

INTRODUCTION TO LEISURE AND RECREATION

History and Development of Leisure and Recreation

Introduction

The concept of leisure and recreation has been used even in the earlier years. It can be traced back to ancient civilizations wherein activities for leisure and recreation are also practiced, although not commercialized. The history of recreation and leisure is a rich tapestry of people, places, events and social forces. showing the role of education, religion, government and the custom and value of different cultures as well as their arts, sports and other past times. By studying its evolution, we will be able to understand more on this sector of the tourism industry.

Definitions of Leisure and Recreation

Leisure Defined

Leisure, in simple terms, means free time that can be spent as you see fit and the activities that are involved in such time. It is said to be the time that is not necessarily planned but also not necessarily wasted which is believed to be the chance for the body to rejuvenate itself.

Richard Kraus (1978), a pioneer in the field of leisure and recreation, outlines four views of leisure. These are the following:

1. The Classical View of Leisure

- The classical view regarded leisure as "a state of being in which activity is performed for its own sake"
- The most critical aspect of this view is considered to be "a state of mind" and that this state is brought about through activities engaged in for their own sake.

2. Leisure as a Symbol of Social Class

- This view of leisure is traced back to Thorstein Veblen's Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) which both described the conditions that brought about this view as well as helped to establish this particular meaning of the term.
- Leisure here becomes the prerogative of an elite class that uses it to establish and maintain its position through such means of conspicuous consumption ethic, contributed to negative image that leisure has achieved.
- This is a negative view of leisure and has, in combination with the teachings of the Protestant Work Ethics.

3. Leisure as a Form of Activity

- According to this view, leisure is a non-work activity in which people engage during their free time.
- This leisure activity may serve specific functions such as relaxation, entertainment or personal development.

4. Leisure as an Unobligated Time

- Leisure here is viewed as unobligated or discretionary time
- This is the most frequently used definition in the sociological literature and is often referred to as the residual definition.

Recreation Defined

The term recreation appears to have been used in English first in the late 14th century, first in the sense of 'refreshment or curing o sick person" It is derived from Latin word "re which means again and "creare" which is translated as create. (Online Etymology Dictionary)

Recreation differs from leisure in the sense that it is a purposeful activity that includes the experience of leisure in activity contexts, hence, recreation is an activity of leisure. The need to do' something for recreation is an essential element of human biology or psychology. Recreational activities are often done for enjoyment, amusement or pleasure and are considered to be fun.

Historical Origins and Development of Recreation and Leisure

It is necessary to have a comprehensive grasp of the role and development of recreation and leisure in the past in order to offer a meaningful foundation on the study of recreation and leisure as it is known today. The origins of recreation and leisure may be traced all the way back to prehistoric times

A. THE PLAY OF EARLY SOCIETIES

Archaeologists have uncovered artifacts that provide some first-hand evidence of the creative athletic and recreation activities of primitive people from around the world.

- Origin of Games and Sports
 - In primitive societies, play may have had many sources. Popular games were often vestiges of warfare, practiced as a form of sport.
 - Musical instruments were likely created for use in religious rituals.
 - Pottery, painting, drawings and other early art provided a record of both daily life and cultural mythology
 - Beads and other jewelry were created as externally symbols of individual status and group affiliations
 - When an activity was no longer useful in its original form, it became a form of sport offering individual status and groups the opportunity to prove physical skill and strategy". Often, the origin was a religious ritual, in which games were played to symbolize a continuing struggle between good and evil or life and death. One example of such sport is the **Tlachtli**, a pre-Columbian Mesoamerica ritual ball game.
- Other Play Functions
 - On the North American continent, play had similar functions among Native American tribes, helping to equip young adult life
 - Boys practiced warrior skills and were taught to survive unarmed and unclothed in the wilderness
 - Girls were taught the household crafts expected of mature women
 - Through dancing, singing and storytelling, both sexes learned the history and religion of their cultures.
 - Among such southwestern Native American tribes as the Navajo, Zuni or Hopi, shamans or medicine men practiced healing rites that made use of chanting,

storytelling, dancing, sacred kachina dolls and elaborate, multicolored sand paintings.

