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## On-screen leisure time activities of rural school going children and their opinions about them

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#### Abstract

One hundred and fifty rural school going children (76 female and 74 Male) in the age range of 9 – 12 yrs were chosen at random from 5 villages of Parbhani District (MS) for studying screen based leisure time activities of rural school going children and their opinions about them. The data related to the study were collected by personally interviewing of rural children based on structured and open ended interview schedule. It is obvious from the results that higher percentage of rural girls (68.42%) observed to be watching cartoon serials telecasted on TV for recreation purpose like *Chhota Bheem*, *Motu Patlu*, *Bablu Dablu*, *Teletubbies* etc. followed by watching comedy programmes (53.94%) viz Funny videos, Dramebaaz episodes, *Comedy circus ka jadoo*, Zee comedy show, family oriented serials (50.00%). However in case of rural boys, it was observed that generally they used to watch Comedy videos, Hindi and Marathi movie songs, Hindi Movies, Cartoon serials etc. As compared to sample rural girls, boys were recorded to be involved more in utilizing cell-phones/ smart-phones to carry out enlisted activities for recreational purpose. All the sample rural school going children opined that they experienced sense of joy, improved communication skills (79.33%), enhanced general knowledge (68.66%) learnt etiquettes and manners and also developed socio- emotional skills (66.66% each) due to getting involved in various screen based leisure time activities. Excessive usage of cell-phones/ smart-phones is proved to be hazardous for children.

**Keywords:** Leisure-time activities, recreational activities, on-screen, electronic gadgets, TV watching, cell phone, smart phone

#### Introduction

Leisure activities refer to activities in which individuals participate in their free time outside of their mandatory time such as work, class, and sleep etc. (Gkiotsalitis & Stathopoulos, 2016) [3]. It is an action based on an open consciousness, free choice, and self-determination, and obtained from the improvement of the sense of implication and experience of the activities, such as reading, sports, climbing, social activities, chatting, viewing TV or shopping (Amoako-Tuffour & Martínez-Espiñeira, 2012) [1]. Leisure time activities are also referred as recreational activities and considered as an essential element in all the stages of human life span. They are especially significant during childhood as the rate of wholesome development of children is very rapid during this period and these activities are proved to be beneficial for fostering wholesome development of children (Bangale and Swami, 2021) [14].

Leisure time activities can be social or solitary, energetic or passive, outdoors or indoors, healthy or harmful, and useful for society or detrimental.

Generally, children get involved in various leisure time activities like sports, music, games, travel, reading, television viewing, arts and crafts, dance, using smart phones for chatting, listening to music, playing video games, surfing, watching videos, photography, and involvement in household activities. Besides these some children also get involved in outdoor activities, outing, sight-seeing, visits, excursions, camping, hiking, mountaineering, games and sports etc. Recent studies indicated a growing interest in identifying specific types of leisure activities that contribute to well-being.

The advantages of leisure time activities are considered to be depends on its use with structured activities generally considered to be more beneficial than unstructured and active leisure time activities than passive (Hofferth and Curtin, 2003) [6].

In view of a tremendous increase in availability of easy access to electronic media, children are getting engaged in sedentary activities. Today majority of the children are glued to the television and gadgets, like cell phones, iPod, tablets, computer, laptop etc. Children use these gadgets for various purposes like for playing games, watching videos, listening to songs,

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chatting with their friends and for browsing different websites. They spend most of their leisure time in these activities and do not pay attention to their posture, screen brightness and screen distance from their eyes which ultimately affect their vision and health. In this era, even though gadgets have its own advantages and disadvantages, one cannot keep children away from them. However, they can minimize its usage and should start participating in outdoor activities.

Therefore, by considering above mentioned facts present study is taken up to know the on-screen leisure time activities of rural school going children and their opinions about them.

### Materials and Method

Total 150 rural school going children (76 female and 74 male) in the age range of 9-12 yrs belonging to low SES group, were chosen at random from 5 villages of Parbhani district of Marathwada region of Maharashtra State were selected to conduct this research study as the investigator was having easy approach to them. The data related to the study of objectives were collected by personally interviewing of rural children based on structured and open ended interview schedule. Data collected from the rural school going children were pooled, tabulated, statistically analysed and discussed.

