

# RECREATION PROSPECTS AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN BORI TOWN, RIVERS STATE- NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** The research was carried out to enhance the promotion of recreation centres in Bori Town. This research became necessary due to the inadequacy of organized recreational facilities to meet the demands of the people of Bori Town. This research endeavored to identify the problems of recreation and delivery of recreational facilities in the study area, the recreational needs of the people and how the promotion of recreation centre will improve the health and quality of life through variety of recreational activities. In order to achieve the goal of this study, closed ended structured questionnaires were designed and administered to sampled individuals and key informants. These questionnaires were collected, collated and analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Based on the analysis, findings were discussed and recommendations were made. The study recommended that Government should recognize the need for the implementation of the open spaces proposed in the Bori Master Plan (1972-2003), there should be adequate management for the proposed recreation centre on completion, the provision of recreational facilities should serve both active and passive activities, outdoor and indoor recreation. Recreational facilities should be of standard to satisfy residence's recreational needs; proposed recreation center suitable for Bori Town, if implemented will enhance recreation and improve the health and quality of life of the people in Bori town.

**Keywords:** Management, Need, Prospect, Recreation, Recreation Center

## INTRODUCTION

Studies concerning recreation centers cannot be comprehensive without first understanding the act of recreation itself. This is because recreation Centers are only facilities designed to enhance the act of recreation.

Smith (1969) defined recreation as a form of play or amusement, refreshment of the body and mind. Something that pleasantly occupies one's time after work is done. It has also been described as an activity, which is voluntarily undertaken and practically motivated by leisure and satisfaction.

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Recreational centers include parks, public open spaces, sports facilities, gardens, etc. In Port Harcourt Rivers State there are notable facilities such as the Alfred Diete Spiff sports complex that contains series of recreational facilities such as swimming pool, football, basketball, volleyball, etc. there are other recreational facilities, Port Harcourt tourist beach, Port Harcourt Peace Park, and the public open spaces along Niger Street, etc.

Kaplan (1988) also sees recreation as one of recreating or revitalizing people that they may efficiently return to activities which are not recreation but economically gainful work.

Furthermore, recreation under good supervision can help strengthen one and contribute to human happiness. The benefits of recreation to man's wellbeing is emphasized by Riggs.

Riggs (1935) in his discussion in "The Function of Recreation to a balanced life" Riggs states that recreation in relation to work afford a refreshing contrast o responsibility and routine, it keeps the

spirit of adventure and that sense of proportion which prevents taking one self and one's work too seriously.

Ojo (1976) says that there are so many benefits of recreation, which any sensible society will take very seriously if it is to survive for a very long time.

Recreational types involves outdoor and indoor while they are classified passive and active. The outdoor are those under taken outside the confines of building, while the indoor are those undertaken in the comfort of one's home. This study is therefore, more or less geared to outdoor recreation, which amongst others make demand on organized recreation centers.

If recreational center is been promoted in Bori Town, it will improve better health conditions general livelihood of the people of Bori Town.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Recreation as stated above is one of the basic requirements for mankind to live a balanced and healthy life style, this is because after the stress of the day's activities, one needs a place to relax and recreate. Hence, it became imperative that recreational centres be developed in cities and towns. Providentially, the Bori Master Plan (1972-2003) proposed an array of open spaces for recreation for the town which have not been organized even until the time of this study. Some of the open spaces have been overgrown with weeds while others which have not been overgrown by bush are being converted for other uses. The need to organize recreation centers in Bori town is imperative to the health, aesthetics, economic growth and the general wellbeing of Bori residence.

