



Harnessing Tourism Potentials of Nigeria: The Opportunities in the Niger Delta Region

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ABSTRACT

The important role that the tourism sector as the main instrument in the socio-economic development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. The nation of Nigeria is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic state with over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups that are rich in diverse cultures, Nature has so blessed the country with vast land, beautiful climate and land formation, especially with the swampy coastal lands and beaches to the lush ram forests and the savannah. There are also the parks and games reserves in their natural habitat. The hills, the rocks, lakes, waterfalls, natural and warm springs serve to make the landscape so beautiful. This paper seeks to highlight the place of tourism in employment generation together with a succinct outline of tourism institutional evolution in the Nigerian context. There are so many natural endowments that are yet to be harnessed in full capacity and requiring attention (of the tourism industry) for maximum exploitation and benefits which, no doubt, will increase the economic fortune of the country. The inability to transform our beautiful natural features, land marks, historical sites and cultural heritage sites into tourism assets has been a major concern to stakeholders. This Paper contends that our rich cultural heritage and natural endowments remain as treasure mines to be developed for maximum national benefits especially if the tourism sector is developed.

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Introduction

Tourism has been recognized and accepted as the fastest growing sector of the global economy. The potentials and opportunities it presents are tremendous. Of late, tourism has become a vital part and fourth largest industry player in the global economy, delivering not only economic benefits to individuals, organizations and governments but also has the capacity to deliver peace and prosperity, especially in the developing countries (Honey and Gilpin, 2009:1; UNWTO, 2008). The World Tourism Organization, UNWTO has since upheld this position and subsequently has followed through with the tourism and sustainable development relationship religiously. The belief in the potential of tourism to boost the growth of the economies of developing nations was based on extant research and empirical evidence. This campaign came to limelight in 2005 at the review meeting of millennium development goals (MDGs) at the UN. The proposition was that tourism has enormous potential for driving the developing nations towards achieving the MDGs (Holden, 2008). At that meeting, tourism was called upon to take its place in national development to help achieve the set targets (World Bank, 2002). Because of the importance and relevance of tourism, nearly every developing country is now promoting some brand of tourism tied to its development (Marafa, 2000, Yunis, 2004). Nigeria is no exception. The UNWTO and other international development agencies such as the World Bank, Regional Banks, International Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), have identified tourism

related projects and are funding them appropriately with the overall aim of promoting sustainable rural development, increase local income generation and infrastructural development and increasing the awareness and popularity of these sites just to mention a few (Elliot and Mann, 2005). In Nigeria, the recognition of the socioeconomic benefits of tourism has been endorsed by the Federal Government of Nigeria with the formulation of the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan in 2005. The plan has suffered setbacks in implementation. Moving forward, the Federal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation in September, 2011 held a sensitization meeting in Abuja for tourism managers in the public sector on the implementation of the Nigeria Tourism Master Plan.

Nigeria as a nation is endowed with both natural and material resources that can be harnessed to aid the economic development of the country by providing revenue and foreign exchange. Tourism has been reborn as a possible tool to spur economic development while at the same time benefiting the environment and local social condition without harming the environment (Reynold and Braithwaite, 2001). It is an activity that contributes to a better understanding of places, people and their cultures. In the early years, agriculture used to be the backbone of the economy of Nigeria till crude oil was discovered in the early 1970s. The discovery of oil led to an attention shift from agriculture to the oil sector. One of the resultant effects was a lot of rural-urban migration in search of employment in the oil sector, other government offices and industries. The concentration on the oil sector was so

much that other sectors of the economy that could have generated much needed revenue were neglected. Tourism was totally neglected until very recently when government of Nigeria started plans to develop it as a means of improving the socio-economic well being of the Nigerian people and diversifying its economic base. For the tourism sector to be sustainable, it should adhere to economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations in the host regions.

The well-referenced definition of culture in anthropological and sociological studies was given by Tylor (1871) as "The complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. For Oke (1984: 20), culture is "the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design for living. Culture, thus, encompasses all man-made parts of the environment and a whole set of implicit, widely shared beliefs, traditions, norms, values and expectations that characterize a particular group of people. It serves several functional purposes in the life of a group, guides social interaction and social relations, the material artifacts and constitutes the basis on which the tourism industry is built. It manifests in arts, dance, language, literature, folklore, mores, music, governance, as well as the character of the environment acquired and transmitted through generations. As societies make attempt at cultural preservations, past cultures have survived in contemporary forms and could certainly be observed and used to reconstruct the past. Geographically, Nigeria is a physically vast tropical African country with 932,768 sq.km landmass, total coastline of 853km, and a human population of over 180 million.

