

Varieties of Leisure Activities Among Indian College Students: A Review Article

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Abstract: *The review article aimed to gather information regarding the variety of leisure activities the Indian college students are involved in. Many research articles are found to be diversified towards different aspects of leisure activity like the importance of recreational time in life, energy and leisure time, racial differences among students regarding leisure activities, etc. Only fifteen research articles are dedicated to the variety of leisure activities among Indian college students. Only one article was found involving the tribal population. The range of duration of published articles is between 1999 and 2024. Eight databases were searched: PubMed, Scopus, Embase, Cochrane Library, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, and Research Gate. Works involved college students of 18 to 25 years of age and from different North and South Indian colleges. Physical activity is found to be the most popular leisure activity among Indian college students followed by reading and spending quality time with family members. Only two studies have identified alcohol drinking to be the favorite leisure time activity.*

Keywords: Leisure activities, Indian college students

1. Introduction

Leisure activities are pursuits engaged in for enjoyment, relaxation, and personal fulfillment during free time. They can vary widely, from physical activities like sports, hiking, and yoga to more passive pastimes such as reading, watching movies, and playing video games. These activities play a crucial role in enhancing mental and physical well-being, reducing stress, and fostering social connections. Engaging in leisure activities can improve creativity, boost mood, and provide a sense of accomplishment, making them an essential aspect of a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Leisure activities are crucial for maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle, providing numerous benefits for both mental and physical well-being.

Stress Reduction: Engaging in leisure activities helps reduce stress by providing an escape from daily pressures and responsibilities. Activities like reading, gardening, or listening to music can relax the mind and body, lowering cortisol levels and promoting a sense of calm.

Mental Health: Leisure activities improve mental health by offering opportunities for enjoyment and relaxation, which can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Hobbies and interests also provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment, contributing to overall happiness and life satisfaction.

Physical Health: Many leisure activities involve physical exercise, such as hiking, swimming, or playing sports. Regular physical activity improves cardiovascular health, strengthens muscles, enhances flexibility, and boosts the immune system. It also helps maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Social Connections: Participating in leisure activities often involves social interaction, whether it's joining a club, playing

team sports, or attending community events. These interactions foster relationships, enhance social skills, and create a sense of belonging and community.

Cognitive Function: Leisure activities that challenge the mind, such as puzzles, chess, or learning a new language, help maintain and improve cognitive function. These activities stimulate the brain, enhancing memory, problem-solving skills, and creativity.

Work - Life Balance: Engaging in leisure activities helps maintain a healthy work - life balance by providing a necessary break from work - related tasks. This balance is crucial for preventing burnout, increasing productivity, and ensuring long - term career satisfaction.

Personal Growth: Leisure activities allow individuals to explore new interests and develop new skills. This exploration can lead to personal growth, increased self-esteem, and a broader perspective on life.

Improved Mood and Energy Levels: Enjoyable activities release endorphins, the body's natural "feel - good" chemicals, which improve mood and energy levels. This boost can have a positive impact on daily life, making individuals more motivated and enthusiastic.

By incorporating leisure activities into daily routines, individuals can enhance their quality of life and achieve a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

Leisure activities play a crucial role in the lives of college students, offering a much - needed balance to their academically rigorous schedules. Engaging in hobbies, sports, and social events helps alleviate stress, boost mental health, and improve overall well-being. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop interpersonal skills, foster friendships, and create a supportive community.

Volume 13 Issue 8, August 2024

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

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Furthermore, leisure pursuits can enhance creativity, problem-solving, and time management skills, contributing to a more well-rounded and fulfilling college experience. Students can achieve a healthier, more productive, and enjoyable college life by incorporating leisure activities into their routines.

2. Material and Methods

Eight databases were searched: PubMed, Scopus, Embase, Cochrane Library, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, and Research Gate. The range of duration of published articles is limited between 1999 and 2024. Works involving college students of 18 to 25 years of age and from different North and South Indian colleges are considered for inclusion in this

review article. Articles written on various other aspects of leisure activities like their importance in the academic field, their relation with different physical and mental issues, leisure activities related to social and cultural behaviors, etc. are excluded as these articles are not found to be fit for selection. Articles written in the English language are considered.

