
HARNESSING TOURISM POTENTIALS FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ONDO STATE OF NIGERIA

Adebayo Adewunmi Emmanuel

Department of Urban and Regional Planning
School of Environmental Technology
Federal University of Technology
Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Tourism has been described as an important venture to bring or take employment into the rural areas (where there are few or no industries) with the ultimate goal of alleviating poverty. The means by which such a goal can be achieved is the main focus of this paper. It examines the concept of tourism and related subjects such as recreation, transportation and provision of lodging facilities. The place of tourism in employment generation together with a succinct outline of tourism institutional evolution is highlighted in the Nigerian context. Various tourism potentials, which exist in Ondo state, are discussed while constraints towards the development of tourism as it relates to economic empowerment were mentioned. Major attractions include Idanre hills, Ebomi Lake, Igbokoda waterfront, museums and monuments, and various festivals and ceremonies. Constraints which include poor funding, low publicity/enlightenment and the low per capita income of the people are discussed. This paper rounds off with a near exhaustive 'cache' of suggestions towards improving tourism development with the intention to alleviate poverty in Ondo state.

Keywords: Tourism. Employment. Economy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Everything is changing except “change” itself. Systems of various sorts are evolving. The environment is dynamic in its real sense. It is as if the computer age will last forever as the all time celebrity. Only time will proof this wrong or right. What is new in tourism? The popular thing is to talk about eco-tourism or adventure tourism. However, there is the new talk about ‘reality tourism’ and ‘space tourism’. Roosevelt (2001) recently hinted on the concept of ‘reality tourism’. He was able to inform that the Centre for Global Education in Minneapolis, United States of America organizes trips from the United States to third world nations like Cuba, Nicaragua, Iraq and Mexico’s Chiapas State for people to learn about the history of repression and political violence. Reality tourism touches war and politics in relation to people’s unpalatable experiences. It touches the reality of experiences by victims of war and various forms of abuse.

Space tourism could sound more like a science fiction, but Buzz Aldrin, one of the first two persons to walk on the moon is already working on the campaign for space tourism and the eventual colonization of Mars. (Agbu, 2002).

In Ondo state, much concentration is still on cultural tourism. It is about promoting our culture through festivals and celebrations. However, the state also has natural tourism resources, which are natural phenomena that are usually of interest to tourists worldwide but which have not been developed to enhance both the local and national economies. This paper aims at highlighting the tourism potentials in Ondo State and additionally suggesting ways through which employment can be created through the development of such potentials.

2.0 THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM

Tourism is a leisure activity involving the movement of people to destinations away from their usual residences. It is often international in character. According to the definition of the Association of International Scientific Experts in Tourism (AISET), tourism is the sum total of the phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents in so far as this does not lead to permanent residency and is not concerned with any earning activity.

The word ‘tourist’ comes from a french word ‘touriste’ meaning a person who out of his own interest undertakes a journey and in the process gets to know places outside his permanent place of abode during his or her free time. The free time could be weekends, annual leave or public holidays and for a duration not less than 24 hours. During such a journey, the tourist must not undertake a remunerative employment.

Tourism is a major source of income and foreign exchange earner for countries whose potentials have been adequately developed. Tourism is a larger concept than recreation. People recreate or go on tour for reasons ranging from the need to escape from boredom of locality and job to the desire to have fun and relax while some persons do it to meaningfully utilize their spare time or for the intrinsic value of tourism and recreation.

Benefits, which accrue from tourism, include direct satisfaction to individuals, enhancement of the overall and physical quality of individuals thereby adding to the productivity of the individual and society, important third-party benefits such as increased business and property value and the generation of wealth and employment.

Tourism can be classified broadly into domestic and international tourisms. Domestic tourism is journey for leisure purposely made within the territory of the country but outside the tourist's place of abode. International tourism can be subdivided into active and passive tourisms. Active tourism is related to the inbound foreigner–tourists to a country. This refers to a foreigner–tourist bringing in his money for tourism purpose into the country. Passive tourism relates to outbound-tourists. This refers to those travelling abroad and through their journey, importing foreign currency into their destination. Tourism could also be classified in relation to the motive.