Nigeria is one of the most socially and culturally diverse countries in Africa with over 250 major and minor ethnic groups, notably Hausa- Fulani, Yoruba, Ibo, Kanuri, Tiv, Edo, Nupe, Ibibio, and Ijaw, among others. B implication, Nigeria has hundreds of cultures with individual uniqueness and peculiarities. There are also different historical sites and monuments that offer tourism attractions. Festivals abound among the different ethnic groups, the potentials for which only few have been developed. Archaeologists through their researches and excavations have also analyzed issues on the proliferated people and cultures of Nigeria. Some of their findings adorn our Museums and Monuments and help to enrich our cultural past. These cultural and artifacts, which are kept by the different traditional institutions, offer attractions and if explored, will serve as an alternative source of revenue that is sustainable to government.

The Concept of Tourism

The term tourism is derived from "tour" meaning... "a journey at which one returns to the starting point: a circular trip usually for business, pleasure or education during which various places are visited and for which an itinerary is usually planned" (Webster, 1961). Tourism can be regarded as a catalyst for national and regional development, bringing employment, exchange earnings, balance of payments advantages, and important infrastructural developments benefiting locals and visitors same way (Glasson et al, 1995). The World Tourism Organization (1996) defined tourism as comprising of: "Activities of persons traveling to and staying in place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year and not less the 24 hours for leisure, holiday, business and other non-remunerated purpose". The word 'tourist' comes from a French word 'touriste' which means a person who out of his own interest undertakes a journey and in the process gets to know places outside his

permanent place of abode during his or her free time. The free time could be weekends, annual leave or public holidays and for a duration not less than 24 hours. During such a journey, the tourist must not undertake a remunerative employment.

It is referred to as 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. The International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST) adopted this definition by bringing out the unique elements of tourism. Tourism is a leisure activity involving the movement of people to destinations away from their usual residences. It is could be either international or local in character. According to the definition of the Association of International Scientific Experts in Tourism (AISET), tourism is the sum total of the phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents in so far as this does not lead to permanent residency and is not concerned with any earning activity.

Tourism is a major source of income and foreign exchange earner for countries whose potentials have been adequately developed. Tourism is a larger concept than recreation. People recreate or go on tour for reasons ranging from the need to escape from boredom of locality and job to the desire to have fun and relax while some persons do it to meaningfully utilize their spare time or for the intrinsic value of tourism and recreation. Benefits, which accrue from tourism, include direct satisfaction to individuals, enhancement of the overall and physical quality of individuals thereby adding to the productivity of the individual and society, important third-party benefits such as increased business and property value and the generation of wealth and employment.

Tourism can be classified broadly into domestic and international tourisms. Domestic tourism is journey for leisure purposely made within the territory of the country but outside the tourist's place of abode. International tourism can be subdivided into active and passive tourisms. Active tourism is related to the inbound foreigner-tourists to a country. This refers to a foreigner-tourist bringing in his money for tourism purpose into the country. Passive tourism relates to outbound-tourists. This refers to those traveling abroad and through their journey, importing foreign currency into their destination. Tourism could also be classified in relation to the motive.

1. **Health Tourism.** This is a journey with an intention to spend time getting well after an illness thereby combining medical exercise or convalescing with holiday and rest. This is different from complete hospitalization.
2. **Sports Tourism.** It is a leisure activity associated with the watching of sports such as football matches, lawn tennis, tournaments, boxing, wrestling, etc.
3. **Cultural and Scientific Tourism.** This is associated with educative excursions, scientific journeys or conferences and meetings.
4. **Cult and Religious Tourism.** This is associated with journeys like pilgrimage to religious sites such as the Vatican and Jerusalem by Christians or to Mecca by Muslims. They are seasonal in nature and are normally organized.
5. **Social Tourism.** This is an organized form of tourism for the less privileged such as pensioners, students or very low-income earners. Special and subsidized facilities are provided for this group of tourists in the form of accommodation,

restaurant or holiday packages, music – carnivals, festivals, etc.

6. Reality Tourism. This is tourism as it relates to learning about the “history of repression and political violence”. Going by the words of Roosevelt (op. cit), it involves among other things, visiting people who are under these conditions and who have probably broken off from such holds. It involves seeing the real life situations of people who have undergone some unfortunate circumstances like war and the impact of such experiences on their lives. It is a recent phenomenon in tourism.

7. Space Tourism. This is another recent approach to tourism. Buzz Aldrin, one of the first two persons to walk on the moon, started the campaign on space tourism and the eventual colonization of Mars. His friend Dennis Tito became the first space tourist by spending \$20 million to travel to Russian Mir space station. Presently, a space hotel like the Nicon Hilton = a ringed structure able to accommodate about 300 people in space - is being envisaged (Agbu, op. cit).

