

THE SITUATION OF THE AGED PEOPLE IN BENIN

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The study on the 60 years old people and more constitutes today a fundamental aspect in the analysis of the demographic phenomena of share its evolution in time and of the specific problems which arise for this category of the population.

The objective of this study is to offer a minimum package of information on the aged people of Benin in response to the national programs on active ageing and the indicators of the major conferences following the lines below:

- Demographics of the elderly;
- Analysis of the socio-cultural characteristics of the elderly;
- Analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of elderly;
- The living conditions of the elderly.

1 Methodology

1-1 Who are the old people in Benin?

The aged people, according to the United Nations, constitute the whole of the men and the women who reached or exceeded the 60 years age. The regrouping of the total population in main categories is a social building. Yesterday, one spoke about the third age. Today, the lengthening of the life expectancy obliges to re-examine the social structures of the third age; thus, the appearance of the fourth age. To this end, one can define two categories of aged people within the framework of this work:

- the people of the third age whose age lies between 60 and 79 years
- the people of the fourth age who reached or exceeded 80 years

The analysis of this study is essentially descriptive and will be carried out on the national and departmental plans, according to the area of residence.

1-2 Limits relating to the collection

In Benin, the populations especially the rural ones are unaware of the importance of the declarations of the facts of civil status. The still of the civil status is very badly held. It results from it a faulty operation on the events relating to the civil status which, with the low level of illiteracy of the populations make difficult the data-gathering on the age. With regard to the third General Census of the Population and Dwelling, in the absence of civil status paper, the age was estimated from historical events or compared to other people which one knows the age.

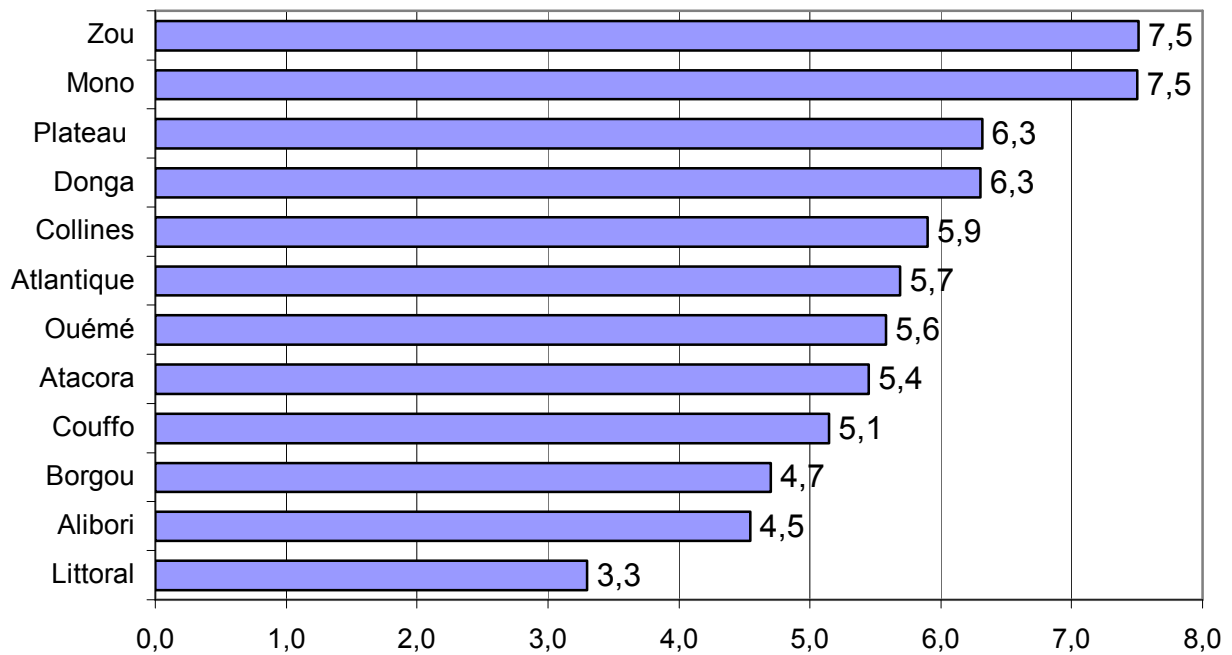
2 The demography of the aged people

The study of the demographic situation of the 60 years old population and more present of the diversified characteristics according to the areas and the categories of aged people.

