

TOURISM EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Tourism education is a unique tool in the economic development of Cross River State. The State is endowed with natural resources such as mountains, rivers, beaches, waterfall, national park etc. Tourism today is seen as one of the ventures that improves the living standard of people. It is very vital in the economic development of any nation, especially the developing nations. Tourism could be used to boost the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For tourism to improve the economic status of the people, both the participants and the host communities need to be educated. This education could be formal, informal, or non-formal through seminars, workshops, excursion programmes, field trips and visitations. This paper, therefore, examines the role of tourism education in the economic development of Cross River State. The paper looks at the key concepts viz; tourism education and economic development. It further x-rays the goals and objectives of tourism education, types of tourism education in Cross River State. Finally, a conclusion was drawn and it was recommended among others that the government should restore most of the tourist sites, parks and other entertaining site attractions, to keep the tourism tempo high. The government should collaborate with private sectors in maintaining tourism sites in the state and the state environment should be conducive enough for tourism industry to thrive.

Keywords: *Tourism, Education, Economic Development*

Introduction

Tourism is the temporal movement of people to the destination outside their normal places of work or residence. Without traveling tourists to different destination, the business connected with tourism will be extremely difficult to run. When looking at the structure of tourism industry, traveling is regarded as the main feature.

Tourism is one of the “world’s fastest growing industries and major sources of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries” (MOFINEWS, 2001). It is a multi-faceted and multi-purpose activity, business interactions which in turn can be profitable, aiming to meet higher socio-economic development and environmental goals. The key fact to the development of tourism is traveling (Young, 2003). The author further asserted that tourism education is referred to as an approach for pursuing education, carrying out research activities and knowledge acquisition. For example, in a place of Ecotourism, education is for the tourists, schoolchildren, and residents of nearby communities in conjunction with the tour operators that supply travellers with reading material about the country environment and local people, as well as code of conduct for both the travellers and the tourism industry itself. Tourism, economic growth and development work hand in hand. Tourism emerged as a forceful agent to change and creates impacts which are clearly the product of tourism development. These include resort landscapes, the construction of recreational parks, and generation of employment and income (Esu&Eze, 2007). Effiong (2006), asserted that the

growth of tourism in any given society is predicated upon the effective functionality of socio-economic variables such as good roads network, constant supply of electricity and water, good health care delivery, good communication and public transportation systems with access to tourists’ sites by air, land and sea and existence of good facilities that could add colour to the overall wellbeing of tourists.

Literature review

Tourism

Tourism implies travelling a distance from home. It is also seen as a composite of activities, services, and industries that delivers a travel experience to individuals and groups travelling fifty miles (about eighty kilometres) or more from their homes for purposes of pleasure, education, leisure, business, or recreational (WTO, 2010). Tourism is vital to many countries such as France, Egypt, Greece, Israel, United States, Spain, Italy, and Thailand, and many Island nations, such as The Bahamas, Fiji, Maldives, Philippines and the Seychelles, due to the large intake of money for businesses with their goods and services and the opportunity for employment in the service industries associated with tourism. These services industries include transportation services, such as airlines, cruise ships and taxicabs, hospitality services, such as accommodations, including hotels and resorts, and entertainment venues, such as amusement parks, casinos, shopping malls, music venues and theatres. UNWTO (2011) reviewed that there has been an upmarket trend in the tourism over the last few decades, especially in Europe, where international travel for short breaks is common. Tourists have high levels of

disposable income, considerable leisure time, are well educated, and have sophisticated tastes. There is now a demand for better quality products, which has resulted in a fragmenting of the mass market for beach vacations; people want more specialised versions, quieter resorts, family-oriented holidays or niche market-targeted destination hotels.

