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Lecture - 77

AGENCIES PROVIDING RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Recreation as a term first appeared in English in the late 14th century with the sense of 'refreshment or curing of a sick person'. It term is derived from two Latin words, 'Re' meaning 'again' and 'Creare' which means 'to create, bring forth or beget'. Recreation comprises of any activity an individual engages in during free or leisure or discretionary time for fulfillment and self-satisfaction which ultimately leads to the development of an integrated personality who is socially adjusted and economically productive.

A wide range of activities be it indoor or outdoor, active or passive, creative or self-expressive, individual or group, and many more fall under the purview of recreation. For someone sitting back at home and doing gardening or engaging in watching a movie or playing minor games with the family may act as a source of recreation while for another individual taking a sky diving trip or going camping with friends may be satisfying. Recreation has no strict definition everyone has their own perception and all of them may be correct. However there are certain principles that need to be kept in mind when a professional has to plan a program in recreation.

Keeping in mind the varied nature of activities that recreation offers it will be only logical to categorized them on the basis of the agencies providing them.

AGENCIES PROVIDING RECREATION

Recreation facilities, activities and programs are being provided by various agencies, which were mainly created to meet the existing demands for the various types of leisure time opportunities. The agencies have their own scope, objectives and field of activities. Some of

these agencies serve only its registered members while others benefit the entire community. Most of the agencies are concerned with a single form of recreation; however there are others that provide a wide variety of activities. Some of the agencies are in for the financial profit which results from providing the public with recreation while others mainly cater to the needs of the individual and community life.

Depending on the nature of the activities being provided and the agency providing them, we may categorize them into:

- Individual and Home
- Government Agencies
- Voluntary or Semi-Public Agencies
- Private Agencies and
- Commercial Agencies

We will now elaborate each of these agencies along with the range of activities they offer and the pros and cons associated with them.

- **Individual and Home**

An individual and his home are the primary centers for recreation and home is where an individual ends up spending all or most of the time be it the work related time and free time as well. Home is where the family is and when discussing about the social structure we have discussed the importance of constructive recreation at home for member of all ages and gender. It is essential not only for the children but also for the parents and grandparents and other members who are a part of the family.

Home doubtless is the chief center for most people. Activities in and around the home occupy more hours than those away from home. Home is where much of the indoor play takes place; individual and home recreation is not exactly an agency in itself however the activities that may be engaged in while one is in this setting may consist of reading, writing, walking, painting, riding, walking, fishing, group singing, dancing, playing an instrument, listening to radio, gardening, visiting and entertaining, cooking, story-telling, picnics, playing indoor games like carom, chess, etc. and many more.

The activities should be such that all the members are involved in it. One may engage in individual activities. It should be voluntary and on free will of an individual as recreation emphasizes in one's own free will to be a part of an activity and forced recreation may lead to negative impact and the purpose of recreation will be lost in that case.

- **Government Agencies**

Government agencies which can further be subdivided into the central or federal agency, the state agency, the local or the municipal agency and the museum are responsible for providing recreation to the people of all sections of the society through various offices or departments.

- The central or federal government is essential to:

- Integrate program as in India there are many agencies and each agency has its own policy.
- Conserve natural resources
- Construct infrastructure and recreation facilities
- Maintains and administers recreational agencies
- Plans and advices on standards of recreational activities and programs
- Furnishes information through correspondence, publications and conferences to train recreation leaders.

In India the federal or central agencies are the National Recreation Association; Tourist Bureau; Central Advisory Board of Recreation; Central Sports Federations; Botanical Gardens; National Library; National and International Exhibitions; Youth Festivals; Republic Day Parades; Bal Bhawan, New Delhi; Sangeet Kala Academy; National Programs on the All India Radio.

- **Other State and Provincial Government:** The Director of Public Relations is usually concerned with the state agencies. State grants legal authority for public programs, whether by schools, parks or separate recreation agencies, provision of areas and facilities, provision of programs under leadership on state owned lands and in state owned institutions. The state agency looks after the natural resources; these include state parks, state estates, fishing and other resources. The state also maintains the beauty spots, swimming places, historical places and so on. The local government includes schools, library museums housing agencies, etc. The local agency gives the land to be converted into parks, theatres, fairs etc. It also gives financial help for the same as required by the parties constructing them. The role of the local government is very important due to the social interest, having direct contact with the state and the centre as well. It also serves a wide range of interests and the system is therefore run in a democratic way.

