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FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,
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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY BASED RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IN MINNA

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Abstract

This paper presents the outcome of the study on how to develop a structure for the planning and development of culturally based recreational resources, with the view to enhance the recreational habits of the people. The study makes use of the both secondary and primary data and the field assessment of the existing recreational facilities in Minna the study reveals that the existing recreational centres does not reflect the recreational preference of the residence of the city. The culturally based recreational activities of the people of Minna did not show in the planning and development of parks. The cultural based recreational resources that are expected to feature have the undertone of the religion or traditional festivals, dance and games which the people get involve. The outcome of the study is the preparation of a prototype design proposal where provision was made for the integration of both the modern and culturally based recreational centre with number of facilities in there. The paper thus recommended that, formidable structure for development be established on the basis of approaches like; resource, activity, behaviour and economic structure of the area. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiative is recommended as driven force for the development and management of the parks and any park developed in such manner

Keywords: Culture, Parks, Planning, Recreation, Spatial, Standard.

1.0 Introduction

According to Webster's New International Dictionary (2nd Edition), recreation is defined as refreshment of strength and spirit after toil, diversion and play. Longman Dictionary of Geography described recreation as leisure time activities undertaken for the sake of refreshment and entertainment. While the Dictionary of Human Geography (3rd Edition) defined recreation as generic terminology for leisure time activities and in which people do practiced away from home. The contents addressed by these dictionary illustrations give the concepts behind recreation, things which to include the kind of activities that need to take place, the period in which an individual is to partake in the activity, with respect to the location or places where this takes place (indoor or outdoor), and the purpose which are not economically gainful.

Authors like Ractcliffe (1981) and Arthur (1997) were of the opinion that recreation is the activities taken during the free period to revitalize people. While according to Ojo (1983) recreation is considered as leisure activity which does not involve long distance travel and should be seen as an integral part of social life. These scholars viewed their ideas on different activities, which are taking place at a particular period of time. Considering the concepts and purpose of recreational activities, Seeley (1977), described it as kinds of activities which are physically, mentally or emotionally gainful for the purpose of rejuvenation and revitalization for enjoyment, and the development of physical, mental and creative desire. However from all the expressions of different scholars, the basic fact is that, recreation is an engaging activity for a

leisure period and at the free will of individuals after discharging the normal professional duties (Idowu, 2001).

The word recreation and leisure in most cases had been used interchangeably or jointly in most publications; in order to optimally make recreation meaningful the establishment of the relationship of the two words is important. The view of Burton (1971) on the existence and kind of interrelationship of recreation and leisure was centered on the functions and purpose of the two words, those things that take place independently. His argument was narrowed towards the functions recreation play, which encompass relaxation and entertainment, while leisure is concerned with personal and social development. Gold (1973) and Seely (1975) both agreed on the fact leisure could be taken at a free period or free time that is available beyond the time schedule for one's primary obligations or programme, like working, eating and sleeping. Olokesusi (2004) in his submission described recreation and leisure as portion of an individual's time, not occupied by gainful employment or used in pursuit of essential activities. His assumption was based on the fact that, leisure will be inadequately presented if it is only based on the quantitative concept of length of time spent not working, but on the qualitative activity one gets involved. Collectively, this implies that recreation is a kind of activity, while leisure is the period of time for the activity to take place, with reference to the nature of time allocated for leisure. Whatever the nature of interrelationship, proper planning or coordination with the necessary facilities remains the anchor for such to be meaningful.

Recreational planning is a systematic way of anticipating, causing preventing or monitoring of changes which are related to the provision of public and private leisure opportunities. The planning for recreation is expected to be a dynamic process that reflects the changing life-style, social values and culture, technology, laws,

standards, and resource availability at both the micro and macro scales. Planning for recreation is as important as planning the residential and commercial areas of the city. Therefore it requires good designing for the development of recreational centres. It is guides for actualizing predetermine goals, with the application of standards that are universally or locally accepted as the estimated criterion for development of facility. Onokehoraye (1982) pointed out that standard is important and encouraged proper allocation of land for the recreational facilities. Although, it may be influenced by the taste of the people, the socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the people. The standard could be in terms of the required space for a definite activity or the facility needed. It is possible that standard is more meaningful while it focuses on moderate number of people.

