

## Mapping Leisure and Life through the Ages in Iran

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**Abstract:** *The leisure is a new phenomenon has emerged of the industrial revolution and socio-economic developments of the current world. How the people of a society spend their leisure times could in a large extent show the cultural characteristics and lifestyle of the community. The most important aspects of the lifestyle which emerged of urban development and modernity, is the mode of spending the leisure time. The leisure time is the product of growing urbanization and mechanization. In ancient Iran the leisure time was only for the wealthy and elite class. But gradually, it was generalized to lower and middle classes. The leisure time especially in lower and middle classes of society was spent in the home and with family. It was largely informal and to be passed to companion and dialog with relatives, friends and neighbors. But gradually, as the official definition of working time, particularly for medium to high social classes who were employed in the administrative system, working time apart from leisure time. So the leisure time has been valued and even officially protected by law in the form of paid and official leave. Separation of work and leisure time, the increasing use of vehicles that have provided the possibility of population mobility and mass media like press, radio, cinema and television in particular have caused to more importance of the leisure time. The Iranian society in transition from agriculture to the modern era, gradually are familiar with the leisure phenomenon and its features. In this paper studied situation leisure time in Iran. Since the regular statistical survey has not been conducted about the issue in Iran, the longitudinal study and comprehensive plans of different ages even different age groups, is not possible. In this article tried to demonstrate how different age groups spend the leisure time in Iran, based on available statistical data which mostly limited to the specific surveys have been conducted on a national scale in the past two decades. The age has significant effect on the level of individual participation in the leisure activities, but this effect varies depending on the individual characteristics and the type of activity. The Survey of youth attitudes and values shows that there is a significant different between the average of leisure time during the week for different age groups of young people. The young people spend their leisure, can change over the time. Some studies have shown that young people spend less time with their family although this case for girls is different. However in this field there is the significant difference between different age groups. The results of survey of measuring Iranian values and attitudes (2003) shows that the main activities in the leisure time are respectively the study, the use of media (audio, video and electronics) and the rest. The survey data also show a significant difference between the activities in different age groups. So that in the age group of 15 to 29 years the use of the media has the highest portion and the religious Affairs has the lowest portion. While in the age group of 30 to 49 years the study has the highest portion and the exercise has the lowest portion and for the age group of 50 years and older, the portion increased from the exercise to the resting. Iranian society is a young society and the leisure time is one of the major facing problems in this society. The young people experience more travel in comparison with the other age groups. Moreover, the results of researches which conducted at provincial scale show the significant difference between the travel destinations of young people and the older demographic groups. It seems that the modes of spending the leisure time will change in different generations. The change in the styles of spending the leisure time hasn't been happened only in Iran's urban population. But also this change is seen in the rural community which now covers 40 percent of the population. The survey done on the rural community shows that changing in the social and economic base of the respondents leads to changing in the favorite leisure activities. So by the promotion of this base, the tendency to pilgrimage and excursions trips will increase. However Iranian society is a young society and the leisure time is one of the major facing problems in this society. We need to production more data within longitudinal systematic surveys .That can help that researchers presented more accurate and comprehensive analysis of situation leisure time in Iran.*

**Keywords:** *Social developments, Leisure Time, age groups.*

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## Introduction

Historical evidence shows that nowadays human beings don't spend all of their time and effort trying to improve subsistence but the new achievements in the material and technical fields led to enhancement of their welfare. As a result, the time will remain after economic activity is known as a leisure time. In Persian the word "recreation" is more common and it means the fun and refreshing time. Leisure is one of those phenomena is noteworthy for many experts, especially sociologists and social scientists. The sociologists think that the "leisure" is a new reality has emerged of the industrial revolution and socio-economic development of the current world. "In characterizing leisure as a cradle of meaning and as a significant realm of social engagement and participation, it is important to view it as more than simply activity or time left over from other obligations. Early analysts often spoke of leisure as a residual category: the converse of work, a period of recuperation, or time to be filled after work was done. No doubt such a perspective is valid, in part, but leisure is also an independent domain subject to many of the same forces that shape the rest of the life course.

