

MEANING, DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Mann, a German novelist, short story writer, social critic, philanthropist, essayist and 1929 Nobel Prize Laureate brilliantly quoted, “Recreation which is to say: a refreshing exercise of the organism, because it was in immediate danger of overindulging itself in the uninterrupted monotony of daily life and growing indifferent”.

As opposed to the modern society individual, who is provided with the luxury of enjoying all kinds of technological advancements that has provided comforts even beyond our wildest imaginations, our ancestors in the primitive world had to labour their way vigorously even to fulfill the basic necessities such as food and shelter. Today we enjoy all comforts life has to offer with the push of a button. However on the other hand we have been faced with a lot of physical, mental, emotional and social disturbances. The revolutionary development of science and technology has reduced the level of efforts that was initially required in all walks of life, be it our home, work place, agricultural sector and even the industries. A decline in the rate of codependence among individuals, led to social problems; the technological developments reduced the level of work causing physical problems; working for long duration on mechanical devices and machines led to various mental problems. Work hours led families and friends spending less time with one another also leading to a number of emotional problems.

There is a perk through of all these technological advancements, which is it makes our work a lot more easier for us and also reducing the time required to carry them out, creating a lot of free or leisure time after the working hours, on the contrary recreational

gadgets such as television, video games, computers and these days the addiction to the social media sites has glued an entire generation of adults, youth and children to their smart phones and other gadgets again resulting in inactivity and also a lot of physical, mental, social and emotional problems as well.

To counteract both the aspects i.e. the utilization of free or leisure time in a constructive manner and to make an individual irrespective of the age group more physically, mentally, socially and emotionally active so that the growth and development takes place proportionately active recreation rather than the passive ones are a must of the modern era.

Going through the following segments will put more light and provide a clear understanding on the meaning of recreation, definition and the various characteristics of Recreation.

MEANING OF RECREATION

Recreation carries different meanings to different people with a wide range of activities that may be indoor or outdoor and may have different outcome. It is very important to break the monotony of daily routine. Recreation aims at teaching people to utilize their free time in a constructive manner. The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) states that **Recreation is a special field that contributes to the satisfaction of basic human needs for creative self-expression; helps to promote total health - physical, mental, emotional and social; provides an antidote to the strains and tensions of life; provides an avenue to abundant personal and family living; and develops effective citizenship and vitalizes democracy.**

Recreation as illustrated by the Cambridge dictionary is a noun which is 'a way of enjoying yourself when you are not working'. Recreation is an activity of leisure, leisure being discretionary time. However recreation carries different meaning to different people and can be applied to a variety of activities irrespective of the age or profession of the individual or child. Recreation is for everyone, it is not limited to a particular group of people or age or activity. Dr. John H. Finely has pointed out, that the word 'recreation' is broad enough to include 'play' in its every expression and also many activities that are usually not thought of as play – music, drama, craft, every free or leisure time activity and especially creative activity for the enrichment of life.

Recreation is life in itself devised to regain lost vigour and to get a sense of joy, refreshment, satisfaction and achievement. In the modern era the pressure of performing is prominently visible among all age groups be it children in schools, youth in colleges, adults in the work place, everyone wants to be the one to shine out and be a step ahead of the peers. This

constant need among individuals to survive in this demanding environment leaves them exhausted and socially incompetent to actually have healthy inter-personal relationships. The management in schools, colleges and offices therefore gives a lot of importance to extra-curricular activities and promote class trips, educational excursions, picnics, corporate retreats etc. in order to break the monotony and also to remove the exhaustion caused by their stressful daily lives.

DEFINITION OF RECREATION

Recreation is a term understood and interpreted differently by different writers and experts, one's philosophy is reflected in the definition for a definition marks the limits of a term which sets a boundary as to what is and not to be included. It has been variously characterized as an activity which is voluntarily carried out by individuals just for a pleasure and satisfaction that it brings to the participant, whether through relaxation, refreshment of strength after toil, renewal of spirit, the opportunity for self-expression, relief from boredom, release of emotional tension, the provision of an outlet for expressed impulses, the testing of one's powers, the attainment of a sense of achievement, the forgetting of one's worries, sheer fun or mere strengthening of the ego that comes from the feeling of adequacy and self-esteem. It is the activity plus an attitude on the part of the individual which is more important.

Let us now look at some of the definitions and try to develop a more clear understanding so that at the end we will be capable of formulating our own definition based on our philosophy of Recreation.

The Encyclopedia Britannica has given the definition that, "Recreation means refreshment after toil and sorrow, pleasurable occupation of leisure time, an amusement, a new creation."

Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary defines it as "The kind of recreation that education is advocating can be defined by five descriptive terms –

- Leisure Time: To be a recreation, the activity must be engaged in during one's free time.
- Enjoyable: The activity engaged in must be satisfying and enjoyable to the participant.