### Results and Discussion

Table 1. Exhibits about involvement of rural school going children in watching TV during their leisure. Higher percentage of rural girls (68.42%) observed to be watching cartoon serials telecasted on TV for recreation purpose like *Chhota Bheem*, *Motu Patlu*, *Bablu Dablu*, *Teletubbies* etc. followed by watching comedy programmes (53.94%) viz Funny videos, *Dramebaaz* episodes, *Comedy circus ka jadoo*, *Zee comedy show*, family oriented serials (50.00%) specially *Tuz Maz Jamena*, *Pasand Ahe Mulgi*, *Nakticya Lagnala Yaych Ha*, *Pavitra Rista*, *Yyoti*, *Kundali Bhagya* etc channels like Colors, Zee Marathi, Zee TV, big Magic, Sony, Star Plus etc. However in case of rural boys, it was observed that generally they used to watch Comedy videos, Hindi and Marathi movie songs, Hindi Movies, Cartoon serials, etc.

The statistical results indicate that significantly a higher percentage of rural school going girls often found to be watching family serials than their counterparts boys. Whereas the results were vice-versa with respect to watching movie songs. On the whole it can be inferred from the above results that irrespective of gender a higher percentage of rural school going children used to watch cartoon serials and movie songs more (62-62%) as compared to the other programmes telecasted on TV Further a higher percentage of the rural girls were recorded to be watching family oriented serials more than their counter part boys and were observed to be watching news, movies and sports events. These results are similar with Raut and Bangale (2011), Swami and Bangale (2021) [9, 14].

Table 2. Illustrates about various on-screen leisure time activities performed by the rural school going children by utilizing cell phones/smart phones. About 96.00 percent rural school going girls expressed that they get engaged in doing voice calls to their friends, and family members, followed by taking photographs of them along with selfie (77.63%), video

calling (51.31%), listening to their favorite songs (48.68%), watching cartoons like Tom and Jerry show, Chota Bheem, Motu Patlu, Titoo, Bablu Dablu and Chimpoo Simpo (40.78%), playing video games viz super mario, Helicopter game, Contra game, Running Barbie game, Car Parking games, Snapchate games (40.74%), Video shooting (34.21%) watching you-tube videos specially on Tom and Jerry, Funny videos and even watching their favorite TV serials (19.73) and Movies (15.78%) which generally they miss due to the electricity load shading. However it was found that these rural girls used to be involved rarely in above enlisted activities.

On the other hand all the sample boys were observed to be engaged in doing voice calls specially to their friends during their leisure followed by clicking photographs of their family members or friends (93.24%), video calling (66.61%), playing video games like Super Mario, Contra, Olympic games, Firing games (60%), watching Cartoon shows (62.16%) listening to their favorite songs (53.94%), watching youtube video (48.64%) and video shooting (44.59%). As excessive usage of cell-phones/ smart-phones is proved to be hazardous for children, this findings warns to parents that they need to control their off-springs from it towards other constructive activities like reading, outdoor games, etc. It is evident from the statistical results that as compared to the rural girls, significantly a higher percentage of boys found to be utilizing their cell-phones/ smart-phones for watching cartoons, playing video games and watching video on you-tube. These results are similar with Bansal & Mahajan (2017) [15].

Rural school going children's opinions about the advantages received to them from involvement of various on-screen leisure time activities are depicted in the Table 3. Irrespective of gender, all the rural school going children expressed that they experienced sense of joy, improved communication skills (79.33%), enhanced general knowledge (68.66%) raised status in friends circle (83.33%), learnt etiquettes and manners and also developed socio- emotional skills (66.66% each) due to their involvement in various screen based leisure time activities. Similar results were recorded by Barnett and Weber (2008) [2].

Drawbacks reported by rural school going children in carrying out on-screen leisure time activities are illustrated in table 4. Irrespective of gender about 86.66 percent of them stated that their parents had denied them from getting involved in some on-screen leisure time activities for a longer time like viewing TV programmes, playing video games on mobile etc. Excessive usage of cell-phones/ smart-phones is proved to be hazardous for children. They reduced interest in studies (86%) and household chores (46%). Statistical results, indicated that as compared to the rural boy's parents, significantly a higher (46%) percentage of rural girl's parents denied them for getting involved in some on-screen leisure time activities. On the other hand it was recorded that some rural school going children's parents do not have the smart phones and T.V. so in such cases they were found to be utilizing their friends TV and cellphones for recreation purpose. Rural school going children also having the electricity problems. These results are similar with Rajaram *et al.* (2015), Bansal & Mahajan (2017) [8].