Adebajo (2000) says that the tourism industry is made up of all the businesses that directly provide goods and services for businesses and the leisure activities of tourists. Such businesses include international and domestic airlines operations, shipping and ferry operations, railway, bus, and taxi operations, accommodation supply, operation of restaurants and clubs and the organization of tours, excursions, conferences and conventions. Others include the management of entertainment facilities (such as theatres, cinemas, discotheques, night clubs and funfairs), theme parks, natural parks and heritage attractions, the creation of visitors’ information centres and the production and sales of souvenirs.

Nature and Scope of Tourism Destinations

Baggio (2008:2-3) defines tourism destination “as a geographical location (city, region, resort, etc.), with a pattern of attractions, facilities, and services, which tourists choose for a visit”. Contextually this definition qualifies Nigeria as a tourism destination. From a structure point of view, a destination can be defined as a system composed by a number (usually not too small) of elements that share some kind of relationship. The elements in this case comprise of a number of elements: the tourism operators, the support structure, public and private organizations and associations Baggio, 2008).

There are forces that affect or influence the overall performance of the tourism industry and/or destinations. The success of a tourist destination is anchored on the manager’s ability to identify, adapt and/or overcome forces that may confront its operations in the market. What motivates a tourist to choose or select a destination is the expected or perceived benefits and experience following previous visit to the destination or expectations created by marketing information. Suppliers of tourism services compete in the volume and quality of tourists they attract and retain. The competition may be between or among destinations in the region, country or in different countries Esu and Etuk, 2007).

Destination that cannot survive the competition usually suffer from reduced or lack of patronage with its attendant consequences. The destination that offers tourists greater satisfaction has a competitive edge over the other destinations. Tourists requirement constitute factors that determine the level of tourists’ satisfaction. The more the manager is able to meet these requirements, the higher the tourists’ level of satisfaction. Happy and satisfied tourists are more likely to return and more likely to say positive things

about the destination and service (Wight, 1997). But unhappy and dissatisfied tourists, on the other hand, will seek for satisfaction somewhere else. Destinations that are able to attract the right quality and volume of tourists will enjoy the attendant socio-economic benefit that is commensurate with the level of investment in the business and/or sector.

History and Evolution of Tourism in Nigeria

Tourism is said to be as old as humanity. Writers on the subject have always traced the beginning of tourism to when life started on earth (Wearne, 2001). The history of tourism in Nigeria is traced to the beginning of life and ancient civilization. A quote from Ifegbo (2005:5) buttresses this point about the history of tourism in Nigeria: “History tells us that our fore-fathers offered hospitality and tourism services to strangers willingly. They were in the habit of being their brothers keepers... Our fore-fathers practiced hospitality even before the arrival of the ‘white man’. However, it was the colonialists that commercialized hospitality as trade and commerce”.

Ebaji (2007) noted that tourism development in Nigeria started in 1962. Ukpanah (1991) gave a more detailed narration of the history of tourism in Nigeria. In his account, tourism in Nigeria started with the formation of a body called Nigerian Tourist Association (NTA). The body had the recognition and backing of the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO), now known as World Tourism Organization (WTO). Because of the pressure from NTA, the Federal government in 1971 engaged the African Development Bank (ADB) to conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the tourism potential of Nigeria. At the end of the exercise ADB report indicated that Nigeria has huge tourism potential that can fuel its economic development. Acting on the recommendation of the study, the Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated Decree No. 54 of 1976. The Decree established the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) to replace the erstwhile Nigerian Tourist Association. In 1989 a national conference on tourism was held in Maiduguri. The objective of the conference was to appraise the state of tourism development in Nigeria and assess the performance of NTB. The recommendation from the conference led to the establishment of a department of tourism in the Ministry of Trade. In 1992, Decree No. 54 of 1976 was replaced by Decree 81 of 1992. The Decree replaced the erstwhile NTB and in turn established the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC). The major functions of NTDC among other things include: to encourage people living in Nigeria to take their holiday therein and people from abroad to visit Nigeria and to encourage the provision and improvement of tourism amenities and facilities in Nigeria.

Similarly, the activities of the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism is strictly a platform towards promoting Nigeria’s cultural heritage and tourism at the domestic and international levels. Essentially, due to the inability of past administrations to fully identify and promote Nigeria’s cultural heritage, the vision of the Ministry is ‘to position culture and tourism as leverage for economic growth and development (NACD, 2011)

Some other key government agencies crucial to the identification, development and marketing of the Nigerian cultural heritage include National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), National Gallery of Art (NGA), National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Centre for Black

and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), and National Troupe/National Theatre of Nigeria (NT/NTN).

The mandates of these parastatals are clearly defined.

The NCMM is responsible for:

1. Administration of National Museums antiquities and monuments;
2. Construction, maintenance and management of National Museums;
3. The preservation of antiquities and monuments and their declaration as national ones;
4. Granting approvals for establishment of private museums.