Tourism Education

According to Advance Learner's Dictionary, (2013) Educationist the acquisition of knowledge, facts, skills and ideas that have been learned, either formally, non-formally, and informally. People always travel to distance parts of the world for leisure, recreation, to educate themselves, to see great buildings, works of art, learn new languages, experience new cultures and taste different cuisines (United Nation World Tourism Organization, 2004). Long ago, at the time of the Roman Republic, places such as Baiae were popular Coasted Resorts for the rich, and the word tourism was seen as 'someone travelling abroad for at least twenty-four hours. Effiom, (2006) further asserted that tourism education from personal outlook is provision of economic development in terms of the labour contribution and education. Tourism education could be referred to as an approach for pursuing education, carrying out research activities and knowledge acquisition. The idea of travelling is for relaxation, learning for self-improvement, such learning can be more fun than ever and there is no age limit restricting people from learning and most of the tourists who take part in tourism education such as lifelong learning, learning with fun and self-improvement are the common aspects between the 'many forms' of tourism

education, such as school excursions, student exchange programmes, senior seminars, and environmental tourism. According to Anukratis (2019), tourism education is the way to prepare the human resources to be able to work professionally in developing the tourism sectors. The educated people who take part in tourism development would depict better quality of life for both tourists and local people at the "destination".

Goals of Tourism Education

The goals of tourism education were adopted in 2017 by the resolutions of the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism. They included:

1. ***End poverty in all its forms everywhere:*** As one of the world's largest and fastestgrowing economic sectors, tourism is one of the main drivers of world trade and prosperity, and has continued to be even during these years of global economic crisis. The tourism sector is uniquely positioned to foster growth and economic development at all levels and to provide income through job creation.
2. ***End hunger, achieve food security, improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture:***The supply of local agricultural products not only improves the well-being of the community of the destination, but also increases its attractiveness in the tourist market, offering the tourists a greater authenticity in their experiences.
3. ***Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages:*** Tourism can have a notable effect on health and well-being, not only through its contribution to economic growth and

sustainable development, but also through its role as a transmitter of ideas and customs. By empowering local health practices, not only a channel of understanding between cultures is built, but also good health and well-being practices can be shared.

4. ***Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning:*** A good level of training is crucial for the tourism sector. The sector can provide incentives to invest in education and professional training, promoting professional mobility through cross-border agreements on professional training (especially for young people, women, the elderly, indigenous communities and groups with special needs) transmitting values of tolerance, peace and non-violence.
5. ***Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:*** As one of the sectors with the highest proportion of women employed and entrepreneurs, tourism can and should be a tool for the empowerment of women, helping to ensure that their participation in all aspects of society is full.
6. ***Ensure access to water and sanitation for all:*** Tourism has the moral and commercial imperative to improve its water management. The cost is a clear factor: the consumption of water supposes on average 10% of the fixed expense of any hotel. Many hotels also pay double for the water they consume: first, buying potable water and secondly disposing of it as waste water. On the other hand, the moral aspect is equally compelling: water is a scarce resource in many resorts around the world, which is why hotels have the responsibility of not using more

than necessary, especially in remote areas where only through efficient management is ensured that local residents are not deprived of essential supplies.

7. ***Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all:*** Sustainable economic growth and the reduction of poverty through tourism depend on being able to generate employment opportunities, creating synergies with agriculture and local service provider sectors, and stimulating the development of basic infrastructure such as roads and airport facilities. To this end, it is essential that tourism revenues be used to finance infrastructure development, to support local businesses, particularly state management economic (SMEs), and to develop the skills and institutions needed to strengthen the local economy.

Types of Tourism Education Programmes:

Tourism education develops because of the growing popularity of teaching and learning of knowledge and enhancing of technical competency outside the classroom environment. In tourism education, the focus of the tour or leisure activity includes visiting another country to learn about culture, such as in Student Exchange Programmes and study tours. Tourism education must also deal with knowledge that is of significance both to the learner and to the society in which they operate (Hegarty, 1990). However, due to its multidisciplinary nature, the body of knowledge about tourism can be vast, encompassing a

wide range of possible knowledge, skills and attitudes (Tribe, 2000) and allowing for “different educational paths depending on how a particular curriculum is framed” (Tribe, 2002). The tourism education includes the following:

Formal Education: In this type of education, a student gets a diploma or certificate in formal education system. It is institutionalized. It is compulsory. There is a curriculum for formal education and it is under the control of government. Learners in formal education are young. The diploma they get makes them acceptable in labour market.

