

TOURISM-THE POTENTIALS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Travel has become one of the great forces for peace and understanding in our time. As people move through the world and learn to know each other's customs and appreciate the qualities of individuals of each nation, a level of international understanding is built, which can sharply improve the atmosphere for the world peace. Recreation and tourism as leisure activities are relatively new developments and only recently have they been considered worthy of serious business endeavor or academic study. Moreover, leisure activities are of sufficient economic importance and their impact upon the economy, environments and societies are significant enough for them to deserve academic consideration. Modern tourism industry started in the west as a result of industrial revolution and this boosted the ranks of middle classes. Coupled with the advancement in transportation and springing up of large hotels also helped to cater for the growing traffic. Holidays and tourist travel were generally accepted as part of western culture, due to the acquisition of television sets in most households. Nigeria took some economic measures to promote tourism by the establishment of the national tourism policy. Tourism has its benefits and their attendant problems, which include cultural awareness, communication, technology and cultural revival. Some of the problems include negative impact on vegetation, rare species of animals and high crime rates and so on. The return of democracy in Nigeria has the amplifying effect in lifting the image of the country internationally. This paper therefore seeks to examine the potentials of tourism development. In doing that, the following issues will be addressed; leisure, recreation and tourism, the origin of tourism, benefits of tourism and its attendant problems, and future trends of tourism.

Introduction

Each year, over 600 million people travel internationally while hundreds of millions journey within their home countries doing so for both work and pleasure. As a result, the tourism industry including hotels, resorts, airlines, travel agencies and other businesses that cater for travelers is described as the world's number one employer.

Nevertheless, according to Holloway (1994), the popularity of leisure activities and recognition of their importance by government has accelerated their studies. Given the rate at which interest is growing in recreation and tourism, there is the hope that before long, they will take a pride of place in the list of professional programmes.

Leisure Recreation and Tourism?

It is difficult to understand the real meaning of recreation without understanding what leisure time is all about. This is because; it is the leisure time that creates the opportunity for recreation.

Leisure, to a lay man's view, is surplus time left after all the necessities of life have been accomplished. (Clawson, 1978) throws more light by dividing time into three categories -

- * The existence time
- * The subsistence time
- * The leisure time

The existence time, is time spent to answer the call of nature, such as sleeping and eating.

Subsistence time refers to time spent acquiring all the necessities of life, such as food, housing, clothing, transportation, jobs, whose earning can acquire all these.

The leisure time, is time remaining after existence and subsistence time have been met. It is free time when people are free to pursue desirable expressions that are pleasurable to them.

Godbey (1978), further explained that, leisure time does not involve any commitment to work, assignment, appointment and activity.

Recreation refers to all activities taken during leisure time. It is a wholesome activity taken for pleasure. Godbey (1978), quotes Wrenn and Hardy, that "recreation to be what a person finds pleasure in doing when he is not paid for it and does not feel any obligation to do it".

Kundson (1980) refers to recreation as any action that refreshes the mental attitude of an individual. It could be 'active'¹ activity, such as running, Footballing, jumping or can be 'passive'¹ activity, such as reading, viewing television, meditating etc.

Recreation, revitalizes the human spirit, restores a person's vitality, initiative and perspective of life thereby preparing the individual to return to his toil.

Most scholars in the field of tourism admit that the term tourism is not easy to define (Bannan, 1976; Wood, 1991; Appleton, 1992). They see tourism as a form of recreation, therefore one of the leisure activities. Mathieson and Wall, (1982) defined tourism, as the temporary movement to destinations outside the normal home and work place, the activities undertaken during the stay and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourist. Leiper, (1990) defines tourism as a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted activity which touches many lives and many different economic activities. That is, tourism touches a whole range of individuals, businesses, organizations and places, which combine in a way to deliver a travel experience. Generally, tourism can be defined as an activity of increasing social and economic importance which involves the movement of people from one point to the other in search of pleasure, fun, business, adventure, culture and political exchange.