A recreational park is a relatively spacious area with outstanding scenic and wilderness character often times containing the historical, archeological, geological and other scenic values. Arthur (1997) expanded further on its meaning as a planned and developed open space which serves as a creative land mark with a strong imageability and focal points in the city and it exist in categories depending on the structure of the urban areas. Joseph and Koppleleman (1978) and Arthur (1997) both agreed on the existence on categories of parks with relationship to some factors such as; population, functions, dominant use, ownership, density or intensity of development. The categories are playground, neighbourhood, playfield, community, metropolitan or district and regional parks.

Among the factors that could enhance the usage of the park is the provision of facilities, the location of the park and the kind of activity taking place. The provision of facilities is subject to the types of activities which could either be active or passive. In terms of the passive recreational activities, these do not require physical exertion and the types of activity include picnicking, zoos and botanical

garden, indoor and outdoor activities, while in the active recreational activities, it involves direct participation of people and requires the physical exertion of one's energy. These include activities that take place on the field and playing areas, for children and adult, sporting areas, swimming and golfing.

The act of recreation cuts across the socio-cultural boundaries of different countries, races and tribes. Every social organization of the world has its patterns of recreating. Due to diffusion of culture, the system of recreation seems similar but with few differences. For instance United States of America and Europe had similar systems of recreation which was aided by the level of development and of the advantages in such areas like industrialization, trading and politics. In Africa, before the advent of the colonial administration and the introduction of modern recreational parks, the people had the indigenous systems of recreating after the serious and tedious farming activity, which is mostly at night when the moon is out, or in the evening after returning from farm done under shady trees playing games and during their traditional festivals.

The interrelationship of culture and recreation cannot be underestimated as they are both aim at social balancing and development of people among themselves. Burton (1971) and Ractcliffe (1981) presented the concepts as a socially constructive activity for people or set of people for their personal development and as the wing for higher flight to social development. Seeing recreation as a social related factor, the best development of recreation in Africa and mostly in Nigeria is through the involment and integration of the culturally based recreational resources into the common recreational system.

The problems facing the planning and development of recreational land use with the provision of facilities in Nigerian cities is a clear picture that the people have poor recreational habits. Some of the problems may include the non existence of information on outdoor recreational characteristics in the urban area, poor

provision of facilities, poor maintenance of the existing park and the structure of the existing parks which may not cater for all categories of activities (passive and active). In Minna for instance, the problem is not that recreation centres are not available nor on the sufficiency of it for the base population in the city, but on the fact that the available resort centres are poorly coordinated. Some of the factors responsible for the state of recreational parks in Minna include; none existence of the physical development plan that guide development of the park, unchecked conversion and encroachment of the open spaces by the influential individuals, poor framework for the development of park which truly reflects the taste of the people.

This study aims at assessing the pattern for planning and development of the existing recreational parks in Minna with the view to design a prototype recreational park, which accommodate pattern of recreation that is culturally based in nature along side with a modernized pattern of recreational. The objectives for this study include; the assessment of the patterns and concepts of the existing recreational centres in Minna, identification of the form and facilities required for the practice of these culturally based recreational activities of the indigenous residents of Minna, examining the system for integrating the culturally based and modern recreational activities and prepare a prototype design proposal.

2.0 The Study Area

Minna is the administrative headquarters of Niger State. Minna in the total expanse of land coverage lies in between the latitude $9^{\circ}92^1 - 9^{\circ}100^1$ North and longitude $6^{\circ}30^1 - 6^{\circ}35^1$ East. The area spans from Tundun- Fulani in the Northwest to Chanchaga in the South (see Fig.1). In distance to other major towns and cities; it is about 135km away from the Federal Capital Territory, 86km to Bida, 110km away from Suleja and about 150 km to Kotangora. Minna is basically Gwari town and got its name from a ritual performed yearly by the Gwari founders of the town

to observe the beginning of every New Year. This ethnic group is the original settler of the city of Minna, other notable ethnic groups that later moved into the city to reside are; the Nupes, Hausas, Kanuris and Kadaras. The non indigenes that reside in the city are from different parts of the country and beyond. By virtue of the role the city plays as the state capital, all these ethnic groups politically share the right to

practice and exhibits their culturally based recreational activities. There are few planned recreational centres of different forms and categories in the city, apart from that; there are a number of open spaces in these neighbourhoods that are meant for recreation. However, the culturally based recreational activities are not incorporated in the design and implementation of the existing recreational centres.

