

**SPORTS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF  
INFRASTRUCTURAL PLANNING, PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE: A COAST EFFECTIVE  
APPROACH TO SAFETY IN NIGERIA SPORTS INDUSTRY.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper addresses issues relating to sports management and sustainable development of infrastructure, planning, and maintenance. The issues of equipment and facility management have been looked into from multifarious points of view, as there are many stakeholders to this very important aspect of sports industry. With these it was emphatically stated that management of infrastructure should not be restricted to a certain person or group of people alone. The reason being that timely report and intervention of all and sundry towards damaged infrastructure could save the entire sports organization from untold embarrassment or even litigation. Nevertheless, this is not to undermine the importance of professional grounds men in the overall management of sports infrastructure. However, this does not preclude these professional, from specializing in a given area in the wide field. The sports administrator being the overall boss must ensure that this important area is given the priority it deserves in the general scheme of his operation. Sometimes, all it takes to run a successful sports programme is the aesthetic value of the immediate surroundings of our sports arena. Sports management research although, it is a very costly aspect of investment, is needed by all sports organization since we know that sports is an important tool for unity and development, sports organization and institutions should as a matter of priority encourage people to carry out researches bordering on the different aspects of sports development. A nation that does not want to incorporate investments on how their country is faring in sports is bound to operate below expectations of the world standard.*

**Keyword:** *Sport Management, Infrastructural Planning, Maintenance, Cost Effective, Safety*

**INTRODUCTION**

The importance of infrastructure in any sporting organization cannot be over-emphasized as there could not be any meaningful development of sports without adequate management of these important resources. In other words the state of infrastructures usually determines the sustainability or the nature of sports organizations. Sports generally in Nigeria have focused mainly on administration and not development. This has resulted in stagnation and extinction of sports at some levels. The management of sports infrastructure varies from one organization to another. Abubakar (1991) advised that a management committee should be established to manage such structures. other administrators may just decide to have a sub-unit within the organization to over-see the day-today management of these important resources. In sports council where this option is being practiced, such unit is usually headed by a stadium manager or the head grounds man. This write up is not going to suggest the better option because much depends on the availability of qualified personnel that could provide expected services.

It is imperative to state that planning, management, maintenance and safety of infrastructures should be taken as an important aspect of the total sports administration in every sports organization. Therefore, for effectiveness, it is better to accommodate as many stakeholders as possible in the overall management of equipment and facilities. Coaches and athletes in particular are the primary users of these resources. So, they should play a prominent role in its management, and the administrators should formulate policies for proper and effective utilization and sustainability

To sustain sports development there is need for private sectors to be deeply involved in sports development in the country. Some private individuals can have their own stadium and various sports clubs as this will help to reduce unemployment and insecurity in the society.

Developing countries instead of dissipating their energies in incessant sports wars amongst themselves, example, neighbouring countries always engaging themselves in fighting wars for issues that they should (have sat) down in a round table arrangement to amicably discuss and resolve, they should invest their resources on researches aimed at improving their poor condition or their resources could be channel to sports development. This paper advocates that this unwholesome practice be checked by all developing countries

and face the facts of life. All nations are endowed with abundant sports man and woman. The problem or issue is how to harness them meaningfully for the benefit of all citizens of the society. Inability to do this, sometimes, gives rise to under-development or delayed development of the sports and society.

#### **WHAT IS SPORTS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH**

The relevance of sports management research to the society cannot be over-emphasized. It is knowledge illumines the mind of both educators and sports managers. The issue of incessant changing of our educational system in Nigeria calls for sports manager's researchers' attentions. Investigations must be carried out to know why we change our educational policies every now and then. This is one of the major problems of developing countries. Some governments are not interested in finding out empirically why certain issues are so. The poor performance of our athletes in national and international competition should be major concern of our sports organization and government. The questions is how is school sports been organized, how many universities are offering physical and health education and how many schools have adequate facilities. Nigeria supposes to be depending on schools sports for athletes, to represent the nation in any type of competitions.

According to Ladani (2001), sports management research is an investigation or findings ways and means of teaching and learning efficiently and effectively, so that goals of sports can be attained anytime and place. This definition is directional, teaching and learning process must be so arranged and conducted in the form that, the learners must contribute to the development of their society in the future time. This is what government supposed to encourage sports mangers, to do, but because of un-challenge and bureaucratic procedures inherent in our governance, people became disintegrated and fall backs to theorizing and make meaningless and unworkable policies which assist in de-developing the society.

