Problems and Countermeasures of Public Sports Service Supply in Shaanxi Province

Guang-bin BAI¹,a, Tao Li²,b and Da-qian ZHANG¹,c

¹Xi'an University of Electronic Science and Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China
²Department of Sports, Xi'an University of Posts and Telecommunications, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China
³bgb1972@126.com, btl1014@sohu.com, c740638305@qq.com

Corresponding author

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Abstract. The existing problems of public sports service supply in Shaanxi province of China are studied by the methods of literature review, questionnaires and expert interviews. The people-first service concept is introduced for a service-oriented government to offer better quality, organization and management of the public sports service so as to meet the people's growing demand for diversified sports. Some enforceable measures are proposed for improving the quality and efficiency of public sports service supply in Shaanxi Province.

Problems in Shaanxi Public Sports Service Supply

Gap between the supply and the actual needs of the masses

With the rapid development of Shaanxi's economy, the higher quality of life leads to more health concerns and demands, which requires better public sports services provided by the government, including the organization and development of mass sports activities, investment and construction of sports infrastructures, and the popularization of sports guide services. These are the key to the rapid promotion of city public sports service. The public sports service standards, however, are specified by bureaucrats without considering the actual needs of the masses. Although the government invests substantially in sports, the majority of the people do not enjoy the benefits of public sport due to the lack of field research in setting the standards of the supply.

Poor management of public sports service supply

Public sports service management by the government of Shaanxi province covers sports infrastructure construction, sports goods supply, organization of mass sports activities, and provision of sports guidance, consulting, training, and monitoring services. Beside mass sports, competitive sports, sports industry and sports societies are all under the management and control of the government. The abuse of governmental intervention in the provision of public sports services causes unscientific management and unnecessary problems. The lack of policy support of public stadiums management brings heavy stadium operation burden, thus a reluctance to open its facilities to the public due to shortage of funds.

Poor involvement of social organizations in the management of public sports services

In the public sports service management, the government plays the leading role while the social organizations are the major players. The enthusiasm of social forces in sports management is not fully mobilized yet, owing to the failure of the basic role of market in the allocation of resources and of the current sports management system to adapt to the rapid development of city sports. It boils down to the confused roles and responsibilities of the government and social organizations in Shaanxi Province. The high barriers to entry and complex registration procedures for sports social organization and the lack of a standardized management system and platform also contribute to the problem.
Imbalanced distribution of public sports resources

Most of the counties in Shaanxi province have built community fitness plazas under the guidance of the government, benefiting part of the residents. But the city communities have difficulties in acquiring public lands and vary greatly in the provision of public sports facilities, which suffer a short service life due to poor maintenance and lack of full-time management. Survey shows serious waste of sporting resources and irrational practices in the operation of Shaanxi province stadiums. Some national fitness facilities were dismantled temporarily without grant. The stadium utilization factor is too low to meet the needs of mass fitness, exercises, leisure and entertainment. On the other hand, the daily operation burden induced by shortage in funds and policy support suppresses the enthusiasm for operating stadiums and gymnasiums.

Poor public sports service fund management

Public sports service supply investment mode is transforming gradually from the current financial allocation by provincial government into government-guided investment from private capitals, fully utilizing the government's financial fund and attracting private capital to the construction of sports facilities. The annual sports financial expenditure of Shaanxi Province is rather high, but diluted by a long list of projects and items, among which are the sports administration, competitive sports, mass sports and sports industry. More public sports funds are devoted to competitive sports than to mass sports, reflecting the government's greater interest in the former, thus the uneven development. With increasing spending on stadium construction and maintenance year by year in Shaanxi province and the growing government budget on the supply of public sports services, it is necessary to improve the management of public sports funds by optimizing the supply of funds and by reducing the management cost for maximal economic benefits.

Development Strategies for the Supply of Public Sports Services in Shaanxi Province

Transformation of government’s role with citizen-oriented concept of service in mind

It is the trend that the government plays a leading role in the supply of public sports service. Its major function should be the macroeconomic regulation and control of the total sport supply and demand balance together with structural optimization, the construction of a sophisticated public service system with sound regulations and policies, and the planning and guarantee of the future development of public sports service. The sports department in charge should fundamentally change the management philosophy into a community-oriented service idea. Shaanxi sports service is still in its infancy, with low operation efficiency, incomplete sports service system and functions, and especially poor marketization of the national fitness service. The national fitness sports development is still in the stage of effective control of stadiums and gymnasiums by the sports management department. The potentials of the national fitness service should be fully exerted by formulating specific schemes and definite functions and development strategies of the stadiums and gymnasiums based on their respective characteristics. Supportive regulations and policies should be provided by the sports management department of Shaanxi province to take full advantages of the comprehensive role of stadiums and gymnasiums and to optimize the social resources for more diversified amateur sports activities. Medium and small-sized stadiums owned by enterprises and universities should be encourage to accommodate the general public with improved service and reasonable opening hours.

