

LEISURE TIME UTILIZATION FOR URBAN YOUTH IN DELHI: TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This study has used primary data collected from youth population in Delhi to identify some patterns in the leisure time utilization of youth and how the pattern is governed by the age and gender. We collected data for around 100 youth in Delhi and found that girls and boys differ in the kind of activities they undertake, with significantly more boys reported to playing outdoors, fitness activity and spending time on social networking sites.

Keywords: Leisure, Time Use Pattern and Urban Youth

INTRODUCTION:

India faces a unique demographic situation currently. With maximum number of population as its youth, India has a number of demographic advantages including a huge work force and contributor to national income and relatively few dependents. However, with youth as its majority group India faces certain peculiar challenges when it comes to the productive utilization of the time that youth spends in its free time. According to some studies in the developing countries, leisure is fast becoming sedentary and inactivity prone. Maximum number of youth spends their free time in watching TV, using social media and internet and keeping indoors. The concept of physical activity and playing had increasingly received lesser and lesser attention from the youth all over the world and Indian youth is not untouched by this phenomenon. The involvement of youth and children in constructive leisure activities is constrained by both willingness on their part and lack of infrastructure and opportunities. A large literature stresses that the willingness of present day youth to participate in social interaction and social activities is hampered by the availability of social media and lack of awareness about the benefits of social interactions and the concept of socializing on their own time. All of this has raised concerns

about physical and mental health of the youth and the way they can contribute towards the overall health of the economy. Keeping such concerns in mind, this study explores the issue of time management, leisure, and physical activity of the youth in India. A detailed questionnaire was outlined to examine the leisure activity of the youth and questions were centered on finding the various ways in which Indian youth spends its leisure time. Questions were also asked to examine how certain other variables, particular parental encouragement and school system help to promote involvement in physical activity and reading habits in Indian youth. This study also examines if there are gendered differences in the time use patterns. This paper uses a pilot survey from a larger project which aims to target youth and children. For the pilot survey, we focus only on the youth and their time use patterns and attempt to understand the differences on the basis of age and gender. The larger survey will incorporate youth and children and study more nuanced questions about policy and integrating theory and practice. This study provides an important starting point to explore the leisure time use of Indian youth and focus on a few of the policy aspects. This is the first study of its kind to undertake the use of primary data and analyze leisure time patterns of Indian youth according to age, sex and family support to encourage such activities. Rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a review of literature, Section 3 discusses the data, Section 4 presents results and section 5 concludes.

Review of literature

The literature on leisure time activities of youth and elderly has a huge following in developed countries where much of the focus is on psychosocial development of individuals and the leisure time activities seem to contribute in various ways to this development in various age groups (Tinsley and Levers, 2007). The same literature, though, is non-existing or very scant for developing countries even though the same repercussions are important variables for physical and mental health of citizens of developing countries (Larson and Verma, 1999).

Studies emphasize that there are significant differences in boys and girls in adolescence about the way they spend their leisure time and undertake physical activity (Sallis and Owen, 1999).

Girls undertake lower physical activity than boys on average and within girls younger girls have more active lifestyles (Mota and Esculas, 2002). The gendered differences in the time use pattern have been observed across age groups and countries (Stephens et al. 1985, Bitman and Wajcman, 2000). The relationship with age is much more complicated and there is no consensus on how it varies. However, a few studies suggest that the time on leisure first increases and then decreases with age (Pate et al., 1994) Certain other studies have also looked at the parental influence on time use pattern. Ornelas et. al (2007) find that family cohesion and parental involvement are positively correlated with increasing physical activity in adolescents.

Studies have also established that more physical activity and involvement in sports is conducive to less behavioral problems and is associated with better cognitive outcomes. The studies also suggest that time spent in socializing with friends and hanging out promotes social skills and promotes better behavior in children and adolescents.

All through the world, increasing trends have been reported in children and adolescents spending more time in sedentary activities and how such use of time adversely affects the youth development (Ng and Popkin, 2012). To the best of our knowledge, such studies have not been conducted in India. This study aims to identify some patterns about leisure time activity of urban youth in India and analyze these patterns on the basis of pre-existing knowledge about such variables from the literature.

DATA AND METHODS:

A questionnaire of about 25 main questions was circulated among Delhi youth randomly. The main population consists of students and people working in younger ages. The pilot survey results have been discussed in this paper and the results from the main survey will form a part of the bigger project that is still under progress. The pilot survey was conducted in North West Delhi and the target population was achieved by circulating questionnaires through the team involving college and university students. About a 100 questionnaires were returned back to the

researchers out of which about 62% were answered by male youth. The average age of the respondents is about 19 years with the oldest individual of 25 years of age. About 29% of the youth said that they spend about 1-2 hours on leisure activities per day on average. The primary focus of the survey is to analyze the time use pattern in leisure activities given the sex and age preferences in youth and to focus on some activities as the main leisure time activities. For this purpose, an elaborate list of activities was provided to the respondents from which they could identify their main activity and answer questions about time spent on that activity. Since some previous literature has focused on the benefits of physical activity and reading on children cognitive skills and behavior outcomes, the survey also included some questions about these activities and what kind of encouragement does the youth get from various sources regarding these. The main method of analysis is to conduct differences in means exercise to find out significant differences in between gender and age. Some more descriptive analysis about the kind of activities that youth undertake has been presented too.