The Origin of Tourism

Modern tourism industry evolved in the West, in the 19th century. As the industrial revolution boosted the ranks of the middle classes in Europe and the United States, a growing number of people found themselves with both the money and the time to travel. In addition, great advances were made in methods of mass transportation. Powerful locomotives pulled passengers between major cities and great steamships sped them between continents. To cater for the growing traffic, large hotels sprang up near railway terminals and shipping ports.

In 1841, an English entrepreneur, Thomas Cook, saw the potential in tying these elements together (transport, accommodation and activities at desired locations into a holiday package tour). Due to the system founded by Mr. Cook, noted the British Statesman, William Gladstone in the 1860', whole classes (middle/upper) have for the first time found easy access to foreign countries and have acquired some of the familiarity with them which breeds kindness, not contempt. However, the outbreak of two world wars during the first half of the twentieth century, did not ruin tourism. Rather the social changes and technological advances spawned by those wars actually accelerated the growth of the industry. Air travel became faster and less expensive, high-ways spread across continents and motor vehicles proliferated. By the middle of the 20th century, holidays and tourist travel were an accepted part of Western culture and were available to most classes of society. In addition, millions of households acquired television sets and became fascinated by pictures of exotic locations, fueling early urge to travel.

During the early 1960', the number of international tourists reached 70 million each year. By the mid-1990^s, that figure ballooned to over 500 million. Around the globe, tourist resorts sprang up to cater for both international and domestic travellers. Industries not directly associated with tourism benefited since tourists consume vast quantities of food, drink and spend money on numerous other goods and services.

Today, tourism is important to the economy over 125 countries.

Highlighting the benefits tourism can bring, a 2004 U.N World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) news release, explained that Tourism can alleviate poverty through the creation of small and medium-size tourism businesses. As it creates new jobs, it can raise environmental, cultural and social awareness.

In the early 1980^s, some scientists and film-makers took an increasing interest in saving rain forests and coral reefs as well as creatures that depend on them. The resulting reports and nature documentaries heightened the public's interest in visiting these natural sights. The small business that sprang up to cater for the scientists and film-makers expanded to care for the influx of ecology-minded tourists.

Eco-tours have rapidly become popular, making eco-tourism the fastest-growing segment of the tourism industry.

Journalist Martha S. Honey(1976) explained: "In several countries, nature-based tourism mushroomed into the largest foreign exchange earner, surpassing banana in Costa Rica (Central America) Coffee in Tanzania and Kenya and Textile and Jewelry in India,

Tourism has thus provided a valuable financial incentive to save plants and animals. For instance, in Kenya, Martha Honey observed that, it is estimated that one lion is worth \$7,000.00 per year in income from tourism, and an elephant herd is valued at \$610.00 annually. Hawaii's coral reefs are estimated to generate \$360 million each from nature based tourism.

Nigeria had her first international tourism in 1472, when Portuguese merchants visited Lagos, apparently in search of trade. There are also historical records of Trans-Saharan and Caravan movements in the 16th-19th century. Since then, the tourism industry has continued to show appreciable growth in the country.

In 1962, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Tourist Association (NTA) and charged it with the responsibility of promoting domestic and international tourism in the country.

In 1976, NTA was dissolved and the Nigerian Tourism Board (NTB) established in its place. The development of the sub-sector was boosted in 1990, when the Ministry of Trade and Industry was created, and the NTB became a Corporation.

The Nigeria government in her quest to diversify her mono-cultural economy which is heavily dependent on petroleum export, decided to take some measures to promote Travel and Tourism. The measures include:

- * The establishment of the National Tourism Policy (NTP) in 1991.
- * The birth of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in 1992
- * The founding of the National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTQUR) in Baganda and Kano
- * The National Travel Bureau (NTB), a tour operating company of (NTDC) in 2001
- * The adoption of a Tourism Master Plan and National Tourism Council, which was vested with the President as Chairman (2005)

Nigeria is one of the leading countries in Africa in the fight against poverty and plays an active role in (UNWTO) United Nations World Tourism Organisation's ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism - Elimination of Poverty). The programme was launched in 2002 and focuses on long-standing work to encourage sustainable tourism, social, economic and ecological factors, which specifically alleviate poverty, bringing development and jobs to people living on less than a dollar a day. Nigeria has chaired the working group of the (UNWTO) Executive Council, (the highest policy-making organ of the organisation) which supervised the preparation of the STEP initiative.

