

Tourism A Panacea for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The continuity of tourism as one of the main sectors in all global economies depends mostly on the protection and development of the resources allocated to tourism. Based on this drive, sustainable tourism is a method of tourism based on travel to environmental places to foster a greater appreciation of natural habitats while having a low negative impact. This paper concisely examines the relevance of tourism to ensure a high positive impact to foster sustainable development. The researcher employs exploratory research methods, and got data from secondary sources and other relevant materials. It was found that tourist are most often over whelmed by the attractions of destinations, that they often do not take the foster respect for different cultures and for human right, so that future generation may experience destinations relatively untouched by human intervention. The researchers recommended that the government should provide financial benefits for environmental conservation investors and host communities alike should deliver memorable interpretative experience to visitors that help raise sensitively to host countries, political environmental and social climates.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, Tourism.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's fastest industries and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides many jobs which have helped revitalize local economies. Indeed, the tourism industry is among the world's leading and also a major contributor to the world's economy. It is also one of the most efficient sources of new wealth for most nations of the world. Tourism is a sector that stimulates development in terms of income, employment, foreign exchange earnings etc. and it is pertinent to say that tourism has become the hope of many developing countries that lack industrial capabilities and other natural resources. The importance of tourism can be seen by the fact that the worldwide contribution of tourism to GDP is estimated as some 5%, spending on international tourism reaching US \$944 billion (2008). (World Tourism Organization, 2008 Report of multi stakeholder working group of tourism). Key factors in this growth include the advances in transport technology, increased leisure time and regular holidays, and it insults to long periods of relative political stability and rising living standards. However, the benefits of holidays for tourists are not always shared by the countries they visit. As long ago as 1981, a report on tourism to one Caribbean Island noted: "We recognize that the attraction of this Island is reduced by overcrowding. As traffic multiplies, attraction lessens, as noise increases, attraction decreases, as social and cultural instability rise. As we have greater numbers of tourists, we may be repelling the very tourists that would be our idea visitor." (Butler, R. 1991).

This shows clearly that despite the huge benefit and advantages that is associated with tourism, its adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts are enormous and numerous. Tourists have been more concerned about their personal enjoyment and excitement without considering whether or not the environment is in danger or not.

Tourists' activities should not hamper the environment, so that the future generations can also benefit from it. This has been the goal of sustainable development. A sustainable approach of tourism therefore would mean that neither the natural environment nor the socio-cultural fabric of the host communities will be impaired by the arrival of tourists. On the contrary, the natural environment and the local communities should benefit from tourism, both economically and culturally. Sustainability implies utilization in such a way that their subsequent use by the future generation is not comprised.

This research therefore seeks to determine how tourism can be a catalyst for sustainable development, and how it can be reaching its economic, socio-cultural potential without denying the future generation the ability to also benefit from it economically and socio-culturally.

Review of Related Literature

Tourism

In every corner of the world, tourism has been identified as a dependable foreign exchange, as well as world's largest generator of jobs. Tourism though has been recognized as the obvious economic sector that contributes to the wealth of many nations; people still lack full knowledge of what tourism is really all about.

According to Torukuru and Nnamdi (2017), tourism is the endogenous and exogenous human activity, which entails the movement of people from their normal residence to other geographical locations for a period not less than 24 hours and not more than 12 consecutive months for personal, business professional reasons. Pearce (1989), a Sociologist defined tourism as the relationships and phenomenon arising out of the journeys and temporary stay of people travelling principally for leisure or recreation purpose. Chadwick (1994) also defined tourism as the field of research on human and business activities associated with one or more aspects of the temporary movement of persons away from their immediate homes, communities and daily work environment for business, pleasure and personal reasons.

Holloway (1992) took it from an academic point of view that tourism is a subject of study that of concerned with the motives, expectations and experiences of the tourist and with the economic, socio cultural and environment impacts of tourism in the host country. All these definitions have been made by people of different academic environment. This however prompted a more consensus definition in 1996 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO). Defined tourism as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been defined by several authorities; according to the WCED, it is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs.

