Editorial
The State of Tourism in Nigeria

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It is common knowledge that the tourism industry in Nigeria has faced serious infrastructural, personnel and institutional challenges since its inception in the early 1950s. There is a low level of infrastructural supply to designated tourist sites, dearth of qualified professionals to manage the available resources and gross inadequacy of well staffed institutions to produce the necessary personnel. The lackluster approach to the subject matter by successive governments, low budgetary allocation and the resultant poor contribution of the industry to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have also been blamed for this development. In actual fact, tourism contributes less than one percent of the nation's GDP. We must not forget also, the quantum of leakages from the economy arising from uncontrolled medical tours overseas by the upper and middle classes. Consequently, the numerous tourist resources in Nigeria have remained largely untapped. We are also not oblivious of the current spate of insecurity in the country and its associated threat to both domestic and international visitation. The insecurity problems occasioned by the Islamic extremists called Boko Haram in the northeast, the nefarious activities of Fulani herdsmen, particularly in the north central, kidnapping in parts of Nigeria, predominantly in the south, robbery and crimes in general etc are major issues begging for attention. There is also the issue of tourism education and benchmarking of tourism curriculum.

It is the urge to contribute to this fledgling industry that propelled us to convene a meeting in September, 2012, which ultimately led to the formation of Association for Tourism Development in Nigeria (ATDiN) and the establishment of *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies*. These two organs will provide a forum for interaction among academics and interested persons, and serve as a multi-disciplinary platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences in tourism and related areas and how these can be harnessed to promote development; advance the art of tourism, leisure and hospitality management; develop local and international capabilities for examining, managing and promoting tourism and related developments in Nigeria. The underlying word here is academic. This is where we have the skills and competencies. This is where we have the capacity and capability to help move the industry forward. This is where ATDiN differs from other associations before it.

We wish to welcome the transformation agenda of the federal government, and Vision 20-20-20 in which Nigeria plans to be among the top 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020. No matter how idealistic

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this vision may be, it accords tourism a place in the scheme of things. What remains is how to judiciously implement its provisions to achieve results. Indeed, we can have a vision of Nigeria's economy transformed through tourism and good reputation. This can be done by understanding peoples' perception of Nigeria and her travel trade, and subsequently outlining policies and programmes that will correct any negative perception that may affect the industry, while enhancing the attraction values. The ultimate aim is to attract international visitation and investments into the country. Today, Nigeria's tourism practitioners have chosen the brand *fascinating Nigeria* as a means of promoting the uniqueness of Nigeria and her heritage resources so as to encourage visitation. This vision can only be realized if we make our tourist lures competitive in terms of quality of product and service delivery, if we provide a safe environment for visitors, and if we make concerted effort to uplift the industry.

Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies (JTHS) is one of the many ways to actualize our vision, while promoting academic excellence. It is published twice each year by Association for Tourism Development in Nigeria (ATDiN) to address historical, current and emerging issues in tourism, hospitality and heritage management. The journal welcomes articles covering any of the following areas: Heritage Management, Tourism, Anthropology, Archaeology, Communication, History, Social Linguistics, Economics, Religion and Cultural Studies, African Literature, Zoology, Botany, Geography etc. Nevertheless, priority is given to contributions that focus on Africa and Nigeria particularly.

JTHS also publishes review papers, conceptual issues, analytical and case study researches, technical notes and book reviews. Authors are advised to use the Guidelines for Contributors in preparing their manuscripts for submission. Submissions are peer-reviewed.

This maiden edition of the journal attempts to critically evaluate some of the nagging issues in Nigeria's tourism industry, and provide a springboard for continued debate on the future role of tourism in the social, economic, educational and cultural development of the country. The authors to this inaugural edition provide invaluable insights into tourism education and the associated policies in Nigeria; the National Universities Commission's benchmarking policy, the impact of event management, the efforts to harness heritage resources for tourism, and the peopling of the Central Sudan…. The edition is indeed a hybrid - a combination of debates on tourism and historical trends in heritage management. This principle will continue to guide our subsequent editions.

Proposed Cultural Tourism Strategic Plan for Nigeria

Tourism is one of the high ranking industries in a number of economies. It is the fastest growing industry across the globe and many developing and developed nations have continued to promote it as a tool for economic

development. Indeed, many policy-makers and planners are turning to tourism development as a mechanism to restructure economies.