#### **GOAL OF THE STUDY**

The goal of the study is to assess the potentials and management of recreational facilities with the intent of promoting recreation center in Bori Town in Bori

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives are to

1. Highlight the need for the development of public recreational centers in Bori town.

2. Advocate the implementation of recreation centers provided in the Bori Master Plan (1972-2003).

3. Design a model recreational center for the use of Bori Town residents as well as to improve the aesthetics of the town.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **BRIEF HISTORY OF RECREATION**

Recreation dates back to the history of man. However organized recreation began when the industrial revolution hit Great Britain in the 1700s. There were different forms of recreation in then days. For instance the Romans had where they watched chariot races and other entertainment shows. The Greeks had Amphitheatre where they viewed drama and comedy and other entertainment sport spectacles on earth, even bullfights by gladiators. Even the Bible discusses singing, dancing, music and other forms of acceptable recreation, so even the most ancient civilizations enjoyed entertainment and recreation. In the Middle Ages life for most people was dark and difficult. More emphasis was put on work and there was little or no time for recreation. However, jousting tournaments, hunting turns rent and the earliest forms of chess checkers and others games developed during this time. The people worked hard, the church forbade many forms of entertainment but there were still leisure pastimes to help develop the growing history of recreation and leisure.

#### **RECREATION IN NIGERIA**

In pre-colonial times the sports of wrestling was a vehicle for expressing individual and social identity, status and prestige. British colonizers introduced other sports to Nigeria in the early 20th century football (soccer), boxing, athletics (track and field) and tennis spread through mission schools, real companies, the armed forces and the colonial bureaucracy. After independence in 1960, the Nigerian government used domestic and international sporting events to foster a sense of national identity among the various ethnic groups and to gain recognition.

### **RECREATION IN RIVERS STATE**

In Port Harcourt there are various forms of recreation, although it cannot be compared to that of developed cities, residents in Port Harcourt involved in different Form of recreation to enable them feel relaxed, have fun and rejuvenate. Recreation has improved drastically in the city of Port Harcourt. Before now there was no much recreation centers, what was there were few cinemas where people go to watch movies and relax. The civic center (now Alfred Dietsch sports complex) were people go For swimming, watch different types of sports, has very few play grounds except those found in government schools which are basically meant for the students. There are a number of recreational centers in the City of Port Harcourt, which includes hotels, where people lodge for leisure, business or other activities, swimming, play games, etc. There are public open spaces that enable people to recreate with little or no money paid. There are privately owned cinemas such as Genesis, Silver bird, Number 1 cinema, amongst others. There are many eateries in Port Harcourt where people go eat and also relax or engage in business activities.

### **DEFINITIONS OF RECREATION**

There is a myriad of definition for recreation from many authors as the study of recreation is a very wide area. However, literature shows that recreation is all about time voluntarily spent during leisure time for ones enjoyment and or amusement.

Gold (1980) says that recreation is any leisure time activity, which is pursued for its own sake or what happens to a person as a result of recreation experience.

Dana (1978) defined "Recreation as an insurance against disease to the mind and body".

Roberts (1974) says that recreation has positive function and the functions are relaxation, entertainment and means for personal development. He further defined recreation as "any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time other pursuit to which people are normally highly committed".

### **TYPES AND CLASSIFICATION OF RECREATION**

This involves outdoor and indoor recreation activities and can be classified as passive and active recreation. On one hand, outdoor recreation activities are those activities that are undertaken outside the confines of buildings and do not involved organized competition, while indoor recreation activities are those activities undertaken on the comfort of one's home or more specifically activities that recreate the mind and soul. Also, active recreation is a physical activity that a person voluntarily undertakes in their leisure time for purpose of mental or physical satisfaction, it involves energy tasking engagement, while passive recreation refers to no consumptive uses and is marked by relative inactivity, Lawson and Band- Bovy (1977).

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF RECREATION TO ASPECTS OF LIFE**

Recreation is like a precipitation during the days of sweltering heat, it is like a beam of moonshine in the awful darkness. Better put recreation is the time spent either alone or together with loved ones, friends etc for pleasure. If recreation is engaged upon on a regular basis; it will in the long run enhance good health and achieve a peace of mind.

### **RECREATION AND HEALTH**

Recreation has many health benefits. Recreational therapy has been developed to take advantage of this effect; such therapy is applied in rejuvenation and in the care of the ageing population.

