

## **Extent of Dependency on Television Recreation and Growing Individualism in University going Students of Urban Dhaka**

**Mohammad Saifullah\***

### **Abstract**

*The leisure time of the people of urban Dhaka is decreasing day by day. This is happening due to rapid urbanization and globalization. This has created severe impact on the life style, social interaction pattern and community life of the populace. Growing individualism is the ultimate outcome of this phenomenon. This research paper has tried to figure out the extent of dependency on television recreation and growing individualism in university going students of urban Dhaka. It is our finding that the usual TV watching per week is within the satisfactory range from the individualistic operational classification. Although the rate of individualism is increasing in a discernable rate in Dhaka City, we have found that the sample university population is not greatly dependent on TV recreation.*

### **Introduction**

#### **Preamble**

The rapid urbanization of Dhaka City has increased tremendous pressure on recreational facilities. People have limited access to recreation facilities like parks; play grounds etc. due to limited affordability, lack of provisions, transportation cost and time. Schools and Universities are bereft of open spaces and most of them are being accommodated in hired multistoried buildings (especially private universities). Therefore, the only attractive option left for young students as a way of getting enjoyment is watching different programs on television.

According to the clauses 127(1) and (2), clauses 128 and 129 in section-A of the *City Corporation Ordinance of 1983*, the city corporation has to bear responsibility to provide outdoor recreational facilities (trees, park, garden and forest). Besides, clause 135 of the ordinance provides that the City Corporation holds the responsibility to encourage games, sports, cultural functions, maintain and protect historical places within the city, create such opportunities for recreation of the citizens and to provide financial support wherever needed. In clause-136 responsibility has also been affixed upon the City Corporation to install library for the public and to make due publicity on its usage by them.

But the city authority has failed to provide necessary provisions for recreations for the city dwellers. This deprived population, who can't afford costly recreation facilities with long holidays are increasingly dependent on TV recreation, the only cheap, apartment based, secured and time saving recreation medium.

---

\* Assistant Professor, Faculty of Business, ASA University Bangladesh

The children and university going population in the city center are getting introvert, more concentrating on individual activities rather than social cohesion. A growing number of psychological patients of depression and other mental diseases are being encountered by the society and being registered by health experts. Our research question was to find out the correlation between the excessive TV dependency for recreation and the growing trend of Individualism.

### **Objectives of the Research**

The objective of this research was to find the relationships between the rising individualism among the university going population and the increasing dependency on TV watching as recreation element in Urban Dhaka. We wanted to find out whether the students are becoming more addicted to watching televisions or not, as well as the impact of their attitude on their participation in social activities.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Operational definition**

**Individualism:** It is the behavioral tendency to avoid social gathering, filial and social responsibilities, and interpersonal relationship. If someone fails to attend 50% of his invitations, social or family responsibilities, spends more than 75% of his leisure time in isolated environment, we define it as individualistic behavior. Minor psychological problems like depression etc are treated as symptoms of individualism.

**Excessive Dependency on TV Recreation:** If someone spends more than 2hrs/day in average or 15hrs/week in watching TV is excessively dependent on TV for recreation. The mania of TV watching is also defined as extreme dependency. 50% of the leisure time spent for TV recreation is also defined as abnormal dependency on TV watching as a medium of recreation.

**Leisure time:** Time left at hand after deducting the minimum requirement for sleep (8 hrs/day), eating (1 hrs), washing/bathing (.5 hrs/day), study 4 hrs/day, travel 2hrs/day, others 2 hrs/day, part time job (if any, duration) etc. The free time is at one's own disposal.

#### **Collection of Data**

#### **Primary Data Collection**

First we have categorized university students on the basis of Public Universities and Private Universities. The stratified sampling technique was used for it. Choosing proportional number of samples from both public and private groups according to the student numbers on the basis of BANBEIS data of 5 students in each group. 5 groups from public and 5 from private universities were chosen. Five groups of both category university were distributed among posh area like Gulshan, Banani, Dhanmondi, Middle income group area like Lalmatia, Mohammadpur, Uttara Rich but local traditional society area of old Dhaka, high density area like Elephant Road, Green Road, Hatirpool and satellite township like saver.

After selecting a specific university in Dhaka city-we took the student list from the university administration and grouped them according to residential areas from the address book. The main objective was to study the trend in different social strata's on the basis of economic condition of the student's family. Residential area is one of the effective criteria for economic class.

