

## **TOURISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Tourism is globally acknowledged as a viable industry that can boost a nations' economy. This is due to its nature giving tourists knowledge of cultural heritages of the people and sites, improving and sustaining the standard of living, offering leisure to tourists, and some of the benefits of cultural tourism. However, insecurity challenges such as kidnapping, assassination, banditry, cult clashes, and communal crises have tended to weaken tourism sustainability in Nigeria. The economy of some families, communities, states, and nations whose source of diversified revenue are from tourism income suffered economic hardship. This paper seeks to explore cultural tourism potentials across the geo-political zones in Nigeria and proffer some measures to manage the insecurity and attendant challenges that confront them. It will also offer suggestions on how to improve security and peace for sustainable cultural tourism in Nigeria. The methodology employed is purely qualitative and complemented with extant literature in the field for a lasting tourism heritage in Nigeria. It is recommended that Nigeria should train security guards and deploy them to tourist sites for improved security. The benefits of this would help to boost the economy of the country which is sadly dependent on oil.*

**Keywords:** Cultural tourism, heritage, insecurity, peace, development.

### **Introduction**

Cultural tourism is acknowledged as an industry that can boost and sustain the economy of a nation. This is as a result of its multi-dimensional nature. This is explicit in its benefits in areas of eco-tourism, health tourism, religious tourism, aquatic tourism, etc. There are destination sites that afford tourists recreation and aesthetics. This explains why Ogwunka (2016:58) reasoned that the concept of tourism entails human beings and business activities associated with the temporary movement of persons away from their immediate environments and place of work for business and pleasure based on personal reasons. Cultural tourism covers the entire gamut of the cultural development of a place. According to Tasie (2013:33), cultural tourism covers the "entire way of life and natural resources of a particular community, projecting and promoting the aspects that are peculiar to it that may attract the attention of outsiders." In other words, cultural tourism is wide and diverse and covers such areas as a material culture like monuments and artifacts,

handicrafts, natural endowments such as mountains and caves, hills and valleys, rivers and lakes, forest and wildlife and recreational aspects such as festivals, songs, dances, folktales and myths”.

The inability of the communities or nations to exploit their cultural tourism potential is a challenge to the development of the sector. Again, according to Balwin (1997), insecurity in the destinations threatens the full realisation of tourism potentials and the development of the economy. Thus, the paper analyses the questions of insecurity challenges to cultural tourism: How do tourists feel when they are kidnapped or molested? What is the state's image to the public when tourists are molested and killed or kidnapped for ransom? What impact do cult clashes and community clashes have on tourist destination activities? How safe are the cultural artefacts when these disorders occur? It is hoped that the answers provided to the above questions would give useful insight to tourism policies and thereby improve the potential of the country.

Therefore, this paper examines the tourism potential, especially the cultural tourism heritages across Nigeria, and suggests measures in managing insecurity issues that will foster peace and improve the economy and living standard of the people. This will be achieved by adopting a framework for conceptualising security, peace, cultural heritages that are panacea for cultural tourism that will enrich the destination image to tourists.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations**

Security is defined as measures taken to guarantee the safety of a country, person, thing or value, etc (Crowther, 1995: 1062). Baldwin (1997) described security as the “preservation of acquired values.” Malec (2003) asserts that security is “a value and / or system maintenance over time, and the absence of threats to it.” He further asserted that “security is a real, or perceived state when there are no threats, or when existing threats do not pose a danger to the considered object.” His view on security covers all aspects of security and refers to total content of the term ‘security’ at all levels of analysis. Also, his concept does not exclude possible creation of subfield of studying new kinds of threat that may arise in security discourse.

These perspectives on security from scholars led to various approaches to understanding security. For instance, the traditional approach of exploring security, as Bajpai (2000) averred, focuses mainly or even exclusively on military concerns. It is a realistic approach to security based on the ideology of Thomas Hobbes that placed the state as the referent object of security. The state is the only legal entity entrusted with the power to resolve crisis/security breaches within itself and other states and between other external factors (Farah, 2015).

The human security approach appeared a relatively new approach that challenged the traditional approach on security. Umaru and Mohammed (2016) see human security approach as “an approach that takes the individual wellbeing and responding to the people’s needs in dealing with the sources of threats” where does the quotation start? The approach also proffers protection of the individual and nation from menaces such as environmental pollution, disease outbreak, poverty, food insecurity, climate change, tourism, et cetera.

On the rational approach to security, considerations are made on the changing character of the world and security threats. Thus, the understanding of security is based on organising the field of security by sorting threats into sectors on the basis of their character; demonstrating the degree of threats from a particular sector on the basis of their character; demonstrate the degree to which threats from a particular sector exist at a particular level, both of analysis and danger (Malce, 2003). All these approaches are criticised for being too broad by putting all security issues into one perspective. The social constructivist approach sees security as an outcome of a process of social and political interaction where social values and norms, collective identities, and cultural traditions are essential (Wendt, 1992 cited in Brauch 2011). From this approach to conceptualisation of security, security is achieved on the perception and fears of security threats, challenges, vulnerabilities, and risks are dispelled and defeated (Brauch et al., 2011).

