

Leisure Activities Profile of Indian Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder- A Qualitative Analysis

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Area/Section: Psychology.

Type of the Paper: Research Case Study.

Number of Peer Reviews: Two.

Type of Review: Peer Reviewed as per [C|O|P|E|](#) guidance.

Indexed in: OpenAIRE.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13325116>

Google Scholar Citation: [PIJMESS](#)

How to Cite this Paper:

Sylvia, M. I., Vidya, N. & D'Mello, L. (2024). Leisure Activities Profile of Indian Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder- A Qualitative Analysis. *Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS)*, 1(1), 185-196. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13325116>

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS)

A Refereed International Journal of Poornaprajna Publication, India.

ISSN: 3107-4626

Crossref DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64818/PIJMESS.3107.4626.0008>

Received on: 08/07/2024

Published on: 16/08/2024

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *This study explores the leisure preferences of mothers with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), focusing specifically on their inclination toward entertainment activities, resting, and relaxation.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *A cross-sectional design using an interpretive framework and an inductive approach, the researchers aimed to explore leisure time activities among a sample of 140 mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in India.*

Finding/Result: *Findings reveal that the preference for entertainment activities, rest, and relaxation among these mothers serves multiple functions, including stress relief, emotional coping, and maintaining personal well-being. The 3 categories of Leisure activities (LA) are Entertainment activities, Rest, and relaxation. Leisure activities offer a break from the demands and challenges of caregiving, allowing mothers to recharge mentally, emotionally, and physically to maintain resilience and cope with the ongoing stressors.*

Originality/Value: *The study underscores the importance of understanding how leisure activities are chosen and valued by mothers of children with ASD, consistently prioritizing those that offer relaxation and entertainment, reflecting their coping mechanisms and efforts to maintain personal well-being amidst caregiving responsibilities.*

Paper Type: *Case study-based analysis*

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mother, Caregivers, Leisure activities, Entertainment activities, Rest, Relaxation, Qualitative analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION :

1.1. Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Caring for a child with ASD presents unique demands and stresses on families, particularly on mothers who often assume primary caregiving roles (Rassafiani, M. et al. (2012). [1]. The journey of caregiving for a child with ASD is marked by intense responsibilities, emotional resilience, and a constant need for support. Mothers of children with ASD often experience heightened levels of stress and caregiver burden due to the complex needs and challenges associated with the disorder. Studying leisure activities among Indian mothers of children with ASD lies in its potential to improve caregiver well-being, strengthen family relationships, address cultural contexts, advocate for supportive policies, and promote holistic approaches to caregiving. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with core neurodevelopmental deficits of attention, communication, and behavior, negatively influences family dynamics and social interactions.

1.2 Mother and Caregiving:

Caregiving for a child with ASD can be highly demanding, often leading to increased stress, burnout, and compromised well-being among caregivers, particularly mothers (Olsson, M. B., & Hwang, P. C.

(2003). [2]. Understanding how mothers strengthen family cohesion, support the child's development, and promote positive interactions within the family unit can provide insights into family dynamics and relationships. Understanding how to improve physical and mental health outcomes of mothers of children with ASD can provide evidence-based strategies for promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing caregiver stress addressing their unique caregiving experiences.

1.3. Mother and Leisure Activities:

Leisure activities play a crucial role in family dynamics and relationships. Caregivers of individuals with ASD are at increased risk for physical and mental health issues due to burden and burnout. Understanding how leisure activities can serve as coping mechanisms and contribute to their overall well-being is crucial for supporting these caregivers effectively. Exploring how leisure activities are integrated into daily routines and family schedules can provide insights into promoting positive family dynamics and enhancing the caregiving experience. Leisure activities are influenced by cultural norms, traditions, and social structures that shape daily life. Studying leisure preferences and practices among Indian mothers can reveal culturally specific approaches to self-care, stress management, and community engagement.

