

Unified Journal of Geography and Regional Planning  
Vol 1(1) pp.001- 005 January, 2017.  
<http://www.unifiedjournals.org/ujgrp>  
Copyright © 2017 Unified Journals

*Original Research Article*

---

## **Park and Outdoor Recreation Impact on Man and Environment**

**Dare E. Alaba<sup>1\*</sup> and Omaye, A. Tokula (PhD)<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Kogi State University, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, Kogi State University, Nigeria.

Accepted 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

### **ABSTRACT**

**In a modern neighbourhood, adequate and standard facilities and services should be provided to make the residential area functional. The basic principle of recreational planning is that desirable space standard should be set aside and reserved long before their need became apparent to man. This study focused on basic design principle of park and recreation and the impact of park and recreation. The approach to the study include: field survey and administration of questionnaire to five hundred respondents systematically drawn from neighbouring population of five thousand. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyze the data. Finding from the studied revealed that park and recreation is a major aspect of our local and national development. It contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Products and is responsible for millions of job in varied field of travel and tourism, popular entrainment, soccer. Park and recreation promote health and fitness of its users. It also preserves and conserves the natural environment. The authors advocate Built Onward Transfer (BOT) by the State Government to the private sector in its maintenance, and effective management policy. Secondly, adequate security should be provided at public places such park playground to guarantee safety of those who visit such an area.**

**Key words:** Park, Outdoor Recreation, Neighbourhood Playground, Land use

---

*\*Corresponding Author's E-mail: [exceldare@yahoo.com](mailto:exceldare@yahoo.com)*

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In a modern neighbourhood, adequate and standard facilities and services should be provided to make the residential area functional and efficient. A neighbourhood is the minimum planning unit desirable for the development of residential area. It is the area within which residents may all share the common services, social activities and facilities required in the vicinity of the dwellings. The population of neighbourhood vary from 2,000 to 8,000 requiring land area of 20 to 100 hectares. The density of development being the primary factor (Obateru, 2005).

Recreation is any activity that a person does to refresh the body and mind for his enjoyment usually after work. It can also be described as pleasant activity which one enjoys doing in one's spare time.

The tropical climate which is characterized by high daily temperature necessitates the need for more people to engage in outdoor recreation.

On the other hand, the increase in the people at risk of diabetes due to different lifestyle couple with the need for physical and mental underscore the need for recreation.

The social impact of recreation within a neighbourhood helps to foster interaction among the users and participants in both active and passive recreation.

Youth restiveness in neighbourhood and the attendant social vices are things of concern to both parents and policy makers. How then could active recreation help these youths to develop skill, socialized and become a useful member of the society at large?

Urbanization and the desire to live with nature brought about the creation of park of different landscape which brings man close to nature.

Urbanization undoubtedly is one of the most remarkable achievements of man that represents his impact on the natural environment. Farms and forests have been replaced by large settlements that are created by technology and human-induced processes.

### *Statement of Objectives*

The objectives that guide this research are:

- (i) To identify the impact of outdoor recreation on health
- (ii) To determine outdoor recreation behaviour of Lokoja residents
- (iii) To determine how could active recreation be engaged to reduce youth restiveness

## *Theoretical Framework*

There are many theoretical frameworks that could be used for this research work, but for the sake of clarity of concept and unambiguity, the following will be considered.

### *Outdoor Recreation*

In a well-planned city, five levels of outdoor recreation areas can be identified. In a hierarchical order, they can be categorized as local, neighbourhood, district, city and regional recreation areas.

The components of the modern urban outdoor recreation system are as follows:

- (a) The children's playground
- (b) The neighbourhood playground
- (c) The neighbourhood park
- (d) The district playground
- (e) The district park
- (f) The city playground (stadium)
- (g) The city park
- (h) The urban regional park

A park is an area of natural, semi natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment and recreation or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. It may consist of grassy areas, rocks, soil and tree but may also contain building and other artefacts such as monument, fountain or playground structure. Some parks are built adjacent to bodies of water or water courses and many comprise a beach or boat dock area.

Parks are part of the urban infrastructure for physical activities, for families and communities to gather and socialize, or for a simple respite. Research reveals that people who exercise outdoors in green-space derive greater mental health benefit. Kaplan, R et al (1989).