NCAC was established to promote and foster the appreciation, revival and development of Nigerian arts, crafts and culture; registering artists and artiste group for effective business relationship; coordination of inter-state cultural exchange activities; organization of exhibitions in visual, performing and literary arts; promoting the development of traditional dance, drama, opera, photography, folklore, oral tradition, literature, poetry, painting and general arts, woodworks, embroidery, weaving and similar crafts; establishment of Cultural Centres, theatre arts galleries and craft centres; and preservation of all materials on culture that contribute to the image of Nigeria. Nigeria's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as contained in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy published by the International Monetary Fund also identified tourism as one of the major sectors for the much desired social transformation in Nigeria (IMF, 2005).

As part of the framework for cultural reawakening, Nigeria's National Cultural Policy was formulated with focus on the following:

1. Analysis and understanding of the Nigerian cultural life, cultural values and cultural needs and expectations of people.
2. Affirmation of the authentic cultural values and cultural heritage;
3. Building up of a national cultural identity and parallel affirmation of cultural identities of different ethnic groups;
4. Development of cultural infrastructure and introduction of new technologies in cultural activities; and,
5. Establishment of links between culture and education, as well as between education and different cultural industries, particularly mass media.

The ultimate goal of the policy as enacted is to create enabling environment for the reawakening of the Nigerian cultural heritage and their possible packaging for tourism purposes. It is important to say that organized tourism in Nigeria dates back to September 1962 when the Nigerian Tourist Association was formed by a group of private practitioners to project the tourism potentials of Nigeria and encourage both domestic and international tourism activities. This enabled Nigeria to be admitted as full member of the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO) in 1963, which later metamorphosed into World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1964. The Nigerian government subsequently established the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) through Decree No. 3 of 1975 and promulgated Decree 54 of 1976 which established the Nigerian Tourism Board. The decree was amended, in line with the Nigerian Tourism Policy that came up later, to facilitate the establishment of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Decree 81 of 1992. In pursuit of promoting tourism, Nigeria hosted a global event in 1977 tagged Festival of Arts and Culture. TDC is the apex statutory body of the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the

Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism charged with the overall responsibility of promoting, marketing and coordinating tourism activities in Nigeria. The corporation's specific objectives include creating enabling environment for tourism activities to flourish; making tourism a major revenue earner; standardization and sanitization of the industry through registration, inspection, classification and grading of the hospitality and tourism enterprises to meet international standard and ensure customer satisfaction; publicizing and promoting Nigeria's endowment through print and electronic media; ensuring the provision of reliable and up-to-date tourism statistical data; liaising with other government agencies such as the Immigration Service and others to produce Annual Tourism Statistical data and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA); planning, coordinating and assisting in the development of tourist sites throughout the country; ensuring the establishment of Tourist Development Fund (TDF) to provide financial assistance to practitioners and developers; among others.

To ensure grassroots tourism development, NTDC operates a decentralized system of administration with zonal offices in Bauchi, Calabar, Kano, Lagos, Enugu, Asaba, Yola, Sokoto, Lokoja, and J05. Each is headed by a Zonal Coordinator. Some other relevant bodies such as: Centre for Black African Arts and Culture and Nigerian Film Census Board were also established to complement the efforts of the Federal Government towards boosting the status of our tourism resources and the promotion of our Arts and Culture. All the efforts are highly financed by the Federal Government.

Nigeria's Tourism Potentials

Nigeria is a highly blessed country not only with human resources but also with natural resources as well as artifacts and other historical sites. Natural resources which abound in Nigeria include hills, plains, valleys, rivers, streams, e.t.c. while the artifacts include Monuments and tools of different kinds. According to Agbaje-Williams (1990), it is the recognition of both the natural and artifactual resources that always form the basis of any country's tourism programme. Among the tourist potentials in Nigeria is what Ekechukwu (1990) referred to as the protected ecosystem which is also known as nature reserves. These were particularly recognized during the period of colonial rule and were often referred to as government lands. Such government lands were of different types depending on the usage. Some were particularly used as games reserves. These games reserves are important tourist attractions in Nigeria and they are located mainly in the Savanna region. According to Areola (1976), Nigeria has about thirty- three games reserves most of which are not functional. The most important are the Yankari Games Reserve in Bauchi and the Borgu Games Reserve which now forms part of the Kainji National Park.