1.4. Leisure Time Activities:

Leisure time is a crucial aspect of daily life that allows individuals to engage in activities of personal interest and enjoyment, distinct from work and obligatory responsibilities. It serves as a means for relaxation, personal growth, social interaction, and emotional well-being. The rigorous nature of caregiving undoubtedly causes physical and mental stress on caregivers (O'Mullan, W. D., & Krishnagiri, S. (2005). [3]. For caregivers, particularly mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), leisure time takes on added significance due to the unique challenges and demands associated with caregiving. The leisure activities chosen by individuals often reflect their preferences, values, and available resources. Participation in physical or outdoor leisure activities by moms may be restricted due to exhaustion and low energy resulting from caregiving and household responsibilities (Soyer, F. et al. 2017) [4]. People frequently participate in leisure activities because they find them enjoyable, satisfying, or pleasurable. (Menezes, I. S. & D'Mello, L. (2021). [5]. Studies often explore a wide array of leisure activities among caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Menezes, I. S. & D'Mello, L. (2021). [6]. A previous study by the author aimed to explore various leisure activities in the lives of mothers of children with ASD. The 7 categories of Leisure activities (LA) that measure Entertainment activities, Outings, Social events, Sports and physical exercises, Homemaking and other fruitful involvements, Arts, and intellectuals, Resting and relaxation, as diversionary activities to energize, divert, and relax as fun and free-time have been identified as various leisure activities on a broad view (Menezes, I. S., & Shwetha, K. T., (2022). [7]. According to researchers, people frequently ignore fascinating leisure activities because of self-imposed constraints, usual sedentary behaviour, and other difficulties in life (Lee et al. 1994) [8].

2. OBJECTIVES :

The objectives framed are:

- (1) To identify the specific categorized leisure activities mothers of children with autism engage in.
- (2) To achieve a comprehensive understanding of their leisure activities and their impact on caregiver well-being.
- (3) To understand their motivations and needs for participation in these activities.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE/ RELATED WORKS :

3.1. Leisure Experience:

According to the theory, leisure is the interaction and connection between a person and their surroundings to promote health and improve human well-being. Therefore, leisure should be understood as more than just people's free time in their surroundings. The leisure activities offer tiny worlds of their own that are incredibly delightful in addition to being gratifying in and of themselves. Csikszentmihalyi looked, examined, and verified the characteristics of flow that allow participants to encounter a rich source of the flow. How each leisure activity's well-defined requirements help focus attention on the present moment's events and away from life outside of the flow of the leisure pursuit. A flow experience

typically incorporates logical, calls for action that is not in conflict while also delivering clear and quick feedback to a person's activities, which makes it feasible to reach such total immersion in it. The flow experience is triggered when an action is in tune with its surroundings and when feedback offers enough opportunities for an unbroken flow of action (Frase, L. E. (1995). [9]. However, what counts as feedback differs significantly depending on the action (Sutton, S. D. (2007). [10]. Since flow-producing activities by their very nature offer a variety of opportunities for feedback, people do not need to rely solely on external sources of feedback (Stavrou, N. A. et al.(2007). [11].

3.2. Leisure Needs and Motives:

Leisure needs and motives among mothers of children with autism are complex and varied, influenced significantly by their caregiving responsibilities and the unique challenges they face. Many mothers of children with autism have limited opportunities for personal relaxation and downtime due to the demanding nature of caregiving. Leisure activities serve as a means of respite, allowing them to recharge and reduce stress levels. The statement from King, G. et al., (2003) [12] highlights the transformative impact of leisure activities chosen by individuals themselves. Engaging in leisure activities that are personally chosen allows mothers to reshape their identity beyond the role of a caregiver. By participating in activities they enjoy and find meaningful, mothers can protect their mental and emotional well-being as a safeguard against burnout and emotional exhaustion. Leisure activities offer a break from the demands and challenges of caregiving, allowing mothers to recharge mentally, emotionally, and physically to maintain resilience and cope with the ongoing stressors.

Isolation is a common challenge for these mothers, as they may have fewer opportunities for social interaction due to caregiving responsibilities or the behaviours of their children. Leisure activities that offer socialization opportunities can be highly valued as they provide a sense of community and support. Engaging in leisure activities that are considered 'normal' or unrelated to autism-related tasks can provide a sense of balance and normalcy in their lives, helping to maintain their identity beyond the role of a caregiver. Some mothers may seek leisure activities that allow them to develop new skills or interests, providing personal growth and fulfillment outside of their caregiving role. Leisure activities can serve as an emotional outlet, allowing mothers to express their feelings, frustrations, and joys constructively. Activities like exercise, creative pursuits, or even journaling can help manage emotional well-being (Chun, S. et al., (2012). [13] underscores the idea that the choice of leisure activities is influenced by both situational and social contexts, reflecting the complex interplay of individual preferences and external factors. Situational factors such as time availability, financial resources, and physical environment significantly impact the leisure choices of mothers. Caregiving responsibilities, unpredictability in schedules, and the need for flexibility can all influence which leisure activities are feasible and practical to engage in. Social factors, including family dynamics, social support networks, and community resources, play a crucial role in shaping leisure choices. For mothers of children with autism, social context may involve considerations such as the availability of respite care, understanding from friends and family members, and opportunities for socialization both for themselves and for their children. Balancing caregiving responsibilities with personal leisure time requires careful consideration of priorities and compromises. Mothers may need to negotiate between their own needs and those of their children, finding ways to incorporate leisure activities into their daily routines without neglecting their caregiving duties.

