Anthropology of tourism in Nigeria: implication for social studies education

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Local and international tourist in Nigeria often experience a range of diverse human and natural settings, which they are often unable to understand or explain and Social-cultural anthropologist have tried to provide explanations to the diverse human and natural experiences of the tourist through the anthropological study of tourism but a framework for the proper understanding of the diverse human and natural experiences is a fundamental aspect of culture that has been ignored by Social Studies educators in Nigeria. The growing anthropological interest in tourism have not been very concerned with disciplinary boundaries, Yet, little work has been done, if any at all on the relationship between education and tourism in Nigeria. Social Studies Education in particular draws noticeable attention to particular cultural practices and sites in Nigeria and some of these sites and practices are classified as national heritage. Through a careful study of the tourism industry in Nigeria through desk review, the questions this paper tries to answer are; issues about Nigeria society that will compel or deter people to favour sightseeing in large groups and how social studies education can help people to have a better understanding of these conditions. Although most of the Nigerian elites and political class spend holidays in Europe and America, they have no interest to visit tourism sites in Nigeria. Therefore this paper also x-rays the challenges to tourism in Nigeria and the social and economic benefits that can be derived from the huge tourism potentials in Nigeria.

Keywords: Anthropology, Tourism, Tourism Development, Social Studies Education, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism appears to be one of the fastest growing industries in modern times. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, there were 983 million international tourist arrivals in 2011, whereas the number of registered international tourist arrivals approximate 800 million in 2005, (UNWTO, 2006), this figure shows that the tourism industry recorded an approximate increase of two million international tourist arrival in the last half decade. This rapid growth of modern tourism industry undoubtedly has made tourism one of the most important industries of the world. For instance the United Nations World Tourism organization reports that international tourism receipts grew to USD1.03 trillion in 2011 which is equivalent to N164.8 trillion. But, most often international and local tourist in Nigeria often experience a range of diverse human and natural settings, which they are unable to understand or explain and Social-cultural anthropologist concerned with the study of human social life: the origin, and dynamics of man’s societies and his cultures have tried to provide explanations to the diverse human and natural experiences of the tourist through the anthropological study of tourism.

Tourism fits easily into anthropological concerns because anthropologists are interested in everything human, whenever and wherever it occurs and although,
research on tourism by western societies has been on for decades, Nash and Smith, (1991) found that there seems to have been a reluctance to consider it as a legitimate object of study. Most anthropological work centred on the relationship between anthropological field work and tourism (Enemou, Anozie and Otta, 2012; Crick 1985 and 1995; Bruner 1989; Errington and Gewertz 1989), and the promotion of cultural heritage as cited by Robert Shepherd in Asian Thought and Cultures entitled partners in Paradise. However, the growing anthropological interest in tourism have not been very concerned with disciplinary boundaries, even though anthropologists seem to have no hesitation in borrowing from other social sciences and the views of these other disciplines comprises of necessary points of articulation (Nash and Smith, 1991). It is important to mention here that, little work has been done, if any at all on the relationship between education and tourism in Nigeria though, Social Studies Education in particular has drawn noticeable attention to particular cultural practices and sites in Nigeria; some of these sites and practices are even classified as national heritage at the state and federal levels, as these become tourist attractions. In this article, I will not dwell on the distinction between social studies education and anthropology, neither will I confine the discussion to social studies education but I am interested in showing how tourism can be sponged from the perspective of social studies education and how students and other stakeholders in the tourism industry can benefit from this perspective to shape the future of tourism in Nigeria. This is what I call the educational implication of anthropology of tourism.