Open-ended questionnaire had been used for interview, for a wider and deeper understanding. The diversity of student groups of different economic Strata were taken to adjudge the whole situation as recreation is becoming a more dependent on the variable of wealth of economic condition of the person in question. Finally we tried to work out the general trend of TV watching as a medium of recreation and the growing tendency of individualistic personal behavioral patterns in the society.

### **Secondary Data Collection**

Secondary data have been collected from different books, websites, e-journals and newspapers.

### **Rationale of the Research**

People of this country have to remain ever busy at fulfilling daily needs of life. The matter of recreation is hence an ignored aspect both at individual and organizational level. Yet recreation has been recognized as a fundamental human right nationally as well as internationally. Even though enough research has been made in the developed countries, similar research on recreation in Bangladesh has been so far very scarce and insignificant. Particularly, research work on recreational facilities and their impact has been far less. Inadequacy of information in respect of the framework for recreational pattern of the youths in Dhaka city has encouraged us to conduct this research. Moreover, as the students of the Department of Development Studies, this research will be of extremely beneficial for us in the near future.

### **Limitation**

The research sample size was only 56 due to time and budget constraints. The research has also been kept limited only among the university going students.

### **Literature Review**

In order to get primary knowledge and conceptual understanding, different local and foreign books and publications and articles on individualism and recreation were collected and reviewed.

### **Concept of Individualism**

Individualism is a term used to describe a moral, political, or social outlook, that stresses human independence and the importance of individual self-reliance and liberty. Individualists promote the unrestricted exercise of individual goals and desires. They oppose any external interference with an individual's choices - whether by society, the state, or any other group or institution.

Individualism is, therefore, opposed to collectivism, which stresses community and societal goals over individual goals.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "social contract" maintains that each individual is under implicit contract to submit his own will to the "general will." This advocacy of subordinating the individual will to a collective will is in fundamental opposition to the individualist philosophy. An individualist enters into society to further his own interests, or at least demands the right to serve his own interests, without taking the interests of society into consideration (an individualist need not be an egoist). The individualist does not lend credence to any philosophy that requires the sacrifice of the self-interest of the individual for any higher social causes.

The extent to which society, or groups are "individualistic" can vary from time to time, and from country to country. For example, Japanese society is more group-oriented, and it has been argued that "personalities are less developed" (than is usual in the West). The USA is usually thought of as being at the individualistic whereas European societies are more inclined to believe in "public-spiritedness".

### **Negative consequences of Individualism**

Individualism has negative connotations in certain societies and environments where it is associated with selfishness. For example, individualism is highly frowned upon in most East Asian countries where self-interested behavior is traditionally regarded as a kind of betrayal of those to whom one has obligations (e.g. family and firm). The absence of universal health care in the United States, which traces back to a belief in individual (rather than societal) responsibility, is widely criticised in Europe and other countries where universal health care (usually funded through general taxation) is aimed at protecting individuals from the vagaries of health problems. Proponents of such public initiatives and social responsibility argue that their policies are beneficial for the individual, and that excessive individualism may actually hurt the individuals themselves.

### **Concept of Recreation**

Rest and recreation hold a significant role in physical, mental and intellectual development. At one stage after having worked continuously man seeks to be relieved of the stress of work. Such type of respite provides inspiration to him for resuming subsequent Activities. Here lies the difference between machine and human being. Different people have defined it in dissimilar manner. Some definitions of recreation are given below:

The philosophical aspect of recreation surfaced even in the work of the scientific minded thinker of 4th century B.C Aristotle- *"the aim of nature is not only to build man with skill for work, rather, is to make him fit for a cultured retired life. Rest is a mirthful state by its own qualities and our active life also cannot go without it"* (Sardar Fazlul Karim, *Politics of Aristotle*, Chapter 3 P. 361-362, Bangla Academy).