Informal Education: Learning through a programme that it is not usually evaluated and does not lead to certification. Non-formal education is supplementary or voluntary. It does not take a very long time for the learners. Examples are learning foreign language courses, some hobby courses, workshops, etc. All are included in non-formal education. The participants can be awarded participation certificate or a diploma certifying competence. The learner’s profile is different from the learner’s profile in formal education. The attendees are mostly adults but some school children can take part in non-formal education, for instance, weekend courses are for children and young school students. In short, Informal learning can be defined very clearly as Livingstone pointed out, “any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the

courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies (Livingstone, 2004). It draws attention to the learning that takes place in the spaces surrounding activities and vents with a more overt formal purpose, and takes place in a much wider variety of settings than formal education or training. It can also be considered as a complementary partner to learning from experience, which is usually construed more in terms of personal than interpersonal learning (Eraut, 2004). Informal learning is a new concept and social recognition of it is so important that some policy makers have taken it in their agenda. Informal learning occurs in lifelong learning and makes lifelong learning a reality. Informal learning should be recognized and non-formal and informal learning should be visible in education policy of countries. In fact, there have been some efforts and reforms to recognize the learning beyond formal learning and there have been some efforts to recognize learning through a document or qualification. Informal learning is a procedure that occurs beyond formal and non-formal education. If we look into the features of informal learning, we see that Informal learning can take place in any place and it can occur at any age. It can be viewed as a part of life-long learning, and lifelong learning is realized by informal learning. The basis of lifelong learning is that individuals learn everywhere and all the time throughout their lives.

(See <http://www.oecd.org/edu/recognition>).

Informal education has some distinctive characteristics: It is mainly outside formal and non-formal education. Here, we must focus on the concept of education and learning. As there is no institution or curriculum or instructors in the nature of informal learning, we cannot say it is an education. Informal learning is self-directed and it is independent. Informal learning is outside the curricula. Schugurensky developed taxonomy of informal learning; “it is possible to develop a taxonomy which identifies three forms or types of informal learning: self-directed learning, incidental learning and socialization” learning (Schugurensky, 2000). According to him, “self-directed learning refers to learning projects undertaken by individuals without the assistance of an instructor and incidental learning refers to learning experiences that occur when the learner did not have an intention of learning and socialization refers to the internalization of values, attitudes, behaviours, skills that occur during everyday life”.

Informal learning is different from other types of learning and probably the most distinctive characteristics is that it can be contradicted to the learning acquired through the other two. Shortly;

- Informal learning is not intentional – learning takes place anywhere and anytime throughout one’s life.

- Informal learning is not redistricted – No one registers to an institution or school and cannot be awarded a diploma or certificate.
- Informal learning has no validation or accreditation.

Lifelong learning: It has its roots in lifelong education which has been part of the education debate since the 1960s. A key precept is that education is not limited to a specific number of years of exposure to institutional education, but rather should occur throughout life. This refers to institutional learning in addition to that which occurs in informal settings. Thus, lifelong learning brings to the fore the learner and their corresponding individual needs; the notion of self-directed learning; the range of environments in which learning may occur; and its long-term nature (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1996). Marshall and Marrett, (2008) explained that lifelong learning, is linked to the concept of a knowledge-based economy, which engenders the need for learning to occur throughout a person’s lifetime while Parnham, (2001) suggested that it entails establishing a learning that is important to society (Antonacopoulou, 2000).

Phenomenon since the complexities of modern societies, with knowledge and information intensive economies, demands the ability to anticipate and adapt to change. Marshall, Brandon, Thomas, Kanwar, and Lyngra, (2008) posited that the precepts of lifelong learning can be readily adapted to

tourism education. Here, as in the more general sense, two practical matters arise. First, attention must be given to the educational expectations of the providers, the learners and the local society. Second, consideration must be given to how these expectations can best be met in relation to the fundamental principles of education and “training at the various levels”. Anthony and Omang (2019) asserted that literacy education can provide the necessary knowledge for the interpretation of complex phenomena that shape the environment as well as sustainably managing it.

