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TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION: THE CROSS RIVER REGION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the world's largest and most diverse industries. Many nations rely on it as a primary source for generating revenue, employment, private sector growth and infrastructural development. Tourism development is encouraged particularly among the developing nations around the world. This scenario becomes instructive for Nigeria, which is at present experiencing economic recession because of decades of corruption, mismanagement and the slump in the global oil sector which has been the mainstay of the national economy. This calls for diversification of the economy by fast-tracking the tourism industry using a regional approach rather than the singular state approach adopted by the respective states. In Southern Nigeria, the Cross River Region is a vast area with rich and diversified natural and cultural assets of global reputation that can attract tourists from all over the world if well managed. For this objective to be realisable, the governments of the respective states in the region and the relevant stakeholders would need to create the enabling environment to drive the initiative. For a start, the two sister states of Akwa Ibom and Cross River would have to adopt a pilot scheme in the area of joint tourism projects to attract other states in the region to embrace the agenda. This thesis is supported by the existing robust cultural "roadmap" in the area that has for many centuries driven developmental efforts. The paper adopts a historical analytical method.

Keywords: *Tourism, Development, Globalization*

Introduction

Tourism, the world over, is one of the fastest ways for economic development. It is one of the ways of increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and by extension, an increased revenue yielding venture and veritable in value re-orientation. Tourism has also become the largest and biggest employer of labour with undeniable great returns (Nkponam, 2012). With the available statistical data pointing to the indispensability of tourism on global economic stage, particularly in an era of dwindling fortunes of crude oil earnings, it becomes pertinent for Akwa Ibom and Cross River States to harmonise the myriads of tourism potentials that abound in the two states for the rapid transformation of the area and as a sustainable developmental model for the other states in the Cross River Region.

Tourism development in Nigeria has undergone a gradual but progressive evolution with each phase reflecting its growing importance in the economy. In 1962, a bold attempt was made by a group of Nigerians with interest in, and commitment to the promotion of tourism which led to the setting up of the Nigerian Tourist Association (NTA). The effort of the association resulted in the admission of Nigeria as a full member of the International Union of Official Travel Organisation (IUOTO) in 1964. The IUOTO metamorphosed into today's World Tourism Organization (WTO). Following this development, in 1974, the Federal Military Government appointed the African Development Bank (ADB) to conduct a feasibility study of the potentials and viability of tourism in Nigeria. The report of the study showed that Nigeria possessed enormous potential for the development of tourism as a viable economic sector. In 1976, the Murtala-Obasanjo regime replaced the Nigeria Tourist Association (NTA) with the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) through Decree 54. In a bid to strengthen and energise the National Tourism Board, government in 1982 amended Decree 54, and this later gave birth to the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation

(NTDC) via Decree 81. As the apex tourism agency of the Federal Government, the Corporation was charged with the overall promotion, marketing and coordination of tourism activities in Nigeria (Jones, 2008).

Akwa Ibom and Cross River States have over the years followed the footsteps of the Federal Government in the area of tourism by establishing some relevant administrative structures and policies to drive tourism. Moreover, the two states are endowed with enormous tourism potentials. The area offers a wide variety of tourist attractions such as extended and roomy river and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, some cities and climatic conditions particularly conducive to holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs, rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting or illustrative of indigenous arts and lifestyle and authentic friendly attitude of the people (Mbina, 2014).

The paper is divided into eight sections. Section one is the introduction, section two is the definition of terms, section three discusses tourism in the age of globalisation, section four looks at tourism development in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, section five discusses some tourism sites in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, section six addresses the challenges of tourism development in Nigeria, section seven looks at the regional tourism agenda, while section eight is the conclusion.

Definition of Terms

Tourism

The definition of tourism has been a subject of long debate over the years and an agreement on a comprehensive, easily understood and universally accepted definition of the concept has been difficult to accomplish. This is primarily because of the broad nature of the subject matter and the fact that the tourism industry comprises diverse, yet interrelated industrial sectors which touches all aspects of man's life and the society both socially, politically, economically, historically and culturally (Kimbers, 2007).

