

EVALUATION OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN NIGERIA: THE NEED FOR ARCHITECTURAL INPUT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Tourism involves several activities and services whose success depends on the enhancement of the destinations through Architectural planning. Architecture plays a very significant role in tourism development through the provision and designs of tourism infrastructure such as hotels, Resorts, shops, Restaurants, parks, good scenic view and aesthetics including a well planned environment. The appearance of a destination is an important aspect of tourism development which should not be ignored but unfortunately, in developing countries with reference to Nigeria, concerns are more on the immediate economic benefits than providing the necessary infrastructure, maintaining the beauty and attraction of the destinations. Many of these tourist destinations lack the ambience found in developed tourism destinations; access to these sites is hazardous and difficult such that visits to them are not for the 'faint hearted'. This study investigates tourism infrastructure in Nigeria and the need to integrate architecture in tourism planning. Based on the secondary and primary sources of data collection, the findings of this study indicate that tourism infrastructures in the Nigerian tourists' attractions are inadequate and needs both the government and private sectors attention. The study concludes that for tourism to be properly developed in Nigeria, infrastructure which together complements an attraction will not only improve the attractions but will at the same time make tourism investments economically viable.

Keywords: Architecture, infrastructure, Nigeria, Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is located in the western sub region of Africa and occupies an area of approximately 913,768sq.Kms (Awaritefe, 2007). Has a population of about 149,229,090 (CIA 2009) and informally divided into six geopolitical zones (Bah, 2005; Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2004). Although the zones were created unofficially, without constitutional sanction, it has become very relevant as political entity (Rotberg 2004). The various zones are North West, North Central, North East, South East, South West and South-South.

Nigeria's landscape is dotted with natural tourist attractions that are comparable to the best in the world but remain largely undeveloped and lack basic tourism infrastructure. It is not an exaggeration that visits to most tourist destinations in Nigeria are made for purposes other than leisure such as educational excursion visits. Similarly, there are no adequate accommodations for tourists and so patronage to these attractions are very low and nothing to write home about.

Where there are infrastructures, they lack proper planning, input of professionals and are ill maintained. It is not enough to design the basic functions solely for the tourist services or activity, all attributes of the sites and surrounding area must be taken into consideration (Gunn and Var, 2002), hence the need for expertise in the planning process. As stated by Hassan (2000) it is critical for future destination development plans to be compatible with market needs and environment integrity for tourism industry to maintain its economic viability.

Tourism destination with basic infrastructure, good aesthetics and landscape setting are important factors in the satisfaction of holiday makers with both their journeys and destinations. Apart from these is sustainability, if all factors are considered before a design and are not haphazardly planned.

This will stand the test of time and of benefit to the future generations.

2. TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure as defined by Dwyer, Forsyth & Dwyer (2010) refers to the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. These include networks, air services, airports, water supply, waste disposal systems, energy and power generation, post and Telecommunications, recreational facilities. Also, Medlik (2003) refers to infrastructure as all forms of construction required by an inhabited area in communication with the outside world, which support and make economic development possible.

Going by these definitions, it implies that infrastructure is very important in any country's development. Without proper infrastructure put in place there will be no significant development in any sector. As averred by the Country Report for the Philippines (1996), the provision of infrastructure is a backbone of development of any country's economy; furthermore, it helps to improve the country's productive capacity. Likewise, Khadaroo and Seetana (2008) stated that the infrastructure base of a country is a determinant of the attractiveness of a tourism destination. As such for any country to attain economic growth, infrastructure must be put in place.

Tourism as defined by the World Tourism Organization is 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. These activities call for the provision of goods and services in order to satisfy the tourism demand and require basic infrastructure services referred to as tourism infrastructure. This as posits by Raveendran (2010) include services like airports, railways, roads, waterways; amenities such as electricity, water supply, drainage, solid waste disposal systems and facilities such as accommodation, restaurants, recreational and shopping. All these are integrated in tourism planning and development to provide complementary experiences, in order to contribute to the overall attractiveness of a tourism destination.