B. RECREATION AND LEISURE IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

As prehistoric societies advanced, they developed specialization of functions. Humans were able to domesticate plants and animals which permitted them to shift from a nomadic existence based on hunting and food gathering to a largely stationary way of life based on grazing animals and planting crops.

➤ Ancient Egypt

- The Egyptian culture was a rich and diversified one; it achieved an advanced knowledge of astronomy, architecture, engineering, agriculture and construction.
- They engage in many sports as part of education and recreation including wrestling, gymnastic exercises, lifting, swinging weights and ball games.
- Bullfighting was a popular spectacle and was religiously motivated.
- Music, drama and dance were forms of religious worship as well as social entertainment.
- Complex orchestras that included various stringed and percussive instruments.
- Groups of female performers were attached to temples and the royal houses had troupes of entertainers who performed on sacred or social occasions.

➤ Ancient Assyria and Babylonia

- The land known as the "fertile crescent" between two great rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, was ruled by two powerful empires - Assyria in the North and Babylon in the South.
- Like the Ancient Egyptians the Assyrians and Babylonians had many popular recreation activities such as boxing, wrestling archery and a variety of table games
- Assyrian nobles went lion hunting in chariots and on foot using spears.
- As early as 9th century BC, parks were established for royal hunting parties as well as settings for feasts, assemblies and royal gatherings
- On the estates of other monarchs during the ninth and tenth centuries BC were vineyards, fishponds and the famed hanging gardens of Babylon.

➤ Ancient Greek

- Among the ancient Israelites, music and dancing were performed for ritual purposes as well Ancient Israel as for social activities and celebrations.
- The early Hebrews distinguished dances of a sacred or holy character from those that resembled pagan ceremonies with such having abundant references in the Old Testament.
- The ancient Hebrews also engaged in hunting, fishing, wrestling and the use of weapons such as the sword and javelin for both recreational and defensive purposes.
- The major contribution was to set aside the seventh day - the Sabbath - as a time for people to rest from work and to worship.

➤ Ancient Greek

- Athens, during the so-called Golden Age of Pericles, took great interest in the arts, in learning and in athletics. These pursuits were generally restricted to wellborn aristocratic noblemen who had full rights of citizenship including voting and participation in state affairs.
- The Athenian ideal of the balanced man - a combined soldier, athlete, artist, statesman and philosopher. This ideal was furthered through education and the various religious festivals which occupied 70 days a year.
- The art of music, poetry, theater, gymnastics and athletic competitions were combined in these sacred competitions.
- Sports appear to have been a part of daily life and to have occurred mainly when there were mass gatherings of people such as assembly of an army for war, wedding or funeral.
- Musical events were also present offering contests on the harp and flute, poetry and theatrical presentations. Physical prowess was celebrated in sculpture and poetry, and strength and beauty were seen as gift of the gods.
- Young children enjoyed toys, dolls, carts, Skip ropes, kites and seesaws When boys reached the age of seven, they were enrolled in schools in which gymnastics and music were primary elements. They were intensively instructed in running and leaping, wrestling, throwing the javelin and discus, dancing (as a form of military drill) boxing, swimming and ball games.
- Greek Philosophy believed strongly in the unity of mind and body and that play activity is essential to physical health and social growth of children.

➤ Ancient Rome

- Ancient Roman citizens participated in sports and gymnastics intended to keep the body strong and spirit courageous
- Numerous games were held to worship Roman gods and later were developed as festivals. These games were carefully supervised by the priesthood and were supported by public funds frequently at great costs.
- The most important of Roman games were those that celebrated military triumphs which were usually held in honor of the god Jupiter.
- Young Roman children are pretty much like Greeks who plays with toy carts, houses, dolls, hobbyhorses, stilts and engaged in many sport game such as running and jumping, sword and spear play, wrestling, swimming and horseback riding.
- Romans supported play for utilitarian rather than aesthetic or spiritual reasons. Romans were also known as systematic planners and builders and their towns generally included provisions for public baths, open-theater, amphitheater's, forums for public assemblies, stadiums and sometimes parks and gardens.
- During the reign of Emperor Claudius in the first century AD, there were 159 public holidays during the year, 93 of which were devoted to games at public expense including many new festivals in honor of national heroes and foreign victories.