3.5. Empirical Studies Related to Leisure Participation and Satisfaction:

Melton, K. (2014). [14] 884 households in the United Kingdom were surveyed online using FLAP (Family Leisure Activity Profile) and FACES II. The outcomes of this research back up earlier studies that show a correlation linking family leisure participation and factors of family dynamics proposed in the Core and Balance Model. Furthermore, the three main contributions of this study will be highlighted: an inter-rater agreement in family leisure indicators, new measures of family recreation locations using the FLAP index, and the degree of scales for family leisure. A new addition to the FLAP index was the conceptual advancement of core and balanced family leisure habits to reflect arousal affordances of recreation environments. Centered on the incongruity affordances of recreation settings, this study offered a new conceptualization of core and balanced leisure trends. Second, this study proposed new forms of reliability estimates and inter-rater agreement data not previously available in published literature relevant to the FLAP index.

(Agate, J. R. et al., (2009). [15]) Using the Family Life Scale, which prioritizes leisure, it was possible to quantify how satisfied people were with their leisure time. A total of 898 families revealed a correlation between the variables used from across the United States. The research covers both family recreation and family life satisfaction. Elemental leisure satisfaction was most associated with satisfaction with the different age groups of the family members in each developmental stage domain. Within families, paired data from different developmental stages offered fascinating insights into the essence of the partnership.

(Zabriskie, R. B., & McCormick, B. P. (2003). [16] The goal of this study was to see a correlation between leisure engagement and life satisfaction. Data was analyzed at three levels: parent, child, and family. From the perspective of the parents, leisure engagement as kinship was the best multicomponent of family happiness from the children's standpoint. Only the layer made up of the Elemental and Balance family leisure aspects could account for a significant share of the factors influencing family satisfaction as kinship. The three scales included in the research questionnaire produced three sets of data-provoking responses from the parents, youth responses, and the individual mean scores. Taking part in leisure and life satisfaction are intertwined, especially from the viewpoint of parents and families. If family satisfaction is a central predictor of a harmonious life, participation is the most important facet leading to a superior level of family life, according to the parents and families in this study. Mean family-centered and balanced leisure habits were positively correlated with mean family satisfaction.

(Chun, S. et al., (2012). [13] examined the positive relationship between leisure satisfaction towards stress-related growth (SRG). Frequent participation of 318 Canadian university students in various types of civic activities as well as specific activities of individual choice showed statistical significance in coping various stresses as well as assisting growth-related changes. Ragheb's frequency measure scale to measure leisure participation for six months was applied, which contained outdoor physical activities, indoor activities, entertainment activities, social activities, and civic activities rated under the six Likert scale. Similarly, the Leisure Satisfaction Measure is applied to weigh the satisfaction level by analyzing the psychological well-being, physiological benefits, social component, mental relaxation, educational prognosis, and aesthetic outcome, of satisfaction by involving in leisure. The hypothesis was confirmed with the outcome of community service-based civic activities as the strongest antecedents of SRG satisfying the leisure experiences as coping stress as well as growth facilitator. The potential of identifying meaning in life and exploring new interests promoted frequent participation thereby leisure satisfaction. Research shows that civic activities express generativity in older adults to experience personal well-being also university students helped to find meaning in routine life chores by experiencing personal growth as they engage in meaningful engagements of their choice. One significant finding was pinned in this study about the participation in physical activities as leisure such as sports and other exercises. Depending on the stages of life and their engagements in academics, work, and life, the leisure activities participation showed importance accordingly, as well as the unique characteristics and the geographic distribution of the population. Physically active leisure enhances positive emotions rather than transformational experiences.

