

Socio-economic tourism and its implication for national development plan: Cross River State experience

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Abstract

This study is anchored on socio-economic tourism and its implication for national development plan in Cross River State experience. This paper was stratified into three cities within the state. Four hundred questionnaires were administered to citizens within the three cities, while interview were conducted among some selected staff of the state tourism commission. One hypothesis was formulated and tested using person moment correlation. The paper indicates that, several prospect occur to socio-economic tourism and its national development plan in the study area. It was observed that poor planning constitute a major challenges to socio-economic tourism plan in the study area as showed from the hypothesis which indicate positive significant relationship between the challenge and prospect of socio-economic tourism and national development plain in the study area. It is on this note that, the government and non-governmental organization must ensure that the challenge of socio-economic tourism and national development plan are adverted through proper monitory, proper distribution of resources, employment opportunity, training and retraining of staff to promote effective development tourism site in Cross River State.

Keywords: Tourism, National Development and Plan.

Introduction

In Cross River State, Tourism have undergone gradual and positive evolution with each phase reflecting its growing importance toward National Development plan. A group of Nigerians with common interest and commitment to the promotion of tourism in Nigeria, setup the Nigerian tourism Association (NTA) in 1962. The effect of the association led to the admission of Nigeria as a full member of the International Union of official Travel Organization (IUOTO) 1964 the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO) grew as a result of its members from different countries to what is known today as World Tourism Organization (WTO). As a result of its Socio-Economic Development in Cross River State, the State Government appointed group of members to conduct a feasibility study on the socio-economic potential and viability of tourism. The result of the report showed that, Cross River possesses enormous potential for the development of tourism as a viable socio-economic sector. The implementation of this analysis is that through it was realized that tourism is a socio-economic venture, nevertheless, it was not developed like other sector such as Agriculture and Oil for rural transformation.

The rich potential of the socio-economic and human resource of the State, in a special way, made the State and Local Government to take interest in cultural festivals as an important stimulus or some tourist activities. This led the state Government to create distinct ministries to cater for tourism (Esekpa, 2017). In Cross River State, tourism was established with the following responsibility such as encouraging people living in Cross River State to take this holidays here in and people from abroad to visit the state, to assist in development of museum and historical site, parks, games reserve, beached, natural beauty sport, National Park holiday resort and souvenir industries, and to promote and undertake research in the field of tourism.

Ardahacy (2011) believes that, Tourism in Cross River State has gained so much experience in view of its slow but steady growth. The main policy thrust of Cross River State Government is centered on alleviation of poverty through tourism and development base, for instance, Calabar the State Capital has several hotels of international standard, others include Obudu Ranch Resort, Tinapa Business, National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Water Park, which are the main tourism attraction in the State, the facilities have been upgraded right from the native resort through the rehabilitation of the Bebi-Airstrip to the increased number of Chalet from the thirty two suites to eight suites. It is on this note, that the paper stand to examine the socio-economic tourism and its implication for National Development plan, Cross River State experience.

Statement of problem

In Cross River State, tourism has been seen as a major means of advancing socio-cultural, economic development. This is done through National development plan of well utilized. However, there is no doubt that, the government of Cross River State advertised and invested much on the tourism potential industry in order to sustain the tempo and interest generated by the state. This laxly is usually associated with the poor attitude of tourism commission to tourist, poor commission, lack of tourism information by hoteliers, poor infrastructural amenities. These problems are usually centred on the survival of the existing industries. If they are not addressed, it could lead to the collapse of the fast growing industrial, economy generation in the state and nation as a whole.

Other problems associated with the tourism industries includes waste, increase, theft, accident poor satisfaction derived from motels, insecurity corruption, inadequate funding, social vices and lack of implementation of National tourism plan. However, Cross River State Hospitality industries are equal associated with a myriad of challenges which connotes poor electrification, inconsistent regularly environment, misconstrued internal perception, little or no standardization in operation, cynical global perspicacity, poor customers service and flowed hotel classification. It is obvious that tourist experienced difficulties in trying to adapt to the destination environment and coping with the norms and beliefs of the people in the tourism industry. There some fundamental questions that comes to mind. Could these be attributed to poverty reduction in Cross River State? Do tourism bring about development? It is on this not, the paper sought to address the cases as they relate to tourism industries in Cross River State.