1. **Health Tourism:** This is a journey with an intention to spend time getting well after an illness thereby combining medical exercise or convalescing with holiday and rest. This is different from complete hospitalisation.
2. **Sports Tourism:** It is a leisure activity associated with the watching of sports such as football matches, lawn tennis, tournaments, boxing, wrestling, etc.
3. **Cultural And Scientific Tourism:** This is associated with educative excursions, scientific journeys or conferences and meetings.
4. **Cult And Religious Tourism:** This is associated with journeys like pilgrimage to the Vatican and Jerusalem by Christians or to Mecca by Muslims. They are seasonal in nature and are normally organized.
5. **Social Tourism:** This is an organized form of tourism for the less privileged such as pensioners, students or very low-income earners. Special and subsidized facilities are provided for this group of tourists in the form of accommodation, restaurant or holiday packages.
6. **Reality Tourism:** This is tourism as it relates to learning about the “history of repression and political violence”. Going by the words of Roosevelt (op. cit), it

involves among other things, visiting people who are under these conditions and who have probably broken off from such holds. It involves seeing the real life situations of people who have undergone some unfortunate circumstances like war and the impact of such experiences on their lives. It is a recent phenomenon in tourism.

7. **Space Tourism:** this is another recent approach to tourism. Buzz Aldrin, one of the first two persons to walk on the moon, started the campaign on space tourism and the eventual colonisation of Mars. His friend Dennis Tito became the first space tourist by spending \$20 million to travel to Russian Mir space station. Presently, a space hotel like the Nicon Hilton - a ringed structure able to accommodate about 300 people in space - is being envisaged (Agbu, op. cit)

Adebajo (2000) says that the tourism industry is made up of all the businesses that directly provide goods and services for businesses and the leisure activities of tourists. Such businesses include international and domestic airlines operations, shipping and ferry operations, railway, bus, and taxi operations, accommodation supply, operation of restaurants and clubs and the organisation of tours, excursions, conferences and conventions. Others include the management of entertainment facilities (such as theatres, cinemas, discotheques, night clubs and funfairs), theme parks, natural parks and heritage attractions, the creation of visitors' information centres and the production and sales of souvenirs.

3.0 EMPLOYMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

According to the report of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in year 2002, international tourism was then the world's largest export earner. Foreign currency receipts from international tourism has since outstripped exports of petroleum products, or any other product or service, making tourism the world's largest growing industry. Many nations of the world, which before now underestimated the gains of tourism, are now scrambling for a piece of the action in international tourism industry. (Agbu, op. cit)

The world record has it that in the mid 1990s, the tourism industry contributed to more than 6 percent of the value of all goods and services produced throughout the world. It also accounted for more than 7 percent of global capital investment and 13 percent of world consumer spending. Experts estimated that tourism supported more than 130 million jobs worldwide and contributed more than 5.6 percent to total tax payments. (The World Book Encyclopaedia, 1997)

As mentioned above, many businesses are directly linked with tourism industry through supply of goods and services for recreation and leisure activities

of tourists. In addition to this, there are specific job opportunities that are directly linked with tourism industry since it is a labour-intensive industry. But most forms of tourism are seasonal, as it is the case with cultural tourism and those associated with winter sports. As a result, many tourism jobs are part-time, casual, low skilled and low paid. However, the large number of people that tourism employs coupled with its links with other industries makes governments to actively participate in the development of tourism resources.

4.0 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

As reported by Kasali (2002), national recognition of the need to promote and develop tourism dates back to the colonial era - 1953 to be precise - when the need to collect and preserve the natural and historic heritage of the country was brought up by the colonial masters. Many parastatals have been established since then and were placed under the Ministry of Information and Culture until recently when the present administration deemed it fit to establish a full-fledged Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Under this ministry, certain parastatals that have direct and indirect links with preservation of culture and tourism development exist.

1. The National Commission for Museums and Monument - This parastatal has experienced series of transformation. It started from Antiquities Services Department in 1943 to Department of Antiquities as well as the Antiquities Service Commission in 1953 through the provision of the 1953 Ordinance and finally metamorphosed into the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) through the Decree No. 77 of 1979 and was given a corporate status.

2. The National Archives – This started as Nigerian Record Office in 1954 for the purpose of historical record storage in Nigeria, but later transformed into the National Archives through the provisions of Public Archives Ordinance of 1958.