Providing activities for all ages, abilities and income levels is important for the physical and mental well-being of the public. Friedman, d et al (2013).The emphasis of park management has become more ecological with park establishment both for scientific research and to maintain examples, representative natural areas. In a park that is established for scientific research, such as Sengwa National Park in Zimbabwe, no tourist is allowed there. Hence, it is called a 'Reserve'. Other national parks in the countries of eastern and southern Africa, including those in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa have been established primarily for wildlife viewing and for

biological conservation. The Yankari Game Reserve in Nigeria is also for viewing and for biological conservation. Again, parks have boundaries. Many parks have been developed on what are otherwise considered wasteland or wetland.

Spending at local regional public park contributes \$140 billion in economic activities and generate nearly 1 million jobs in 2013 Eku (2016) park improve the local tax base and increase property value.

Park and protected public land are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development. Produce habitat for wildlife and provide place for children and families to connect with nature.

### **Park Design**

Park design is influenced by the intended purpose and audience, as well as by the available land features. A park intended to provide recreation for children may include a playground. A park primarily intended for adults may feature walking paths and decorative landscaping, specific features such as riding trails, may be included to support specific activities.

The design of a park may determine who is willing to use it. Walkers may feel unsafe on a mixed-use path that is dominated by fast moving cyclist or horses.

### **Basis of Recreation Space Standard**

The basic principle of recreation planning is that desirable space standards should be set now for future use and for suitable land, adequate recreation areas to be set aside or reserved long before their needs become apparent to the layman and also long before the funds for their development are available.

Another factor that affects the supply of recreation areas and facilities in urban centres are:

- (a) The amount of land available for urban development and
- (b) The quantity and quality of the available outdoor recreation resources.

The tropical climate of the low latitudes disposes its residents towards outdoor activities including outdoor recreation more than the temperate climate does to the people of the middle latitude.

On this climatic issue, the California committee on planning for recreation, park area and facilities specifically assert that: larger areas are needed in warmer climate because more people wish to be outdoors and a greater amount of shaped area is needed.

Outdoor recreation areas like central places are varied in location (spatial arrangement), sizes, types and functions. Their minimum size vary from 0.2hectares for the children's playground to 240 hectares for the urban regional park. (Obaleru I.O, 1981). On functional basis, they are of two categories: the playgrounds which are primarily for formal (active) recreation and parks which are primarily for informal recreation.

Former recreational pursuits are game and sports which involves a substantial degree of motion and characterized by a high level of organization of their play sites (Playgrounds) and modus operandi. Those recreational engagements which do not belong to the category of game and sports are regarded as informal as they do not involve a considerable degree of motion and as their site and modus operandi are not characterized by formalized or rigid rule. In most cases, they involve such activities as reading, watching, listening, talking, relaxing and sleeping (Bartholomew, B 1955).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The approach to the study involved the administration of structured questionnaires to resident of Phase II neighbourhood in Lokoja. With a total population of about five thousand (5000) people on the whole, five hundred people were sampled based on systematic random sampling technique.

### **Data Processing**

The responses to the questionnaires items were designed on a modified five point scale of measurement. Thus:

- |     |                         |   |   |
|-----|-------------------------|---|---|
| (a) | Strongly agree (SA)     | - | 5 |
| (b) | Agree (A)               | - | 4 |
| (c) | Undecided               | - | 3 |
| (d) | Disagree                | - | 2 |
| (e) | Strongly disagree (S.D) | - | 1 |

The five hundred questionnaires distributed were returned, giving a return rate of 100 percent. The average of this point is  $(5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 - 3)$ . Therefore, in analyzing the responses, items with mean 3 should be taken to indicate agreement with the statement while an item with mean below 3 is taken to indicate disagreement with the statement.

**Table 1**  
**Recommended areas (in hectares) of Neighbourhood recreation centres in three geographical region or California**

Geographical Region	Neighbourhood recreation centres adjoining primary school	Neighbourhood recreation centres away from primary schools
Coastal Region	2.61	6.60
Valley Regions	3.29	7.39
Desert Regions	4.50	8.33

**Service: Guide for planning recreation park in California 99:50-54**

In **table 1** above, the recommended land areas for the neighbourhood recreation centres adjoining primary schools vary from 2.61 in the cooler coastal regions to 4.50 hectares in the hotter desert regions. Similarly, the land areas for those centres sited away from primary schools vary from

6.60 to 8.33 hectares. It is therefore demonstrated in the table 1 that there is a positive correlation between climatic type and recreation space standard. The warmer the climate, the larger is the space required for outdoor recreation.