The achievement will however not be tempted in unsocial ways. When the members of a community are idle and there is a lack of agencies to provide recreation, it does not help the community. It has been seen in most cases of delinquent and criminal acts that they happened when an individual or a group of individuals were idle with nothing to do in their free or leisure time. Thus providing people with adequate opportunities of self-expression in a healthy and constructive manner may help in the reduction of criminal activities which ultimately leads to strengthening of the national economy.

- **Semi-Public or Voluntary Agencies**

Semi-Public or Voluntary agencies are the ones who are supported by private funds. Recreation has a prominent place in the programs of most of these agencies, which includes the Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association) the Y.W.C.A. (Young

Women's Christian Association, the Youth Organization, the Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and many more.

- **Youth service organizations:** These are the Y.M.C.A. AND Y.W.C.A. The development of interests and skills essential to the enrichment of leisure is one of its objectives. Participation is extended to both young men and women as they organize activities for industry workers, provides leadership in athletics and camping too.
- **Hostels:** These hostels furnish overnight facilities for young people and conduct trips. These hostels and the service have been a means for stimulating interest among the youth for activities such as hiking, camping and other adventure related recreation.
- **Boys and Girls Work Organizations:** These include the boy scouts and girl guides. These agencies emphasize out-of-door activities and afford participation in a wide range of interests, nature study, woodcraft, games, athletics, services, camps, water sports and craft activities that appeals strongly to boys and girls. These agencies develop interests that are carried over to later life.

The voluntary agencies promote cultural, religious, educational, creative skills and values; they further emphasize on outdoor activities and afford opportunity for participation in a wide variety of projects.

- **Private Agencies:** A large number of agencies providing recreation fall under this category. These agencies are not dependent on community support and provide services to the members only. The most important agencies in this group are industries, religious establishment, sports organizations and other clubs.
 - **Industries:** As mentioned the programs are restricted to members only. Big enterprises and industries furnish elaborate recreation facilities for their employees. Playgrounds are equipped for the workers and their families. Outings, corporate retreats and dramatic entertainments are arranged for the workers their families and in some cases for the entire community.
 - **Religious Establishments:** When we look at the church and the religious agencies, on Sundays and on some other religious functions, people get together in social gathering. The church affords opportunities for group singing.
 - **Sports Organizations:** The growing popularity of games and sports in today's generation such as tennis, boating, cricket, hiking, etc. has resulted in the formation of private agencies which we also call clubs to provide recreation facilities and program specifically designed for a specific game or sport and for targeted group of people. These agencies comprises organizations that are not affordable by everyone, in some cases the membership fees is so high that only the most wealthy would be able to afford and in some of these clubs the membership is only open to prominent people in that sport. These also include the National Federations, State Associations for all types of competitive sports

where there are set standards and rules to promote and conduct National tournaments.

- **Other Clubs:** There are many other clubs besides the organizations such as the social clubs, dancing clubs, folk dance groups, chess, camera, stamp and hobby clubs. Many of these clubs have small local membership. They often influence the lives of an individual member more because they are formed around a common interest. These also include many women clubs. Being a member of any of the club, the leisure time gets shaped and is directed in a better and constructive way.
- **Commercial Agencies:** The universal urge for recreation, relaxation and release from the daily routine has been capitalized by commercial agencies. Unlike the other agencies whose main focus is to provide the best services and is driven by results, commercial recreation is purely and primarily motivated by profits rather than the service. These agencies involve both passive and active participation in strenuous physical activities. Commercial recreation may be defined as 'Recreation that is established as private enterprise for which the participant pays'. Mass entertainment, such as movies, television, radio and magazine are few of the means that are in the hands of the commercial interests. Recreation however is mostly passive, even though some of the activities as mentioned earlier may be physically strenuous and also require investment of a lot of time and money. Commercial recreation includes amusements that is, pictures, radio, theatres, night clubs and dance halls, swimming pools, picnic areas, bating facilities, adventurous activities, etc. It is important to take a note that even the stadiums are commercial centers for recreation because we as spectators have to pay gate money to get recreation.

People have realized the values of recreation and they are becoming most mobile in their life. During vacations, they travel to far-away places, stay in hotels, motels, resorts, private camps and so on. Such kinds of activities are also being undertaken by the commercial agencies and in turn they derive huge amount of income.

CONCLUSION

Thus it may be concluded that there are various agencies providing recreation, an individual should just look around for the agency that suits his need and fulfills his interest. One may engage in these activities in their leisure time thus improving his personal physical, mental, social and emotional health in the process.