



Resort Potentials as a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The unique climate conditions of Plateau State and the numerous tourism attraction and spots has made Plateau State the home of peace and tourism and also tourist haven of Nigeria. This paper is centered on five resorts in Plateau State such as National Museum, Jos Wildlife Park, ASSOP Falls, Pandom Wildlife Park and Solomon Lar Amusement Park. Data for resort patronage were provided only in National Museum, Jos Wildlife Park and ASSOP Falls. The critical issue of concerned was on domestic and international patronage of tourist resort between 1996-2008 and the recreational facilities provided in each of the resort centres. Data were collected base on questionnaires, directly field observation and interviews. The data collected were analyzed using ANOVA and the results obtained shows that there is a significance variation in the patronage of the different resorts centres used for this study. However, the viability of tourism potentials can only strive effective in Plateau State if there is full participation of the various stakeholders in decision making process.

Keywords: Resort, Tourism, Destination, Patronage, Sustainable

1. Introduction

Almost all nations are in recent times recognizing the importance of tourism and embracing it. No wonder the world tourism organization/WTO 2000, claimed that tourism is among the fastest growing industry in the world. Tourism development had unquantifiable benefits ranging from social physical to economic gains. Socially, it promotes world peace and exposes people to new “worlds or environments thus making participant to learn about new environments. In Nigeria, the vast tourism potentials such as table mountains beautiful landscapes, colourful folks, overwhelming serenity wildlife, waterfalls and other rich festivals, architecture, and craft has necessitated towards the existing tourism drive in the country. Today Plateau State is blessed with abundant tourism potentials, such as beaches, spectacular rock formations, hydrological bodies, wildlife and waterfall and other rich festival, architecture, and craft which has necessitated towards the existing tourism drive in the State. However, the rich tourism attractions of the State have earned her the slogan “Home of peace and tourism”. A part from this, most of the tourism potential have been converted

into tourism resorts while others are still left to fallow without any conscious effort by the government and private individual towards its development.

Beside numerous factors has hindered patronage of tourist resort in Plateau State. These factors ranged from age, gender, occupation income social class amongst others. Regretfully most of the tourist resort lack the basic facilities such as accommodation, catering, entertainment, electricity, water which are of essential to tourist and hence making them less attractive in any given location. In this regard it should be asked if resort development is of economic important in Plateau State, what role does resort play in Plateau State? Is resort development an appropriate tool for sustainable local socio-economic development. This study addressed some of the critical issues on resort potentials, particularly as it relate to patronage and facilities provided in the various resort centres. However two hypothesis were stated in this study, thus:

Ho: There is no significant variation in the patronage of the selected resorts.

Hi: There is significant variation in the patronage of the selected resorts.

2. Study Area

Plateau is one of the 36 States of Nigeria. It is located in the central part of the country. It covers an area of about 3,000 square miles, at a general level of about 4,200 feet above sea level and is surrounded by high plains with altitudes ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level. Apart from the southern margin which is both very steep and rather regular in outline, the Plateau is bordered by an irregular margin with gentle slopes. This study only covered some selected tourism resort in Plateau State.

3. Material and Method

Five tourist resorts were used in this study. There are, Jos wildlife park, Jos National Museum, Solomon Lar Amusement park, ASSOP waterfalls and Pandom wildlife park. Data were collected using questionnaires and Participatory Research Method (PRM). Four hundred and seventy one (471) copies of questionnaires were administered to occupants living within the resort center using systematic sampling technique. This was to ascertain the recreational activities undertaken by visitors in each tourist resort. While Participatory Research Method (PRM) was employed to obtain data based on domestic and international patronage in National museum, Jos wildlife park and ASSOP falls and facilities provided to tourist in each resort center. However, three hundred and twenty (320) household were used for this study. While two hundred and fifty (250) respondent were drawn from the (320) household sample for this study. The (250) respondent represent the sample size for this research work. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was adopted for testing the stated hypothesis. It was used to compare the variation within and variation between groups of the resorts. Data on the level of patronage in Pandom wildlife park and Solomon Lar Amusement park were not made available.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainability is one of the key-words of the 1990s. sustainability and sustainable development were given impetus and made popular by the Brundland report (world commission on environment and development 1987). It define sustainable development as “development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Both an equity dimension (intergenerational and intergenerational) and a social/psychological dimension are clearly outline by this definition the Brundland report also highlighted the “essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given”, and “the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs” means that such development must be ecologically bearable in life long term, as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities.