3. The National Council for Arts and Culture (NACA) – It was established through the NACA Act No. 3 of 1975, evolving from the Nigerian Arts Council. The new functions and responsibilities of this parastatal are contained in NACA Amendment Decree of 1987.

4. The Nigerian Tourism Development Company (NTDC) – It was first established as Nigerian Tourism Association (NTA) in 1975 and later transformed into Nigerian Tourism Board (NTB) through Decree No 54 of 1976 (NTB Decree). This board was charged with the responsibility of projecting the Tourism attractions in the country to both Nigerians and foreigners by improving the facilities for tourism and highlighting their locations, beauty and values. Of recent, it has come to be known as the Nigerian Tourism Development Company (NTDC).

Some other relevant bodies such as: Centre for Black African Arts and Culture and Nigerian Film Census Board were also established to complement the efforts of the Federal Government towards boosting the status of our tourism resources and the promotion of our Arts and Culture. All the efforts were highly financed by the Federal Government, such as through the disbursement of N1 million to each of the 19 states in the country in 1978. Also a huge sum of N115 million was allocated for tourism promotion in the 4th National Development Plan.

5.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF ONDO STATE

The present Ondo State is the remains of the old Ondo State after the carving out of Ekiti State in 1996, by Late Gen. Sanni Abacha's Administration.



Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing Ondo State and the location of Akure as the state capital.

Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/nigeria/nigeria-political-map.html> retrieved on Monday April 23, 2007

The old Ondo State was actually created in February 1976. It is presently made up of 18 Local Government Areas, which evolved from the remaining 12 Local Government Areas in 1996 after the creation of Ekiti State. The projected population of the Ondo state for the year 2005 at a growth of 2.6% is 3,222,243 (as adopted by Ondo state Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Budget in their projection of the state's population from 1996 to 2000) on a land area of 13,595.00 km². The state lies between longitudes 4⁰30' and 6⁰E of the Greenwich meridian and latitudes 5⁰45' and 8⁰ 15'N of the equator.

Figure 1 shows the location of Ondo state in the national setting with the indication of Akure as the state capital

The state is within the tropical rainforest experiencing two main seasons namely the rainy season (in the month April to October) and the dry season (in the month of November to March). Annual rainfall varies from 1150mm to 2000mm in Northern and Southern parts of the state respectively. The state is bounded in the north by Osun and Ekiti States, in the East by Kogi, Edo and Delta States, in the south by the Atlantic Ocean and in west by Ogun State. The state has a widespread of tourist centres/features. These include rivers and lakes (in the coastal area), lowlands and rugged hills. The inhabitants of the state are mainly Yorubas comprising the Akokos, the Owos, the Ondos in the northern and central areas and the Ikales, Ilajes, Apois and Arogbos who inhabit the southern and the coastal areas. (Kasali, op. cit).

6.0 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ONDO STATE

The state has widespread tourist features. Going by the description of Fazoranti (2002), there is a maze of creeks, rivers and lakes in the coastal area. Lowlands, rugged hills and granite outcrops on a few hills are found in the Northern area. The hilly areas are notably found at Idanre and Oka. Some of the numerous rivers in the state are Owena, Ogbese, and Ose. In the southern coastal belt, the vegetation is typically marshland. Bordering the North is the stretch of shrub land and low grassland commonly referred to as the savannah. There are averagely dense forests at Idanre, Owo and Ifon.

Tourism in the state saw a green light during the era of governor Adekunle Ajasin which started with the development of Idanre Hills and Ikogosi warm/cold spring (i.e. before the Creation of Ekiti State) and new tourist centres were later developed including Ebomi lake, Oke–Maria, Igbokoda Waterfront, Owo Museum of Antiquities, Deji's Palace, Igbo-Olodumare, Oduduwa Shrine and the Red water. Each of the tourism resources has its peculiarities, which are described later.

For the fact that tourism and culture are inseparable, Ondo state is rich in Arts and cultural heritage, having an interesting variety of traditional sculptors and cultural ceremonies. The luxuriant vegetation is also a rich source of materials for the various carvings in wood, bamboo or calabashes. Iron, bronze and brass works abound in the state. Carved outposts and decorated doors from Idanre are among the best known internationally. The 'Obitun' traditional dancers are also an internationally acclaimed dance troop. Palaces of traditional rulers are true relics of the people's culture and tradition. Traditional rulers aid the integration of cultural heritage, which has a major effect on tourism development in the state.

