

The role of tourism in the development of nigeria



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In discussing this, earlier work conducted on similar research will be made reference to. This include: a research carried out by (Oji-Chukuwka, 2013) entitled Economic development of Nigeria-The Role of Tourism.

This study was carried out using structured questionnaire and based on the notion that the federal government has heavily depended on agriculture and crude oil as the main stay of the Nigerian economy.

As such, the researcher decided to carry out a research to unravel how well or otherwise the Ebonyi State Tourism Board has contributed to the Nigerian economy through the promotion of its tourism-related activities.

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. If the Nigerian tourism sector has met the objectives with which it was set up?
2. If Government's interference in the activities of the Ebonyi State Tourism board affects its performance in the long-run
3. If Tourism has created equal job openings for all classes of people.

In another study, carried out in 2006, Noëlle O'Connor examined how television induced tourism has influenced Ballykissangel's Residential Community in the long run. Ballykissangel is the title of a BBC television drama that was shot in Ireland. It aired from 1996 to 2001 and had six episodes.

O'Connor, simply wanted to find out if and how the decision to shoot the series in the rural Irish suburb has affected the tourist inflow into the community. The purpose of the study, according to her, was to examine the influence of television induced tourism on a small rural based community in Ireland and how it can actually influence tourist development to a destination.

Specifically, the researcher sought to find out the role of the television series' in developing an area for tourism related activities.

The case study chosen therefore for this research was Avoca, a small village in County Wicklow, Ireland that was the setting for the filming of the BBC television series *Ballykissangel*. The major data for the work were collected from a systematic sample of residents of Avoca and through personal interviews.

2. 4. Empirical Literature

During the course of consulting other research works that are in line with my research, the different methodologies used proffered different findings and conclusions. These would be highlighted here as part of the empirical literature.

The first study, (Oji, Chukwuka, 2013,) discovered that the lukewarm and inadequate funding of the Ebonyi State tourism board was the one of the banes confronting the development of tourism in the state.

Also, findings of his study revealed that the government were the major beneficiaries of the tax revenues derived from civil servants, visitors' expenditure and tourism attraction.

On the other hand, O'Connor, discovered that a large number of tourists were attracted to Avoca as due to the fact that the then popular series *Ballykissangel* was being shot in the locality. Today, tourism has become Avoca's most vital industry since the closure of its copper mines. The residents have also realised that not only has this increased their earnings, it has attracted the international attention to the once quiet suburb. It has also created job opportunities for the locals whilst instilling a sense of pride for the natives of the community.

With regards to the tourism promotion, this study revealed that Television is currently the most potent of all media used in promoting tourism activities. In view of this, more consideration should be given to television as a medium of advertising. This may be because Television combines motion, sound, and special visual effects. The product can be demonstrated and described on TV. It also offers wide geographic coverage and flexibility as to when the message can be presented (Arens, 1996).

2.5 . Other relevant literature

2.5 . 1 The Nature of the Nigerian Tourism Industry

Nigeria currently boasts of an array of beautiful landmarks, amazing water-bodies which include the beaches, rainforests in the southern part of the country, monuments, sites and sound, down to the hustle and bustle which

is prevalent in the cosmopolitan cities like Lagos, Abuja and Port-Harcourt. All these have become particularly conducive and attractive for holidaying.

Besides the tourist attractions, the culture, norms, artefacts, food, language, mode of dressing which all differ from one part of Nigeria to the other, have all contributed in making the country extremely unique in many ways. On many occasions, international tourists are in awe of the unique selling points of Nigeria despite the attendant issues like corruption and high poverty index.

However according to (Uche, 2003) many of these attractions are largely still untapped notwithstanding the fact that they are largely exploited. They are savoured by visitors either rich and in search of adventure, new terrains and exploits.

One cannot help but mention some of these attractive tourist sites which Nigeria boasts of. They include the Yankari Games Reserve, Olumo Rock, Mabilla Plateau, Zuma Rock, Gashaka Games Reserve and of course the coastal beaches which are unique and enchanting.

Tourism is relatively at an infancy stage in Nigeria. This is more so because of the running neglect of the abundant resources naturally endowed on the country rather than the lack of them. Nigeria's rich cultural diversity and tourist attractions are inexhaustible.

Apart from Cultural sites and reserves which serve as potential tourist attractions, African countries like Nigeria have abundant cultural festivals that are very rich in mythology and diversity which can also be harnessed to

generate revenue as well as serve as a means of creating some feeling of shared love and brotherhood among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. These festivals include the fishing and New Yam festivals celebrated in almost all the nooks and corners of the country at various seasons of the year.

The uniqueness of Nigeria's tourism potentials have been confirmed and recognized by UNESCO, which has singled out the Sukur Kingdom in Adamawa State as a world heritage site. Other unique sites also recognized include the Three Sisters' Rock, Kamala Mountains, Obudu Cattle Ranch, Lokoja Confluence, Osun Oshogbo Shrine, Gurara Waterfalls, Ikogosi Warm water springs, Oguta Lake, Kwa Waterfalls, Bwasu Hot water spring, Mboi pond, ancient natural and man-made caves and a host of other sites.

Many years after the advent of television in Nigeria as well as the proliferation of private television stations across the country very little has been done to promote the tourism sector, which is a neglected goldmine, (Da Silva, 1999).

However, despite the rich number of tourist sites and attractions in Nigeria, there have been a lot of impediments to the growth of the sector. These impediments are numerous and include acute conditions of advanced fee fraud popularly called 419, underdevelopment and poverty as well as the growing level of insecurity-fuelled by the activities of the insurgent group, Boko Haram, which many potential Nigerian bound tourist' many not like to be confronted with.