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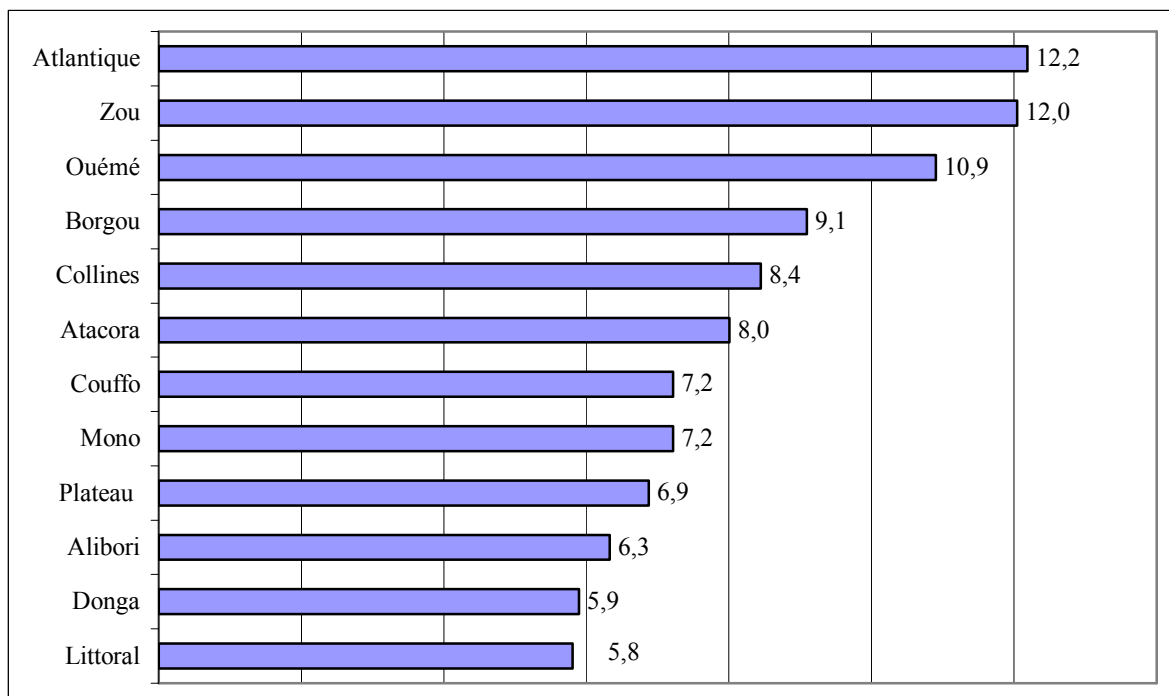
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Figure 1: Demographic weight of the aged people by region



According to the place of residence, 68,4% of the old people live in rural against 31,6% in urban environment. They are concentrated in the areas of the north and the center of the country.

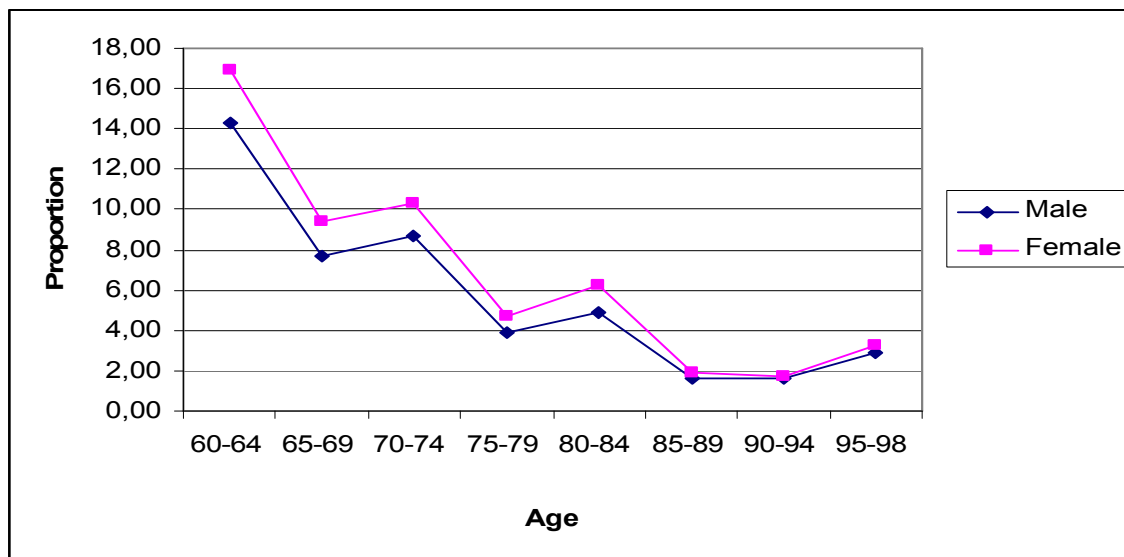
Figure 2: Concentration of the aged people by region



2.1 Structure by sex and age group

The distribution of this fringe of the population in quinquennial groups presents a very significant inequality. The strongest proportion is obtained in the section of 60-64 years (31,2%). From 65 years, the aged people take a form in teeth of saws as figure3 shows it. However, the regrouping of the ages by categories of aged people shows that the people of the third age i.e. those of the section of 60-79 years are in a majority and represents 75,9% of the total of the aged people, against 24,1% for those of the fourth age.

Figure 3: Proportion of the aged people by group of ages according to the sex



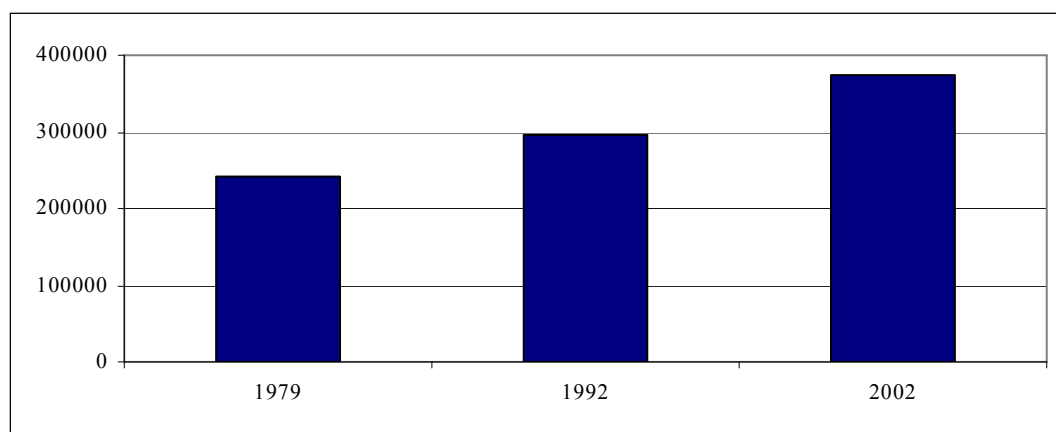
The population of the aged people is unequally divided according to the sex. The aged women are more numerous (54,4%) than aged men (45,6%). As one can note it, the aged women have a better life expectancy to than the aged men (the 60 year aged people hope to live 20,1 years more including 21,2 years at the aged woman and 19,4 years at the aged man). The report/ratio of masculinity is of 83,6 men for 100 women.

