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## Interrelation and Importance of Recreation and Health

**Anshuman Kumar Pathak**

*Sitaram Samarpan Mahavidyalay Naraini, Banda, U.P. India*

It has always been considered that recreation is a compliment or, a tonic of health. Recreation and health are dependent on each other. Before we go further into the matter; let us consider the meaning of Recreation properly. According to Macquarie Dictionary, recreation is refreshment by means of some pastime, agreeable exercise, or the like. Webster's Third New Dictionary says, "Recreate; to renew or enliven through the influence of pleasurable surroundings; to refresh after wearying toil or anxiety; usually the change or diversion; the act of recreating or the state of being recreated : refreshment of strength and spirit after toil; diversion, play; a means of getting diversion or entertainment." "Any form of play, amusement, etc, used for refreshment of body or mind is recreation", says Collins Australian Dictionary.<sup>1</sup>

According to above definitions we conclude that recreation is needed not only for pleasure but for strength and health also. No one can be long life healthy without recreation. So people have used so many means of recreation to keep themselves healthy, strong, and renewed from the time immemorial. Health and recreation are interrelated each other. Without recreation one cannot remain healthy forever. But man cannot afford recreation over his needs and responsibilities. So he has always used the leisure for recreation.

In most of the countries around the world, sports, recreation and play are improving health—both mind and body. But we should adopt the means of recreation, which is positive, healthy and moral improving. Any type of recreation may be healthy for some individual or groups but if it may be ultimately harmful for someone else or society, it should be avoided at any cost. People should adopt only those means of recreation that can improve their physical, mental, economic and moral position. Plays, games and sports are most healthy means of recreation. They teach important life lessons about respect, leadership and cooperation. They promote equality for all and bridge dividers between people. UNICEF has been working in this direction for many years. It is now incorporating the power and potential of sports, recreation and play into many countries around the world. People are developing partnerships with all sectors and levels of society from government to sports world, to civil society in all its diversity, to get boys and girls on to sports field and playground and to educate children and their families about the benefits of the physical activities.

Recreation and leisure have multiple meanings based on individual perception. From an individual perspective, it may be watching television, attending an opera, walking in a lawn, taking your children to the zoo, go out for a picnic spot, writing a book, playing cards, downloading music, an evening in the town or whatever one chooses to make it. Theorists struggle to agree on what to call these types of experience. Should it be called recreation, leisure, free time, available time, creativity, selfishness, or hedonism? Individuals' own perceptions are most important factors in defining of leisure and recreation. Today, recreation constitutes a major force in our national and local economies and is responsible for millions of jobs in such varied fields as government, travel and tourism, popular entertainments and arts, health and fitness programs, hobbies and participatory and spectator sports.

Beyond its value as a form of sociability, recreation also provides major personal benefits in terms of meeting physical, emotional, philosophical and other important health related needs of participants. In broad sense, the leisure life of a nation reflects its fundamental values, and character. The very games and sports, entertainment media, and group affiliations that people enjoy in their leisure help to shape the character and well-being of families, communities and societies at large.<sup>2</sup>

Health and recreation are not only interrelated but they are also interdependent. Good health is not possible without recreation. Only a healthy recreation can provide a good healthy position of body and mind to an individual. We cannot imagine good health without healthy means of recreation. Without adopting some healthy means of recreation one cannot be healthy forever. When someone uses any means of recreation through which he/she gets entertainment or enjoyment, his/her endocrine glands begin to secrete beneficial hormones and the healing process of the body and mind is going on. All the organs and glands of the body function properly only when one is not tensed or when one is at ease, calm and healthy. By recreation everyone can get health and happiness. Without recreation one feels bored, dull, tense or uneasy and remains unsatisfied within him/her. So we should not lose even a single moment of our leisure without enjoying it or living it heartily. To recreate one the entire time one should learn how to take one's actions—mental or bodily as play, as game or as sport. As Hindus' mythology says, "All the worldly actions and movements are nothing but Creators play. In this context, Hindus' most sacred book Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta says, "ईश्वरः सर्व भूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति। भ्रामयन् सर्व भूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया"<sup>3</sup> means "The Supreme Lord abiding as the controller in the inner psyche of all beings, O Arjuna! causes them to revolve, by His power of Maya, like puppet mounted on a machine. All the people should be enjoyed by the play of the Lord. We should consider all our actions as play, recreation or enjoyment. If we are not able to remain in playful position in our entire time, we should use our leisure for the same. We should use our leisure for rest or recreation. No one can work continuously without a break.

When we think of recreation, we should have to think of leisure also, because without leisure no one is able to enjoy recreation. Leisure and recreation are both crucial components of balanced and healthy lifestyle. Leisure is such a time when one can do what one can want to, away from work and other commitments. Recreation and leisure play an important role in social well being by providing people with a sense of identity and personal autonomy. Involvement in leisure activities adds meaning to individual and community life and contributes to people overall qualitative life. Recreation encourages personal growth and self expression and provides increased learning opportunities, satisfying needs not met in people's non leisure time.

For most of the people participation in leisure and recreation improves their physical and mental health. Researches in this field show that increased physical activity can lead to fewer health problems and higher productivity at work, especially when combined with a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.<sup>4</sup>

The benefits by leisure time recreation for mental health are equally important. Several studies have demonstrated the fact that there is a certain link between regular physical activities and reductions in the symptoms of mild or moderate depression, stress and anxiety. Passive leisure also has some benefits to mental health, by providing an outlet for the mind to be emptied of tensions. It may provide physical rest, tension release or opportunities to enjoy nature and escape from the daily routine. Participation in leisure and recreation activities is also of social benefits. It creates

opportunities for socialization and provides a stage for social cohesion to people to connect and network with others.

## References

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