**Table 2**  
**Presentation of Data and Interpretation and Discussion**

S/N	Items Descriptions	N	Mean Std	Deviation	Remark
1.	Active recreation promote physical fitness	500	3.54	0.5	Accepted
2.	Recreation increase physical and mental health	500	3.64	0.6	Accepted
3.	Recreation reduce stress	500	3.45	0.4	Accepted
4.	Outdoor recreation helps youth to develop skills	500	3.62	0.62	Accepted
5.	Active recreation engage the youth and thus reduce social vices	500	3.43	0.42	Accepted
6.	Visit to park brings once close to nature	500	3.57	0.52	Accepted
7.	Security challenges discourage frequent visit to park	500	3.56	0.56	Accepted

**Source: Author's Field Work (2016)**

**Table 2** above revealed that analyzed data. The respondents agree that active Accepted Promote physical fitness and increase physical and mental health as indicated by 3.54 and 3.64 mean rating of the respondents.

Outdoor recreation helps youths to develop skills as revealed by the mean rating of 3.62 by the respondents. Youth in the study area developed skill in soccer as they always meet every week-end at the neighbourhood playground to play football. Football matches have been organized between

neighbourhood and youth from such club have represented the state in a football competition.

Furthermore, active recreation engages the youth within the neighbourhood positively thereby reducing youth restiveness and social vices.

The residents of the neighbourhood agreed that visits to park bring one close to nature. The sight-seeing of the flora and fauna plants and animal in the habitual made one to appreciate nature the more.

Finally, security challenges discourage most of the residents from frequent visits to park as reported by 3.56 mean rating of the respondents.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Recreation is an important process that helps refresh and reinvigorate both the body and mind. Recreational activities help you to relax and give soothing effect to your nerves. It helps you to release tension and maintain equilibrium, it reduces stress when tension is taking its toll on someone.

Recreational activities have a very good impact on health. It is an excellent medicine for ailment which cannot be cured by any other manner. It is a natural way to stay fit and healthy in life.

The social impact of recreation include: it helps you meet likeminded people and develop a favourable interest. Make a joyful group that help each other to promote themselves.

Recreation helps to rejuvenate the senses and prepare one for the next challenge in life.

Recreational activities help you to build self esteem and confidence. It helps you enhance the quality of life by building a positive self image.

Finally, the value of recreational activities is best seen in the form of skills that gets developed and sharpened over the period of time.

Recreational Park is a source of revenue for local government. Park has also influenced the location of business activities in the neighbourhood studied.

## RECOMMENDATION

The involvement of the private sector in the provision, maintenance and effective management of recreation park through Built Onward Transfer Policy by the State Government.

The enhancement of the fauna and flora population should be the utmost importance to the management of park.

Adequate security should be provided at private places such as park and garden, playground to protect life and properties.

## REFERENCES

- Bartholomew, B. (1955): Land use in American Cities. Harvard City Planning Studies xv, 1955 Table 3
- Chiara J.D Kopperman't (1978): Site Planning Standards. McGraw-Hill Book CO. New York 1978.
- California Committee on Planning for Recreation Park Areas and Facilities. Guide for Planning Recreation Park in California. State of California Recreation Commission in 1956.
- Eku (2016): Eastern Kentucky University, Department of Recreation And Park, 2016.
- Foran, Clare (2003): 'How to Design a City for Women' the Atlantic Cities. September 6, 2013.
- Friedman, D. Danneberg, A. Frumkin H. (2013): Design and Public Health Working Hand-in-Hand for Better Built Environments, Arcade Summer (2013). <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>.
- Kaplan,, R. Kaplan, S. (1989): The experience of Nature: A psychological Perspective, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lapham, Sandra C: Cohen, Deborah A. Han, Bingi Williamson, Stephanie Evenson, Kelly. R, Mckenzie Thomas L, Hiller, Amy W. Philip (2016) "How important is perception of Safety to Park Use? A four-city survey " Urban Studies 53 (12): 2624 - 2636.
- Obateru, I.O (2005): Space Standard for Urban Development. Penthouse Publication (Nigeria).