The principle of sustainable tourism was proposed as early as 1988 by the World Tourism Organization, with sustainable tourism envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support system. Recalling previous declarations on tourism, such as the Manila Declaration on world tourism, the Hague Declaration and the Tourism Bill of rights and tourist Code, the charter for sustainable tourism approved during the World Conference on sustainable tourism, held in Lanzarote in 1995, underlined the need to develop a kind of tourism that meets both economic expectations and environmental requirements, and respects not only the social and physical structure of its destination, but also the local population.

The concept of sustainability has a twin valence: on one hand there is the ecological aspect, that is the conservation of the natural equilibrium of all the components of the natural environment (flora, fauna, water resources, etc); on the other hand there is the anthropological aspect, which could be expressed by the persistence of enjoyment of this environment in spite of growing tourist flows.

It is obvious, at least for the economist, that there is a strong relationship between the two characteristics (ecological and anthropological) of sustainability in tourist enterprise. In fact, the degradation of weaker components of the natural environment, especially if it is irreversible, provokes, first of all, a slow down in the development of tourist activity, with substantial consequences at a social and economic level. Such a situation of backwardness and impoverishment will subsequently result in a loss of interest in conservation and good use of natural and environmental resources, which are of great interest to tourists. Added to this there is also a substantial loss even in the financial profitability of the different commercial activities concerned. According to him, internet may represent one opportunity for making and selling the product.

4.2 The Role of the Private Sector in Tourism Development

Scheyvens (2002) in analyzing the role of private sector in tourism development opines that corporate businesses can assist by providing markets, capacity building, monitoring and micro-financing support for small, medium and micro-enterprises. Swarbrooke (1999) agreeing with Scheyvens pointed out that the private sector seems to recognize the issues of sustainability, and to recognize the importance of the community as a stakeholder in the paradigm of successful tourism, with the more aware operators and investors understanding something about the needs and requirements of the community. The private sector is more sensitive to the market than any other stakeholder; this is of course not surprising as private sector stakeholders are interested in financial stability, remuneration and economic sustainability (UNWTO, 2005). According to Loannides (2002) smaller enterprises may, naturally, have the ability, interest and spatial positioning to be more sensitive to community needs and objectives.

Godwin (2001) in assessing the role of private sector in tourism development opines that the private sector can contribute to local economic development and poverty reduction by changing the way it does business and through philanthropic activities.

He further emphasized that there are strong commercial motivations for private sector engagement in local economic development and poverty reduction, principally the creation of an enhanced product range, which adds market advantage and of a better business environment, which fosters of favourable staff attitudes and morale. Potter (2006) agreeing with the works of Goodwin further stress that private sector can foster local socio-economic development by recruiting and training local people, procuring goods and services local and shaping local infrastructure development to include benefit for the poor. Private sector can also encourage tourists to purchase products that are complementing to the core holiday, such as handicrafts, art, local food and beverages and services such as guide services, music and dance (UNWTO, 2005).

Singh and Dowling (2003) in their study of private sector involvement in tourism development discovered that private sector is capable to undertake joint marketing and promotion, to liberation trade in travel and tourism, to enhance cooperation in raising the quality and sustainability of tourism in any region and to ensure tourist safety and security and human resources development.

4.3 Tourism and Economic Development

Hall (2003) in his study on the socio-economic impact of tourism discovered that tourism has become a significant source of foreign exchange revenue for many countries of the world. According to him tourism activities in Maldives contributed 66.6 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounted for 65.9 per cent of its exports, Roe and Godwin (2002) supported the works of Hall, according to their analyses, tourism industry in Vanuatu has contributed 47.0 per cent of the country's GDP and 73.7 per cent of its total export earnings. They went further to emphasized that thirteen (13) developed countries in Asia (Cambodia, Lao people's Democratic Republic and Neps), tourism accounted for more than 15 per cent of export earnings.