Anthropology of Tourism

The origin of tourism often considers the classification and rationale behind travel as it raises concern about what makes a person a tourist as well as the motivations and destinations of the tourist. Anthropologist and tourist seems to have a lot in common, both spend time exploring the cultural productions and rituals of a society, and both carry the status of outsiders as they make forays into the lives of others (Stroenza, 2001). According to Oke (2006:14), Social-cultural anthropology highlights the efforts of men to live and work together as groups and as human societies. Until the 1970s only few anthropologists showed interest in tourism even though tourism was relevant to the peoples and places many tourists were studying (Stroenza, 2001). The early academic works on tourism by anthropologist include that of Smith, 1989, MacCannel, 1976, Cohen, 1972, Crick, 1989, Nash and Smith 1991 and Stroenza, 2001. Today, Anthropologist and other social scientists are becoming more and more interested in the study of tourism because, tourism often involves contact between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Despite the growing academic interest in the study of tourism, Anthropological attempts at arriving at a consensus on the definition of tourism has often met with the biblical proverbial statement of “a Carmel’s head passing through the eye of a needle” and tourism like most concept in social sciences it does not easily lend itself to a universal definition. Scholars have acknowledged the fact that anthropologist have had a hard time defining tourism (Stronza, 2001; Nash, 1981; Cohen, 1974). However, Smith (1989) sees the tourist as essentially “a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change.” Other anthropologist attempted to define tourism from the spec of modernity (Cohen, 1988:374; Doblign de Rios, 1994; Harkins, 1995; Redfoot, 1984). They argued that modernity is characterized by feelings of alienation, fragmentation and superficiality and the search for authentic experiences is a reflection of the modern tourist desire to connect with the pristine, the primitive, the natural and that which is yet untouched by modernity. These group of anthropologist tends to view the tourist as a person who travels to a natural destination. However this definition fails to underscore the destinations in the modern tourist industry; although all tourist destinations were once natural settings, the anthropogenic artificial tourist destinations in modern times assumes a violation or rather defiles the modernist conceptualization of tourism.

According to Turner and Turner (1978), leisure travel is like a pilgrimage and one that can lift people out of the ordinary structures of their everyday lives but Stroenza (2001) asserts that tourism offers freedom from work and other obligatory time. he therefore describe tourism as an escape from traditional social roles, and the liberty to spend ones time the way one chooses. Stroenza found that modern tourism is an escape from something rather than a quest for something as presented by the modernist school of thought. Stroenza tends to agree with the earlier definition of Graburn (1983:11), that tourism is “one of those necessary breaks from ordinary life that characterizes all human societies which are necessary for the maintenance of physical and bodily health.” This health benefit identified by Graburn is one aspect that does not appear to be strong in other definitions. This definition can better be conceptualized in modern context as “medical tourism.” even though it has not been so coined the fact that people embark on medical tourism, especially from developing countries is undeniable. Irrespective of the motivations; whether as an act of quest, or rather escapist and medical, the tourist is a person who travels from the place of residence to another destination and tourism is the act and processes of tourist and destination interactions.

Tourism in Nigeria

Globally, Nigeria is a country richly endowed with a wide
range of natural and cultural resources relative to other nations in Africa and the rest of the world but most of these resources are largely untapped. Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroun in the east, and Niger in the north. The country rests its coast in the south on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. The strategic location of the country as the most populous black nation on Earth sandwiched in over 350 ethnic groups and diverse religious and geographical features such as rain forest, savannah, and waterfalls. The diverse natural attraction makes the country a potential tourist destination. Tourism studies in Nigeria have found that; tourism in the country centers largely on events, and tourist destination. Nigeria offers a wide variety of other tourist attractions such as extended and roomy river and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, some new rapidly growing cities and climatic conditions particularly conducive to holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs; rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle. The Beach and Coastal Resorts stresses over 700km of unpolluted sandy shores from Lagos to Akwa Ibom State. There are also over eight national parks and about ten game reserves. Hotels and standard restaurants, transportation; water recreation, air and rail services, caves, tunnels, waterfalls and spring waters and the presence of endangered wildlife, especially drill monkey, manatee, white throated monkey, pigmy hippo and cultural and archaeological sites are just a piece of the iceberg that the Nigerian tourist industry offers to potential tourists.

Challenges to Tourism Development in Nigeria

Although there a lot of tourist potentials in Nigeria, many of these attractions are still largely untapped and even at their raw states, they are still being enjoyed by few outsiders, either very rich visitors in quest of exoticism or adventurous people in search of new challenges and experiences. Although most of the Nigerian elites spend summer holidays in Europe and America, visiting squares, parks, gardens and even museums; in their home country (Nigeria) they have no interest to visit the nearby village or a traditional play staged in the neighbourhood (Onwuejeogwu, 1992: xx).