The correlation between family leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, family functioning, and family life satisfaction of ASD and normal children's parents from Ohio US. The results state that parents of kids with ASD reported partaking in roughly the same amount of leisure time as parents of kids with typical development. But neither leisure satisfaction nor family life satisfaction was examined in the report. Despite increased depression in this population, the study on how leisure fulfillment improves mental well-being has not been carried out; caregivers' psychological conditions could undermine this view. Leisure happiness was a crucial sign of leisure involvement. The recognition of leisure dedication as a legitimate standard of enjoyment. Participation in family leisure activities was a mediator between family complacency and family functioning (Walton, K. M. (2019). [17].

Table 1: Literature Review Summary

S. No.	Area	Focus / Outcome	Reference
1	Choice of leisure activities is influenced by both situational and social contexts.	The study underscores the idea that the choice of leisure activities is influenced by both situational and social contexts, reflecting the complex interplay of individual preferences and external	Chun, S. et al., (2012). [13]

		factors. Situational factors such as time availability, financial resources, and physical environment significantly impact the leisure choices of mothers.	
2	884 households in the United Kingdom were surveyed online using FLAP (Family Leisure Activity Profile) and FACES II.	The outcomes of this research back up earlier studies that show a correlation linking family leisure participation and factors of family dynamics proposed in the Core and Balance Model.	Melton, K. (2014). [14]
3	Using the Family Life Scale, quantifying leisure satisfaction when people were with their leisure time.	The research covers both family recreation and family life satisfaction.	Agate, J. R. et al., (2009). [15]
4	The goal of this study was to see a correlation between leisure engagement and life satisfaction.	If family satisfaction is a central predictor of a harmonious life, participation is the most important facet leading to a superior level of family life, according to the parents and families in this study. Mean family-centered and balanced leisure habits were positively correlated with mean family satisfaction.	(Zabriskie, R. B., & McCormick, B. P. (2003). [16]
5	Family leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, family functioning, and family life satisfaction of ASD.	The correlation between family leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, family functioning, and family life satisfaction of ASD and normal children’s parents from Ohio US. The results state that parents of kids with ASD reported partaking in roughly the same amount of leisure time as parents of kids with typical development.	(Walton, K. M. (2019). [17].

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH :

A cross-sectional study was carried out to identify and categorize specific leisure activities mothers of children with autism prefer to engage in. In the descriptive stage, a deductive research approach provided a better understanding of the insights. Data was collected from 140 organized online and offline in-depth interviews using the convenience sampling method in India. The study aimed to identify specific leisure activities mothers engage in as respite.

4.1. Assessment of the Leisure Activity Profiles of Mothers of Children Diagnosed with ASD:

Leisure is sometimes thought of as the pursuits people elect to engage in when they have free time. Leisure can also be thought of as a particular action that helps a person unwind and reenergize. Leisure motivation concerns intrinsic motivation (Haworth, J. T. (2004), [18] as perceived leisure activities fall under three dimensions of needs, such as competence, liking, and interpersonal involvement, that explain leisure behavior with individual differences and need-satisfying (Menezes, I.S., & D’Mello, 2021) [6]. Leisure behavior with individual differences and need-satisfying qualities led to the clustering of leisure activities. The main three leisure activities are generally preferred as entertainment activities, rest, and relaxation by almost all mothers with ASD children. Hence three categories of leisure have been clubbed together depending on their productive outcome and proposed by the researcher: entertainment activities, rest, and relaxation.

4.1.1. Entertainment Activities:

When it comes to time, leisure can be characterized as free time without any external pressures or obligations dictating one’s path of activity. According to traditional wisdom, leisure time should be spent doing the aforementioned things. The most well-liked pastimes are watching television, reading, and listening to music. Hence category of entertainment activities passively involved is any type of visuals on television, iPad, or mobile, or any type of audio on radio, television, iPad, or mobile, as a

medium of entertainment. On the other hand, entertainment activities actively involved are playing electronic and or computer games, on mobile phones that provide immense entertainment in one form or the other without much planning, coercion, limitation, or feasibility. The majority of the respondents 33.57% responded “frequently”, followed by 23.57% responding “occasionally”, 22.85% responded “rarely”, followed by 17.14% responded “regularly”, and only 2.85% responded “never” towards commonly engaging in entertainment activities. These pursuits either result in mental, physical, or spiritual relaxation, but they fall short of satisfying a person's spiritual demands.