Improvement of the organization and management system of public sports services

In the provision of government public sports services, there should be a clear division of labor and responsibilities for mass sports services with separate functional departments responsible for different services. The Department of public sports planning is responsible for formulating and implementing mass sports development plans. The specific services include the organization and guiding of mass sports and community sports activities, the development and effective utilization of the community sports platform, communications with local communities, the implementation of the
national standard of physical fitness exercise, the popularization of national physical fitness monitoring, the management of social sports instructors and the approval of technical grade. The above work requires dedicated departments and the effective communication and coordination between them.

**Government as the main body in the aggressive promotion of mass sports activities**

As the major provider of public sports service, the government needs to further strengthen its public service and management of mass sports. The government can use allocated funds to provide public sports facilities and services, or commission/purchase the National Fitness services for the public, especially for the grassroots to participate in sports activities. Efforts should be devoted to the improvement of the quality of public sports services, consulting services, and physical fitness monitoring. Apart from fulfilling its own function, the government should actively encourage the development of enterprises, social sports organization and sports charity funds through the formulation of relevant policies and regulations to offer favorable policies and financial supports. Thus the social involvement can be fully mobilized. The integration of social resources makes possible the massive construction of new sports facilities for the ever growing demands of mass sports. An information platform should be constructed for better communication between the government, enterprises, the public, and various sports organizations by making full use of the public information platforms such as the government sports website and WeChat for easier and timelier release of information and feedbacks from the masses.

The rapid economic development of Shaanxi Province makes it possible to arrange more government-fund sports activities to benefit all the people, such as "National Fitness Month", "August 8th National Fitness Day" and various activities on traditional holidays. Greater promotion efforts should also be made to publicize characteristic sports activities, including the Shaanxi City Wall International Marathon, Qujiang Open Water Swimming Race, Mount Cuihua Climbothon, Mount Li Climbothon, and County fitness Day activities.

**Social sports instructors' training and social security**

At present, the number of social sports instructors in Shaanxi is far from meeting the needs of the masses for fitness consultation and guidance, demanding more social sports instructors. The administrative departments should strengthen the training of social sports instructors to improve their professional competence. A dedicated social sports instructor organization fund should be established for the training, exchange and welfare of the instructors. The government should strengthen the social security system of the sports instructors, and solve the worries of the sports staff, thus their devotion to the public sports services.

**Improvement of sports information consultation and physical health testing**

The sports information consultation and physique monitoring service should be strengthen to raise the awareness of the masses in scientific exercising. The Department in charge of sports in Shaanxi province may take the following measures:

1. The establishment of the scientific health guidance information website for introduction of scientific knowledge and methods of sports (such as sports injury and protection, emergency first aid, and sporting diet), information of sports organizations, activities and competitions, and the sports regulations and policies. Full-time persons should be appointed for the regular information updates. Additional channels such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and publicity windows should also utilized to publicize fitness tips, as well as the effect of physical exercises on the prevention and treatment of some diseases;

2. Community lectures by accomplished social instructors, fitness coaches and experts on sports injury treatment and rehabilitation;

3. Multi-channel publicity of the extensive coverage of physical fitness monitoring, which is widely considered to be physical health examination but actually also includes the physical fitness tracking evaluation, sports supervision and sports prescription formulation; and

4. Greater efforts in the construction of the national physique monitoring sites and the training of
monitoring personnel to offer the masses fitness tracking evaluation, exercise intervention and exercise prescription services.

Conclusions

The major problems of Shaanxi province public sports services are the gap between the supply of demand of public sports services, the poor public sports service supply management by the government, inactive social involvement in public sports service management, imbalanced regional distribution of public sports service resources, and poor management of public sports funds.

The Shaanxi provincial government should take the people-first service strategies to optimize the organization and management of public sports departments, define its major role and responsibilities in the provision of better and more diversified public sports services to meet the people's growing demand. The improvement in the quality and efficiency of public sports services in Shaanxi province can only be achieved by an aggressive promotion of sports activities that benefit all the people and the cultivation of the competent social sports instructors.

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