Nigeria has a vast array of cultural and natural heritage that can support a thriving tourism industry. The diversity of her ethnic nationalities, the sheer size of her population and the variations in her physical environment provide a fertile backdrop for a viable tourism industry. Furthermore, Nigeria recognizes tourism and mobility of people as a major factor of cultural growth and development. This recognition has been documented in part II section 7 of the 1988 Cultural Policy for Nigeria, and section 4 of Decree No 81 of 1992 tagged "The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation Decree," now NTDC Act. Many analysts have argued that Nigeria and private developers will make huge financial gains if the tourism industry is properly managed. This argument is predicated on the enormity and quality of her diverse natural and cultural heritage, the sheer size of the country and the increasing desire of government to harness these great potentials.

Unfortunately, however, Nigeria is yet to utilize the vast tourist resources in the country to achieve the desired result. The following reasons account for this state of affairs:

1. Undue reliance on petroleum exploitation and the consequent neglect of other sectors, including tourism;
2. Low level of capital investment in the industry, as a consequence of the above;
3. Poor tourism culture among Nigerians, largely due to the dearth of well developed destinations and the resultant urge to take holidays overseas;
4. Lack of trained and knowledgeable personnel to run the industry; and
5. Ineffective application of the legislations provided for the protection of tourist resources, culminating in their vulnerability to destructive forces.

Given the large size of the country and the diversity of her cultural and ecological heritage as stated above, a zonal approach is suggested in identifying her huge heritage and in converting this into tourist products. In other words, we shall take the six geopolitical zones, as delineated in the current political dispensation, one after another. The ultimate aim is to redress the above problems and make our tourism industry properly rooted.

A number of approaches can be employed to achieve these desires:

1. The promotion of people-oriented tourism industry that is capable of making them stewards of their heritage. This will create a sense of ownership and responsibility among the people, and ultimately encourage sustainability;
2. The documentation of available attractions, backed by proper researches about their history and basic features;

3. The provision of community-oriented infrastructural supply and facilities;
4. Training of requisite manpower to run the industry; and
5. Collaboration with companies and organizations in the development, promotion and marketing of cultural activities and events so as to make our tourism industry more robust and active.

Consequently, there is need for study tours of cultural tourist attractions in Nigeria to enable us develop a strategic plan for harnessing them. We shall start with selected states in the southeast and south-south geopolitical zones.

Background

Every major city around the globe anchors its economy, including tourism development, on a particular product or products. For instance, the economies of Amsterdam (Netherlands) and London (United Kingdom) are built around their international Airports, while that of New Jersey in the United States is built around its Seaports. Cities like Miami, New York, and Los Angeles also in the United States, have their economies built around Steel industries, Tourism (entertainment), Commerce, and Movies (JASMAK Group, *et al* nd). What then can make southeast and south-south regions to hustle and bustle?

Southeast and south-south Nigeria are regions of great variety, endowed with a rich array of heritage resources and potential tourist destinations. We therefore recommend the development of cultural tourism in both regions as a launching pad for the development of other sectors. This is because cultural attractions, particularly festivals and carnivals, when combined with events and entertainments, act as catalysts for enhanced tourist traffic. Among the numerous attractions in the regions are: new yam, ofala and masquerade festivals, rich and colourful traditional dances including the Nkpokiti Acrobatic Dance Troupe of Umunze, Ekombi Traditional Dance of Cross River, the Mask Market at Ikot-Ekpene, Omu-Ukwu temple in Ohafia, and a wide range of heritage sites/resources as well as local crafts (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002).

Objectives

The general objectives of this proposal shall be to develop a plan for the promotion of tourist communities and tourism youth clubs across the two zones.

The Specific Objectives Shall be:

1. To document and study the multifarious cultural attractions, events and heritage resources in the zones with a view to determining their comparative strengths and commercial prospects;
2. To do a profiling of the institutional structures in the zones particularly youth cooperatives so as to harness their potentials for tourism promotion;

3. To examine the manpower need for tourism promotion vis-à-vis the available training opportunities to enable us make recommendations;
4. To examine ways of promoting international cultural cooperation between Nigeria and other countries, given the growing interests in Nigeria's culture, commerce, entertainment and tourism;
5. To find ways of encouraging competitive international contests in sports, culture and entertainment between Nigeria and other countries;
6. Based on the above findings, to develop a strategic plan for harnessing and managing them.

Operational Definition of the Area

The study shall cover five states in the southeast and south-south zones respectively. Specifically, the states are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo in the southeast and Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross River and Rivers in the south-south.