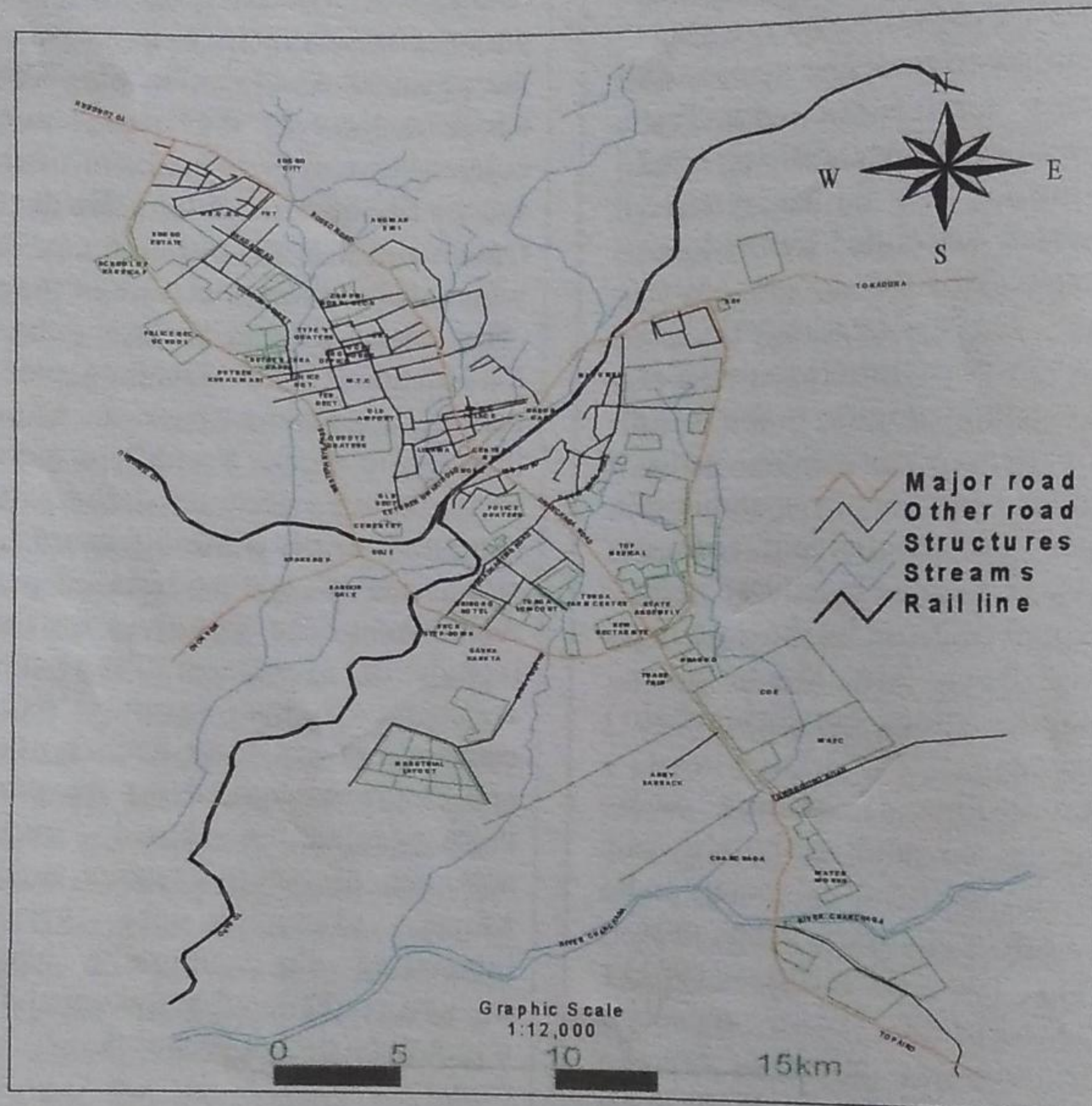


Fig 1. The Street Guide Map of Minna.
Source: URP Dept, FUT Minna.