It may sound incredible to note that Nigeria has up to thirty-three games reserves with only a few that are really functional. Many countries of the world do not have such enormous games reserves and if these are developed in Nigeria, they will surely become money springing ventures for the country. This is just one aspect of Nigeria's tourism potentials that is yet to be explored. Another important tourist attraction in Nigeria is the protected landscapes which are usually areas of exceptionally scenic beauty and charm. They are often protected for recreational purposes and they include areas with rugged terrain, waterfalls and landfalls or valleys. Among such areas of scenic beauty are the Ikogosi Warm

Spring in Ondo State where United African Company (UAC) has been producing bottled water for many years; the Warm Spring along Benue-Adamawa valleys; the Jos-Plateau Shere hills with its beautiful landscape and mild climate and rock formation; the Wikki Warm Springs; the Bima Hills in Bauchi; the Mambilla Plateau; the Olumo Rock in Abeokuta the Idanre Hills in Ondo State measuring 3,000 feet above sea level. (Afolabi-Ojo, 1966). The Obudu Cattle Ranch, as well as other landscapes of exquisite beauty found in different parts of the country remain invaluable tourist resorts that have not been fully developed.

The country has large expanse of unused land which include substantial part of the Niger Delta. It is said that Nigeria has a coastline of about 815 kilometers with very enticing sandy beaches which can be transformed into holiday resorts of international standard. The coastline stretches from Lagos State, all through the coastal states to Rivers and Cross River States. Boat cruise along the shore-line itself offers a beautiful scenic attraction. Although there are many beaches along the coastline, they have not been developed for maximum benefits of their potentials.

Cultural Sites and Monuments

Archaeologists in the course of their research have discovered different sites where excavations were carried out: Historic towns and sites, sacred groves and shrines, monuments of various dimensions, artifacts and works of art, religious instruments, festivals as well as other relics of the past that serve to remind us about the history of the Nigerian people abound in different parts of the country. In recent time, there was a documentary on the Island of Bonny in Rivers State. This documentary captured important legacies and materials which the Europeans who first came to Nigeria left behind. Among these are the tombs of Emirs deported to Lokoja by Lugard when he was the Governor of Northern Nigeria in the early days of Colonialism, the tombs of British soldiers who died in the course of Northern resistance to Colonialism also there in Lokoja, the house which Lord

Lugard occupied, as another historic colonial monument prefabricated from Britain with only nuts for its construction and no nails. A number of archaeological sites have also been discovered which confirms the proliferated nature of the Nigerian people and their advanced level of Archaeological development. Such include, the excavation of the rich Nok culture, the Igbo-Ukwu, Benn, Owo, Ife and the Benue valleys (Isichei 1976). Some of the cultural materials adorn our museums and are also found in European museums. The tourism potentials of these important historic sites have also remained greatly untapped.

There are also several cultural festivals that are rich in mythology which can be harnessed to attract tourists as they produce feelings of love and brotherhood among members of different ethnic groups. These festivals include, Fishing and New Yam Festivals, Egungun and Oro Festivals among the Yorubas, the Eyo Festivals celebrated in Lagos State, Osun Festival in Oshogbo, and other Festivals celebrated in different parts of the country. The Igbos celebrate the harvest of yams with pomp and pageantry, while the Argungu Fishing Festival, celebrated by the Hausas attracts people annually from different parts of the country. Other fishing festivals celebrated annually include 'Mjuwa' Fishing Festival held annually in Yola and the 'Nwuyu' Fishing Festival which is also held annually at Ibi in Adamawa State. Although these Festivals attract tourists from within and outside Nigeria, their potentials can still be enhanced.

Apart from these, there are several cultural and religious festivals that are celebrated in different localities by different ethnic groups that can be made more attractive in order to boost tourism in Nigeria. The popular Ojude-Oba Festival celebrated in Ijebu-Ode is another good example of festivals that bring people and organizations in large numbers to Ijebu-Ode annually. This table provides the summary of some tourism assets, both natural and cultural, that are widely spread across different parts of Nigeria.

Selected Cultural Heritage and Tourism Assets in Nigeria Location/State		Tourism Attractions
Abuja	i.	Several National Monuments and Assets scattered within and at the outskirts of the city e.g. National Gallery of Arts
	ii.	Nicon-Noga Hilton; Millennium Park
Abia	i.	National War Museum displaying relics of the Nigerian Civil War and local inventions.
	ii.	Akwette: Blue River Tourist Village
	iii.	The Long Juju Shrine of Arochukwu
Akwa Ibom	i.	Ibeno (Famous for yachting and swimming)
	ii.	Oron Museum (Collection of fine African carvings)
	iii.	OpoBo Boatyard (Natural sand beaches at Ikot Abasi)
Anambra	i.	Crafts Work
	ii.	Ijele Masquerade from Aguleri
	iii.	Yam Festival (Annual event); Ofala Festival
	iv.	Odinani Museum at Nri
	v.	River Niger and Niger Bridge
	vi.	Rojenny Tourist Village
Bauchi	i.	Wikki Lame-Burra Games Reserve
	ii.	Tomb of First Prime Minister (Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa)
	iii.	Yankari Games Reserve
Benue	i.	Confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue
	ii.	Kwaghir Festival: A theatrical display of masquerades, puppet theatre, some forms of acrobatics, dancing, music of the Tiv people
	iii.	Beaches and Fishing Festivals
Borno	i.	Kyarimi Park (Sightseeing for animal and bird lovers)
	ii.	Shehu of Bornos Palace
	iii.	Fishing Festival at Gahsua
	iv.	Lake Chad, Ngeji Warm Springs; Sambisa Game Reserve