3. Results and Discussion

Only fifteen research articles are found to be dedicated to the variety of leisure activities among Indian college students. The colleges are chosen from both North and South India as well as from the North - East provinces.

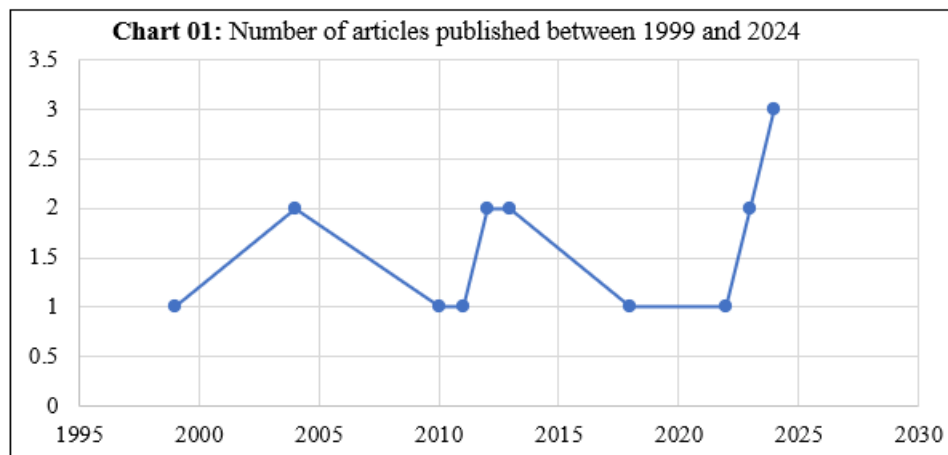


Chart 01 clearly shows the number of articles published between 1999 and 2024 considering the topic varieties of leisure activities among various college students of India. Between 1999 and 2004, only three articles are published (Udin, 1999; Burak, 2004; Sen et. al., 2004). The paper of Udin (1999) studied north Indian college students and reading was found to be the favorite leisure activity among students. In the article of Burak (2004), 201 college students were involved. In this study also reading was found to be opted by the college students as their popular leisure time activity. Another study of 2004, conducted by Sen et. al., involved more than 1000 Indian college students and this study concludes that playing indoor games with friends and participating in recreational activities like toy making, television viewing, etc. were popular among students as leisure activities. From 2004 to 2010 no study has been found dedicated to unfolding the varieties of leisure activities opted by the college students. In 2010 Banerjee et. al. conducted a study on Indian college students as a whole. The age range selected was between 18 and 25 years. The study concluded that physical activity was the most popular choice of leisure activity among students. Between 2011 to 2013 one or two studies for each year have been noted. In the year 2011, Komal et. al. studied in South Indian colleges involving 2171 female and 2016 male students. Watching television and physical activity were concluded to be the most opted leisure activity among students. In 2012, Nathial et. al. conducted a study on leisure activity among college students of Indore and pointed out physical activity as the popular leisure activity. Nayak et. al. (2013) studied Indian college students regarding their choice of leisure activity and found that alcohol drinking was the favorite leisure activity among students. Smith et. al.

(2013) also studied on Indian college students and found the same result as Nayak et. al. (2013). For four years i. e., from 2014 to 2017, no published articles have been found on varieties of leisure activity among Indian college students. Jain et. al. (2018) studied North Indian college students regarding their choice of leisure activities. This study involved both sexes and concluded that spending quality time with family members and listening to relaxing music were the two most favorite leisure activities among selected students. In 2022, Heintzman conducted studies on Indian college students and found that internet surfing and physical activity were the most popular leisure activities of college students. Two articles were published in the year 2023 (Reddy, 2023 and Erinjeri, 2023). The work of Reddy (2023) involved 220 North and South Indian college students of 18 – 27 years of age. Spending quality time with family members was found to be the best leisure time activity opted by the samples included. Erinjeri (2023) involved 168 Indian college students of 18 to 25 years and concluded that physical activity, social activity, reading, and recreational activities were the most popular leisure activities among students. In the year 2024, three published articles have been found. Kim et. al (2024) involved 266 participants to study the varieties of leisure activities among college students and found that participating in various sports, physical activity, cultural activity, and civic or social activities were the most popular among them. Sen et. al. in 2024 conducted studies on the North - East State of India (Tripura) and included tribal college students in the study. Results showed internet surfing, dancing, singing, gardening, reading books and physical activities were some of the most popular leisure time activities among tribal female college students. Another study by Sen et. al. in the same year

included non - tribal female college students of Tripura and found almost the same results.