Economic Development:

It is the process by which “emerging economies” become advanced economies. In other words, it is the process by which countries with low living standards become nations with high living standards. Economic development also refers to the process by which the overall health, well-being, and academic level of the general population improves. During the development, there is a population shift from agriculture to industry, and then to services. A longer average life expectancy, for example, is one of the results of economic development. Improved productivity, higher literacy rates, and better public education, are also consequences of economic development. Economic development is all about improving living standards. Improved living standards refer to higher levels of education and literacy, workers’ income, health, and lifespans. The process in which an economy grows or changes becomes

more advanced, especially when both economic and social conditions are improved (Micheal, & Stephen, 2011).

According to Yoon and Lee, (2008), The growth of tourism in any given society is predicated upon the effective functionality of socio-economic variables such as good roads network, clean and serene environment, good security, constant supply of electricity and water, good health care delivery, good communication and public transportation systems with access to tourist sites by air, land and sea and the existence of good facilities that could add colour to the overall wellbeing of tourists. Onnoghen, Ojong, Omang, Obibessong and Asor (2020) asserted that clean potable water and sanitation are basic civil rights. Exposure to fresh water is also a requirement for achieving other aspects of sustainable growth, including wellbeing, food protection and poverty reduction, in adequate quantity and quality. Elly and Heri, (2014) pointed out that tourism is so important to different organizations and their development. Each organization has different objectives and these can be classified as follows: i). Economic objectives ii). Environmental objectives iii). Socio-cultural objectives and iv). Political objectives. These objectives are applicable to knowledge and understanding of the objectives of tourism development to both developed and developing countries.

Economic Objectives:

Tourism is the world's largest industry and one of the objectives of tourism development is economic gain. This is not a narrow matter of private sector providers of tourism services making a profit. In economic terms, the travel and tourism

industry is able to do three key things: 1). It gives vigour to economies. 2). It offers people jobs and career prospects. 3). It stimulates development.

It does this through:

- 1 - Creating employment - direct and indirect
- 2 - Increasing foreign currency earnings
- 3 - Increasing visitors' numbers and visitors' spending within the local economy
- 4 - Increasing income for commercial operators
- 5 - Economic development and regeneration.

Environmental Objectives:

The saying 'tourism destroys tourism' is well known as protection of the environment in an essential areas that are subject to damage by tourist numbers. Thus the main environmental objectives of tourism are as follows:

- 1 - Habitat preservation
- 2 - Regeneration and conservation of the natural environment
- 3 - Environmental education
- 4 - Environmental improvements.

Socio-cultural Objectives:

Tourism development can affect the lives of people who live in the tourist destination. Tourism brings people of different countries together and we all need to increase our awareness and understanding of different cultures. Tourism can generate income and provide funds to keep traditional cultures alive and to improve the quality of life for the host population. The main socio-cultural objectives of tourism development are:

- 1 - To promote understanding of different cultures

2 - To improve quality of life for the local population

3 - To provide community facilities, as well as tourist facilities

4 - To develop a sense of pride in traditional culture and identity.

Political Objectives:

Governments can have an influence on the patterns of travel, not only directly through their policies but also indirectly, through their wider activities and the political climate that they promote. Changes in the political system in Obudu Ranch Resort, Tinapa Resort Centre and the Far Babi Airport, along with investment by governments in the infrastructure of developed industries such as the State National Park, the Canopy Walkway, Museum, have led to an increase in visitors and visitors' spending. Beyond the economic and environmental objectives considered above, political objectives can include the following:

- 1 - Enhancing the image of an area
- 2 - Creating a regional or national identity.

Tourism education and economic development in Cross River State:

Nigeria is a nation that is richly endowed with a large population of people with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The country is blessed with a range of geographical features, expenses of vegetation with different man grove swamps and the equatorial rainforest zone in the south to semi desert in the North. This is traversed by rivers of various sizes and interspersed with hills, mountain ranges and water falls (Esu& Etuk, 2007). Tourism is an important economic development tool for emerging and minority communities around the world. The industry has been placed as the world

leading employer and among the leading contributors to the world economies (Chronicle, April 7-13, 2006:12). David (2018) postulated that tourism, as an economic development tools, at times gets a bad rap. Opponents focus too much on the low image service jobs generated by the hospitality industry and fail to see the large value of tourism to many successful regional economic.