2.2 Evolution of the population of the aged people from 1979 to 2002

The result of the censuses carried out until now indicates that the 60 years aged people and more are very little numerous in Benin's population and that their contribution to the total population decreases with time, for in 1979, compared to the total volume of the population, one counted 7,2% aged people. This proportion was 6% in 1992, that is to say an intercensal rate increase of 1,6%. The result obtained from the RGPH3 fixes the aged people at 5,5% with an intercensal rate increase of 2,4%. This progressive decrease of the proportions would express the effect of the overmortality at the advanced ages compared to the youths.

From the point of view of size, the aged people did not cease increasing, passing from 240 579 in 1979 to 295 097 in 1992 and 374 204 in 2002, as the figure 2.4 show it.

Figure 4: Evolution of the size of the aged people from 1979 to 2002



It is important to indicate that, for a good taking care of the aged people, it will be necessary to take into account rather of their size than proportions which still give a weak volume.

The aged women are mainly represented. Indeed the ratios of masculinity of the aged people reveal gradually a weakest proportion of men from one census to another. This indicates a progressive increase in the proportion of the aged women.

Table1: Evolution of the size of the aged people from 1979 to 2002

Sex	1979	1992	2002
Male	122 831	143 170	170 437
Female	117 748	151 927	203 767
Total	240 579	295 097	374 204
Ratio of masculinity	104,3	94,2	83,6

3 . Analysis of sociocultural characteristics

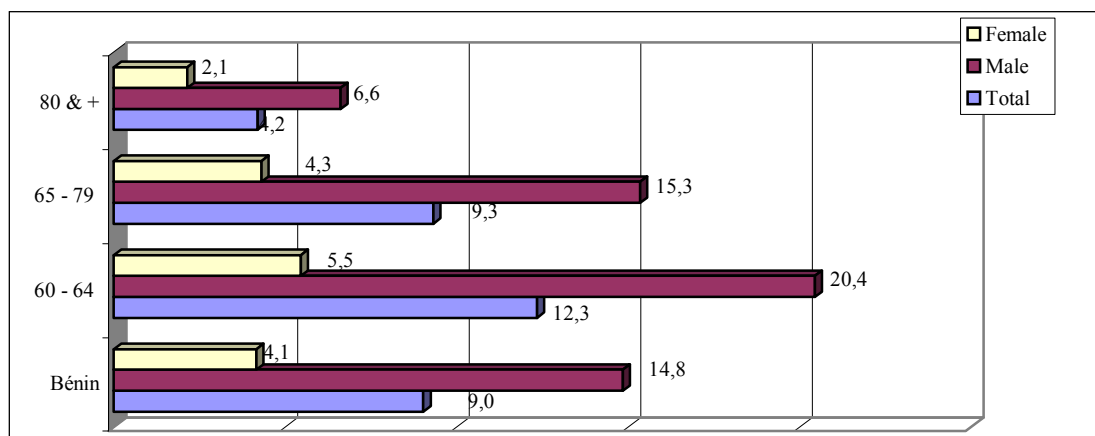
3.1 Literacy

The level of literacy at the aged people is an indicator of the measurement of the degree of information and communication which one must hold large account in the programs aiming at improving the living conditions of the aged people.

In the fringe of the population of the aged people, the level of elimination of illiteracy is not satisfactory: only 9% of the aged people can read and write in a language that, is a rate of illiteracy of 91%. That is a population which remained in a traditional education system not having profited, at the beginning of the priority actions of development, namely the instruction for all.

Compared to the categories of ages, the rate of teaching to read and write decreases in proportion from 12,4% to 4,2%. What wants to say that the level of elimination of illiteracy of the aged people decreases under the weight of the age. These proportions are better in the age bracket of the 60-64 years which could profit at a given time from the efforts made in the national language teaching, in the 1974's.

Figure 5: Rate of literacy for the aged people



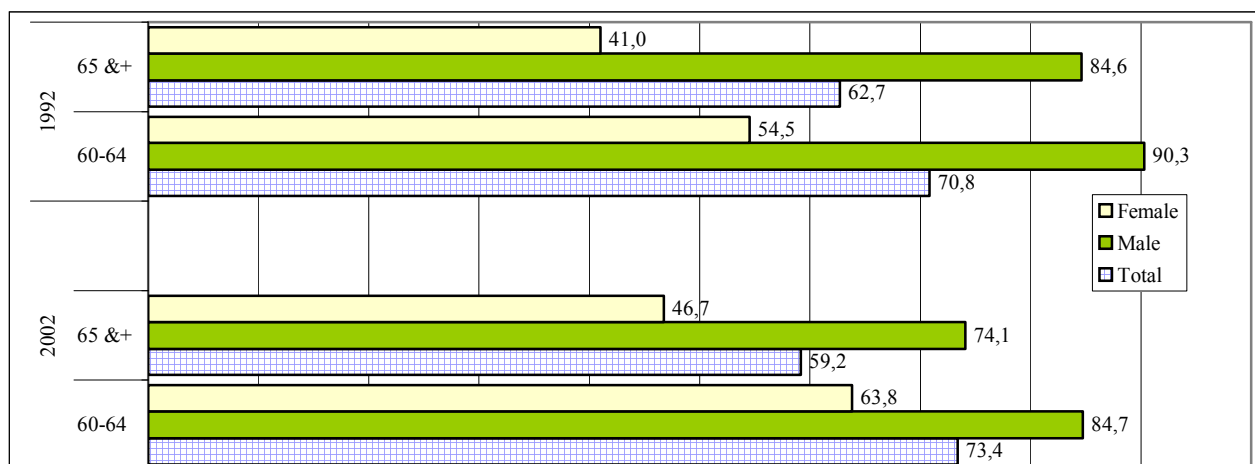
The report/ratio of masculinity in the category of the literacy is of 0,3 woman for 1 man, against 1,3 women for 1 man in the category of not taught reading and writing.