Most of the roads within the state, including those linking various tourist centres to the state capital (Akure), are tarred in order to make them motorable. In the riverine areas of Ilaje/Ese-odo Local Government Area, water transportation is a very important means of transportation for the people. This means of linking Igbokoda waterfront by tourists was facilitated by the State Government's dredging of many canals. The state is also linked to other states such as Lagos, Delta, Rivers and Cross-River by sea. However, Rail and air transport systems are yet to be developed in the state.

Tourist centres in the state are mainly financed by the state government via allocations to the tourism Board. There is also a link between the health sector and the tourism industry. Each of the tourist centres has a reserve team from the health sector in the state which is called upon in cases of emergency at the tourist centres.

7.0 TOURISM POTENTIALS IN ONDO STATE

1. Tourism Potentials Of Idanre (Idanre LGA)

The is the leading tourist centre in Ondo state and one of the best in Nigeria with international reputation is in Idanre Town. The hill-fenced town has series of high and historic hills and landmarks. History had it that the town was formerly located on one of the highest hills of the area, as a sort of defence against external aggression of the olden days. The old Oba's (King) Palace is located at the top the said hill and the present Oba still visits it during festive periods in order to invoke the spirits of the ancestors on the town. The hill top sanctuary is marvellous and attractive as it consists of about 640 steps.

Among the uniqueness of Idanre town is the presence of Agbogun Foot Print on one of the hills. This is an intriguing footprint that contracts and enlarge to accommodate any foot placed in it except those of the evildoers like witches and

wizards going by the people's belief. There is also the presence of an antiquity of long historic value, the Oduduwa Crown, which is believed to have been brought by the first King of the town, Olofin. The crown is said to have been there for over 1,000 years. It is occasionally being worn by the Owa of Idanre especially during Ije festival.

2. Ebomi Lake (Akoko South East LGA)

Another potential tourist attraction of Ondo State is the Ebomi Lake at Ipesi in Akoko area of the state. The lake, which is about 2 km North of Oka town had been in existence before the settling of the Ipesi people. The lake is 1.6 kilometres long and 40 metres wide. The name 'Ebomi' is a local dialect of the word 'Abami' implying weird or mysterious. A local priest is charged with the responsibility of appeasing the lake when in times of trouble. The best period for visitation by tourists is between the months of November and March when the level of water must have fallen due to low rainfall at the period. The mysterious Lake forms part of Ose River and it requires more attention than the yearly sacrificial festival in August for which it is being used by the indigenes.

3. Oke Maria At Oka Akoko (Akoko South West LGA)

The Oka Hills provide attractive scenery for visitors and tourists. Oka Town is located northeast of Akure, the state capital, and is about 113 km away. The occupation and placement of the representative statue of the Virgin Mary by the Catholic faithfuls has given the area a religious undertone. The hill was first spotted by Rev. Father Cerminatti in 1916 and since then, thousands of tourists have visited the site annually on pilgrimage. Another attractive feature at Oka is the presence of Agba Shrine, which is made up of a small Lake known as Ojomirin. The lake has never dried since it was discovered.

4. Igbokoda Water Front (Ilaje LGA)

The waterfront at Igbokoda, within the Ilaje Local Government Area, is one of the longest territorial waters in Nigeria, and also one of the important tourist attractions in the riverine area of Ondo State. The presence of an open fishing terminus will definitely be of interest to tourists.

5. Igbo Olodumare At Oke-Igbo (Ile-Oluji/Oke-Igbo LGA)

This is an ancient forest that is known for various spirits. The forest is an attractive sight for tourists. In the forest, there is the site for a thousand demons and also a hill known as Oke Langbodo. This forest has been of tremendous use most especially to artists and film producers for its uniqueness. The host Local Government Area is found towards the east of the state capital.

6. Oduduwa Shrine And Red Water At Epe (Ondo East LGA)

These have just been discovered by the Tourism Board as an important tourist attraction. It is still under proper study by the Board, in order to fashion out strategies for proper development of the site as a tourist centre in Ondo East LGA.

7. Cave Of Ashes At Isarun (Ifedore LGA)

This is another newly discovered tourist centre that has a cave containing natural ashes. The centre is yet to be developed by the board. Isarun is less than fifteen minutes travel time from the state capital.

