

# THE SITUATION OF THE AGED PEOPLE IN BENIN

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By taking as reference the age of the individual to determine his degree of old age, the study on the 60 years aged people and more, one of the components of the population, 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.

In this direction, the questions relating to the aged people took a place of foreground at the time of the large world assemblies on the population organized by the United Nations during the last decades. Thus, the first world conference on the ageing of the population held in Vienna in 1982, recognized the concerns of the aged people in the world by the adoption of an international action plan recommending a solution of social protection. More precisely, the second world assembly held in Madrid in 2002, examined the results of the application of the first action plan where the development and the adoption of a national action plan on active ageing in each country constitute a preventive solution with an announced critical situation.

Admittedly, Benin declaration of policy of population of May 1996 envisaged actions at the place of the vulnerable groups of which aged people, but they are left for account. Indeed, no specific program is intended to them whereas they are confronted more and more with difficulties related of the degradation of their labour force and to the reduction purchasing power to them. This highlights the degree of dependence of the aged people and shows the loads which the company must support, taking into account the inexistence of reception facilities of the aged people. This vulnerable situation of the aged people brought to the creation of the National Federation of Associations and Organisations of Retirees and aged people of which the principal objective is to improve the living conditions of retirees and aged people.

The census of 1992 had not provided particularly information on the aged people apart from the statistical data on their volume. The existing data were interested in the young populations within the framework of the objectives such as defined in the national programs of socio-economic development of the country.

By working out policies and programs under the angle to age while remaining active, one gives oneself the possibility of taking up all the challenges of ageing of the individuals, but also of the populations. When policies pursued as regards health; labour market, employment, education and social action favour an active ageing:

- less adults will die prematurely at the highly productive stages of their existence;
- more aged people will have a good quality of life;

- more aged people will take an active part in the social, cultural, economic political aspects and policies of life in society, in employment remunerated or not, in their hearth, their family and their locality.

Thus, conscious of the width covered by the social questions relating to the aged people, the current government fixed, within the framework of the national policy of economic and social development, to integrate the ageing of the population like a variable likely to influence all the socio-economic indicators of development. This requires a rather broad knowledge of this under population in the identification, the follow-up and the evaluation of the programs established for this purpose.

It is in this dynamics that the specific study on the characteristics of the aged people is registered through the results of the third general census of the Population and dwelling of february 2002.

This study will allow, on the whole, to know the precise and economic indicators on the aged people in order to encourage the authorities, the NGO and the associations with:

- creating conditions which improve their quality of life and which enables them to carry out an independent life in their own community as long as they can or wish it;
- creating a system of health care, adequate economic and social safety;
- setting up a system of social support so that it is easier to deal with them within their family.

This document entitled: " The situation of aged people in the Republic of Benin " A thus for ambition to offer a minimum package of information on the aged people in response to the national programs on active ageing and the indicators of the great conferences along the axes hereafter:

- the demography of the aged people;
- the analysis of the sociocultural characteristics of the aged people;
- the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the aged people;
- the living conditions of the aged people.

## **1 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1-1 Definition of the concept**

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.

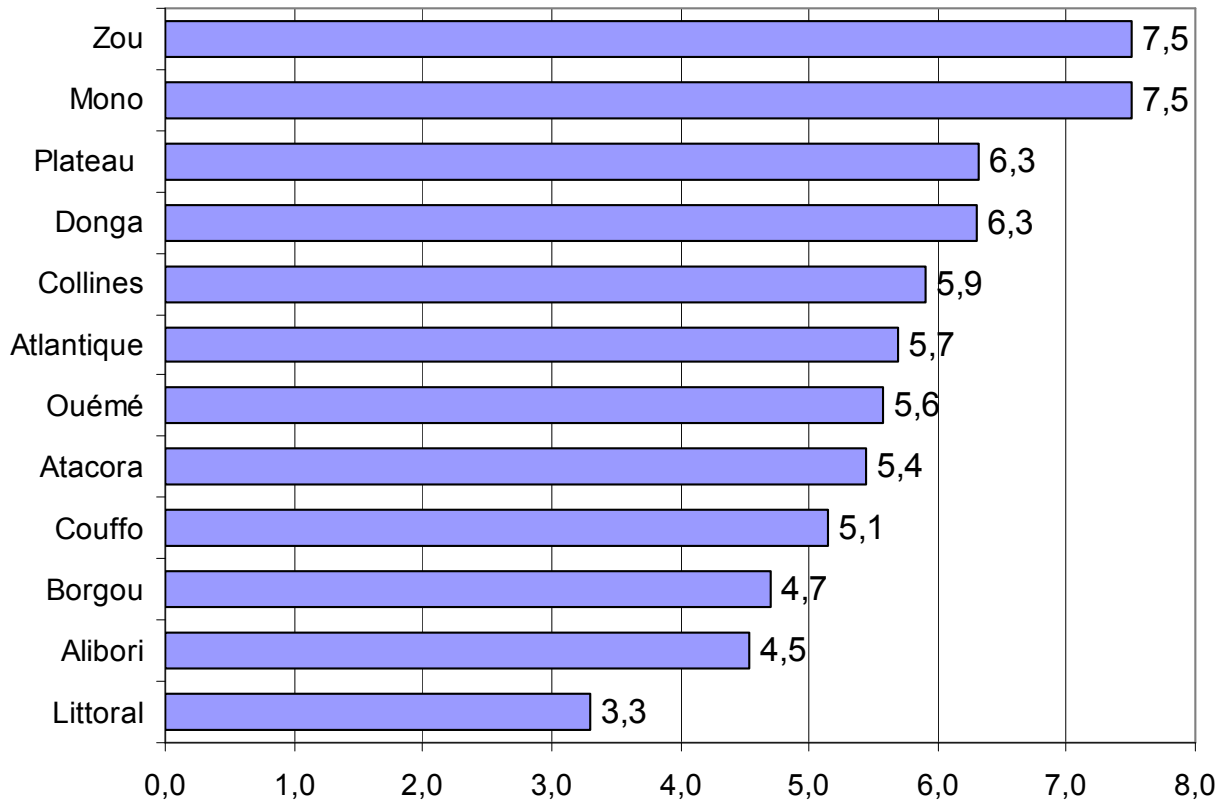
### **2.1 Spatial volume and distribution**

#### **2.1.2 Geographical distribution of the aged people**

The data on the total number/size of the aged people to the third General Census of the Population and the Dwelling made it possible to count a population of 374 204 people aged 60 years old and more all confused sexes, in a proportion of 5,5% compared to the total population.

The distribution according to the area of residence indicates that 68,4% of the aged people live in rural area against 31,6% in urban environment.

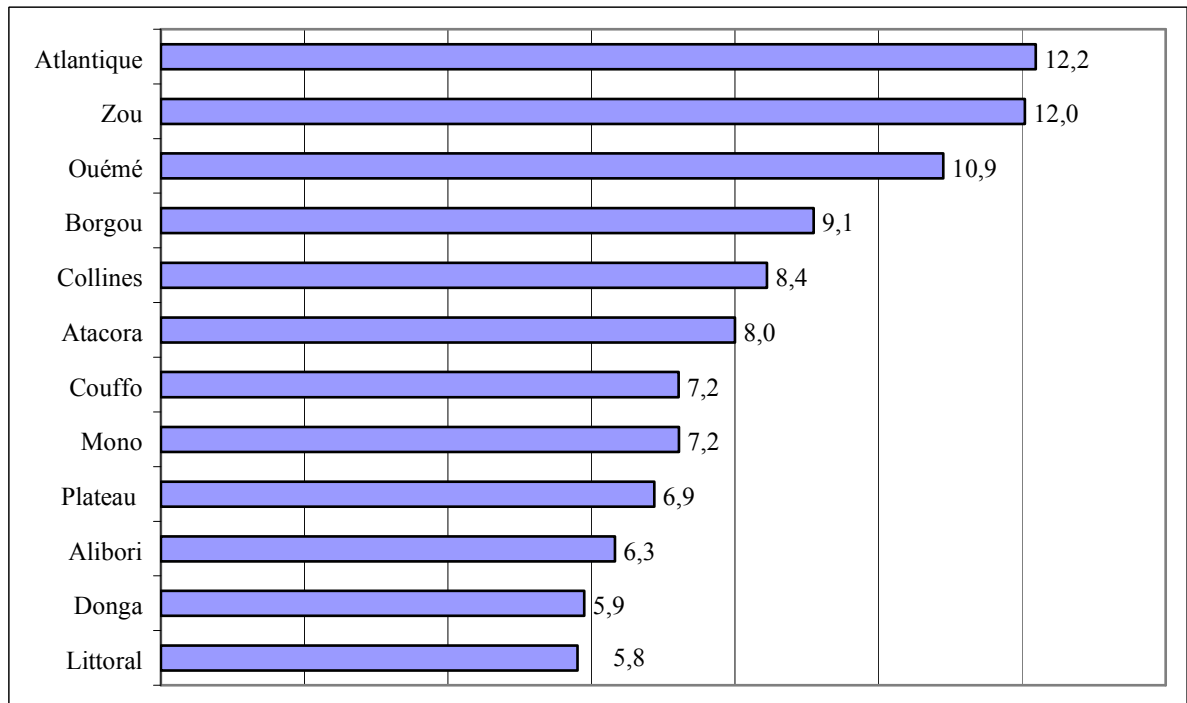
Figure 2.1 Demographic Weights of the aged people by department



At the departmental level, the demographic weight of the aged people reveals Zou and Mono departments as the departments which record the strongest proportions of aged people (7,5%); come after Donga and the Plateau departments (6,3%), the Collines (5,9%), the Atlantique (5,7%), the Ouémé (5,6%), the Atacora (5,4%), the Couffo (5,1%), the Borgou (4,7%), the Alibori (4,5%) and the Littoral (3,3%).

