had more than Rs. 20,000 as monthly earning. Females were found to be better of than male subjects.

#### 2. Previous Employment and Year after Retirement



Almost all the males (95%) and females (90%) were working in government sector. 70% males and 90% females were leading the retired life for more than 6 years while 30% males and 10% females were leading retired life for less than 6 years.

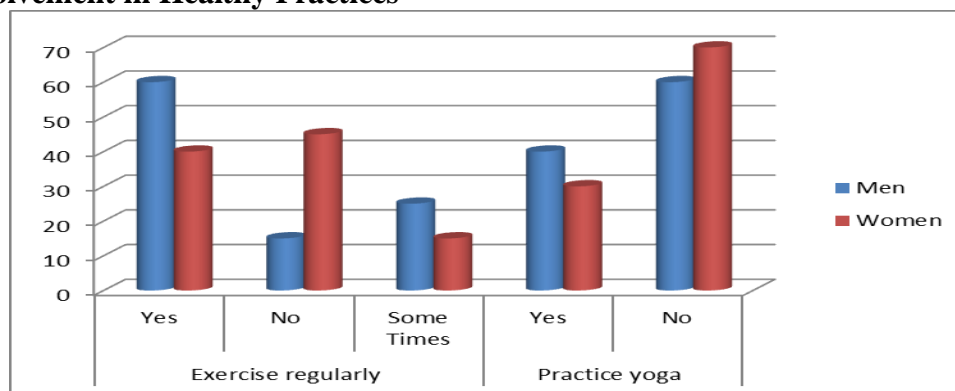
### 3. Details of jobs taken up after retirement



Majority of males (60%) and females (65%) had taken up new job after retirement. Nearly half of both males (58%) and females (46%) were self employed after retirement. The rest had taken up jobs either in private or public sector. Those who were previously working in government offices continued working there on contract basis after retirement.

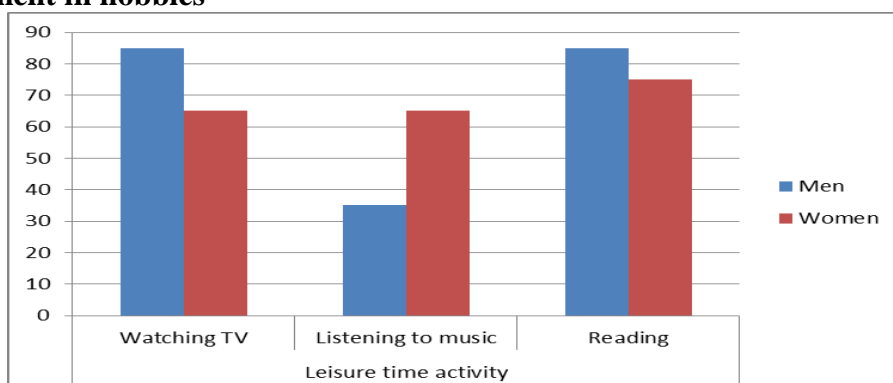
#### • Specific Information

### 4. Involvement in Healthy Practices



Though majority of the subjects were found to exercise (60 % males & 40% females) to maintain their health and nearly half of both male & female subjects practiced yoga, the above table shows that more male subjects than females exercised either regularly or occasionally. Yet more or less the same percentage of both the category practiced Yoga.

## 5. Involvement in hobbies



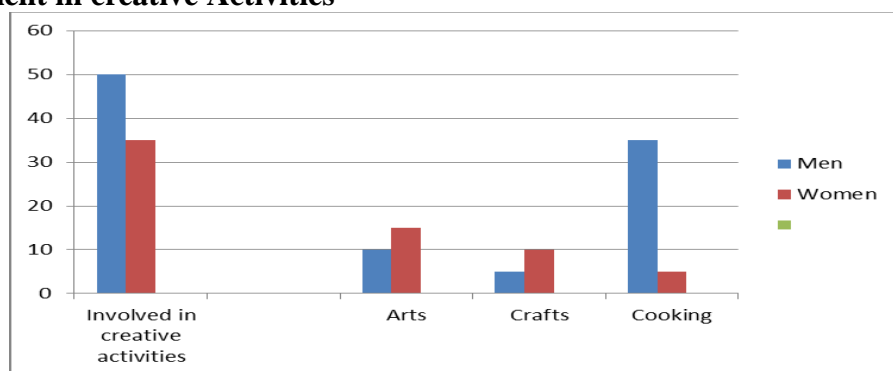
TV watching & Reading were the major hobbies of both men & women subjects followed by listening to music. Majority of men watched TV for more than 3 hours than females. More women enjoyed music as it doesn't interrupt their work. Generally women subjects spent less time for their hobbies.

## 6. Time spent for hobbies

Subjects	TV watching (%)		Listening to music (%)		Reading(%)	
	< 3 hrs	> 3 hrs	< 3 hrs	> 3 hrs	< 3 hrs	>3 hrs
Men	30	55	25	10	35	10
Women	40	25	35	30	40	35

The percentage of males who watched T V for more than 3 hours was more than their women counterparts. Women preferred music and reading more than watching TV. It was generally observed that the percentage remained very less for both and women i.e. less than half, regarding pursuit of hobbies.

