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Recreation- Need and importance in modern society

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Abstract

Recreation is an activity of body and mind which gives relief from tension and fatigue. When we continue doing a work or performing an activity regularly and continuously for some hours, it gives us physical and mental fatigue and strain. Recreational activity relieves us of the feeling of fatigue, restores our energy and promotes a sense of joy. Without recreation, life would be dull and miserable. Leisure is that time which man has acquired for himself, in which he has the freedom to do as he pleases. One must be educated to use his leisure in worthy pursuits. Recreation means leisure activities chosen by an individual for the purpose of improving his life and living. These activities are of a constructive nature. They are not time-consuming but time-using. They are healthy-physically, mentally and socially.

Keywords: Physical, mental emotional, social disturbances

1. Introduction

In the modern world, a man is enjoying lot of luxuries provided by the advance technological development on one hand and facing lot of physical, mental emotional and social disturbances on the other hand. The advance technological development has provided all kind of comforts in all walks of life, may it be home or any other work place, agriculture or industries consequently, it has reduced lot of dependence on each other, caused social problems, reduced physical work, caused physical problems, working on machines causes mental problems, and working in shifts allows meeting family members like strangers, cause emotional problems. Collectively all these factors effect family life, society and nation adversely in the long run. Further, the technological advancements in all spheres of life has created lot of free/leisure time after the working hours, at the same time the advancement in recreational gadgets like T.V., Video-CD games, computer games have made the child least interested in physical activity resulting in so many physical, mental and emotional problems. To counter act both the aspect i.e. the utility of free time/leisure time in a constructive way and to make a child more physically active in order to allow his growth and development take place proportionately, active recreation activities, other than passive ones, are must.

Recreation carries different meaning to different individuals and it is applied to great variety of activities. Sometimes the term is applied to activities of young people and adults to differentiate those activities from the play of young children. Because of this diversity in the use of the word, it is desirable to understand clearly in the beginning to avoid confusion. In common usage, however, recreation has a more comprehensive meaning and it is not restricted to any particular age group and activity. Recreation means to regain lost vigour and get a sense of joy, refreshment and satisfaction. Recreation is life itself, without recreation life is meaningless. The modern age is full of complexities, a man in order to survive has to do lot of physical and mental work, resulting in fatigue. Through recreation he can regain the lost vigour or energy. Recreation is concerned with those activities performed by an individual during leisure time or at hours not at work. Hence it is frequently referred to as leisure-time activity. Recreation education is aimed at teaching people to utilize their free time/leisure time in a constructive manner. To achieve this aim and to have value as recreation, activities must be suited to his physical, mental, emotional and social needs. In other words, it implies a careful selection of activities for the utility of free time in a healthy way.

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2. Classification of Recreational activities

2.1 Physical activities

These include games, sports, physical exercises, drill, marching, gymnastics, acrobatics etc.

2.2 Mental and intellectual activities

These include discussion groups, study circles, debates, recitation, reading, writing, painting, modeling, chess, cards, etc.

2.3 Self-defence and self-discipline activities

These include NCC, NSS, Territorial Army, home guards, sewa smites, Girl Guide and scouting, etc.

2.4 Cultural and social activities

These include drama, music, variety programme, dancing, community service, first aid and celebration of religious, social and national festivals etc. For rural people of Haryana, Saangs (folk plays) Ragnis (folk songs), and rural games like kabaddi, volleyball and wrestling, etc. are best recreational activities, besides the T. V. & Radio programmes.

2.5 Art and craft activities

These include drawing, painting, carpentry, modeling, spinning and weaving, gardening tailoring, doll making, needle-work, embroidery, paper machine, leatherwork, etc.

2.6 Outdoor activities

These include outing, sight-seeing, visits, excursions, camping, hiking, mountaineering, etc.

2.7 Hobbies

These include stamp collecting, newspaper cutting, photography, picture collecting, album making, picnics, specimen collecting, etc.

3. Essential characteristics of recreation

Education is advocating that the recreation must have the following characteristics to benefit the participant to his fullest,

3.1 Leisure Time

To have recreation the activity must be engaged during one's free time. From this point of view, one cannot leave during the working hours and engages in recreational activity.

3.2 Enjoyable

The activity engaged in, must be enjoyable not boring one.

3.3 Satisfaction

The activity engaged in must bring immediate and direct satisfaction to the individual.

3.4 Voluntary

The individual must have chosen recreation activity of his/her own choice. There must be no compulsion.