Table 2: Frequencies for Entertainment Activities

Ent Activities	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	4	2.857	2.857	2.857
2	32	22.857	22.857	25.714
3	33	23.571	23.571	49.286
4	47	33.571	33.571	82.857
5	24	17.143	17.143	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	140	100.000		

4.1.2. Rest:

Leisure time is time that is not devoted to duties that must be completed. As it provides freedom from rigid formalities, the ability to choose how to spend one's time, the satisfaction of one's need for rest, and the ability to express oneself, leisure is seen as the primary source of all desirable experiences. Ideal leisure is long-lasting and characterized by feelings of freedom from strain and stress. Resting, sleeping, and not having to think, say, or do anything. Some contend that any pastime can be productive if it makes the individual involved happy. An action is productive if it results in something beneficial even if the person does not enjoy it. Active or passive recreation decreases sadness and anxiety, promotes the formation of good emotions, boosts the sense of self and self-worth, improves overall psychological wellness, and supports cognitive processes (Henderson, K. A., & Ainsworth, B. E. (2002). [19], (Iso-Ahola, S. E., & Mannell, R. C. (2004). [20]. Hence leisure activities like Tea-coffee breaks, meditation, and napping are categorized under resting. The majority 33.57% of the respondents responded “frequently”, followed by 23.57% responding “regularly”, 19.28% responded “occasionally”, followed by 22.14% responded “rarely”, and only 1.4% responded “never”, resting to energize from daily workload. Perceived constraints as intrapersonal, were subjected to the attitude of the mothers as caregivers with guilt, or lazy, being too tired, or in need of just to lie down as lacking energy.

Table 3: Frequencies for Rest

Resting	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	2	1.429	1.429	1.429
2	31	22.143	22.143	23.571
3	27	19.286	19.286	42.857
4	47	33.571	33.571	76.429
5	33	23.571	23.571	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	140	100.000		

4.1.3. Relaxation:

Leisure is typically associated with freedom, liberty, and unrestricted, voluntary, stress-relieving activity. The restoration-relaxation domain was comparatively similar to the catharsis need theory with passive leisure involvement after a busy tiring schedule of the day. The compensation components where active leisure filled with energy were utilized towards unmet desires. Whereas diversionary

relaxation with active leisure activities energizes to divert from routine. The selection of leisure activity from one’s repertoire depends on the situational as well as social contexts to meet the desire (Balasubramanian, N., & Shankar, G. (2005). [21]. When a need for self-expression arises, people play and relax to attain pleasure. The majority of 40% of the respondents responded “frequently”, followed by 23.57% responded “occasionally”, followed by 22.85 “rarely”, and 12.14% “regularly”. Another 1.4% responded “never” as they focus better on a good mood after relaxation. Different pastimes appear to foster certain life values. Warm interpersonal relationships, self-respect, safety, fun, and enjoyment of life were the shared values reinforced by leisure pursuits including watching concerts, going shopping, outing, playing indoor games, and participating in sports and outdoor activities, among others.

Table 4: Frequencies for Relaxation

Relaxation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	2	1.429	1.429	1.429
2	32	22.857	22.857	24.286
3	33	23.571	23.571	47.857
4	56	40.000	40.000	87.857
5	17	12.143	12.143	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	140	100.000		

5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS :

5.1. Findings: Assessment of the specific Leisure Activities of ASD Mothers:

Leisure as a recreational activity is personally rewarding or of great benefit to someone. Engaging in leisure activities that are personally meaningful and chosen with consideration of situational and social contexts provides feelings of enjoyment, relaxation, and fulfillment. Choosing leisure activities that align with personal desires and circumstances can create a rewarding and optimistic experience. This positivity stems from the satisfaction of fulfilling one's leisure needs and preferences, contributing to a sense of contentment and happiness. Leisure is purely subjective and identified as free time as an individual concept that is chosen rather than compelled. Parents and caregivers frequently give up or cut back on their leisure time if they have to take care of children to take care of their families. Individuals require a respite from routine tasks, an opportunity to engage in personally fulfilling activities, and/or a chance to retain their identities. Leisure behaviour, is influenced by individual differences and the specific qualities of needs being satisfied. These needs can include relaxation, social interaction, skill development, creativity, physical fitness, and emotional expression, among others. People have unique preferences, interests, and motivations when it comes to leisure activities. Due to individual differences and the specific needs they fulfill, leisure activities tend to cluster into distinct groups or categories. For instance, activities like gardening, painting, and yoga might cluster under relaxation and stress relief. Activities such as volunteering, attending social clubs, and participating in team sports might cluster under social interaction and community engagement. Hence three categories of leisure activities have been clubbed together depending on their productive outcome and proposed by the researcher: entertainment activities, resting, and relaxation. These main three categories of leisure activities are generally preferred by mothers with ASD children.