8. Igbara Oke Petroglyphs (Ifedore LGA)

Here, some ornamental things are incised on the rock and were said to be from the sword of Ogedengbe, a notable warrior in Yoruba history. This is the location where he was said to have sought refuge during the Kiriji war. The centre was officially declared a National monument during its first commissioning on 31st July, 1987 by prince Tony Momoh, a past Minister of Information.

9. Oyemekun Rocks (Akure South LGA)

“Oyemekun rocks” is a tourist centre under the control of a non-governmental organization in Ondo state. It is owned by a private individual. The main attracting feature of Oyemekun rocks is the natural pool and outcrops with the tracks well laid out. A continuous evergreen environment, which can be described as cool temperate, is facilitated by the heavy rainforest trees that give a convenient shed over the whole centre. Another natural element notable in the centre is the cool breeze, which blows incessantly over the area. (Oyinloye, 2003)

10. Victory Gardens (Akure South LGA)

This centre has a clubhouse and children’s playground with swings and other children facilities. The open area is planted with lawn and beautiful flowers. A similar attribute with that of Oyemekun rocks can be found in the cool and evergreen environment of the garden. (Oyinloye, op.cit). Other parks in Akure town are the **Alagbaka Recreation Park** and the **Tourism Village** along Igbatoro road which are already attracting the attention of private investors (adeniyan, 2005).

11. Museums And Monuments In Ondo State

The museum at Owo is a first generation museum where antiquities and the cultural heritage peculiar to the old life of the residents of the area could be easily found. The museum at Akure is a national museum located strategically by the Deji's Palace. It was declared a National Monument by Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in 1989 and officially gazetted in 1990. The properties are under the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NNCM), Akure office, headed by Mr. Francis Anene (The curator). The Museums have different sections, such as library, exhibition area and crafts stand among others and these have been serving the recreation interest of the people of Ondo State and beyond.

Deji's Palace has a number of characteristic features such as 16 open courtyards, natural underground drains which inspite of heavy rainfall in Akure and without a special drainage channel has never allowed the flooding of the palace. The palace is over 700 years old, so it has many ancient cultural heritages that deserve preservation. Presently, NCMM Akure office has 30 persons on its workforce.

In conclusion, the compilation of the entire above-listed tourist centres has been the major achievement of the Board for now. The responsibility of developing these centres rests on the state and federal governments coupled with the need to provide an economic atmosphere for the private entrepreneurs to assist in the development and promotion of tourism recourses.

12. Festivals and Ceremonies

Table 1.0 shows the various festivals in Ondo State with the towns and tribes involved in the marking of such festivals and the various months of the year when these festivals are marked. These festivals are major side attractions to mainly citizens of Ondo state that are resident in the state and those in the Diaspora.

Table 1.0: The Major Festivals Celebrated In Ondo State

| S/n | Festival | Town | Tribe | Month of the year |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Arigiya | Ikare | Akoko | May |
| 2 | Imole | Ikare | Akoko | April |
| 3 | Ajagbo | Irun | Akoko | October |
| 4 | Igogo | Owo | Owo | September |
| 5 | Agheregbe | Uso | Owo | August |
| 6 | Olokun | Akure | Akure | June |
| 7 | Egungun | Akure | Akure | June |
| 8 | Omojao | Akure | Akure | August |
| 9 | Orosun | Idanre | Ondo | May |
| 10 | Obitun | Ondo | Ondo | September |
| 11 | Ogun | Ondo | Ondo | October |
| 12 | Olofin | Ile Oluji | Ondo | October |
| 13 | Ere | Okitipupa | Ikare | March |
| 14 | Malokun | Igbokoda | Ilaje | April |
| 15 | New Yam | All settlements | All tribes except Ilaje and Apoi | June - August |

Source: Ministry Of Tourism And Culture, Ondo State, 2005

8.0 LODGING FACILITIES IN ONDO STATE

Several hotels and lodging facilities are spread throughout Ondo State. Some of these are revealed on table 2.0 as shown below. Almost all of these facilities are located in the in the local government headquarters.

9.0 PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ONDO STATE

Several problems are associated with tourism development in Nigeria in general. These same problems are pronounced in Ondo State and so cannot be ignored. Inadequacy of fund is a major problem. Tourism is being accorded low priority in the State's budgetary allocation and this greatly affects its development and management. This may not be unconnected with the fact that the agitation of the people towards tourism is so low.

