

INDIAN ETHOS ON WORK, LEISURE AND RECREATION TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of Work, Leisure and Recreation are viewed differently by different workers and are examined with reference to the concepts contained in the ancient Indian scriptures. The ancient scriptures declare that work involves both body and mind and is not a mere physical activity. Human body possesses five organs of action and the mind possesses five sensory organs, all of which are connected with Prana a vital force/cosmic energy. There are specific relaxation techniques for each of the sense organs and organs of action. The scriptures further proclaim that recreation is not complete unless it involves both the body and the mind. Since they are interconnected, there should be no imbalance between the levels of relaxation of the two. Based on the findings, a conceptual model has been designed and developed in tune with the wide variety of opinions expressed on Work, Leisure and Recreation in the current literature, for the purpose of clarity. Contrary to the thinking of the present day workers the study and analysis brought out the inseparable nature of body and mind for the recreation to be total. This concept should prompt the promoters of leisure and recreation to provide amenities for relaxation of sense organs besides the organs of action.

Keywords: Work, Leisure, Recreation, Ancient Scriptures, Body and Mind, Sense Organs, Organs of Action.

Introduction

Work is an activity directed toward making or doing something. By definition, an activity is a situation in which something is happening or a lot of things are being done. It is well known that no living being in the universe can survive, even for a fraction of second, without engaging in any activity at all times. Activities engaged in by human beings, during free time through voluntary pursuits that are relaxing to the mind is the Leisure. The process of engaging oneself in some pleasurable activity is Recreation. In the field of Leisure studies, the relationship between work, leisure and recreation has been the subject of inquiry for many researchers.

Many thinkers who probed the subject of Work, Leisure and Recreation, have put forth various views and ideas from time to time. The key concepts advanced by different authors on the subject are summarised and presented in Table 1, along with their fields of specialization, indicating their individual perceptions, possibly connected to their specialization.

It can be observed from the table that, as regards work, Roadburg (1983) observes that individuals are motivated when they are paid for the work they do and at the same time would also be willing to put up with the stress and strain, whereas

Table 1
 Different Opinions of various Authors on Work, Leisure & Recreation along with their field of specialization

S. No.	Item	Contemporary Author & Year	Key Concepts	Field / Specialization	Indian Ethos
1	Work	Roadburg (1983)	i) Payment makes motivation ii) Unpaid task enjoyable	Gerontologist	Author & Year: Veda Vyasa (3000 B.C) Key Concepts: The Human body comprises of the action organs and sense organs with an invisible energy Prana where He advocated various relaxing and recreation techniques. Specialization (Profound Philosopher and Author of Vedas)
		Brook (1993)	i) Non freedom ii) Freedom of choice	Psychologist	
2	Leisure	Pieper Josef (1965)	Mental and spiritual attitude	German Catholic Philosopher	
		Gray David E (1971)	Pursuit of truth and self understanding	Historian	
		Neulinger (1974)	State of mind: being at peace with oneself	German-American Psychologist	
		Stockdale (1985)	Emphasizes individual perceptions and belief system	Psychologist	
		Weaver and Lawton (2002)	Enhancement of mental and physical health	Eco Tourism	
3	Recreation	Ap John 1986	Act or experience to meet personal want or desire	Psychologist	
		Cooper, (2005)	Totality of Pursuits engaged in during leisure	Geographer	
		Hall and Page (2001)	Universal accepted definition is an impossibility	Geography and Rehabilitation	

persons who do work on their own free will, without any payment enjoy the work and have freedom to relax. Brook (1993) while classifying work and non-work found that they have similar characteristics, such as creativity, challenge, mental activity and self development, but non-work possesses freedom of choice which is socially oriented, and discretionary.

Pieper Josef (1965) considers leisure as a mental and spiritual attitude—not simply the result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. Gray David (1971) views leisure as an activity in the pursuit of truth and self-understanding involving both gross and subtle body. Neulinger (1976) concludes that Leisure is a state of mind; it is a way of being, of being at peace with oneself and with what one is doing. Stockdale (1985) identified three main ways in which the concept of the leisure is used viz. i) as a period of time, activity or state of mind, ii) non-work or residual time and, iii) a subjective view which emphasizes individual perceptions

and belief systems. Finally, Weaver and Lawton (2002) state that leisure and relaxation are for enhancement of mental and physical health, amusement (entertainment, escape), play (relaxation, exercise), adventure (excitement, challenge) or education (organized, incidental) indicating the involvement of both body and mind.