As a result of the complex nature of the studies on security that have led to academic discourses, it becomes expedient to adopt the social constructivist approach in comprehending security, especially in cultural tourism operations. The menace of insecurity that has devastated the tourism sector and its branches like cultural tourism were outcomes of the negative societal and political interactions that have devalued the state’s and nation’s values and norms, cultural identities and traditions.

### **Some Insecurity Challenges to Cultural Tourism in Nigeria**

The rise and onslaught of the Boko Haram group that has killed human beings, destroyed properties and economy of the North-east region and, by extension to other parts of the northern states, were a result of some Islamic extremists’ reactions based on political interest and their perception on Islamic culture/traditions. Their nefarious acts metamorphosed into splinter terrorist groups vis-à-vis the bandit group, unknown gunmen, herdsmen, and kidnapers that spread to other parts of the nation, causing insecurity to states and cultural tourism heritages in their host destinations (Grizold, 1994). The rise of militancy was as a result of the perception of the youths from the south-south region of uneven distribution of wealth and underdevelopment of the region. The region became a zone for armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, and destruction of houses and properties as well the economic activity of the region and the nation.

Other activities of the militants led to the emergence of cult groups with their claim on superiority within the state.

The porous nature of the nation's borders sparked insecurity in some communities and states in the country. Migrants are alleged to have come from neighbouring countries and are responsible for the terrorist attacks in some regions of the country ranging from killing, kidnapping, and assassination to the destruction of properties and cultural tourism sites. These migrants are believed to have their sponsorship from some individuals, local and foreign organisations that are pursuing religious, political and economic interests in some states and nations, whose aims of sponsorship may be suggesting a better economy.

Communal crisis also flared insecurity in most communities and tourist destinations. The communal crisis surfaces in chieftaincy struggles, boundary disputes, quest to control the economy of the community by one or few individuals to the detriment of the entire community. The perpetrators of the crises in various communities recruit naive youths and weak adults and arm them with all manners of arms and propaganda to keep sway of their heinous crimes. The activities of these few individuals, in most cases, metamorphose into cult groups and cult clashes in the quest to reign and claim sway over the community.

The glaring facts remain that these vices that appeared overwhelming to state security agencies did not originate from celebrating the cultural tourism heritages of the people. They are actions of the politicians and exotic cultural influences that bedevilled the society, causing the insecurity that has traumatised the economy and source of livelihood to practitioners in the cultural tourism sector. It becomes imperative for collective efforts by the cultural tourism host destinations, stakeholders, state and other security agencies to dispel and defeat the threats, fears, vulnerabilities, and risks perceived as security threats. This is because insecurity endangers the tourism quest of tourists to visit a destination and the image of host destinations in cultural tourism.

### **The Imperative of Peace for Promoting Cultural Tourism**

Security on tourism/cultural tourism entails ensuring the safety and wellbeing of visitors/travellers/tourists before, during and after the cultural tourism heritage celebrations in various cultural tourism destinations. It is what those concerned in the tourism industry and involved in security think and make out of the security challenges to resolve the conflict. As David (2009:22) avers, security is "generally about the condition or feeling safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection, and preservation of core values and the absence of threats to acquired values."

At this juncture, a brief conceptualisation of peace will be explored. Ibeanu (2009:5-6) says peace is a "state of perfection, an earthly expression of God's kingdom that is yet uncorrupted." He expatiated his views on the philosophical

concept of peace by Plato's discussion on justice as the most fundamental basis of ordered social life. He reasoned that justice is the basis of peaceful social existence, which entails giving each his/her due.

Political expressions on peace entail "contractual pact denoting that the parties to the pact, especially nation, state, mutually respect the pact and recognise each other" (Ibeanu, 2009:9). The third perspective on peace is the sociological perspective. Accordingly, Ibeanu (2009:6) expressed that the sociological perspective of peace refers "to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms." In other words, peace is a condition in which there is no social conflict and individuals and groups can meet their needs and expectations.

Exploring an approach for attainment of peace in cultural tourism celebration/activities, the sociological perspective becomes suitable for this paper. For cultural tourism celebrations to flourish and be sustained in improving the economy and livelihood of the host destinations, practitioners and stakeholders are to ensure that no social antagonism exists. Social antagonism, like social conflict, occurs when there is unjust governance, distribution of social amenities/privileges, marginalisation and failed structures to sustain order in cultural tourism destinations. This explains David's (2009:17) assertion that peace is the "absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence and about peaceful coexistence." In other words, peace is primarily concerned with "creating and maintaining a just order in the society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means."