3.5 Constructive

The recreational activity is constructive. It is not harmful to the participant physically, mentally, emotionally, socially or in any other way. It helps one to become a better integrated individual.

3.6 Socially acceptable

The recreational activity is socially acceptable and individually beneficial to the participants.

4. Need and Importance of Recreation

There are certain fundamental human needs which are required to be satisfied; there are objectives of education that need to be achieved; there are obligations of democratic society that need to be fulfilled; there is price of the technological advancement relished by the modern society that has to be paid; and there are factors/changes which have given rise to the wide spread recognition of the need and importance of recreation in the modern life.

In the explanation given below an attempt is made to point out why and how recreation is serving increasingly important functions in the life of the individuals, the community and the nation:

4.1 Recreation- A fundamental human need

Among all the peoples and in all stages of history, man has found outlets for self-expression and personal development in forms of recreation which have a striking similarity. Recreation is a common heritage of all people, although its expression takes varied forms. In all lands, play is the chief occupation of young child during his active hours. Through play the child attains growth and experience. It is nature's way of affording outlets to the great biological urge for activity and the means of acquiring skills needed in later life. As he grows older, other forms of activity make increasing demands on his time, energy and attention. In adult life the duties and responsibilities of earning a living, earning for family and maintaining a place in human society tend to relegate recreation to a place of minor significance on the margin of life. Yet the urge for recreation is so fundamental and universal that it cannot be suppressed.

4.2 Recreation contributes to human happiness

Happiness was recognized by our forefathers as a fundamental and worthy objective for every individual. In fact life would be incomplete and drab without recreation, the great leader of recreation Dr. Austin Fox Riggs has rightly expressed that "The function of play is to balance life in relation to work, to afford a refreshing contrast to responsibility and routine, to keep alive the spirit of adventure and that sense of proportion which prevents taking oneself and one's job too seriously and thus to prevent the death of youth, and not infrequently the premature death of the man himself."

Among the needs for real living there should be a beauty, knowledge and ideals; books, pictures and music; song, dance and games; travel, adventure and romance, friends, championships, and the exchange of minds. Recreation holds its place of importance in modern life because it has afforded and continues to afford opportunities for the attainment of these basic human needs which provide happiness.

4.3 Recreation and Health

Recreation is vigours, and is carried in the open air, which makes use of the fundamental muscles and is the best known means of developing and maintaining healthy organs. Certain forms of recreation cause increased circulation, greater respiratory activity, better elimination of wastes and improved digestion. It contributes to emotional stability by affording rest, relaxation and creative activity. Also give tone to the body by a healthful stimulation of the nerve centers. The value of recreation has been characterized as an insurance policy against nervous disorders, which when collected in middle age, will reimburse hundred fold. Its contribution lies in its value in preventing illness by contributing to healthful, happy living. Recreation is also used increasingly in the

mental rehabilitation of the individuals. People suffering from mental disorders have been found to react quickly to the stimulus of play, music in particular.

4.4 Recreation and character development

Recreation has been characterized as a force of tremendous consequence for the personal character and the national culture. Yet character development is not an objective specifically sought by persons engaging in recreation activities, it can be a natural by-product of participation in team games, drama, and music which require cooperation, loyalty and team play. Under recreation leaders of integrity and ability, people can be taught respect for rules, fair play, courage, an ability to subordinate the selfish interests of the individual to the welfare of the group and a capacity for team play. They also can be given valuable leadership experience. Recreation not only develops individual qualities, but it strongly influences the growth of social attitudes which affects the individual as member of group.

4.5 Recreation and Crime Prevention

Participation in wholesome recreation helps to build character. It acts as a safety valve for the prevention of crime and delinquency. Because recreation activities have a strong appeal for children and youth, delinquency is less likely to flourish in communities where opportunities for wholesome recreation are abundant and attractive. Children or young people engaged in recreational activities on the playground cannot at the same time robbing a bank, breaking into a home, involving in a gang raping or some other crime. The boy who goes to the playground daily or who excels in some other co-curricular/social activity, and the girl who takes part in the composition for the drama play or who is a leader in the nature group are finding outlets for the normal desire for recognition, success, and achievement. They have little need to seek such satisfactions in unsocial ways. Most delinquent and criminal acts are committed during leisure hours and larger parts of these acts are performed in order to get the means for the enjoyment of leisure. The police officials and prison authorities have testified from their experiences that much delinquency and crime result from inadequate recreation opportunities. As a result to avoid such things recreation plays an important role in the life of children, youngster, youth and adult.