Dr. John H Finlay has given an all-pervasive definition of recreation. *"The word recreation denotes all types of games and includes independent chores like music, drama, handicraft etc.*

*even though ordinarily they are treated as games but pursued in the interest of developing the life standard.” (Duther. D. George, Introduction to Community Recreation, N Y 1968).*

*“Recreation means those socially recognized activities from which man can make his leisure time more lively and attractive selecting them according to his own choice” (Mckay etal, 1996).*

*“Activeness occurring during leisure time is recreation” (Clawson and Keetsch, 1966: 6).*

*“Recreation is that part of agility in which a person takes part at will prompted by satisfaction or pleasure during leisure time and the elements those help personality building (ideal, desire, fear, trust, attitude, etc.) have an ultimate impact on recreation” (Meyer and Briybtill, 1959).*

*“Recreation is a pseudonym of freedom. When man gets tired amid multifarious work he seeks relief from such fatigue. That may be possible relaxing by the lakeside, reading books, enjoying drama or visiting park. It can be generally said that without recreation mental development of a human being doesn’t occur. The mental developments of a man are of two types: a. pleasure derived through the senses, that means something liked by seeing alone (e.g. dance, song, etc) and b. The pleasure of the world of senses” (Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Director, Biswa Shahitya Kendra, Dhaka).*

### Varieties of Recreation

Recreation can be of different types. It can either be individual or collective. Again recreation can be physical, mental and social or a combination of all the three. We can divide recreation into two parts: a. **Indoor recreation:** watching TV, listening music, reading books, domestic rendezvous, playing computer games, etc. and b. **Outdoor recreation:** visiting park, lake, picnic spots, etc. Outdoor recreation can again be of two kinds: **Local:** different recreational facilities available locally, such as, library museum, zoo, open space, play ground, etc. **Regional:** the places which are located in the remote areas of the town, e.g. picnic spot, historical place, scenes and sceneries by the river side, etc.

### Different Theories on Recreation

#### Recreation Theory - 1

An equation related to recreation as enunciated by Doell and Twardzik: 26-27 provides an explanation on recreation:

$$A + P_c + T + C \rightarrow P (\pm A_n \pm A_c \pm R_c) + E_n (\pm M_n \pm P_{hy} \pm E_m) + R_a \pm I_m \pm S_a = R$$

**Here,**

A = Any human activity

P<sub>c</sub> = Occur at any place

T = At any time

C = Regardless of the circumstances

P = Pleasurable response

A<sub>n</sub> = Anticipation

A<sub>c</sub> = Actual Activity

R<sub>c</sub> = Reflection of the activity

E<sub>n</sub> = Enriching Experience

M<sub>n</sub> = Mental

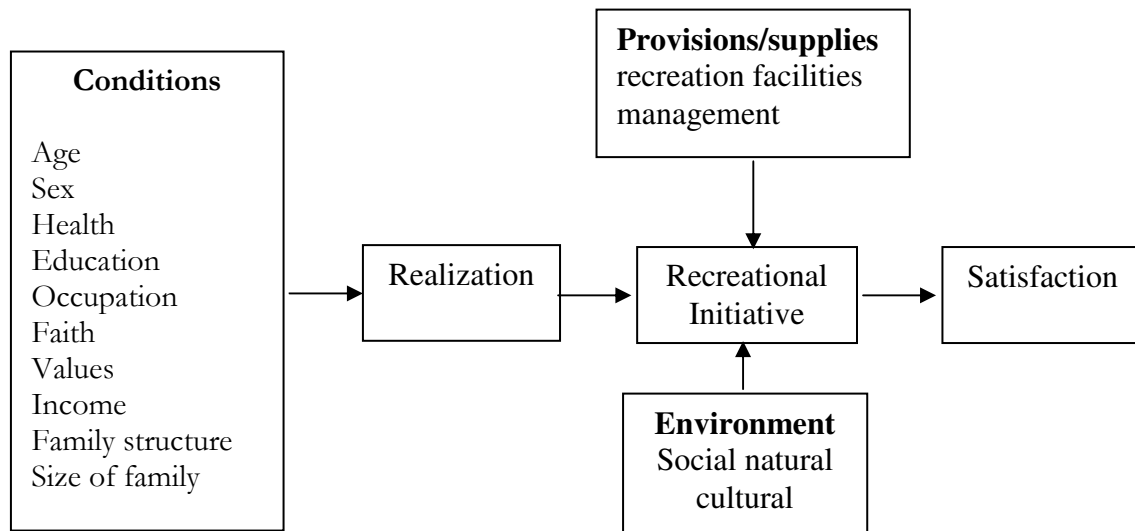
$P_{hy}$  = Physical  
 $E_m$  = Emotional  
 $R_a$  = Rationally Chosen  
 $I_m$  = Individual Morality  
 $S_a$  = Social Acceptability  
 $R$  = Recreation