Conceptual explanation

The issue of conceptualization was put forward base on what scholars have said in respect to the subject matter. They include tourism, National Development and plan.

- i. **Tourism:** the term tourism can be said to be a business venture which provides service for people or places or people to stay while they are on holidays or any other business it can also be view according to Esekpa (2017) as the movement of people to place of interest, interactions and the relationship that takes place in attractive business environment. Tourism has tremendous potential to bring socio-economic prosperity and development including environmental improvement to the destination in which it operate, preserving the rich socio-economic heritage of the people.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defined tourism as a business activities of people traveling to and staying or place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business or other purpose. Agbo (2013) seen

tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development. The guest by Nigerians to return to prominence in the global tourism arena recently received a boost following the rights granted by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) to the country on host the 38th conference of the Commission for Africa in Abuja. However, tourism connotes the action and activities of people taking trips to a place or places outside of their home community for any purpose except daily commuting to and from work. Nickerson (2002), sees the term tourism business travel as a travel for leisure.

- ii. **National development:** various scholars have written based on the concept of National Development, according to Victor, 2013 National Development refer to a state of maturity which connote a nation state. National Development is characterized by socio-cultural tourism capable of commanding loyalty, keeping law and order, eliciting legitimacy, permitting mass participation fostering integration, expectations, and satisfying popular want. It can also be defined as a developed skilled citizenry which exercises its capacity to create modern industry in a given environment to obtain a high level of development for the general population. This includes economic, political and social force which aim at transforming diverse people, shaping a common cultural activities, acceptance and allegiance to and effective participation in a transitional policy in order to create a nation state.
- iii. **Plan:** various actions have been taken by either the government, individual or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). This action can be turned to be a plan. According to Edame (2001), plan is a pre-requisite for development administration of tourism sites in a Geographical area.

Plan can be defined as an aspect of town and country planning which comprises of a set of documents which set out the local authority proposal and policy statement for tourism development and land use in a particular area. Plan informs and guides the day-to-day decision making as to whether or not planning permission should be granted, under the system known as cultural economic development.

Plan can also entail professional development, industrial development, educational development with short planning documents that examine both government, individual and institution continuing professional development need which looks at how these needs might be met, and lists objectives for futuristic purpose. It can also help to restructure and focus on effective and efficient training need and how to address such need. Plan can also be termed as a perspective of individual (Personal Development Plan) which enables one achieve their goals and objectives in one's life.

In Nigeria, Development plan includes policy making toward the private sector, list of proposals, economic forecasting, public expenditure and revenue obtained within a tourism physical year. This decision is made by private unit, disregarding the major discrepancies between social, cultural, financial, profitability and high economic pay-offs from direct commercial or productivity investment. Amongst the wealthy, tax increase was discouraged and advocated a conservative monetary and financial policy which lay emphasis on relative small plan, foreign trade investment and basic economic reliance on overseas assistance.