4 Analysis of the economic characteristics

4.1 Occupied aged people

The working population of the aged people is made up makes only occupied people of them because, to these advanced ages, it is better indicated to count the people still claiming itself unemployed in the non busy population. This being, the results of the third General Census of the Population and the Dwelling indicate at the national level that the share of the 60 years old and more occupied people (the rate of activity) accounts for 63,6% of the total of the aged people. She is 77,4% at the old men and 52% among women. On the other hand, for the 65 years and more it accounts for 59,2%. There is a very noticed participation of the aged people of 60-64 years in the economic activity (73,4%) compared to the age brackets 65 years and more (59,2%). The comparison with the data from 1992 indicates that the activity ratio of the aged people of 60-64 years increased by 70,8% in 1992 to 73,4% in 2002. On the other hand, that of the 65 years aged people and more decreased from 62,7% to 59,2% as the figure 6 indicates it.

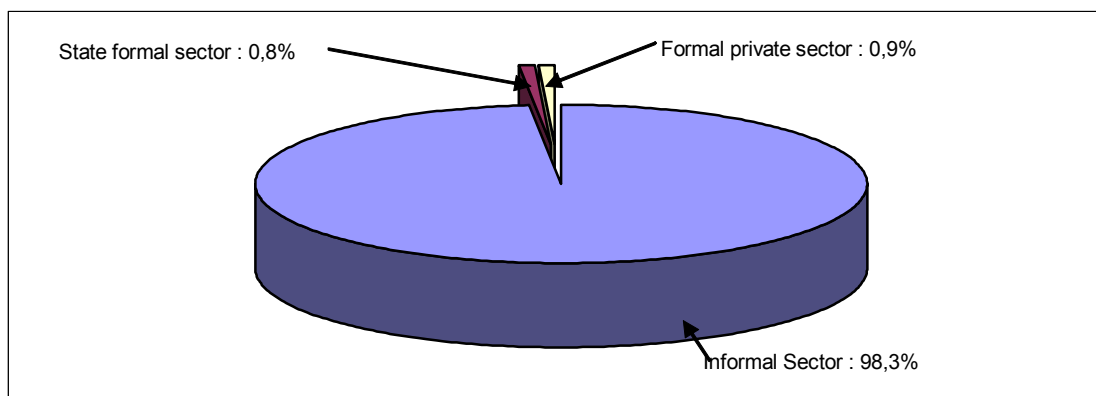
Figure 6 : Activity rates of the aged people between 1992 and 2002



According to the area of residence, the activity rates of the aged people are higher in the rural zones (69,1%) than in the urban zones (51,7%), as well for men as for women (63,6% against 42,7 in urban environment and 83,4% against 56,6% in rural area).

The aged people are in a majority in the informal sector: 98,3% against 1,7% in the formal sector. Better, because of the way in which the needs are satisfied according to areas of residence, the aged people are more strongly represented in rural area (74,3%) that in urban environment (25,7%). However, it is to be noticed that in the informal sector, 75% of the aged people come from the rural area and 25% from the urban environment. On the other hand, in the formal sector, it is the opposite result which is obtained. Such a report is hardly surprising when it is known that the economic activities of the formal sector are much concentrated in the cities.

Figure 7: Aged people per branch of activity



Apart from agriculture and trade which absorb most of the busy aged people (respectively 63,7% and 26,1%), one tends to ignore the invaluable contribution that the aged people provide in the industrial sector (5,8%) and other services (2,6%) which are summarized with the small activities, independent activities, house work etc, and in the form of work not remunerated within the family. However, for the various branches of activity, it is necessary to underline the more active participation of the aged women in the commercial activities.

As regards situation in the profession, the working population of aged people is made up primarily of self-employed workers (91,1%) although the family help and the employers are also less negligible (respectively 4% and 3,1%).

Table 2: Busy aged people according to the branch of activity

Total	Agriculture		Industry		Electricity, Buildings		Trade and		Transport, Bank,		Others	
	Fishing, hunting	Industry	Extractive	Industry	Water, gaz	Public works	restoring	and	Communi-	Insurance	services	Others
230 702	146 844	4 574	8 800	41	2 358	60 222	1 775	84	6 004			
100,0	63,7	2,0	3,8	0,0	1,0	26,1	0,8	0,0	2,6			
60-64	34,9	35,1	35,0	61,0	47,5	38,2	52,7	50,0	39,7			
65-79	45,2	44,3	46,4	29,3	42,7	46,0	39,3	44,0	42,8			
80 &+	20,0	20,6	18,6	9,7	9,8	15,8	8,0	6,0	17,5			
Male	71,2	95,3	58,8	95,1	95,1	8,8	96,7	73,8	85,9			
Female	28,8	4,7	41,2	4,9	4,9	91,2	3,3	26,2	14,1			