	v.	Leather tanning and ornamental leather work
Cross River	i.	Obudu Cattle Ranch (Featuring near temperate climate, waterfall, birds)
	ii.	Agbokin Falls; Boshi Game Reserve
	iii.	Mary Slessor Cottage
	iv.	National Museum
Delta	i.	Sandy beaches in Asaba
	ii.	Olus Palace
	iii.	Itsekiri Juju Festival
Edo	i.	Bronze, brass and ivory works of art
	ii.	Royal Palace of Benin
	iii.	Benin Museum; Emotan Statue
Enugu	i.	Iva Valley Coal Mines; National Museum
Imo	i.	Oguta Lake Holiday Resort (sand beaches)
	ii.	Mbari Cultural Centres: The home of Mbari sculptural houses
	iii.	Afikpo (Famous for pottery and mask making)
	iv.	Akwete Textile Centre in Akwete
Jigawa	i.	Birnin Kudu Rock Paintings
Kaduna	i.	Nok culture
	ii.	Palace of the Emir of Zaria
Kano	i.	Emirs Palace: Ancient city walls and gates
	ii.	Gidan Makaman Museum
	iii.	Kofar Mata Dyeing pits
Katsina	i.	Emirs Palace
	ii.	Wall surrounding Katsina
Kebbi	i.	Traditional arts and crafts, beads and glassware
	ii.	Argungu Fishing and Cultural Festival
Kogi	i.	Old buildings used by the Royal Niger Company
	ii.	Confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue, Lokoja
	iii.	Ekuechi Festival of the Ebiraland people
Kwara	i.	Esie Museum of stone figures
	ii.	Kainji Dam; Jebba Dam; Owu Waterfall
	iii.	Mungo Park Monument
	iv.	National Theatre, Iganmu
Lagos	i.	Seaside attraction and resorts; Tarkwa Bay Beach
	ii.	Slave Port at Badagry
	iii.	National Museum
	iv.	Eyo Masquerade
	v.	Eyo Masquerade
Niger	i.	Gurara Falls; Shiroro Hydroelectric dam
	ii.	Mungo Parks Cenotaph
	iii.	Handicraft of Bida town
	iv.	Kainji Lake and National Games Park
Ogun	i.	Obas Palaces
	ii.	Birikisu Sungbo Shrine in Ijebu-Ode
	iii.	Olumo Rock
	iv.	Igunnuko Masquerades
Ondo and Ekiti	i.	National Museum, Owo
	ii.	Ikogosi Warm Springs
	iii.	Idanre Hills; Igbokoda Waterfront
Osun	i.	Ile-Ife as the origin of the Yoruba people
	ii.	Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove and Osun Festival, Osogbo
	iii.	Palaces
	iv.	Ife Museum, and Opa Oranmiyan at Ile-ife
	v.	Erin-Ijesa Waterfalls
Plateau	i.	National Museum, Jos
	ii.	Jos Wildlife Safari Park
Rivers	i.	Nigeria's first petroleum refinery at Elesha Elema
	ii.	Water Glass Boatyard; Onne Port; Isaka Holiday Cruise Island
	iii.	Oil well at Oloibiri
	iv.	Monument of King Jaja of Opobo
	v.	Slave transit hall at Akassa
	vi.	Ogidi Shrine at Nembe
	vii.	Nwaotam Carnival
Sokoto	i.	Cloth dyeing (Fulani attires)
	ii.	Museum
	iii.	Sultan's Palace
	iv.	Tomb of Usman Dan Fodio

It is an obvious fact, therefore that these resources have remained untapped essentially because the Tourism Sector is not well developed. The sector has suffered from inadequate funding in the past years. The implications of the low level of funding include low development of tourist facilities and sites, low demand, apathy and poor perception of tourism in Nigeria. Investment into the sector will make it more attractive and when made attractive, this will lead to job creation in the support services, such as hotels, eateries, as well as the transportation sector. The subsequent reduction in unemployment will reduce poverty which has been identified as bane to development. Jiboku (2008).

