

Tourism: A Panacea for Nigeria Economic Woes

by

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Abstract

It has been said that Nigeria loses much money yearly because of its lack of attention to tourism. Since our economy took a nose dive, many economist have preferred what they conceived to be the best prescription to the ailment, but all seem to be oblivious of the redemptive potentials of tourism as a foreigner exchange earner. As we walk of counter- trade, exports drive, backward integration and others, it is necessary to reflect on tourism which has continuously brought huge revenue in foreign currency to those countries which care to tap the great potentials tourism trade has in stock. Records on international tourism show that of all foreign exchange earners tourism comes next to crude oil. While the country was riding on the crest of economic stability generated by crude oil, Tourism was neglected. With the current incessant fluctuation in oil market, tourism can be properly harnessed to inject new blood into our ailing economy. Our economy is singing swan songs and calls for judicious exploitation of all available potentials and revenue generating avenues to resuscitate it. Tourism is one of the sectors that can play that noble role. This paper will examine the concepts of tourism, and types of tourism, the role of tourism in national development, and the country current economic situation. The paper also made suggestions and recommendations on how to improve on tourism development.

Keywords: Nose Dive, Swan Songs, Counter Trade

1. Introduction

Nigeria focuses attention on mono-structural kind of economy, which is solely on oil, tagged the black gold whereas other areas that are economically beneficial, for example, Agriculture (green gold) has been neglected. After examining the aforementioned, the paper now suggests other areas to be explored.

Nigeria needs to establish a clear priority in the national agenda, and put many policies in place in service of the growth of tourism. Nigeria has so much variety of culture, variety of landscape, the steps ahead in relation to many other countries on African continent.

It is important to establish political will that sees tourism as part of a solution to Nigeria economic woes, and part of Nigeria future, because a country like Nigeria has so many options to develop its resources, generate income, and enrich the lives of the people. Tourism can be as important as some of the mineral resources, if not more, because it's a resource that never runs out, it keeps growing the more you take care of it.

There is no doubt that Nigeria has been a focus of world attention for various reasons. Many people want to visit the country, if adequate facilities are provided. Tourism no doubt would generate a lot of foreign exchange by focusing attention on sponsored tours, and conferences. Even Nigerians, who spend their hard foreign exchange abroad, could be made to conserve the money lost in foreign travels which flow back through foreign visitors coming into Nigeria.

For whatever might be said about the average Nigerian, there is no gainsaying that he love his country dearly, and could help to salvage it if he knows how. One way is combing the unnecessary spending of the country, reserve abroad in the name of a European holiday. The multitude of Nigerians who travel every day is unimaginable and can only be brought vividly to the minds focus, when one realize that out of thousands of them, hardly ten percent of this number take their vacation in the real sense of the word within the country, they troop to country like Britain, Italy, etc., where Nigeria foreign exchange is siphoned. Tourism should be considered not only in terms of foreigners coming from abroad, but also in term of local population visiting its own country. In Europe, America, and Australia, the tourist market is first generated by local people travelling at home.

2. Literature Review

The world tourism organization estimated that in the year **1990**, there were nearly **415** million international tourists' arrivals throughout the world. It was estimated that in the year **1991**, international tourist arrival would approach the figures of 450million or an increase of **5** percent over **1990**.these tourists spend billions of dollars in the countries visited. All this activity may be described as tourism.

One of the earliest definitions of tourism was given by an Austrian economist, Hermann .V.Schullad, in the year **1910** who defines it as, "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". The concept of tourism found expression however, in a more technical definition of the Swiss Professors, HUNZIKER and KRAPP in the year (**1942**) they stated, "Tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity". This definition was subsequently adopted by the international Association of scientific Expert in tourism (**AIEST**). The definition brings out the following three distinct element of tourism. (i) Involvement of travel by non-residents (ii) Stay of temporary nature in the area visited (iii) Stay not connected with any activity involving earnings.

Theobald (**1994**) suggested that "etymologically, the word tours is derived from the Latin "tonare" and the Greek "tornos" meaning a lathe or circle, the movement around a central point of axis. The meaning changed in modern English to represent "One's turn the suffix-ism is defined as an action . When the word tour and the suffixes and ism are combined, they suggest the action of movement around a circle. One can argue that a circle represent a starting point, which ultimately returns back to its beginning. Therefore, like a circle, a tour represent a journey in that it is a round trip, that is the act of leaving and returning to the original starting point and therefore, one takes such a journey, can be called a tourist.