However, the departments like the Atlantique (12,2%), the Zou (12%) and the Ouémé (10,9%) concentrate the most aged people as the opposite figure shows.

Figure 2.2 Concentration of the aged people by department

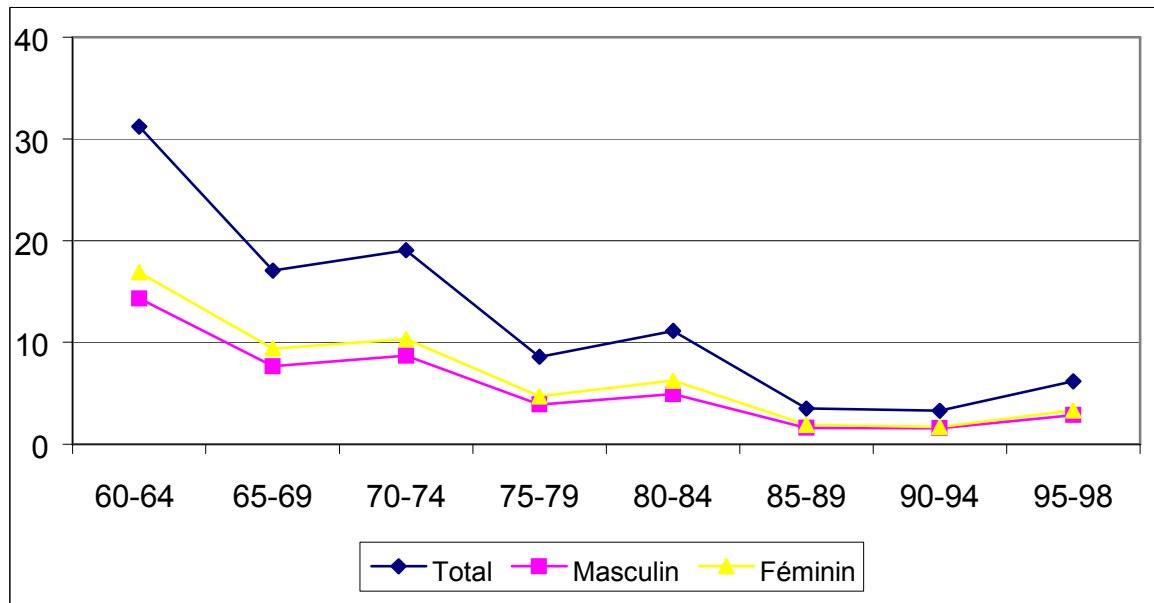


The ratios on masculinity at the level of the departments are weak (77 men for 100 women on average). However, they are high in the north areas where they vary from 100 to 116 men for 100 women.

## 2.2 Structure by sex and group of ages

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 (the most 80 years: table A1).

Figure 2.3: Proportion of the aged people by group of ages according to the sex



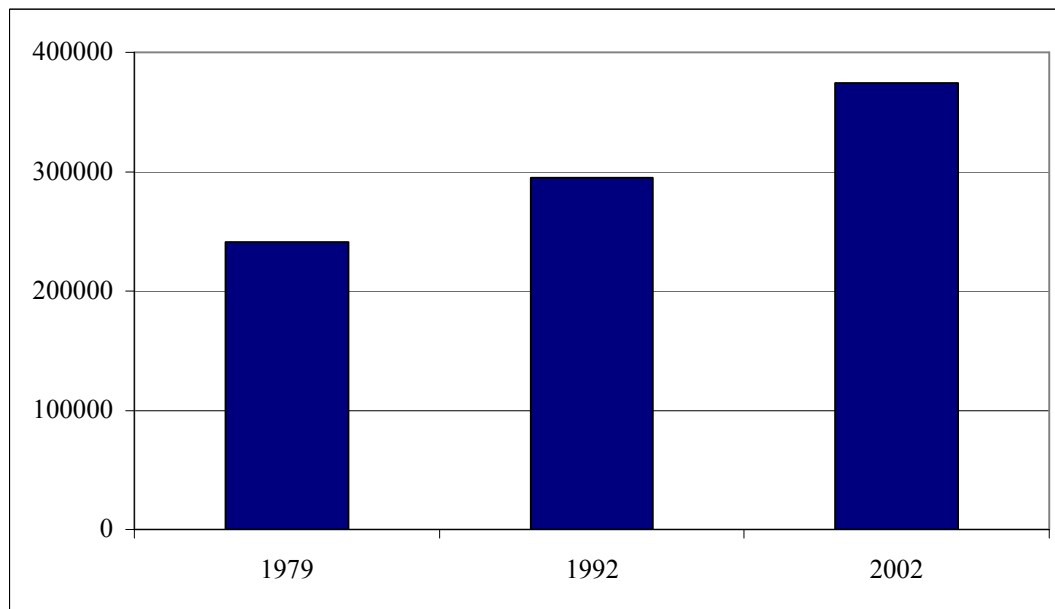
The population of the aged people is unequally divided according to the sex. The aged women are more numerous (54,4%) than aged men (45,6%). As one can note it, the aged women have a better life expectancy to than the aged men (the 60 year aged people hope to live 20,1 years more including 21,2 years 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.

### 2.3 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 2.4 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.

Table 2.1 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

The aged people, through the evolution of their size, constitute a layer not less significant which interpellate the attention of researchers as well as of the national community since forming integral part of the population.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF SOCIOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The examination of the sociocultural characteristics of the aged people assumes a significant character because of its use in the explanation of the elements which distinguish the aged people from the other components of the population. To this end, the variables selected relate to the ethnic group, the religion, the elimination of illiteracy and the instruction.

#### 3.1 Ethnic group and the religion

Among the ten sociolinguistic groups identified for the needs of the analysis, the aged people are concentrated in the group of Fons and connected groups (41,4%), come after the group of Adja and connected groups (15,2%) and finally the group of Yoruba and connected groups (13,3%).

This unequal pattern of the settlement of the 60 years aged people and more remains the same one compared to the results of the RGPH2 of 1992 which gives the same classification of the ethnic groups for the whole of the population.

Whatever the ethnic group, the aged women remain the most represented. The ratios of masculinity revolve around 75%. However, for the ethnic groups of the septentrional area and the foreign ethnic groups, the ratios of masculinity are highest (141,8% at the peulhs and connected groups, 122,9% for the foreign ethnic groups, 107,9% at Dendi and connected groups, 106,2% at Bètamaribè and connected groups, 101,5% at Yoa-lokpa and connected groups and 99,1% at Batoumbou and connected groups.

**Table 3.1 Proportion of the aged people according to the ethnic group**

Ethnic group	Total	Male	Female	Ratio of masculinity
Adja and connected groups	15,2	6,4	8,8	73,2
Fon and connected groups	41,4	17,5	23,8	73,5
Bariba and connected groups	9,4	4,7	4,7	99,1
Dendi and connected groups	1,8	0,9	0,8	107,9
Yoa-Lokpa and connected groups	4,4	2,2	2,2	101,5
Peulh and connected groups	5,6	3,3	2,3	141,8
Gua ou Otamari and connected groups	5,7	2,9	2,8	106,2
Yoruba and connected groups	13,3	6,0	7,3	82,1
Other ethnic groups	1,4	0,7	0,7	92,1
Foreign ethnic groups	1,1	0,6	0,5	123,0
Total	374 204			
Non declared	3264			



Concerning the religion, one notices that more than the third of the aged people practise the vodoun (31,8%), come after the catholic religion (21,2%) and Islam (20,9%). But only the other traditional religions and Islam contain more men at the advanced ages.

Table 3.2: Proportion of the aged people according to the religion

Religion	Total	Male	Female	Ratio of masculinity
Vodoun	31,8	13,5	18,3	73,6
Catholic	21,2	9,2	12,1	75,9
Protestant méthodist	2,7	1,2	1,5	78,0
Other protestants	1,3	0,6	0,7	75,4
Célestial	2,4	1,0	1,4	72,9
Islam	20,9	10,8	10,1	106,6
Other christians	2,7	1,1	1,6	71,2
Other traditionnal religions	8,0	4,2	3,9	107,2
Other religions	1,3	0,6	0,7	91,2
Any religion	6,8	3,2	3,6	87,4
Total	374 204			
Non declared	3499			

### 3.2 Elimination of illiteracy

The level of elimination of illiteracy 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.

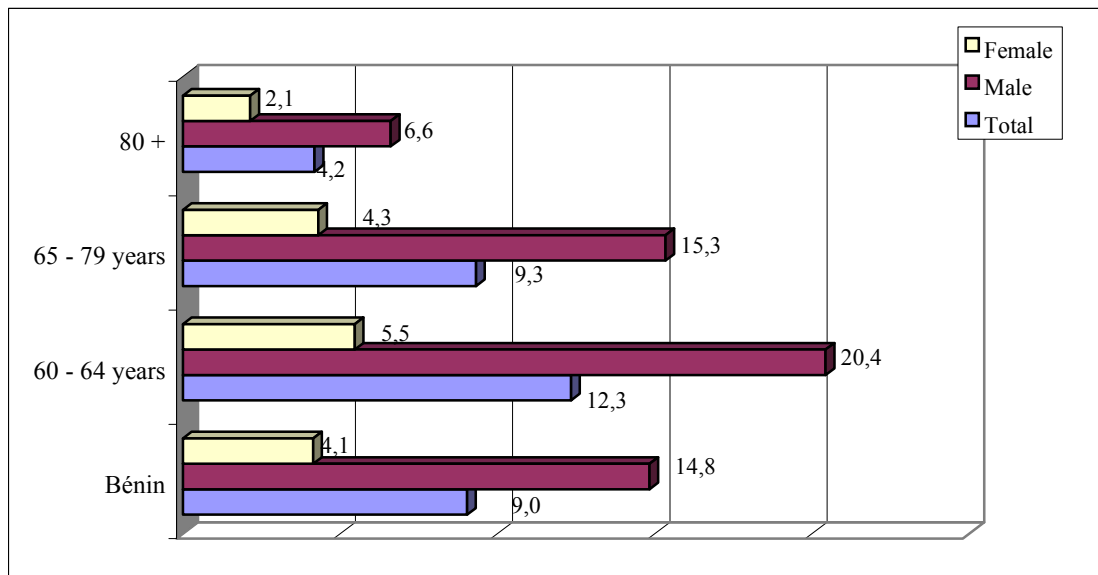
Compared to the categories of ages, the rate of teaching to read and write decreases in proportion from 12,4% to 4,2%. What wants to say that the level of elimination of illiteracy of the aged people decreases under the weight of the age. These proportions are better in the age bracket of the 60-64 years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

However, the rate of teaching to read and write of the aged men exceeds that of the aged women. Indeed, the taught reading and writing aged people of the male sex account for

14,8% against 4,1% among women. It is higher in urban environment (20,7%) than in rural area (4,1%); what corresponds to a rate of illiteracy of 84,2% in urban environment and 93,8% in rural area.