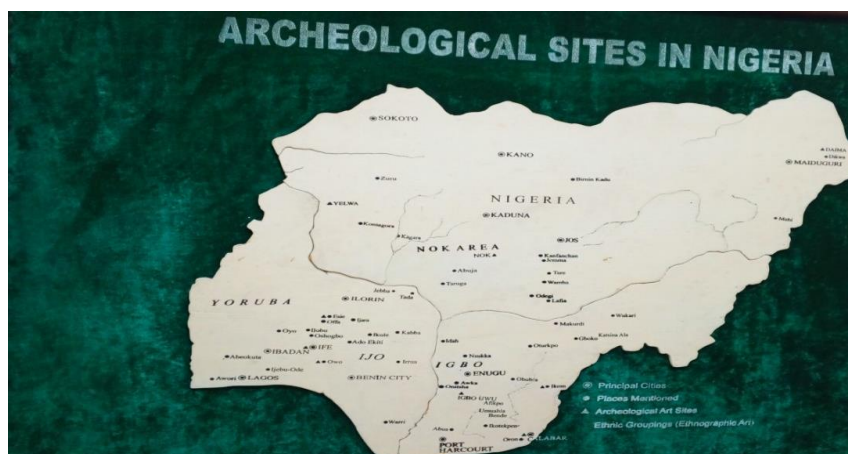
Theoretical framework

This paper is anchored on one theory: Talcott Pearson's functionalism theory (1902 – 1979).

Talcott Pearson was the proponent of this theory, in 1949 Talcott stated that social life as characterized by mutual advantage and peaceful cooperation to goal achievement. Based on common values, integrating forces and goal realization, with ethical values and goal engendered social cooperation. This actors are guided by rules and regulation, beliefs and customs which must be there to regulate behaviour. The theory believed that, social actors are individual or cooperate person who are goal seeker. Peoples' interaction would always ask what the gain would be should there exhibit certain behaviour. Talcott person was much criticized by his conflict in one hand and for under-emphasizing the positive function of social conflict in the maintenance of the social system in another hand. According to him, conflict was not pathological rather a functional lot performances. He was not wrong because, there is bound to be problem in tourism industry where the population is increasing and revenue is decreasing workers not paid, insecurity and other social vices. Talcott Pearson's functionalism theory directly applies to the present study particularly as it affect socio-economic tourism and national development plan for instance increase and uncontrolled tourist will lead to excessive generational collapse of the fast growing industry, if not properly manager with direct effect on individual tourist and the government. This implies National development plans should includes rules and regulation to guide the conduct of all tourist in a geographical locations in order to promotes peaceful co-operation toward achieving a common goal.

Tourism sites and its implication for national developmental plan in Cross River State

In Cross River State, the National development plan is geared towards diversifying the state economic tourism gain which provide basic alternation for tourism development with the aim of improving the state internal revenue. Some of the tourism sites found in Cross River State include Tinapa, Calabar Trade Zone, Agbokim Water Falls, Obudu Ranch Resort, The Mirage, Kwa Falls, National Park, National Commission for Museums and Monument, National Galleries of Art and Culture, Metropolitant Hotel, Drill Ranch, officially called The Drill Rehabilitation and Breeding Center, Okwangwo Division, The Mbe Mountains. Festivals like; YakurrLeboku International Festival, Beaches and Lakes (Abi), Cultural Heritage (Biase), Nkarasi Monolith Cultural Dance (Obam Ekpaktimana in Obudu), Abang Dance or Ekombi of the Efiks as well as Ekpe and Obon Masquerade and Moinkim Dance and National Park. The map below shows different tourism sites in Nigeria and its cultural location



Source: Field work 2023

Some of the National Development tourism plan in Cross River State can be group as follows:

1. **Organizational plan:** This approach lay emphasis on tourism area, this can either be spatial, temporal and capacity in nature rather than assessing the tourist attraction. This is developed with an aim of reflecting specific qualities needed within an organization. This include respect to authority, training and retraining of staff, employment opportunity, promotion etc. Organization economic activities were see as an art of economic recovery and growth that was promulgated in 2009 and reintroduced in 2017 to bridge a long term insight for socio-economic tourism area with the aim of encouraging socio-economic development across the state, reduction in poverty and inflation rate, Economic and political diversification, good governance and security infrastructure development and health educated population. This is important interm of planning and marketing of tourist sites where tourism markers encouraged small scale business venture.