That means in the consideration of individual honesty or social acceptability ( $I_m \pm S_a$ ) irrespective of place ( $P_c$ ) or time (T) or circumstances (C) Recreation (R) is the collective results of any mental activity (A) rationally selected ( $R_a$ ) creating pleasurable response (P) and its enriching experience ( $E_n$ ). Pleasurable response (P) is a unit of anticipation ( $A_n$ ) or actual activity ( $A_c$ ) or of the reflection of ( $\pm$ ) of the three. And enriching experience is a unit of the good effect of the mental ( $M_n$ ) or physical ( $P_{hy}$ ) or of the emotional or may be a type of combined feature of the three.

## Recreation Theory 2

Type of recreation one would select depends much on his income, age, and gender and on the overall social environment. Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Director of Biswa Shahitya Kendra says “subject to one’s age and taste variation in recreation takes place. Reading of books with cheap literary values can provide some sort of pleasure as would Tagore’s novels do; the point is how one derives entertainment and from where”. There is of course an interaction among the conditions for recreation, available provisions and natural, social and cultural environment. The subject is more clearly presented through the flow charts below.

**Figure 1: Relation Between Demand, Supply and Social, Natural and Cultural Environment**



### **Necessity of Recreation**

In the opinion of some researchers, recreation plays a remarkable role in holding up the youths from going astray and limiting them from other criminal activities (*Clauson and Kmetch 1966: 29*). The Leidel Foundation of Canada conducted a research on the recreation facilities for the youths hinting on four hypotheses that guide policy options:

- Human development: paucity of constructive recreation creates negative impact on the mental development of the youths.
- Civic qualities: Non availability of such recreational facilities as would proffer opportunities for interaction of the youths with others deter development of civic qualities in them.
- Problems in participation: Youths do not take part these days in the necessary constructive recreation as would help their human development and building civic qualities.
- Inadequate facilities: Due to inadequate recreational facilities the youths are not participating in recreational chores and fine arts. These four suppositions bring up two distinctive features (measures) in the relationship between adolescence and recreation. Firstly- Impact of recreation upon the biological, social, mental and civic quality development in the youths. Secondly- Social, economic, cultural and political impediments to participation in recreation by the youth.

### **Recreational Pattern in Dhaka City & TV Dependency**

#### **Recreational Facilities of Today's Dhaka**

The people of our country are very amiable and hospitable. They like to meet together and express their views with each other very much. Their hospitality is well known throughout the world. Different social activities that the people in the city of Dhaka regularly participate in are listed below:

- a) Wedding party
- b) Birthday party
- c) Religious festivals
- d) Cultural Functions
- e) Family Gatherings
- f) Book fairs, trade fairs etc.
- g) Watching TV
- h) Browsing Internet
- i) Games and Sports

#### **Role of Television as a Recreation Medium**

“This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise, it is nothing but wires and lights in a box.”-----*Edward R. Morrow*

Television represents an important part of our culture today. This medium has led to decreases in the numbers of people participating in social, recreational and community activities; encourages passivity and pessimism and is likely to have negative affects on child socialization. By contrast, it can be argued that those who obtain the news from the print-media tend to be more civic-minded and socially engaged, as well as more aware of what is going on in the world around them. Excessive television viewing along with other media activities such as the internet chat rooms and computer games give rise to a form of individualism and self-centeredness among the young students in the city of Dhaka.

### **Why We Watch TV?**

We like to be entertained. We like excitement. We like to vicariously (and safely) experience the experiences of other people. We like to be drawn into fantasy worlds that we will probably never be able to experience first hand. But, maybe most of all, we like to passively relax in front of "the tube," and let them flood over us without any real effort on our part. That is why; people from all corners like to watch TV very much.

### **Positive Impacts of Watching TV**

To stay mentally and physically healthy, it is important to spend some time relaxing each day. Plus, it has been proven that it is healthy to laugh and release our tensions. With TV we can enjoy the humorous escapades of our TV friends. And then there is the information we gain from TV. Before television, children had no idea what most foreign countries or their peoples looked like, or how they lived. Most exotic animals and fish were only names in books. Letters, numbers, and words were things that we started learning when we got to first grade. However, because of television, most children are now familiar with these things even before they start going to school.