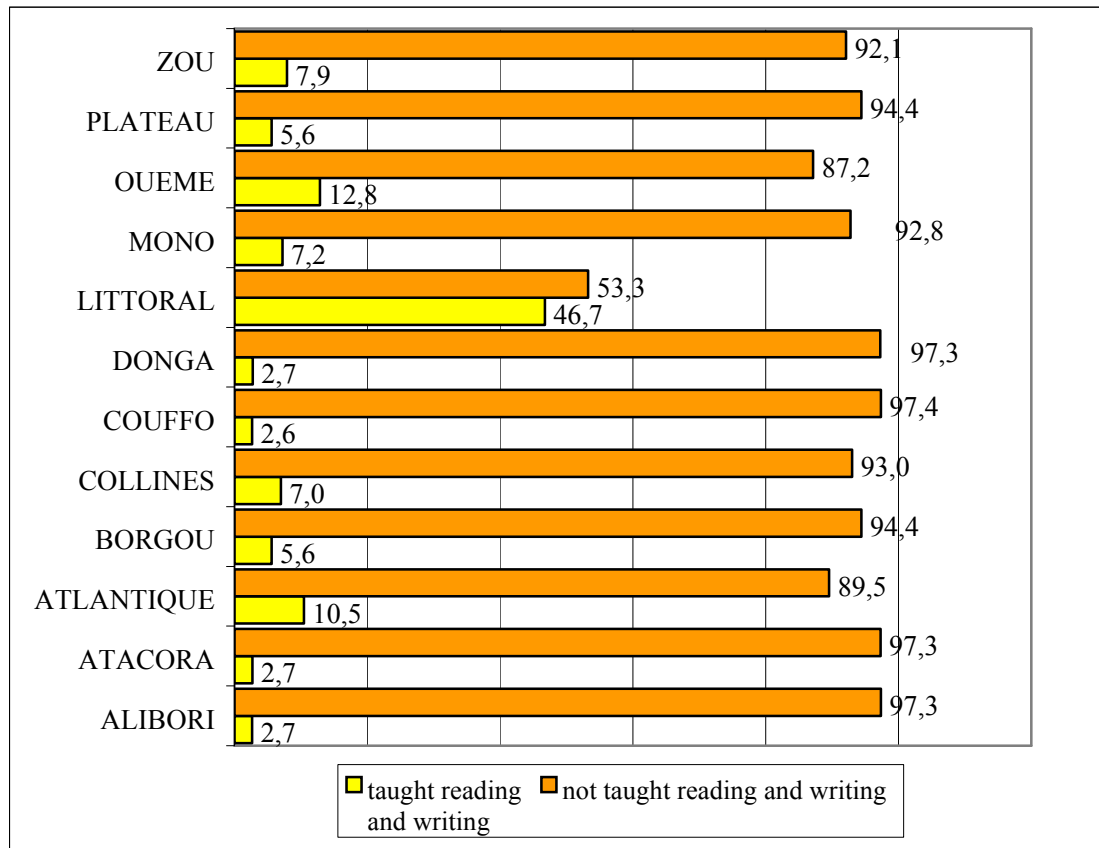
Although the ratio of masculinity is a little weak (83,6 men for 100 women), the one calculated according to the fact that aged person is taught reading and writing or not higher in the category of taught reading and writing persons : 0,3 woman for 1 man, against 1,3 women for 1 man in the category of not taught reading and writing.

Figure 3.1: Rate of elimination of illiteracy for the aged people



Among the departments, only the Littoral presents a quasi equitable distribution of proportion of the taught reading and writing aged people (46,7%) and not taught reading and writing (53,3%). On the other hand, in the other departments the levels of elimination of illiteracy are low (between 2% and 5%), although in Ouémé and the Atlantique they are 12,8% and 10,5%. There is thus an unquestionable comparative advantage which is offered by the cities compared to the campaigns on the aptitude or the will to have access to the elimination of illiteracy. It is the same for the instruction.

Figure 3.2: Elimination of illiteracy of the aged people by department



### 3.3 The instruction

With the instar of the elimination of illiteracy, the instruction is a determining factor of health and access to the resources, at any age. In this direction, the instruction received in the childhood combined with the possibilities of formation throughout the life, can confer to the aged person the cognitive aptitudes and confidence wanted to adapt and remain independent.

The data make it possible to observe that at the national level, on the 372 015 aged people, having declared their educational level, only 9,5% are educated, all levels combined, against 90,5% of non educated. This weak rate would result from as many determinants, knowing the difficult access to the existing schools, the poverty of the parents and especially their ignorance of the utility of the instruction at that time.

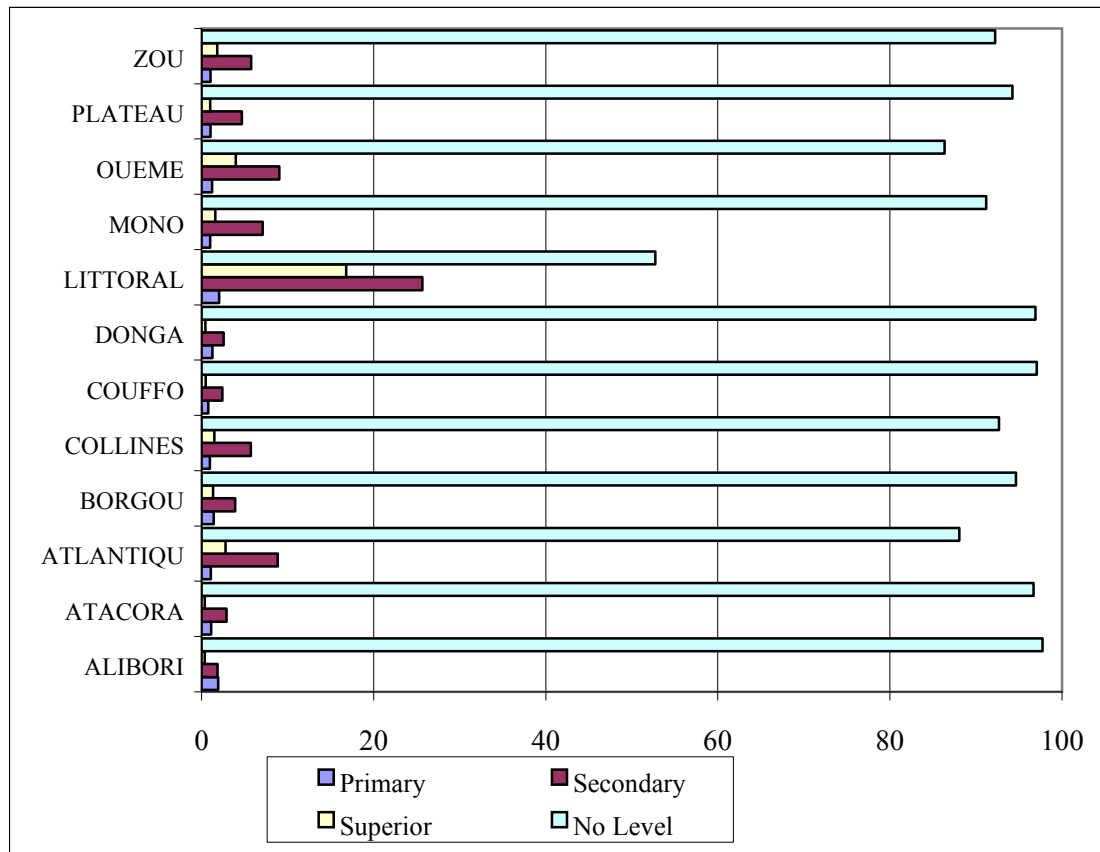
Just like the elimination of illiteracy, the educational level decreases under the effect of the increase in the age. However, non educated are concentrated in the 80 year old section and more.

The aged women are less educated than the aged men. Indeed, on the size of the educated aged people, only 5,8% women are educated against 15,8% men.