As for “Recreation” AP John (1986) states that it is important to re-create the individual to resume daily obligations, whatever they may be. Cooper, et al (2005) opined that recreation can be thought of as the totality of pursuits engaged in during leisure time, comprising those around the home at one end of the scale and those connected with tourism involving an overnight stay, at the other end. Therefore leisure and recreation are two components of work within a constellation of related purposes that include vacation, rest, relaxation and pleasure.

However Hall and Page (2001) believe that a universally accepted definition of leisure, tourism and recreation is impossibility. Therefore the main purpose of the present study is to arrive at an acceptable definition and conceptualization of Leisure and Recreation that relates to work through investigating into ancient Indian scriptures.

Indian Ethos and Contemporaneous Thought

As per the ancient Indian scriptures every human being has two bodies on the material plane—the gross body and the subtle body, where the former is visible and the latter invisible. The gross body, which is visible in physical form, is made up of five elements known as the organs of action, viz., speech (vak), hands (pani), feet (pada), genitals (upastha) and anus (payu). In a similar way the subtle body also comprises of five elements viz., skin (Thwak), eye (chakshu), ears (srothra), tongue (jihwa), nose (ghrana) imbibed with cosmic energy (Prana).

These declarations are realized from Vedas which testified that the gross body has five action organs and the subtle body has five sense organs and they are related through the cosmic energy Prana, the motive power from within, by which the individual survives and recreates in the pleasantries of the Universe as stated in following lines.

मनोबुद्धिभ्यामुपेतं ज्ञानेन्द्रिय पञ्चक,

कर्मेन्द्रिय पञ्चक प्राणादि पञ्चक संयुक्तं जायते ।

— Vedanta Paribhasha 318

“Mano buddhibhyamupetam Gnanendriya Panchaka,

Karmendriya Panchaka, Pranaadi Panchaka, Samyuktham Jayathe”

The Subtle body is formed by five sensory organs, five organs of action and five vital gases.

The scriptures view the work as an activity of a mortal or ‘Karma’ involving the acting performance of both body and mind. Bhagavad-Gita declares that none can ever remain, even for a moment, without performing work that is an action.

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

— Bhagavad-Gita 3-5

“Na Hi Kascit Ksanamapi Jatu Tisthatya-Karmakrt”

None can ever remain, even for a moment, without performing action.

Further Bhagavad-Gita states that the subtle body (mind) is distinct from the gross body and mind is the entity that perceives, thinks, feels, wills, and desires; motivating the body to perform different actions.

मनः षष्ठाणीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ।

— Bhagavad-Gita 15-7

“Manah Shashthanenindriyani Prakruthisthani Karshathi”

An External portion, having become a living soul in the world of life and abiding in nature draws (to itself) the (five) senses, with mind as the sixth.

Therefore the subtle body comprises sensory elements, and is manifested in the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. The sensations originate in specialized cells that have receptors for specific stimuli. These cells have links to the nervous system and thus to the brain. Prana is the vital power behind all the functions, of the body and mind. Mind is internal to the prana and there is a directing principle behind the prana that thinks before it acts. The mind, intellect, ego and consciousness are all subtle manifestations of the prana.

These manifestations of different elements of both gross and subtle body as declared in the scriptures are presented in Figure 1 along with their meaning, and the transliterated words in English.

It can be observed from Figure-1 that the five organs of action are the elements of the body known as Karmendriyas viz., speech (vak), hands (paani), feet(pada), anus(payu) and genitals(upastha) which are made by the motive power of the prana. On the other hand the five elements of sense organs Gnanendriyas are the five senses, which are skin (twak), eyes(chakshu), ears(srothra), tongue(jihwa) and nose(ghrana) these relate to the mind. The connecting broken line represents the internal energy prana which relates both body and mind.