3.0 Methodology

This study involves the use of both primary and secondary data, the sets of secondary data used include the documents and publications from the Ministry of Sport Development, articles on the subject matter, past research dissertations on recreational planning and development and the printed texts from the library, journal

articles from the internet which all together formed the basis for literature for this work. The primary data involve visitation to the existing recreational centres in Minna and ascertain of the concept of its development, the indigenous practice of the people that have a cultural base was investigated. So also investigation was carried out from the

concerned agency on problems facing the development of recreational centres and on the provision of facilities at the centres on how to use it to develop our cultural and indigenous based recreational activities. Total number of 120 questionnaire was administered was randomly distributed to 4 (four) neighborhood in the metropolis, namely; Minna central, Bosso, Tunga and Barkin-Sale. Also a closed ended question was structured to capture the information from the agencies in charge of the recreational facilities. Images of the existing centres were downloaded from the internet through the goggle earth data map and the design is through the design software goggle sketch up package.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

This aspect of the study focuses on the outcomes of the objectives set for this study which include, background information about recreational pattern of the respondents, the assessment of the pattern and concepts of the existing recreational centres in Minna, the forms and facility of the culturally based activities that are recreational in nature, the auxiliary demand needed for the development and preparation of a design proposal, with respect to the choice of a site appropriate for this kind of park in Minna.

4.1 Level of Awareness of the Existence of Parks in Minna.

This information basically confirms the level of awareness of the residence of Minna on the existence of recreational centres in the city.

Table 1 Awareness of the Parks in Minna

Awareness of the Park	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	114	95
No	6	5
Total	120	100

Source: Authors Field Work (2010).

According to Table 4; 95% of the respondents are aware of the existence of different recreational centres in Minna, while 5% of the respondents were not aware of the centres in Minna. This implies that quite a number of the residence are aware of the existence of parks in the city of Minna.

4.1.2 Do You Participate in Recreational Activities in any of these Centres?

The question addresses whether the respondents do make use of the existing recreational centres for any form of recreational desire.

Table 2 Participatory level of the People

The use of the Existing park	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	33.3
No	80	66.7
Total	120	100

Source: Authors Field Work (2010).

Table 2 reveals that 33.3% of the respondents involved in recreation exercise within the existing recreational centres, while 66.7% of the respondents do

not make use of the centres for recreation. With regard to the outcome in Table 1 and 2, despite the awareness of the majority of the people on the existence of the parks,

more of the people also did not make use of the facilities for recreation.

4.2 The Patterns and Concepts of Recreational Centres in Minna.

The investigation carried out in respect to the pattern and concept of the existing recreational centres in Minna, identifies

the different recreational centres, the categories or classes, the description of the areas where they are located and the facilities available at the centres. Table 3 below explains on the related information in respect to that.

Table 3. Existing Recreational Centres

S/No.	Recreational Centre	Hierarchy of Recreational Centre	Area Located	Purposes
1	Muritala Park	District	Bosso Road	Children Playground/Amusement
2	Hockey Pitch	Play field	Okada Road	Sporting Centre
3	U.K. Bello	Region	Minna Central	Event Hall, Museum
4	Gidan Matasa	District	Bosso Low Cost	Event Hall
5	Youth Centre	District	Tunga	Event Hall
6	123 Field	Play field	Type B Quarters	Football Field and Indoor Games
7	Gymnasium	District	Type B Quarters	Indoor Game
8	Bako Kotangora Stadium	Regional	Stadium Road	Football Pitch, Handball Court
9	Lawn Tennis Court	District	David Mark Road	Sporting Centre
10	Democracy Garden	Neighbourhood	Keterngwari	Relaxation/Viewing Centre
11	Magawata Garden	Neighbourhood	Midwifery, Tunga	Relaxation/Viewing Centre

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2010.

Table 3 revealed that, quite a number of the recreational parks in Minna comprise of district, play field, region and neighborhood. This implies that, community recreational parks are not being considered for development in all parts of the city. Based on the patterns and concepts of these parks and centres, integration is noticed to be lacking in

terms of the principles that characterize the kind of expected activities for both the passive and active activities. The design pattern and concept for these recreational centres focuses on an entity of activity at each centre, which could either be passive or active. Fig 2 – Fig 9 are the goggle earth images of some of the recreational centres in Minna.



Fig 2. Gidan Matasa



Fig 3. Hockey Pitch



Fig 4. Lawn Tennis Court



Fig 5. Democracy Garden



Fig 6. 123 Field and Gymnasium



Fig 7. Murtala Amusement Park



Fig 8. UK Bello Art Theater



Fig 9. Abdulsalam Youth Centre

Source: Goggle Image Retrieved in January, 2011.