Table 3.3: Aged people according to the educational level

Group of age	Primary	Secondary	Superior	No level
Bénin	6,6	2,5	0,4	90,5
60 - 64 years	8,7	3,6	0,7	87,0
65-79 years	6,8	2,6	0,4	90,2
80 +	3,4	1,0	0,1	95,5
Male	1,1	10,4	4,1	84,4
60 - 64 years	1,1	14,2	6,1	78,6
65-79 years	1,1	10,7	4,2	84,0
80 +	1,0	5,0	1,0	93,0
Female	1,3	3,3	1,1	94,3
60 - 64 years	1,3	4,2	1,5	93,0
65-79 years	1,3	3,4	1,1	94,2
80 +	1,3	1,7	0,4	96,6
Total	374 204			
Non declared	2189			

Figure 3.3 Educational level of the aged people by department



## 4 ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

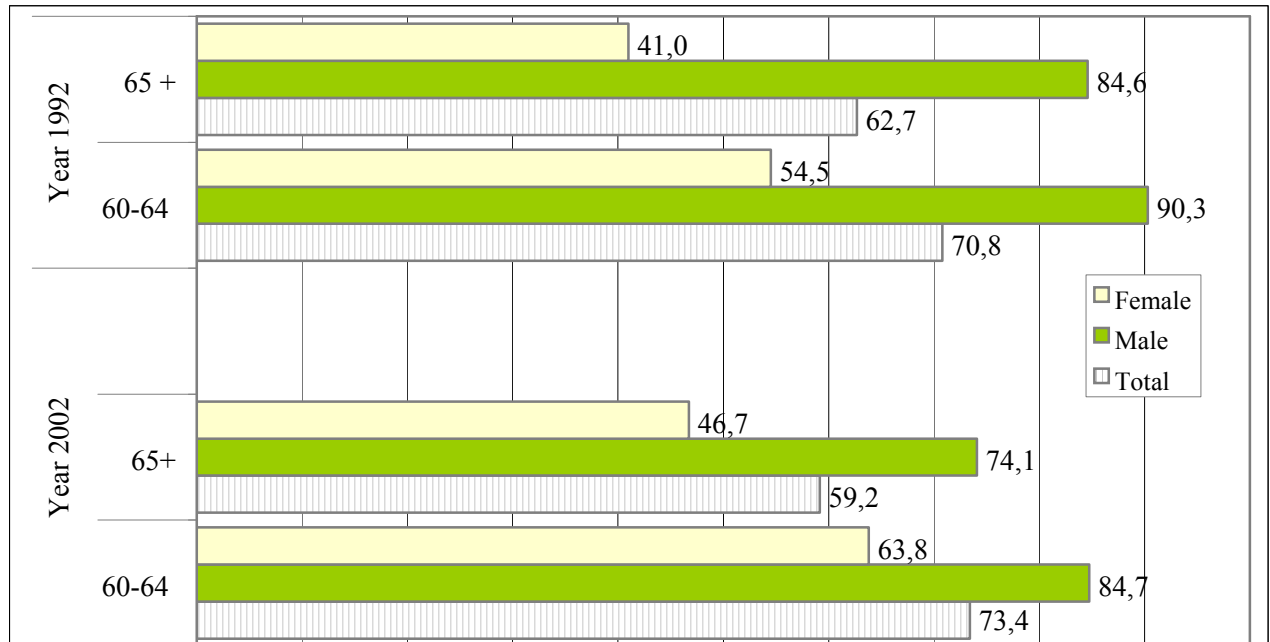
According to the definition, the aged people are people who reached and exceeded 60 years. Theoretically, these people would have, in their great majority, ceased carrying on any economic activity because of their age, or to have been allowed with the retirement in accordance with the industrial legislation in force in Benin. However, reality is very different on the ground. If in urban environment that seems true, in rural area, the majority of the people of this fringe of the population are still in activity. This is why it proves to be necessary to study the economic characteristics of this population through the analysis of the structure of the non busy subpopulation and of the structure of the subpopulation active.

### 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 4.1 indicates it.

Figure 4.1: Activity rates of the aged people between 1992 and 2002



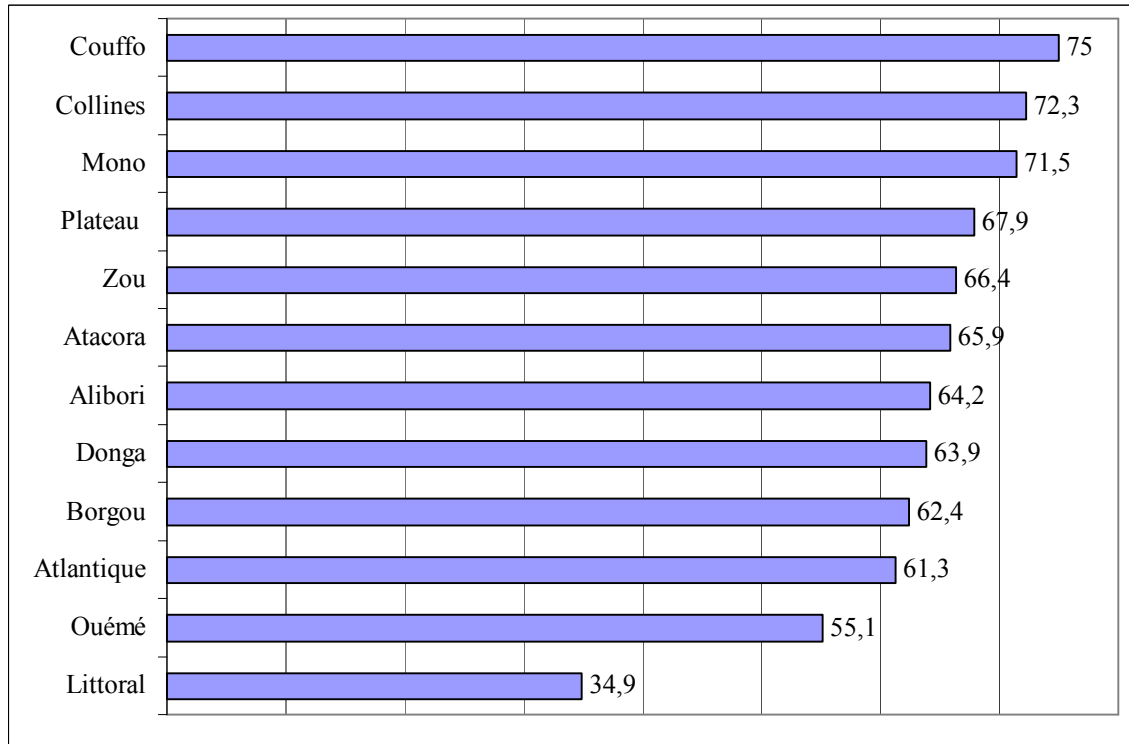
According to the area of residence, the activity rates of the aged people are higher in the rural zones (69,1%) than in the urban zones (51,7%), as well for men as for women (63,6% against 42,7 in urban environment and 83,4% against 56,6% in rural area).

Table 4.1 Activity rates per area of residence

Area of residence	Activity rates
<b>Total</b>	63,6
Male	77,4
Female	52,0
<b>Urban</b>	51,7
Male	63,6
Female	42,7
<b>Rural</b>	69,1
Male	83,4
Female	56,6

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 one (71,5%) and the Plateau (67,9%). Only the Littoral shows a rate relatively low (34,9%).

Figure 4.2: Activity rate per department



The busy 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 busy 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.

The division of the busy aged people according to the sex lets appear a difference little noticed in the activities of the informal sector (55,1% at from men and 44,9% for women). However, in the formal sector, only the quarter of the busy aged people are women (table 4.2)

When the categories of age intervene, the tendency is the same one compared to the national level (table a5).

We can thus say that the concept of growing old while remaining active finds its base in the predisposition of the aged people in the economic activity. It would be a whole process consisting in optimizing the possibilities of participation of the aged people in the economic activities in order to increase the quality of life during old age.

Figure 4.3: Busy aged people per branch of activity

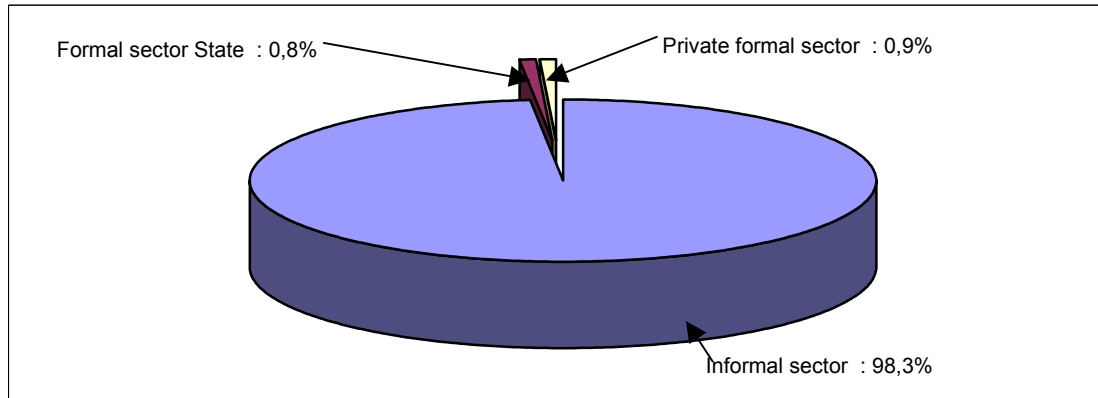


Table 4.2: Proportion of the busy aged people

Type Of occupation	All Areas			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Occupied	100	55,5	44,5	25,7	13,7	12,0	74,3	41,8	32,5
Informal sector	234 041	55,1	44,9	25,0	13,0	12,0	75,0	42,1	32,9
Formal sector State	1 832	79,6	20,4	68,6	57,2	11,4	31,4	22,4	9,0
Private formal sector	2 123	74,5	25,5	63,2	49,1	14,1	36,8	25,4	11,4
Total	246 939								
Non Declared	8 943								

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 4.3: Busy aged people according to the branch of activity

	Total	Buildings				Transport, and Commu- nication				Others services
		Agriculture fishing,	Hunting Mining	Industry manufacture	Electricity, public Water, gaz works	Trade restoring	Bank, Insurance			
Total	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 years	36,2	34,9	35,1	35,0	61,0	47,5	38,2	52,7	50,0	39,7
65-79 years	45,2	45,1	44,3	46,4	29,3	42,7	46,0	39,3	44,0	42,8
80 years and more	18,6	20,0	20,6	18,6	9,7	9,8	15,8	8,0	6,0	17,5
Male	55,8	71,2	95,3	58,8	95,1	95,1	8,8	96,7	73,8	85,9
Female	44,2	28,8	4,7	41,2	4,9	4,9	91,2	3,3	26,2	14,1
Non Declared	7 294									

Table 4.4: Status of the aged people in exerted employment

Status of occupation	Total		Employer		Independent employment		Permanent employee		Temporary employee		Co-operative member		Family help		Other	
Benin	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 ans	80 906	2,8	90,7	1,3					0,7		0,2	4,1	0,2			
65-79 ans	101 391	3,0	91,5	0,8					0,4		0,1	3,9	0,3			
80 ans et plus	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 Non busy aged people

The Non busy aged people include the housewives, the pensioners, persons of private means and other inactive. It arises from the analysis of the results resulting from the RGPH3 that approximately 34% of the whole of the aged people remained without occupation. In their centre, the housewives and other inactive are most dominant and account for 35,5% and 50,8% respectively; come after the pensioners (10,4%) and persons of private means (3,3%).