In 1976, the Tourism Society of Britain described the concept of tourism as "the temporary, short-term movements of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live or work, and activities during their stay at these destinations including movement for all purposes as well as day visit or excursions. The International Association of Scientific Experts on the Concept of Tourism defines it as "the sum phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity to meet their bill". The World Tourism Organisation which is the organ that acts as an umbrella organisation that provides guidelines upon which global tourism operations are based, cited in Kimbers (2007), also sees tourism beyond just leisure and hospitality but as a "veritable tool for poverty alleviation..., reduction in rural-urban migration and for provision of social infrastructural facilities in rural areas and creation of wealth among which employment and better standards of living are involved" (Kimbers, 2007).

While writers, scholars and organisations differ in their individual interpretation of the concept of tourism, a common feature in most of their views is that tourism is simply a conglomeration of services related to all forms of hospitality, travel, accommodation, entertainment, recreation, sports and education, whose by-products are safety, infrastructure, materials/technical bases and good services. This goes to suggest that indeed, tourism is a revenue generator/earner and one of the biggest sectors in both domestic and international trade/business. Thus, a tourist is one who travels temporarily from one place to another for any purpose other than taking up gainful employment (Kimbers, 2007).

The Concept of Development

There has not been a consensus on a universal definition of development. However, in recent times, the earlier tendency to define it in economic terms of (Gross Domestic Product – GDP) has shifted. At present, development connotes positive change in economic, social and political spheres in human endeavour. This expression became quite prominent after World War II. In other words, the concept of development has gone beyond earlier bounds to include all processes of growth, progress and expansion in different fabrics of human endeavours, arising from a number of social and cultural transformations of prevailing social, economic, political and environmental components in different levels of day to day activities and interactions of individuals and groups. One can therefore claim that the term, development, has shifted to a closer and more focused consideration on the satisfaction of one's needs and happy survival. As Barbier, cited in Okeke (2016), puts it, "...the approach emphasises meeting the present needs of the poor, advocates cultural sensitivity, and encourages "grassroots" participation in the development process".

While Suleman expressed difficulty in defining the term development, he however sees it as:

The capacity of a state to increase its human resource with the aim of achieving higher outcome of production for the satisfaction of the basic needs of majority of its citizens and empowering them to make demands on the government (Suleman, 2010).

In addition, Seer cited in Suleman (2010), identifies three areas of focus, namely, poverty, unemployment and inequality, which must be reduced to their barest minimum. In other words, technological development, poverty eradication, gaining livelihood and equal rights among the human population, provide a strong yardstick for development to be a reality. National development is realisable when all these are positively achieved in an integrated manner among people in a given geographic entity.

In relation to the forgoing explanations, all development policies and programmes are supposed to be geared towards achieving the stated goal. Equally, the achievement is mainly enhanced by systematic application of increasing awareness and knowledge of scientific and technological events of the modern times in satisfying the needs of human population and their environment. Attention has recently been drawn to the importance of sustaining national development by every nation. Okeke (2015) observes that (UNDP) Brundtland Report emphasises that sustainable development is the "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This connotes "development that (continuously) promotes prosperity and economic opportunity, greater social well-being, and protection of the environment." There is a general belief that sustainable development provides the surest avenue through which the life of every human being and his environment will be maximally promoted.

Globalisation

Broadly speaking, the term globalisation connotes the deepening of social, economic and cultural interactions among countries of the world. It is the "integration of economies and societies through cross country flow of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services, capital, finance and people. In other words, it is the process of universalisation and turning the world into a "global village". Uya (2012) emphasises that it is the "compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole". In this context, the world shrinks into a single space with barriers of time and space broken and there arise greater interdependence and one universal consciousness of how the world is to be ordered.

Through advances in technology, globalisation has conquered time and shrunk space. But this did not just

suddenly occur; as noted earlier, it is a historical continuum that started several centuries ago. In fact, current globalisation can be described as the climax of a long process in technological changes and advancement that have characterised human societies since the emergence of organised human communities. According to Aina (2003), every discovery and advancement in the technological and scientific world has impacted on its evolution. For instance, the emergence and transformation of transport technology, Information Communication Technology (ICT) - (telegraph, telephone, fax, computer, internet and satellite communication, etc.) have facilitated the movement of persons, goods and services around the world.

The concept means to make ideas, theories, proposals or a way of life to have a worldwide scope and application. This means that people all over the world can have and share the same experience (Idang, 2011). Although globalisation may not be a new phenomenon as it has a long historical process of evolution, concerns have continued to heighten now than before owing to the nature and spread of transformation that is currently taking place as well as the enormous impact it is having on the economic, social and political organisation of countries of the world. Little surprise therefore, that the concept has remained topical among scholars, policy makers and development analysts all over the world especially, given the instruments and components involved, such as standardization, marketisation and strict adherence to norms. This is further accentuated by the different implications which globalisation has for different geo-political zones of the world (Mohammed, 2013).

