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## Integrated Management Model For Sports Facilities Utilization In Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*In Nigeria, the dearth of sports facilities is a popular and sustained complaint. The trend though counter productive, should not be allowed to stifle the development of sports. In this article, an integrated model for the management of existing sports facilities is proffered to enhance the utilization of sports plant.*

*The thesis is that sports plant should be managed at four mutually complementary levels: clientele, resources, services and evaluation. The article analyzes how the four systems could be operated to ensure holistic management of sports plant for effective mass utilization and improved fitness index of the clientele. That way, organic enfeeblement of man through sedentary life style could be checked.*

### **A Point of View**

Man's journey through life is a challenging endeavour. As he travels down the highway of life, the need for food, shelter, and exercise are to be satisfied. The exercise instinct is inherent in man. Movement is a segment of the living process and part of everyone's life. Movement is a universal "language", "spoken" and "understood" by everybody. There is hardly any civilization or culture in which sport has not received some form of emphasis in varying degree. Sports have existed for



centuries, infact ever since man inhabited the earth (Nixon and Jewett, 1980). -What is certain is that sports have developed from informal instinctive activities or movements, such as walking, running, jumping, dancing, wrestling and warfare, to deliberate highly organized competitive movement activities. The olympic games have their origin in the first games in Greece in 776 B.C. (Gordon, 1991). However, the degree of sophistication of the modern olympiad; standards of performance, financing, administration, facilities and sheer grandeur are quite distinct from those of the ancient games.

Today, most of the work done by hand are done by machines. While man's distant ancestors led physically active lives; covering long distances to gather roots, nuts and grains or to pursue game, while the grand or great grand parents tilled the fields for food and handcrafted everyday necessities, modern man finds himself in a largely technologically sedentary economy.

The development is a mixed blessing. Literally modern man wears two shoes. The shoe in the right leg ushers the benefits of technology; opulence, affluence or soft life. The shoe in the left leg unleashes the demerits or evils of technology; organic enfeeblement, degeneration or physical indulgence.

It is an irony of life that comparatively, of the three listed needs of man, perhaps exercise is the most neglected. It is regretablely a matter of misplaced priority because if any man in history needs exercise it is the modern man. The purpose of this article therefore was to dissertate on the effective approach to sports facilities management for proper utilization of sports systems.

This article is significant because the approach postulates clear cut managerial responsibilities associated with four complementary sports sub-systems; clientele, resources, services, evaluation of sports plant to promote facilities utilization. The thesis is that proper integration of



sports systems will facilitate its use and without dispute mass utilization would raise clientele fitness index.

In literature, many environmental factors have been mentioned as responsible for the lack of awareness and participation in sports, (Uduk and Achalu, 1990). The thesis is that environmental factors are sports "soft wares" while facilities constitute sports "hardwares", (Galloway, 1984). To promote sports growth; development and clientele participation, the hard wares should be adequate in supply and quantity, (Jubenville, 1978). This thesis is somehow idealistic. To make do with the current realities the integrated approach to sports facilities utilization is developed.

### **Facilities Management**

Sports facilities are conceived as the relatively permanent outdoor and indoor structures used for performance. They are usually constructed and designed as to the type of sports. This embraces all play grounds, gymnasias, trampoline, swimming pool, track and field events spaces. For the purpose of this paper equipment and supplies are blocked as constituting facilities. In their strict technical sense they are quite distinct.

Management is a concept in the social sciences that has been successfully adapted to the educational system. Management is the art and science of careful utilization of the resources open to the organisation in order to attain primary goals of the establishment while the employers derive their personal and/or collective needs, (Werf, 1980).

### **The Problem-Solving Process**

In today's complex world, management is getting more demanding and involving. A manager who thinks of his work only in terms of the traditional functions, of Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordinating, and Budgeting, acronymed POSDCORB (Adebayo, 1982), may not attain excellent results. Management is now a complex



and loaded social resources which demands coherent integration of the different elements in the human environment into a total design, suited to the goal achievement. The human environment is a broad spectrum including psychological, sociological, cultural, political and technological elements as well as the human personality. Except all the complex subsystems are integrated to form a holistic system there are bound to be administrative voids. A void is a niche, lethal to organizational operations.

The primary purpose of sports facilities provision is proper and lawful utilization by the clientele. Any encumbrance constitutes a problem and should be checked. Bannon (1972) toasts a simple definition of problem as something that is wrong. Thus, a problem is a deviation from the normal, expected, or desired outcome for a given situation which needs corrective action to remedy it. Before a problem is solved the first step is the identification, the second is isolation and the third is articulation of the symptoms.

The first stage is simply the definition of the deviation. In the second step subproblems may be discovered as the symptoms. Thirdly the symptoms, subproblems and the real problems are articulated. In this way "trial-an-error" is avoided in the problem solving process. To be able to solve the real problem, intermediate objectives should be set. This is to get the system back to normal operating conditions. This will lead to creative thinking, a sort of brainstorming exercise in which unrestrained ideas are put up in form of proposals for the solution. There is an overlap into the next stage which is the evaluation of alternatives. The alternatives are critically evaluated, screened and examined from the baseline of the established objectives. After a thorough synthesis, the alternative that best fits the problem is chosen before decision is taken while there is re-evaluation in the future.



As a final process the decision is implemented. It is necessary to monitor the result of each phase to be sure that an errant programme is remodeled to chart its objective course.