### **Negative Impacts of Excessive TV-viewing**

Television viewing frequently limits our time for vital activities such as playing, reading, spending time with peers and family, participating in regular exercise, and developing other necessary physical, mental and social skills.

The critics of TV say that television:

- Debases the arts and audience tastes
- Undermines moral standards
- Encourages escapism
- Engages in economic exploitation
- Exhibits a liberal bias
- Sets up false images of reality
- Distorts reality through omission
- Increases obesity.



### Data Interpretation and Analysis

In total, 56 male and female participated in this survey. Among them 52.3 percent were male and 47.7 percent were female. The questionnaire was prepared in such a way that we could be able to get an idea about TV dependency and growing individualism of the university going students. Following specific TV viewing trends have been identified:

- Individualistic Trend
- TV watching percentage in Leisure Hours
- TV watching trend in working days
- TV watching trend in holidays

#### Individualistic Trend

Only 6% of the university going sample population spend 40% or above of their leisure in isolation. It is quite healthy for the society. The percentage is double for the private universities than that of the public universities. The individualistic trend in general is higher for private university students. Nevertheless around 75% of the sample population spends less than 25% in mere isolation, which is an index for normal psychological behavior. The overall trend is depicted in Table 1 below.

Leisure hour spent alone	Public University Students	Private University Students	Average
Up to 15%	54%	48%	51%
15%-25%	24%	22%	23%
25%-40%	16%	18%	17%
Above 40%	6%	12%	9%

**Table 1: Individualistic Trend among the University Students**

#### TV Watching Percentage in Leisure Hours

The percentage of time spent for TV in respect of total leisure hours is quite healthy. In average only 7.5% of the population spends more than 50% of the leisure time for TV watching, which is considered as abnormal behavior. Around 70% of the population spends 20%-40% of their leisure in TV watching, which is a positive sign for better social interactions (when TV watching in group or family is not considered as absolute social cohesions). Majority of students spend 20%-30% of their leisure for TV recreation. The overall scenario is shown in Table 2 as follows.

Percentage	Public University	Private University	Average
Up to 10%	5%	2%	3.5%
10%-20%	4%	3%	3.5%
20%-30%	42%	46%	44%
30%-40%	23%	24%	23.5%
40%-50%	15%	21%	18%
Above 50%	11%	4%	7.5%

**Table 2: TV watching percentage in Leisure Hours**

#### 4.3 TV Watching Trend in Working Days

When the leisure hour is at minimal level the maximum (66%) of the leisure is used for TV recreation. As the leisure hour increases the share of TV watching in the total leisure declines.