It can also be Bio-diversity conservation (Flora) which consist or genetic resources preservation, development and research in addition to its species abundance was the central through that specifically guided by Oban-Hill, National Park (CRNP, 1989). This is recognized based on socio-economic tourism which is most vulnerable to the actions of people living within a given geographical zone. This lay emphasis on mutual dependence between the park and the Communities thereby creating negative impact on the life of the people as compensated for, and advantage to be gained from the tourist (park) are reatried to the greater extent possible at the community level.

2. **Cognitive national plan:** This connotes tourist socio-economic perceptions and their physical experience towards tourist site. Cognitive plans are sometimes related to ideographic interms of pre-dominate, place of attraction and individual feeling over a place of attraction where socio-economic activities do taken place such as education and marketing activities. This implies an event of enlightenment, where tourist are willing to take risk. Risk is major instrument experience offered by different tourist with an element of security. The National developmental tourism plan is structure in several areas such as public administration, implementation plan, economic and development growth, Human Development Capital, Socio-cultural infrastructure and development (national Development Plan 2017).

Traveling across international boundaries. In Cross River State, one would have expected that the socio-economic tourism activities of the Portuguese explorer in 1472 and the sub-sequent visit by the European would be the beginning of tourism development. But this was not the case as tourism development in Africa is a recent occurrence. But the development is becoming very rapid as can be seen in the Cross River State experience attest. According to Okoi (2004). Tourism in Cross River State has gained so much prominence in view of its slow but steady growth. The main policy thrust pf Cross River State government in this regard is to alleviate poverty through tourism. For instance, Calabar the state's capital has several international standard. They include ObuduRacnh Resort, Tinapa Business Resort and Marina Resort which are the main international attraction in the state. The facilities have been upgraded right

from the native resort through the rehabilitation of Bebi Airstrip to increase number of Chalet from the thirty two suites to eighty suites.

3. ***Idiographic national tourism plan***: This plan focuses on “Uniqueness” of a site. They are specific attraction which is associated to individual by names. This is mostly used in small study area such as cities and villages. Zinn and Ritchie are example used by the world tourism organization (1980). This is characterized as sport, commercial facilities price level, tourist attitudes a long series of activities with features that were inanimate with life daily actives. In Cross River State, business activities those who are involved in trade fair and conferences or participating in creative trade scheme. The idiographic-economic tourism embodies dividends projects which gave employed opportunity to youth, road maintenance, bridges. Infrastructures are improved and transportation cost is reduced for every resident. An agro-forestry nursery demonstration to local farmer, alternative, sustainable Agriculture option include fang production. However, Cross River State Biodiversity conservation has gained socio-economic huge public interest globally with various zones known for its species, to reduce socio-economic lost and hereby protecting richness and abundance establishment as identified as biodiversity strategy.

Creating an economic and social tourism balance, it was observed according to Sangorwa (1999) and Wainnsht and Wehrmeyer (1998) that Nigeria has a total of 1171 protected areas consisting of 1131 forest reserves, 31 games reserve, wildlife and 7 national Parks including Cross River State National Park Akamkpa, (Manza, 2006). Furthermore, Will (2015) sees idiographic tourism as a tourism which has a pre-date historical development and its international recognition in term of festival celebration. Some of the notable festivals include Leboku International Festival of Yakurr, others within the country that are notable are as follows: Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi State, Dubar Festival Kano, Katsina Oshun Festival at Oshogho, Igue Festival at Benin City, Manwu Festival at Enugu and other numerous New yam Festival celebrated across the communities and villages in Nigeria (Ashely 2000).

Challenges and prospect of socio-economic tourism and its implication for national development plan in Cross River State

In Cross River State, the National Development plan have positive significant influences with various negative defect. They include:

1. Flaws in government policy strategies adopted mostly in rural infrastructural development program: Government policy synthesis activities reveal in the past years within basic constrictive programs and for reaching economic activities taken by the state government to address the challenges of rural amenities which are significantly far from being solved due to tourism flaws in the strategies adopt by the Cross River State government. This strategies include barrier tourism program duplication between the Federal, State and the Local government. Olayiwola and Adeleye (2005) believes that, tourism development by the Federal Government was done through the use the state and the local Government to disburse funds for tourism implementation. But separation of the local government rural development strategies. Secondly the basic mechanism for revenue allocation for different tourism development fail to recognize that rural communities have different ecological development tourism sites, separated from degree and nature of needs (Okafor, 1985).