The non busy aged people are mainly women (74% women and 26% men): the highest proportion is found in the rural area (57,9% in rural area and 42,1% in urban environment).

If it is supposed that the pensioners enjoy their retirement pensions and, persons of private means an income resulting from the revenue, we realize that there is 86,3% of the non busy aged people who do not have any particular source of income.

Figure 4.4 Categories of non busy aged people

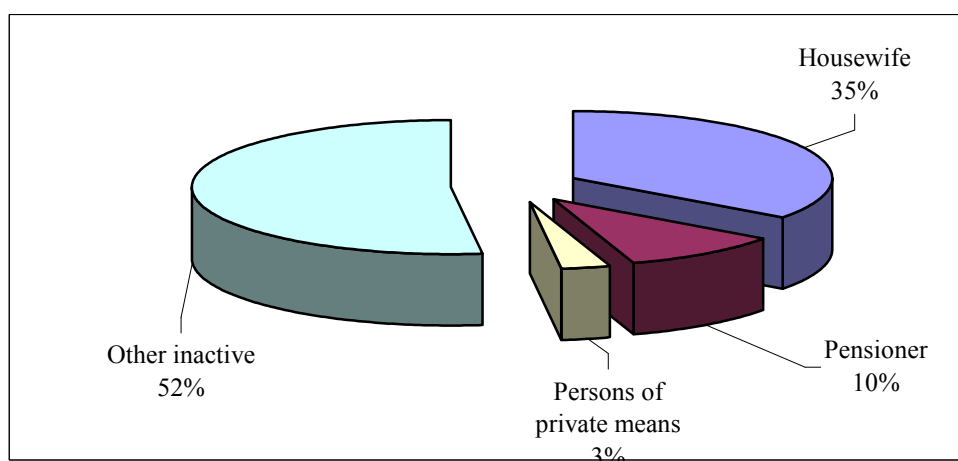


Table 4.5: Distribution of the aged people non busy by sex and Groups of ages

Non busy population	All areas		Urban		Rural				
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female			
Proportion	100,0	26,0	74,0	42,2	13,0	29,2	57,9	13,1	44,8
Housewife	45176	0,0	100,0	41,4	0,0	41,4	58,6	0,0	58,6
Pensioner	13270	84,9	15,1	82,1	69,3	12,8	17,8	15,5	2,3
Persons of private means	4187	59,8	40,2	39,8	25,2	14,6	60,2	34,6	25,6
Other inactive	64632	30,0	70,0	34,6	9,7	24,9	65,4	20,3	45,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>127265</b>	<b>33127</b>	<b>94138</b>	<b>53602</b>	<b>16500</b>	<b>37102</b>	<b>73663</b>	<b>16627</b>	<b>57036</b>

A particular attention must be given to the aged people who live in rural area where morbidity can be different because of the environmental conditions and a lack from the structures of support. The urbanization and the rural migration of the young people in search of employment are likely to isolate from advantage the aged people of the rural area.

The economic report of dependence of the aged people (i.e. the total of the 60 years aged people and more divided by the total of the working population) is an indicator of the load supported by the working population. Between 1992 and 2002, this report 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 aged 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.

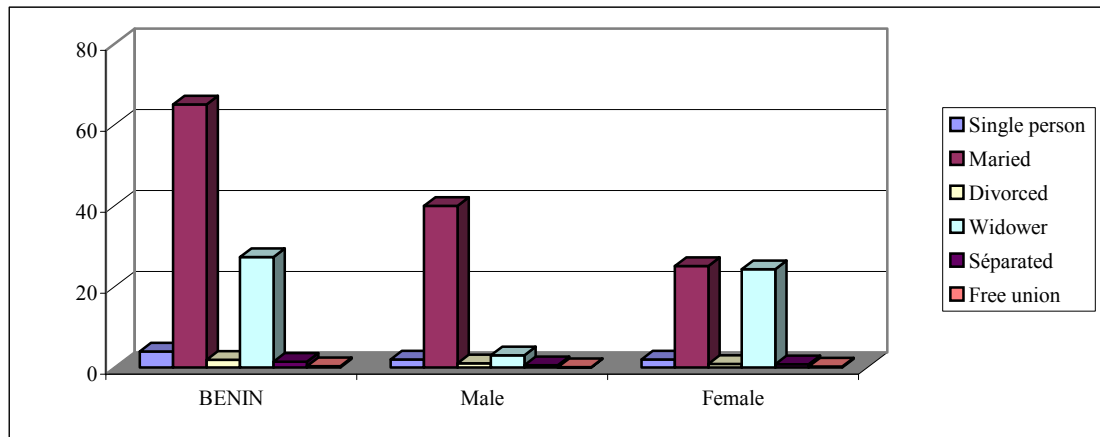
### **5.1 Marital status**

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 5.1 Aged people depending on the marital status



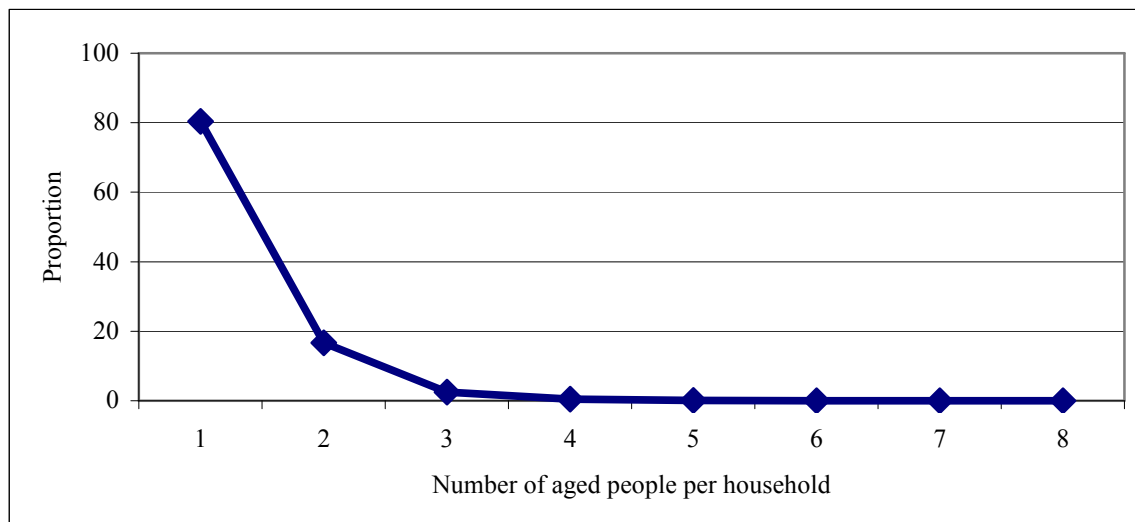
From the point of view of widowhood, the analysis according to the gender confirms the weak proportion of the aged men (3,1%) in the proportion of the widowed aged people translating on the one hand, the effect of the male overmortality and on the other hand, the fact that women remarried themselves 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 (table a18)

## 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 5.2: Proportion of the aged people by household

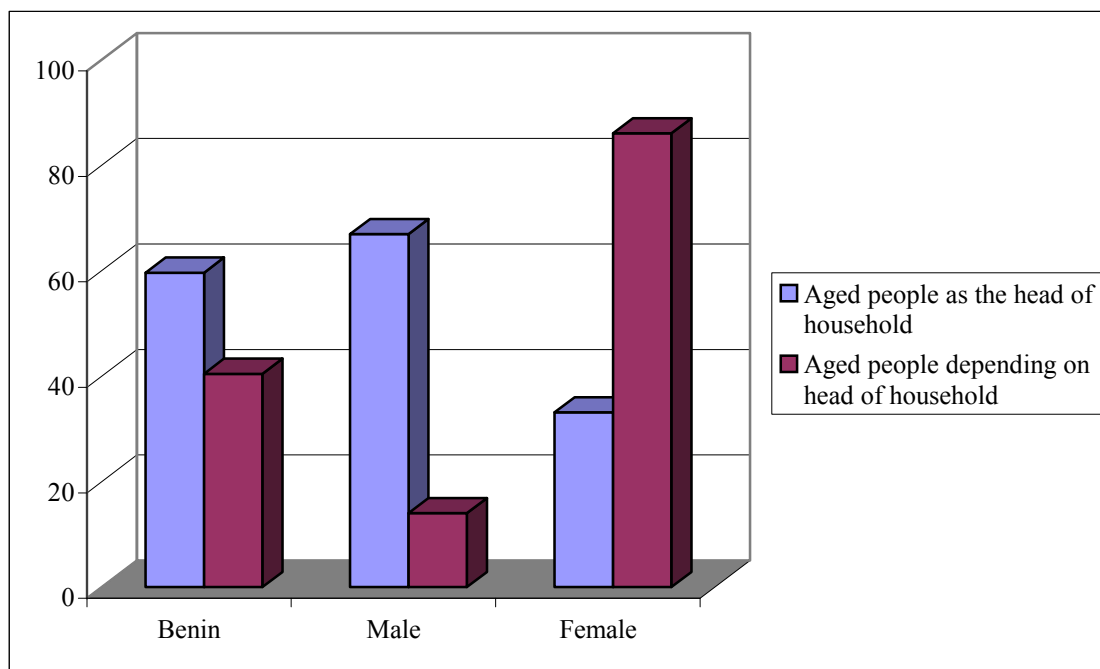


In fact, in the whole of the listed households, approximately 25,2% comprise aged people (either they direct households or they are dependent on a household). Within the households where appear the aged people, 80,4% contain an aged person, 16,6% contain two aged people, 2,4% contain three aged people. 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 graph 5.3 indicates it.