If changes in the way work is performed come to pass and patterns of lifelong employment built on explicit career ladders become less prevalent, then the delineation of socially defined passages previously provided by work will also diminish. If so, alternative sources of meaning may emerge, based on what they can contribute to normative definitions of age, structuring of the life course, and personal identity (Han and Moen, 1999). Dumazedier (1967) asserts that Leisure is activity apart from the obligations of work, family and society, to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free expression of his creative capacity." (Dumazedier, 1967:16-17). He referring to the correlation and coherence of three functions of leisure, has defined it such that: "The total activities that a person deals with desire and willingness after release from the occupational, family and social obligations and tasks. The aim of this leisure is the rest, recreation, develop the knowledge, perfection of the personality, enhancement of creativity and finally expansion of freely participation in the community. Clocke denotes three principal axes along which definitions of leisure have been developed: time, activities and attitude of mind (Clocke, 2000: 443). In result leisure times have multi-functional in levels individual and societal and more important" leisure is a developmental opportunity and an imperative. Larson argues that adolescence, including leisure time during this period, should be defined and understood as a time of preparation for family life, employment, good citizenship, lifelong learning and personal fulfillment. It also provides an opportunity for the development of communities and societies (World Youth Report, 2003:222). How the people of a community spend their leisure time could in a large extent show the cultural characteristics and lifestyle of the community.

The most important examples of the lifestyle which emerged of urban development and modernity, is the style of spending the leisure time. The leisure time is the product of growing urbanization and mechanization. From one perspective, the leisure time is the product of industrial society whereas the urbanization and industrialization growth have caused to the significant changes in the job activities such as less working hours and more leisure time. Before the industrial revolution, the leisure time was not separable from opening hours. In this period, people worked permanently until the nature allows them. After the industrial revolution, which the work time was defined and work was separated from the family, consequently the leisure time was separated from the opening hours and the new leisure activities such as a variety of recreation and games to be developed." Thus work became a part of life, and leisure, while not the whole of non-work time, was located within it, and in modern societies it is during this leisure time, their own time, that people enjoy relative freedom to determine their own activities, and to do things for the pure enjoyment (Roberts, 2010). The important role that young people play in sustaining their families, communities and countries suggests that their discretionary time may represent a potentially powerful force for renewal, contribution and change. Around the world, young people are proving that leisure represents a prime opportunity not only for individual development, but also for contribution and change. Rates of voluntary participation in community building and community development have increased dramatically among youth in many regions. Young people have demonstrated the desire and capacity to use their own time to make an impact on their communities and societies (World Youth Report, 2003:224).

Moreover, the formation of cultural industries like cinema and television was followed by the technology enhancement. The new features of this developed leisure are:

1. Generalization of the leisure to all social classes. In the past time, only the privileged classes had access to some aspects of leisure. However, nowadays the time and opportunity to benefit from it is generalized and extended to all social classes.
2. Reduction of the physical mobility .While in the past time, the leisure activities are often associated with physical activity, nowadays the watching have increased.

3. Domination of the media in leisure activities. Nowadays, using television, radio and other mass media are the main leisure activities.
4. Go beyond the leisure activities from the family institution. In the past, the leisure time was spent in the home and with family, but nowadays a significant portion of leisure activities are experiencing outside the family. So that multiple agencies are responsible for operating the leisure time.