4.3 Recreational preference of the people.

The purpose is to know the kinds of facilities preferred by the people, such as

modern, indigenous or the centre with combination of both modern and indigenous/culturally based recreational facilities.

Table 4 Recreational preference of the people

The Recreational Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Modern Recreational Facilities	36	30
Culturally Based Facilities	12	10
Both Modern and Culturally Based	72	60
Total	120	100

Source: Authors Field Work (2010).

According to Table 4; 30% of the respondents preferred modern recreational facilities at the recreational centre, 10% preferred only the facilities that are culturally based, while 60% of the respondents were of the opinion that both the modern and culturally based recreational facilities be provided at the recreational centres. From this analysis, the preference of the people of the city is the provision of recreational facilities that have both the modern and culture

undertone as a place that will command high patronage.

4.4 Forms of Culturally Based Recreational Activities and Facilities Needed

The formation of the cultural based recreational activities of Minna residents is a function of the cultural compositions of the ethnic groups in town. This characterizes the cultural attractions that are capable of motivating recreation development in Minna.

Table 5. Ingenuous Recreational Activities of the people of Minna.

S/N	Activity	Tribe	Required facility
1.	Eko Gani	Nupe	Playground, "walki" animal skin, "Tsani" Local Drum, "Dzaka" rhythmical ring or bangles
2.	Dambe	Kambari	Playground, "walki" animal skin or short pant, sleeveless singlet, canvas shoe, "Tsani" Local Drum,
3.		Bauhi Madaka	
4.	Infar Ebira	Gwari	Playground, "walki" animal skin or short pant, sleeveless singlet, "Tsani" Local Drum, thrift ground holes. Playground, pants, "Dzaka" rhythmical ring or bangles.

Source: modified from Idowu (2001).

Table 5 revealed the various forms of culturally based recreational activities that take place under the category of dance. This could be inform of traditional or religion festival, and traditional games. Some of these activities include; Eko – Gani, Dambe, Infar and Ebira, while the activities could occur during any of these festivals; the Muwo Yam festival, Amanga, Ndakogboya, Anakpe, and Chali.

4.5 System for the Integrating of Modernized /Culturally Based Facilities

There is no strict system for integrating both the modern and cultural based recreational facilities, as most of the recreational activities are in need of space. This implies that space must be created for the activities to function. Though the space required may vary depending on the type of activity, for instance, the space required

for games is less than that of dance and local wrestling. Therefore, there must be appropriate space earmarked for all these activities. In this study, appropriate portion of the recreational park is needed for all sorts of activities that have a links with the culture of the people. The space provided must be able to accommodate the numbers of people who wish to participate actively or passively.

4.6 The Proposal Design

The short comings at the existing recreational centres in Minna have shown that the pattern and concept of the development of the parks have not truly incorporated both the passive and active recreational activities. Therefore the proposal centres on the planning for community recreational park in Bosso area of Minna.

i. Design Approach Techniques: the context of approach helps in selecting the best area as well as planning for ideal activities. The approaches are; resource, activities, behaviour, and economic.

ii Site Selection and Analysis: the area selected for this study is located at the heart of Bosso Town adjacent the Federal University of Technology Minna Bosso Campus. The site is situated at the open space, and it covers about 4.50 hectares. The factors in consideration entail; the availability of space, accessibility to any part of the city, the potential patronage from the university environment. The methods adopted for analysis of the site include the hint of the land scope, site survey method and check list methods.

Topography: the site is gentle rise slope toward the northern part of the site and it is very low elevation.

Climatic Condition: the site does experience two periods of wind; North-East Trade wind and South -West trade wind. The maximum rainfall is in September and the maximum temperature in August by 38°C.

