

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Nigeria so much depends on her oil that she forgets the other natural endowments she is blessed with; earning her the name a “mono-economy”. Truth be told, if Nigeria diversifies her economy, it will be rated as one of the fastest growing economies of the world (Ogege & Mojekwu, 2012). Nigeria needs to take her eyes off the oil sector; most especially now the oil sector has failed her and seeks means of boosting other sectors of the economy like the culture and tourism sector. The oil sector has not only failed us, but it has exposed Nigeria to a lot of ills (Ibeanu, 2008:p8).

Nigeria is one country with a dignified culture; a culture many foreigners want to know about coupled with the beautiful tourists' sites she has; some include: beautiful waterfalls, beaches, adorable cattle ranches, and even our long preserved traditional cultures. Tourists' visiting will have knowledge of our past and where Nigeria is heading to.

The culture and tourism sector in Nigeria has been relegated, but it is a large economy that has what it takes to generate much revenue for Nigeria.

In fact, tourism ranks the fourth largest sector in global economy which goes beyond providing revenue to even fostering peace and development in an economy (Honey and Gilpin, 2009:1; UNWTO, 2008). This industry was first promulgated in Nigeria in 1990 when the National Tourism Policy was created.

The Nigerian people need to change their orientation and see the culture and tourism sector as a force that can push economic development and this can only be achieved if every Nigerian; the government and the governed give this sector the deserved attention it requires. Everyone will be in doubt if culture and tourism can place food on Nigerians' table or in any way boost the economy, but a flash back at the pre-colonial era reminds us that this industry contributed about 50% to the economy (Aig-Imoukhuede, 1987:pp2-11). At that time some of our crafts were equally exported during the across the border trades.

Currently in Nigeria, we are experiencing scarcity of foreign exchange and the high cost of it, investors are dropping Nigeria for other countries; and it least beats our imagination that our culture and tourism industry has the tendency to deliver us from these mess. It will attract foreign investors, alleviate poverty, uphold our culture and further rate us as one of the fastest growing economies of the world.

This study is aimed at looking at how the culture and tourism sector can boost the Nigerian economy.

1.1 Statement of the problem

It is so disheartening that with how much endowed Nigeria is, it could only concentrate on the oil industry to boost its economy.

Aside from this, the poor state of our infrastructure; poor road network, unstable power supply, and high level of insecurity hampers the growth of culture and tourism (Oduyoye, 1994).

Meanwhile, Nigerians lack good orientation on how to value her culture and tourist sites. Government no more allocate funds to the culture and tourism sector, poor maintenance of tourist sites, cultures have gone into extinction, indigenes engage in theft on culture and tourism materials, etc. Still on poor orientation, Nigerians lack proper orientation on how to treat tourists; some are scared that tourists have come to exploit them and so they put up some attitude to scare them away. All these culminate in why culture and tourism sector cannot thrive in Nigeria.

However, it is crystal clear that the oil industry is not booming the economy as before as we now have cases of increase in unemployment, scarcity of foreign reserves, absence foreign investors, and tourist sites being exposed to environmental factors like: erosion, leaching and desertification.

1.2 Aims/ Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study is to discover how culture and tourism can be repositioned in a diversified economy like Nigeria.

Other specific objectives include:

- To determine how culture and tourism can become one of the leading sectors of the Nigeria economy.
- To determine the level of relationship between culture/tourism and the economy.
- To determine the relationship between culture/tourism and unemployment.
- To examine how oriented Nigerians' are towards managing their culture and tourist sites.
- To discover the current state of our tourist sites.

1.3 Research Questions

- Can culture and tourism be one of the leading sectors of Nigeria economy?
- What is the relationship between culture/tourism and the economy?
- Can culture and tourism reduce unemployment?
- What are the effects of culture and tourism on the Nigeria economy?
- How can Nigerians be oriented on how to preserve their culture and tourism?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no relationship between culture/tourism and the economy.

Hi: There is a relationship between culture/tourism and the economy.

1.5 Significance/ Justification of the study

This study is meant to orientate and educate the general public, including the government on how culture and tourism can boost the Nigeria economy. It is to remind the government that there is a need to diversify the Nigeria economy; by considering the culture and tourism sector.

Finally, this research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research on this subject matter.

REPOSITIONING CULTURE AND TOURISM IN A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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