Recently, Nigeria was elected as the Chairman of the UNWTO Commission for Africa.

Benefits of Tourism and Attendant Problems

Tourism carries some positive benefits which participating countries enjoy. They include: cultural awareness, communication technology and cultural revival.

Contact with foreign culture creates the opportunity for getting to know new things about other societies in other parts of the world. Therefore, tourism breeds a fertile ground for cultural advancement and widening of awareness with other cultures.

Tourism development demands that all parts of the world should be well linked and interconnected together. Potential tourists must be informed of available tourism attractions, where they exist, time available, political and security situations. All these information are necessary for tourism to thrive. It is the desire to inter-connect the regions of the world that led to the advancement in communication technology such as Global System Mobile Phone (GSM),

There are so many historical events, art work and cultural heritage that are being revived for the interest of the development of tourism. Many cultural activities and tribal customs would have been abandoned but for tourism. The tourism boards are intensifying efforts to revive interest in traditional local customs. Remote areas endowed with tourism resources have been provided with infrastructural facilities in order to enhance their attractiveness as tourist destinations. Thus, infrastructural facilities such as roads, electricity, hospitals, banks, hotels, security have been provided to many rural communities.

In order to foster and strengthen tourism development, many nations come together to discuss modalities for cooperation. This engenders interest for international cooperation to discuss and find solutions for common problems. Travelling out is a kind of education. Tourism provides opportunities for people to get to know the realities about places foreign to them. Travel is also an experience, not a tangible object. It creates pleasant anticipation or aversion, excitement and challenge or fatigue and disappointment. The anticipation, the experience and, the memory occur in the mind, leaving no tangible evidence as to why travel was undertaken and the same trip is experienced in so many different ways by different people.

It is true that in most cases, journalists are sentimental and subjective in their reporting and could thus give misleading information about places. For instance, travel literature and films, often falsify reality or are shot so selectively that the actual environment is not recognizable by the visitor. The phony shot that makes the pool look longer than it is, the colour that never exists in nature, the lavish buffet that was rigged especially for the photography, the glorious sunset that occurs once a year all of these create expectations that cannot be realised, and lead to disappointment. However, tourism helps to clear doubts.

Visitors sometimes pick interest in some commodities found in the places of visit and arrange to market them to the outside world. Others take their local art works to advertise in their destinations. These activities stimulate international trade for such portable artworks and jewellery. Arrival of many visitors often stimulates demand for several commodities and services such as food, clothing, hotels, parking spaces and transport. Development of tourism facilities has often led to the conservation of endangered life species of wild life and the protection of special or important wilderness habitat. (Wood and House, 1991).

The sheer volume of tourists today has led to problems. In India, the Taj Mahal, is suffering wear and tear from visitors. According to Lickerish and Jenkins (1998) quoted in Awake 2005, August 15th the Pyramids of Egypt are also threatened by large numbers of visitors. They also warned that uncontrolled tourism can kill or stunt vegetation when hordes of visitors tramp through conservation areas. More species can be endangered when tourists collect items such as rare seashells and coral or when local residents gather these items to sell to tourists.

It is also observed that, an average of one kilogram of solid waste and litter are produced by tourist per day, according to estimates by the UN Environmental Programme. A recent report from the Rain Forest Action Network;

says, "In popular Himalayan tourist routes, litter has been strewn along the trails and the alpine forest has been decimated by travellers looking for fuel to heat food and bath water".(Mark 1998)

Furthermore, tourists often consume a disproportionate amount of resources at the expense of local inhabitants. For example, James Mark(1998:491-7) writes in his book. *Tourism and the Economy* writes in his book, "Tourism and the Economy",

"Tourists in Grenada, consume seven times as much water as residents. I further adds that, directly and indirectly, tourism accounts for 40 percent of total energy consumed in Hawaii, although on average only one out of every eight people in Hawaii is a tourist".