- Voluntary: The individual must have chosen, of his own volition, to engage in this pursuit, there has been no coercion.
- Constructive: The activity is constructive. It is not harmful to the person physically, socially or in any other way conversely, it helps him to become a better integrated individual.
- Non survival: Eating and sleeping are not recreational activities in themselves. One may engage in a picnic where wonderful dinner is involved, but other facts of the affair, such as the social games and fellowship, are important parts of the recreational activity. [1]G.D. Butler has defined recreation as, “Any form of leisure-time experience or activity in which an individual engages from choice because of the enjoyment and satisfaction which it brings directly to him”. [1]Meyer and Brightbill defined recreation as, “An activity voluntarily engaged in during leisure time and primarily motivated by the satisfaction of pleasure derived from it”.

According to Joseph Lee, “Play for children in recreation is creation or the gain of life, and play for adults is recreation or the renewal of life”.

According to Dr. John H. Finley, “The word ‘recreation’ is broad enough to include ‘play’ in its every expression and also many activities that are usually, not thought of as play-music, drama, craft, every free activity and specially creative activity for the enrichment of life.”

Hatchinson, has defined recreation as, “Recreation is a worthwhile, socially accepted leisure experiences that provides immediate and inherent satisfaction to the individual who voluntarily participates in an activity”.

According to Ottromney, “Recreation is not a matter or notion but rather emotion. It is a personal response, a psychological reaction, an attitude an approach, is a way of life”.

According to Wilson, “Recreation is concerned with those activities in which a person participates during hours other than work. It implies that the individual has chosen certain activities in which he is voluntarily engaged because of an inner self motivating desire”.

Gerald B. Fitzgerald has defined recreation as, “Leisure is time and recreation is the expansion of human interests in free time”.

According to Dr. James S. Plant, “Recreation is interested in the things which people are doing, rather than in the finished products”.

Butler in his introduction to Community Recreation has defined that, “Recreation is any form of experience or activity in which an individual engages from choice because of the personal enjoyment and satisfaction which it brings directly to him”.

“Recreation refers to the use of that leisure and primarily on some qualitative scale. For children, these activities will be called play but for adults certainly recreation.” – Anonymous

Recreation has been defined as a type of experience, as an area of rich and abundant living, as a specific form of activity, as an attitude or spirit, as off the job living, as an expression of inner nature of man, as a phase of the educational process, as a way of life, as a matter of the emotions, as an outlet for the creative urge and as a means for lifting the wings of the spirit. It has also been described as fun, as refreshment, as diversion or as the less serious and more passive type of playful activity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RECREATION

In order for a recreational program to be effective and to benefit the individual or participant to the fullest it must have the following characteristics:

- Leisure Time
- Enjoyable
- Self-satisfaction
- Voluntary Participation
- Constructive
- Socially Accepted
- Non-survival L
SEP Let us now discuss the characteristics in detail
- Leisure time: It is very important that the recreational activities are

planned in the free time only. Keeping in mind this point of view one should not leave during the working hours to engage in any form of recreational activity or activities.

- **Enjoyable:** As mentioned earlier that recreation is meant to recreate lost vigour, hence the program scheduling needs to be interesting and enjoyable and not a boring one.
- **Self-satisfaction:** The activity engaged in must bring immediate and direct satisfaction to the participant or individual involved in it.
- **Voluntary Participation:** There must not be any compulsion from the management on the employees when it comes to choosing or participating in any recreational activity. The individual's choice should be given the utmost importance when it comes to choosing the activity.
- **Constructive:** Activities have to be such that it helps an individual or the participant to become a better integrated individual and increase his productivity when he gets back to his work. The recreational activity should be constructive. It should not be harmful to the individual or participant in any manner be it physically, mentally, socially or in any other way as well.
- **Socially Accepted:** In such cases the recreational activity has to be socially acceptable and individually beneficial as well to the participants. Socially acceptable recreation leads towards positive side for example games, hobbies, tours, watching informative videos or channels, etc.
- **Non- Survival:** One cannot consider eating or sleeping as recreational activities. One may engage in picnic or a lunch or dinner but there must other parts such as the social games and fellowship which form the backbone of any such event. Without constructive activities which lead to cohesive team building or individual growth the whole meaning of recreation will be lost.

CONCLUSION [L SEP] Recreation which is often referred to as play among children is an organized form of activity which is mainly

directed to benefit an individual and to break the monotony of his daily routine which ultimately leads to the overall development of a participant from an individual to a better integrated individual.

OBJECTIVES:

On completion of this chapter, the student will be able to

- explain the meaning of recreation
- define recreation and
- elaborate the characteristics of recreation.

SUMMARY:

Due to the monotonous nature of work life has become dull and boring for the modern society individual. The developments in the field of science and technology has not only made life and work easier for us but at the same time less time consuming as well, leaving us with a considerable amount of free/recreational/discretionary time. The way one uses this time has an impact on the productivity of an individual at home, at work and life. Recreation aims at educating people on the constructive and productive use of this free time, based on activities that are of interest to the participant, comprising of such activities that provide the participant the satisfaction from a socially accepted, constructive, non-survival activity.