The Cross River Region

The Cross River region is located in southeastern Nigeria and stretches from Benue State southward and covers all of Cross River State and Akwa Ibom, the Eastern part of Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi and Abia States and continues into Mamfe Depression within which it flows into the upper courses of the Cross River in Western Cameroon. The entire drainage basin of the Cross River including the catchment area of all its tributaries covers about 53,590 square kilometers of which 39,490 square kilometers fall within Nigeria while the remaining 14,100 square kilometers lie in the Cameroon Republic. About 49 per cent (19,350 square kilometers) of the Cross River Basin lies in Cross River State, 29 per cent (11,452 square kilometers) fall within Anambra, Enugu, Abia and Imo states and an area 22 per cent (8,688 square kilometers) is situated in Benue State. The northern three quarters of the Cross River basin, between latitudes 5° 30' North and longitudes 8° and 9° 40' East, can be defined as the Upper Cross River area. A line running south of Ediba and Mamfe between the local watershed of the Calabar-Kwa River system and some northward flowing tributaries of the Cross River, forms an appropriate demarcation between the upper and lower coastal parts of the Cross River Basin (Peters, 1990).

The Cross River, which is the third longest river in Nigeria, is a major geo-physical feature after which "Cross River State" is named. The river has played a very fundamental role as a vehicle through which the healthy socio-cultural exchanges between groups were affected. From very early times, the river has always served as a highway of migration, commerce and civilisation for the peoples of the area. Enforced by various tributaries and streams which occasionally also strengthened by it, a ramified network of waterways was created across thickly forested areas of the state, thus facilitating easy movement of its peoples and their civilisation (Onor, 1994). Noah (1990) notes that the Cross River region is inhabited by various people including: the Ibibio and her related groups of Annang, Oron, etc. of Akwa Ibom State, the Efik, Biase, Yakurr, Mbembe and the Ejagham, etc. of present Cross River State and the Cross River Igbo, particularly the Aro and Ohafia, Aribra, Eda, etc., found in present-day Abia and Ebonyi States.

Tourism in a Globalised Age

The 21st century has undoubtedly become an age of globalisation. This abundantly manifests in the liberalisation and intensification of international linkages in trade, finance, markets, production, research, transportation, energy, medicine, tourism, education, politics and culture on a scale never seen before in human history. New forms of co-operation, linkages and mutual inter-dependence are weaving the world through technology, trade, computer mediated communication, cablenisation networks, international sports, advances in weaponry, economic integration, emergence of transitional communities, democracy and tourism into a global village (Uya, 2012).

According to Uya (2012), tourism itself can be described as “an industry of globalisation”, which has witnessed international tourists crossing national boundaries more than 500 million times a year. As this happens, new friendships are established; interpretation of cultural differences resulting in greater tolerance occurs; global diversities are better appreciated and understood; and the emergence of a synthetic global culture gradually becomes a reality. Besides, tourism has also been described as “the industry of the new millennium”, potentially able to transform rural economies through creation of non-agricultural based jobs, rise in real disposable income, as well as its environmental friendliness.

Some nations especially in Europe and America have appreciated and exploited the economic benefits of the transnational contacts brought about by tourism, especially its foreign exchange capacity. Britain, U.S.A., Israel, Saudi Arabia and India, for example, derive substantial economic benefit from tourism. Latin American countries like Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Brazil devoted sustained attention to the development of their tourist industries from the 1970s and earned substantial foreign exchange from this important sector. Emphasis was also placed on the development of regional tourism that could take the enterprising tourists through Rio de Janeiro in Brazil; Iguazu Falls; Mar del Plata; Bariloche; Buenos Aires in Argentina; Montevideo in Uruguay and Vina del Mar in Chile. Tourism then became a major force in the regional integration of the region (Uya, 2012).