### **Social Developments and Changes in the Leisure Time**

In ancient Iran the leisure time was only for the wealthy and elite class. But gradually, it was generalized to lower and middle classes. Nowadays the horse riding, polo, hunting and shooting, which were the important entertainment especially in the superior classes of Iranian society, have degenerated to the numerous. And also animal games such as pigeons and to throw the rooster, ram, bull and ... has been abandoned (Behnam & Rasekh, 1969:352). After the advent of Islam, the sport and recreation in accordance with religious orders and advices was encouraged. The scientific, technical, artistic and literary advances of Muslims have been emerged of the correct and appropriate use of their leisure time, as well as the religious teachings have emphasized on division of time into the three-portion for work, worship and recreation. The Prophet of Islam has said: To have fun, because I do not like the violence in your religion. In the past, the leisure time especially in lower and middle classes of society was spent in the home and with family. It was largely informal and to be passed to companion and dialog with relatives, friends and neighbors. But gradually, as the official definition of working time particularly for medium to high social classes who were employed in the administrative system, working time apart from leisure time. So the leisure time has been valued and even officially protected by law in the form of paid and official leave. Separation of work and leisure time, the increasing use of vehicles that have provided the possibility of population mobility and mass media like press, radio, cinema and television in particular have caused to more importance of the leisure time.

The Iranian society in transition from agriculture to the modern era, gradually are familiar with the leisure phenomenon and its features. As well as the statistics every year show the more cost on the leisure activities in the family budget. In Iranian society before the industrial and administrative development, time with quality feature had been attached to the social customs. The customs was so widespread that sometimes even seven days and nights were spent on a wedding or mourning. The leisure time often has been spent in republican style and the social purposes have been more important than individual purposes. Dialogue as the most common form of spending the leisure time, have been flowed not only at homes but also in mosques, coffee houses, streets and many other places. So, the "see and visit" was one of the most stable traditions and habits of Iranians in the past which is still prevalent. One of the most important parameters of the particular interest of Iranians to the new audio-visual equipment such as radio and TV is the possibility of talk with others even in times of loneliness (Behnam & Rasekh, 1969:327-328).

Many of researchers speak of individualism and totalitarianism in Iran and said that the propagation of the popular sports such as wrestling and weightlifting instead of the game such as football, volleyball and basketball, is the clear indication of it. Perhaps the superiority of the sports which do not require the ability of team works, is the evidence of Iranian society emphasis on the individual power. But being unaware of the group games, especially in the rural mass is not through, although the existence of feudalism has caused to less cooperatives in rural communities (Behnam & Rasekh, 1969:354-356).

Beside the days and weeks during the year in which people effort for ways and mean, there are days of celebration in which people away from rules and restrictions, experience the passing of time. In Iran the celebration can be divided into several categories, which include:

1. Ancient, myths and seasonal celebrations and rituals
2. Religious celebrations and rituals
3. National, patriotic and governmental celebrations and rituals
4. Family celebrations and rituals
5. Regional celebrations and rituals (It is placed in category 1, 2 and 3) (Rouholamini, 1997: 15). Until when that Travel very not extended in Iran, Norooz visitation was a duty in cities and communities in due to their familiar and face to face relationships. Urban development, increase population, fragmentation of traditional families, restrictions on employment and the apartment culture are factors that reduced Norooz visitation. Also Iranians are very interested in nature, so the large mass of each social class infested to in the mountains, plains and gardens in the holidays." Living in apartments is the main reason of the increased desire to departure from home and spend the leisure time in green

space (Abdi and Goodarzi, 1999:39)". In recent years, the creation of green space is one of the most important issues in urban planning and it is predictable that the use of green space will grow rapidly.

### Age Groups and Spending the Leisure Time

Since the regular statistical survey has not been conducted about the issue in Iran, the longitudinal study and comprehensive plans of different ages even different age groups, is not possible. In this article tried to demonstrate how different age groups spend the leisure time in Iran, based on available statistical data which mostly limited to the specific surveys have been conducted on a national scale in the past two decades. All people do not enjoy the leisure time in same level and there are lots of styles for spending the leisure time which is emerged of lots of limitations and opportunities. Findings of the RCIRIB<sup>1</sup> (1986) with a sample size of 1601 persons older than 15 years, shows the watching television is the most common way of spending the leisure time. So that 79 percent of people are watching television and the other leisure activities are sitting together with family, relaxing, listening to the radio and visit. The age has significant effect on the level of individual participation in the leisure activities, but this effect varies depending on the individual characteristics and the type of activity. Having the opportunity to participate in the recreation activities is one of the most important parameters, so some people have enough time to participate in these activities. The Survey of youth attitudes and values shows that there is a significant different between the average of leisure time during the week for different age groups of young people.