**Table 1:** Involvement of rural school going children in watching TV as leisure time activities

| TV Programmes         | Total no. of girls involved in activities (a) | Girls(n=76)   |               |                | Total no. of boys involved in activities (e) | Boys (n=74)   |               |               | Total no. of children involved in watching TV programmes | Percentages of rural school going children irrespective of gender (n=150) |               |               | Z values           |                    |                    |                    |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|---------------|----------------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|---|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                       |   | Often(b)      | Sometimes(c)  | Rarely(d)      |  | Often (f)     | Sometimes (g) | Rarely (h)    |  | Often   | Sometimes     | Rarely        | a Vs e             | b Vs f             | C Vs g             | d Vs h             |
| a. Serials<br>Cartoon | 68.42<br>(52)                                 | 19.23<br>(10) | 57.69<br>(30) | 23.07<br>(12)  | 75.67<br>(56)                                | 39.28<br>(22) | 44.64<br>(25) | 16.07<br>(09) | 7200<br>(108)  | 29.62<br>(32)   | 50.92<br>(55) | 19.44<br>(21) | 0.61 <sup>NS</sup> | 2.59*              | 1.56 <sup>NS</sup> | 2.21*              |
| Comedy                | 53.94<br>(41)                                 | 17.07<br>(07) | 51.21<br>(21) | 31.70<br>(13)  | 74.32<br>(55)                                | 41.81<br>(23) | 38.18<br>(21) | 20.00<br>(11) | 64.00<br>(96)  | 31.25<br>(30)   | 43.75<br>(42) | 25.00<br>(24) | 1.93 <sup>NS</sup> | 4.79**             | 1.78 <sup>NS</sup> | 2.76**             |
| Family                | 50.00<br>(38)                                 | 13.15<br>(05) | 39.47<br>(15) | 47.36<br>(18)  | 25.67<br>(19)                                | --            | 57.89<br>(11) | 42.10<br>(08) | 38.00<br>(57)  | 08.77<br>(05)   | 45.61<br>(26) | 45.61<br>(26) | 3.80**             | 0.32 <sup>NS</sup> | 2.29 <sup>NS</sup> | 0.72 <sup>NS</sup> |
| b. Songs              | 34.21<br>(26)                                 | 65.38<br>(17) | 34.31<br>(09) | --             | 90.54<br>(67)                                | 37.31<br>(25) | 38.80<br>(26) | 23.88<br>(16) | 62.00<br>(93)  | 45.16<br>(42)   | 37.63<br>(35) | 17.20<br>(16) | 5.04**             | 3.26**             | 0.76 <sup>NS</sup> | --                 |
| c. Movies             | 04.75<br>(19)                                 | --            | 52.63<br>(10) | 47.36<br>(09)  | 28.37<br>(21)                                | 01.49<br>(01) | 38.09<br>(08) | 57.14<br>(12) | 26.66<br>(40)  | 02.5<br>(01)  | 45.00<br>(18) | 52.5<br>(21)  | 7.21 <sup>NS</sup> | --                 | 1.96 <sup>NS</sup> | 1.15 <sup>NS</sup> |
| d. News               | 15.78<br>(12)                                 | --            | 16.66<br>(02) | 83.33<br>(10)  | 21.62<br>(16)                                | 12.05<br>(02) | 37.05<br>(06) | 50.00<br>(08) | 18.66<br>(28)  | 07.14<br>(02)   | 28.57<br>(08) | 64.28<br>(18) | 1.9 <sup>NS</sup>  | --                 | 4.39**             | 3.00**             |
| e. Sports events      | 05.26<br>(04)                                 | --            | --            | 100.00<br>(04) | 35.13<br>(26)                                | --            | 34.61<br>(09) | 65.38<br>(17) | 20.00<br>(30)  | --  | 30.00<br>(09) | 70.00<br>(21) | 8.12 <sup>NS</sup> | --                 | --                 | 2.53*              |