The world Tourism organization defines tourist as people "travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business, and other purposes. It was recognized in the Manila Declaration of word tourism of **1980** as an activity

essential to the life of nation because of its direct effect on social cultural, educational, and economic sector of national societies, and on their international relations.

Tourism includes movement for all purposes. In 1981, the International Association of Scientific Expert in Tourism defined Tourism in term of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken by choice and undertaken outside the home. United Nation (1994) classified three form of tourism in its recommendations on tourism statistics.

- Domestic tourism, involving resident of the given country, travelling only within the country
- Inbound Tourism, involving non-resident travelling in the given country.
- Outbound Tourism, involving resident travelling in another country.

Tourism is, therefore a composite phenomenon which embraces the incidence of a mobile population of travellers who are strangers to the place they visit. It is essentially a pleasure activity in which money earned in one's normal domicile is spent in the place visited.

2.1 Basic Components of Tourism

Tourism does not exist in isolation. It consists of certain component, three of these may be considered as basic, these three basic components of tourism are Transport, Locale and Accommodation. A Tourist in order to get to his destination has to travel, and therefore some mode of transport may be a motor car, a coach, an aero plane, a ship, or a train which enable a traveler to reach his pre-determined destination. The locale may be used to include holiday destination, and what it offer to the tourist, The holiday destination may offer naturel attraction like sunshine, scenic beauty or sporting facilities, e t c. at these attractions. Accommodation is another basic component which is essential for providing food and also rest. After having reached his destination, a tourist must have some kind of accommodation which provides him food and sleep. On the three components, locale with it attractions and amenities is the most important as these are very basic to tourism. Unless these are there, the tourist will not be motivated to go to a particular place.

2.2 The Elements of Tourism

In addition to three basic component of tourism, there are certain elements, or ingredient, of tourism. These elements predispose towards tourism development. These elements which are the fundamental attraction of tourism are:

- 1 Pleasing weather
- 2 Scenic attractions
- 3 Historical and cultural factors
- 4 Accessibility
- 5 Amenities
- 6 Accommodation.

While Economic and political conditions may continue to fluctuate throughout the world, there is every reason to believe. That more and more people throughout the world will continue to travel. Tourism has home and irreversible fact in most parts of the world, and the expected upturn in overall economic growth together with success in stabilizing prices, likely to promote further increases in international tourism demand. With the expanding right to paid holidays and the irreversible increase in travel for cultural purposes, the number of persons taking to travel is bound to increase. As a result of labor legislation introducing paid holidays, over 500 million workers and their families throughout the world has the right to travel.

2.3 Basic Travel Motivators

With the advent of tourism especially after the First World War, various attempts have been made to study as to why people wish to become tourist. McIntosh has started that basic travel motivators may be grouped into the following four categories.

- (1) Physical motivators which are related to physical relaxation and rest sporting activities and specific medical treatment all are connected with the individuals' bodily health and wellbeing.
- (2) Interpersonal motivators which are related to a desire to visit relatives, friends, or to escape from one family, work mates or neighbors, or simply to escape from the routine of everyday life.
- (3) Cultural motivators which are connected with the individual's desire to travel in order to learn about other countries and their people and their cultural heritage expressed in art, music, literature, folklore etc.
- (4) Status and prestige motivators which are identified with the needs of personal esteem and personal development, these are related to travel for business or professional interests, for the purpose of education on the pursuit of hobbies.

Above mentioned are four broad categories of motivators. Breaking down and elaborating these broad categories will give us many more reasons as why more and more engage in tourism. These include: (1). Pleasure (2). Relaxation, test and recreation, test and recreation (3).health (4) participation in sports (5) curiosity and culture (6).Ethnic and family (7) Spiritual and religion (8).Status and prestige (9).Professional and business.

2.4 Types of Tourism

Recession Tourism: Is a travel trend, which was evolved by the world economic crisis. Identified by America entrepreneur Matt Landau (2007) as low- cost high-value experiences taking place of once-popular generic retreats. Various recession hotspots have been business boom during the recession.

Educational Tourism: Developed because of the growing popularity of teaching and learning knowledge and the exchanging of technical competency outside the class room environment. In educational tourism, the main focus of the tour of leisure activities includes visiting another country to learn about the culture, tours, or to work and apply skills learned inside the classroom in a different environment such as in the international practicum training programs.