Tourism is a critical element to the quality of life a region offers its residents. Tourism also benefits urban and rural markets. Big cities are not the only location where tourism impacts the economic. For example, countries like New York City, Chicago and San Francisco certainly have a substantial economy, built in part on a billion dollar convention and visitors' programme. However, rural communities with mountains, rivers and beaches also have a large number of jobs and wealth created based upon visitors spending freely on vacation and second homes. These amenities act as "export opportunities for land and rural communities".

Cross River State, has been positioned to become the model state for tourism development in Nigeria. The State is blessed and endowed with natural resources and tourism potentials, such as The Cross River National Park, Obudu Ranch Resort, Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Canopy Walkway, Tinapa Resort Centre, Museum, Festivals, and Carnival etc which create attractions, employment, and generate income opportunities to the people. Tourism as a socio-economic development in the state, and also repository of income, foreign exchange earner and employment generation by Government and for

individuals, it could be for adventure, education, sports, or other unremunerated purpose (Obot, 2003). Consequently, the state is positioned with her enormous tourism potentials to thrive tourism industry. The former Cross River State Governor, His Excellency Donald Duke, on the 15th of December, 2003 gave his assent to the law establishing the Cross River State Tourism Bureau (Law No.1 of 2004). The function of this Bureau is to promote sustainable tourism development in the state and to establish it as tourism sector in the state. Wale (2000) asserted that the "growth of any tourism in any given society or state is predicated upon the effective functioning of both government and non-governmental organizations". Both sectors must play a complementary role if tourism should become the key growth area of any nation. He further explained that the slow state of tourism in any nation is attributed to lack of maintenance participation, and involvement of government to look into the key tourism product like adventure and eco-tourism, cruise and boat tourism, country side, recreational, historical and cultural tourism, hospitality industry, also maintain amusement parks, family vacation resorts and outdoor games facilities.

Aramu (2001) concluded by asserting that if private sector (Non-Governmental Organizations) are allowed to participate in tourism development, the financial standing and development strides of the state will improve, and there will be increase in employment opportunities. The encouragement could be through granting of long-term loans for tourism projects. According to him, tourism industry is too big for the State Government alone to

maintain, hence the need for Non-Governmental Organizations to be involved. In developing countries, tourism is a major economic sector and is increasingly making a contribution to national economies by creating income, taxes, hard currency, generating employment, and stimulating regional development. However, despite the positive impacts of tourism, it has significantly contributed to environmental degradation, negative social and cultural impacts and habitat fragmentation. These undesirable side-effects have led to the growing concern for the conservation and preservation of natural resources, human well-being and the long-term economic viability of communities. Sustainability development emerged as a solution to optimise the residents' standards of living, promoting local economic benefits, protecting the environment and meeting visitors' needs to have a "high-quality experience" (Choi, & Sirakaya, 2006). Nevertheless, with a closer look at the government's main policy of raising the living standard of both the urban and rural dwellers, several other tourist spots across the state should be on focus. Such areas include the upgrading of facilities at the Agborkim/Kuafalls, the Agwagune and Etankpini Caves, the Nkarassi Monoliths, Tinapa Resort Center, and the maximal utilization of the natural sand-beaches of the Islands of Bakassi etc. With the development of these other tourist spots, the concentration of human traffic at the millennium parks, popularly referred to as "Eleven, Eleven" will be reduced and the rural dwellers should also have the opportunity of participating in what is fast becoming a yearly funds attraction (Esu & Etuk, 2007).

The Yakurr people have the same traditional attire with the Igbos, both their men and women tie wrapper as the most popular dressing. The Loboku – the most popular festival in Yakurr, the Obon – it is a traditional dance which men are initiated into a particular age, the Ebitarbin – traditional dance which identifies somebody as a man in the community, Ekelebi – the dance strictly for women after they have attained a certain age, Obam – war dance and wrestling (Essien, Cecilia, Ojong, Lucy and Obot, 2020).

