

Changing Concept of Zoos in India (Evolving as a National Brand)

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I) Definition -- A place where live wild animals are kept, studied, bred, and exhibited to the public.

II) Evolution of the Zoo and their concept -- The oldest zoo in the world was in Egypt around (2500 B.C.). In those times, zoos were mainly a private collection of the kings and rich people, for whom most of which it was another way to display their status and wealth. In prehistoric times, Rishis kept deer and doves around their ashramas and Moghul emperors kept wild animals as a show of their status and pleasure. The first detailed information about early zoos and their management was available regarding the menagerie built by King Henry I in England which had lions, cheetah, camels, and domestic animals in its list. The main idea behind having zoos in the early years was to provide harmless entertainment to the people.

III) Change of concept -- The zoo management concept started changing drastically in the 20th century when it was felt throughout the world that zoos have much an important role to play due to decline in populations of some animal species. With the advent of this concept, many laws have been framed all over the world to provide a legal umbrella.

In India the "Wildlife Protection Act" was formulated in 1972, which was later revised in 1992. Also, "Central Zoo Authority of India" was formed in February 1992. What the zoo wants to show now is not more animals but what animals are like, viz, their natural habitat, their behaviour, eating habits, etc. by the means of educational activities in zoos. Zoos are changing as a natural corollary, designing and managing mock eco-systems, light, temperature and other influencing factors so that the visitors can get an opportunity to observe the diurnal and nocturnal animals simultaneously. Also zoos are changing according to needs of the visitors. Introduction of aquarium, exotic birds and night safari within the zoos is transforming zoos in the 21st century. Zoos and aquariums are focusing on threatened species, research, public education, training and influencing and advocacy through *in situ* support of species population and their habitats and also linking *ex situ* activities to *in situ* conservation projects.

Calcutta Zoo (1875) produced a systematic and scientific manual of zoo management in 1892 which was hailed by the British Nature Magazine and cited as the "first practical handbook" on the management of wild animals in captivity by its first Superintendent R. B. Sanyal.

Brands -- We live in a marketing world today. Everywhere you go, every corner you pass, and any discussion you have is bound to be about brands. Hence, the zoos have to develop as a national brand, which has an entity (product, service, company, person, technology, etc) that offers a set of value exchange measures between what the public or market seeks and the price the buyer is willing to pay for it. Hence there should be a clear strategy for doing so, with leadership, proper co-ordination between governments the public and private sector, NGOs and population in general to develop zoos as a national brand.

Thus Indian zoos need to understand the need of MIS (management information system), IT, Logistic Management, etc. as it is an evolving need for the modernization of zoos. As and when the zoos come under the public sector more efforts have to be implemented to improve services.

Importance and need of marketing, MIS, HRM, Logistic Management in the Zoo

Marketing :

"Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, services, organizations, and events to create and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and organizational objectives." Zoos and aquariums of the world attract about 600 million visitors per day.

Zoo visitors, their purpose and demands: -

Zoo visitors can be grouped accordingly

i) Students (school, college, veterinary, etc)

Purpose—

- To see wild animals
- To conduct project work
- To gather information for purpose of learning about wildlife

Demands—

- They want to interact closely with the wildlife.
- They need a richer experience, not merely observing the animals in cages.
- They need information about the animals handily

ii) Volunteers

Purpose—

- To utilize their spare time.
- To help them decide their career
- To educate the visitors.
- To educate themselves

Demands --

- Require proper guidance, when, what and how to help.
- Privileges (sometimes not possible for zoos to deliver)

iii) Tourist (Foreigners).

Purpose—

- Zoos have been always a prime attraction of tourist as it represents the nations' wildlife .

Demands—

- Requires translator, as they may not understand the local languages
- They always seek zoo guide and other materials such as pamphlets, hand books, details of zoo and zoo map.

iv) Formal and informal groups.

Purpose—

- To enjoy the holidays as a group outing
- Entertainment, fun etc.