Table 3: Status of the aged people in exerted employment

Status of occupation	Employer		Independent		Permanent		Temporary		Co-operative member		Family help		Other	
	Total	Employer	Independent	Permanent	Temporary	Co-operative member	Family help	Other	Total	Employer	Family help	Other	Total	Other
Bénin	224 229	6 889	204 236	2 004	1 022	332	8 886	860						
Proportion	100,0	3,1	91,1	0,9	0,5	0,1	4,0	0,3						
60-64	80 906	2,8	90,7	1,3	0,7	0,2	4,1	0,2						
65-79	101 391	3,0	91,5	0,8	0,4	0,1	3,9	0,3						
80 &+	41 932	3,9	90,8	0,4	0,2	0,1	3,9	0,7						
Male	124977	4,0	91,5	1,4	0,7	0,2	1,9	0,3						
Female	99252	1,9	90,5	0,2	0,1	0,1	6,7	0,5						

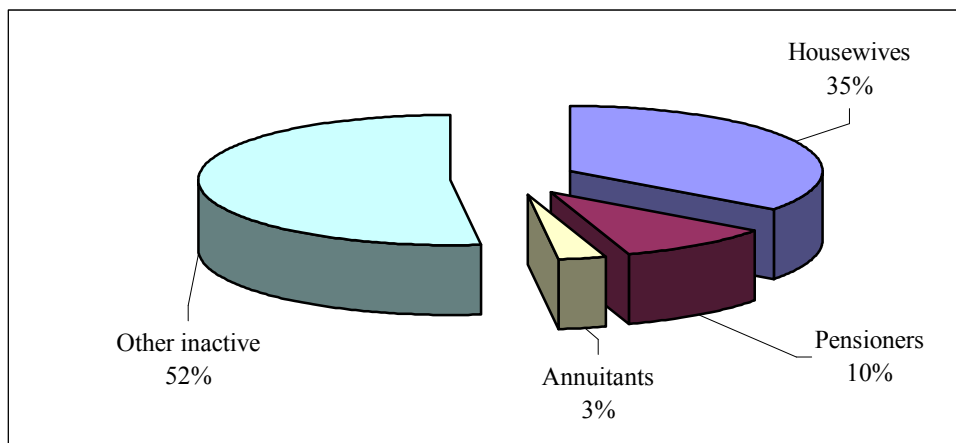
4.2 Nonoccupied old people

The nonoccupied old people include/understand the housewives, the pensioners, rentiers and other inactive. It arises from the analysis of the results resulting from the RGPH3 that approximately 34% of the whole of the old people remained without occupation. In their centre, the housewives and other inactive are most dominant and represent 35,5% and 50,8% respectively; come after the pensioners (10,4%) and rentiers (3,3%).

The nonoccupied old people are mainly women (74% women and 26% men).

If it is supposed that the pensioners enjoy their retirement pensions and, Annuitants an income resulting from the Annuity, we realize that there is 86,3% of the nonoccupied old people who do not have any particular source of income.

Figure 8: Categories of nonoccupied old people



The economic report/ratio of dependence of the old people (i.e. the total of the 60 years old people and more divided by the total of the working population) is a loadmeter supported by the working population. Between 1992 and 2002, this report/ratio passed from 14,2% to 13,2%. It is thus useful to develop more policies and programs which help to age while remaining active to make it possible to the old people to continue to work according to their capacities and their preferences.

5. Living conditions

In this chapter we will study the matrimonial situation of the aged people, then one will be interested in their situation in the household. It will be also necessary to highlight the differential aspects of the exercise or not of an economic activity according to the family tie with the head of household.

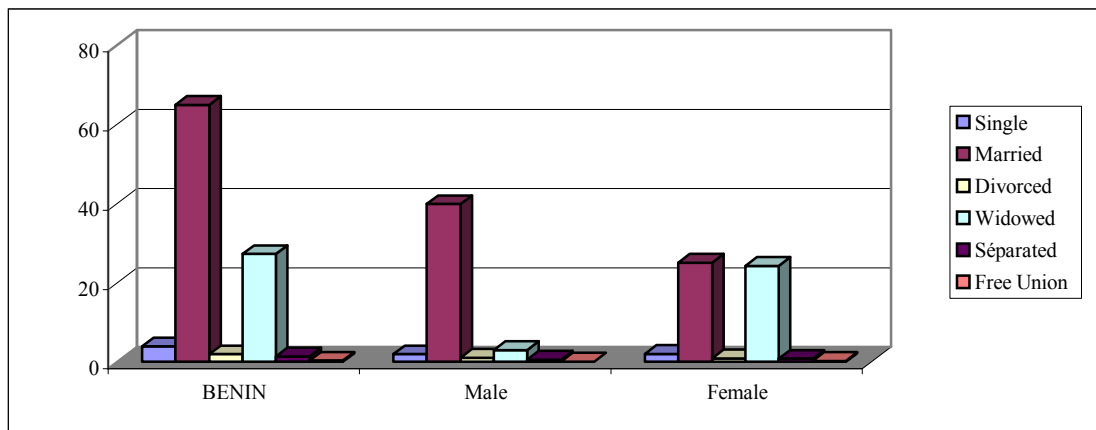
5.1 Marital status

The marital status is a significant variable which makes it possible to appreciate the health of the people at the old ages, since it can pose the problem of isolation when the couple are not together to help each other.

The data make it possible to observe that the sub population of the aged people, 65,1% of them are married, 27,3% are widows, only 4% are single, 2% are divorced, 1,4% are separate and 0,3% are free unions.

The married aged people are much more men than women: on 100 married aged people, more half (61,4%) of men are currently married against only (38,6%) of women.

