

Culture, Media, Technology and Psycho-social Development in Nigeria



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Chapter 7

WOMEN, CULTURE, TOURISM AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In spite of the abundant cultural resources, Nigerian leaders seem not to realise their value and apply same to evolve viable tourist industries with monetary gains for the country. Unlike in Europe, Asia and Australia where culture and tourism sector account for huge income to execute national projects and as viable source of employment generation, much is yet to be achieved to enable Nigeria tap her widespread tourism potentials maximally. The aim of this paper is to define and classify the various forms of tourism, which can be explored for positive advantage. In addition, the ecotourism potentials of Nigeria, problems and prospects from the point of view of culture, women and the role of mass media in harnessing tourism for national development are examined. It concludes with some suggestions on the way forward in terms of measures required to redefine culture, tourism and Nigeria's much needed national development.

Introduction

Many countries depend heavily upon travel expenditures by tourists as a source of taxation and income for the provision of social welfare, political, economic, technological and overall development of their societies. Consequently, the development of tourism is often a strategy employed either by a non-governmental organisation [NGO] or a governmental agency to promote a particular region for the purpose of increasing commerce through goods and services provided for tourists. The immediate benefit of tourism to the host community is economic empowerment. The local people will be employed not only as guides to tourists, but also as keepers of tourist sites thus they can earn some wages to enable them improve their living conditions. In addition, the tourists will of necessity patronise

local goods, music, entertainment, cultural artefacts and services produced by the indigenes. In this way, local delicacies, and crafts will be promoted simultaneously thereby showcasing the community to the outside world.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, travel and tourism is the world's largest industry, accounting for nearly 200 million jobs and over 10 percent of world GDP, i.e., billions of dollars. In 2002 alone, there were more than 700 million international travellers. By the year 2010, the industry is expected to generate \$8 trillion of economic activity and 328 million jobs.

Until recently, the world's fastest growing economic sector in terms of jobs and revenue is the tourism industry. It is the only economic sector that accepts foreign exchange directly. According to Taleb Rufai, United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)'s Deputy Secretary-General, "tourism is the 21st century's number one industry". The experience of Nigeria since independence has shown that much is yet to be done to enable the country tap its tourism potentials maximally for her economic development. Since the discovery of the **Black Gold** in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State, South South Nigeria in 1956, over fifty years ago, the result had been over concentration on the oil sector and the total neglect of other viable sources of national development such as tourism. This indeed is no doubt a major setback for the nation. Although the country's economy like those of other nations of the world is broad based, and has been liberalised to encourage public sector and foreign investors' participation, its tourist sector has not been adequately explored and managed. Nigeria's beautiful natural and man-made environments, the vast cultural resources in the forms of festivals, visual and performing arts, have been neglected in the quest for national development. Little or no effort is made by the stakeholders in strategic positions of government, banking, hospitality business, cultural agencies, academia and most importantly the media in articulating and packaging sale-able tourist programmes or projects channelled to positive development of the country.

The concern of this chapter is to conceptualise the term tourism, its classification and special forms. It also attempts to examine the eco-tourism potentials of Nigeria, problems and prospects for

national development, as well as the position of the media in attaining tourism's goals for Nigeria.

Definitions

The Austrian economist, Hermann Von Schullard (1910) gave one of the earliest definitions of Tourism. He states that tourism is 'the sum total of operators, mainly of an economic nature, which directly relate to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region'.

Hunziker and Krapt (1942) defines tourism as 'the totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and stay of strangers; provided that the stay does not imply the establishment of permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerative activity'. Similarly, in 1976, Tourism society of England defined tourism as 'the temporary short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes'. In 1981, International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism defined Tourism in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. For Matheson and Wall (1982), tourism 'is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to care for their needs'.

Sometimes *Tourism* and *Travel* are used interchangeably. The League of Nations first used both terms officially in 1937. Tourism was defined as people travelling abroad for periods of over 24 hours. In this context travel has a similar definition to tourism, but implies a more purposeful journey. The term tourism is often used pejoratively, implying a shallow interest in the societies and places the tourist visits.

However, a more comprehensive definition states that 'tourism is a service industry, comprising a number of tangible and intangible components. The tangible element include transport systems air, rail, road water and now space; hospitality services accommodation, foods and beverages, tours souvenirs; and related services such as

banking, insurance, safety and security. The intangible elements include; rest and relaxation, culture, escape, adventure, new and different experiences.'