According to Adnam Ahmad (2015) it is the wise use of our resources for our development to meet our needs without comprising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. According to the Resources Management Act (RMA) enacted by New Zealand in 2015; sustainable development is managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in a way or at a rate which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being and for their health and safety while sustaining

the potential of natural and physical resources safeguarding the life supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems and avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects activities on the environment. Sustainable development is not an end, but a means to achieve a steady and equitable growth in a region. It encompasses the utilization of the present resources in a manner that quality and comfort is not comprised and the future chances of their occurrences is also manageable. The guiding rules are that the people must share with each other and care for the earth. Humanity must take no more from nature than nature can replenish. This in turns means adapting lifestyles and development paths that respects and work within nature's limits. It can be done without rejecting the many benefits that modern technology has brought, provided that technology also works within those limits (source: caring for the earth IUCN, P8) the essence of this form of development is a stable relationship between human activities and the natural world, which does not diminish the prospects for future generations to enjoy a qualify life at least as good as our own. Many observers believe that participating democracy, undominated by vested interests is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development (Mintzer, 1992).

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined as "tourism that respects the local people, the travelers and the environment". It seeks to provide with an exciting and educational holiday that is also of benefit to the host community or country. Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only a positive impact on the environment, society and economy. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principle refer to the environmental economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Sustainability tourism development requires the informal participation of all relevant stakeholders as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impact, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability and promoting sustainable practice amongst them.

Environment Impact of Tourism

Like other forms of development, tourism can also cause its share of problems such as social dislocation, character assassination, loss of cultural heritage, economic dependence ecological degradation, pollution, loss of religious deities' loss of natural vegetation and a host of other environmental problems. For example, in an average Nigerian household, 600 liters of water per day is used, while a luxury hotel room guest uses about 1300 liters of water per person per night. A species of animals of plant life disappears at rate of one every three minutes. 70% of marine manuals are threatened. I acre of trees absorbs 2.6 tone of CO₂ per year. By 2050 climate change could have directly led to the extinction of 30% of species, the death of 90% coral reefs and the loss of half the amazon rainforest. The number of cars on the road surpassed 1 billion in 2010, today it is about 1.2 billion and will be about 2 billion by 2035, and although 70% of the earth's surface is water, only 3% is potable.

Contributions of Tourism to Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Fundamentally, the tourism and hospitality industry, if properly annex could bring sustainable development in Nigeria. Tourism as an industry is usually classified as a service industry and

this suggest that tourism can be used as a powerful engine for industrial diversification for many local economies. Therefore, it is no longer possible to ignore its roles as one of the sectors that could bring sustainable development in Nigeria.

Of course, Nigeria is filled with several exciting tourism potentials and cultural artefacts and festivals but in spite of all these, Nigeria relatively is yet to use its full potentials of its attractions and artefacts to increase the financial base for development. It is not out of place to maintain that Nigeria could be developed through the promotion of eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and belief tourism for sustainable development.

1. Eco-Tourism: This could be defined as an environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undistributed natural areas, in other to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local participants. Such places provide an avenue for research works and improve knowledge. Eco-tourism encourages the development of markets in native handicrafts and artwork for souvenir's, thereby contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage.

2. Cultural Tourism

According to Satano (2004) "Every time tourists go shopping having a meal in a restaurant, visit museum or heritage and do whatever during their travel and trips, they have chances to meet and talk with local people who have a different culture and belief the aftermath of these action is to sustain development. Cultural tourism has the potentials of sustaining development in the society, because it is an embodiment of tourism development, it serves as an important tool in creating job opportunities which is more or less is to sustain economic development. This was obviously what the Government of Nigeria had in mind when they officially recognized Abuja Carnival in 2005 where participants are recognized representing the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory. The carnivals relatively have brought a source of development socially among Nigerians despite the cultural diversity it has ended up in building and enhancing friendship amongst states and tribes.