Soil and Vegetation: the soil is adequate for planting exotic trees, shrub and grasses. Presently palm trees are grown on the site, the situation which can

be seen as advantages to the development of recreational park. The city is a blessing; the site is accessible as it is bounded by two major roads, the dual carriage road and the road linking the Western bye pass.

iii. Design Proposal: the number of facilities which fall short in the existing recreational centres is being taken care off in this proposal (see Fig. 10 and 11), these include;

- (a) **Parking Area:** the arrangement of the parking area is propose centrally, with the concept which enhances the security of vehicles in the park. The park is located in such a way that will not destruct the users, movements of vehicles within the park area.
- (b) **Administrative Area:** this is the unit located at the heart of the park, to control all activities in the park.
- (c) **Security Post:** this is located at the entrance of the park, as well the security point located very close to the activity area in the park.
- (d) **Indoor Hall:** This facility serves the purpose of the indoor games such as wrestling, gymnasium, weight lifting, and some sports.
- (e) **Multipurpose Hall:** this facility plays the purpose of hall for theatre, for events, such as seminars, conferences, wedding reception and lots more.
- (f) **Restaurant:** this facility is centrally located in the park; it has a good location factor in relation to some activities like: indoor hall, sporting area and children playground.
- (g) **Swimming Pool:** this is located far from the children playground and it strictly for the adult.
- (h) **Picnic Area:** this is an important facility where most of the culturally based recreational activity will take place. It serves a dual purpose of picnic with cultural events. Local/gang huts are proposed to give the cultural contents and values, so also is the movable sits for outdoor functions and events as shown in Fig 12, the view of the Picnic/cultural activity site.

- (i) Sporting Area: this facility encompasses sporting activities and games such as; handball court, badminton court, basketball court and lawn tennis court. Pavilions are made available for each of the games for the passive participation in the activity.
- (j) Gang Huts: these serve as relaxation centres and are evenly distributed in the park.
- (k) Equipment Store: this serves the purpose of keeping the sporting materials

- and other equipments belonging to the park.
- (l) Fountain and Water Fall Area: this is located behind the administrative building and closer to the children playground.
- (m) Children Playground: this activity is enriched with facilities for the children. It is located in the place that is accessible to other activities in the park.