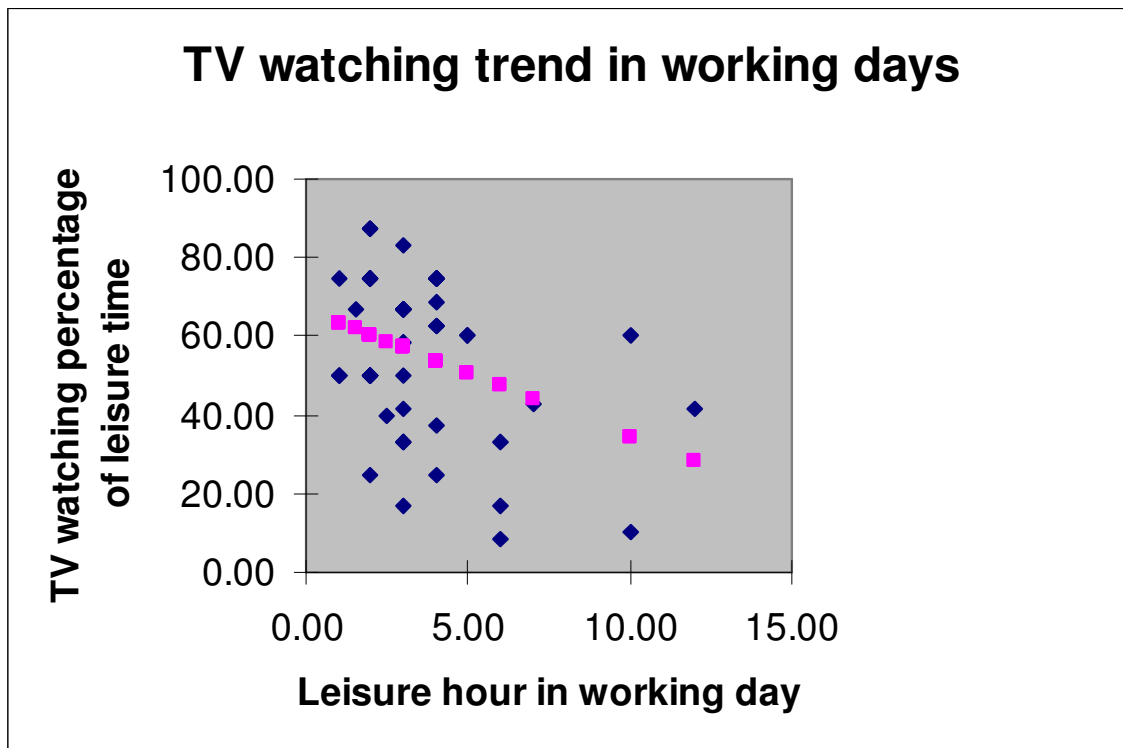


Figure 2: TV Watching Trend in Working Days

### TV Watching Trend in Holidays

When the leisure hour is at minimal level the maximum (80%) of the leisure is used for TV recreation. As the leisure hour increases the share of TV watching in the total leisure declines.

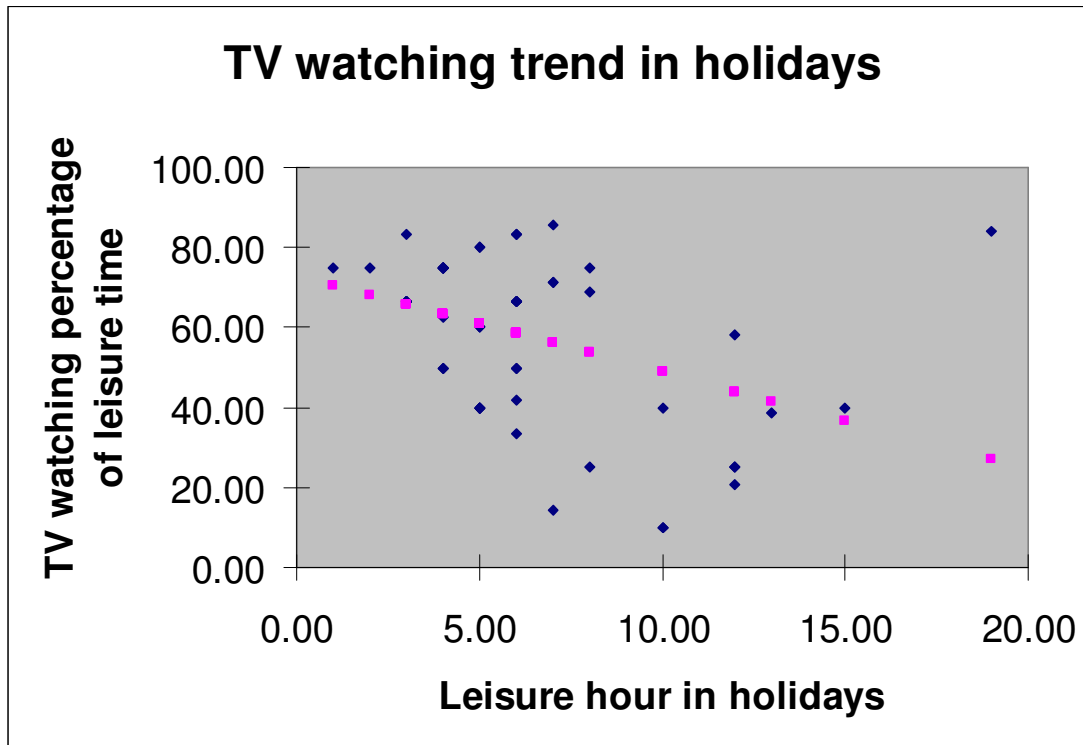


Figure 3: TV Watching Trend in Holidays

The regression analysis reveals that Weekly TV Watching Average is 15.45 Hours and Standard Deviation of Holidays from the working days is 8.06 Hours. This means that the alternative recreation other than TV watching has been decreased drastically in Dhaka city.