Rusk (1959) has called this aspect "The preventive medication of the future".

### **RECREATIONAL DEMAND**

As cited in Iboke (1991) People while choosing to use parks and other recreation facilities, consider the time, money and trouble invested in such activities and thereby behave in a way that is fundamentally different from the way they purchase other items.

The gap between attempting to access people wants to do or ought to do parallels the extreme points on demand, Gold (1980). Recreation is an activity that people engage in during their free time and enjoy as well as recognize as having socially redeeming values

## RECREATION PLAY AND WORK

Unlike leisure, play has a more singular definition. Play is imaginative, intrinsically motivated, non-serious, freely chosen, and actively engaging. While most people see play as the domain children, adults also play. On the other hand, children play is typified by spontaneity joyfulness and inhibition and is done not as a means to an end but for its inherent pleasure.

Recreation is difficult to separate from the general concept of play, which is usually the term for children's recreational activity; children may playfully imitate activities that reflect the realities of adult life. It has been proposed that play or recreational activities are outlets of or expression of excess energy, channeling it into socially acceptable activities that fulfill individual as well as societal needs, without need for compulsion, and providing satisfaction and pleasure for the participant Yukic (1970).

A traditional view holds that work is supported by recreation, recreation being useful to "recharge the battery" so that work performance is improved. Work, an activity generally performed out of economic necessity and useful for society and organized within the economic framework, however can also be pleasurable and may be self-imposed thus blurring the distinction to recreation.

Maller (2002) highlights the importance to human and wellbeing of regular quality exposure to nature, or natural phenomena, such as trees, grass plants, birds and animals. This is particularly critical in urban and sub-urban societies, as these things often aren't always readily available to people unless provided in the form of public parks, gardens and reserves.

Putnam (1999) challenges Urban and regional Planners, Developers and Community Organizers to ensure (that in future we design) more integrated and pedestrian friendly areas and that the design of our communities and the availabilities of public space, will encourage more casual socializing with friends and neighbors" (and others)

## RECREATIONAL CENTERS

### Neighborhood Park

The public space set apart for the habitual play of the residents of an urban neighborhood has generally been called the neighborhood park. It is sometime called the neighborhood playground. Parks are intended to provide a means of escape from the cramped, confined and controlling circumstances of the streets of the town, in order words, a sense of enlarged freedom Alexander (2000). Furthermore, parks will improve physical health by supplying air screened and purified by trees and recently acted upon by sun. This improves mental health by proving an opportunity to escape from conditions requiring vigilance, wariness and activity towards other(s), Stelman (1978).

### Parks and Gardens

Parks and gardens are defined as partly landscapes, mostly green areas intended for social and recreational activities as well as aesthetic or display purposes. Parks are usually larger than gardens and entail less management of plants. But usage of these terms varies by country. While some parks and gardens are highly specialized and institutionally designed for specific cultural functions, others have operated as multipurpose spaces of social interaction, recreation, and ritual, Kaplan (1988).

## PROVISIONS MADE IN THE BORI MASTER PLAN (1972-2003)

The Bori master plan showed playgrounds, playfields, parks and other open spaces where people carry on active and passive recreation activities are not only desirable but also an essential feature of a health and attractive urban center. They also serve as open "breaks" in the town that reduce densities and relieve the compactness of built-up areas, residential, commercial or industrial.

There are three basic functions which open spaces serve:

1. To meet positive human needs both physical and psychological.
2. To enhance and protect the resource base air, water, soil and plants, and

3. To promote economic development such as tourism and improve development patterns, employment and land values, etc.

The productivity and efficiency of the physical resources are important factors in allocating open space and development programmes. By protecting and preserving these resources, flood damage can be reduced, water supplies protected, soils nourished, wild life enhanced and many economic activities, from farming to fishing, promoted. The misuse of these resources has previously had uneconomic results, such as, polluted waters, costly flooding, decreased animal and fish production and loss of soil through erosion.