Hall (1999) opines in his study of economic impact of tourism opinion that this industry has contributed to GDP as seen in the Island states of Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.

He further stress that tourism alone contributed 43.5 per cent of the total export earnings of Fiji and one third of its GDP. Other small Islands such as Tonga and Vanuatu are dependent on tourism for half or more of their export earnings. Prentice (2007) in his study opines that tourism in China has provided a substantial contribution to its GDP amounting to 13.7 per cent in 2006. Taking full advantage of the potential of their natural and culture tourist resources, countries in the greater Mekong sub-region are benefiting from the tourism industry. He went further to stress that in 2006, tourism in Cambodia and the Lao people's Democratic Republic accounted respectively for 22.3 and 21.4 per cent of their total export earnings and contributed 19.6 and 9.3 per cent respectively of their GDP.

According to UNWTO (2004) tourism industry contributes significantly to the creation of employment both directly and indirectly. According to UNWTO the industry in the Asian and Pacific region provide jobs for about 140 million people representing an average of 8.9 per cent of total employment. It also emphasized that tourism employment in North-East Asia is estimated at 86 million jobs, or 10.1 per cent of total employment. This situation is attributed main to China, where 1 out of 10 persons works in a tourism-related industry. In support of UNWTO's argument, Sharpley and

Stelfer (2002) following empirical findings, indicated as part of his illustration, that in Oceania, the workforce in the tourism sector accounted for 14.5 per cent of total employment, or 1 in every 6.9 jobs. The importance of tourism becomes more significant when the structure of the workforce in selected Pacific Island economies is analyzed. For instance in 2003, 1 in every 3.2 persons was employed in the tourism sector, while in Vanuatu the ratio was 1 in every 2.4 jobs.

Richards and Hall (2003) opines that tourism industry has become a significant provider of employment in countries of the Asian and Pacific region, thereby improving the economic situation of the people of those countries. In addition, revenue generated from tourism has enabled Governments to allocate financial resources for improving education and health in countries. They further stress that in Maldives, where tourism activity is the economic mainstay, almost 100 per cent of the population is now literate, while the infant mortality rate has improved from 121 per 1,000 in 1977 to 38 per 1,000 in 2002 and over the same period, the average life expectancy at birth increased from 47 years to 67 years.

5. Research Findings

Table 1 gives the summary of some of the recreational activities which the tourist engaged in at the various resorts sampled.

The Table 1 reveals that majority of the visitors are engaged in relaxation/drinking a value 27% compare to other variables with values rock climbing 7% swimming 13% game viewing 21% horse riding 9% and sight seeing 22% respectively.

Table 2 shows the level of domestic and international tourist of the national museum resort between 1996 to 2008. The data obtained indicate a high level of domestic tourist patronized in the National Museum compared with international tourist.

The highest level of patronage of the resorts were recorded in 2003, while 2001 recorded the lowest patronage. The national museum resort witnessed a drastic fluctuation in terms of domestic and international patronage.

Furthermore, levels of patronage of domestic and international tourist in Jos wild life park resort were obtained.

Table 3 represents annual increase in the patronage of Jos wild life park. International tourist were fewer than domestic tourist. Table 3 reveals that there is a fluctuation in terms of domestic and international tourist arrival to Jos wildlife between 1998 – 2003. This could be due to the religious crisis which almost engulfed the entire Plateau State. With regards to ASSOP falls resort. Table 4 shows the level of patronage of domestic and international tourists to ASSOP falls resort.

Comparatively, ASSOP falls recorded the least patronage over the thirteen years period covered in this study. The annual totals are relatively low. The domestic patronage shows a steady increase from over eight thousand in 1996 to over twenty five thousand in 2003. Conversely, the number of international tourists dwindled over the years, but interestingly reached the peak of over four thousand in 2001 when the domestic tourists dropped to the least (3,407) in the same 2001, due to religious crises. However, in order to verify the data collected in the field, the stated hypothesis which was stated as there is no variation in the patronage of the selected resorts was tested and the calculated value of 99.49 was obtained. This result shows that there is significant variation in the level of patronage of the different resorts: Nevertheless, Table 5 shows the facilities provided by respective resorts in the study area.