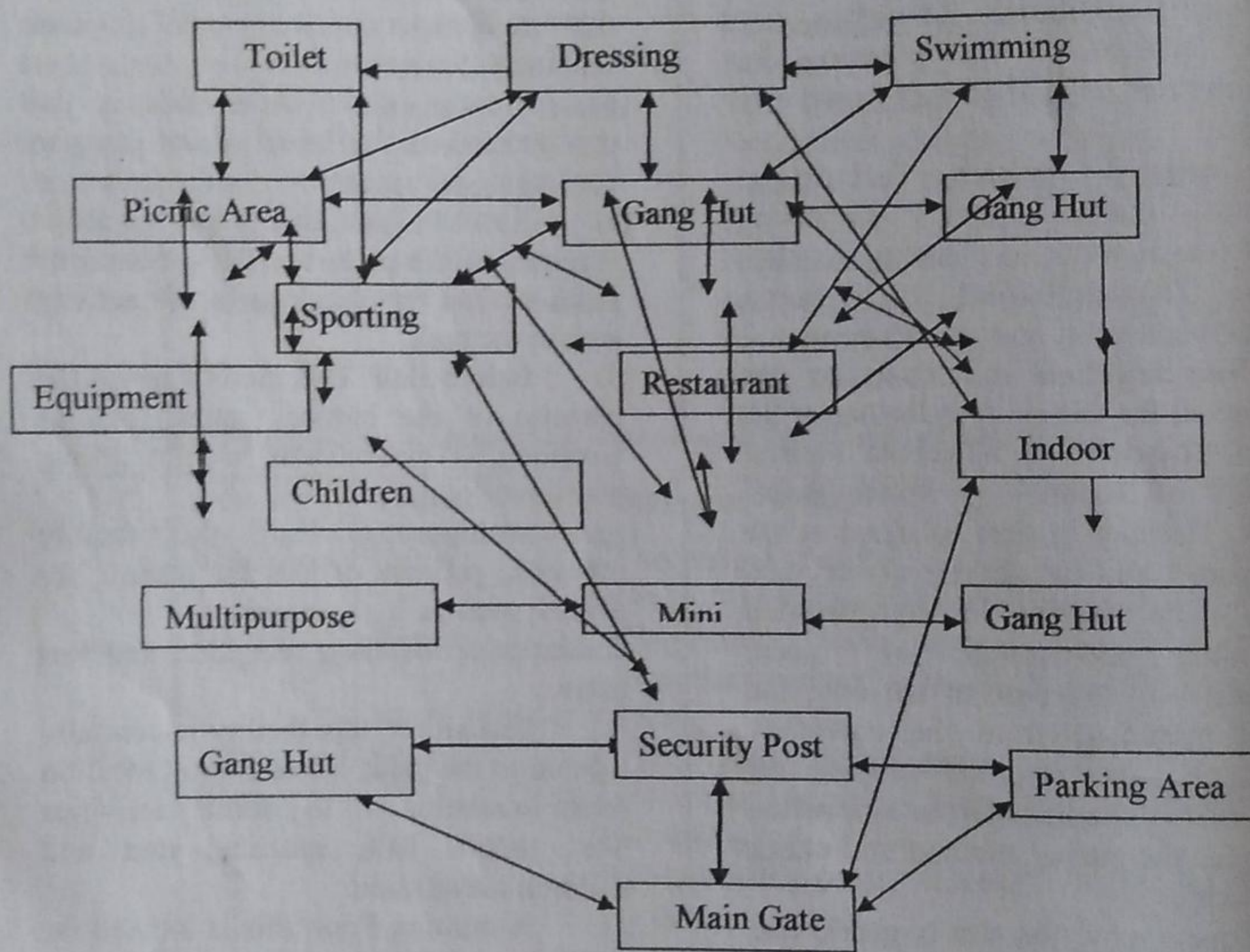


Fig 10. Functional Relationship of the Activities in the proposed Park
 Source: Author's Explanation on the Design 2010.

Fig 10 depicts the interrelationship of the activities in the proposed park, all facilities are well connected. Also, the proximity of every related facility goes together with relative interest in its functions and structures.