Provision of infrastructure in tourist attractions serves the tourist needs and encourages both local and international patronage; it will not only bring development but also promote the image of a place; the lack of which reduces the possibility of the growth of tourism of a place. Tourism development requires infrastructure, this is because a tourist is not only drawn to the attraction alone but also to the totality of the environment.

As stated by Chen (1999), the average tourist visits environment with a high quality of life and such tourists are not drawn to specific attraction but to the entire experience of the destination. The destination lies in the heart of travel and tourism system representing an amalgam of products that collectively provide a tourism experience to consumers (Fyall, Garrod, Tosun, 2006) Similarly, Henderson (2009) averred that the extent and standard of infrastructure and services influence the decisions of tourists and tourism industry, helping to establish overall flows between and within countries. In the same vein, Murphy, Pritchard & Smith (2000) liken a destination to a market place where demand and supply jostle for attention and asserts that a tourist destination is an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities which combine to form a total experience of an area visited. The experience of a tourist is a combination of both the attraction itself and the infrastructure services that support the tourists' visits. Tourism infrastructure is the supply chain of transport, social and environmental infrastructure collaborating to create a destination (Tourism Infrastructure Policy and Priorities, 2011). Tourism depends highly on environmental resources and for it to thrive, basic tourism infrastructure must be provided to support tourism activities. This can only succeed if government at the planning and implementation stage identify and make the provision of basic tourism infrastructure a priority in tourism development.

3. TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN NIGERIA

Tourism globally is recognized as the fastest growing industry and a powerful driver of the economic engine of many nations. With several tourists' attractions and potential tourists' attractions, the Nigeria tourism sector is still operating at a very slow pace and below capacity. Tourism infrastructure, rather than contributing to tourism as money spinner as in the case of other countries constitutes an eyesore in many of the tourist attractions.

Despite the discovery of tourism as a source of additional revenue, Nigeria's richness in tourism potential and government's efforts in developing tourism, many of the tourist's attractions still lack

modern and even basic infrastructure. Many of the attractions, especially those in the rural areas suffer from poor roads, electricity, water and poor aesthetics of the tourist environments. With the vast tourism potentials in Nigeria, which remain largely unlocked; ailing infrastructure as stated by The Report (2010) contributes to the under development of tourism sector in Nigeria and this as noted by Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) has attracted relatively fewer tourists. Available Data from UNWTO (2006) shows that International Tourist Arrivals in Nigeria was 190,000 in 1990; in 1995, 656 000 was recorded, and between the year 2000, 2003, 2004; 813000, 924000 and 962000 were recorded respectively. And the international tourism receipts for the years as recorded was 25, 17,101, 49, 21 (US\$, million) respectively. From this data, it can be concluded that the growth of tourism in Nigeria is at a slow pace as compared to other countries in Africa like South Africa.

As narrated by Emeruwa (2009), the Director General of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC), Otunba Ransewe, identified infrastructure as the 'key' to advancing the tourism industry in Nigeria. Furthermore, the Director General of NTDC promised that 'government would ensure a speedy provision of basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, water, electricity, communications and hotels to centres of attractions; in order to accelerate their development for the purpose of exploiting fully their touristic values'. Unfortunately, in many of the attractions visited, development and the physical provision of the said infrastructure are either not in existence or are at very slow pace as many of these attractions still lack the basic infrastructure.

Apart from infrastructure is the state of lack of control. Many of the private investors who would have ventured into tourism development are scared of being victims of insecurity. As noted by Ikein, Alamieyeseigha & Azaki (2008); the key problems to tourism development are the lack of infrastructure and the state of lawlessness and insecurity; as no one would build a hotel in a locality in which the facility could be set on fire for the flimsiest reasons, nor would tourists wish to visit such facility. For tourism to develop in Nigeria, the necessary infrastructure and security must be put in place, in and around many of the tourists' destinations to help boost the sector.