Figure 5.3: Situation of dependence of the aged people



The classification of the aged people according to the area of residence shows that 67,8% of the heads of household live in rural area against 32,2% in urban area; the same tendency is observed within the dependent aged people with 69,4% in the rural area, against 30,6% in the urban one.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the aged people in the household

Group of age	Aged heads of household	Aged people of depending on a head of household
<b>Total</b>	222 965	151 239
Male	66,9	14
Female	33,1	86
<b>Rural</b>	67,8	69,4
Male	46,8	10
Female	21	59,4
<b>Urban</b>	32,2	30,6
Male	20,1	4,2
Female	12,1	26,4

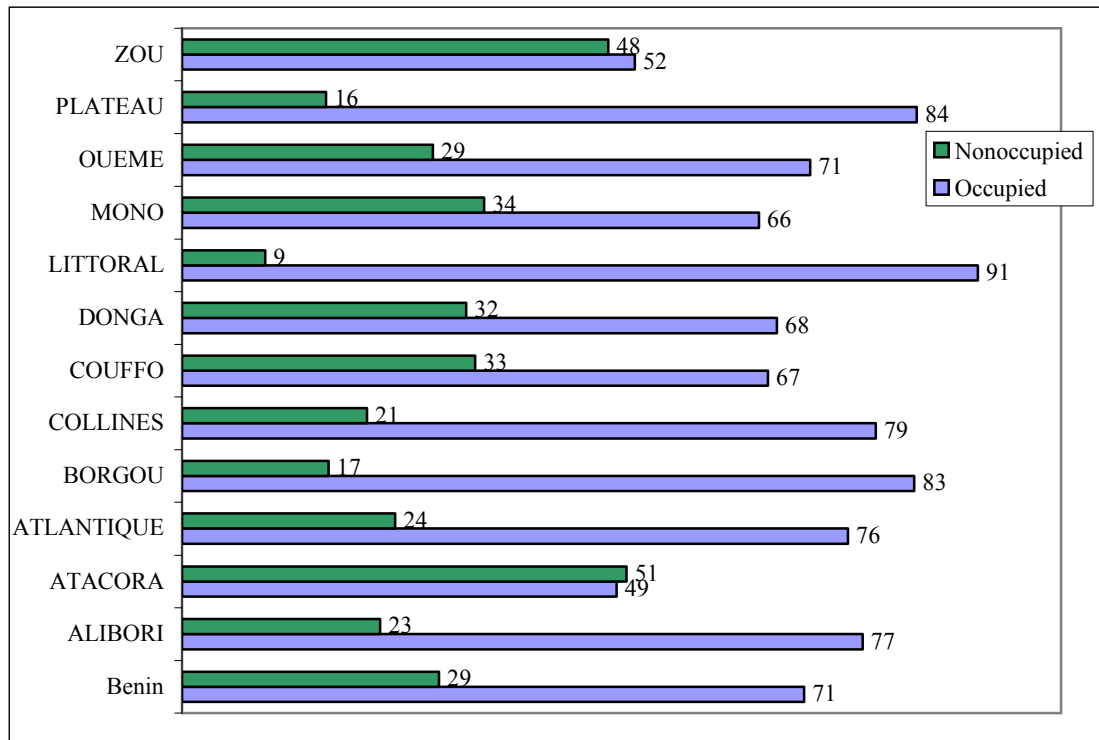
That it is at the level of the categories of ages and within the departments, the same tendency is observed (table a8).

With the instar of the classification of the aged people according to the profession, the aged people heads of household carry on activities in formal and informal sectors are strongly represented in rural area. More particularly, within the aged people heads of households, one meets a proportion of heads of household without an occupation. Indeed, on the total number of the aged people heads of household, approximately 29,2% are without occupation among which there is 69,1% men and 30,9% women.

Table 5.2: Aged people heads of household according to the occupation

Group of age	Total	Occupied informal sector	Occupied formal sector	state Occupied formal sector	private Nonoccupied
Total	222965	62545	92800	2403	65217
Proportion	100,0	28,1	41,6	1,1	29,2
60-64 years	32,3	32,0	32,3	37,1	32,3
65-79 years	45,5	44,7	46,5	53,0	44,6
80 +	22,2	23,3	21,2	9,9	23,1
Male	66,9	67,9	64,7	65,7	69,1
Female	33,1	32,1	35,3	34,3	30,9
<b>Rural</b>	<b>64,2</b>	<b>71,4</b>	<b>55,7</b>	<b>16,1</b>	<b>71,3</b>
Male	43,9	48,6	37,6	9,4	49,7
Female	20,3	22,8	18,1	6,7	21,6
<b>Urban</b>	<b>35,8</b>	<b>28,6</b>	<b>44,4</b>	<b>83,9</b>	<b>28,7</b>
Male	23,0	19,3	27,1	56,3	19,4
Female	12,8	9,3	17,3	27,6	9,3

Figure 5.4: Occupation of the aged people heads of household



### 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. They are for the majority concentrated in Zou (20,2%), Atlantique (19,2%), Ouémé (18%) and Mono department (10,3%) as figure 5.5 indicates it.



Figure 5.5: Concentration of the aged people living alone by department

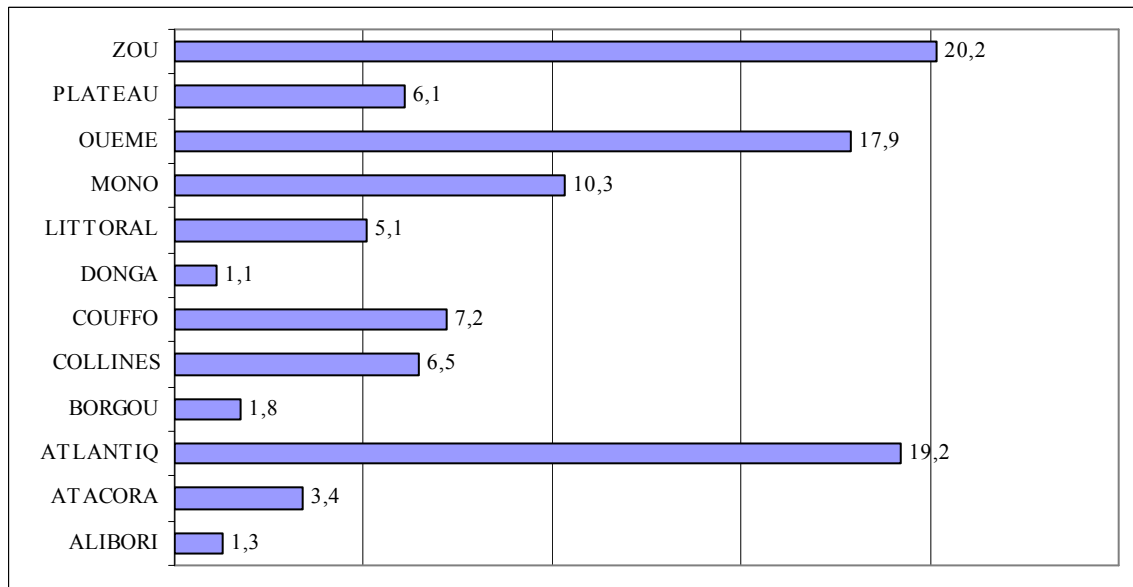


Table 5.3: Demographic characteristics of the aged people living alone

Group of age	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 years	25,2	8,8	16,4	8,1	10,1	17,2	17,1	8,3	16,1
65-79 years	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 5.6: Aged people living alone according to the occupation