Table 5 shows that patronage of any resort is a function of facilities provided. It also reveals that accommodation is the major facilities provided by the National Museum and Pandam Wildlife Parks with values 67 and 45 respectively.

6. Conclusion

This case study shows that Plateau State is endowed with great tourism potential which can be developed to ensure sustainability and socio-economic empowerment of the local people. Consequently, there is a high percentage of patronage by domestic tourist as compared to international tourist over the years. Therefore, if tourism is to contribute to sustainable economic development in Plateau State, a strategy centered on expansion of local empowerment and self employment, development of partnership amongst public and private sectors, improving social and cultural impacts, increasing local access to infrastructure and services provided for tourist must be advocated.

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Table 1. Recreational activities undertaken by the visitors at the resort

Activity(S)	No of Patrons	Percentage
Rock climbing	40	7
Sight seeing	54	9
Swimming	76	13
Game viewing	123	21
Horse riding	52	9
Relaxation/drinking	126	22
Total	471	

Field work 2008

Table 2. Levels of patronage of domestic and international tourists in national museum resort (1996 - 2008)

Year	Tourists		Total
	Domestic	International	
1996	75,323	2,546	77,869
1997	76,767	2,979	79,772
1998	67,000	4,0378	71,038
1999	50,213	3,139	537,551
2000	131,457	6,100	137,551
2001	7,082	7,032	14,114
2002	202,727	5,382	208,109
2003	275,809	5,124	280,933
2004	273,012	3,397	276,409
2005	241,871	3,544	245,415
2006	3,691	417	3,244
2007	3938	551	3,391
2008	4085	653	3,493

Source: Management of the resort (2008)

Table 3. Levels of patronage of domestic and international tourists to Jos wildlife park resort (1996 - 2008)

Year	Tourists		Total
	Domestic	International	
1996	22,340	767	23,107
1997	28,701	811	29,512
1998	32,589	672	33,260
1999	101,094	806	101,900
2000	65,242	581	65,823
2001	83,917	737	84,654
2002	58,327	409	58,736
2003	90,371	607	90,978
2004	103,923	1,164	10,5087
2005	104,977	2,204	10,718
2006	3,691	417	3,244
2007	3938	551	3,391
2008	4085	653	3,493

Source: Management of the resort (2008)

Table 4. Levels of patronage of domestic and international tourist to ASSOP falls resort (1996 - 2008)

Year	Tourists		Total
	Domestic	International	
1996	8,245	1,086	10,417
1997	8,413	1,679	10,092
1998	7,903	2,158	1,006
1999	9,587	1,741	11,328
2000	10,898	1,051	11,949
2001	3,490	4,980	8,470
2002	20,853	216	21,069
2003	23,966	101	24,067
2004	21,982	213	22,191
2005	25,050	315	25,365
2006	3,691	417	3,244
2007	3938	551	3,391
2008	4085	653	3,493

Source: Management of the resort (2008)

Table 5. Facilities provided at the resorts

Facilities	National	Jos	ASSOP	Pandam	Solomon Lar
Library	1	-	-	-	-
Auditorium/hall	1	-	-	1	1
Parking space	3	1	1	8	1
Restaurant/bar	2	-	1	-	1
Conference room	1	-	-	1	-
Open air theater	1	-	1	-	-
Children playing ground	1	-	1	-	1
Accommodation	67	-	-	45	7
Water supply	7	1	1	-	-
Public convenient	6	-	-	4	-
Picnic area	-	-	1	5	-
Canoe	-	-	-	4	-
Nature museum/museum	1	1	-	1	3
Café	-	-	-	-	-
Shopping mail	-	-	-	-	4
Swimming pool	-	-	-	-	1
Lawn tennis court	-	-	-	-	1
Artificial lake	-	-	-	1	1

Source: Field work (2008)