Actions are required rather than the lip service being paid to tourism by the government, furthermore, there is also the need for government at all levels (Local, State and National) to show commitment in tourism development, this will attract tourists to many of the attractions rather than concentrating only on specific attractions; in order to also diversify the nation's economy from oil. With the increasing awareness of the importance of tourism globally, there is the confidence that if the Nigerian tourist attractions are well improved and marketed, Nigeria will record positive change. For tourism to be sustainable in Nigeria, apart from borrowing ideas from nations where it has thrived, the Nigerian Government at all levels should create the enabling environment for tourism industry to succeed in the regions, create awareness locally and internationally about the numerous benefits and tourism opportunities in Nigeria, have a policy especially in the area of infrastructure, planning and implementation that will encourage the growth of the tourism sector in Nigeria and also encourage investors both local and foreign. Another important need is to take inventory of existing situation in the tourist attractions, appraise and improve on them to international standard.

4. THE NEED FOR ARCHITECTURAL INPUT IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Tourism involves several activities and services whose success depends on the enhancement of the destinations through Architectural planning. Architecture plays a very significant role in tourism development through the provision and designs of tourism infrastructure such as hotels, Resorts, shops, Restaurants, parks, good scenic view and aesthetics and well planned environment; in order words, architecture helps to conserve and enhance a tourist destination in an appealing way. Architecture is the art or science of buildings, especially, the art or practice of designing and building edifices for human use, taking both aesthetics and practical factors into account (Klein & Weiss, 2009; Conway & Roenisch, 2005). The design incorporates the totality of the built environment including the surrounding landscape.

Having an architectural input in tourism development is very vital, especially if an attractive environment is to be achieved; putting the total environment in terms of planning, the green and open spaces, the movement, both pedestrian and vehicular, the safety of the environment and the local community into consideration. As stated by the Council of European Union (2008), architecture play an intergrading and innovative role in implementing sustainable urban development by reconciling the

differences in requirements of building and landscape conservation and by its diversity, quality and creativity and contributing to the quality of life.

The role, view and impact of Architecture in tourism cannot be overemphasised. In combining architecture and tourism, a lot can be achieved in the area of having well organised, attractive and sustainable destinations, which could attract tourists far and wide and improve on the various businesses within the destinations. As noted by Kierchhoff (1997) a comfortable atmosphere, natural, unspoiled environment are among the important expectations of tourists visiting destinations. As such the quality of entire surrounding environment is important. Also, Nadeau, Heslop & O' Reilly (2008) said the image of a place influences tourist decisions and defined the term destination as the location visited by a tourist which may be interpreted as a city, region or country. Thus a tourism destination with good architecture and its landscape setting are two important factors in the satisfaction of holiday makers with both their journeys and destinations. Platform for Architecture (2007) stated that Architecture benefits the process of creating the corporate identity and market position of businesses, villages and destinations, however in most cases; enormous amount of money is invested in construction and design without basic architectural reasoning. When a place is well landscaped, it not only showcases such places but also improves the businesses within such destinations. Functionality and good planning of spaces is very important. A good tourist destination with all architectural inputs stands to be sustainable and as stated by Dittrich (2009), the workability of planning, transport, safety, green spaces and the interaction of the local community are all required if the totality of the built environment is to be attractive.

Several features characterise tourism and vary depending on the scope and function of the tourist's destinations, the various relevant components for a particular design situation are organised in an efficient and functional manner to cater for the needs of the users of such destinations and also add to the visual appeal and value of the destinations. Some input through architecture are features such as the green areas, outdoor facilities, play ground for children, Natural and artificial landscapes (with components such as sculptures, pools, fountains, walkways, etc) and Buildings (hotels, restaurants, kiosks, sports etc); in addition are well planned facilities with good functionality and accessibility architecture in tourist destinations. High quality architecture attracts visitors, acts through its quality. According to Platform for Architecture (2007) High quality architecture stands for function and wellbeing, stands for corporate identity, translates into competitive advantage, and stands for life style, quality of life for employees and also stands for sustainability.