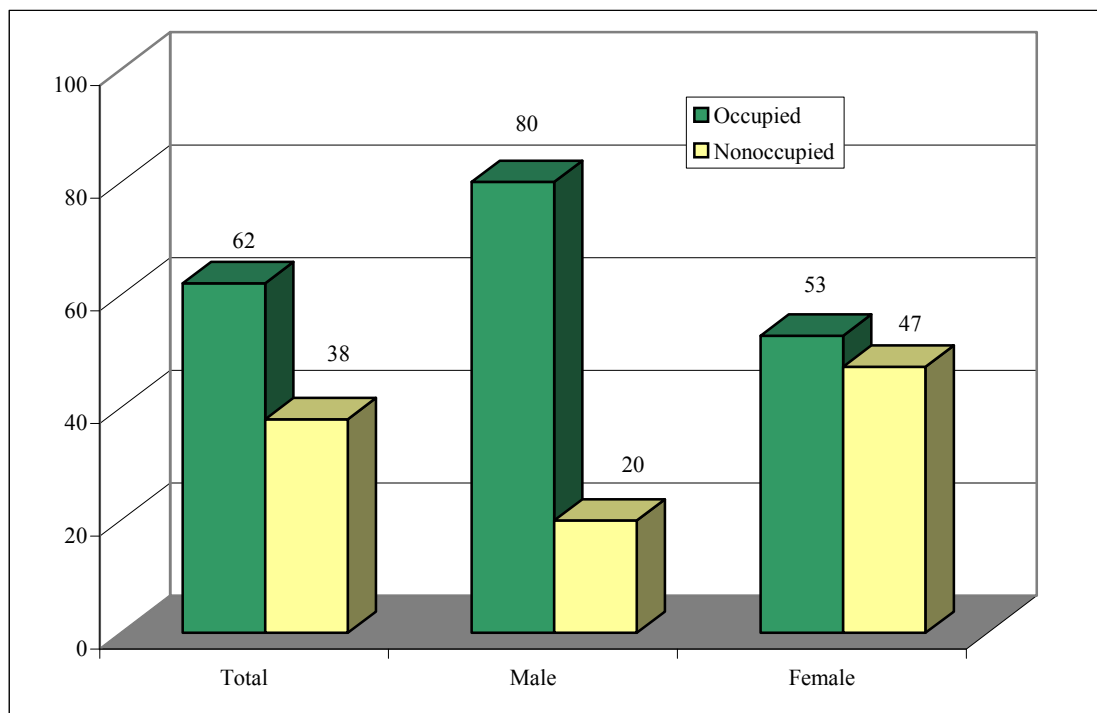


Table 5.4: Aged people living alone and their occupation

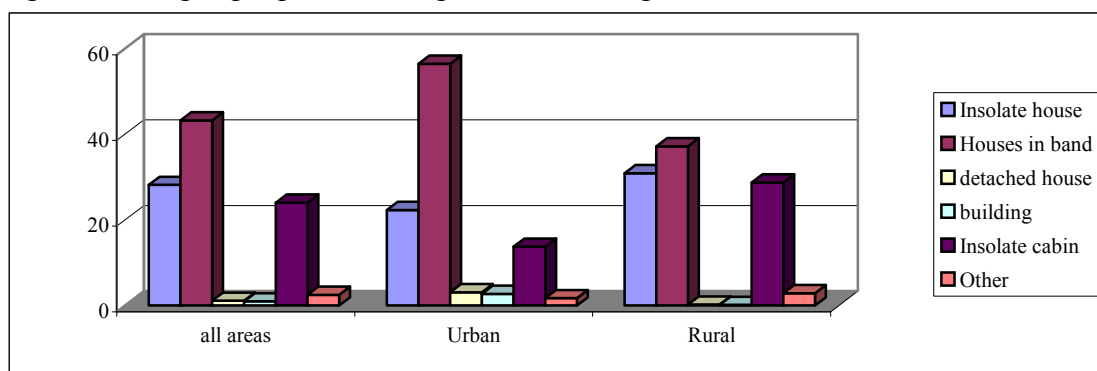
Area of residence Sex	Total	Occupied			Housewife	Pensioner	Persons of private means	Other Inactive
		Occupied Informal sector	formal state sector	Occupied Private formal sector				
All areas	36109	15284	5779	1357	8524	10	713	4442
Male	34,2	47,6	33,9	48,7	0,0	60,0	85,7	29,4
Female	65,8	52,4	66,1	51,3	100,0	40,0	14,3	70,6
Urban	29,7	18,6	51,5	34,2	33,0	80,0	58,5	27,4
Masculin	10,5	9,2	16,9	22,6	0,0	50,0	52,5	11,2
Féminin	19,2	9,4	34,6	11,6	33,0	30,0	6,0	16,2
Rural	70,2	81,4	48,5	65,8	67,0	20,0	41,5	72,6
Masculin	23,7	38,4	17,1	26,1	0,0	10,0	33,2	18,2
Féminin	46,5	43,0	31,4	39,7	67,0	10,0	8,3	54,4
Total	36109							

### 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 5.7: Aged people's housing units according to the area



### 5.3 Characteristics of housing

The existing literature on the structure of the housing units in rural area shows that the strong frequency of the isolated houses and especially of the isolated cabins is explained by the installation of individuals having left the family in the concern of independence or a conquest of new arable lands or search for pasture. It is sometimes said as that they are the aged men who are the founders of villages.

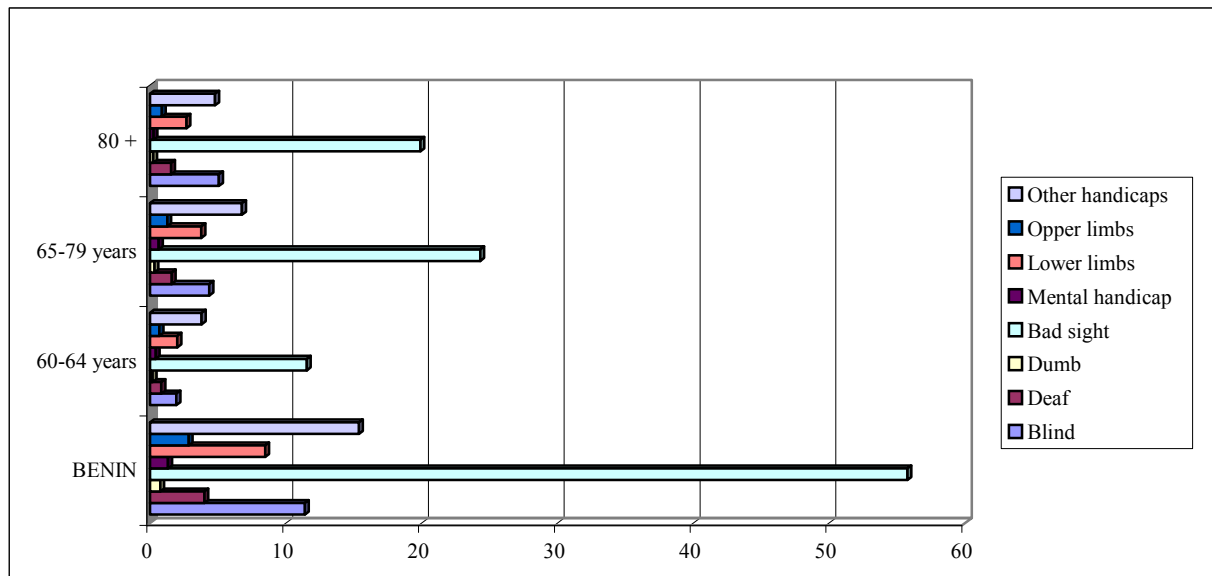
Table 5.5: Aged people and the characteristics of housing

Housing units	Total	Urban	Rural
Isolate House	28,2	22,3	30,9
Row house	43,2	56,4	37,2
Detached house	1,1	3,1	0,2
Building	1,0	2,7	0,1
Insolate cabins	24,0	13,8	28,7
Other	2,5	1,7	2,9
Total	374 204		
Non declared	6 390		

## 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 5.8: 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.

At the departmental level, the demographic weight of the aged people reveals Zou like the department more provided with aged people (7,5%); come after Donga and Plateau (6,3%), Littoral (6%), Collines (5,9%), Atlantique (5,7%), Ouémé (5,6%), Atacora (5,4%), Couffo (5,1%), Borgou (4,7%), Alibori (4,5%) and Mono (4,1%).

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.

The share of the 60 years old and more occupied people (the rough rate of activity) accounts for 63,6% of the total of the aged people. It is 77,4% among the aged 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 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%) that 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 busy 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 busy aged people are strongly represented in rural area (74,3%) than in urban environment (25,7%). However, it is to be noticed that the formal sector

employs the aged persons in the urban environment, because of the characteristics inherent in the activities of this sector. Such a report is hardly surprising as one knows that much economic activities of the formal sector are concentrated in the urban area.

The classification of the credits occupied according to the sex lets appear a little difference noticed in the activities of the informal sector (55,1% among man and 44,9% among woman). However, in the formal sector, only the quarter of the occupied aged people are women.

When intervenes the groups of age, the tendency is the same one compared to the national level.

We can thus say that the concept of growing old while remaining active finds therefore its base in the predisposition of the aged people in the economic activity. It would be a whole process consisting in optimizing the possibilities of participation of the aged people in the economic activities in order to increase the quality of life during ageing.

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 in small activities, independent activities, house work etc, and in the form of work not remunerated within the household. 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 far as the situation in the profession is concerned, the working population of the aged people is made up primarily of self-employed workers (91,1%) although the family help and the employers are less negligible (respectively 4% and 3,1%).

Approximately 34% of the whole of the aged people remained without occupation (housewives and other inactive).

Between 1992 and 2002, the economic report of dependence of the aged people passed from 14,15% to 13,22%. It is thus useful to develop more policies and programs which help to grow old while remaining active in order to allow the aged people to continue to work according to their capacities and their preferences.

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.

In the whole of the listed households, approximately 25,2% comprise aged people. Within the households where appear the aged people, 80,4% contain aged people, 16,6% contain 2 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 weak proportions obtained are insignificant, they translate, all the same, the degree of cohabitation within the generations. Thus, at least two to three generations cohabit within the households in Benin.