## 7. Involvement in creative Activities



Nearly half of the males were interested in creative activities and out of them most (35%) were interested in cooking which a significant finding was as only a negligible percentage of women considered it a creative activity. This could be due to the fact that it was a routine task for them. The interest of men in cooking could be due to the fact that they could take it up as a hobby and not as a full time job. Other major creative activities were Art and craft work.

### 8. Active involvement in Associations and Clubs

Subjects	Organization membership (%)	Particulars (%)				Office Bearer (%)	Active participant	
		Clubs	Alumni Assn.	Religious Assn.	Social welfare Assn.		Yes	No
Men	65	25	10	25	5	20	60	5
Women	30	-	-	20	10	15	30	-

More number of men (65%) than women (30%) was involved in different organizations. Women were more involved in religious and welfare associations. Very few of both men and women held responsible position in the organizations where they were active and this was surprising since men's involvement was very high in this area. All those who were members irrespective of the sex difference, actively participated in the activities of organization mostly because they had ample leisure time. This was more evident in the case of women though the percentage wise involvement was less.

### 9. Spending time for skill development

Subjects	Learning creative skill	Particulars					
		cooking	music	Yoga	painting	driving	computer
Men	45	20	5	25	5	-	-
Women	25	10	5	-	5	10	5

From the above data it was observed that more men than women were learning some creative skills. Women learnt driving and computers while men learnt music and yoga more. It was interesting to note the presence of men who learnt cooking. Less than 50percent subjects only were learning creative skills. This could be due to the fact that they had these trainings earlier or were shy about learning in old age.

**10. Involvement in household production**

Subjects	Having Household production(%)		Particulars(%)		
	Yes	No	Cattle rearing	Vegetable gardening	Stitching/ tailoring
<b>Men</b>	60	40	15	60	-
<b>Women</b>	50	50	5	35	20

The table shows that more than half of the subjects had house hold production. Vegetable gardening was taken up by more numbers than any other as it requires less energy. Very few got involved in cattle rearing and among that men's presence was more. Household production was mainly taken up for supplementing income and for utilizing leisure time. Most of the subjects had these even earlier stating that it was not a post retirement activity.

**11. Participation in household activities**

Subjects	Have more family centred activity	Particulars (%)			
		Taking care of grand children	Cooking for family	Managing home	Shopping for family
<b>Men</b>	100	40	15	100	85
<b>Women</b>	100	40	80	50	65

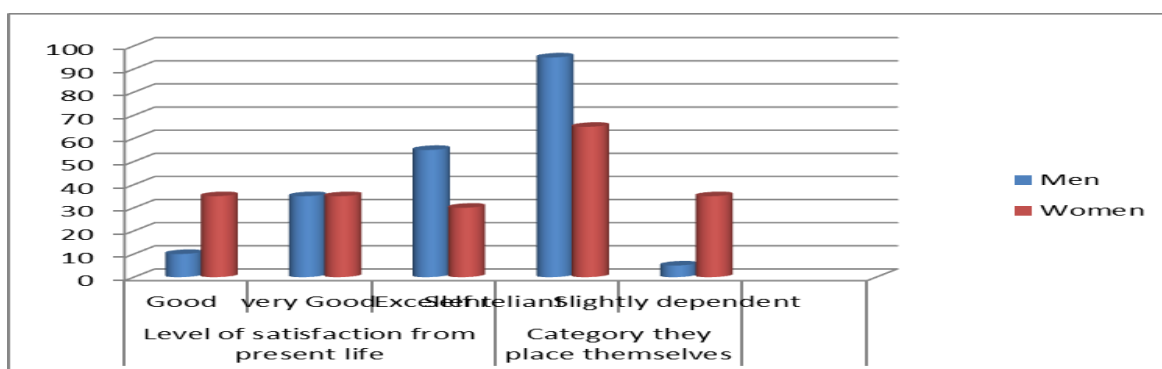
The above results show that all the male and female subjects had more family centered activity. Both men and women took care of their grandchildren. More women did cooking for their family than men. All the men subjects and half the females managed their homes. Majority of men and women subjects did shopping for the family. All this showed the active participation of young old.

## 12. Involved in conducting classes

Subjects	Took tuitions(%)	Particulars(%)		Accept fees(%)
		Academic	Music	
Men	40	35	5	25
Women	35	25	10	35

Academic coaching was more among both the category than other areas though less than half only did it. It shows income generation was a motive behind conducting classes for majority.

## 13. Level of satisfaction of respondents in their life style



More men were completely satisfied in their life style than women. Almost all men considered themselves as self reliant & independent. None of the selected subjects wanted to place themselves under the 'fully dependent and weak' category of senior citizens. More women placed themselves under 'slightly dependent and adjustable' category.

## Conclusion

Men could pursue more active hobbies than women though both had comparatively same amount of leisure. Since all subjects were living with family; involvement in family matters was more. The major differences found were that when elderly women carried out more manual tasks, men preferred the management. More men were satisfied in their life than women due to the higher status they could retain and their capacity to manage their home. More women considered themselves dependent showing their flexible nature and low fear of status loss. It was generally found that both the group wanted to prove themselves worthy through some sort of activities; though the specific activities varied considerably.

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