GLOSSARY:

Coercion: Coercion is the action or practice of persuading someone or an

individual to do something by using force or threats.

Community recreation: The entire range of activities, relationships, interactions and experiences planned for and carried out to meet the recreation needs of residents, it also includes providing the spaces and places where recreation takes place. Community recreation and parks is anything and everything the community does to

satisfy people's interests.

Leisure: Leisure comprises time when one is not working or occupied; free time.

Motivated: The act of being inspired so as to perform or excel in any form of activity one engages in.

Philanthropist: Any individual or person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.

Play: Play is an outlet of creative expression among children in which they engage for enjoyment rather than for a serious or practical purpose.

Recreation: Any activity engaged in for the sake of fun and enjoyment when one is not working irrespective of age of an individual; recreation is life in itself.

Self-esteem: A person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It is a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring; it can involve a variety of beliefs about the self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviours.

Vigour: Vigour signifies physical or mental strength, energy or force; a sign of good health; the ability to carry out any activity or task with effort, energy and enthusiasm.

Voluntary: An act not directed by any external factors or people but on one's own free will and interest to derive the desired level of satisfaction of involvement in the activity.

FAQs:

Q1. What did Thomas Mann quote on recreation?

Ans. Thomas Mann, a German novelist, short story writer, social critic, philanthropist, essayist and 1929 Nobel Prize Laureate brilliantly quoted, "Recreation which is to say: a refreshing exercise of the organism, because it was in immediate danger of overindulging itself in the uninterrupted monotony of daily life and growing indifferent".

Q2. Mention the perks of technological advancements.

Ans. The perk of technological advancements is that it makes our work a lot more easier for us and also reduces the time required to carry them out, creating a lot of free or leisure time after the working hours.

Q3. What are the disadvantages of the development of technological recreation gadgets?

Ans. The development of technological recreational gadgets such as television, video games, computers and these days the addiction to the social media sites has glued an entire generation of adults, youth and children to their smart phones and other gadgets again resulting in inactivity and also a lot of physical, mental, social and emotional problems.

Q4. How does AAHPER define recreation?

Ans. The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) states that Recreation is a special field that contributes to the satisfaction of basic human needs for creative self-expression; helps to promote total health - physical, mental, emotional and social; provides an antidote to the strains and tensions of life; provides an avenue to abundant personal and family living; and develops effective citizenship and vitalizes democracy.

Q5. Give any two definitions of recreation?

Ans. Following are the definitions of recreation:^[1]_{SEP}G.D. Butler has defined recreation as, “Any form of leisure-time experience or activity in which an individual engages from choice because of the enjoyment and satisfaction which it brings directly to him”^[1]_{SEP}Meyer and Brightbill defined recreation as, “An activity voluntarily engaged in during leisure time and primarily motivated by the satisfaction of pleasure derived from it”.

Q6. What are the characteristics of recreation?

Ans. The characteristics of recreation are:

- Leisure Time
- Enjoyable
- Self-satisfaction
- Voluntary Participation
- Constructive
- Socially Accepted
- Non-survival

Q7. Explain any two characteristics of recreation.

Ans. Following are explanation of two characteristics of recreation:

- Leisure time: It is very important that the recreational activities are planned in the free time only. Keeping in mind this point of view one should not leave during the working hours to engage in any form of recreational activity or activities.^[1]_{SEP}
- Enjoyable: As mentioned earlier that recreation is meant to recreate lost vigor, hence the program scheduling needs to be interesting and enjoyable and not a boring one.

Q8. What is the meaning of recreation?

Ans. Recreation is an activity of leisure, leisure being discretionary time. However recreation carries different meaning to different people and can be applied to a variety of activities irrespective of the age or profession of the individual or child. Recreation is for everyone, it is not limited to a particular group of people or age or activity.

Q9. What did Dr. John H Finley point out about the term recreation?

Ans. Dr. John H. Finely has pointed out, that the word ‘recreation’ is broad enough to include ‘play’ in its every expression and also many activities that are usually not thought of as play – music, drama, craft, every free or leisure time activity and especially creative activity for the enrichment of life.

Q10. Why is recreation important for the modern day individual?

Ans. As recreation is life in itself devised to regain lost vigor and to get a sense of joy, refreshment, satisfaction and achievement. In the modern era the pressure of performing is prominently visible among all age groups be it children in schools, youth in colleges, adults in the work place, everyone wants to be the one to shine out and be a step ahead of the peers. This constant need among individuals to survive in this demanding environment leaves them exhausted and socially incompetent to actually have healthy inter-personal relationships, thus in order to break the monotony and also to remove the exhaustion caused by their stressful daily lives recreation is very important.