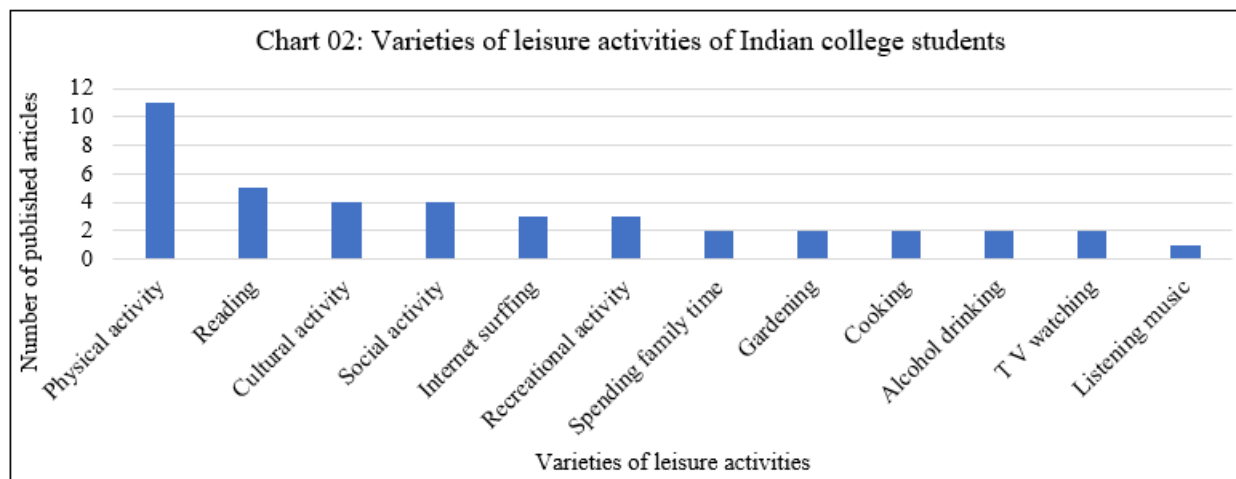


Chart 02 clearly shows the varieties of leisure activities opted for by the Indian college students studied from all over India. A maximum number of published articles (Kim et. al.2024; Erinjeri, 2023; Heintzman 2022; Banerjee et. al.2010; Nathial et. al, 2012) under consideration concluded that *physical activities* were the most popular leisure activity among students. As reported, the physical activity involves various indoor (carom, badminton, chess) and outdoor (cricket, football, kabaddi, group games) sports, practicing yoga, going to the gym, bodybuilding, wrestling, boxing, swimming, etc. Reading was found to be the second most popular choice as a leisure activity (Udin, 1999; Burak, 2004; Erinjeri, 2023; Sen et. al.2024). Reading during leisure time includes magazines, story books, periodicals, newspapers, etc. Leisure reading is immensely important for students as it fosters a lifelong love for learning and broadens their horizons beyond the confines of the curriculum. Engaging in voluntary reading enhances cognitive functions, improves vocabulary, and strengthens comprehension skills, which are critical for academic success. Furthermore, it stimulates imagination and creativity, providing an escape from academic pressures and everyday stress. Leisure reading also encourages empathy by allowing students to experience diverse perspectives and cultures through stories. Overall, it cultivates a habit of reflective thinking and critical analysis, essential for personal and intellectual growth.

Social activities and cultural activities were the third and fourth choices respectively for Indian college students as their leisure activities. Social activities include (as reported) feeding stray animals (especially dogs and cats), giving food and articles to beggars, helping elders and disabled people, working as a member of an NGO, etc. (Erinjeri, 2023; Kim et. al., 2024). Social activities are crucial for students as they play a significant role in their overall development and well-being. Participating in social activities helps students build essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These interactions foster a sense of community and belonging, reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing emotional health. Social activities also provide opportunities for students to develop leadership qualities and self-confidence as they navigate different social settings and challenges. Moreover, engaging in social activities can create

a balanced lifestyle, relieving academic stress and contributing to a more enjoyable and enriching educational experience.