Methodology

The following methodology should be adopted in executing this project:

1. General ethnographic approaches for the collection and study of data on the cultural events and activities within each state, including the demographic patterns and socio-economic features;
2. SWOT Analysis and matrix ranking method to enable us classify events, attractions and other tourist products into basic and strategic projects for purposes of developing them;
3. Computer-processing and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

Strategy

A pre-feasibility analysis of many of the cities in the South-south and Southeast suggest that they can be commercially viable and active if we build their economies around COMMERCE, EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT. We believe that these activities have great potentials that will help to improve travel traffic and trade within the regions. We are aware that travelers can be influenced by advertising and promotion to choose travel destinations. Nevertheless, tourists generally place great emphasis on a 'value-for-money' holiday experience (Inskeep, 1991). Thus, an integrated approach or the presentation of multi-products and events, which offer variety of experiences to travelers, when anchored on the above tripod is a useful way to harness the rich heritage of the study zones.

For instance, a major strength of Calabar in Cross River State as an area of attraction is its status as a FREE TRADE ZONE. This vintage position can be used to transform the city into a hub around which tourism, events and commerce, particularly for imported goods revolve. It must be noted that a sizeable number of imports in Nigeria come from China, Dubai, Singapore

and Malaysia ...What this means is that a great proportion of businessmen and many more who travel to these countries for business can be attracted to Calabar and environs if such products are placed within their reach, if the diverse heritage of the people are regularly showcased; and if the city is developed as a nerve centre for show-business and entertainment. The products on offer must not only be of standard quality, but should also be competitive with respect to their prices. In other words, the city could be promoted as NIGERIA'S DUBAI that is geographically well-situated, economically appealing and romantically engaging.

Another important strength of Calabar is its proximity to the two very important international markets in Nigeria, Aba and Onitsha, both of which are located in the Southeast. Traders in these two markets import a greater percentage of goods that come into this country, and would readily explore and exploit the benefits of the Free Trade Zone if it is well managed; and if the comparative advantage of travelling outside for business and entertainment swings in their favour. There are also other markets within and outside the regions that will find Calabar very convenient for business. Given the above scenario therefore, we make a number of recommendations.

1. A re-examination of current events and activities at TINAPA Resort, Calabar to enable us suggest the way forward. Nevertheless, we encourage a robust reorganization, anchored on commerce, events and entertainment, so as to make the resort vibrant and internationally competitive.
2. In the short-term, there is need to examine the feasibility of instituting seasonal TINAPA TOURNAMENTS AND TALENT NURSERY in Nigeria. The target population should be the youth, while the entire country shall be the catchment area.
3. The tournaments will be competitive and must aim at grooming young talents in various sporting events, including traditional games, and ultimately positioning them for professional engagements in their areas of competence. International invitational tournaments should also be encouraged.
4. A robust activity organized along the above lines, when combined with well equipped children's playground and daily movies etc. will hopefully put the resort on a new pedestal.

Consequently, in conjunction with commerce, there should be varieties of regular events and entertainment to keep the city lively. Among the numerous activities that can be harnessed are: Variety Nights, Fashion Shows, Beauty Pageants, Masquerade Festivals, Sport Festivals, Cultural Shows and Entertainment, Celebrity Weddings (as with Delaware in the US), Regular Colloquiums and so on. We shall use the opportunity of the events to showcase our diverse material heritage, some of which could be purchased as souvenirs.

As the author of this proposal noted elsewhere, the people of Nigeria have numerous longstanding artistic traditions that can be modified for

economic reasons. For instance, the Awka and Nkwerre people of the Southeast are acknowledged masters in blacksmithing. The Annangs of Akwa-Ibom State produce amazing variety of cane and raffia crafts such as tables, chairs, beds, baskets, bags, baby cots, hats etc. In Sokoto, Kano and Borno States, high quality leather goods are produced, while Iseyin (Oyo State) and Akwete (Abia State) people are noted for their well-prized durable cloths of delightful designs. The Benin people are popularly associated with their high quality brass works, while the Nupe are acclaimed glassworkers using discarded pieces of bottles, glass and glassware as raw materials (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002). In actual fact, there are probably as much variety of handicrafts as there are different peoples and cultures in Nigeria. These products would generally appeal to some visitors.

We shall draw further strength from the annual CALABAR FESTIVAL**,** the hospitality of the people and their rich dishes to make Calabar and environs popular travel destinations. The people of the region are generally hospitable and their local dishes and delicacies are very well cherished by Nigerians.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The approach to be adopted in the execution of this project in the two zones can be replicated and modified for application in the remaining four geopolitical zones in the country.

1. In the short-term, there is need to commission researches on potentially viable attractions with the object of determining their marketability;
2. There is need to isolate, develop and promote viable attractions to generate both domestic and international tourist traffic;
3. In the long-term, there should be a properly articulated tourism education in the country in order to inculcate tourism culture in the people; and
4. To facilitate the above, government should collaborate with private organizations (foreign and local), researchers, institutes and departments to harness the vast tourist products in the country.

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