Tourism Development in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States

Akwa Ibom State was carved out of the old Cross River State in 1987. Initially, little attention was paid to tourism beginning from the days of the South Eastern State. Tourism was run by the Hotels Management Board, which was part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Attention was paid to the development of some hotels, while the development of tourist sites was ignored. In other words, there was no “tourism road map” and specific budgetary allocations were not earmarked for the tourism industry. Every positive effort made to properly position the tourism industry was however followed by a lull, brought about mainly by our nation's penchant since oil boom days to neglect the non-oil sectors of the economy. This was worsened by prolonged military rule in the country which considerably suffocated the atmosphere of freedom tourism demands and not infrequently earned Nigeria the status of a pariah nation to be avoided. Indeed, many nations warned their citizens against travelling to Nigeria.

From 1999, the governments of Akwa Ibom and Cross River State began to place high premium on the tourism industry. One of the manifestations was the creation of a full fledged Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the two states. The Cross River State government added more impetus to the tourism revival with the organisation of the globally attended on yearly basis Calabar Carnival and the Obudu Marathon Race.

The South Eastern State (re-named Cross River State, in 1976) was one of the 12 States into which Nigeria was re-constituted by the Federal Military Government in 1967. In September, 1987, Akwa Ibom State was created out of the Cross River State. However, long before the state was created, the peoples of the Cross

River region have had centuries of close cultural, economic and other contacts and interactions. These had helped to forge the various ethnic units that comprise these states into a distinctive cultural area, possessing common cultural characteristics and speaking related languages. The common outlook generated from centuries of interactions such as trade, inter-group marriages and the lasting bond created by the missionary enterprise creates the basis for the continued harmonisation of interest in key areas of socio-economic relations such as tourism.

Ujene and Mendie (2014). opine that the identity of a people and the nation is largely defined by their heritage which is something passed down from one generation to another. Therefore, through conservation of heritage places, one can pass to the future generations what is today identified as having cultural significance. They add that heritage places usually include buildings, artifacts, structures, areas and precincts of historic, aesthetic, architectural, cultural or environmentally significant nature (buildings and heritage precincts), natural feature areas of environmental significance or sites of scenic beauty. The listing of buildings and monuments to be of special architectural or historic interest using certain criteria and preserving them is the responsibility of National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Such buildings are irreplaceable records that contribute to understanding of the past and present. Their presence adds to the quality of life, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene, and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness.

Some Tourism Sites in Akwa Ibom State

The Raffia Craft Market, Ikot Ekpene

The raffia craft market at Ikot Ekpene is famous for works of arts and crafts to an extent that Ikot Ekpene town is nicknamed "raffia city".

National Museums, Uyo and Oron,

The National Museum in Uyo contains mainly relics of Akwa Ibom State creation and other important artifacts of the people, while the National Museum in Oron established in 1959, has over 600 artifacts primarily, ethnographic in scope and has become a harbinger of museum institutions in this part of the world.

Akwa Ibom State Museum at Ikot Udo Esang, Onna Local Government Area

Akwa Ibom museum at Ikot Udo Esang, Onna Local Government Area is domiciled in the house of the revered Nigerian economist and one time Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and Old Cross River State, Chief (Dr.) Clement Isong. It has a collection of cultural artifacts of commerce, chieftaincy institutions, work of arts goldsmith and diverse currencies.

Slave Trade Routes

One of the most prominent symbols and relics of the abolished Atlantic slave trade, the "bridge of no return" is still standing at Ikot Abasi today. As the name implies, it really was a bridge of no return where slaves brought in from the hinterland, were marched through the bridge into ready vessels ferrying them to their new worlds. Where the ferries were not enough, slaves were not returned to the hinterland, but were stuffed in a slave warehouse with three cold underwater chambers directly below the bridge of no return, till the next ready ferry would show up, no matter how long (Abasiattai, Ekpo and Ezebube, 1997).

The Slave Master's Lodge, Okopedi

The slave master's lodge at Okopedi, Itu, is where those who traded on slave lived. The relics are still there for visitors to see. The slave routes project itself arose from the concern of the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to resolve the controversies generated by debates by scholars about the role of slave trade and slavery in shaping the American and Black world. It was initially conceived to try to recreate the experiences of being a slave from the point of recruitment (capture) in the African interior, through transportation overland to the African coastal ports, the exchange or sale at the coast, the middle passage or Atlantic crossing and actual cultural experiences in the Americas and Europe. It thus involved careful identification of the number of major ports through which slaves were exported and an examination of relations between these ports and their hinterland (Uya, 2012)

The 1929 Women's War Statutes of 1929

The 1929 Women's War (wrongly tagged the Aba Women's Riot) was a culmination of the oppressive and exploitative activities of the British colonisers in Nigeria. By the 1920's, the European colonisers introduced direct taxation in Eastern Nigeria to cushion the effect of the Great Depression. This development was strange in this part of the country. The people of the area, particularly the Ibibio were only used to periodic communal levies which in most cases were once – and for all affairs. As a matter of fact women were levied for communal projects. But as it turned out, the British – imposed taxation was to be a regular affair and women too were to be taxed (Abasiattai, 2003).