**Table (1): Average of leisure time during the week for different age groups of young people**

Age	Average	Sig.
15 to 19	28.64	0.000
20 to 24	30.46	
25 to 29	27.30	

*Source: Survey of youth attitudes and values (2005)*

One of the most important issues in leisure discussion is situation entourages in spend leisure time. Whom the young people spend their leisure, can change over the time. Some studies have shown that young people spend less time with their family over the time while the elapsed time with the family for some people (for example girls) remained stable and even has been increased. Although family is still the main source of different leisure attitudes of its young members. Despite the growth of commercial leisure and competition of effective factors on a person's leisure attitude, there are still many forms of recreation which family enjoys it with all of its members. Although, spending leisure time with family is more common among women. Responding to responses, most people (apart from belonging to a particular age group) spend their leisure time with family and this has been further emphasized by the higher age groups (68 percent vs. 55 percent). Against, this group less than the lower age groups spend their leisure time with friends (14percent vs. 27percent).The Chi-square statistic has shown in this field significant difference between different age groups.

**Table (2): Distribution of respondents according to entourage of spending the leisure time in different age groups**

Age \ Entourage	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Family	54.8	56.3	68.2
Relatives	8	5.7	6.9
Friends	27.9	25.8	14.3
Et	0.5	1.2	1.4
Alone	8.9	11	9.4
Total	100	100	100
Chi-square: 312.403		Sig: 0.000	
V- Kramer: 0.101		Sig: 0.000	

*Source: Survey of youth attitudes and values (2005)*

The leisure activities include a wide range of characteristics, passive activities, non-passive activities and both of them. According to the survey (1996), "Evaluation of the Social and Cultural Attitudes and Behaviors in Iran", the

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activities related to leisure, have been shown in the following table. The categories of very high and high and also the categories of never and rarely were gathered together. Finally, the ratio of high to never has been calculated for each of these activities.

**Table (3): Leisure activities according to the ratio of high to never**

Activity	ratio of high to never
Watching TV	22.4
Associating with family and relatives	6.1
Resting at home	5.3
Study	1
Go to the mosque	0.65
Walking	0.63
listening to the radio	0.63
Go to the park	0.41
Exercise	0.29
Do crafts	0.16
Go to museums and exhibitions	0.05
Go to the cinema	0.04
participating in forums and groups	0.03
Go to cafes and coffee houses	0.01

Source: Mohseni, M (1996)

In the following table the relationship between the age groups and leisure activities is shown. There is a significant difference between the leisure activities in different age groups.

**Table (4): Age groups and leisure activities**

Age groups	Participating in forums	Go to cinema	Go to museums	Do crafts	Exercise	Go to park	Listen to radio	Walking	Go to mosque	Study	Resting	socializing	Watching TV
16 to 24	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.21	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.3	3.9	4.2	6.9	37.1
25 to 34	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.21	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.4	2	4.4	11.9	47.5
35 to 44	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.18	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	1	5	5.5	41.8
45 to 54	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.13	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.6	4.9	5.7	21.7
Older than 54	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.11	0.1	0.3	0.9	0.8	1.5	0.4	9.4	3.9	8
$\chi^2$	30	328	136	74.9	337.8	101.7	60.1	27.6	218	379	67.4	34.7	68.4
Sig	0.002	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Mohseni, M (1996)

The results of survey of measuring Iranian values and attitudes (2003) shows that the main activities in the leisure time are respectively the study, the use of media (audio, video and electronics) and the rest. The following table shows the distribution of different activities in the leisure time.