#### **PURPOSEOF SPORTS MANAGEMENT RESEARCH**

- 1. To provide sports managers the opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, and understanding in reporting, discussing and evaluating research**
- 2. To facilitate the preparation of sports managers who can utilize teaching and learning processes that will enable them participate more effectively in the life of organizations and institutions**
- 3. To provide sports managers with an orientation to employee relation this might be useful in their personal career decisions.**

In any establishment, may it be an industry, a college, university or any other organization, there should be a functional and efficient direction through which to operate in order to achieve the set goals and objectives. This direction is usually patterned in an organizational form whereby the administration conforms to a kind of structure that promotes leadership, followership and line of action. The structure should therefore provide an efficient way of operating and carrying out the various responsibilities that exist in the establishment. This structure would also show roles of the various members of the establishment to achieving the goals. The moment an organization has established its corporate objectives, it is necessary for the organization to begin to say in what way or manner it intends to achieve them. One of the ways or manners whereby these objectives could be achieved is through formation of policies.

Policy statements are made to indicate to those concerned on what the organization will and will not do in pursuance of its overall purpose and objectives such statement are one expression of the organization's culture and belief system. Policies are not the same as objectives or plans, even through they are frequently confused together. Objectives state an aim or goal i.e. they are ends, policies, on the other hand, are neither ends nor means, they are statements of conduct, policies cause managers or administrators to take actions in a certain way, they are not actions in themselves, policies reflect and contribute to the organization culture.

According to Ladani (2001) policy is an aspect of planning which indicates the organization in decision-making. The author further explained that policies have been identified as guides to thinking in decision making. Policy portrays a formalized and an established path based on rules or guidelines that must be followed. According to Adams (1999) policies do not require action, but are intended to guide managers in their decision commitments when they do make decisions.

Policy is relevant to sustain the organization according to Amuche (2001) for the following reasons:

- To achieve set policies there must be work structures both physical and administrative. These policies ensures the setting of position, roles and the system of role relationships**

- **Policy serves as a navigational aid to sport managers of direction on how to go about along things to meet set targets.**
- **Policies help to explain the ground roles for sport participation**
- **Policy involves fairness and discipline as it embodies ethics and workers welfare.**

In order to fulfill the essence of sports participation, there is the need to formulate policies which could guide administrator in sports management.

#### **PARTICIPANT POLICY**

An administrator has a positive impact on development of participants when they understand the human growth process and can provide quality programme based on participants interests. Administrator should develop sustainable positive relationship with participants by being accessible and possessing communication skills. There should be an open door policy according to Adesoye (1989) so as to increase contact with participants and to give them leadership positions such as team captain, unit manager, committee member, official and supervisor. Policies should be formed guiding the participants on so many things such as:

- **They must be aware of their responsibilities to provide the necessary information for accident reports.**
- **Participant acceptance of facility use policy must be made and the participant should be involved in the decision making process.**
- **Participants should be categorized according to their age-junior, intermediate and senior**

#### **PROGRAMME POLICY**

As an administrator, you must design policies and procedures for all programmes you direct. Policy statements outline the conditions for participation and procedures direct the manner in which these policies are enforced. The programme policies of the sport programme should be clearly stated and available to all the participants before taking part in any programme. These policies could be inform of handouts to serve as guides to participants. The administrator could discuss the most pertinent information with participants. This entails the following considerations.

- **Identification of the user-groups**
- **Need of the user groups-hour at operations, activities, personal services etc.**
- **Consideration for competitive and recreational usage**
- **Consideration for programming of facility for different sports, usage and the best form of funding sourcing and financial operation (Ladani 2002).**

#### **HOW TO SUSTAIN PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND SUPERVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE (FACILITIES)**

Among the numerous functions or responsibilities of a sports administrator are those of management and supervision of sports infrastructures, which are “laboratories” within which sports are played. Consequently, they are of invaluable relevance to successful participation in sports. Their availability, adequacy, accessibility and suitability go a long way in determine success in sports participation. Infrastructures according to Amen (2000) are those qualities, which make learning or doing things easy or simple. If sports infrastructures are available, adequate, accessible and suitable, there is need to properly manage and supervise them so that they can be durable and not constitute health hazard to the users.