Comprehending security and peace in cultural tourism activities, the social constructivist approach in security and the sociological perspective on peace becomes suitable in ensuring a viable cultural tourism and tourism industry. The two concepts deal with human activities and reactions to dynamics in the society in which cultural tourism heritages are not contributors. It behoves adopting societal approaches in resolving security and its challenges. Again, cultural tourism/tourism activities are people-oriented activity. It is what the actors in insecurity resolve, see, and make out of the situation and in dialogue and positive perspective that security and peace are attained and sustained for effective cultural tourism activities in the states and nation.

## Cultural Tourism Heritages and their Locations in Nigeria

### A. CULTURAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

S/N	NATURAL ATTRACTION	S/N	CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTION
1	Akwana Salt Village	1	Yankari National Park
2	Bagauda Lake and Tiga Dam	2	Wikki Warm Springs, Yanki Bauchi
3	Baturiya Birds Sanctuary	3	Sukur/UNESCO World Heritage site
4	Barup Water Falls	4	Abuja Pottery
5	Chad Basin National Park	5	Argungu International Fishing Festival

### B. CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE BELT OF NIGERIA

1 Assop Water Fall, Plateau State	1 Achoncho Chunting Festival) Assak People of Plateau
2 Chad Basin National Park	2 Egungun-Oje Masquerade from Esohorum
3 Enemabia Warm Spring, Benue State	3 European Colonial Cemeteries Lokoja

### C. CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTIONS IN THE WESTERN PART OF NIGERIA

1 Arinta Waterfalls at Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	1 Ariginya Festival at Ikare Akoko
2 Black Heritage Museum, Badagry	2 Egungun Festival of Osogbo
3 Ebonmi Lake at Ipesi Akoko	3 Igogo Festival Owo

### D. CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTION IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN PART OF NIGERIA

1 Agulu Lake	1 Blacksmithing at Awka and Nkwere
2 Arochukwu Caves/Shrine	2 Gigantic Ikoru Drums in Bende
3 Be Chukwu (God's abode) Cave in Enugu	3 Igbo-Ukwu Bronze Culture

### E. CULTURAL TOURISM ATTRACTION IN SOUTH-SOUTHERN PART OF NIGERIA

1 Afi Mountain Nature Reserve Cross River	1 Akaso Monument in Rivers State
2 Agbokin Waer Falls Ikom Cross River State	2 Aluu Egelege Festival in Rivers State
3 Agaja Beach Bonny	3 Amachree Square at Buguma

Source: Ngozi, I. and Eluke, P. (2016). Cultural tourism sites in Nigeria. In: Abdulrazaq O. Kilani and Ben O. Onu (eds.). *Religio-cultural Tourism Promotion and Hospitality*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press Limited. Pp. 42-56.

## Cultural Tourism, Peace and Developemnt in Nigeria

The selected cultural tourism heritage attractions situated in the regions of Nigeria reveal that the nation is endowed with an abundance of cultural tourism heritages that need to be identified, developed, and sustained for viable tourism industry. Festival celebration constitutes a major aspect of cultural tourism heritage. In Mbanefo's (2014) views expressed by Ngozi and Eluke (2016:42), festivals display the essence "for a peaceful coexistence of a people with common goals and focus especially on the host communities of cultural tourism." Furthermore, festivals give a common sense of "unity for the provision of service, friendship, and brotherhood; provide an opportunity for the training of the youths in various cultural heritages and how to respect elders, norms, culture and traditions and as well boost the knowledge of the history of the people."

Sustaining festival celebrations that will place the cultural tourism heritage of the people on the global tourism market, structures need to be in place. Structures refer to interrelated roles necessary for individual(s) or groups performing a specified function. It is believed that when the individuals and groups function properly,

there will be order in the tourist destination. Thus, peace is achievable when existing structures perform their functions adequately, supported by the requisite culture, norms and values of the cultural tourism destinations and states. The structures are:-

(a) **Cultural Tourism Peace Building Structure:** - This structure comprises the government, state security agencies, and other recognised security operatives within the cultural tourism destinations. The government here refers to the federal, state and local government areas. Their obligation shall entail building/making regulations for cultural tourism/tourism operations in line with best practices globally to appeal to tourist taste without endangering the sustainability of the cultural heritages in various cultural tourism destinations. Also, state and local government councils should constitute an effective tourism committee in the state and local government areas, including some traditional rulers in communities and the Police Force and some recognised security outfits that will constantly review the regulations and make recommendations to cultural tourism host destinations.

(b) **Cultural Tourism Peace Enforcement Structure:** - This structure for cultural tourism peace enforcement shall comprise the state security agencies, community leaders and youths, and tourist guides. The state security agencies are to monitor and implement the regulation as enshrined in the constitution and state edict to eschew mishandling by some extremists and mischief makers during cultural tourism celebrations.