The colonial tax involved careful assessment of the income level by the Warrant Chiefs, consequently, farms were measured and yam heaps counted, other items counted included women cooking pots, pieces of apparel (cloth) in their boxes were recorded and so on. This resulted in the women from the present day Akwa Ibom and Rivers State reacting angrily to the exploitation and oppression. On the 16th of December, 1929, the colonial authorities who had arranged a meeting with more than 200 women at Egwanga beach (Ikot Abasi) gunned down more than 68 unarmed women. The incident marked a watershed in the history of colonialism in Nigeria. Indeed, the whole paraphernalia of indirect rule was reformed. Undoubtedly, the experience was an effective part of the nationalistic efforts in Nigeria.

Ibibio Union Museum,

The Ibibio Union Museum is situated along Udo Udoma Avenue, Uyo, few poles away from the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly Complex. It houses the works of arts and crafts from Akwa Ibom State and pictures of those who fought for the creation of Akwa Ibom, under the aegis of Ibibio Union (later Ibibio State Union).

The first Qua Iboe Church in Nigeria (1887)

The Qua Iboe Church which was established in Ibeno, Akwa Ibom State in 1887 has spread worldwide. Apart from the Church building which has become a monument, there are the ancient giant sized Bible and a ticking clock on display for tourist's delight alongside gravestones of Rev John Kirk, his wife Grace and other pioneer missionaries.

Mary Slessors' Residence and Cain at Ibiono Ibom

A brief information on the personality of Mary Slessor is provided under tourism sites in Cross River state.

Ohuaogbu Blue and White River, Ukanafun,

At the Ohuaogbu Blue and White River, Edem Idim, Ukanafun Local Government Area, the wonders of

nature is here displayed for all to see. The place is indeed a mysterious handiwork of God, where white and blue coloured gush of water meet a waterway without each changing its original colour. It is a great sight to behold.

Some Tourism Sites in Cross River State

The Obudu Cattle Ranch or Obudu Mountain Resort

The Obudu Cattle Ranch spread over an area of 40 square miles/104 square metres and is located in Obanliku Local Government Area of Cross River State, north of Cross River State. It is about 332 kilometers or five hours drive from Calabar the State Capital. It is situated at an altitude of 1,575.75 (5,1000 feet) above sea level and covering an area of about 104 sq. kilometers. The ranch was discovered in 1949 by Mr. Macculoh of the Veterinary Department in the former Eastern Nigeria. On investigation, he found the plateau to be flat at the top and was free from tse-tse-fly, hence an ideal ranching/animal rearing area. His idea materialised in 1951 (Kalu, 2006).

The ranch is unique and is one of the best holiday resorts in West Africa. Its undulating landscape of mostly grassland has a temperate climate all year round and adds up to its beautiful topography. It has good pastures on 27 grazing ranges of which nine are in use. The drive in the ranch is exhilarating, especially the 11 kilometers of winding road with its 22 bends. One of the most exciting bend is the "devil elbow", which is half through the stretch. The highest temperature of about 85°F – 90°F is recorded between November and January, while the lowest temperature of 4° and 10° is recorded between June and September. Cattles are breed on the ranch for their fresh milk, butter, meat and cheese. There are also birds and pigs that produce eggs and pork in commercial quantities. Green mountain ranges surround the Becheve nature reserve that is home to rare species of birds and also the animals such as Gorilla. The ranch which has a mini-golf course and a squash hall is currently managed by Protea Hotels of South Africa (Kalu, 2006).