Classifications

Tourism may be classified into the following types:

- **In-bound international tourism:** this involves visits to a country by a non-resident of that country. For example, the visit of some Ghanaian students to selected Nigerian universities on educational tourism.
- **Out-bound international tourism:** refers to visits by the residents of a country to another country's typical example is the visit of some Nigerian Catholics to Rome in Italy for holy pilgrimage.
- **Internal tourism:** Visits by residents of a country to their own indigenous or local tourist sites. Visits of a group of Covenant University students to Yemoji tourist centre in Ogun state south western Nigeria is a typical example of internal tourism.
- **Domestic tourism:** is a combination of both inbound international tourism and internal tourism. **National tourism:** a combination of internal tourism and outbound international tourism.

Special Forms of Tourism

For the past few decades other forms of tourism, also known as **niche tourism** have been becoming more popular, particularly:

- **Adventure tourism:** This involves travelling in rugged regions, or adventurous sports such as mountaineering and hiking.
- **Agricultural tourism:** farm based tourism, helping to support the local agricultural economy.
- **Ancestry tourism:** [also known as genealogy tourism] is travel with the aim of tracing one's ancestry, visiting the birth places of these ancestors and sometimes getting to know distant family.
- **Armchair tourism and virtual tourism:** this involves not travelling physically, but exploring the world through internet, books, TV, etc.

- **Bookstore tourism** is a grassroots effort to support independent bookstores by promoting them as a travel destination.
- **Cultural tourism:** includes urban tourism, visiting historical or interesting cities, such as Berlin, Beijing, London, Paris, Rome, Mecca and Abeokuta, the historical town in Nigeria and experiencing their cultural heritages. This type of tourism may also include specialized cultural experiences, such as art museum tourism where the tourist visits many operas or concerts during the tour.
- **Ecotourism:** This refers to sustainable tourism, which has minimal impact on the environment. This is a common type of tourism in Nigeria. Examples includes the Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River state, The Yankari Games Reserve in Bauchi state and The Ikogosi Warm Spring found in Ondo state western Nigeria.
- **Educational tourism:** may involve travelling to an educational institution or some other destination in order to take personal-interest classes, such as cooking classes with a famous chef or craft classes.
- **Health tourism:** usually to escape from cities or relieve stress, perhaps for some 'fun in the sun', etc. Often to "health spas".
- **Medical Tourism:** for use of free or cheap health care organisations, for advanced medical care unavailable in one's own country or in cases of long waiting list in one's country, a person seeking urgent medical attention could embark on medical tourism.
- **Pilgrimage tourism:** this involves pilgrimages to ancient holy places or religious sites such as Churches, Mosques, Shrines, etc. The annual pilgrimages of some Catholics to Rome, the Muslims to Mecca, etc., are special forms of tourism.

Ecotourism Potentials of Nigeria

Tourism has become a flourishing industry all over the world especially as one of the largest generators of wealth and jobs.

Governments of nations are encouraged to unlock the industry's potentials by adopting a framework or policy that would enhance its sustainability and development.

While the advanced countries have maximised inherent potentials of tourism to boost their economy, in Nigeria and other developing countries the reverse is the case. Generally, tourism takes advantage of people's desire to travel to places of varied interests to them and for different objectives, which may be recreational in nature, or for different objectives such as business, religious worship or for research purposes. Indeed, the tourism industry depends on a combination of geographical, physical and environmental factors. These include, unique natural features such as beaches, rivers lakes, lagoons, mountains and man-made monuments such as cenotaphs, statues, shrines, and historical buildings, which attract tourists. In addition, events of economic, socio-political and historical significance like trade fairs, art exhibitions, sport competition, athletic meetings, religious and cultural festivals largely attract tourists.

Tourism can be categorised into several types. According to Okon-Ekong (2006), these include, mountaineering, beach tourism, resorts, adventure/bird (animal) watching, sports, hospitality, historical, business/conference and festival tourism. Similarly, Okon-Ekong identified some places and events of cultural characteristics in Nigeria, which serve as great tourist sites and attractions. Some of these vast tourist potentials from Okon-Ekong's categorisation includes, Obudu and Mambila mountains found in Cross River and Adamawa States respectively, Nigeria's beaches of over 2,678 kilometer coastline. Others are Olumo and Zuma rocks in Abeokuta and Abuja respectively; the Yankari and Kanji games reserves, Old Oyo national park, the Durbar in Kano and Kaduna, Osun Osogbo festival, Argungun Fishing and cultural festival in Kebbi State, Igue Festival in Benin, Ofala festival in Onitsha and the just concluded National Sports Festival held in Ogun State South Western Nigeria. Suffice to mention that the list of tourism potentials in Nigeria is inexhaustible, however several factors have been identified as militating against harnessing these vast tourism

potentials optimally for national development in Nigeria as shall be discussed in the next section.