Attitude of Nigerians towards Nigerian culture and tourism is another major challenge to the tourism industry in Nigeria. To most Nigerians a piece of African art is a piece of juju wood or a bronze object which Europeans only admire out of curiosity. He further assert that they see traditional African music as a cacophony of barbarous pagan noise and traditional African drama or dances are erroneously perceived as nothing more than forms of incoherent or grotesque pagan displays (Onwuejeogwu, 1992: xx). In many cases the local communities are often neglected and regarded as insignificant in matters related to tourism planning, this also results in poor perception and attitude of the host and local communities towards tourism (Falade,2001; Enemou, Anozie and Otta, 2012). There is also the challenge of inadequate infrastructure and facilities, inadequate and inaccessible roads and in some parts of the country acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty in is what most potential Nigeria bound tourist may not like to be confronted with (Adejuwon, 2008; Afi, 2001; Matheison and Wall, 2006; Enemou, Anozie and Otta, 2012). The industry, also suffers from the country's poor electricity, roads, and water quality. Although, the UNWTO of 2006 report indicates that International air access is adequate for existing and short term needs. Tourism development according to Okoli (2001) is the provision of infrastructure and superstructure. The infrastructure ranges from road to water supply and communication system while the superstructures are hotels, models and guest houses etc. The challenge therefore is that there is a general dearth of infrastructure and superstructure and most potential tourist sites in Nigeria.

The tourism industry in Nigeria also suffers inadequate promotion and publicity cum negative reports by the media (Enemou, Anozie and Otta, 2012.). This deliberate image hoarding and negative media portrait has colossal adverse effect on the tourism industry in Nigeria. A survey of tour operators in the UK, Europe and the United States of America indicated a lack of information or knowledge about Nigeria as a tourist destination (UNWTO, 2006). This calls for a radical market approach in the development of the nation’s tourism sector. The potential market segments could include leisure, new experience seekers such as expatriate community and Nigerians in Diasporas, conference and meetings, visiting friends and relatives as well as religion and sports hubs. Security and safety measures is another mounting challenge in the Nigeria tourism industry, although militancy in the Niger Delta has greatly subsided with the amnesty proclamation by the Federal Government of Nigeria since 2009, the recent Boko Haram insurgency in the North and North-Central parts of Nigeria that has led to the bombing of the headquarters of the United Nations and Police headquarters in Abuja, and a host of other calculated attacks at military formations, places of worship and public offices is a grave concern for
potential tourists.

The tourism sector also lacks reliable statistics and market information according to the United Nations report of 2006, the report indicate that revenue value of domestic leisure travel is unknown, however the significant size of the Nigerian population places a growing higher demand on tourism services from domestic travels (UNWTO, 2006). The revenue value of state government’s contribution to the transport and hospitality sector in the undertaking of official travel activities is also unknown. According to Ayiba (2007), tourism in Nigeria is at low ebb not only because of economic hardship but because of all the factors militating against the industry, and unless the challenges facing tourism are solved, Nigerian tourism industry will continue to remain in nascent state.

Relevance of Tourism Development in Nigeria

Tourism development in Nigeria has both economic and social benefits; although the fight against poverty is an age long battle in Sub-Saharan Africa that has defied most aspect of science and scientific warfare; it is a battle that needs the arsenal of tourism to surmount. Therefore it is not surprising to find nations such as the UAE, South Africa and a host of other nations and government prioritizing tourism on the top of their development agenda. Tourism is one of the major industries of the world and a developmental tool for many Third World countries, and can be a leading sector in the fight against poverty (UNWTO, 2006; Nash and Smith, 1991). The industry has been characterized by a variety of destinations and a continuum of geographical spread making it possible for many countries, especially in developing countries and Africa to develop tourism as a viable springboard for socio-economic development, the industry brings a lot of benefits to the different levels of government and the private sector through the generation of foreign revenue, returns on investment, taxation on tourists and tourist products. According to the United Nations report of 2006, international tourist spend an estimated USD280m/N44.8billion, and export revenues of international tourist estimate additional gross revenue of USD224m/N35.840billion in Nigeria. The report also indicated that revenue generated from travels within the country by employees and staff of Federal Government Departments and Agencies (FGDAs) is estimated at USD68M of transport and hospitality sector demand. The total number of international air visitors to Nigeria in 2004 was also estimated at 190,000 and the level of spending by international tourists in 2004 was estimated at N36billion (USD 280million).

Socially the tourism industry creates employment benefits for both skilled and unskilled labour, especially for women and ethnic minority groups. When properly managed tourism can serve as a mechanism protecting the natural environment, historic and religious monuments and stimulate the practice of local cultures, traditions and crafts (UNWTO, 2006; Okoli 2001). Across the globe, tourism has been touted as a roadmap to economic sustainability, national and local prosperity, and as one of the fastest growing industries in the modern world, tourism can supply wealth and growth opportunities in poverty stricken communities (Stacey, 2009).