#### **MANAGEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURES (FACILITIES)**

Facilities management refers to the total process of structuring the business or organizational aspects of sports facilities. According to Ekeomoru (1981), sports facilities management involves optimum placement, utilization and maintenance of facilities in sports in relation to other vital resources which are human, financial etc.. Facility management could be discussed in terms of consideration for the existence of a sport facility. It could be classified into four broad categories, which include: design consideration, Building consideration, Operations considerations and programme considerations.

In the words of Habila (2000), sports facility management offers interesting, rewarding and varied careers to sport managers. Currently, the facility management profession is experiencing changes. Building and maintenance costs have risen dramatically and the funds to construct new ones or even maintain the existing ones are not forthcoming. Coupled with this, sports facilities are becoming grossly inadequate due to increased population, rising school environments, city life, limited space and sky rocketing labour and material costs. This situation has naturally caused deterioration in the state of sporting facilities, because it leads to over use of facilities, overcrowding and probably manhandling of facilities, which consequently result in accident and reduction in the life span of such facilities. Going by the prevailing circumstances in which new facilities are not constructed due to the reasons earlier mentioned, prompt attention should be given to keeping facilities in good order for use through adequate management maintenance and supervision.

#### **MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES**

A total facility maintenance effort covers two areas, which are operations and repairs. Operations refer to scheduled routines. Such as sweeping floors, weeding fields, picking up trash, moving grass, cleaning rest areas and replacing light bulbs. As simple as these may look their neglect may lead to serious injuries while using sports facilities. Take for instance the issue of sweeping of floors. If pins, broken bottles, stones or even ordinary pure water nylons are allowed to litter the gymnasium or a badminton court, they can cause very serious injuries. So also is the issue of replacing light bulb especially in indoor facilities which are used in the night. If the gymnasium for instance is not well illuminated it poses danger to athletes so also. If the football pitch is not well kept and the grasses grow tall, apart from disrupting the flow of the game of soccer, it poses health hazard because such football pitch may become snake infested. Other management tasks are preventive, which involves regular inspections of facilities to avoid costly or time-consuming repairs. Preventive management involves tuning engines, painting, preserving adequate ground cover, applying protective floor surfacing, pruning dead tree limbs, replacing worn mechanical parts, and cleaning, filtration systems. All these should be given regular attention to ensure safety of facility users (Igbanugo 2000).

The other aspect of facility management with a view to ensuring safety of the users involves repair work that requires more specialized labour. These include replacing roofing: fencing or flooring surfaces and seeding fields, are scheduled functions while others such as those needed when vandalism, neglect, accident and whether damage occurs are unpredictable. Repairs could be inexpensive and simple while others could be expensive or complex. Whether simple or complex, repairs should be made on regular basis in order to prevent accident and ensure safety of the users of sports facilities. Some parameters, determine the maintenance role of a sport manager. These include, type of maintenance role of a sport manager. These include, type of facility, nature of job and training, area, or equipment, the maintenance need and the maintenance staff available within the setting. Facility management plays a prominent role in preventive maintenance through activity supervision and facility inspection. Facility inspection requires general knowledge and simple observation to detect situations needing attention. During these regular inspections, the use of checklist can be adopted. Whenever a hazard exists at the site of repair work, efforts should be made to secure the area and remove the hazard, notify the proper authorities and initiate evaluation when necessary (Awosika 2004).

#### **SUPERVISION OF FACILITIES**

Adequate and proper supervision of sports facilities is another essential function of sports managers to ensure proper use and maintenance of facilities and safety of users of sports facilities. Theoretically any one present at a facility site may provide supervision but in practice, the nature of the sport programme, age level of participants, group size, concern for safety and satisfaction determine the appropriate supervision. According to Ladani (2004), supervision is an art of overseeing the implementation of programme. It is a process of directing, correcting and coordinating available human and material organization or institution.

#### **PREVENTION OR CONTROLLING HAZARDS**

A lot of measures could be taken in respect of supervision of facilities to prevent or control hazards. These include ensuring that facilities are in good order, by ensuring that there are no potholes, cracks, obstacles and other dangerous objects on pitches, providing lights where necessary, and general cleanliness of the environments of sports facilities and so on.