Problems of Tourism Development in Nigeria

One of the prevailing problems of tourism development in Nigeria stems from the ignorance of the citizenry about the cultural and economic value of tourism. While some of the identified factors are internal and located within the Nigerian system, others are external factors. Artefacts especially artworks of immense value have been vandalised or carted away by foreigners, thus depleting our enviable museums and cultural stock Cenotaphs, great historical buildings, statues, shrines which are of immense tourist values are being destroyed ignorantly. Similarly, man threatens the natural vegetation, which constitutes the habitat of wild life through various activities such as construction of roads, bridges, houses, and factory sites in some cases. Sonubi (2005) captures this in his work entitled "*Sungbo Eredo and Its Ecotourism Values: Africa's Largest Single Ancient Monument*" where he condemns the destruction of some portion of the 160 kilometer long natural deposit **Sungbo Eredo**, by a group of persons caught scooping laterite from it for commercial purpose. These activities, have not only destroyed the ecology of the place, it succeeded in exposing its topsoil to erosion and destroyed the site's natural environment. Suffice to mention that years after UNESCO included Sungbo Eredo in its list of world cultural heritage sites, the government through the various cultural agencies are yet to renovate and restore the lost glory of such a monument of international repute.

Closely related to the problem of ignorance in harnessing and preserving existing tourist sites, is the problem of incessant political instability, religious and inter-ethnic crises currently plaguing the national unity of Nigeria. The recent uprisings in the oil producing regions of Niger-Delta, agitations and clamour for resource control through which bloody clashes resulting in loss of several lives and properties have become the order of the day. These discourage foreign investors who may desire to venture into that sector of the economy. Kidnappings of foreign oil workers and other social vices

such as murder, arson, robbery, etc. are common phenomena in oil rich regions of the country presently, and these no doubt pose serious impediments to tourism development. Lack or inadequate capital required to preserve and effectively manage the tourist sites constitutes a major challenge for the sector. In cases where new tourist potentials are discovered, it involves huge resources to put them into maximum use, thus the need for more private sector participation in the industry. Emi (2006) notes, "Tourism is a big business that requires much financial capital and input of experts for managing its various sub-sectors efficiently". Similarly, Idezuma (2006) states that "poor budgeting over the years have impacted in fast-tracking the benefits of the business". In the view of this writer, privatisation appears to be the next best option. However, there's need for caution because there exist several unresolved questions of ownership as regard cultural objects and sites endowed with tourist potentials which in some cases have resulted in legal tussles between various parties. Emi (2006) opined that "the general attitude of government, the private sector and a few wealthy individuals who have invested in tourism in certain parts of the country has been that of the entrepreneur takes all the profit". The implication is that, the host community is further impoverished and consequently, the aggrieved local people as a result of a feeling of alienation, tend to sabotage investors efforts at developing tourist sites.

Lastly, Corruption of government officials, unnecessary bureaucracy associated with obtaining a licence for operating tourist sites and most especially, the politics involved in appointment of key personnel to head parastatals such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism impede the development of the industry in Nigeria.

Role of Culture, Women and Mass Media in Tourism Development

Culture refers to the social heritage of a people - those learned patterns for thinking, feeling, and acting that are transmitted from one generation to the next, including the embodiment of these patterns in material items. Culture provides the meanings that enable human beings to interpret their experiences and guide their actions.

Tylor (1891) defines culture as the complex whole which involves knowledge, arts, motives, feelings, beliefs, norms, mores, laws, and values and every other capacity acquired by man as a member of the society and transmitted through the process of socialisation from one generation to another. The need for our cultural heritage to be preserved for tourism development cannot be over-emphasized and women on their part do have vital roles to play in realising maximum development in the tourism sector. Women can bring their creativity and love for aesthetics to play, design and package proposals for government and NGO's to harness the vast cultural and tourism potentials of the nation which are currently untapped for national development. In a similar vein, the mass media have become an integral part of our everyday live. They inform, educate, entertain, delight us as well as challenge our intellect. Through them and other technological devices, the world has been reduced to a global village. According to Baran (2004), "the mass media we use regularly include, radio, television, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, sound recordings and computer networks".

When the medium is a technology that transmits messages to a large number of people it is called a **Mass medium** (the plural being **Mass media**). However, these messages could be encoded through printed or electronic channels. In Nigeria, there are several public and private-owned media houses. The various radio, television and newspaper houses such as Cool FM, Ray Power stations, NTA, AIT, MITV, STV, Channels and Galaxy Television stations are household names. In the print media, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *This Day* and *Daily Times* are notable Newspapers making waves within and outside the country. Others include magazines such as *TELL*, *The News* and *The Week*, etc. Suffice to mention that the role of Mass media in promoting and developing the vast tourism potentials especially in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. By utilising the media in sensitising the public on the enormous tourism potentials which remain untapped in the country, tourism development will be accelerated as in other advanced countries of the World such as Japan Canada, Britain and the United States.