Dark Tourism: One emerging area of interest has been identified by Lennon and Foley (2000) as Dark Tourism. This type of tourism involves visit to dark sites as battle grounds scenes of horrific crimes, or of genocide, for example Concentration Camps. Dark Tourism remains a small niche market, driven by varied motivations, such as mourning remembrance, education.

Sport Tourism: Since the late 1980s, sport tourism has become increasingly popular. Events such as ruby Olympics, common games, Asian games, and football world cups have enable specialist travel companies to gain official ticket allocation and then sell them in packages that include flights, hotel and excursions. Focus on the sport and spreading knowledge on the subject, especially more recently, lead to increase in sport tourism. Most notably, the international events such as the Olympics caused a shift in focus of the audience who now realize the variety of sports that exist in the world. In the United States, one of the most popular sports usually is focus on event like the world cup.

In Asian countries, the numerous football events increase the popularity of football. But, it was the Olympics that brought together the deferent sports that lead to the increase in sport tourism.

Pro-Poor Tourism: Which seeks to help the poorest people in developing countries, has been receiving increase attention by those involved in development, the issue has been address through small scale projects in local communities and through attempts by ministers of tourism to attract more numbers of tourists.

Medical Tourism: When there is a significant price difference between countries for a given medical procedure, particularly in south East Asian, India, Eastern Europe, and where there are different regulatory regimes in relation to particular medical procedures (e.g. dentistry), traveling to take advantages of the price or regulatory differences is often referred to as medical tourism.

Creative Tourism: Has existed as a form of cultural tourism since the early beginnings of tourism itself. It's European roots data black to the time of the Grand tour, which saw the sons of aristocratic families traveling for the purpose of mostly interactive and educational experiences. More recently creative tourism has been given its own name by Raymond and Grey Richards, who as members of the association for tourism and leisure education (ATLAS) have directed a number of projects for the European Commission, including cultural and craft tourism, known as Sustainable Tourism. They have defined creative tourism as tourism related to the active participation of traveller in the culture of the host community through interactive workshops, and informal learning experiences.

Meanwhile, the concept of creative tourism have been picked up by high-profile organization such as UNESCO who through the Creative Cities Network have endorsed creative tourism as an engaged, authentic experience that promote an active understanding of the cultural features of a place. Creative tourism has gain popularity as a form of cultural tourism, drawing on active participation by travellers in the culture of the host communities they visit
Several Countries offer examples of this type of tourism development, including the United Kingdom, Australia, France, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Spain, Italy, and New Zealand.

2.5 Current Economic Situation in the Country

The state of Nigerian economy has been described in recent times by stakeholders in the economic sector as a bleak one. It offers little or no hope for the future, with about sixty percent of the population living below poverty line as a result of bad governance, corruption and inability to fully harness the economic potential of the country.

The challenges facing the Nigeria economy in the 21st century are diverse and enormous. The unacceptable state of Nigeria's economy is most galling, given Nigeria's enormous endowment of natural and human resources. This is more to be given the fact that Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia with the same colonial heritage attributes similar natural resources endowment and have recorded significant successes in development of their economy. For instance, World Bank reports that Singapore some thirty year ago had capital income of the sum of \$10,0000 , while that of Nigeria was \$300 The world bank reports also has it that Nigeria economic decline, especially during the last 20 years is illustrated by the fact that per capital income which was \$1000 In 1965, had declined to \$300 by 1998.

Within some 20 years, Nigeria has declined from middle to a low medium income country, and amongst the fifty richest countries, to one of the poorest countries of the world. One of the

fundamental causes of decline in Nigeria's economic fortunes has been political instability and bad governance especially in the 1990s.

Nigeria economy, according to the World Bank in 2000 was said to be burdened by the biggest external debt in Africa. While its dependence on oil revenue left it vulnerable to the plummeting prices of the years. In recent years, economic growth estimated at 2.8 per annum. In spite of the country's immense human and natural resources, little economic progress has been made.

World Bank recent report also has it that two-third of the population, more than 160 million live below poverty line, and one-third survives on less than a dollar per a day, also more than 40% illiterate. Recent report shows that life expectancy is 55years, a decade below the average for developing nations, and less than half of the population has access to clean water, and adequate sanitation.