The socio-cultural effect of tourism on host countries is quite remarkable particularly among third world countries, O'Grady (1990) remarked that the upsurge in the number of tourists from Europe and North America can lead to loss of cultural and community identity, create conflict in traditional societies over the use of community owned land and natural resources.

Reports from famous tourist destinations all over the world, for example: Hawaii, Miami, and London indicate that tourism is responsible for the high crime rate and other social problems associated with those centres. The types of crimes are prostitution, theft of portable art works, kidnapping, cheating, trick-star activities and gambling.

Mak, (1998;496) observed that, "Tourists today feel free of restraints so they engage in activities that they would not share in if they were at home around family and friends"

The immorality of tourist as a result, has become a problem of serious consequences worldwide. The CNN News Agency,(2004) reported the effects of tourism on child-prostitution. It estimated between 16,000 to 20,000 child-sex victims in Mexico, largely in border, urban and tourist areas.

Future Trends

The rapid and diverse changes taking place in the world today have placed Nigeria in a better position. Viewing the rate at which socio-political and economic reformation is taking place is an indication that tourism has a bright future in the country.

Tourism is a multidimensional, multifaceted and multidisciplinary activity which touches many lives, organizations, and many other different economic activities. Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation must be fully aware not only of existing patterns of tourism, but also trends, which might indicate possible changes of behaviour in the future.

The return of democracy in Nigeria has an amplifying effect in lifting the image of the country internationally. The result is that more foreigners would-crave to visit Nigeria as their liberty and integrity will be guaranteed.

Under the military administration, many countries severed their diplomatic relationship with Nigeria. This affected tourism in the country, which was declared a tourism destination for Africa. The current democratic government has been deeply involved in re-establishing these relationships. With the current rate of success so far achieved in international relations, it is believed that tourism will benefit immensely.

The rate of advancement in the telecommunication in the country is quite impressive and has a positive effect on tourism. The involvement of private individuals in air and sea transport has been on the increase, more international air ports, sea ports, even international railways and road ways are gaining prominence. Nigerian mass media, both private and public are doing their best to brighten Nigeria's image abroad, and they have positive implications for tourism. (Wylson, 1980.)

One of the cardinal objectives of democracy is to protect individual's freedom and liberty. Many institutions are being established as positive measures to guarantee security of lives and property in the country. There are also measures that will avoid political and civil unrest. The success achieved in these areas, means success for tourism.

Both the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Tourism and Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) have jointly participated in the major travel fairs in the world, marketing and promoting tourism potentials whose major product is cultural tourism. The purpose is to generate international traffic. Nigeria generated about \$12 million from cultural tourism (Guardian, September 27, 2002).

With the current increase in salaries and wages, more civil servants are likely to enjoy the benefits of increased disposable income, coupled with more Nigerians becoming educated and literate and this will ignite the desire of visiting other regions or resorts, thereby promoting domestic tourism.

The rate of voluntary retirement in Nigeria is on the increase coupled with the increase in population, car ownership, improvement in transportation and communication infrastructural services and the establishment of hotels and guest houses of moderate costs, show indications of brighter future for tourism.

Conclusion

Tourism is a luxury and a voluntary activity. Until recently, participation was restricted to the select few who could afford both the time and money to travel. Increased leisure, higher incomes and greatly enhanced mobility have combined to enable more people partake in tourism.

Tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-growing world industries and an economic and social phenomenon of major importance.

The significance of tourism has been recognised in both developed and developing countries. This can be seen in the establishment of sophisticated and well resourced government departments of tourism, sponsorship of widespread encouragement and tourist developments and the proliferation of small businesses and multinational corporations contributing to and deriving benefits from the tourism industry. There is widespread optimism that tourism might be a powerful and beneficial agent of both economic and social change, some even advocating that it might be a force for world peace. Indeed tourism has stimulated employment, investment and entrepreneurial activity, modified land use and economic structure, and made a positive contribution to the balance of payments in many countries throughout the world.

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