A survey on tourist activities in different geographical areas of Africa shows that Nigeria is one of the least favourite destinations which by extension earn less income.

However, in spite of the enormous tourism potentials in Nigeria, the investigation shows that tourism's contribution to economic development in Nigeria leaves much to be desired, (Ovat, 2003).

Sensing the impediments to the growth of the tourism sector and realising the important role that tourism can play in the economic and national development of Nigeria, led to the establishment of the National Tourism Policy. (Da, Silva, 1999) says the national tourism policy prescribes various ways of promoting the development of tourism in Nigeria through the following ways:

- Increase the flow of foreign exchange through the promotion of international tourism
- Encourage even development of tourism based enterprises.
- Accelerate rural/urban integration
- Foster socio-cultural unity among the various groups in the country through the promotion of domestic tourism
- Promotion and encouragement of active private sector participation
- Preservation of our cultural heritage and historical monuments
- Massive and aggressive publicity campaign to facilitate the growth and development of tourism
- Simplify the issuance of visas to intending visitors.

- Re-orientation for all security agencies including customs and immigrations,(Da, Silva, 1999)

While all these promises are okay, revenue from tourism sector has not been encouraging. A careful study of tourism statistics and data reveals that Nigeria in particular is one of the least favourite destination in the world, this by extension results in a colossal loss of revenue with untold hardship and effect on Nigeria's gross domestic products , (Uche, 2003).

On the other hand strongly believes that the Nigerian coastal waters and beaches are dirty and therefore unattractive to tourist.

The negative publicity launched by the international media against Nigeria has also affected the tourist traffic in the country with (Nnadozie, 2007) identifying some of the problems affecting tourism development in Nigeria as follows

-Government's nonchalant approach to the tourism industry

-The scourge of political instability which encourages wastage and poor resource management

-Lack of foresight on the part of the elite who control virtually every sector of the economy.

-Inadequate enlightenment and improper coverage of the tourism sector by the mass-media.

Nigeria also has key rivals in the tourism industry namely Ghana, The Gambia, South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco and Mauritania. These

countries have a better and more developed tourism industries in terms of infrastructure, maintenance, security and enlightenment. Another impediment to the growth of tourism in Nigeria is the general belief and habit of excessively copying anything western, despite our rich cultural heritage and tourism potentials.

It therefore becomes imperative therefore to blame our artists and media practitioners for failing to portray our rich cultural and tourism potentials to the outside world. They often love to portray the culture of the foreigner to the foreigner, they want to speak and dress like them. They want to belong to their kind of caucus, yet they are nothing near them. The end result however is that they have made themselves copy-cats, rather than portraying have their own culture, (Adekeye, 2007).

However in the words of (Nasco, 1986), in this day and age when no country including ours, can't afford to solely depend on the fluctuating oil market as the primary source of revenue, tourism, my dear friends is indeed an alternative for the mobilization of the much needed foreign exchange and local revenue.

The Nigerian Tourism Development Commission, NTDC, traces the advent of tourism in Nigeria back to 1472 with the first Portuguese mercantile mission-trade tourism.

However, the first attempt at structuring Tourism in Nigeria came about in 1962 when a group of Nigerians with interest in and commitment to the promotion of tourism set up a body then known as Nigerian Tourism Association (NTA).

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Prior to the creation of the Department of Tourism in the former Federal Ministry of Trade and Tourism in January 1990, very little or no attention was paid to the development of the sector.

However, following the approval for the establishment of the department, a federal bureau was also created to champion the promotion and development of tourism in Nigeria.

In the last few years, the Nigerian government has put in a lot of effort aimed at reviving and improving the tourism sector.

In an attempt to explore other aspects of the Nigerian economy, economy with an emphasis on the tourism sector, the federal government took some concrete steps at ensuring the development of the culture, travel and tourism industries. They comprised of

inauguration of the Presidential Council on Tourism, Federal Ministry of Tourism and its Departments and Agencies with same at the States' level and Local Tourism Committees which falls in line with the provisions of the National Tourism Policy (NTP) of 2005, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) of 1992 and the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan of 2006.

Back in January 2003, President Olusegun Obasanjo, approved the sum of \$548 million as grant to the transport, culture and tourism ministries for tourism master plan projects Udeorah, (2004).

Primarily, this amount was earmarked to develop transportation, infrastructure, tourist sites, mobilization and public enlightenment towards accelerated tourism development.

It is however evident that there is need for the mass media albeit television, to complement government's effort at tourism development and promotion.

Nigeria, with its population and array of tourist attractions and sites is yet to tap into this goldmine as a result of the dearth of tourism programmes on TV stations.

Today, the apathy towards tourism, confronts broadcast stations in the country despite the abundance of tourism contents which can be explored to any capacity.

The urgency to nurture, promote and sustain the Nigerian tourism sector cannot be over emphasized and can therefore not be overlooked, (Udeorah, 2004)

The Nigerian tourism sector is still at an infantile stage amidst the abundant natural human and natural resources. Also, the infrastructures currently in place at the tourist sites and locations in Nigeria are nothing to write home about and consequently not make Nigeria the envy of other nations in this regard. When compared to countries like The Gambia, South-Africa, France and Spain who already have advanced tourism industries, Nigeria does have a long way to go (Dantata, 2011).

Speaking at the Nigerian Tourism Investors forum and exhibition in Abuja in May 2014, DirectorGeneral of the Nigerian Tourism Development Board, Sally Mbanefo, noted that

tourism is Indeed a tool for national economic development. She said there are several international initiatives that have highlighted the potential of tourism to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction, as well as to environmental protection, cultural preservation, and job creation .