The Old Residency Museum

The Old Residency Museum building, Calabar, was erected on the top of a hill between Duke Town and Old Town. The Old Consulate was the first building of its kind and was erected in the 1880s to accommodate the British Consul for the Oil Rivers/Niger Coast Protectorate. The National Museum is meant for the preservation of antiquities, artifacts and relics of historical importance dating back to hundreds of years. It is located in the Old Residency, Calabar. The building and its contents were declared national museum in 1959. The building is prefabricated and the woods are of the Scandinavian pines. The woods were mounted on steel, pillars and were covered with wide gauged iron sheets. The walls were all done in Britain and shipped in pieces to Old Calabar, where it was erected on a permanent site. It has remained one of the finest examples of early colonial architecture in Nigeria. This building was restored and converted to a museum which was opened to the public in 1986 (Francis, 2006).

The spacious hall of the of the museum with Victorian furnishing accommodate various historical personalities such as Consul Edward Hewett, Claude Macdonald, William Fosbery and C.J.Moore, anthropologist, P.A. Talbot, M.D.W. Jeffreys etc. (Mbina, 2014).

Mary Slessor's House and Tombstone

Mary Mitchell Slessor, the famous Scottish missionary arrived Old Calabar on 11th September, 1876. She was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding missionaries who laboured in this part of the African continent. By her colossal and myth-breaking contributions to evangelism, charity work, educational and health services, she registered her foot-prints indelibly in the annals of Nigerian history and also publicised Nigeria on the map of the world. In specific terms, her gallant efforts salvaged twins and their mothers from

the claws of superstition thereby according them human dignity and assured future. Today, twins and their mothers are celebrated in our society (Aye, 1987). Her grave at the Mission Hill Cemetery situated on Anderson Street in Old Calabar, is a beautifully carved tombstone with a giant granite cross stand towering over her grave. In 1956, during the official visit of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II of England, the Queen paid homage to Mary Slessor's grave side and laid a wreath there. The grave is now a tourist attraction (Aye, 1987).

Agbokim Water Falls

The famous Agbokim Waterfalls which forms the upper course of Cross River is found in a village called Agbokim in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State. It is located some 37 kilometers from Ikom Urban and about 315 kilometers from Calabar.

Kwa Falls

Kwa falls is found in Anengje near Oban Hills in Akamkpa, Cross River State and about 25 kilometers from Calabar. The uniqueness of this falls is its picture of sparkling snow-white stream tumbling down the hilly ingenious rock formations, the thick evergreen surrounding forests and the natural arrangement forming a chandelier-like pattern. The falls empties into an area well arranged with rocks which at first sight would readily be taken for logs of wood.

Carved Monoliths

Among the historical monuments in Cross River State, are the ancient carvings on rock surfaces and stones – some of the natural mystery and major attractions found in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State. These carved stones are located in communities like, Alok, Ekajuk, Nnam, Nselle, Nta, Abanyom, Nde, Nkarassi and Akparabong. The most outstanding monoliths widely scattered over the region at Alok and Nkarassi. Out of all 27 stone circles locally known as *Akwanshi*, only the Alok and Nkarassi have been developed as tourist sites. The stone carvings have been estimated to exist for more than 2,000 years and still tell the story, not only of the origin of the people but also of the beliefs system of their time especially as it relates to procreation and fertility. Some spectacular annual festivals are held at the sites of the monoliths (Oyongha, 2012).

Drill Ranch

The Drill Rehabilitation and Breeding Centre of the ranch started in 1991 with some drills. At present, more than 50 per cent of all known drills in the world are rehabilitated in Calabar. As the drills advance in age, the chimps and drills are transferred to their natural but protected habitat at Buanchor in Boki Local Government Area. The Afi and Mbe mountains are home for the newly discovered gorilla specie – The Cross River Gorilla and other endangered primates. This location is popularly referred to as the Gorilla Sanctuary. The Drill Ranch and cercopan serve as zoo to tourist.

The Ebom Lake

This lake is located in the flood plain region of the Egbezum in Bahumono clan. It is about 10 kilometers from Ediba in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. The Ebom Lake covers a diameter of about 500 hectares of clean surface water surrounded by 300 hectares of evergreen marshy grass and isolated hills giving it fascinating scenery. The Ebom Lake is a scenic lake ideal for canoeing, sport fishing and so on. It has a depth of about 6-9 feet.

Agwangune Sand Bank

The Agwangune sand bank is located at the beach of Agwagune village in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State. The sand bank covers an area of about 84 square kilometers. It is the most extensive of the stretches of glittering sand banks which line the shores of River Cross during the dry season. The attractive coastal sand is an excellent holiday and camping ground for tourists and fun lovers only during the dry season. By virtue of its location, the sand bank offers one of the opportunities for surf riding, swimming, picnicking, sun-bathing and so on.