Cultural activities include dancing, singing, recitation, writing stories, painting, etc. (Kim et. al., 2024; Sen et. al., 2024). As noted in the study of Sen et. al. (2024), the tribal female population of Tripura love to maintain their traditions and also to live and mingle within the same group of people. In most villages and towns their most famous dance is a group dance named Hozagiri, which is very skilful and requires a group to perform. Other dance forms like Garia, Jhum, Maimita, Masak Sumani, Lebang boomani, etc are popular among different tribes. So, from their childhood, they are associated with dance which is also a part of their tribal festivals and culture.

Recreational activities (Erinjeri, 2023; Sen et. al., 2004) include different forms of crafts, making toys with cloth and mud, knitting, photo frame making, etc. Students were reported to enjoy doing all these during their leisure periods. Few students were reported to love making handmade gifts during their leisure time to gift those items to their friends. Recreational activities are vital for students as they contribute significantly to physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Engaging in sports, arts, or other hobbies helps students manage stress, improve their mood, and boost overall health. These activities offer a necessary break from academic pressures, allowing students to recharge and maintain a balanced lifestyle. Recreational pursuits also foster creativity, enhance social skills, and encourage teamwork and cooperation. By participating in various recreational activities, students can discover new interests and talents, promoting personal growth and a sense of accomplishment. Overall, recreational activities enrich the student experience, making it more holistic and enjoyable.

Internet surfing (Heintzman, 2022; Sen et. al., 2024) was found to be another favorite leisure activity among Indian college students. Internet surfing involves (as reported) chatting with friends and family members, playing games, watching movies, listening to music, etc. Internet surfing offers numerous benefits for students, enhancing their

educational experience and personal growth. With vast amounts of information readily available, students can conduct research, access scholarly articles, and explore diverse perspectives on various subjects, facilitating deeper understanding and knowledge retention. Internet surfing also supports skill development, such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and information evaluation, which are essential in today's technology - driven world. Additionally, it provides opportunities for students to engage in online communities, participate in educational forums, and collaborate with peers globally, fostering social connections and cultural awareness. Furthermore, the internet offers a plethora of resources for learning new skills, from coding to language acquisition, empowering students to pursue their interests and passions independently.

Spending quality time with family members was also reported as a popular leisure activity among Indian college students (Reddy, 2023; Sen. et. al., 2024; Jain et. al., 2018). As reported by Sen et. al., 2024, the tribal population studied, was found to be interested more in gossiping with family members after a tiring day in college. The older one takes care of the younger ones and spends time giving company to them. Spending time with family is highly beneficial for college students, providing a strong foundation of emotional support and stability during a transformative period in their lives. Family interactions offer a sense of belonging and comfort, helping to alleviate the stress and pressures of academic and social challenges. Quality family time fosters open communication, allowing students to share their experiences, seek advice, and gain different perspectives, which can be invaluable for personal growth and decision - making. Additionally, family activities and traditions create cherished memories and reinforce values, contributing to a well - rounded and grounded individual. The emotional connection and encouragement from family members can significantly boost students' confidence and resilience, enhancing their overall well - being and academic success.

Alcohol drinking was found to be a popular leisure activity among Indian college students as reported by two studies (Nayak et. al., 2013 and Smith et. al., 2013). Alcohol drinking among college students during leisure time can have numerous detrimental effects, impacting both their academic performance and overall well - being. Excessive alcohol consumption impairs cognitive functions, leading to decreased concentration, poor judgment, and memory problems, which can negatively affect academic performance and productivity. It also increases the risk of accidents, injuries, and risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex and drunk driving. Over time, habitual drinking can lead to addiction and serious health issues, including liver disease, cardiovascular problems, and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. Furthermore, alcohol abuse can strain relationships with family and friends, reducing social support and contributing to feelings of isolation. The combination of these factors can create a cycle of academic difficulties, health problems, and social challenges, undermining students' success and well - being.