Roles of Tourism in Economic Development

The roles of tourism in the economic development of any nation are numerous and cannot be overemphasized. Kinwar (2002) noted that tourism industry has become a job generator, both services oriented and product oriented in the sense that the people are employed in order to provide services to the tourists. This means increased income by job generation which will eventually raise people's standard of living. He stressed further that the diversification of various new economic activities can lessen the big social problem of unemployment. For effective development of tourism, infrastructure such as roads, hotels, electricity, and pipe-borne water among others must be developed. One of the potentials of well planned and managed tourism is to bring economic benefits to host communities and help alleviate poverty and conserve natural and cultural assets. Investment in tourism development is expected to generate social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts in host communities or clusters (Nigeria Tourism Master Plan, 2006). Tourism:

1. Increases in income levels for individuals and the states,
2. Stimulates investment,
3. Enhances the areas image and international reputation,
4. Facilitates the development of small and medium-sized businesses,
5. Acts as a means for the conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources,
6. While delivering growth and employment on the scale required to make a real difference to the economic landscape of the area.

Other advantages of tourism include:

1. Provision of revenue and diversification to rural communities. This is because foreign currencies from foreigners remain within the local economy.
2. Tax revenue realized from foreigners can be used for further development of some facilities such as swimming pools, golf courses, restaurant and shopping facilities.
3. Inhabitants of the host community will be interested in some of the events planned for tourists.
4. It attracts location of industries because of the quality of services and recreational resources provided.
5. Foreigners may become permanent residents if the country is a pleasant place to reside.

However, despite all these advantages there are still some disadvantages that affect the development of tourism. These include:

1. It is capital intensive
2. Exerts pressure on public services.
3. It requires promotion, marketing and time

Social Infrastructure and Tourism in Nigeria

A major hindrance to tourism development in Nigeria is the lack of necessary modern infrastructural facilities. Nigeria ranked 119 out of 131 countries and 2.2 on the scale of I to 7

on infrastructure on the Global Competitive Index 2007-2008 (The Nation, 2009:6). For Nigeria and others not doing well on this parameter, Honey and Gilpin (2009:1) recommended in their executive summary "investment in infrastructure and human capacity, the development of comprehensive national strategies, the adoption of robust regulatory frameworks, mechanisms to maximize in-country foreign currency earnings, and efforts to reduce crime and corruption. Besides lack of efficient and easy to understand transportation system, most Nigerian towns and cities are not planned, no proper labeling of streets and houses, and no reliable guide map illustrating what to see in a given destination and precise location. People mostly depend on oral descriptions, which most often imprecise to locate places of interest. Similarly, many other social problems have been traced to high level of poverty among the vast majority of the Nigerian populace. Similar to the infrastructural deficiencies is the lack of organized tour operators necessary to marketing tour destinations. The optimism here is that the sustenance of the current democratic governance will boost the nation's image among the comity of nations and enhance investment opportunities particularly in the tourism sector. The extent of attracting investors, both local and foreign, into the abundant tourism potentials will depend on the extent good governance is institutionalized. The enormity of the Nigeria's tourism infrastructural deficiency is vivid in the quote below.

For tourism potentials in Nigeria to be utilized sustainably, the necessary infrastructures and enabling environment and information on tourism which will attract tourists must be available. Enabling environment in this case refers to all the parameters required to make a complete tour, such as good roads, functional telecommunications, good accommodation and adequate security. Information on the existence of attractions sites and these infrastructures must be available to tourists and the general public. This means that raw data on tourist sites and infrastructures has to be gathered, processed, structured, then stored and organized in such a way it is easily retrievable from storage (Ologun, Taiwo and Adeofun, n.d.).

Another setback that cannot be ignored are the security challenges bedeviling Nigeria from time to time. Nigeria has experienced all types of insurgency from kidnapping, youth restiveness, and violent demonstrations to full-blown terror attacks. Hopefully, with the increased security measures in place and with the large-scale assault against the deadly sect, the Boko Haram, Nigeria would be a much more peaceful and conducive place for tourism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Managed sustainably, tourism is an effective development tool. When tourism's environment, social, and economic and other constraints are addressed, tourism energizes economies. With the full knowledge that tourism is a complex sector with tentacles into a myriad of other economic activities, all of which require careful management, countries with tourism assets are fully justified in deciding to prioritize tourism as a development tool. Several entities are primarily responsible for the success of the sector. The government's political support at the highest level for tourism is essential. The government's role is to initiate the formulation of a strategy for the sector and then play the crucial coordinating role among the different public sector agencies involved, the relevant private profit and non-profit entities, and local communities. The government must also address market failures that affect the tourism sector and

should create an enabling environment for private investment and, above all, must provide political and social stability.

The government will also have to supply basic infrastructure and assist in the promotion of the country for marketing and investment. Without the private sector's investment in accommodation, attractions, and tourism services and facilities, and its knowledge transfer, there can be no tourism sector. Local communities must be receptive to the tourists that intrude into their communities and, to be so, they must participate in the benefits of tourism. External donors can provide the critical capital and technical assistance to support the sector and help raise it from one development level to another. Without any one of these active participants, the sector cannot grow to its full potential-or even, in the early stages; begin to put together a tourism package for visitors.