**Table (5): Distribution of absolute and relative plenty of different activities in the leisure time**

Activity	Plenty	Percent
Study	946	21.75
Resting	738	17
Exercise	249	5.7
Use of media	845	19.45
Recreation	390	9
Personal activities	411	9.4
Art works	251	5.8
Religious affairs	180	1.4
Associating with family and relatives	277	6.4
Other	63	1.4
Total	4350	100

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

The following table shows with whom the respondents spend their leisure time and the main response is related to the family.

**Table (6): Style of spending the leisure time**

Style of spending the leisure time	Plenty	Percent
With family	3091	68.3
With relatives	333	7.4
With friends	739	16.3
With colleagues	43	0.9
With neighbors	90	2
Solitary	191	4.2
Other	41	0.9
Total	4528	100

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

The survey data also show a significant difference between the activities in different age groups. So that in the age group of 15 to 29 years the use of the media has the highest portion and the religious Affairs has the lowest portion. While in the age group of 30 to 49 years the study has the highest portion and the exercise has the lowest portion and for the age group of 50 years and older, the portion increased from the exercise to the resting.

**Table (7): Percentage distribution between leisure activities and age groups**

Activity	Age		
	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 years and older
Study	22.7	21.2	19.5
Resting	15.7	17.5	20
Resting	8.7	3.1	1.2
Use of the media	23.5	16.1	13
Recreation	11	7.2	6
Personal activities	5.7	12.5	15.4
Art works	6.6	6	1.9
Religious affairs	1.4	5	12.3
Socializing with family and relatives	3.7	9.5	8.1
Other	1	1.7	2.4
$\chi^2 = 713.340$ Valid Response = 4352	Sig = 0.000		

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

Moreover, with whom the respondents spend their leisure time is different according to the age groups. The differences in such factors as spending the leisure time with family members, friends and solidarity in the age group of 15 to 29 years in comparison with other age groups are more obvious.

**Table (8): Distribution of relative Mode spending the leisure time with different age groups**

Mode spending the leisure time	Age		
	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 years and older
With relatives	6.7	8.5	6.5
With friends	27	5.4	6
With colleagues	1.1	0.7	1
With neighbors	1.5	2.5	2.3
Solitary	5.2	3.4	3.1
Other	0.8	0.6	2
$\chi^2 = 474/423$ Valid Response = 4528	Sig= 0.000		

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

Travel during the leisure time reflects the mobility experience in personal scale and the spatial mobility of population in community scale. Following table shows that in response of the question which was about the number

of travel for fun and recreation during the past year, percent33.2 of respondents have not have any travel for fun and recreation.

**Table (9): Distribution of absolute and relative plenty of number of travel**

Activity	Plenty	Percent
None	1519	33.2
One	1190	26
Two	881	19.2
Three	462	10.1
Four	186	4.05
Five	125	2.73
Six	47	1.03
Seven	25	0.55
Eight	28	0.6
Nine	5	0.1
ten & more	113	2.47
Total	4581	100

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

Also, in the table is shown the number of travel experience in a year according to the different age groups. The statistics of table show the significant difference between the numbers of trips in different age groups. However, one travel experience in three age groups has the highest percentage, but two and more travel experience for the age group 15 to 29 years is more than the other two age groups. It shows that the young people experience more travel in comparison with the other age groups.

**Table (10): Distribution of relative plenty of the travel numbers between different age groups**

Age \ Travel	15 to 29 years	30 to 49 years	50 years and more
One	34	44.6	43.4
Two	30.6	25.7	30
Three	15.9	14.7	12.3
Four	6.4	5.7	5.9
Five	5	3	1.3
Six	1.6	1.3	5
Seven	1.1	0.7	0.6
Eight	1.1	0.7	0.6
Nine	0.2	-	0.3
ten & more	4.1	3.7	2

$\chi^2 = 0.086$

Valid Response = 3062

Sig= 0.000

Source: Office of National Plans (2003)

Moreover, the results of researches which conducted at provincial scale show the significant difference between the travel destinations of young people and the older demographic groups.

Table 11 illustrates the relative distribution of relation between the travel destinations and the age groups.