Figures in parenthesis indicate frequencies  
 \* $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  level NS-Non-Significant

**Table 2:** Various leisure time activities performed by the rural school going children by utilizing cell phones/smart phone

| Leisure time activities performed on Cell phone/smart phone | Total no. of girls involved in recreational activities by utilizing cell phone/smart phone (a) | Percentages of girls (n=76) |               |                | Total no. of boys involved in recreational activities by utilizing cell phone/smart phone (e) | Percentages of boys (n=74) |               |               | Total no. of children performed recreational activities by utilizing cell phones smart phone | Percentages of rural school going children irrespective of gender (n=150) |               |               | Z values           |        |                    |                    |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--|---|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   |  | Often (b)                   | Sometimes (c) | Rarely (d)     |   | Often (f)                  | Sometimes (g) | Rarely (h)    |  | Often   | Sometimes     | Rarely        | a Vs e             | b Vs f | c Vs g             | d Vs h             |
| Voice calls   | 96.05<br>(73)  | --                          | 19.17<br>(14) | 80.82<br>(59)  | 100.00<br>(74)  | 52.70<br>(39)              | 45.94<br>(34) | 01.35<br>(01) | 98.00<br>(147)   | 26.53<br>(39)   | 32.65<br>(48) | 40.81<br>(60) | 0.24 <sup>NS</sup> | --     | 4.69**             | 8.62**             |
| Photography   | 77.63<br>(59)  | --                          | 27.11<br>(16) | 58.90<br>(43)  | 93.24<br>(69)   | 10.14<br>(07)              | 27.53<br>(19) | 62.31<br>(43) | 85.33<br>(128)   | 05.46<br>(07)   | 27.34<br>(35) | 67.18<br>(86) | 1.11 <sup>NS</sup> | --     | 0.09 <sup>NS</sup> | 0.34 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Video calls   | 51.31<br>(39)  | --                          | 5.12<br>(02)  | 94.87<br>(37)  | 66.61<br>(49)   | --                         | 20.40<br>(10) | 79.59<br>(39) | 58.66<br>(88)  | --  | 13.63<br>(12) | 86.36<br>(76) | 1.58 <sup>NS</sup> | --     | 6.44**             | 1.07 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Listening to songs  | 48.68<br>(37)  | --                          | 27.02<br>(10) | 72.97<br>(27)  | 53.94<br>(41)   | 29.26<br>(12)              | 46.34<br>(19) | 24.39<br>(10) | 52.00<br>(78)  | 15.38<br>(12)   | 37.17<br>(29) | 47.43<br>(37) | 0.63 <sup>NS</sup> | --     | 3.14**             | 5.54**             |
| Watching cartoon  | 40.78<br>(31)  | --                          | 22.58<br>(07) | 77.41<br>(24)  | 62.16<br>(46)   | 08.69<br>(04)              | 30.43<br>(14) | 60.86<br>(28) | 51.33<br>(77)  | 05.19<br>(04)   | 27.27<br>(21) | 67.53<br>(52) | 2.54*              | --     | 1.82 <sup>NS</sup> | 1.46 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Video games   | 40.74<br>(31)  | --                          | 35.48<br>(11) | 64.51<br>(20)  | 60.81<br>(45)   | 08.88<br>(04)              | 15.55<br>(07) | 75.55<br>(34) | 44.00<br>(66)  | 06.06<br>(04)   | 12.12<br>(08) | 81.81<br>(54) | 2.39*              | --     | 4.55**             | 0.96 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Video shooting  | 34.21<br>(26)  | --                          | --            | 100.00<br>(26) | 44.59<br>(33)   | --                         | 33.33<br>(11) | 66.66<br>(22) | 39.33<br>(59)  | --  | 18.64<br>(11) | 81.35<br>(48) | 1.61 <sup>NS</sup> | --     | --                 | 5.67**             |
| Watching you tube videos                                    | 32.89<br>(25)  | --                          | 24.00<br>(06) | 76.00<br>(19)  | 48.64<br>(36)   | 06.75<br>(05)              | 30.55<br>(11) | 55.55<br>(20) | 40.66<br>(61)  | 08.19<br>(05)   | 27.86<br>(17) | 63.93<br>(39) | 2.34*              | --     | 4.26**             | 5.46**             |
| Watching TV serials   | 19.73<br>(15)  | --                          | 20.00<br>(03) | 80.00<br>(12)  | --  | --                         | --            | --            | 10.00<br>(15)  | --  | 02.00<br>(03) | 08.00<br>(12) | --                 | --     | 8.06**             | --                 |
| Watching movies   | 15.78<br>(12)  | --                          | --            | 100.00<br>(12) | 25.67<br>(19)   | --                         | 31.57<br>(06) | 68.42<br>(13) | 20.66<br>(31)  | --  | 19.35<br>(06) | 80.64<br>(25) | 2.90*              | --     | --                 | 7.20**             |