4.6 Recreation and community solidarity

Many forces in modern society tend to separate people into distinct and often hostile groups, based on differences in their economic status, social position, race, creed, nationality, education or cultural background. Consequently, it grows suspicion, distrust, and dislike of our fellowmen and a lack of neighborliness and unity of interest. Recreation affords a common ground/common platform where differences may be forgotten in the joy of participation or achievement. Recreation is essentially democratic; interest and skill in sports, drama, or art are shared by all groups and classes. The young boy/girl/man/woman that excels in sports or any other activity is recognized regardless of his cast, colour, and creed by followers of these activities/ group people.

4.7 Recreation and Morale

In periods of insecurity, depression and unusual strain man is more than ever in need of activity which brings satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. In different parts of the world people are facing earthquakes, floods, military invasions, and

other larger scale disasters which lead to mental breakdown. During such times the value of recreation as means of building and restraining morale is highly appreciated. For example during world war 2nd recreation activities played a vital role. Comprehensive programme for men/women in the armed forces, leisure time activities for war workers and their families, and neighborhood and community programme helped to sustain morale on the home front. The recreation services being provided for the armed forces, for the worker in war industries and for the morale of civilian groups are very definitely contributing to our war effort. Military leaders repeatedly testify to the morale value of such service.

4.8 Recreation and Safety

Adequate provision for recreation, especially in the form of play grounds/swimming pools under the supervision of efficient leadership contributes definitely to the reduction of accidents. Recreation areas that are properly designed and carefully operated are remarkably safe. Recreation departments also contribute public safety by providing and supervising recreation areas by teaching skills that are essential to safe participation in injury prone recreation activities, and by enforcing safety regulations on public recreation areas. In the absence of safe recreation areas there is no safety in street recreation at a crowded place which may cause injuries.

4.9 Recreation and Democracy

Democracy and recreation are alike in spirit and each tends to promote and strengthen the other. Democracy is committed to giving each individual the opportunity to grow fully, express himself freely and achieve an abundant life. Recreation which represents activity freely chosen, offers the individual opportunity for genuine satisfaction, creative expression, and the development of his powers, helps him in attaining the objectives of democracy. It contributes to his effectiveness as a citizen in the modern democratic state.

4.10 Recreation and Education

In many respects the objectives, methods, and programmes of education and recreation are similar but they are not identical. The fullest development of the individual is sought by both; but recreation affords immediate satisfactions, whereas education aims at a more distant goal. The element of compulsion is present in some aspects of education which is lacking in recreation experiences. Many activities such as sports, music, drama, or arts are common to both programmes, but in education they represent areas in which skills, understanding and appreciation are to be acquired. In the recreation programme however, the activities serve primarily as a means of using and enjoying skills and interests that have already been acquired. Yet educational growth is a part of every satisfying recreation experience. The training for worthy use of leisure was one of the seven objectives of education. To achieve this objective recreation provides opportunities to impart training and activities to use leisure time intelligently in a constructive manner. The early and continuous development of leisure attitude, habits, skills and knowledge, leads towards developing and educated judgment about recreation. The authorized educational institutions have realized that recreational programme affords an excellent medium for carrying on the learning process and for achieving objectives of education. Recreation therefore plays an increasing role in the curriculum of formal education and in the extra-curricular programme of an Institution.

4.11 Recreation and Economy

Leaders in business and industry have long realized that the way in which their employees spend their leisure hours influences effectiveness on the job. In the welfare states of the world hundred of dollars are being spent per year to care for one delinquent whereas a playground, which may prevent children from becoming delinquents, can be operated at an annual cost of only a few dollars per child served. In other words investment made in developing and providing recreational facilities is an investment in the welfare of human being, that pays dividends in dollars/rupees as well as intangible returns.

5. Conclusion

From the concluding point of view, recreational activities are very important means of utilizing the spare time in fruitful activities which enliven mind and body and direct their superfluous energies into channels of constructive and national building work. However, as too much of everything is bad, people must not be over-strained while engaged in such activities otherwise their sense of joy would be adversely affected. Thus recreational facilities should be available for all classes of men and women, both in the urban and rural areas and is closely related to such aspects of national life as education, health and social welfare. It is clear that recreation has gained a place of importance in modern life and has pointed out several ways in which it contributes to an individual, community and nation's welfare.

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