**Table (11): Relative distribution of relation between the travel destinations and the age groups**

Countries \ Age groups	15 to 29 years	30 to 54 years	55 years and older	Total
Islamic countries	40.7	15.3	13.6	47.4
Europe	12.9	8.7	5.9	27.5
Turkey and the Persian Gulf	4.2	1.9	1.5	7.6
United States and Canada	7.5	3.1	2.1	12.8
Other	2.4	0.9	1.6	4.8
Total	45.4	29.9	24.7	100

Chi-square: 41.246

V- Kramer: 0.11

Sig : 0.000

Source: Azad Armaky and Ghaffary (2005)

It is noted that there are the significant differences in the ratios of interest among the different generations. Table 12 shows the relative distribution of relation between the favorite Cities and the age groups and the significant relation in confidence level of 99percent.

**Table (12): Relative distribution of relation between the favorite Cities and the age groups**

Cities \ Age groups	15 to 29 years	30 to 54 years	55 years and older	Total
Religious	37.6	47.5	65.8	47.5
Historical	26.1	24.1	20.4	24.1
Recreational	36.3	28.4	13.8	28.4
Total	100	100	100	100

Chi-square: 62.8 V- Kramer: 0.17 Sig: 0.000

Source: Azad Armaky and Ghaffary (2005)

The following table shows the crossover relative distribution between the generations and the spending the weekends. The value and the confidence level of the Chi- Square static illustrate the existence of the significant difference between the various generations. The age group of 15 to 29 years, more than the other groups spends its weekend to read books, exercise and watching it, excursion & trip, watching movies and listening to music. While stay at home, participating in religious ceremonies and visit relatives are the main weekend activities in the old generation.

**Table (13): Relative distribution of relation between the generations and spending the weekends**

spending the weekends \ Age groups	15 to 29 years	30 to 54 years	55 years and older	Total
Reading books	10.5	7.4	6.8	8.7
Exercise and watch it	13.6	8.5	8.3	10.7
To participate in religious ceremonies	7.2	8.3	16.2	9.7
Excursion & trip	28.1	26.7	24	26.6
Stay at home	16	22.5	27.3	20.7
Watching movies and listening to music	9.8	8.9	5.1	8.4
Visit	14.8	17.8	12.4	15.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Chi-square: 67.178

V- Kramer: 0.15

Sig: 0.000

Source: Azad Armaky and Ghaffary (2005)

While, table 14 shows the relative distribution of relation between the favorite books and the age groups, results of statistical test indicate the significant difference in the types of favorite books among three generation.

**Table (14): Relative distribution of relation between the favorite books and the age groups**

Books \ Age	15 to 29 years	30 to 54 years	55 years and older	Total
Islamic Sciences	8.7	8.1	۴/۷	21.6
Stories and novels	12.9	4.2	۱/۸	19.1
Historical and social	12.4	4.7	۱/۷	18.8
Literary and artistic	6.7	3.5	۴/۶	14.8
Educational and Psychological	5.3	4.3	۰/۷	10.2
Technical Books	10.9	3.2	۱/۴	15.5
Total	56.7	28.2	15	100

Chi-square: 73

V- Kramer: 0.22

Sig: 0.000

Source: Azad Armaky and Ghaffary (2005)

Moreover in the favorite topics of newspaper, there is significant difference between the various age groups. This difference is shown in the table below.

**Table (15): Relative distribution of relation between the favorite topics of newspaper and the age groups**

Subject \ Age	15 to 29 years	30 to 54 years	55 years and older	Total
Political	5.5	6.2	3.5	15.2
Social	4.2	4.1	1.9	10.3
Economic	4.5	3.4	0.8	8.8
Cultural	0.2	0.5	0.3	1
Foreign News	1.6	1	0.5	3.1
Table	17.2	8.4	3.1	38.7
Events	2.3	4.2	2.3	8.8
Sport News	18.6	4	1.8	24.3
Total	54	31.9	14.1	100

Chi-square: 125.1                      V- Kramer: 0.24                      Sig: 0.000

*Source: Azad Armaky and Ghaffary (2005)*

Finally it seems that the styles of spending the leisure time will change in different generations. The change in the styles of spending the leisure time hasn't been happened only in Iran's urban population. But also this change is seen in the rural community which now covers 40 percent of the population. Then, in the next part has been mentioned to the findings of the survey "cultural status in the villages of Iran.