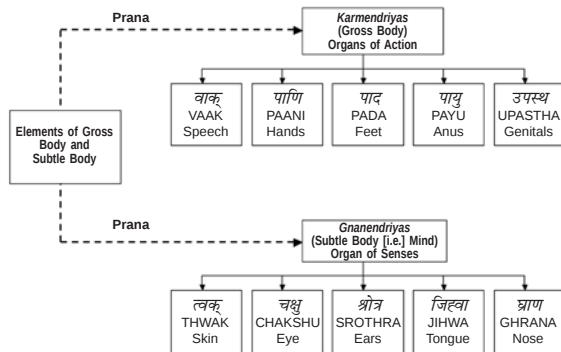


Fig. 1: Elements of Gross body and Subtle body for Leisure and Recreation Activities

The Bhagavadgita also proclaims that any work shall be perfect only if sense organs synchronize with action organs; thus emphasizing the importance of the unity of body and mind for work to be perfect.

कर्मन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यत ।

—Bhagavad-Gita 3-7

“Karmen-Driyaih Karma-Yogana-Saktah Sa Visisyate”

Whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, initiates the work with his organs-of-action without tension, without attachment, he excels.

Vedas (TTD, 1989) further clarifies that the mind is distinct from the body calling for separate recreational activities to give relief/recreation by play for relaxation.

क्रीडा च मे मोदश्च मे ।

— Krishna Yajur Vedam: 4-7-2

“Kreedachame - Modaschame”

Play resulting in relaxation

Finally Upanishads succinctly bring out the spiritual dimension of work, leisure and recreation by stating that tranquillity brings out calmness in every action(work) for experiencing relief.

शमेन शान्ताः शिवमाचरन्ति ।

— Maha Narayanopanishath 79-5

Shamena Shantaha Sivamaacharanti”

In essence, the Indian Scriptures look upon Leisure and Recreation as a combined measure of free time involving both the body and the mind during any work activity. These concepts propounded in the Indian Ethos are clearly reflected in the modern literature by several contemporary researchers all over the world, as already presented in the previous section-1, are further elaborated as given below.

Yukic (1970) viewed recreation as an act or experience, selected by the individual during his leisure time, to meet a personal want or desire, primarily for his own satisfaction involving the sense organs. De Grazia (1964), the "Father of Leisure" in the West expounds on the idea that leisure is not necessarily recreational, but meant to expand one's awareness and understanding of the world through music and contemplation suggesting involvement of action organs. These observations are reinforced by Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER, 1980) as per which defines Leisure as a state of mind which is ordinarily characterized by un-obligated time and willing optimism. Further the Systematic investigations carried out by Bhargava Teja (2009) while analyzing recreation revealed that the business tourists are deprived of any sort of relaxation despite visiting prime locations because of the preoccupation of their mind(sense organs) with the work.

Therefore leisure and recreation are two components of work activity within a constellation of related purposes that include vacation, rest, relaxation and pleasure involving leisure and recreation.

Design and Development of Conceptual Model

It has already been explained in earlier section that the human being is a three dimensional creature, comprising the body and the mind and prana - the vital energy connecting the body and the mind. The mind possesses the intellect responsible for the functioning of the various sense organs by which action organs are activated. The three levels of the being i.e., mind, body and prana are not isolated from each other and together form the total individual person. A conceptual model on recreation paradigm has been designed and developed based on Indian ethos. The model represents the gross body and subtle body (mind) by means of a block bar, representing a human being and is presented in schematic in Leisure and Recreation plane in (Figure 2).

It can be observed from the figure that the left part of the bar represents the gross body (in front) and the left one, the mind (in the back). Different elements of the body and mind are also indicated in the figure, for ready reference. It can be observed that the organs of action, viz., speech (vak), hands (pani), feet (pada), genitals (upastha) and anus (payu) are moved by the motive power of the Prana at its centre. In the right part behind the gross body there are five senses skin (Thwak), eye (chakshu), ears (srothra), tongue (jihwa), nose (ghrana). Vin the figure.

The conceptual bar representing human being is superposed on the recreation and leisure plane parallel to Y-axis in the schematic diagram FIG.2. The horizontal axis represents recreation activities spectrum and vertical axis relates to leisure in terms of the time spent for relaxation. It can easily be conceptualized from the figure that however long the time a person spends in leisure (by moving towards the top of the Y axis) by invoking the action organs does not make the individual to experience complete relaxation. And hence the recreation is only partial and incomplete. Therefore it is imperative that the sense organs are also to be involved fully (i.e. by moving forward towards the extreme right in the X-axis direction) along with the action organs to experience full and complete relaxation.