3. Belief Tourism

This is a significance form of tourism for religions in the world. It involves pilgrims visiting important religious sites and in most cases at some major religious sites, special facilities are often developed to accommodate large number of pilgrims. All of these development takes place through the influence of religious tourism for instance the Redeemed site in Lagos is a living example. Therefore, it is not out of place to mention that capital inflow to Nigeria is next to Saudi Arabia. Due to the Pentecost wave of the Christian faith, most in-bound aircrafts to Nigeria in December of every year contain religious tourist.

Policies for Sustainable Tourism

Just as individuals can learn to be enlighten travelers, governments and tour operators can also support and encourage sustainable tourism through appropriate policies and regulations such as:

1. Tourism development project should be compatible with the needs and practices of local communities.
2. Good agricultural land can be made off limits for tourism.
3. Codes of conduct can be formulated and distributed at tourist and lets.
4. Minimum wage levels approved by independent labour unions should be enforced.
5. Environmental safeguards can be rigidly applied in the development approval process.
6. Minimum levels of local employment and resources should be enforced.

Benefits for Sustainable Tourism

1. **Foreign Exchange Earnings:** Tourism expenditures, the export and import of related goods and services generate income to the host economy. Tourism is a main source of foreign exchange earnings for at least 38% of all countries.

2. **Contribution to Government Revenue:**

Both direct (taxes, direct charges from tourism related activities) and indirect (taxes and duties on goods supplied to tourist).

3. **Employment Generation:**

Generation of jobs directly through hotels, restaurants, taxes, souvenir sales etc.

4. **Stimulation of Infrastructure Investment:**

Tourism can include the local government to improve the infrastructure by creating better water and sewage systems, roads, electricity, telephone and public transport networks.

5. **Contribution to Local Economics:** Local revenues etc.

6. **Direct Financial Contributions to Nature Protection:**

International tourist arrivals have increased from 26 million globally in 1950, to 278 million in 1980, 527 million in 1995 and 1.18 billion in 2016. They are expected to reach 1.8 billion by 2030. Travel and tourism represent approximately 10% of total global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016. The global trade and tourism industry create approximately 11% of the world's employment (direct and indirect) in 2016. Leakage in tourism is as high as 80% in the Caribbean (of every dollar earned in tourism, 80 cents leave the country).

Solutions for Sustainable Tourism

Government and relevant stakeholders should:

1. Address environment and social concerns through policies, practices and initiations with others.
2. Tourists should be considerate of the committee and environment they visit.
3. Tourist and visitors should avoid literacy, try to carry their own shopping bag to avoid contributing to the plastic problems in many countries.
4. Reduced energy consumption unplugs your mobile phone charger, turn on the lights.
5. Visitors, guest should conserve water by taking shorter showers.
6. Tourist should do well to educate yourself about the place they are visiting and the people.
7. Tourist should respect cultural differences and learn from it.
8. Avoid purchasing or eating endangered species. And also choose sustainable seafood.
9. Support a local charity.
10. Use more of cable or electric cars within destinations to reduce emissions.

Conclusion

Sustainable tourism is about re-focusing and adapting. A balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning ensure that tourism can be managed. This requires long-term thinking and realizing that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible. Economic social and environmental aspect of sustainable development must include the interest of all stakeholders including indigenous people, local communities, visitors, industries and government.

Tourism will never be completely sustainable as every industry has impacts, but it can work towards becoming more sustainable. As more regions and countries develop their tourism industry, it produces significant impacts on natural resources, consumptions patterns, pollution and social systems. The need for sustainable/responsible planning and management is imperative for the industry to survive as a whole.

Recommendation

The researchers however recommended that the government, relevant stakeholders, investors, visitors and host communities alike should:

1. Provide direct financial benefits for environmental conservation.
2. Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitively to host countries, political, environmental and social climates.
3. Design, construct and operate low impact facilities.
4. Minimize physical, social, behavioral and psychological impacts.

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