Additionally, lodging facilities have been found to be sub-standard. It has been discovered that most hotel accommodations lack holiday-oriented programmes and facilities. Publicity seems to be at zero level. Adverts are hardly found anywhere. The public is not aware. Maybe only the relevant institutions are and this has created a gap between tourism and the people. What seems to be a problem beyond the state is the poor national political scenario that seems to fluctuating. Once, the United States declared Nigeria unsafe to visitors and investors. No individual wants to risk his life in the face of potential political violence.

Also is the lack of interest in tourism on the part of the people of the state. In general, the attitude of most Nigerians towards recreation has been a poor one. Tourism is seen as a white man's phenomenon and this affects the attitude of the people towards tourism and recreation.

Poor implementation of government policies retains tourism development on paper without actualisation. The Nigerian economy does not help matters, as it does not leave an average Nigerian with much to recreate or invest in tourism at regular intervals. This has affected patronage from within and outside Ondo state. Lack of development in the immediate environment of tourist centres is revealed in the lack of good access roads and other infrastructural facilities that encourage the patronage of tourism features. This was noted by Amodu (2005).

| SOME HOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES IN ONDO STATE WITH THEIR LOCATIONS | |
|---|---|
| <p>Akure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Owena Motel Limited 2. Akure Plaza Motel 3. Solton International Hotel 4. Ade Super Hotels 5. Alpha Motels 6. Do Good International Hotel 7. Royal Birds Hotel 8. Modulore Guest House 9. Royal Shalom Guest House 10. Kajola Hotel | <p>Owo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Molac Hotel 2. Rosa-B Hotel 3. Ade Super Hotel 4. Obayanju International Hotel 5. Ola Motel <hr/> <p>Ore</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terminal Hotel 2. Unity Hotel 3. Oni Guest House 4. Banker Hotel |
| <p>Ondo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ade Super Hotel 2. Sunbreaker Hotel 3. Flagship Hotel 4. Sunny Sky Hotel 5. Olamojiba Hotel | <p>Ikare</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prestige hotel 2. Deluxe hotel 3. Boye Guest House 4. Rockyson Hotel 5. Dayspring Hotel |

Source: Arowolo, 2005

Table 2.0: Some Of The Hotels and Guest Houses In Major Towns Of Ondo State

10 GENERATION OF EMPLOYMENT THROUGH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD

Most of the tourist resources in Ondo State are located in the rural areas where there is low job opportunities and involvement in non-agricultural activities because of the presence of little or no specialized industries. Thus, the development and revitalization of the tourism potentials in these areas makes it a viable venture for reducing unemployment and poor standard of living in the rural communities since tourism is a large employer of labour because of the various direct and indirect activities linked with the industry.

In many places, local communities have been reinvigorated by tourists' interest in their arts, crafts or culture. Tourism has also exposed destinations in developing countries to the behaviour and values of visitors from foreign lands. This section highlights the recommendations towards the general development of tourism in Ondo State while at the same time touches on how some of the suggestions made can be used to create employment for the rural dwellers in the state in order to reduce the poverty level.

Investors will always think about profit just like every wise businessman. Most capital intensive business ventures take some years to recoup their invested capital before profit begins to turn in. Such is the case of the provision of lodging facilities like hotels especially in rural areas where patronage is expected mainly from tourists. The talk has always been to advise private investors to take the initiative but it is very pertinent to emphasize the role of the government in this respect. On the part of the hotel operators, new comers into the business should be encouraged to provide something different from and better than what exists on ground in terms of facilities and services. On the part of the government, publicity, good road networking and encouragement of local side attractions and creation of game centres are some of the expected contributions that are discussed ahead. In addition, the government should be able to grant soft loans with long moratorium to such private investors. Additionally, for the existing hotels, there is need to maintain and upgrade their facilities. Middle class hotels with very neat and adequate facilities will be good enough for take off in such centres. Indigenes or residents of host community should be given preferences in taking up jobs in such hotels. They should reap the benefits of the facilities in their locality. Unskilled labour can be employed in cleaning, driving and clerical jobs among others.