Rock with Foot-print Indents, Ngarabe

The above "tourist wonder" is located in Igbo Ekureku and the village square of Ngarabe in Abi Local Government Area. It is a solid rock with two human foot-prints indented on it. No one can say exactly how old the stone is or how such indents really occurred.

European Cemetery: This is where some late colonial administrators, European traders were buried.

Cross River National Park

One of the prized assets of Cross River State is her wildlife, which is reflected in various efforts at conservation of not just the wildlife, but also the natural habitats. From the different endangered primate family like wild drills, Gorillas and Chimpanzees to birds like, parrots, Cross River State is endowed with rich wild life and the Cross River National Park housed/conserved most of this wildlife. The Cross River National Park was created under Decree 36 of 1991, along-side other parks. This action by the Federal Government was to arrest the fast rate of environmental degradation. The country's rainforest and natural resources have gone through 90 percent depletion since the turn of the century.

The Cross River National Park has an area of about 4000 square kilometers and is located in two non-contiguous sections – Oban area. Animal species found in both divisions include: antelopes, chimpanzees, high forest monkeys, buffaloes, high forest elephants, manatees and bush pigs. Others are baboons, leopards, gorillas, water chevrotain, sitatunga, Duiker, Bush-Buck, warthog, pangolin, Monitor lizard, Porcupine, Giant forest Squirrel and so on. The park also harbours more than 350 species of birds including Olive Ibis, Crowned Eagle, Black Guinea Fowl, Yellow Hornbill, Red-headed Rock-fowl and so on, some 60 per cent of these birds are not found elsewhere in Nigeria. The diversity of butterflies in the park may well be richer than any other part of Africa, nearly 30 per cent of African butterfly species are found within the park.

Calabar Carnival

The Calabar Carnival is a mega-event and the climax of Christmas festival in Calabar consisting of several activities from the 30h to 1st of January the following year. The children carnival comes up on the 27th of December while the adult one is on the 30th. There are five competing bands namely: bay Side, Masta Blaster, Passion 4, Sea Gull and Freedom band. There are other non-competing bands. The carnival has been dubbed Africa's biggest street party, with dance groups covering a distance of 12 kilometres. The carnival showcases an antenna role of arts, heritage, theatre, culture hospitality and entertainment in tourism development (Mbina, 2014).

Apart from the Calabar Carnival, there are several traditional festivals such as New Yam Festival which are held annually in several parts of Cross River State, which could attract tourists.

Challenges of Tourism Development in Nigeria

Despite the abundance of tourism potentials, such as rich sophisticated cultures and histories, natural resources and developing tourism infrastructures, the tourism industry in Nigeria has been dogged by a number of complicated problems. Adejuwon and Ekpenyong, have identified some of these problems as follows:

- i. Low level demand brought about by poor perception of tourism in Nigeria arising from inadequate publicity and negative reports about the country by the Western media.
- ii. Inadequate measures and incentives to attract investors into the industry.
- iii. Insufficient tourism facilities, sites and supporting tourism infrastructures
- iv. Inadequate trained personnel for the sector
- v. Insufficient funds
- vi. Problems associated with land acquisition arising from the Land Use Decree;
- vii. Dearth of data and statistics
- viii. Apathy of many Nigerians who see tourism and leisure generally as waste of valuable time for work and other pleasures;
- ix. Inconsistent policies and poor implementation of such policies

To the above we should add the following, especially as they relate to the foreign tourists:

- i. Illegal road blocks and unnecessary and corruption-ridden check points of entry and other visa problems
- ii. Inadequate security for tourists while travelling through the country and at tourist sites;
- iii. Insufficient though vastly improving cable television networking;
- iv. Poor and frustrating infrastructures as light; water, telecommunication and transport
- v. Rising communal, ethnic and religious conflicts which threaten the security of the tourists;
- vi. Discouraging and disturbing and sometimes exaggerated signals about the inability of Nigeria to successfully manage our new democracy.

The problems painted above strips Nigeria of the full benefits that other countries of the world derive from the tourism industry. In the Cross River Region, (Akwa Ibom and Cross River States) the situation becomes pathetic because of the fact the "regional" or "integration" approach that should drive the industry in the area has been ignored. This is what this research seeks to achieve.