Figure 9: Aged people depending on the marital status

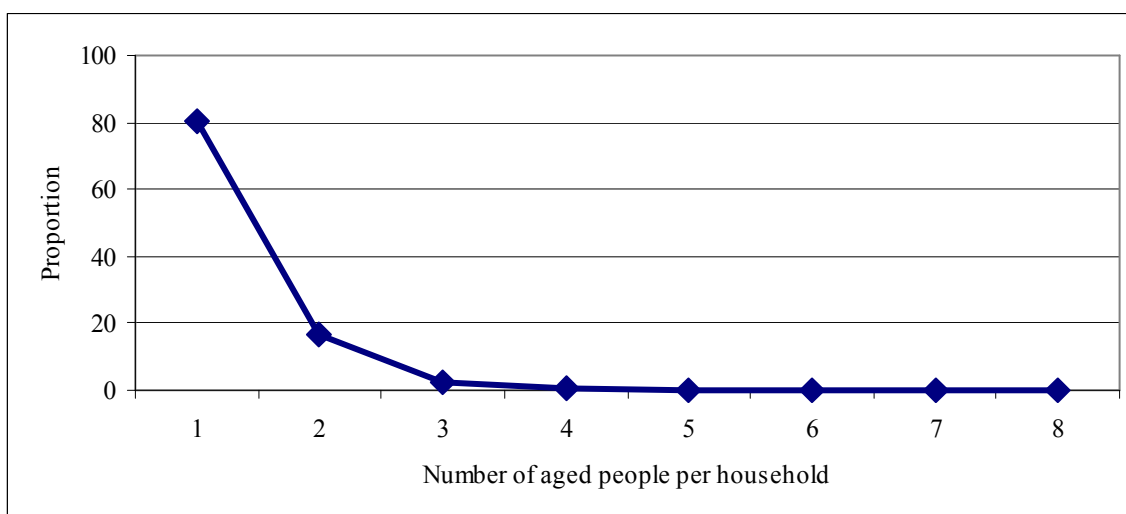


From the point of view of widowhood, the analysis according to the gender confirms the weak proportion of the aged men (3,1%) in the proportion of the widowed aged people translating on the one hand, the effect of the male overmortality and on the other hand, the fact that women remarried themselves less frequently than men following a divorce, of a separation or death of the spouse. For each type of methods, the strong proportions are observed in the rural area.

5.2 Households and aged people

The analysis of the data on the households offers a multiplicity of information on the type of cohabitation within the generations

Figure 10 : Proportion of the aged people by household

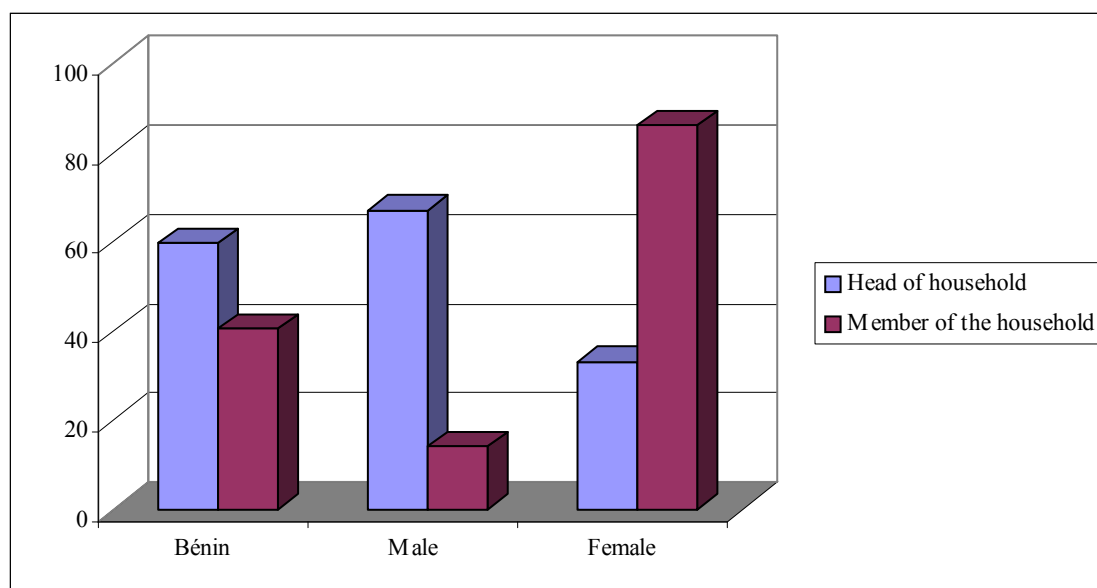


In fact, in the whole of the listed households, approximately 25,2% comprise aged people (either they direct households or they are dependent on a household). Within the households where appear the aged people, 80,4% contain an aged person, 16,6% contain two aged people, 2,4% contain three aged people. As the number of aged people increases in the household, the proportions decrease. Even if statistically the small proportions obtained are insignificant, they translate all the same the degree of cohabitation of the generations within the households. One could say, from now on, that in Benin's households, it happens that two to three generations cohabit.

The appreciation of the nature of the family tie of the 60 year old people and more with the head of household made it possible to determine two great groups. The first constitutes the whole of the aged people who direct a household, the second gathers all those who are not a head of household thus profiting from a family assistance in a priori.

The aged people who direct a household account for 59,6% and are with strong male predominance (66,9% men and 33,1% women) against 40,4% which depend on a head of household and with strong female predominance (86% against 14%) as figure 11 indicates it.