Architecture has input in tourism through the proper planning of all the facilities such as the functionality of space, the orientation, the quality of the environment and ease of accessibility. Through Architectural planning, positive influence and lasting memories are kept alive, thereby exposing such destinations to other tourists. Architectural planning also contributes to the establishment of regional and national identity and also contributes to the development and maintenance of the built environment. Architecture designs enhance and enrich, sustain and protect the environment, promote the well-being and health of the people; and minimise the impact of tourism activities on the environment. Therefore in planning a tourist destination, all tourism infrastructures within the tourist environment need to be properly planned by involving professionals in the field of architecture for good aesthetics and sustainability.

In planning and designing the potential tourists' attraction and redeveloping the available few, the government will need to take to into action the need to involve all professionals at all stages of planning, implementation and preservation in order to attract tourists both at local and international level in Nigeria.

5. STUDY AREA AND METHOD

The study was conducted within two geo-political zones in Nigeria, namely, the North Central using the Federal Capital Territory and Lokoja the Kogi State Capital and the South West using Ondo state and Ekiti States. The tourists' attractions and potentials within these zones are numerous and heterogeneous made up of water based, hill based and human made attractions.

The study population for the research were all tourists' attractions in Nigeria. Samples were drawn from four states; Ondo, Ekiti, Kogi, the Federal capital territory and an academic institution, through the simple random sampling process. Quantitative data was collected using a total of eight hundred and fifty closed and open ended questionnaires, using a four point Likert scale to represent respondents' position on favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the issues. The questionnaires

were administered by trained enumerators to respondents made up of people in the tourism industry (staff of tourism board, hotels, and travel agents), Government (public servants, local and state government offices), individuals and tourists (visiting tourists from within and outside the states). A total of two hundred copies of questionnaires were administered in each of the states and fifty copies in the academic institution. At the end of twelve weeks, seven hundred and forty five copies of filled questionnaires were returned, representing eighty seven percent were utilised for the analysis using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis and results expressed in simple percentages. From the respondents demographic structure, the result show that of the seven hundred and forty-five response received, a total of four hundred and seventy two respondents i.e. 63.4% were male and two hundred and seventy three i.e. 36.6% were female. This was further revealed in the mode which is 1 and represents male respondents.

Furthermore, three hundred and thirty five (45%) of respondents were between the age bracket of 20-30 years, one hundred and fifty two (20.4%) were between 30-40 years, one hundred and thirty six (18.3%) respondents fell into the age bracket of 40-50 years, while eighty (10.7%) were above 50 years of age and forty two (5.6%) did not respond.

The analyses further revealed that majority of the respondents were government employees and accounted for three hundred and sixty seven (49.3%) as also revealed in the mode which is 2. Also one hundred and sixty five (22.1%) respondents were unemployed. A total of one hundred and thirty (17.4%) were self employed while eighty two (11.0%) respondents were private sector employees and one respondent was indifferent.

The educational level of respondents revealed that the tertiary level has the highest respondents of four hundred and ninety (65.8%), a total of ninety four (12.6%) hold secondary school certificate, also ninety one (12.2%) hold the primary school certificate; about sixty six (8.9%) do not have any formal education and needed a form of assistance of interpreting and filling the questionnaires while four (0.5%) did not respond.

Also, four hundred and thirty nine (58.9%) respondents were married, two hundred and ninety one (39.1%) were single, twelve (1.6%) were widowed and three (0.4%) did not respond .

Furthermore, three hundred and sixty three (48.7%) fall under the monthly income of between N1 – N100,000.00k, those who earn between N100,000.00k – N500,000.00k were one hundred and eighty seven (25.1%). Between N500,000.00k – above were one hundred and nineteen (16.0%), while seventy six (10.2%) did not reveal their income. The above income was expressed in the Nigeria Naira.