### **Situational Paradigms**

For problem-evasion model to be effective, it is presented as a system. To describe the management situation, a holistic approach is used. When the total picture is clearly focused upon, there can be a successful "bloodless" dissection of the system into subsystems or elements for analysis. The four elements are Clientele, Resources, Service, and Evaluation systems.

### **Clientele Management System (Fig. 1)**

Clientele Management system revolves around four sub-systems: information, scheduling, public relations and health/safety education.

#### **Information Sub-System**

Clients should be well informed of the existing facilities and regulations governing their use. This should be stated clearly as the essence of information is misunderstood by the decoder if it lacks the essential element of communication which Chappell and Read (1979) posit as "knowing the encoder's point of view".

#### **Scheduling Sub-System**

Scheduling advisers on the programming of the sports plant, explains the timing, procedures and modalities of operations.

#### **Public Relations Sub-System**

Public relations is a neglected duty of Facility Managers. The point is that sport plant should be regarded as a rallying centre for universal

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brotherhood. To ensure that, the sports environment should be made users friendly.

### **Health/Safety Education Subsystem**

Apparently there are inherent health hazards associated with sports participation. Health has to be preserved by promoting safety. Efforts should be made where necessary to protect clients through danger signals, signs, notices, guides or assistants around activities centres.

### **Resources Management System (Fig 2)**

The key to effective resources management are monitoring and identification. The sub-systems to be monitored are materials, accessories, establishments and health services.

1. **Materials:** It is the abiding duty of the manager to keep track of the "soft" and "hard wares" of the programme. Technically, they are the facilities, equipment and all forms of supplies, tangibles and intangibles. There should be adequate inventory and knowledge of status of their servicability.
2. **Accessories:** There is the need to inform the clients of additional services available in the sports plant. These could be films, sauna or float baths, body therapy clinics, weight control and conditioning resources.
3. **Establishments:** Sports is an enterprise. At times it demands travelling at very short notice. For the convenience of the "tourists", information should be made accessible of hotel locations, and tariffs including other useful guides like police call number or car hire service.



4. **Health Services:** Sports at times could be a source of body injury or discomfort. Clients have to be told where they could obtain medical care, the services available, calibre of personnel and health counselling clinics.

### **Service Management System (Fig 3)**

Sports plant is a public enterprise that gains relevance through mass utilization. The spaces, consultancies, utilities and recreational constitute subsystems.

1. **Spaces:** The spaces, number per unit, capacity and time of use should not be hoarded. To do that is to render the edifice a white elephant.
2. **Consultancies:** Sports has wide-spread appeal to people of diverse backgrounds. They should be informed of the gamut of expert services available and the benefits derivable.
3. **Utilities:** Where there are conference centres, auditoriums, banquet halls, swimming pools and fast food cuisines, use procedures and modalities have to be provided or advertised.
4. **Recreationals:** This implies that the logistics of resources affording relaxation and enjoyment pastime in the sports plant be made known. Also the regulations, sanctions and how to make necessary contacts.

### **Evaluation Management System (Fig 4)**

– Sports management should be objective-oriented service enterprise. To do this the proposals must be well thought out. There should be regular post-mortem of the services. It is important that objective-assessment should be the cardinal principle of evaluation.



The evaluation process should be by necessity holistic, embracing the triad; clientele, resources and services management systems. The objectives of each subsystem should be matched with the over-all objectives of the supra-system. Through this screening procedure, the Director of sports can ascertain if the sports complex meets its erection philosophy.

### **Fundamental Issues In Facility Management**

Some of the primary issues that pose problem and conflicts in facility management are:

1. *Poor or Absence of Information System:* In many instances there are very limited or virtually non-existent information storage and retrieval facility in the system leading to information frustration on demand.
2. *Inadequate use of Funds of Establishment for Wrong Priorities:* Many managers divert funds meant for projects or programmes to illicit proposals. At times new initiatives which are at variance with priority objectives are considered for selfish reasons.
3. *Absence of Maintenance Culture:* In Nigeria, in most cases, except the system grinds to a halt minor defects are not rectified which usually lead to total collapse of the system.
4. *Construction of Sub-standard Facilities:* Most of times managers change original construction plans on the unprofitable excuse of escalating construction cost. With spiralling inflationary trends they end-up, unable to erect the original concept at all times.
5. *Poor or Lack of Supervision:* No manager can provide strong leadership without sound supervisory approaches. Supervision helps



to open-up the system to executive scrutiny for easy identification of pit-falls. In Nigeria, there is wide scale executive dereliction in supervisory responsibilities.

6. *Under-utilization of Facilities:* In many instances, sports system is underused not because of lack of patronage but management - scare of prospective clients. This could be as a result of dearth of information on existing facilities, services, poor community/ neighbourhood relations and hostile environment.
7. *Vandalization of Facilities:* Sports system is cost intensive to set-up and to maintain functionally. It is tragic to note that such structures expensively constructed at tax payers expense are sometimes thrown into flame by irate fans, spectators and participants. Such wanton destructions turn deprivative, so, should be discouraged.

### **End Thought**

The familiar complaint and lamentation is that sports facilities are in dearth in Nigeria. The few that exist are grossly inadequate, by international standards. Unfortunately, available information does not indicate any improvement. Sports administrators must find ways in the mean time to make-do with the existing stock. That is the challenge of management. Success will not come with a magic wand. Sports administrators must continue to stretch their imagination to improve the profession. In this age of technologically motivated automation and the attendant organic enfeebling life style, the fitness index of man could be maintained through life-long sports creed by breaking barriers against utilization of sports systems. Information gained and, or critical issues raised in this article should stimulate thoughts toward the quest for improved management of sports facilities.



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