Figure 11: Situation of dependence of the aged people



5.2.1 Aged people living alone

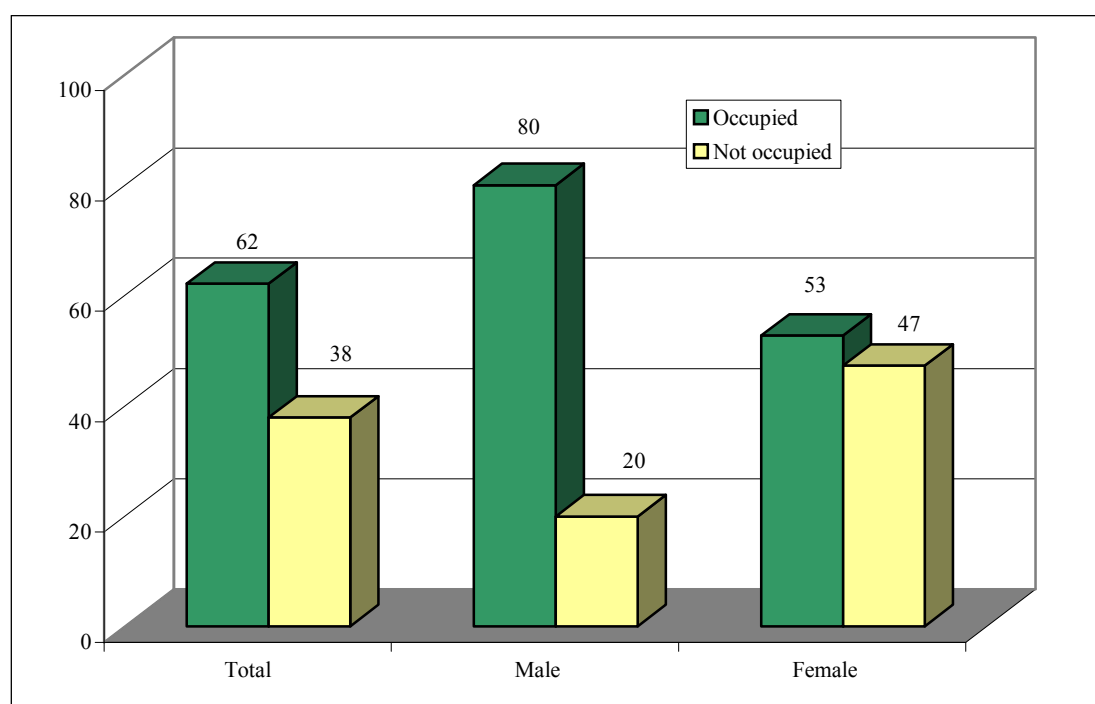
The aged people living alone account for 9,6% of the total of the aged people. At the advanced ages, the people who live alone are primarily women (34,2% of the aged men live alone against 65,8% in the case of the aged women). Compared to the categories of ages, the people of the third age living alone make 71% against 29% of the fourth age and are strongly represented in the rural area.

Table 4 : Demographic characteristics of the aged people living alone

Age group	All areas			Urban		Rural			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All Age	100,0	34,2	65,8	29,8	35,4	64,6	70,2	33,7	66,3
60-64	25,2	8,8	16,4	8,1	10,1	17,2	17,1	8,3	16,1
65-79	45,7	15,2	30,6	14,3	17,1	30,9	31,4	14,3	30,4
80 & +	29,1	10,2	18,8	7,4	8,2	16,5	21,7	11,1	19,8
Total	36109								

However, the analysis of the variable occupation indicates that all the aged people living alone do not have in the whole, an occupation for approximately 38% remain without activity. Those who are qualified or experienced still work in the formal sector (16%), although the great part is found in the informal sector.

Figure 11: Aged people living alone according to the occupation

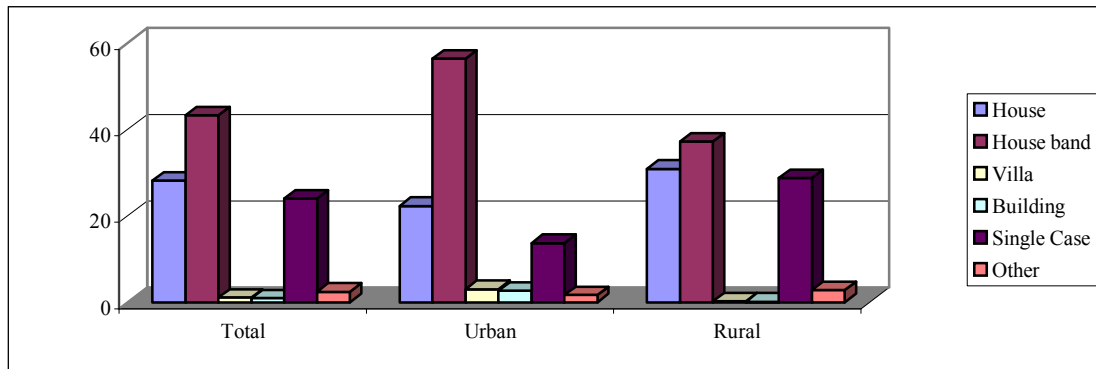


5.3 Characteristics of housing

A sure and adequate housing and a neighbourhood are essential for the wellbeing of the people. But, for the aged people, the site and in particular the proximity of the family members can make all the difference between a positive social interaction and the isolation.

Compared to the whole of the subpopulation that constitute the aged people, 43,2% live in row houses 28,2% insolate cabins and 24% in insolate houses. The other forms of housing units although existing, seem less mode of occupation : they are buildings and the detached houses. The situation is similar, as for the aged people living alone.