Here

Sigma Population:  $S_p$

Sigma Sample:  $S_s = S_p \text{ square} / \text{Root } N$

$S_p = S_s * \text{Root } N$

$S_p = 8.06 \text{ root } 56$

$S_p = 60.30$

## Conclusion & Recommendations

### Concluding Remarks

The fast urbanization of Dhaka City has amplified unbelievable strain on recreational facilities. Populace have inadequate right of entry to recreation services like parks; play grounds and other open spaces etc. due to partial affordability, lack of provisions, transportation fee and time. Specially, the Private Universities lack open spaces and the majority of them are being accommodated in hired multistoried buildings. Therefore, the only striking option left for young students as a way of getting recreation is watching different programs on television.

The average time of TV watching per week is within the acceptable range from the individualistic operational definition. Although the rate of individualism is growing in a discernable pace in Dhaka City, the sample university populations is not excessively dependent on TV recreation.

### Recommendations

- Television watching should be limited to less than 1 h to 2 h per day. Families may want to consider more active and creative ways to spend time together.
- Parents should encourage children in watching knowledge based tv programs.
- The city authorities (Dhaka City Corporation or RAJUK) should manage the present parks and provide arrangement of more parks, play grounds, open spaces and other outdoor recreational facilities.
- Course teachers of the universities should provide regular group assignments rather than only individual assignments. This will reduce individualism of the students to a great deal.

### References

- Ahmed, Saima. Child Recreation Facilities and Behavioural Pattern: A Case Study of the Middle Income Group in Dhaka City. M. Sc. Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Dhaka, 1994.
- Ally, Safeha. Urban Recreational Needs in Planning for Residential Neighborhoods: An Approach Towards a Planned Development (A Case Study on Some Selected Neighborhoods of Dhaka City) Development of URP, BUET, 1980.
- Islam, Nazrul (ed), Urbanization, *Urban Planning and Development and Urban Governance*, CUS, Dhaka, 2001.
- Stubbs, Jeffry (ed), *Mega city Management in the Asian and the Pacific Region*, Vol..2, The Asian Development Bank.
- Siddiqui, Kamal. etal, Social Formation in Dhaka City, UPL, Dhaka 1993.
- Hye, Hasnat Abdul, Governance- South Asian Perspective UPL, 2000.
- Census 2001, Primary Report, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2001.
- CUS Bulletin*, Center for Urban Studies, Number -39, July-December 2000.
- Bhorer Kagoj* 28 January 2002.
- Janakantha* 22 May 2005.
- Prothom Alo* 21 March 2006.
- Prothom Alo* 22 March 2006.

## Appendix I

### Questionnaire

**Research Title:** “Extent of Dependency on Television Recreation and Growing Individualism in University going Students of Urban Dhaka”

Identification of the respondents as the interviewee and information provider will be kept anonymous and secret. The following information will be used only for research purpose. Please fill it up as per given instruction.

Name:

Age:

Name of the University:

01. **How much time** do you spend on **watching TV** (on average):

- (a) on holidays: ..... hrs/day
- (b) on working days: .....hrs/day

02. **How much time** you get as **leisure/free time** ( time left at hand after necessary activities like sleeping, eating, washing, studying, part time job / private tuition /service etc)

- (a) on holidays: ..... hrs/day
- (b) on working days : .....hrs/day

03. How much time you spend alone with yourself.....hrs/day

04. How much time you spend with your family (including watching TV with them): .....hrs/day

05. How much **time** you **spend** (on average) **weekly** for following social activities:

- (a) Scouting/BNCC.....hrs
- (b) Acting/Recitation Club.....hrs
- (c) Debating Club.....hrs
- (d) Religious activities/interactions.....
- (e) Blood/Eye donation club.....hrs (f) others

06. Social/Cultural function/ceremony/gathering you like to attend: (Put ticks)

Wedding party/Birthday/Funeral/Religious festivals/Mela/Cultural functions/Family gathering no:

07. What sort of engagement did you have or how did you spend that time when you were supposed to attend a social function:

- (a) Watching TV
- (b) Official engagement/Study or activities other than watching TV

08. Do you think you prefer watching TV instead of attending social/cultural gatherings/volunteer activities when there is (a) transport cost involvement, (b) physical effort, (c) wasting valuable leisure time for rest at home or (d) others.

Yes/No (Put ticks)