RESULTS:

On average males report to spend about 2-3 hours on leisure time pre day whereas females report about 1-2 hours of leisure time (p value of t- test <0.01)!

To simplify the analysis on age and gender, we divide the age groups in three categories 14-17, 17-22, and 22-25. These age categories have been specified according to the educational structure in India, Typically age 14-17 will represent high school students, between 17-22 age group represents the college going category and 22 and above either represents higher education or people in jobs. We conducted the difference in means for these age categories by gender and the results have been discussed below :

In the 14-17 age category, the average time reported on leisure time activities differs by the gender and females report lesser leisure time than males but the difference is not significant (p value of test 0.5). In the 17-22 age category, the time spent on leisure by both genders varies

significantly and boys report higher time spent in the magnitude of 2-3 hours per day (p value of the t test =0.005). In the last age group, the age categories cannot be divided on the basis of gender and hence a severe limitation of this data comes to light. Of the main activities that the students spent time on during leisure hours, the following is the distribution of students. Watching TV emerges as the main leisure time activity for the sample with 76% of the sample reporting to watch TV. The other main activities that this sample engages in are using social networking sites, (61%), playing outdoors (56%), talking over phone and internet (50%) and reading (44%). The least engaged in activities were religious activity and writing and playing indoors.

Within these categories, we tested the data for significant differences in reporting by gender.

The results for this analysis have been reported in Table 1. The p values for the sample proportion tests have been reported in Column 8. The results indicate that boys outweigh girls in an affirmative response to four of the twelve categories viz., playing outdoors, playing indoors, and using social networking sites and in fitness activity. The results state that the proportion of boys spending their leisure time in playing outdoors, playing indoors, using social networking and in fitness activity outweigh the proportion of girls for leisure time in these activities. There is no significant difference in the proportion of girls and boys in their time use in any other activity.

Table 1
Major Activity Categories and Differences by Gender

Activity (1)	Yes (2)	No (3)	Girls		Boys		P- Value (8)
			Yes (4)	No (5)	Yes (6)	No (7)	
Reading	44	56	0.605	0.394	0.467	0.532	0.475
Writing	22	78	0.261	0.736	0.193	0.806	0.796
Playing –Outdoors	56	44	0.394	0.605	0.661	0.338	0.008***
Playing – Indoors	22	78	0.131	0.868	0.274	0.725	0.094*
Video Games and computer games	44	56	0.368	0.631	0.483	0.516	0.258
Watching TV	76	24	0.368	0.631	0.483	0.516	0.365
Social Networking Sites	61	39	0.710	0.289	0.790	0.209	0.002***
Talking over phone and internet	50	50	0.473	0.526	0.483	0.516	0.680
Hobby Classes	34	66	0.421	0.578	0.290	0.709	0.184
Religious Activity	12	88	0.078	0.921	0.145	0.854	0.323
Fitness Activity	41	59	0.184	0.815	0.548	0.451	0.003***
Others	9	91	0.105	0.894	0.096	0.903	0.695

The results may be driven by the fact that during high school days, both boys and girls are busy studying for the crucial exams and take a number of entrance exams and are worried about going to college and hence, there is not significant difference in the time spent on leisure for girls and boys. However, once they reach college, boys enjoy more freedom and liberty owing to social system and structures and hence can find more time to spend on leisure time activities. Apart from the usual questions, we also asked the youth to provide comments on the role of government in encouraging outdoor activities and sports. A majority of responses insisted that proper provision of outdoor parks, grounds and stadiums and building new sports complexes would be ideal case scenario. A few responses centered on the role of scholarships and monetary benefits to players and students. A few others pointed to the need of providing adequate equipment and training to children and some said it should be made into a policy that some hours per week should be allocated for outdoor activities for each individual. Responses also emphasized on providing more opportunities to players, arrange tournaments, give more funds to sports associations, ban internet on phone, infrastructure, make sports compulsory in junior classes so it becomes a habit overtime organizing games and sports competitions! The majority of responses were centered on provision of adequate grounds, sports complexes and stadiums. The second highest responses included the promotion of outdoor activities and sports through organizing events, tournaments,

CONCLUSION:

This study focuses on the differences in time use pattern of urban youth in Delhi. WE collected data for about 100 youth from North west Delhi as a part of the pilot survey and structured the questionnaire to find out about leisure time utilization of the youth. We found that males spend more time in leisure activity than females and that there are significant differences on the basis of gender and age in the amount of time spent on leisure and on the activities that youth undertake. Significantly greater number of boys participate in social networking and fitness activity and playing outdoors and indoors. The results from this study point to the importance of identifying the differences in gendered patterns and for evolving different channels for girls and boys to encourage different activities.

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