The bad economic situation of Nigeria, no doubt contributed in so small measure, to the loss of Okonjo-Iwela in World Bank presidency. From the forgoing, it can be inferred that Nigeria economic woes can be blamed on leadership failure and mismanagement of abundant resources in the country.

2.6 The Role of Tourism in National Development

Tourism experts agreed over time that Nigeria's tourism sector has the ability to boost the revenue prospect of the Country, if well nurtured. They say that if the potential of the sector is harnessed, revenue of the sector could even surpass that of the oil sector. Tourism industries in Nigeria have the potential to lessen the country's dependence on oil revenue, also known as the black gold.

In developing countries with artificial resorts ,like the U.S, Britain, France, Spain, Italy and Mexico, tourism account for more than one of third off all export earnings from goods and services. If a man- made resorts and ports can be so harnessed to earn such huge foreign exchange, the economic benefits derivable from the natural resources bestowed on the country will be monumental if fully tapped. Among the natural attractions are the Ogbunike cave in Anambra State, the lake on the top of hill at Somorika, Edo State, and at Enin Ijesha where a four hundred -foot high and seven floor Olumirin water fall is situated. This water fall is akin to the famous Niagara fall in the United States. There is also the Ikogosi Warm Spring at Ekiti State. The warm spring has a little history behind it. According to the legend, the villagers associated the warmth of the water with presence of powerful god. The warm spring was therefore held in such a great reverence by people that it was worshipped regularly.

We have a list of other tourist sites, which includes, the Obudu cattle ranch, the Ogbunike cave near Onitcha, the Olumo rock, Mambila , Plateau, National Museum, and other museum and monuments. Important national festivals, for examples the Igue Festiva, Argungu fishing festival, the mysterious Ihene lake, Owa falls, etc.

Tourism is increasing vital parts of the national economy and throughout the world tourism bring money to cities and countries.

Below are pictures of some of the aforementioned tourist sites.