Planning for parks, watersheds, scenic beauty, conservation and amenities cannot be undertaken as a single function. It must be integrated with all other land uses, economic, social and transportation considerations involving in community, divisional and state planning. (Bori Master Plan, 1972 – 2003).

**METHODOLOGY**

Data was collected from two sources:

Primary and Secondary sources

Primary source for this research includes information obtained from interviews using structured questionnaire, personal observations, photographs etcetera.

Secondary source for this research include information obtained from textbooks, journals, internet and other published and unpublished articles.

In determining the adequacy and management of recreational facilities in which this project is interested in, the target populations are the government functionaries and managers of recreation facilities.

Three basic techniques were used for data collection

- (i) Personal Observation
- (ii) Key Informant Approach; and
- (iii) Questionnaire Design and Administration

The Key Informant Approach was structured questionnaire to interview many users, key informants and people related to the research.

The questionnaires instrumentation helped to assess the present condition and make recommendation

for Implementation. The questionnaire used aimed at collecting information on the following areas:

- (i) Reasons for non-implementation of the goals and objectives of the master plan of Bori (1972-2003) up till date.
- (ii) Importance of a model recreation centers in Bori Town.
- (iii) The socio-economic characteristics of house hold members.

This explains how the sample size was derived and the sampling technique used in determining those that were interviewed was multi-stage sampling techniques as streets were delineated as strata taking 30 households in each street at random.

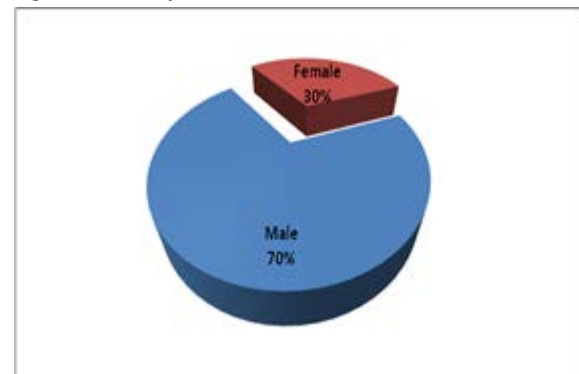
**Table 1: Selected streets in the study area**

S/NO	Roads	Frequency	Valid Percent
1	Hospital road	30	20
2	TTC road	30	20
3	Zaakpor road	30	20
4	Taaba road	30	20
5	Bank road	30	20
Total		150	100.0

Source: Authors' field work, 2015

**DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

**Fig.1 Sex of Respondents**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015.

Figure 1 above revealed that 70% of the sampled respondents in the Study Area were males, as females represented only 30%.

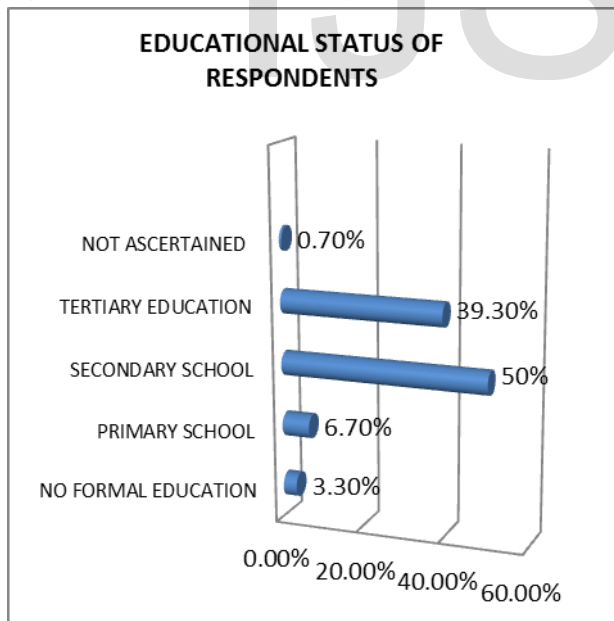
**Table 2: Age-Sex distribution table of household members**

Age Cohort	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0-14	90	20.7	90	20.7	180	41.4
20-34	45	10.3	80	18.4	125	28.7
35-44	70	16.1	20	4.6	90	20
45-54	20	4.6	5	1.1	25	5.7
55 and above	5	1.1	10	2.3	15	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' field work, 2015.

