

Recreation Tours for Active Ageing

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The heritage tours / picnic / pilgrimage by ASCENT, Kochi of HelpAge India provided a solution to address some of the glaring problems of the older people. Isolation or loneliness is a terrible feeling that, if not addressed, leads to tragic deterioration of the quality of life. The heritage tour and the various activities organized during the trip were centered on older persons. It was also aimed to involve their time and skills and it really helped to inculcate a feeling of inclusion.

Changing values, demanding jobs, shift to nuclear family structures etc. have led to increased neglect of the elderly by families and communities. Often this creates a feeling of alienation and it will be more profound for a widow or widower. For many older people the heritage tour organized by ASCENT, Kochi was the first trip in their life after retirement as often the children prefer to travel without the parents. The tour has enabled them to mingle with their own age group and relive their past, forget the present and look forward to the future with hope.

Many of the testimonials reveal the fact that the senior citizens were suffering from boredom. It was more in retired people who were once productive and was able to do something meaningful. The problem occurred due to forced inactivity and withdrawal from responsibilities. The heritage tour and subsequent activities lifted them up physically and mentally and this in turn had a positive emotional impact. The recreational activities devised during the tour encouraged them and motivated them. This was illustrated in their movements and actions thereafter and the whole activity was effective in addressing the raging issue of boredom among the older people. It also restored their self confidence. By encouraging the elders to take part in the various recreational activities their self worth and value improved and it was also a platform to chisel their skills.

The heritage tour was a success not only in terms of bringing together senior citizens from different walks of life but also was heartening to see that irrespective of their economic status all mingled with each other and every senior citizen went back home with lot of fruitful memories and joyful experiences which had never occurred in their life before.