The Nigerian case is a rather pathetic one in the sense that during the pre and post-colonial era, little or nothing has been done to effectively utilise the mass media to package sale-able vast tourism potentials, which abound in the country for local and international consumption. Thus there is a clarion call for the media practitioners in Nigeria to rise up to these challenges to explore and adequately harness these abundant God given resources meant to bring succour and rapid development to Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world. Beside the various problems militating against tourism development in Nigeria identified, the mass media are hindered by a host of problems thus jeopardising their roles in promoting tourism development. The core of mass media problem stems from the issue of control, state interference and regulations imposed on media practitioners in terms of what to produce, how and for what purpose. These in no small measure tend to hinder their coverage of the vast tourism potentials, which abound in the country. In addition, it accounts for why entrepreneurs, businessmen and women, corporate bodies, government and non-governmental agencies alike are ignorant of not only the tourism potentials but also its usage as a vital tool for development. In view of the extraordinary importance of media and communication in our society McChesney (1999) states that;

“the subject of how media are controlled, structured, and subsidized should be at the center of democratic debate. Instead, this subject is nowhere to be found. This is not an accident; it reflects above all the economic, political and ideological power of the media corporations and their allies. And it has made the prospect of challenging corporate media power and of democratizing communication, all the more daunting”.

The Way Forward

To ameliorate the multifarious problems hampering tourism development in Nigeria, the best approach is to begin with education of the citizenry about the intrinsic values of their indigenous cultures and their potentials for tourism. There is need for cultural education at the primary and secondary school levels to inculcate the requisite knowledge on culture and tourism. Prott (2001) suggests that indigenous people should be empowered to practice and perpetuate their arts through the supply of funds, raw materials and other necessary tools or equipment. In this way, they will realise the need to protect and preserve their heritage. Grants for the revival of some indigenous arts and craft traditions, which are dying fast, should be given to the few artists who still practice them. Potential tourist sites should be identified and developed without delay with the legal backing of constituted government.

There is also a need for the preservation of existing tourist sites especially historical buildings. Adornment in the forms of mural paintings, relief sculpture designs, etc., could be used to add more beauty to the sites. The communities in which tourist sites are located should be regarded as stakeholders. For the industry to thrive successfully there is a need for active participation of the host community, who not only own the cultural artefacts but on whose land the tourism industry is located.

Emi (2005) suggests that, "It will not be out of place for government and private sector to fund research projects on culture and tourism in Nigerian institutions of higher learning". In addition, government could also establish special banks for tourism that could grant soft loans to entrepreneurs in the industry. Similarly, a consortium of business organisations with the participation of financial institutions such as banks could be involved as sponsors of tourism.

Further Questions

Tourism can be considered as one of the most efficient instrument for promoting interaction of cultures and national development. It is a catalyst for the development of trade, commerce, crafts and industries. In Nigeria and other developing nations, this sector suffers from a number of weaknesses and challenges as identified in this paper. The following questions are worth giving attention if the potentials for tourism and national development are to be attained:

1. How do we maximise and sustain the benefits of tourism for national development?
2. How do we encourage private sector participation in tourism development?
3. What role can research play in the development of tourism?
4. What are the roles of the media and Nigerian women in promoting tourism within and outside the country?

Answers to these and several other questions would no doubt yield the much needed and long awaited results.

Conclusion

Tourism has become an increasingly popular generator of wealth and job creator worldwide. While some countries especially, Britain, Australia, China, Japan, Spain, USA, Kenya etc, have utilised its vast potentials to foster development of their societies, others, especially Nigeria, are yet to maximise and explore the numerous opportunities which abound in the sector. A few states namely Abia, Cross River, Kebbi and Rivers are stepping out to uplift the sector in recent time thereby changing the horizon. The best is however, yet to come as Idezuna (2006) observes, "the dividend of democracy cannot be complete without growing culture and tourism business". The mass media must take the lead to ensure that sale-able tourism potentials, which abound in large quantities throughout the country, are adequately packaged, introduced, and sold to the local and international communities to enhance positive development of the sector.

Today, the media are accepted as very powerful forces in the process through which we come to know ourselves, our environment and other happenings globally. It is central to the creation and maintenance of both our rich dominant culture and our various bounded cultures. All efforts must be geared towards harnessing, improving and sustaining the tourism industry in Nigeria. Media practitioners, especially, and others (business men and women, corporate organisations, banks, telecommunication industries, Non-governmental Organisations [NGOs], etc., should partner with the government to turn the fortunes of Nigeria around through the tourism business. Women on their part have a stake in national development. Culture and tourism aided by mass media are viable tools for women to harness both for self and national development.

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