



What We Learned from the UTTAR RANG Conference Surveys

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As a part of the 2015 BMM Convention, a daylong conference on UTTAR RANG was organized on July 2. Invited speakers presented information on various issues related to retirement and a couple of panel discussions were also a part of the program. Dr. Ashok Sapre and Mrs. Vidya Hardikar- Sapre have been involved in bringing awareness about retirement for over 15 years and were appropriately the conveners of this conference. The vast majority felt that the organization of the conference was excellent, the duration was just right and it was quite informative. A very few did not like the marketing or sales pitches. Close to 300 registrants were present and a report on this conference has already appeared in the July issue of the BMM Vrutta.

As a part of this conference two anonymous surveys were conducted to assess interest and views on various retirement related issues of those who had registered for this conference. The first survey, RETIREMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY was distributed to all registrants by email several weeks ahead of the conference and the second survey, UTTAR RANG CONFERENCE SURVEY was distributed during the conference. Since relatively a small number of completed surveys were returned making it difficult to draw reliable conclusions, only impressions reflected in these surveys are reported here.

(1) RETIREMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY: (a) Preference is to move into a 55+ independent living type of retirement community with Indian and/or Maharashtrian lifestyle, with willingness to invest \$200,000 or more. (b) An exercise facility, a common club house and a community park with walking trail were the most preferred facilities. (c) Vegetarian/nonvegetarian meals served according to the dietary needs are preferred. Preference is to pay up to \$500/month for two meals a day or pay a prorated amount on a monthly basis. (d) More interest in having regular maid service and frequent visitation by a nurse practitioner/physician assistant. (e) Indication is that all are well informed about the Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Long Term Care Insurance and the costs associated with Assisted Living, Nursing care and Memory care.

(2) UTTAR RANG CONFERENCE SURVEY: (a) Almost 30% registrants to the conference were from California and over 60% were over 65. (b) Dr. Jeste's presentation was appreciated by the largest number and was followed by the information on Shantiniketan and Senior Singles Issues panel discussion. (c) Access to health care facilities, being near to one's children and close relatives, closeness to a large city and geographical location were considered relatively important factors in selecting a place to retire.



(3) A FEW INTERESTING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS: (a) Retirement community with Indian lifestyle should reflect American + Indian lifestyle and one should not feel that you have moved back to India. (b) Waiting since 1991 BMM Convention for an Indian lifestyle retirement community (c) Include the following topics in future conferences: Make death your friend, financial planning for single spouses, hospice, spirituality, how to cope up with catastrophic events and death, psychological and emotional concerns and mental health at old age, use of alternative medicines, how to communicate with the 2nd and 3rd generation, information on programs such as "Meals on Wheels" for seniors, making audio-video recordings of the conference available to individual Mandals or groups.

Organizers were rather surprised with a marginal response to the first survey with a slightly better response to the second survey. Several surveys were incomplete. Why, we as a community do not respond to surveys, remains a mystery!