Different activities of Work advocated in the ancient Indian Scriptures for the gross body and the subtle body through their corresponding elements of the action and sense organs, along with the methods of recreation, historical time periods and modern practices are presented in Table 2.

It can be observed from Table 2 that the ancient period relating to the Ramayana dates back to over 7000 BC and the one relating to the Mahabharata dates back to over 3000 BC to 500 BC (Vartak, 1986). Recreational activities include hunting and playing dice. Going out for penance in groves, spiritualism, yoga and religion were also practiced for the peace of the senses, perfect relaxation and tranquillity. In addition to a variety of games, sports, arts, and travel (pilgrimages) were encouraged for recreation of the body.

Various recreation practices observed for the action organs of the body speech were grammar preaching, storytelling (Gopala Reddy, 1986) while chariot riding,

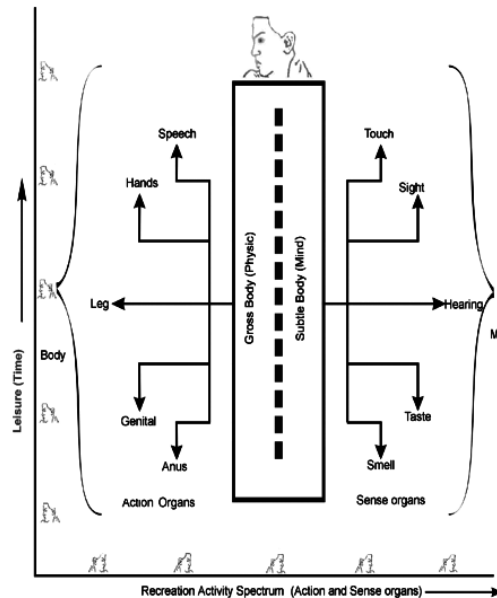


Fig. 2: Schematic Diagram of Recreation & Leisure Spectrum relating the body and mind.

Table 2

Categories of Recreation as per Ancient Indian Scriptures in contrast with modern practices

S. No	Item	Elements and their Functions	Ancient Method of Recreation	Found in	Period / Time	Modern Practices
I	Gross Body	1. Voice (Speech)	Grammar preaching, Story telling	Panini	500 BC	Physiotherapy, Gym, Adventure Sports, Health and Spiritual Tourism
		2. Hands (Lifting)	Chariot Riding Boating, Game of Dice	Mahabharata	3100BC	
		3. Feet (Walking)	Sports/Running	Mahabharata	3100BC	
		4. Anus (Excretory)	Yoga Practices/ Spiritualism Ayurveda	Pathanjali	500BC	
		5. Genital (Reproduction)	Yoga Practices/ Spiritualism Ayurveda			
II	Subtle Body (Mind)	1. Skin(Touch)	Bath with flower extracts	Abhijnana Sakunthalam (Kalidasa)	600BC -500AD	Meditation Sight Seeing Exhibitions Food & Beverages
		2. Eye (Sight)	Dance / Drama	Ramayana	7300 BC	
		3. Ears (Hearing)	Music	Mahabharata (Virata Parva)	3100 BC	
		4. Tongue (Taste)	Food / Beverages	Mahabharata (Virata Parva)	3100 BC	
		5. Nose (Smell)	Flowers	Ramayana Mahabharata	7300 BC 3100 BC	

boating, dice playing, sports/running were employed for hands and feet. Ayurveda and Yoga were also practiced for general health and for relaxation of genital organs (Gopala Rao, 1989). Similarly, bath with flower essence was employed for recreating the sense organs as described by Kalidasa in his play *Abhijnana Sakunthalam*. While dance and drama is recorded in the *Ramayana* for recreating the sight, the practices of music for ears and tasteful preparations of food and beverages for the tongue are found in the *Virata Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, along with inhaling the fragrance of flowers for the nose.

However, in the modern times, it is noticed that there is no specific distinction for leisure and recreational pursuits focusing separately on the body and the mind unlike in ancient times. But gym, physiotherapy and adventure sports are employed through health and spiritual tourism for gross body. Similarly, for the mind, meditation, sightseeing, exhibitions and tasting delicious food and beverages are being used.

So the activity of work always creates pressure and results in tension and strain to the mind causing a fatigue to the body. Any imbalance between the levels of gross body and subtle body would result in low levels of fitness or even sometime in ill health (or disorder). But none can sit idle even for a moment without performing an action which is termed as work. So leisure provides a free time for both body

and mind to work in various pursuits for recreation which relieve one from fatigue through the process of relaxation.