As analyzed, Nigeria's tourism assets is widespread encompassing natural features such as government and privately owned parks, waterfalls, the beautiful outcrop of rocks in different shapes, plateau, forest resources and wildlife, beaches, among others. On the other hand, cultural tourism is the domain where the ingenuity, creativity and originality of the people are on display. The current wide gap between these assets and the potential contributions of tourism to Nigeria's national income make inevitable the need for stronger commitment that will enable the sector assume its much-anticipated developmental role Existing literatures have outlined constraints to tourism in Africa and Nigeria in particular (Ashley and Roe, 2002; UNDP, 2003:79; Falade, 2000:3; IMF, 2005:73). Most African countries, with particular reference to Nigeria, have failed to develop the industry due to poor economic conditions, political instability, and poor infrastructure and security challenges. Since 1990s, Nigeria has renewed her concerted efforts towards developing, managing and marketing her tourism assets. The aim, first and foremost, is to diversify the economy and escape the negative consequences of mono-economy that depends on petroleum as the major foreign exchange earner. This paper has outlined Nigeria's great tourism potentials, which lies in her diverse natural resources and the people. The wide dichotomy between the traditional and modern lifestyles also provides a contrast that tourists use to appreciate. This argument is summarized in the statement made by a male Polish friend who was on visit to Nigeria in 2005 and returning to Ibadan after touring round Nigeria:

Anyone that really wants to appreciate the Nigerian cultures should go to the rural areas, the villages where people have not been contaminated with foreign civilization or the hustle .and bustle of the city life. People are generally friendly and open to the outsiders (a Male Polish Tourist in Nigeria, 2005).

Many of such positive feedback abound, giving hope that the future of tourism in Nigeria is not bleak after all. A number of recommendations are germane here. The first is the need for good governance and the political will to ensure a conducive environment to articulate the various cultural heritages in an inalienable manner for development purpose. The entrenchment of good governance will pave the way for such vital deliverables and key infrastructures such as electricity, efficient modern transport system, and functional medical facilities, among others. In other words, it is imperative for government at all levels to set the pace and commitments towards the development of the country's economy through the provision of basic infrastructural

facilities that will help encourage investment and reduce the cost of doing business. In addition, since there is hardly any modern society that is completely crime-free, and considering the huge negative reporting of Africa in the international media, the saying that "people who travel should leave their prejudices at home" would be quite helpful for anyone that wishes to tour Africa and Nigeria in particular. It is also necessary that Nigerian tourism stakeholders should mount concerted efforts to channel positive information about the country to the outside world. As part of the global community, Nigeria should regularly take advantage of major global events to promote, showcase and sell her tourism assets. For instance, the participation of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) at the Annual Travel Trade Exhibition 2010 held at the ExCel Centre, London yielded some gains as found in the signing of a deal between NTDC and the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). The partnership with ABTA as anticipated would enhance Nigeria's image in the United Kingdom, Ireland and European markets. Similarly, Nigeria is being promoted on the Chinese website in the country's language. The concept of the *Nigerian Tourism Village* built in Johannesburg, South Africa by the NTDC during the 2010 FIFA World Cup can also be replicated and supported by the private sector organizations.

Major stakeholders such as the hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, and car hire service providers, government officials, and the general public also has roles to play by aiming to be at par in service delivery with what is obtainable in other tourist destinations around the world. Government has the responsibility to identify and demarcate potential tourism zones and their products from other usage. There is the need to sensitize destination communities to maintain friendly interactions with the local and foreign visitors to their communities. Above all, democracy all around the world has been a major factor that drives tourism, and Africa cannot be an exception. The extent of tourism development in Nigeria will depend on the sustainability of the democratization process and the entrenchment of democratic tenets such as transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law. Diligent attention must be paid to the security and welfare of both the citizens and the visitors. Security of lives and property of tourists is very important so that those who come into the country will not return to their home countries and give a negative impression that will scare others.

A politically stable polity will attract investors and tourists. Therefore, the gains of the past ten years of civil rule must not be truncated by ambitious military men. Also, the political party in power should govern according to the rules to instill the confidence of the international community in Nigeria.

Nigeria's foreign missions too should be in their vanguard of promoting tourism in their host countries through education and enlightenment. They can, as well have mini museums or galleries of arts and craft in their missions. This would help to project Nigeria and her tourism potentials. The efforts of the current Director General of the Nigerian Tourism Board, Otunba Olusegun Runsewe at enhancing the tourism industry in Nigeria should be commended. The Board needs to participate in Trade Fares, Arts Exhibitions and cultural shows outside the shores of Nigeria to project the country and her tourism potentials.

Finally, one discovers that there is hardly any University offering a Degree Programme in Tourism. It is a multi-

disciplinary' course that Academics in allied disciplines should be able to design Curriculum for its success. Without indigenous manpower, sustaining the programme will be difficult.

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