Other leisure activities include gardening, cooking, watching television, and listening to music (Sen et. al., 2024; Komal et. al., 2011; Jain et. al., 2018; Sen et. al., 2004). *Gardening*

offers numerous benefits for college students, promoting physical health through exercise and exposure to fresh air. It serves as a stress - relieving activity, providing a calming and meditative experience. Gardening fosters a sense of responsibility and accomplishment as students nurture plants from seed to maturity. It also enhances environmental awareness and sustainability practices. Additionally, gardening can improve mental well - being by boosting mood and providing a break from academic pressures. *Cooking* provides college students with essential life skills, promoting self - sufficiency and healthy eating habits. It encourages creativity and experimentation, allowing students to explore different cuisines and flavors. Cooking at home can be cost - effective, helping students manage their budgets more efficiently. It also fosters a sense of accomplishment and boosts confidence as they successfully prepare meals. Additionally, cooking can be a social activity, offering opportunities to bond with friends and family over shared meals. *Listening to music* offers college students numerous benefits, enhancing their mood and reducing stress levels. It can improve focus and concentration, making study sessions more productive and enjoyable. Music also serves as a creative outlet, stimulating imagination and inspiration. Additionally, it can foster a sense of connection and community, whether through shared musical tastes or attending concerts with friends. Lastly, listening to music can aid in relaxation and improve sleep quality, contributing to overall well - being. *Watching television* can provide college students with valuable benefits, including relaxation and stress relief after long study sessions. Educational programs and documentaries offer opportunities for learning and expanding knowledge on various topics. Television can also enhance cultural awareness by exposing students to diverse perspectives and global issues. It serves as a source of inspiration and creativity through engaging storytelling and visual arts. Additionally, watching TV can be a social activity, allowing students to bond with friends and family over shared shows and discussions.

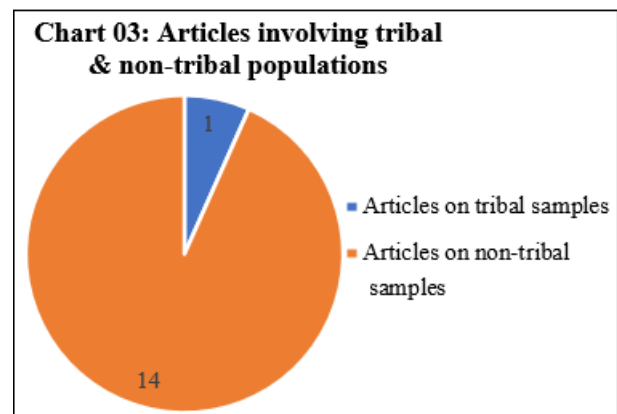


Chart 03 clearly shows the differentiation in the population considered for the research. Only one article was published (Sen et. al., 2024) working with the tribal female populations of North - East State Tripura. Since 1999, no single work has been done involving tribal college students to know about their choice of leisure activity. Female college students between the ages of 19 and 21 who were selected from tribal groups were the subjects of this cross - sectional survey, which was conducted in paramedical colleges throughout West Tripura between October 2023 and December 2023. The

most popular leisure activity was found to be internet surfing, followed by dancing, singing, cooking, gardening, physical activities, and reading books.

More research work involving tribal populations is essential to address the unique challenges and needs of these communities, which are often underrepresented in mainstream studies. Tribal populations possess distinct cultural practices, traditional knowledge, and social structures that can offer valuable insights into diverse aspects of human health, environment, and social dynamics. Comprehensive research can help identify and address disparities in health care, education, and economic opportunities, ensuring that policies and programs are tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, involving tribal communities in research respects their autonomy and fosters collaborative approaches that benefit both the researchers and the communities. By prioritizing research in these areas, we can promote greater equity, preserve cultural heritage, and improve the quality of life for tribal populations.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the review paper was to compile data on the range of extracurricular activities that Indian college students engage in. A large number of research publications focus on many facets of leisure time, such as the value of leisure time in life, energy, and leisure, racial disparities in students' leisure activities, etc. The range of recreational activities that Indian college students engage in is the subject of just fifteen research studies. The papers that have been published span the years 1999 through 2024. PubMed, Scopus, Embase, PsycINFO, Schematic Scholar, Research Gate, and the Cochrane Library were the eight databases that were searched. 18 to 25 - year - old college students from various North and South Indian universities participated in the works. Only one article was found involving the tribal population. The most popular pastime among Indian college students is reported to be physical activity, which is followed by reading and spending time with family. There are only two surveys that show drinking alcohol to be the most popular pastime.

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