Therefore the ancient Indian scriptures reveal the possibility of providing fairly acceptable definition by conceptualizing the unity of body and mind involving the action organs and sense organs respectively which is in tune with contemporary literature. This establishes the fact that recreation is a synchronizing work activity of body and mind together and it will be total only with the full involvement of the gross body and subtle body. Thus

Conclusions

Several earlier researchers attempted to conceptualize and define Work, Leisure and Recreation by establishing relationships between them in modern times. They opined that a uniform definition for each of these terms is almost impossibility and appears to depend on the professional perception of an individual and his experience. The author took up detailed research by investigating various Indian scriptures, epics and ancient history to conceptualize work, leisure and recreation from ancient knowledge and to identify different elements that constitutes them by formulating the sources. Indian Scriptures declare that each human being comprises of the subtle and the gross body. The subtle body is represented by the mind controlling the five sense organs, namely touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell. The gross body also has five organs of action, namely speech, hands, feet, anus and genitals. Further the body and mind are interconnected by a vital force known as Prana, a cosmic energy.

These studies brought to light the ancient methods of leisure and recreation practices for both gross and subtle body which constitutes work with the era these scholars practiced in. These practices are analyzed and codified along with equivalent contemporaneous methods for exploration in the modern times. These practices include running, boating, chariot riding, yoga, spiritualism and ayurveda which were in vogue several centuries earlier to BC, for the recreation of the body. Also music, dance, drama, food and beverages and inhaling the fragrance of flowers and the use of flower extracts were employed for recreating the mind.

Based on these findings a conceptual model has been designed and developed to establish interrelationships for each organ along with indicating the specific recreation techniques that were earlier in vogue for each of these organs. The developed model demonstrates an imaginary virtual separation indicating the unity of body and mind to perform their respective designated activities which are otherwise conceived to be separate by present day leisure and recreation workers.

Contrary to the present day thinking which confines recreation mainly to a physical level activity, the ancient Indian scriptures declare that the activity performed simultaneously by the sense organs (the mind) and organs of action (the body) make for a perfect work experience and total recreation. The present Study and analysis, brings out that it is absolutely essential that we comprehend the unity of the body and the mind, which otherwise are conceived as two separable constituents of the human being. Their essentiality needs to be involved for recreation in totality to be

derived from various leisure pursuits. The findings will go a long way in helping to design necessary amenities/utilities for total recreation In various leisure and recreation establishments.

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Notes

- 1) **Ancient Indian Scriptures:** The ancient Indian scriptures have been the timeless and unequalled heritage of the world. The Vedas and the Upanishads are at the crest of the Indian scriptures.
- 2) **Vedas:** The Vedas are considered to be sacred and revealed knowledge. Rigvedic hymns are considered to be at least 5,000 years old
- 3) **Prana:** This concept was first expounded in the Upanishads as the element that sustains the body and is the mother of thought and thus also the mind. It is the energy within the body other than the five elements responsible for the working of the body.
- 4) **Bhagavad Gita:** The Bhagavad Gita is a part of the Mahabharata, comprising 700 verses. The authorship of the Gita is attributed to Vyasa, the compiler of the Mahabharata. Scholars have opined that the date of composition of the Bhagavad Gita is between the fifth century BC and second century BC.
- 5) **Upanishads:** The Upanishads constitute the end part of the Vedas [i.e.] Vedanta. They deal with philosophical and spiritual aspects of the Vedas.
- 6) **Ramayana:** The Ramayana is about Utopian ideals and lofty principles which creates the perfect: the virtuous elder brother, the obedient, ever-devoted younger brothers and the self-sacrificing, ever-loving wife.
- 7) **Mahabharata:** The Mahabharata is an amazing tale full of drama, scheming, jealousy, human foibles and failings is said to be the longest poem in the world with 100,000 stanzas. The epic has a story relating to pandavas which is as relevant to the world today as it was then.
- 8) **Ayurveda:** Ayurveda is a system of traditional medicine native to the Indian Subcontinent and practiced as the "science of life".
- 9) **Virata Parva:** Virata Parva is a fourth chapter of Mahabharata about 13th year of exile by pandavas at the court of Virata where different practices of recreation for the sense organs are found.

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