When it comes to time, the most well-liked pastimes are ‘**Entertainment Activities**’ like watching television, reading, and listening to music. Hence category of entertainment activities is passively involved in any type of visuals on television, iPad, or mobile, or any type of audio on radio, television, iPad, or mobile, as a medium of entertainment. The amount of time that the mother spends engaging in entertainment activities is assumed to provide immense enjoyment in one form or the other on the quality of life of the mother without much planning, coercion, and limitations.

Leisure time is time that is not devoted to duties that must be completed. ‘**Rest**’ provides freedom from rigid formalities, the ability to choose how to spend one's time, the satisfaction of one's need for rest, and the ability to express oneself, leisure is seen as the primary source of all desirable experiences. Hence leisure activities like Tea-coffee breaks, meditation, and napping are categorized under resting. The quality of the relationship between the mother and the type of leisure activity (Rest) has a direct

causal relationship with the selection of activity that is mediated by how productive and beneficial to the mother of ASD children.

Leisure is typically associated with freedom, liberty, and unrestricted, voluntary, stress-relieving activity, i.e., '**Relaxation.**' The selection of leisure activity from one's repertoire depends on the situational as well as social contexts to meet the desire (Balasubramanian, N., & Shankar, G. (2005). [21]. When a need for self-expression arises, people play and relax to attain pleasure. Different pastimes appear to foster certain life values. Warm interpersonal relationships, self-respect, safety, fun, and enjoyment of life were the shared values reinforced by leisure pursuits including watching concerts, going shopping, outing, playing indoor games, and participating in sports and outdoor activities, among others. The quality of the relationship between the mother and the type of leisure activity (Relaxation) has a direct causal relationship with the selection of activity that is mediated by passive leisure involvement after a busy tiring schedule of the day and active leisure filled with energy that was utilized towards unmet desires to divert from routine.

5.2. Results:

In the context of mothers of ASD children's engagement in leisure activities in India, the study categorizes relevant structures into three main categories: Entertainment activities, Rest, and Relaxation. **Entertainment Activities** are primarily undertaken for enjoyment, fun, and diversion. They provide a break from routine responsibilities and can be a source of mental stimulation and relaxation by allowing mothers to engage in activities they find pleasurable and engaging. **Rest activities** are crucial for recharging energy levels, reducing stress, and promoting overall well-being. They help mothers manage the physical and emotional demands of caregiving, providing essential downtime to recuperate and refresh with physical relaxation. **Relaxation activities** provide a deeper sense of relaxation and tranquility compared to entertainment activities. They support mental health by alleviating stress and promoting emotional balance, which is particularly beneficial for mothers facing the challenges associated with caregiving for children with autism.

6. DISCUSSION :

Mothers of children with ASD often face heightened levels of stress due to the intensive caregiving demands and challenges associated with raising a child with special needs. Leisure activities contribute to improved emotional well-being by fostering positive emotions, reducing negative affect, and promoting a sense of fulfillment and enjoyment. For mothers of children with ASD, who experience heightened emotional strain and fatigue, engaging in leisure provides a vital outlet for self-expression and personal satisfaction. Engaging in leisure activities like entertainment (e.g., watching movies, listening to music) and relaxation (e.g., yoga, meditation, hobbies) can serve as effective stress reduction techniques. Rest activities such as mindfulness practices, or simply taking time to rest can have physical health benefits. They can reduce muscle tension, lower blood pressure, and improve overall sleep quality. These outcomes are particularly important for mothers who may neglect their own health needs while prioritizing the care of their child with ASD. While some leisure activities may be solitary, others can facilitate social connections and support networks, support groups, or online forums related to hobbies or interests can provide mothers with opportunities for peer support, sharing experiences, and reducing feelings of isolation. This social interaction is crucial for maintaining mental health and resilience. These leisure activities often reflect personal interests and passions, allowing mothers to cultivate their identities outside of the caregiving role. fosters personal growth, builds self-esteem, and reinforces a sense of purpose beyond parental responsibilities. This holistic approach to self-care is essential for maintaining a balanced and fulfilling life.