Rating tourism infrastructure in Nigeria: Further analyses on the rating of the Nigerian tourism infrastructure revealed in Table 1 show that 42.3% of respondents rate infrastructure as poor, 38.7% as good, 7.9% rated it as very poor and very good respectively, while 3.2% did not respond.

Table 1: Tourism Infrastructure Rating In Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	24	3.2	3.2	3.2
Very poor	59	7.9	7.9	11.1
Poor	315	42.3	42.3	53.4
Good	288	38.7	38.7	92.1
Very good	59	7.9	7.9	100
Total	745	100	100	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey 2010

Adequacy of tourism infrastructure for tourism development in Nigeria: in accessing the adequacy of tourism infrastructure for tourism development in Nigeria, 35.7% support that it is fairly adequate, 26.0% see the infrastructure as adequate, 19.2% agree that the infrastructures are not adequate while 15.3% as very adequate and 3.8% did not respond to the question as revealed in Table 2.

Table 2: Adequacy of Tourism Infrastructure for Tourism Development in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	28	3.8	3.8	3.8
Not adequate	143	19.2	19.2	23.0
Fairly adequate	266	35.7	35.7	58.7
Adequate	194	26.0	26.0	84.7
Very adequate	114	15.3	15.3	100
Total	745	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey 2010

Using infrastructure to enhance tourism development: when asked if respondents agree that infrastructure can enhance tourism development, 59.3% strongly agree, 32.2% agree, while 3.55% did not respond. Also 2.7% strongly disagree while 2.3% disagree as further revealed in Table 3.

Leading tourism infrastructure development in Nigeria: Table 4 reveals that 62.1% supports that government and the private sector should lead tourism infrastructure development in Nigeria. Also, 26.3% support that only government should lead infrastructure development, while 7.9% express the view that private sector only should lead and 3.6% did not give their response.

Table 3: Using Infrastructure to Enhance Tourism Development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	26	3.5	3.5	3.5
Strongly disagree	20	2.7	2.7	6.2
Disagree	17	2.3	2.3	8.5
Agree	240	32.2	32.2	40.7
Strongly Agree	442	59.3	59.3	100.0
Total	745	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey 2010

Table 4: Leading tourism infrastructure development in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
No response	27	3.6	3.6	3.6
Government and Private Sector	463	62.1	62.1	65.8
Private Sector	59	7.9	7.9	73.7
Government	196	26.3	26.3	100.0
Total	745	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey 2010

From the findings, the analyses reveal that tourism infrastructures in the Nigerian tourist attraction are poor and need intervention from the government and the private sector. If tourism is to serve as additional source of revenue earner, the need for infrastructure in the attractions must be recognised. The infrastructures are also not adequate where they exist, having enough tourism infrastructures in the attractions will enhance tourism development and more tourists are likely to visit thereby increasing patronage both at the local and international levels. Government alone cannot lead tourism development but will need the private sector to key in into tourism development; however, this can

only be possible if an enabling environment is provided.

For there to be a sustainable growth of tourism in Nigeria, the government and private sector will need to work together and develop plans that will be of benefit not only to the economy but to the generality of the private sector, government and the local community. Through this, there will be development and provision of infrastructure in and around the destinations, employment opportunities, biodiversity conservation, and economic growth. In addition, architectural input will contribute to the aesthetics of the destination, as the main elements which appeals to a tourist are the attractions and the scenery of a destination and the role architecture play is being able to combine these elements internally and externally in order to attract tourists far and near. As such, professionals need to be involved in the planning and implementation and monitoring stages if tourism is to thrive in Nigeria.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that there can be improvement in tourism development and patronage in Nigeria if attention is focused on the provision, upgrading and refurbishing of basic tourism infrastructure and also if the government partners with the private sector and provide the enabling environment. Also, if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, architectural input is needed to integrate all elements in ways in which destinations will appeal to tourists.

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