Figure 1 Olumo Rock

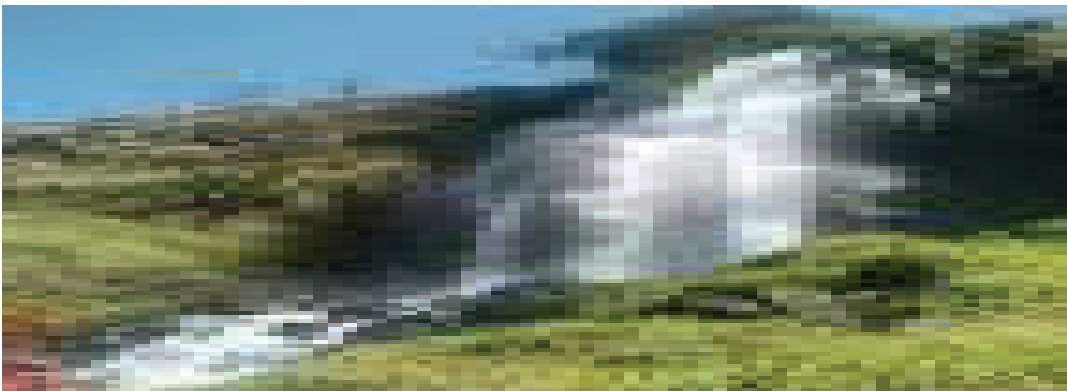


Figure 2 Mambila Plateau



Figure 3 Obudu Cattle Ranch



Figure 4 Igue Festival in Benin City



Figure 5 Boat Regatta

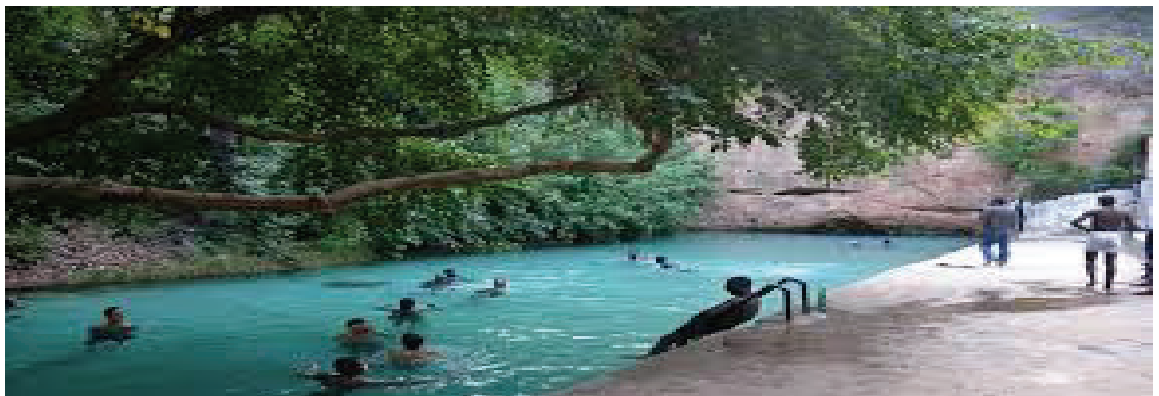


Figure 6 Yankari Warm Spring



Figure 7 Yankari Game Reserve

3. Suggestions and Recommendation

The quest for economic advancement in Nigeria cannot be possible without tourism. Tourism is an essential part of economic growth and sustainability. Nigeria has several advantages over countries like Kenya and South Africa, if only the country could harness its tourism potentials. The most vibrant part of tourism is cultural tourism. If things are done well or properly, our income from tourist should be two or three times above that of Kenya and South Africa.

Experts and stakeholders say that success of tourism depends on sustainability and private response. They suggest government should continuously promote tourism sector by encouraging capacity building. They also urge the government to endeavor to fund tourism school to enable the country produce the man power that would make the country preferred tourist destination. And government can partner with private sector through the public.

Most tourist sites in Nigeria have suffered wreck due to neglect and abandonment, causing the site to lose its beauty and relevance. For instance, the beauty bar beach in Lagos has now become a refuge and sacrificial point to religious worshippers who take pleasure in dumping refuse in the beach due to the fact that nobody is concerned with wellbeing of the tourist site, this activities is dreadful and displeasing site to behold.

Government should at least formulate laws and bodies to oversee tourist sites, and they should also try to rehabilitate dilapidated tourist sites so achieved or tap from the economic benefits. There is the need to develop human resources presently lacking or missing in most tourist sites.

Stating the fact that most tourist sites in the country lack infrastructures or proper amenities is like stating a known truth. This lack of amenities like relaxation materials or apparatus, bars, shelters, etc. have discouraged tourist from visiting, most tourist sites.

By this, I mean showcasing our tourist sites to people of the outside world. There are so many tourists sites in Nigeria, where people can come spend their vacation, honeymoon and so on, but most people are not aware because of lack of publicity and marketing strategies. The idea is that, if

this challenge is tackled and overcome, people outside could learn and know better about our beautiful site, in could lead to visitation.

The image of the country cuts despicable figure abroad, and to help redeem it, there is need to encourage visitors to come into the country to see things for themselves, the noxious beliefs deliberately spread sustained by imperialists press in Europe and the continent can be shattered for good. Thus all derogatory stereotype falsely peddled about the country will be deflated.

Nigeria government have not really taking time to formulate policies that will help change or affect the tourism positively, which is posing a very big threat to the sector. Some important area of tourism needing policy re-orientation include consultation with local Communities in the planning process, liberal immigration regulation, regulation to facilitate free tourist movement. Achieving this broad, will help boost the country purse and also reduces their over dependence on oil production.

4. Conclusion

Tourism economically is the business of arranging travels or providing travelling sites. The business of arranging and providing site might look simple or ordinary. But it plays a very important role in boosting a nation's economy and national development. Many Nations, who have explored the real importance of tourism, have used the sector to build and support their Country economy. The role of tourism in driving economic growth and development cannot be over emphasized.

Tourism is an important foreign exchange earner as a sector can provide foreign income by attaining visitors from across the globe which in turn lead to boost in the transport sector (air, land, and sea) hospitality sector (hotels and restaurants) and integration between indigenes and visitors which can help open business outlets with mutual benefits. These various sectors affected by tourism contributes to the cross domestic profit either through TAX, VAT, royalties, bills etc., the main thing is this this foreign adventurist comes into the country with their money exchange for fun and pleasure.

Tourism helps in reducing poverty. This is achieved by tis ability to create employment to unemployed youth. In the United States, it is estimated that at least about 10 (ten) million people are directly or indirectly employed in the tourism industry. Tourism is an increasingly vital part off the economy. Throughout the world, tourism brings money to cities and countries.

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