### **Leisure in the Rural Community**

In response to the question "How the family like to spend their leisure time", these results obtained: Overall 49.4 percent of rural families noted to one case of their expected leisure activity, 35.7percent to two cases, 10.5percent to three cases, 1.6 percent to four cases and 0.2percent to five cases. As well 6.2 percent of families have not responded to this question. The following table indicates the favorite leisure activities for family members. As it has been shown the most favorite leisure activities for the rural families are, pilgrimage, tourism and meeting friends and acquaintances in the city and totally out of the village. After the trip, the most portion is allocates to the game, exercise, study, art works and going to the cinema and entertainment centers of the city. Also, 4.9 percent of the families doesn't have the money and time for the leisure activities. Whereas they are not interested in such matters or they are involved in supplying the basic needs of life and prefer to use their free time and money to provide these needs. The same was observed that the villages are mostly lacking in the necessary facilities for leisure. So the villagers prefer to use their money and free time for pilgrimage, tourism and recreational travels to towns and centers outside of the village. Pilgrimage to holy places such as Mashhad and then Mecca, Karbala and Syria, make up the most of their leisure aspirations (Iranians cultural behaviors, 211)

**Table 16: Favorite leisure activities for family members**

Activity	Number	Percent
Pilgrimage	8750	60.1
Recreational Travel	4819	33.1
Pilgrimage & Recreational Travel	2802	19.2
Visiting Travel	473	3.2
Games, Sports	1248	8.6
Welfare work	379	2.6
Study, research	1562	10.7
Work	95	0.7
Shopping	366	2.5
Rest	5	0
Art Works	6	0
Going to Town	14	0.1
Religious activities	15	0.1
Housework	238	1.6
Foreign travel	82	0.6
Mecca trip	1203	8.3
Travel to Syria	304	1.2
Travel to Karbala	921	6.3

*Source: Office of National Plans, 2002*

The survey was conducted in urban areas (28 provincial capital cities) with a sample size of 13,976 people shows

that the average leisure time is 4 hours and 36 minutes on a typical day of week and 6 hours and 12 minutes on holidays.

**Table (17): Relative distribution of relation between the mean of leisure time in urban population and the age groups**

Mean Age	Leisure Time	
	Holidays	Other Days
15 to 18 years	6.2	4.3
16 to 25 years	6	4.6
26 to 40 years	5.6	4.1
41 to 64 years	6	4.6
65 years and older	8.1	7.4

*Source: Office of National Plans, 2002*

In the following table the amount of leisure time of rural community in agricultural and non-agricultural seasons has been determined. The average of 5 hours and 25 minutes in the agricultural seasons and 8 hours and 29 minutes for the other seasons, have been announced.

**Table (18): Relative distribution of relation between the amount of leisure time in rural community and the age groups**

Amount of leisure time Age Groups	Agricultural Seasons			Other Seasons		
	0 to 4 hours	5 to 9 hours	More than 9 hours	0 to 4 hours	5 to 9 hours	More than 9 hours
15-18 years	39.9	50.4	9.7	20.1	48.6	31.3
19-25 years	45.8	42.5	11.7	25.7	48.9	25.4
26-40 years	52.8	41.5	5.7	29.9	50.1	20
41-64 years	53.9	38.6	7.5	28.4	50.5	21.1
65 years and older	2.36	39.5	24.3	15.3	49.2	35.5

