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CONFERENCE PAPERS

DEVELOPING TOURISM AS ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF FOREIGN EARNINGS

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INTRODUCTION

The word 'tourism' did not appear in English language until early nineteenth century and the word 'tour' was more closely associated with the idea of voyage or peregrination or a circuit, as in the case of theatrical tour, than with the idea of an individual being temporarily away from home for pleasure purposes which is such a significant feature for the use of the word 'tourist' today (Burkart and Medlik, 1987).

The concept of tourism was first formulated in the period between the World wars and the definition put forward by Hunziker and Krapf was subsequently adopted by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST). They defined tourism as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity." (Burkart and Medlik, 1987).

The World tourism organization estimated that by the end of the 1970s some 270 million journeys were made throughout the world by people travelling to other countries and that they spent \$75 million in the countries they visited (World Tourism Organization, 1970). United Kingdom alone received some 12½ million visits from other countries with an

countries like Egypt and Kenya have so radically structured their tourism heritage to lure foreigners to spend their foreign currencies in their countries. The result is that over 60 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of these East African countries is from tourism.

Government organization of tourism in Nigeria started in the early 1970s. This was in realization of the role of tourism in foreign exchange earnings. Over the years of existence, we have witnessed a crippling development of the tourism industry in Nigeria. Several organizations have also tried to revive tourism in Nigeria. Of great repute is the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation. They claimed their attempt at reviving the crippling sector was stalled by the supervising Ministry of Commerce and Tourism (Vanguard, Oct. 7, 1994). Armed, therefore, with basic facts that tourism if well nourished could improve a country's foreign exchange earnings, this paper probes into how the country's tourism sector could be developed.

2. TOURISM AND NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Nigerian Tourist Association was replaced by the Nigerian Tourist Board with the promulgation of Decree No. 54 of 1976. This same decree also set up Tourism committees for the States. The functions of the Nigerian Tourist Board included the following (Giant Studies, 1993).

- 1) Encourage people living in Nigeria to take their holidays

therein and people abroad to visit Nigeria.

- ii) Encourage provision and improvement of tourists amenities and facilities in Nigeria including development of hotels and ancilliary facilities.
- iii) Private advisory and information services, and promote and undertake research in tourism.
- iv) Grade or classify hotels and render financial assistance to states in field of tourism.
- v) Assist in development of museums, parks, games reserves and holiday resorts.
- vi) Undertake activities which are necessary for the development of museums, parks, game reserves and holiday resorts.

In line with these basic functions, the Board was structured in directorates.

- (a) Physical Directorate - their duties included beautification of sites, development of museums, parks, holiday resorts, game reserves, etc.
- (b) Marketing and Promotion Directorate - their duties included publicity through media, fairs, etc.
- (c) Research and Planning Directorate - their duties included research into viability of projects to be embarked upon by the Board.

With these functions and directorate activities, the Board commenced a radical improvement of the country's tourists attraction. Zoos were developed in most state capitals. Of the

most prominent, included the Calabar and Ibadan zoos. The prominence of these zoos was seen in their daily attendants ... Museums were built or reconstructed where they were destroyed by the raving civil war. The War museum at Umuahia, artifacts museum at Oron and Aba were also very prominent. Also, during this early period, the game reserves and other tourists attraction sites were gradually developed. The Obudu cattle ranch, Yankari games reserve and the sprawling Jos Plateau were developed. The yearly Argungu festival in Sokoto was rejuvenated by government. Aside these few examples, several others were developed all over the country.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, petroleum oil, a very important foreign exchange earner was discovered. The oil boom era saw the almost total diversion of attention from all other sources of foreign exchange earning in Nigeria to petroleum oil. This period witnessed the demise of the tourism institution as it was virtually abandoned. The rich cultural and tourism heritage developed in the country, which was advertised more strongly at 'Festac 1977' was almost forgotten. The Calabar zoo was gradually disintegrating, so also was the Obudu cattle ranch and a lot others.

Table 1 shows the number of foreign nationals who arrived Nigeria by type of Employers between 1983 and 1986. Given the paper's definition of tourism, it could be inferred from the table that tourists includes those immigrants not in labour

force. From the 168,788 foreign tourists that arrive Nigeria in 1982, there was an increase to 215,106 foreign tourists in 1983. There was a total drop in the number of foreign tourists to Nigeria in 1984 to 74,686 and 65,187 in 1985. This could be explained by the incessant change of governments through coups in 1983 and 1984, and government neglect of tourism for oil as a foreign exchange earner.

TABLE 1
FOREIGN NATIONAL ARRIVALS AND TYPE OF EMPLOYERS
1983 - 1986

TYPE OF EMPLOYER	ARRIVALS				
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Total Occupations	386,516	388,908	293,900	339,679	253,1
Fed. Government	13,306	16,687	24,267	27,646	14,58
State Government	24,557	26,287	23,155	21,682	11,38
Private Sector	100,123	95,021	135,410	165,376	89,54
Other Employed	79,742	35,807	36,382	59,788	16,11
Not in labour force	168,788	215,106	74,686	65,187	121,55

SOURCE: Social Statistics in Nigeria (1988), Federal Office of Statistics Nigeria.

The invincibility of petroleum oil as a foreign exchange earner started waning in the late 1980s. The inability of various governments to cope with the dwindling foreign exchange earning capability rendered most of them wanting. Several methods were suggested by various governments ranging from the austerity measures to the Structural Adjustment Programme. It was in realization of the fact that petroleum oil alone could not bail

the country out of its economic problems that government in the late 1980s considered recapturing the lost glory of tourism and the need to revive the industry. Even with the revival it is argued that tourism in Nigeria is still wobbling and lacking behind the likes of North and Eastern African countries.

3. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TOURISM

- i) An inference into our earlier definition of tourism show the accrual of foreign exchange to the country where foreigners are visiting. This accrual of foreign exchange is therefore a very important contribution of tourism to the countries. Also the increase in foreign demand of our currency (which is from the foreigners visiting the country) will go a long way in appreciating our currency in the foreign exchange market.
- ii) Tourists who are visiting a country may discover some potentials they could invest on. Such discoveries could ginger their eagerness to invest in that country. The Nigerian government recognized this fact and built into its tourism policy, incentives for investors. Such incentives include:
 - (a) adequate land space;
 - (b) guaranteed loan scheme;
 - (c) provision of infrastructure;
 - (d) tax free period; and
 - (e) repatriation.
- iii) Another important contribution of tourism is the creation

of new markets outside Nigeria for Nigerian goods, services and values. Tourists who are of great demand for Nigerian goods may open up a marketing channel for such product between Nigeria and their country. This will definitely increase the market choice of the country in terms of exportation of products.

- iv) Also, with the concentration on tourism, the great dependence on petroleum oil as the main or major foreign exchange earner will be drastically reduced, as tourism will also attract foreign exchange. Apart from marketing pleasure to get foreign exchange, the country can also market its art, culture and values for foreign exchange.

4. NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR A FLOURISHING TOURIST BUSINESS

For a good tourist business in Nigeria, lessons from successful countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, show that several conditions must be observed. This part of the paper analysis such conditions and how they impact tourism in Nigeria.

- i) Political Stability - For a country to attract tourists, no matter the density of tourists attractions, there should be political stability. An unstable political scenario, coupled with frequent policy changes, riots, strikes, civil disturbances among others hampers the development of tourism. Recall that a tourist is one who is sojourning in want of relaxation and freedom; if such is unattained, the idea of tourism is defeated.

- ii) **Functioning Facilities** - To develop tourism, there is need for the basic needs of livelihood which includes water, light, food etc. Tourists centres should of great necessity have all these important facilities in functioning order. This is necessary because most tourists come from countries where these basic facilities are constantly provided. Tourists centres, should endeavour to provide constant and clean water, uninterrupted electricity supply, assorted food to meet tourists demands, and other necessities.
- iii) **Shelter** - It is of great importance that good and modern hotels should be cited at tourists sites. Such hotels should be developed to meet international standards and reputation.
- iv) **Attitude of the People** - One of those important conditions for the development of tourism includes the attitude of the people living in the tourist areas. Tourists desire relaxation and free atmosphere. The attitude and behaviour of the inhabitants of these areas towards these tourists will strongly determine the increase or decrease in volume of tourists to such areas. Inhabitants of such areas should exhibit brotherly and friendly tendencies towards strangers, as most tourists will be strange to them. This will give the tourist a warm and homely environment to adventure.
- v) **Designated Tourist Sites** - Government should establish or build tourists sites in the country. After a thorough feasibility analysis of areas that could serve as tourists centres, those that pass the test should be developed by government for such purposes. This will help government to concentrate in the infrastructural development of few centres which it can, than the unnecessary over-bloating of tourists site which are not viable.

5. DEMERITS OF TOURISM

Although tourism has been considered in this paper to be another source the country could explore in furtherance of its developmental aspirations, there are certain disadvantages inherent in tourism itself. Such demerits are what this part of the paper will consider.

- i) Imposition of Foreign Culture - In most developed tourists centers or towns in Africa, there is always a tendency for the people there to imbibe the culture of the tourists (...). Most western tourists come into Africa to propagate their culture. Example of such dissemination could be seen in the colonial Africa. Early colonial lords who came into Africa first as tourists brought their culture through language, trade, ethics, religion, among others. The imposition of their culture on the colonies forced the colonies to abandon most of their cultural values and heritage, which is telling on most countries of Africa today.
- ii) Another negative effect of increased tourists activities is prostitution. As the volume of tourists and business in the tourists center deepens, there will be increase also in the volume of prostitution. Prostitution, apart from constituting moral decadence and against our traditional cultural values and ethics could breed devastating trauma on the people through diseases. The high correlation between prostitution, tourism and prostitution-related diseases, such as AIDS could be easily seen in high density tourists countries like the ones in East Africa, and America and Europe.
- iii) Undue Inflation - As volume of tourists keep increasing, the

on supply. This situation will unduly bring about price increases in these tourists centers thus creating inflation.

- iv) There is also the fact that in such areas since demand for fun is high and prostitution state is high, there is a tendency for the supply of women who may want to be married to be low. The competition therefore for the scarce marriageable women may cause the dowry price in such areas to be unduly high.

6. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The paper has elucidated the importance of tourism as a foreign exchange earner. That the various governments of Nigeria have made commending policies concerning tourism. Most governments of Nigeria claim tourism sector to be a preferred sector, thus the need for proper funding and development. It has however been discovered that tourism in Nigeria is poorly funded by government. The prove is the dearth of the various tourists attractions in the country. The paper has taken time to show such factors necessary for a flourishing tourism business in Nigeria. It has also shown the demerits of tourism. The question then is, how do we recognize tourism in Nigeria for the envisaged revival? The paper suggests thus:

- i) disassociate tourism from undue government bureaucracy, where we have state, federal and local government agencies struggling for rights and claims;
- ii) government should develop those social overhead capitals as electricity, roads, water, telecommunication, etc. needed a

tourist regions or areas. This could even encourage private investors into the business;

- ii) a national body overseeing and controlling tourism in the country (from federal to local level) should be established by government with proper government funding for a take-off; &
- iv) the national body should maintain tourism in the country and also maintain facilities provided by government without undue reference to government for maintenance.

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