Provision of Restaurants, eatery and Take-away Joints generates employment for the people. Such joints are found in places like Ebomi lakes and

Idanre Hills. Similar food and drink spots should be provided at resorts or tourist centres. They automatically provide jobs for people who sell foods, drinks, water in sachet and snacks. Indigenes who are good at preparing local dishes, which could be of interest to tourists, can also make money while companies that produce such things as water in sachet or bottled water can be established in such localities to reduce the cost of transportation of such goods.

Poor roads will always cause friction in accessing the areas concerned. This will also retard growth and development in general in rural areas. Some market centres could not survive due to the very poor condition of access roads linking them. Other Infrastructural facilities like electricity, telephone and portable water supply will both aid development and provide at least some few jobs for the indigenes of the host communities

The State Newspaper, Hope, is a good medium for advertising the various tourist centres. The same applies to the state Television and Radio stations. It is no surprise that most people even in Ondo state do not know about most of the tourist centres mentioned earlier on. Enlightenment differs from publicity in a little way. Enlightenment makes the people to know the values in tourism and recreation. It educates them on the various wonderful aspects of tourism in relation to health and some other things. Publicity and enlightenment provide jobs by helping to increase patronage, thereby increasing demand, which consequently stimulates an increase in supply and suppliers. Also, exhibitions, workshops and seminars will be useful in this wise.

Side attractions stem from performances from traditional dance troupes and artistes. The dance troupes have ways of promoting the culture of the state while at the same time making a living through their performances. Earnings could be made during their performances even at tourist centres. During festive periods such as Christmas and Easter periods, musicians can organize musical concerts, which provide seasonal employment for some people. The government can work to coordinate such entertainment at the festive periods.

The souvenir industry is very much part of the tourism industry. Works of Arts and Carvings together with woven materials are all gift items, which can provide jobs for people in the rural areas. Most tourists are interested in taking something new and different back to their origin. The souvenirs are kept as a memorial of their visit to the tourist centre. Even embroidery or textile works are part of job creating activities in a place like Abeokuta in Ogun State where some of the Tie and dye (Adire) materials are exported to foreign countries for sales.

Institutions such as Research Centres, Museums and Libraries provide jobs for people in both rural and urban centres within the state. Libraries containing books

on the history and culture of the Nation and Ondo state in particular and at various local levels can be built for visitors to visit and read about the history of various towns and settlements in the state. There is an existing museum in Owo town, which can be improved and maintained for the survival of its contents.

Provision of indoor games, and game centres will help to generate income for the government and easily be employed to make their money on daily basis. Local games like Ayo could also be made available apart from the foreign ones like Table tennis and Lawn tennis. In addition, such things as swimming pools will also be good attraction to visitors to tourist centre. Local wrestling are additional side attractions that tourist can watch.

The government is in the position to encourage students and organizations to embark on series of excursion. Tourist's guides could be very helpful during excursions. Increase in the number of tourism related trips like excursions would increase patronage, which will increase income from tourism related businesses that will in turn provide more employment for the people.

Public participation in planning involves citizen participation in project execution and maintenance. In tourism planning, security outfits such as the vigilante groups are common in recent times. The vigilante group consists of indigenes that are volunteers to help in protecting the provided facility from thieves and robbers. These facilities could be tourist facilities or can be connected to them. The Local Government in a particular area could contribute to the payment of salaries to this people. Periodic refurbishment and revitalization of the tourist centres to meet the changing taste of the tourists must be embarked upon. Good maintenance culture helps to keep the facilities alive and also keeps the jobs in existence. Deterioration of tourist facilities will only lead to loss of value and consequently lead to loss of jobs.

11 CONCLUSION

While the Americans are thinking of space tourism, the South Africans continued to enjoy the benefits of its man-made Sun-City in Bophuthaswana which features a make-believe world of what Africa looked like some hundreds of years ago and this draws a daily 25,000 visitors from all over the world who come to have fun and spend hard currency. According to Agbu (Op.cit.) the building of Nigerians equivalent of the Sun-City in at least two cities in the Niger Delta to accommodate tourists could follow at a later phase to provide jobs for our restless and unemployed youths, show case our diverse cultures and create wealth for millions of Nigerians as well as enhance our foreign exchange earning capacity. The same

benefits will result, if the tourist centres in Ondo state are developed to attract visitor. Both the state and the nation at large will benefit from such efforts by the government.

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