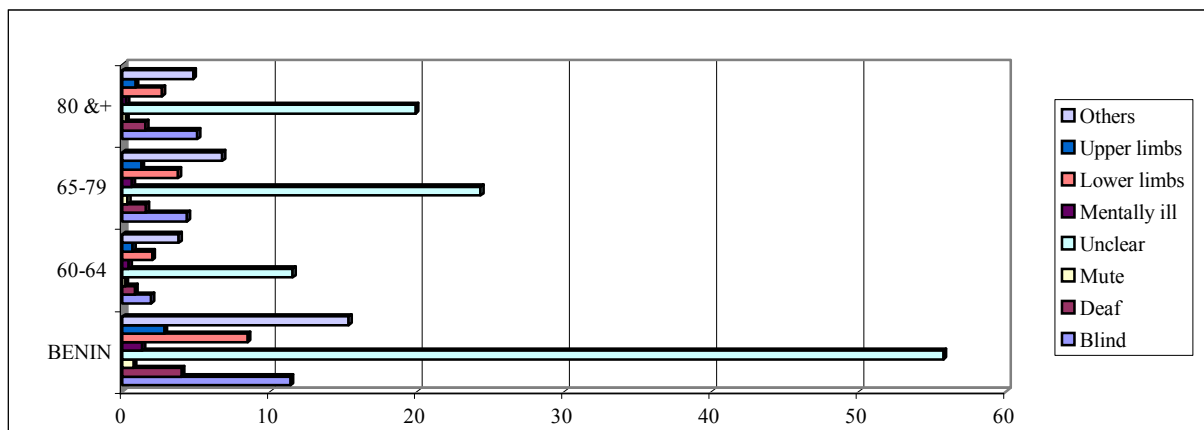
Figure 13: Aged people’s housing units according to the area



5.4 Physical handicap

The aged people, because of the degradation of their physical state due to the weakening of their organic functions, are exposed much to the risks of disease. Some go until losing the use of the members and the sight under the weight of the age.

Figure 14: Type of handicap among the aged people



The data allow to observe that among the aged people, 13,9% live in a situation of physical or mental handicap. Among those, there is 52,6% women and 47,4% men. According to methods' (Blind men, deaf persons, dumb men, paralysis lower limbs, paralysis upper limbs, complete paralysis, other handicaps), these aged people are for the majority of the evil sight (55,8%); come after the handicap from the lower limbs and other handicaps with respectively 7,5% and 15,4%. Graph 16 gives us a general sight of the situation of indigence per category of age.

When we bring size of the handicapped aged people closer to the total number of handicapped of the country, more of the quarter (30,1%) is 60 years old and more.

CONCLUSION

It arises from the analysis on the characteristics of the aged people what follows: On a total number of 6 769 914 inhabitants counted in 2002, 374 204 were people of 60 years and more all sex confused, that is a proportion of 5,5%.

A proportion of 68,4% of the aged people live in rural area, against 31,6% in urban environment.

The population of the aged people is unequally divided according to the sex. The old women are more numerous (54,4%) than aged men (45,6%). The aged women have a better life expectancy than the men (the 60 year aged people hope to live 20 years moreover, that is to say 21 years for aged woman and 18,9 years for aged man). The ratio of masculinity is 83,6 men for 100 women.

The level of elimination of illiteracy is not satisfactory: only 9% of the aged people can read and write in a language, that is a rate 91% of illiteracy.

There is a very noticed participation of the aged people of 60-64 years in the economic activity (73,4%) compared to the age brackets 65 years and more (59,2%). The comparison with the data of 1992 indicates that the activity rate of the aged people of 60-64 years increased from 70,8% in 1992 to 73,4% in 2002. On the other hand, that of some 65 years aged people and more decreased from 62,7% to 59,2%.

According to the area of residence, the activity rates of the aged people are higher in the rural zones (69,1%) than in the urban zones (51,7%), as well for men as for women (63,6% against 42,7 in urban area and 83,4% against 56,6% in rural area). According to departments, the analysis of the rough rate of activity offers a very remarkable disparity. Indeed, it is the department of Couffo which comes in first position with an activity rate of 75%, come after the Collines (72,3%), the Mono (71,5%) and the Plateau (67,9%). Only the Littoral shows a rate relatively low (34,9%).

The data make it possible to observe that in the population of the aged people, 65,1% are married, 27,3% are widows, only 4% are single people, 2% are divorced, 1,4% are separate and 0,3% are free unions.

From the point of view of widowhood, the analysis, according to the gender, confirms the weak proportion of the aged men (3,1%) in the proportion of the widowed aged people translating the effect of the male overmortality and, with the fact that the women remarried themselves less frequently than men following a divorce, of a separation or the death of the spouse.

The aged people who direct a household account for 59,6% and are with strong male predominance (66,9% men and 33,1% women), against 40,4% which depend on a head of household and with strong female predominance (86% against 14%).

The aged people living alone account for 9,6% of the total of the aged people. Compared to the characteristics of housing, 43,3% live in row houses, 28,2% in isolated cabins and 24% in isolated houses. The other forms of housing units although existing, seem less mode of occupation: they are buildings and detached houses. The same situation is similar as for the aged people living alone.

The data make it possible to observe that among the aged people, 13,9% live in a situation of physical or mental handicap. Among those, there is 52,6% women and 47,4% men. According to methods (Blind persons, deaf persons, dumb persons, paralysis lower limbs, paralysis upper limbs,

complete paralysis, other handicaps), these aged people are for the majority of the evil sight (55,8%); come after the handicap from the lower limbs and other handicaps with respectively 7,5% and 15,4%.

This analysis lets foresee that the situation of the aged people depends on all kinds of factors (behavioral, economic, environmental, social and personal) which surround the individual and his family. They would constitute in fact of the predictive elements in the way in which the aged people are touched in their living condition. To this end, it appears essential to undertake a specific study in order to determine the effective problems of the aged people in Benin.

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