Regional Tourism Agenda: The Public-Private Partnership Perspective

Even though significant improvements have been recorded in the area of tourism in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, the approach has been "parochial". In other words, there has not been a concerted linkage between the two states to fully tap from the abundant tourism potentials, some of which have been mentioned above. For instance, in every December, the women of Akwa Ibom State hold series of events in commemoration of the women that were murdered during the 1929 Women's War, at Ikot Abasi (former Opobo) (Akpan, 2017). The month of December also marks the birth of Mary Slessor, one of the world's renowned missionaries who served in the Cross River Region. It is therefore imperative to point out that the two states can synchronise these events such that tourists could visit the two states and be part of the events in the month of December. Akwa Ibom State should stop competing with Cross River State by also organising its own brand of "Cultural Carnival" during the period of the "Calabar Carnival" because this opposes the regional tourism development agenda.

Recommendations:

- (i) In order to fully develop the potentials of the tourism sector, there is need for public-private partnership in the two states and the creation of a regional tourism agency. It is crucial to train personnel who will help make the nation's dream of a prosperous tourism sector a realisable one. One of such personnel are tour guides who are quite essential to the thriving of the industry. In Israel, for instance, tour guides are so efficient, passionate and so enthusiastic that they make tourists feel immensely excited and somehow fulfilled.
- (ii) Also, all the tiers of government need to produce carefully researched and professionally produced tourists' guidebooks which prospective tourists could find handy when they plan or decide to visit the country. It should contain everything like required information about the country such as its geography, economy, hospitality, system of government among others. This could be made available at major international and local airports across the world as well as other platforms with mass appeal. This way, prospective tourists' have essential information about the country as its tourist sites on their fingertips.
- (iii) Vital infrastructures that are quite essential to the growth of tourism must also be developed as any visible defect in infrastructure will surely dissuade tourists. It is pertinent to provide the supporting infrastructure for leisure and business travel for the industry to really grow. For instance, a poorly managed public transportation constitutes a serious disservice to tourism. Equally, our hospitality industry has to be top notched by every world standard. Additionally, the nation needs to put in place a clear cut strategy to professionally manage all attractive festival and carnivals in the country. With many attractive tourist centres, diverse cultural heritages and enthusiastic people, the country certainly stands to gain a lot if all stakeholders evolve new strategies to explore its huge tourism potentials (Uya, 2012).

Conclusion

Tourism is a veritable instrument for socio-economic development as it impacts directly on the economy through the provision of resources and income that could be deployed to enhance economic growth, accelerate development and reduce poverty. Tourism is also an important mechanism for social exchange and identity building at all levels. Currently, the rate of tourism development has increased across the globe. In contemporary time, tourism can be clearly defined as the new socio-economic changer. The economic potential of tourism is remarkable, with direct and indirect impact on employment. Similarly, it is a good public relations mechanism through which a city, state or country could attract needed foreign investment. In spite of accounting for 15 per cent of the world population and the fact that some of the fastest growing economies are domiciled in the continent, the potential of Africa's tourism remains untapped as it receives only about 3 percent of the world's tourism benefits. Indeed, tremendous opportunities exist to further expand tourism across the continent and garner substantial revenue from this sector.

With the dwindling economic fortune, the country has to explore other avenues to sustain the economy as well as provide necessary dividends of democracy for the citizens. One of such ways is through the development of the tourism sector which has been explored and still being explored by nations globally to generate the needed revenue to drive their economies.

In Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, both the public and private sectors have contributed to the development of tourism. While the private sector has contributed in the area of road map development to guide tourists, building and running hotels, generating employment for citizens, the public sector on its part

has contributed in all areas such as expansion of airports, building of roads, provision of public transport system, training of tour guards, establishment of travelling agencies, promotion of cultural activities, provision of employment opportunities and promotion of infrastructure (Mbina, 2014). For the tourism sector to be more developed and more rewarding to Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, the respective stakeholders (public/private) must as a necessity collaborate to harness the enormous resources embedded in the Cross River region. The areas that require collaboration include: transport system, training and re-training of hospitality workers, provision of infrastructure, generation of employment opportunities. Indeed, stakeholders (from public and private sectors) in the two sister states must play complementary role if they envisage tourism to become one of the key sectors in economic growth and development. This could be achieved through the regional approach which is very germane in a globalised age.

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