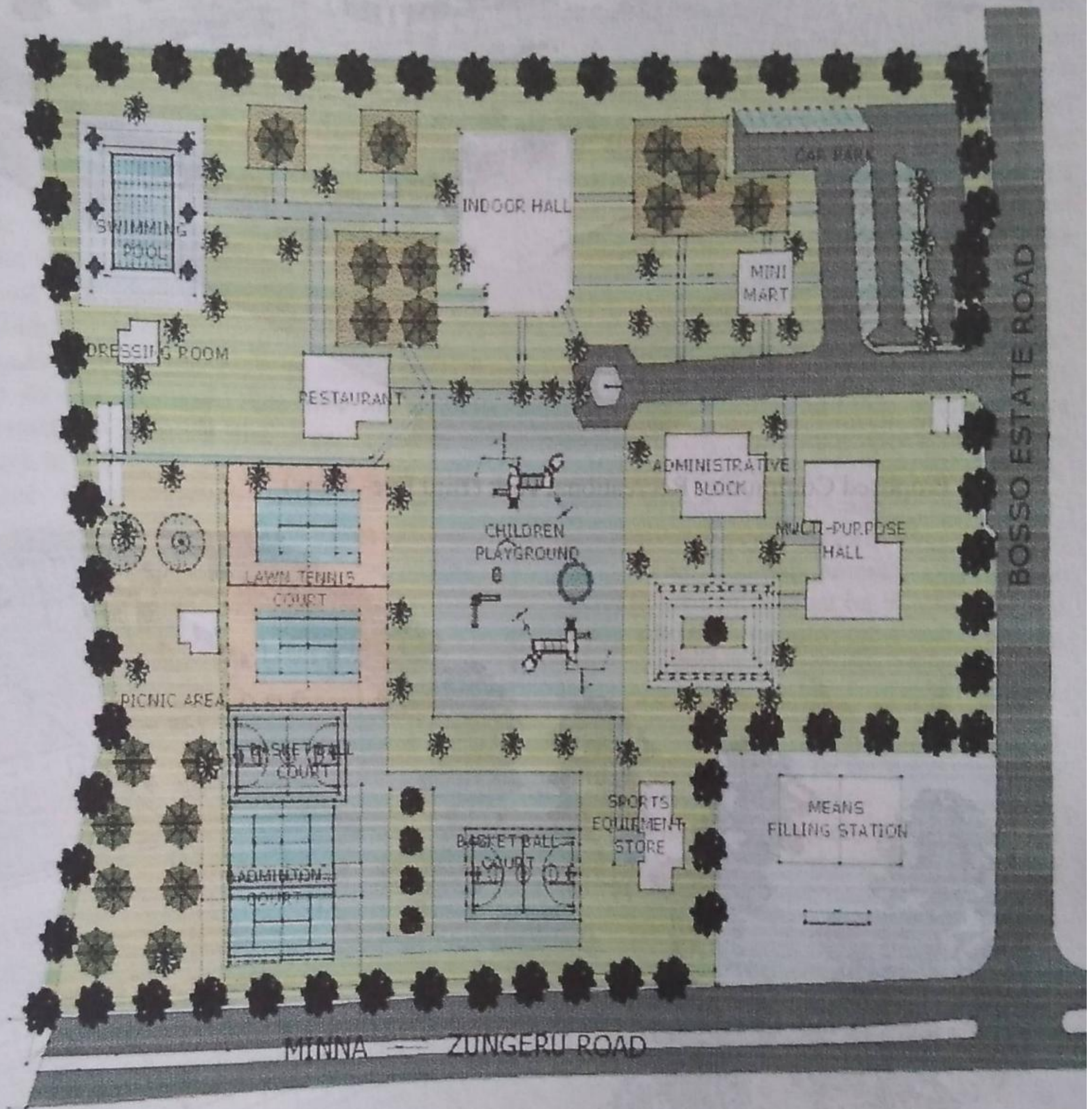


Fig 11. Prototype Design Proposal (Site Plan)



Fig. 12. Proposed Community Recreational Park (Bird Eye- View)



Fig. 13. The Proposed Space for Picnic/Cultural Based Activities (Action Plan)

To enhance the beauty of the proposed park, applications of landscaping elements are important factors to be incorporated into the design. The landscape elements

proposed are for surface design, which are in soft and hard pattern. The soft landscape elements include grasses, trees and shrubs. The species of grasses proposed include;

Carpet grass (*Axonopus Comprises*), Bahamas grass (*Oynodon Dartylon*). The trees proposed are; mango tree (*Manquifer indica*), zebra tree (*Umbrella tree*), whistling pine and masquerade tree. The hard landscape elements include the walkways, fountain and sit-outs. The system applied in the use of the landscape elements provides not only for a scenic enhancement of the park but protection of the environment, such like; the broad (Mango) trees are proposed as buffer to the site, in order to reduce noise pollution from the main roads into the site, the same broad tree were to be planted evenly in different places of the park to reduce the temperature of the park as well increase the oxygen content. Pine tree are to be planted to beautify the area. The walkways in the park are expected to be with edges using "yellow bush" to reduce crossing of lawn, the sporting area are well paved with the use of herringbone paving pattern.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The importance of recreation to man is immense, among which include the healthy living of the participants through the rejuvenation of the lost energy. It is also for economic development in terms of the revenue generation for the governments and individuals as entrepreneur. It serves the purpose of controlling crime within the settlements; it encourages social integration among different, social, economic and political structures through this fostering of unity and interaction among various classes of people. Better participation of people in recreation involves the introduction of the indigenous recreational activities into the system of recreating or provision of space for such activities to take place. Though most of these activities are traceable to the traditional festivals which are based on religious affiliation of the people, even though, no proper documentation on the methods for carrying it out. This study from rational perceptive has developed a concept for those things that

are needed for better patronage of the recreational centres in Minna. These include; provision of facilities for categories of people, adequate site for the park, and incorporation of space as picnic arena which will serve as the place for the culturally based recreational activities to takes place. For the development of such wonderful environment which does not only focus on just to recreate, but to get recreate in the spirit, soul and body, with the person traditional or local background reflecting in this social engagement. The following recommendations are made;

- i. The need for the research on the culturally based recreational activities of the people of Minna and this to be sponsored by the State Governments in collaboration with the Local Government, civil organizations and the non-governmental organizations.
- ii. The development of any recreational centre must be in line with the need of the people and within the environment that has no recreational park.
- iii. Events such as local marriage and other celebration are to be encouraged to be conducted in the park.
- iv. Minna populaces are to be informed on the importance of patronizing this kind of park for their local functions.
- v. Provision of facilities for all kind of activities must be made available, to encourage high turn out to the centre.
- vi. The Private Public Partnership (PPP) initiative must be adopted in the development of the park.
- vii. Maintenance and management of the park be under the supervision of expert in the field as the uttermost end of it all is for profit. Therefore the standard for this kind of park must not be negotiated.
- viii. Framework for the development of the proposal must be on the basis of resource, activity, behaviour and economic approaches with the establishment of institution, policy, finance and maintenance structures.

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