*Source: Office of National Plans, 2002*

The survey done on the rural community shows that changing in the social and economic base of the respondents leads to changing in the favorite leisure activities. So by the promotion of this base, the tendency to pilgrimage will increase and to foreign trips and excursions will decrease (Office of National Plans, 2002:217). The informants of the 1821 Villages were asked about two of the most common style of spending the leisure time in different age groups. The results show that the main leisure activities are the chat and the sitting in the sun for seniors, the chat and coming together in the village square for adults and exercise and playing for youth (Office of National Plans, 2002:223). In response to the question which was about the main leisure activities and the main used media, these answers were obtained:

The 77.1 percent of rural families said that during the day, most of their leisure activity is watching TV at home and 12.4 percent of them have mentioned to chat with friends and vicinage. Also 4/8 percent of rural households have mentioned to playing sports and the 4.1 percent of them to listening to the radio as a main leisure activities. While the 1.7 percent is allocated to art works, 1.5 percent to listen to audio tapes, 1.5 percent to reading books, 0.7 percent to reading the Koran and prayer, 0.4 percent to participate in prayer, 0.4 percent to reading newspapers and magazines, 0.3 percent to going to town for walking the streets and markets, 0.2 percent to participate in religious ceremonies, 0.2 percent to welfare work, 0.2 percent to using the video, 0.1 percent to going to the movies and 0.1 percent to going to the park and amusement park. Certainly the lack of cultural facilities and activities is the main role to limit the leisure activities in rural villages. Although it is important that the TV is widespread media and it will be more palmate via satellite and computer networks in the future, particularly for the rural areas which cannot attract the expensive cultural facilities due to paucity of population.

## Conclusion

Nowadays, the leisure time is certainly more than any other time in the past whereas the official working hours in different countries is reduced. Therefore every individual has many hours after the working hours for using according to his desire and capability. It is obvious that the proper use of the leisure time will have a positive impact on person life and the society while, the incorrect use of it in both mentioned surface could cause to problems and irreparable damages. This particular case is more important about the young people whereas they make the future of society. The leisure time has functions such as rehabilitation of individuals, encourage creativity

and increase personal and social abilities of people. In fact, a society where people do not have adequate leisure time doesn't benefit of good quality and productivity at work and other activities. The lack of desired leisure time leads to the less creativity in society and increases the tension and stress in the society.

Iranian society is a young society and the leisure time is one of the major facing problems in this society. In Iran, the watching TV is the main activity which fills the leisure time. Although in all countries approximately is the same situation but there is a significant difference between the time which is spent watching TV in Iran with the other countries. The urban areas are not suitable to fill the leisure time of their citizens. Emptying the cities and the influx of people to areas outside the city on holidays reflect the lack of recreational opportunities in the city. In fact, the large city like Tehran is exclusively important for its citizens because of economic parameters. The pressure is so intense that people are willing to wait for hours in heavy traffic on roads between cities while spending two days in Tehran is not intolerable. These attitudes cause to limited recreational opportunities in the city and make it as an economic environment. The Lack of recreational and leisure opportunities in the country for various sectors of society including women, older people and adults is evident. Then, such an attitude leads to frustration reduction and vitality growth in the community.

The format and content of leisure time is largely a product of the amount of industrial work growth and also it depends on the other factors. The family's social status which depends on the father's occupational status largely specifies the domain of the travel outside of the relatives. It can be said that the style of spending the weekend exactly depends on the amount of family income. Moreover, the existence of the multiple recreational, scientific, artistic and educational centers has limited the role of families in style of spending the leisure time more and more. Also the communicational devices such as televisions at home influences on this limitation too. However, especially in the non-industrial societies, families still can play very important role on guidance of the youth to the correct style of spending the leisure time. The family according to its economic, social and cultural conditions of the family has ability to provide proper facilities for spending the leisure time. The parents are the best advisors for youth to improve the style of spending the leisure time because of their comprehensive recognition from the personality traits, talents, desires, strengths and weakness of their children. Finally, the studies show that the most important factor in the quality of the leisure time is the personal and family economic conditions.

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