#### **REPORTING AND MANAGING ACCIDENT**

Management of accidents at sports arena connotes availability and accessibility to first aid treatment. It is necessary to make first aid treatment available so as to give succor to the injured before he is opportune to be attended to by a Doctor. This has proved to reduce the severity of injuries and even saved lives.

#### **CURTAILING DESTRUCTION CONDUCTS AND MISUSE OF FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

Destruction and misuse of facilities and equipment should be properly checked through supervision. Destroyed or misused facilities often result in injury to the user and every necessary step should be taken to prevent these situations. If for any reason a facility is destroyed, notice should be pasted on such facility to prevent continued use by unsuspecting athletes until repairs are made. To prevent misuse of facilities and equipment, every intending user should be properly instructed on proper use of such facilities and equipment before using them. These precautions will go a long way in ensuring safety of users of sports facilities.

#### **SAFETY APPROACH AND POLICY**

The risk of injury and accident is a concern of all sport administration. To protect participants and personnel and minimize the potential for legal action stemming from injury, develop a comprehensive policy on how facilities can be used. These policies present information for all eligible facility users regardless of their sports interest. Participant must understand these policies in the interest of their safety and enjoyment. Policies for facilities use must convey information to participants regarding safety awareness and procedure for handling accident situation. Printed statements, supported by notices of activity sites and staff supervision, help ensure proper facilities use and participant behaviour. All policy and procedure statements should describe how and where to obtain assistance at the facilities site for an accident or injury. An outgrowth of facility policies is a process called governance, which the administrator should design, to deal with difficulties that arise. Administrators need preparation to handle situation involving participant abuse to facilities. Effective governance involves keeping participants and staff informed about conduct expectation, including the consequences of policy violation and the procedure for resolving problems. Determine policy and the procedure for fee collection and identification system well in advance. It may involve an identification system that enables the user to verify payment for facility use (Orunaboka 2001).

#### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION**

As part of management strategy, it is imperative that when contracts are being awarded for construction or supply of equipment and facilities, the awarding authority needs to put certain things into consideration:

- 1. Such contractors(s) must be a reputable one with proven integrity. Possible, they should have done a similar job elsewhere.**
- 2. The equipment being supplied must be the type that could withstand our tropical weather. It is not uncommon for dubious contractors and collaborating awarding officials to supply temperate region equipment to a tropical region because of expected huge profit margin and “kickback”**
- 3. Usually, most machinery is expected to have important spare parts attached to the total package of sale. Therefore, sports administrator(s) or the supervisory agent must insist that this is built into the contract and ensure that such is supplied as indicated.**
- 4. The sports administrator should play a prominent role in location and specification of facilities. This is very important because once the construction has taken place it is often difficult to correct some structure. Again, possibility of expansion should be one of the criteria to be taken into consideration and possibility of converting such facility to other use for the entire member of the community is of utmost importance.**
- 5. The coaches and athletes that will be end consumers of sports equipment and supplies should be given opportunity to select what is suitable for them. Though, this should be done within the limited resources earmarked. The sizes, quality and other features could not be mistaken when these groups are involved in choosing the items.**
- 6. Insurance and guarantee must be obtained when necessary. Usually, this helps the awarding organization when supplied equipment fails to perform as expected or when such got damaged or malfunctions prematurely.**
- 7. In construction of facilities, there are many professionals that are expected to participate. The sports administrator must not compromise the inclusion of any of these professional. For example the architect, quantity surveyor, various engineers and other specialists must be allowed to play their professional role adequately. Construction should be done according to approved design.**

8. There is need for the sports administrator or others in charge of purchases to have a good knowledge of items of equipment to be bought. They should be able to differentiate between genuine and fake materials, sometimes, fake materials are often cheaper, that is why it is better to have business dealings with reputable companies. In case there is any defect such instruments or equipment could be channel for good ones. This is not often possible with 'roadside dealers, as they do not have good reputation to protect. Also very important is the fact that the sports administrators should have a good bargaining power, as most dealers are not sincere with their quotation.
9. Incompetent personnel should not be employed under any guise. The staff on ground should have opportunity for in service training. This will further enhance productively and ensure updating of knowledge particularly in their specialized area:
10. Finally, the generality of the personnel should be encouraged as much as possible to have a positive attitude towards the organization. When, some personnel are not pleased with the organization there is possibility of sabotage, object vandalisation or care free attitude towards infrastructure.

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