The traditional rulers in the tourism committee are to inform and sensitise their subjects on the regulations and best practices in cultural tourism and tourism operations in the cultural tourism destinations towards good conduct and roles during the cultural tourism celebration. The youths of the cultural tourism destination are the workforce in preparing and executing the people's cultural heritage. The tourist guides are to guide tourists to the cultural tourism destinations and some historical sites and attractions in the community with an adequate explanation of cultural heritage to the tourists and ensure that tourists do not abuse or vandalise the tourism attraction.

c. **Cultural Tourism Peace Keeping Structure:** - The cultural tourism peace-keeping structure comprises the business community, intra-community and transport workers. The business community leaders within the cultural tourism destinations are to be sensitised to be hospitable to tourists in selling cuisines, beverages and artefacts that serve as souvenirs to tourists during the cultural tourism celebration. They are to keep the cultural image of the host destination to tourists on good standing.

As for the intra-community, celebrating its cultural tourism heritage needs to synergise with neighbouring communities especially when the heritage is a clan

heritage, to ensure the security of tourists that may access their community to the actual cultural tourism destination. They are also to ensure a peaceful atmosphere in their domain that will boost the tourists' confidence in security and safety in participating in the cultural tourism heritage.

The transport system is a major component in tourism industry. This group enables tourists to have access to cultural tourism destinations and attraction within the destination. The group is to be sensitised on their transport fares with the aim of subsidising it. Also, the transport groups are to be aware of such celebrations at a particular tourism destination as well as report to security agencies any suspicious act to breach of security.

d. **Cultural Tourism Peace-making Structure:** - This structure shall comprise tourist health and safety officers, tourist victims/support service centres. The role of tourist health and safety officers in ensuring security and peace in cultural tourism operations cannot be over-emphasised. Some tourist health situations may fail them, react to environmental changes, be allergic to some cuisines or may sustain injuries while participating in the cultural tourism heritage and need to be administered first aid to resuscitate them before transferring them to a nearby hospital. The safety officers are to ensure the safety of the tourists participating in cultural tourism by guiding the tourists on safe participation during the heritage celebration.

Tourist victims here refer to tourists that may fall victim to robbery, rape, loss of items/valuables while at the cultural tourism destination and need support and encouragement from the centre. This will not only help the tourist to recover from the loss/embarrassment but also boost the image of the cultural tourism participation in cultural tourism heritage celebrations.

Achieving peace structures entails development. Ake (2001) asserts that development is "the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realise higher levels of civilisation in accordance with their own choices and values." He further states that development is "something that people must do for themselves, although it can be facilitated by the help of others." Offiong (1980) reasoned that development results from "a people frontal attack on the oppression, crime, poverty, and exploitation that are meted out on them by the dominant classes and their system." For Stiglitz (2000), development and developmental transformation involve "a change in the way people think and the way societies function, a change in norms, expectations and institutions." He further asserted that "development involves not just the acceptance of change but its promotion and indeed its routinization." It then implies that cultural tourism host destinations embarking on the peace processes or structures point towards developmental processes that will boost and sustain a viable tourism activities and potentials of the community, state and nation.

### **Conclusion**

An attempt was made in this paper to comprehend tourism, cultural tourism, security and peace that are panaceas to insecurity challenges to cultural tourism operation. Brief explanation was made on the discourse on security in tourism, some insecurity challenges to cultural tourism, and amelioration of insecurity to enhance cultural tourism. The two approaches place the security and achieving peace in cultural tourism on the interaction of the society and people. The cultural tourism heritages in various regions in the country have been highlighted as an indication that the states and the nation, Nigeria, is richly endowed with cultural tourism heritage that can boost and sustain the tourism industry towards economic improvement and livelihood of the people. Also, the various structures for peace attainment towards cultural tourism celebrations were streamlined to indicate that security and peace can be achieved to make the tourism industry viable through cultural tourism. The communities, states and stakeholders in the tourism sector should work towards developing a blueprint for the cultural tourism industry towards a sustained economy for the communities, states and cultural tourism destinations.

### **Recommendations**

Scholars have engaged in academic discourse on cultural tourism and the challenges of insecurity from various backgrounds of disciplines. This paper is meant to suggest additional measures towards sustaining cultural tourism celebration, security, and peace despite the insecurity threatening the continuous celebration of the cultural heritage. Consequently, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be a synergy between the indigenous security structures of communities and the state security agencies for effective security of the tourists, community and cultural tourism heritages.
2. There should be a cultural tourism auditing within an interval of five years of celebration to meet tourists' satisfaction and sustainability of the cultural heritage of the people/community to meet up with the best practices in the tourism industry as well as sustain a healthy environment.
3. There should be blueprint/policies for cultural tourism development by stakeholders.

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