7. NEW KNOWLEDGE :

Categorizing leisure activities into Entertainment, Rest, and Relaxation provides a structured framework for studying and supporting mothers' engagement in India, offering insights into how these activities can contribute to their physical, mental, and emotional health amidst the challenges of caregiving. Engaging in leisure activities that are personally chosen allows mothers to reshape their identity beyond the role of a caregiver. By participating in activities they enjoy and find meaningful, mothers can protect their mental and emotional well-being as a safeguard against burnout and emotional exhaustion. Leisure activities offer a break from the demands and challenges of caregiving, allowing

mothers to recharge mentally, emotionally, and physically to maintain resilience and cope with the ongoing stressors.

8. CONCLUSION :

In summary, mothers of children with ASD may prioritize entertainment activities, rest, and relaxation as a way to manage stress, cope with caregiving demands, and maintain their well-being amidst the challenges they face. These activities offer a balance between self-care and the responsibilities of caregiving. The outcomes of leisure activities for Indian mothers of children with ASD are multifaceted, encompassing emotional, physical, social, and personal dimensions. By prioritizing self-care through leisure, mothers can enhance their resilience, improve their quality of life, and sustain their capacity to provide loving and effective care for their children with special needs. In conclusion, a study on leisure activities among Indian mothers of children with ASD is essential to address their unique caregiving experiences, promote their well-being, and advocate for supportive policies and programs. By recognizing the significance of leisure in caregiving contexts, stakeholders can work towards enhancing the overall quality of life for both caregivers and their families.

9. SUGGESTIONS :

Educate mothers about the importance of self-care and leisure as essential components of maintaining physical and mental well-being. Increase awareness among healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders about the importance of leisure activities for caregivers of children with ASD. Provide workshops or seminars on stress management techniques, mindfulness practices, and relaxation exercises that mothers can incorporate into their daily routines. Collaborate with local organizations to create inclusive recreational programs and facilities that accommodate the needs of families affected by ASD. Encourage the formation of community-based support groups where mothers can connect, share experiences, and learn from one another.

10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

Generalizability of the results to all mothers of children with ASD in India might affect if the sample primarily consists of mothers who have access to resources, are willing to participate, or have particular characteristics that make them more likely to engage in leisure activities. Participants may provide responses that they perceive as socially desirable than their actual leisure activities and preferences. Participants may have difficulty accurately recalling or reporting their leisure activities. Leisure activities are heavily influenced by cultural norms, values, and practices and hence may not fully capture the diversity of leisure activities preferred by mothers.

11. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH :

Future research needs to focus on understanding these identified specific leisure preferences and needs of mothers with ASD children in India. This could lead to the development of targeted interventions and resources that cater to their unique circumstances and cultural contexts. As technology continues to advance, there may be increased integration of entertainment activities and more accessible and customizable options for leisure. The tailored programs could offer structured activities that combine relaxation techniques, social interactions, and entertainment in a supportive environment for mothers of children with ASD. Efforts may be made to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in leisure activities for mothers with ASD children by initiating recreational facilities, and entertainment venues more accommodating and welcoming parallel to child intervention or therapeutic modules when the children are safe in the therapeutic environment under supervision. This time could be incredibly valuable for mothers rather than anxiously waiting outside the therapy room. They could use this time to engage in self-care activities, such as reading a book, meditating, going for a walk, or simply taking a moment to relax and recharge.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT :

- (a) We are deeply grateful to Dr. Aithal P. S., Director of Poornaprajna University, Udupi, India. His unwavering support and inspiration have been the driving force behind our efforts to develop new research.
- (b) The ongoing supervision and doctoral-level research program (DDLr) led by Dr. H. R. Ganesh, a research professor at Srinivas University in Mangalore, India, has significantly contributed to shaping

the current form of this work. His guidance and scholarly oversight have played a pivotal role in influencing the direction and quality of the research undertaken. Dr. Ganesha's expertise and leadership within the academic community at Srinivas University underscore his commitment to advancing research excellence and fostering intellectual growth among doctoral candidates under his mentorship. His influence is evident in the scholarly rigor and academic depth reflected in the work attributed to his supervision and the DDLR program.

(c) Dr. Srinivasan Venkatesan, ex-reader in Clinical Psychology at the All-India Institute of Speech and Hearing in Mysore, India, holds a special place as our grateful recipient. I deeply appreciate everything he has taught me, his unwavering support, genuine attention, priceless advice, and continuous encouragement.

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