The study shows that 41.1% of the respondents fell between the ages of 0-14 years while 28.7% fell between the ages of 20-34 years. It also shows that those between 35-44 years were 20.7%. The least was 3.4% being those 55 years and above.

**Fig. 2: Educational status of respondents**

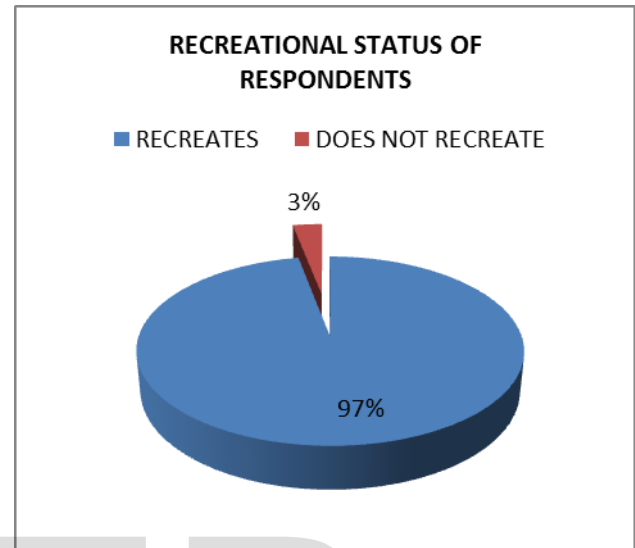


Source: Authors' field work, 2015

Figure 2 revealed that most of the respondents had secondary education which accounted for over 50%,

tertiary education accounted for 39.3%, 6.7% accounted for primary education while 3.3% accounted for no formal education. 0.7% was not ascertained.

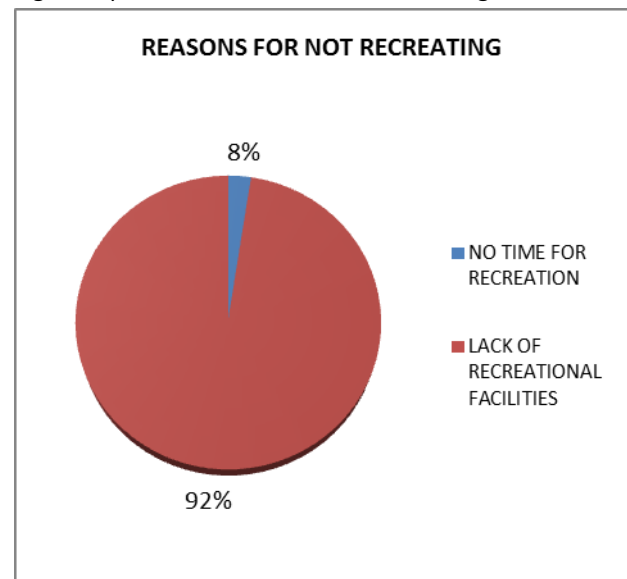
**Fig.3: Recreational Status of Respondents**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

Respondents were asked if they ever had time for recreation. The response as revealed in Fig.3 was that 97% of the respondents do recreate and only 3% of the respondents claimed they do not recreate.

**Fig.4 Respondents reason for not recreating**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

The result showed in fig. 4 that 92% of the respondents' claimed lack of recreational facilities as reason for not recreating. Only 8% of the respondents claimed that they did not have time for recreation.

**Table 3: Respondents Recreational Preference**

Item	N	%
Playing /watching Football	30	24.0
Viewing TV	40	32.0
Swimming	10	8.0
Listening to Music	15	12.0
Sitting-out with Friends	15	12.0
Eating-out /drinking	15	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' field work, 2015

Table 3 showed the respondents recreational preference. Viewing TV was the highest form of recreation as revealed by the respondents, representing 32%. This was closely followed by playing football 24%. Others included listening to music, eating out/drinking and sitting out with friends of which each parameter constituted 12.0% respectively.