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Demands—

- want more space, so that they can sit together and chat.
- want good food, snacks etc
- want for informative live shows.

Hence the zoo authority may want to take their demands into consideration and add these as services, as it is a way to make profit for public sector undertakings.

Zoos come under the service sector. The curators, educational officer, public relation officer need to attract more people to zoo and promote multiple visits. They need to find more sources for generating revenue. They should target schools, colleges, tourists, corporates, civic organisations, etc. They need to be more creative as they are the backbone of the zoo. The education department needs to collaborate with other educational institutions, organizations, ministries, etc. and to participate in the development of formal curriculum activities. This will create a basis for enhancing the effectiveness of conservation education. They also need to increase efforts for raising funds for research, conservation, education, recreation, etc. Hence the principal of integrated nature conservation should be applied.

Logistic Management : -

Logistic management is the management process, which integrates the flow of supplies into, through, and out of an organization. It involves the integration of information, transportation, inventory, warehousing, and material handling. This leads to a level of service ensuring right materials at the right place, time, quality, and cost. Areas of application in zoo:—

- Supply of medicines, routine and emergency
- Supply of surgical equipments and accessories.
- Supply of foodstuffs appropriate to each species
- Stationeries.
- Tools required for the maintenance of cages.

Management Information System :

The current data management tools for zoos are outdated. Data cannot be easily shared across applications. The lack of comprehensive data standards makes extraction of information for analysis very challenging. Existing software cannot handle the complexities of dynamic collections of species. That leaves amphibian, fish and invertebrate collections undocumented as well as even more commonly displayed animals such as mammals and reptiles. Our current technology does not promote timely and efficient validation of critical animal information.

The International Species Information System, (ISIS), a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, is preparing the Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) which is a very advanced wild animal data system, which will help zoos with many other management tasks in addition to keeping their animal records systematically and accurately. ISIS has done this for the past 30 odd years and ZIMS represents a quantum leap in information sciences for zoos. As an area of study it is also referred to as information technology management.

Through ZIMS, MIS will allow zoo staff to quickly check on animal management, provide staff current husbandary and

veterinary information from a global information pool so that best practice in animal care is available, make possible such devices as “compliance report” to assure all necessary animal management procedures are being carried out and offer time-saving and streamlining benefits to a; zoo staff, including vets, curators, registrars, keepers and aquarists.

Human resource management -

Indian zoos are on the verge of introducing various sections such as mammals, avian, aquarium, and night safaris, invertebrate zoo, etc., which are an important attraction for tourists. As various sections are introduced the need of skilled labour and the Human Resource Management is imperative. HRM is playing a major role in staffing, training and helping to manage people so that people and the organization are performing at their maximum capability in a highly fulfilling manner.

Basic Overviews of Human Resource Management

->Getting the Best Employees

- Workforce Planning
- Specifying Jobs and Roles
- Recruiting
- Outsourcing
- Screening Applicants
- Selecting (Hiring) New Employees

->Paying Employees (and Providing Benefits)

- Benefits and Compensation

->Training Employees

- Career Development, Employee Orientation, Leadership Development, Management Development, Personal Development, Supervisorial Development, Training and Development.

->Ensuring Compliance to Regulations

- Personnel Policies and Records, Employee Laws, Topics and Issues, Ethics - Practical Toolkit

->Ensuring Safe Work Environments

- Diversity Management, Dealing with Drugs in the Workplace, Employee Assistance Programs, Ergonomics: Safe Facilities in the Workplace, Dealing with HIV/AIDS in the Workplace, Personal Wellness, Preventing Violence in the Workplace, Ensuring Safety in the Workplace, Supporting Spirituality in the Workplace, Diversity Management

->Sustaining High-Performing Employees

- Employee Performance Management, Group Performance Management, Interpersonal Skills, Personal Productivity, Retaining Employees

->General Resources

- Additional Information for Nonprofits, On-Line Discussion Groups

Thus, with implementation of these strategies and management skills, Indian zoos could aim to be of International Standards.

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