2. **Lack of clear cut tourism plan:** for tourism areas to be development in Cross River State, there is need for basic tourism plan to be laid down but self-interests in policy and decision making most times hinder the good policies implementation plan. Moreso, various ideas on how to transform the economy might be provided but they may not be genuine, hence socio-economic tourism development plan continue to fail. Tourism development in Cross River State, lacks the ability to transform her police actors specifically in areas of cost and benefit or real action that would stimulate tourism development activities.
3. **Poor Budget Allocation:** for development to take place, there is need for effective and efficient planning put in place by the Cross River State government budget unit either wholly or in association with international Union of official travel organization (IUOTO) and World Tourism Organization in order to enhance rural transformation in one way and secondly to take care of basic development such as increase in tourism output, employment generation, poverty reduction, income and Agricultural output, rural and Urban migration and rural electrification scheme (RES) which fail to enhance socio-economic tourism in Cross River State. Furthermore, there was serious low budgetary allocation to tourism development in Cross River State between the periods of 2015-2023 consecutively. The budgetary allocation between 2015-2023 shows that tourism in any particular year was never more than 5% of the total budget, it even went as poor as 1.8% in 2020 while the highest was 4.3% in 2016. More so, between 2021, 2022 and 2023, it received 5.2%, 1.8% and 2.2% respectively. However, this shows poor neglect suffered by the tourism sector in area of funding. Therefor to intuit tourism output, the sector needs to be funded (Tourism Development Commission, 2021).
4. **Relative Neglect for Tourism Sites:** Generally, there has been emphasis on tourism development site in Cross River State, in deed as noted in Cross River State vision 2020 document (2009). Over the year, the tourism development effort has been Urban based and relative neglect of rural sites resulting into a death of socio-economic venture in rural communities. Fundamentally, there is a gross rural tourism neglect in Nigeria's development policies which have resulted to rural underdevelopment as related to lack of economic, social and physical institutional facilities and poor in doctrinal mechanism (Mlon 1992). This prevalent tourism orientation connected with the colonial economy which is promoted in Cross River State.
5. **Lack of Integrated Tourism Development Effort:** Similarity, the total neglect of tourism integrated development strategies effort in Cross River State was directed towards inadequate co-operation amongst policy makers which entails initiative action and mandates reinforce and support each and the economic gain and activities that streamlined to effective rumination of government policy. Idown (1999) observed that, the activities of world tourism body consist of basic development and never decelerated. This is said to be co-ordination amongst the various communities were tourism area are allocated.

Ezeah (2005) believe that, tourism development in Cross River State has not been given integrated effort it required interms of human and material factors as they support and reinforce

one another as important facility for rural development (Nwankwo and Apeh, 2006). Some of those tourism site in Cross River State can be in the map below



Socio-economic tourism recommendation and approaches in Cross River State

In this study, the researcher conducted that, the most fasted industry in Cross River State is socio-economic tourism which posed economic development in terms of employment opportunity, income generation and infrastructural development. However inspite of the prospect that occurs to tourism through the National Development plan promulgated in 2009 tourism areas still faced with challenges that needed urgent attention based on the following recommendations.

1. There is need for socio-economic tourism development transparent government towards the discovering of tourism sites
2. Effective communication channels should cut across all areas through, the radio Television houses etc. in order to facilitate and equally ensure proper development of tourism site
3. Enlightenment of the rural communities is very essential for them to understand the basic plan and activities of government in respect to tourist
4. Government should ensure proper monitoring and supervision with a view of ensuring that employment are generated to alleviate poverty within an area where tourism sites are located
5. Proper funding and financial accountability should be employed with the sole aim of advancing development mechanism

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