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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## APPENDIX

**Table a1:** Distribution of the aged people by group of age and sex

Group of age Area of residence	Total	Male	Female	Ratio of masculinity
All age	100,00	45,55	54,45	83,64
60-64 years	31,21	14,31	16,90	84,65
65-69 years	17,06	7,65	9,41	81,30
70-74 years	19,04	8,69	10,34	84,02
75-79 years	8,59	3,90	4,69	83,25
80-84 years	11,14	4,92	6,23	78,93
85-89 years	3,50	1,61	1,89	85,32
90-94 years	3,28	1,59	1,69	94,20
95-98 years	6,17	2,87	3,30	87,10
Area of residence				
Rural	31,59	43,33	56,67	76,46
Urban	68,41	46,57	53,43	87,16
Total	374204			

**Table a2 :** Distribution of the taught reading and writing aged people

Group of age Sex	Total	taught reading and writing	not taught reading and writing,
All areas	364243	32898	331345
60 – 64 years	113728	14041	99687
65 – 79 years	162844	15185	147659
80 +	87671	3672	83999
Male	166471	24701	141770
Female	197772	8197	189575
Rural	256002	10466	240245
Urban	108241	22432	91100
Total	364243		
Non declared	9961		

**Table a3** : Distribution of the aged people according to the occupation

Occupation	All areas			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
<b>Occupied</b>	<b>237996</b>	<b>131973</b>	<b>106023</b>	<b>61146</b>	<b>32567</b>	<b>28579</b>	<b>176850</b>	<b>99406</b>	<b>77444</b>
Informal sector	234041	128933	105108	58548	30478	28070	175493	98455	77038
Formal sector state	1832	1458	374	1256	1047	209	576	411	165
Private formal sector	2123	1582	541	1342	1042	300	781	540	241
<b>Nonoccupied</b>	<b>127265</b>	<b>33127</b>	<b>94138</b>	<b>53602</b>	<b>16500</b>	<b>37102</b>	<b>73663</b>	<b>16627</b>	<b>57036</b>
Housewife	45176	0	45176	18682	0	18682	26494	0	26494
Pensioner	13270	11260	2010	10904	9202	1702	2366	2058	308
Persons of private means	4187	2503	1684	1667	1056	611	2520	1447	1073
Other inactive	64632	19364	45268	22349	6242	16107	42283	13122	29161
Total	374204								
Non declared	8943								

**Table a4** : Distribution of the old people according to the profession by department

	Total	Informal sector	Formal state sector	Private formal sector
Alibori	1 5188	14969	79	140
Atacora	19721	19588	87	46
Atlantique	27949	27500	235	214
Borgou	21228	20927	146	155
Collines	22847	22656	84	107
Couffo	20243	20081	56	106
Donga	14095	13998	41	56
Littoral	7576	6554	436	586
Mono	19300	19055	112	133
Ouémé	22491	21933	294	264
Plateau	17465	17263	99	103
Zou	29893	29517	163	213

**Table a5** : Distribution of the aged people according to the profession

Group of age Sex	Informal sector		Formal sector state	Private formal sector
	Total occupied			
Benin	237996	234041	1832	2123
60-64 years	36,02	35,82	50,00	45,88
65-79 years	45,17	45,23	39,74	43,05
80 +	18,81	18,94	10,26	11,07
Male	55,45	55,09	79,59	74,52
Female	44,55	44,91	20,41	25,48
Non declared	8943			

**Table a6** : Distribution of the aged people nonoccupied by department

	Population nonoccupied				
	Total nonoccupied	Housewife	Pensioner	Person of private means	Other inactive
Alibori	8469	3017	151	109	4111
Atacora	10202	3697	294	55	5507
Atlantique	17558	5401	1700	631	9044
Borgou	12778	4719	736	225	6069
Collines	8712	2608	483	288	4918
Couffo	6727	2285	243	616	3176
Donga	7959	2587	130	83	4658
Littoral	14021	3911	5208	462	3935
Mono	7680	1997	427	383	4309
Ouémé	18221	6396	2178	523	8025
Plateau	8236	3510	366	167	3548
Zou	15106	5048	1354	645	7332

**Table a7** : Marital status of aged people

	Total	Single person	Maried	Divorced	Widower	Séparate	Free union
Benin	100,00	3,97	65,02	1,94	27,33	1,42	0,33
60-64 years	31,53	1,17	22,78	0,69	6,26	0,52	0,11
65-79 years	44,82	1,68	29,02	0,88	12,48	0,62	0,14
80 +	23,65	1,12	13,22	0,37	8,59	0,27	0,08
Male	46,67	1,98	39,92	1,07	3,03	0,59	0,07
Female	53,33	1,99	25,09	0,87	24,30	0,83	0,25
Alibori	6,11	0,32	4,23	0,10	1,32	0,11	0,02
Atacora	8,00	0,37	4,59	0,15	2,70	0,12	0,07
Atlantique	12,30	0,44	7,58	0,31	3,81	0,14	0,03
Borgou	8,92	0,66	6,02	0,20	1,81	0,20	0,03
Collines	8,58	0,28	6,13	0,16	1,88	0,11	0,02
Couffo	7,41	0,26	4,99	0,06	2,04	0,05	0,01
Donga	5,84	0,25	3,71	0,14	1,62	0,11	0,01
Littoral	5,76	0,23	4,04	0,11	1,27	0,06	0,04
Mono	7,36	0,21	4,64	0,18	2,20	0,11	0,02
Ouémé	10,80	0,43	6,74	0,21	3,20	0,18	0,04
Plateau	6,67	0,25	4,58	0,09	1,63	0,10	0,02
Zou	12,24	0,24	7,77	0,23	3,86	0,13	0,02
Total	356385						
Non declared	17819						

**Table a8** : Marital status of aged people by Area of residence

Area of residence	Total	Single person	Maried	Divorced	Widower	Séparate	Free union
All areas	356385	14131	231720	6897	97415	5048	1174
Male	166316	7048	142286	3810	10807	2099	266
Female	190069	7083	89434	3087	86608	2949	908
Urban	111390	4399	73136	2028	29717	1596	514
Male	49664	2087	42891	1005	2929	634	118
Female	61726	2312	30245	1023	26788	962	396
Rural	244995	9732	158584	4869	67698	3452	660
Male	116652	4961	99395	2805	7878	1465	148
Female	128343	4771	59189	2064	59820	1987	512
Total	374204						
Non declared	17819						

**Table a9** : Distribution of the aged people according to the family tie with the head of household

Group of age Sex	Aged persons as		Aged persons	
	Total	the head of household	depending on head of household	
	100,00	59,58	40,42	
60-64 years	31,21	19,22	11,99	
65-79 years	44,69	27,12	17,57	
80 +	24,10	13,24	10,85	
Male	42,67	37,73	4,94	
60-64 years	14,31	13,12	1,19	
65-79 years	20,25	17,99	2,26	
80 +	10,99	8,75	2,24	
Female	51,15	18,77	32,39	
60-64 years	16,90	6,10	10,80	
65-79 years	24,44	9,13	15,31	
80 +	13,11	4,50	8,61	
Department				
Alibori	6,33	3,45	2,88	
Atacora	8,00	4,20	3,80	
Atlantique	12,19	7,56	4,62	
Borgou	9,10	4,50	4,60	
Collines	8,45	5,41	3,04	
Couffo	7,21	4,38	2,83	
Donga	5,90	2,73	3,16	
Littoral	5,80	3,79	2,01	
Mono	7,22	4,70	2,52	
Ouémé	10,90	6,78	4,13	
Plateau	6,87	4,08	2,79	
Zou	12,04	7,99	4,05	
Total	374204			

**Table a10** : Aged people heads of household according to the occupation

	Total	Occupied	Nonoccupied
Benin	222965	70,75	29,25
Male	149122	46,68	20,20
Female	73843	24,07	9,05
Alibori	12912	77,44	22,56
Atacora	15729	49,42	50,58
Atlantique	28307	75,75	24,25
Borgou	16840	83,31	16,69
Collines	20228	78,93	21,07
Couffo	16399	66,66	33,34
Donga	10233	67,66	32,34
Littoral	14191	90,55	9,45
Mono	17589	65,62	34,38
Ouémé	25354	71,44	28,56
Plateau	15272	83,60	16,40
Zou	29911	51,52	48,48

**Table a11** : Aged people living only and their occupation by department

Department	Total occupied	Informal sector	Formel state sector	Private formal sector	Housewife means	Persons of private means	Other inactive
Alibori	100,00	51,19	13,17	3,24	17,28	2,59	12,53
Atacora	100,00	72,65	2,21	1,15	9,01	1,39	13,60
Atlantique	100,00	39,64	19,35	3,07	25,24	1,89	10,81
Borgou	100,00	47,15	14,87	3,01	20,57	6,17	8,23
Collines	100,00	60,59	12,28	1,58	17,33	1,33	6,89
Couffo	100,00	68,02	7,42	2,31	10,95	0,85	10,42
Donga	100,00	54,32	6,17	1,48	24,44	2,72	10,86
Littoral	100,00	6,59	46,49	6,49	25,72	7,14	7,41
Mono	100,00	50,15	16,55	3,35	16,72	1,23	11,99
Ouémé	100,00	25,69	20,11	6,29	32,60	1,67	13,59
Plateau	100,00	50,64	14,01	3,05	24,07	1,05	7,19
Zou	100,00	40,39	9,20	3,78	26,51	1,95	18,12

**Table a12 : Aged people according to the type of handicap**

Group of age Sex	Total	Blind	Deaf	Dumb	Bad sight	Mental handicap	Par. lower limbs	Par. Oppper limbs	Other handic aps
Benin	51999	5932	2085	391	29002	694	4414	1481	8000
60-64 years	11159	1013	436	96	6003	219	1048	364	1980
65-79 years	22419	2275	835	173	12646	337	1968	661	3524
80 +	18421	2644	814	122	10353	138	1398	456	2496
Male	24673	3172	929	184	13603	311	2028	742	3704
60-64 years	5408	552	204	48	2867	107	532	176	922
65-79 years	10641	1243	372	76	5916	146	926	347	1615
80 +	8624	1377	353	60	4820	58	570	219	1167
Female	27326	2760	1156	207	15399	383	2386	739	4296
60-64 years	5751	461	232	48	3136	112	516	188	1058
65-79 years	11778	1032	463	97	6730	191	1042	314	1909
80 +	9797	1267	461	62	5533	80	828	237	1329