CONCLUSIONS

Nigeria’s tourist attractions are unknown to the international travel trade; A survey of tour operators in the UK, Europe and the United States of America indicated a lack of information or knowledge about Nigeria as a tourist destination according to the United Nations report of 2006, this calls for a radical market approach in the development of the nations tourism sector. The potential market segments could include leisure, new experience seekers such as expatriate community and Nigerians in Diasporas, as well as conference and meetings. The image of Nigeria abroad has also been so negatively branded and the tourist products are not organized or properly packaged for the market place. The current marketing approach is very weak and the marketing of Nigeria as a tourist destination is underfunded and lacks a strategic marketing approach, while they are informative, they are not customer friendly.

The active development of tourism was recommended to the Nigerian government by UNWTO in 2006 as a means for improving the socio-economic conditions of the Nigerian people and diversifying its economic base. The recommendation highlighted that the success of the Nigerian tourism industry depends on its sustainability. Despite the economic, political, cultural and social benefits, tourism development has not been so strong in Nigeria. Unless the challenges facing tourism development in Nigeria are expunged through a through strategic systemic approach targeted at the younger generation through a holistic education like Social Studies that can positively change the affective domain of the learners, and unless the challenges are identified and solved, Nigerian tourism industry will continue to remain in nascent state because bulk of the challenges is attitudinal and calls for concerted effort directed at changing the attitude of the people.

Educational Implications of Anthropology of Tourism

Today, applied anthropology has assumed a borderless position that traverses all fields of humanity including social sciences and education. Social Studies as a field of study, gives a perspective of understanding the diversity and complexity of a number of social settings
and human behavior. Tourism fits easily into social studies education because like anthropologists the Social Studies discipline is interested in everything human, whenever and wherever it occurs. The UNWTO report of 2006 recommends that African studies and the appreciation of African cultures should be an integral aspect of Nigerian education if ever, the nation is to contribute anything meaningful to the continent and world civilization, and the ministry of culture and tourism should enhance the economic benefits of tourism through sustainable, Nigerians friendly policies that will distribute the benefits of tourism to all parts of the country as a way of eradicating poverty in the land. Invariably African study and the concept of sustainability are within the purview of Social Studies education. In addition the collection and compilation of tourism statistics and the strategic element of the Nigerian slave routes in cultural tourism and historic sites in Nigeria can be better promoted and published through Social Studies Education because apart from the strong cultural affinity of the discipline the subject is also a compulsory subject that runs through the early nine years of the basic education system in the country. The UNWTO report of 2006 also recommended that city taxis need to be upgraded and fitted with meters to allow tourist pay per mileage as is being practice internationally and citizens need to be sensitized through proper education. There are no better ways to sensitize the teaming Nigerian population than through a compulsory educational system like Social studies that has transportation as one of the core theme at the elementary schools.

**Recommendation**

- Demand for labour will receive a very significant catalyst through a sustainable development approach of the tourism sector this will take off so many unemployed youths and graduates off the streets of our major cities and villages.
- The Nigerian diversity of cultural attractions and the friendly disposition of the people provides key opportunities for tourism development and opportunities in the country, if the opportunities and potential are fully harnessed and the challenges addressed, strategic marketing of Nigeria as a desirable tourist destination will be required and will pay positive and significant dividends.

There is no better way to sensitize Nigerians about the challenges of tourism and how to appreciate the diverse tourism potentials in the country, other than a holistic and compulsory education programme like Social Studies that affective domain driven. Government and the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should as a matter of priority deliberate promote tourism through Social Studies Education with concrete measure that are germane to the Nigerian tourism environment.

Finally, the Nigerian government needs to address the number of issues that are strategic to tourism development in Nigeria, amongst these are the issues of; tourism policy, governance development of tourism products, marketing approach, international and domestic transportation, hospitality education and training, tourism organization and legislation, and tourism management information system.

**METHOD**

This paper employed the method of desk research using secondary sources of data and personal observations. The personal observations did not involve the conventional survey because the study did not involve a specific field location. As noted by Ajala (2008), every time one is always doing field work even when not formally on the field. The secondary sources consulted included review of journal publications, extracts from textbooks and scholarly materials from websites on the themes of anthropology of tourism. However, the holistic approach of discovering the dynamics processes that characterize the tourism system in Nigeria, and how its elements integrate into a functional whole was employed. According to (Oke, 2006:11), in the holistic approach the researcher is concerned with the nature of the system itself rather than particular independent and dependent variables.

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