**Table 4: Benefits of Model Recreation Centre in Bori Town**

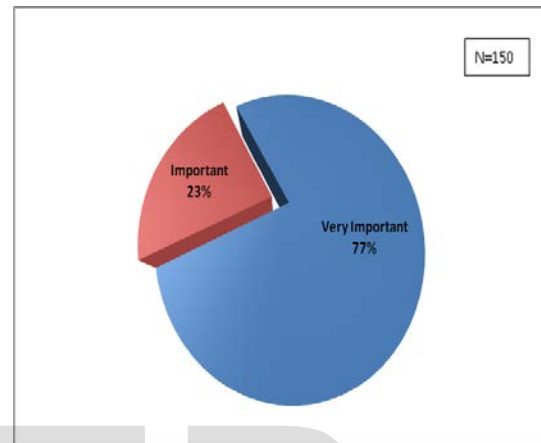
ITEM	N	%
Enhances Unity	5	3.3
Enhance entertainment	40	26.7
Employment Creation	15	10
Enhance relaxation/Recreation	65	43.3
Skills Development	25	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' field work, 2015

Table 4: showed the respondents suggestion benefits expected from constructing the Model Recreation Centre. Enhancement of relaxation/recreation was the highest 43.3%, 10%

said that it will create employment. But 16.7% claimed it will improve skills development, 26.7% said it will enhance entertainment and 3.3% responded that it will bring unity in the area.

**Figure 5: Importance of Recreation Centre**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

From the survey it was revealed that 77% of the respondents said that the provision of a model recreation centre is very important while 23% said that it is unimportant.

**Table 5: Respondents Reasons as to the Importance of Recreation Centers**

Response	N	%
It will encourage recreation	20	13.3
It will generate income for the Local Government Area	5	3.3
It will be fun centre for people	10	6.7
It will ease stress	30	20.0
It will unite people	35	23.3
It will generate employment	15	10.0
It will enhance body fitness	35	23.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors' field work, 2015

The above table 5 showed the Respondents' reasons as to why recreation centre is very important in Bori There was a tie for 23.3% for the enhancement of body fitness and fostering of unity. This was followed by the ability to ease stress (20.0%). It also

showed that 13.3% said it will encourage recreation while 10.0% said it will generate employment. 6.7% and 3.3% said it will be fun centre for people and also generate income for the Local Government Area respectively

With respect to the responses obtained for the implementation of the prescriptions made in the Bori master plan regarding recreation, all the respondents agreed they were necessary. However further investigations revealed that most of the recreational spaces provided by the Bori Master Plan 1972-2003 has being re-allocated for other land uses. This is shown in the pictorials in plates 1 to 3.

**Plate 1: Showing Open Spaces for Recreation now Power House**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

**Plate2: Showing Open Spaces for Recreation now converted to National Youth Service Corps quarters**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

**Plate 3: Showing Open Spaces for Recreation now converted to the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) Center.**



Source: Authors' field work, 2015

## CONCLUSION

Investigations had shown that there are no recreational facilities in Bori town to enable interested persons especially the younger ones to carry out recreation exercise. Recreational activities



provide variety of opportunity to people and enhance the quality of life. It is for this reason that a model recreation center has been proposed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that a Planning Authority should be established and made functional in Bori.
2. Also, employment of qualified Town Planners who will enforce development control and help in the implementation Bori Master Plan.
3. Government should recognize the need for the implementation of the open spaces designated in the Bori master plan (1972-2003).
4. There should be adequate management for the proposed recreation center on completion.
5. The provision of recreational facilities should serve both active and passive that outdoor and indoor recreation.
6. Recreational facilities should be of standard to satisfy the recreational needs of the residents.
6. The Master Plan for Bori should be urgently revised so as to accommodate the present land use in Bori and ensure that all structures put up in the city meet the specified standards.

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