Figures in parenthesis indicate frequencies  
 \* $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  level NS-Non-Significant

**Table 3:** Rural school going children’s opinions about the advantages received to them from involvement in on- screen leisure time activities

| Advantages of screen based leisure time activities | Percentages of rural school going children based on gender |             | Percentages of rural school going children irrespective of children (n=150) | Z values           |
|--|--|-------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Girls (n=76)   | Boys (n=74) |   |                    |
| Experienced sense of joy                           | 100.00 (76)  | 100.00 (74) | 100.00 (150)  | --                 |
| Raised status in friend circle                     | 76.31 (58)   | 90.54 (67)  | 83.33 (125)   | 1.04 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Improve communication skills                       | 71.05 (54)   | 87.83 (65)  | 79.33 (119)   | 1.29 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Enhance general knowledge                          | 64.47 (49)   | 72.97 (54)  | 68.66 (103)   | 0.76 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Learnt etiquettes and manners                      | 53.94 (41)   | 79.72 (59)  | 66.66 (100)   | 2.33*              |
| Developed socio-emotional skills                   | 53.94 (41)   | 78.37 (58)  | 66.00 (99)  | 2.23*              |

Figures in parenthesis indicate frequencies

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $P < 0.01$  level NS-Non-Significant.

**Table 4:** Drawbacks reported by rural school going children about the on-screen leisure time activities performed by them

| Drawbacks of screen based leisure time activities | Percentages of rural school going children based on gender |             | Percentages of rural school going children irrespective of gender (n=150) | Z value            |
|---|--|-------------|---|--------------------|
|   | Girls (n=76)   | Boys (n=74) |   |                    |
| Parental aggression                               | 93.42 (71)   | 79.72 (59)  | 86.66 (130)   | 0.97 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Reduced interest in studies                       | 77.63 (59)   | 95.94 (71)  | 86.66 (130)   | 1.29 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Caused eye strains due to excessive screen time   | 40.78 (31)   | 83.78 (62)  | 62.00 (93)  | 4.00*              |
| Reduced interest in household chores              | 34.21 (26)   | 59.45 (44)  | 46.66 (70)  | 3.20**             |

Figures in parenthesis indicate frequencies

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  level NS-Non-Significant

**Conclusion**

Higher percentage of rural girls (68.42%) observed to be watching cartoon serials telecasted on TV for recreation purpose like *Chhota Bheem, Motu Patlu, Bablu Dablu, Teletubbies* etc. followed by watching comedy programmes (53.94%) viz Funny videos, Dramebaaz episodes, *Comedy circus ka jadoo, Zee comedy show, family oriented serials* (50.00%) specially *Tuz Maz Jamena, Pasand Ahe Mulgi, Nakticya Lagnala Yaych Ha, Pavitra Rista, Yyoti, Kundali Bhagya* etc channels like Colors, Zee Marathi, Zee TV, big Magic, Sony, Star Plus etc. However in case of rural boys, it was observed that generally they used to watch Comedy videos, Hindi and Marathi movie songs, Hindi Movies, Cartoon serials etc. About 96.00 percent rural school going girls expressed that they get engaged in leisure time activities by using smart phones like doing voice calls to their friends and family members, followed by taking photographs of them along with selfie (77.63%), video calling (51.31%), watching cartoons etc. Children expressed that they experienced sense of joy, improved communication skills (79.33%), enhanced general knowledge (68.66%) raised status in friends circle (83.33%), learnt etiquettes and manners and also developed socio- emotional skills (66.66% each). However excessive usage of cell-phones/ smart phones is proved to be hazardous for children.

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