THE COLOSSEUM. The Colosseum was the scene of thousands of hand-to-hand combats between men and animals, and of many larger combats.

➤ PASTIMES IN MIDDLE AGES

- The medieval society was marked by rigid class stratifications. Below the nobility and clergy were the peasants who were divided in ranks as freemen, villeins, serfs and slaves.
- Hunting skills was considered a virtue of medieval rulers and noblemen and is considered a useful preparation for war.
- The games played in castles and medieval manors included early forms of chess checkers, backgammon and dice.
- Gambling was popular although forbidden by both ecclesiastical and royal authority.
- Traveling in reasonable safety has become possible.
- The custom of jousting emerged within the medieval courts stemming from the tradition that only the nobility fought on horseback while common men fought on foot.
- The common people on the other hand also had leisure activities which include village feasts and sport, practical joking, throwing weight, cockfighting, bull baiting and other lively games.
- The people of Middle Ages had an insatiable love of sightseeing and would travel great distances to see entertainment.

➤ THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

- The term "renaissance" means rebirth and describes the revived interest in scholarship, philosophy and arts of Ancient Greece and Rome that developed at this time.
- Expansion of commerce and travel in Europe life.
- Nobility became patrons of great painters, sculptors, musicians, dancers and dramatics. The great wave of music and literature swept through the courts Of Europe aided by the development of printing.
- Dance and theater became more complex and elaborate, and increasingly lavish entertainment and spectacles were presented in the courts of Italy and France.
- Varied forms of play became part of education of the youth of the nobility at these times.
- European town planning during this era was characterized by wide avenues, long approaches, handsome buildings and similar monumental features. The nobility decorated their estates with elaborate gardens with some being opened to the public.
- In some cases, religious brotherhoods-built clubhouses, gardens and shooting stands for archery practice that were used by townspeople for recreation and amusement.
- Three types of large parks emerged during this period - royal hunting preserves or parks ornate and formal garden parks and English garden parks.
- Leisure is highly based on social status. The working class has very little opportunity for leisure activities while wealthy individuals have the opportunity for

activities such as social visits, dining and passing evenings at gaming, theater, ballet or opera.

➤ **THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: IMPACT OF INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

- The Industrial Revolution changed the way people lived, and it also had great effect on popular patterns of recreation and leisure.
- The residents were oppressed by low wages and recurrent unemployment hence leisure and recreation were not a priority over their basic needs.
- Many believe that working alone is sufficient for an individual to improve his or her social and economic status.
- The first half of the nineteenth century saw a gradual expansion of popular amusements in the United States. Performances were usually by touring players who joined local stock companies throughout the country presenting serious drama as well as lighthearted entertainment.
- By 1830s, there are about 30 traveling shows around the country with menageries and groups of acrobats and jugglers which later developed into circuses.
- Drinking remained as a popular past time and majority of American men were tavern goers.
- Towards the last half of the century, free public education had become a reality and was able to develop college sport as a campus-based recreation.
- The Young Men's Christian Association based its program on active recreation.
- Commercial amusements as well as dime museums, dance halls, shooting galleries, bowling alleys, billiard parlors, beer gardens and saloons sprang in major cities and provided a new way of entertainment for pay.

C. RECREATION AND PARKS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

- Municipal parks became well established.
- The concept that city governments should provide recreation facilities, programs and services became widely accepted.
- New forest preserves, historic and scientific sites and wildlife protected areas were included in federal park systems.
- Playgrounds, parks, public beaches and picnic grounds appealed to young people.
- Later, organized recreation programs were promoted by churches, law enforcement agencies and civic associations.
- Commercial recreation such as theme parks and casinos as well as wellness related facilities such as spas became popular.
- Resorts emerged as an all-in-one stop for recreation with some offering varied services for any age group.