Tourism Education which is seen as job development, career enhancement, capacity building and self-experience, and improvement, helps students who travel both long and short distances for educational purposes such as school excursions, students' exchange programmes, senior seminars and environmental tourism. These students travel around for sight seeing, learning new things, for relaxation, & funs, etc. Knowledge can be imparted in a much better manner apart from sitting in one corner and reading books. Practicality is better than theory. Tourism education does not depend upon weather; a proper infrastructure should be in place. The main focus is to apply the knowledge and skills learnt within the classroom environment in a totally diverse environment, like the International Practicum Training Programme (Elly & Diyah, 2014).

The structure of Tourism Education recognises three aspects: the science of tourism, the science of education and the aspects of the external environment. Also, the implementation of educational excursions that provide good opportunities for the development of students by enhancing their research and

observation skills broaden their experience. These also involve study tours. In the tourism industry, study tours are considered as the most advanced form of travel. This can be attributed to knowledge acquisition and skills enhancement. Lifelong learning, with fun and self-improvement, informal learning is more appreciated than formal learning (Elly&Diyah, 2014). Today, no country of the world, whether industrialized or developing can afford to ignore the importance of tourism to its socio-economic and cultural development. The tourism industry is an important economic development tool for emerging minority communities around the world, serving as the world leading employer and among the leading contributors to the “world economics” (Chronicle, 2006).

Contribution of tourism education as a socio-economic development of Cross River State, Nigeria

In Nigeria, Cross River State is today acclaimed in the foremost tourism destination. It has gained a prominent position in the States in Nigeria and world at large because of its tourist attractions. The State is blessed with abundant tourist attractions which span the creeks of Calabar River to the plateau of Obudu, the benevolence of nature simple in explicable. Cross River tourism potentials can best be expressed when looking at the types of tourist attractions, such as; Agborkim/Kuafalls, Agwagune/Etankpini, Nkarassi Monoliths, Obudu Ranch Resort, the Bebi Airstrip, the Gorilla Sanctuary (Afi Mountain), Cross River National Park, Drill Rehabilitation and Breeding control (Bunchor), Cross River Marina Resort, Tinapa, Resort Center, Canopy walkway, Museums, Carnivals, and

Festivals. The growth of tourism in any given society is predicated upon the effective development with capacity building (Omang, 2012).

- ❖ For instance, state parks in rural area like Buanchor in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, produced nearly \$1,000 US Dollars gross economic output. It attracts foreign exchange earning to the State. This has to do with tourists who engage themselves in ecotourism and this helps in raising funds for environmental protection, research and education through a variety of mechanisms, including entrance fees, Tour Company, hotel, airline and airport taxes and voluntary contribution.
- ❖ It provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people: The local community must be involved with and received income and other tangible benefits (potable water, roads, health clinics etc) from the conservation area and its tourist facilities.
- ❖ It brings about development to the state: It helps educate the travellers; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities.
- ❖ It creates job opportunities: it provides supplemental income to rural farmers, women and young people living within the tourist area.
- ❖ It provides economic opportunity for workers with less than a college degree.
- ❖ Sixty percent of Cross River State economy is in the service industry: Natural resources of a region also

influence the large economic development pitch made by regions and states to every company considering staying or locating in a region.

- ❖ The workers for regional companies also enjoy the same natural resources developed for the tourist market. More so, the location and decision of a company is determined by the quality of life in a region and their corporate involvement in the tourist industry. Now all communities claim to have a great quality of life but regions developing their natural resources can illustrate how their regions provide access to them (David, 2018).

Challenges of tourism in the State:

There are certain challenges that could limit the spread of tourism education sector.

- **Climate change:** This issue is seen to be so sensitive. It can affect the industry negatively. Some strategies and policies need to be presented to deal with this trend. (Bramwell & Lane, 2012).
- **Ecological challenge:** Environmental protection become a major issue to tourism education practices, greenhouse gas emissions are the most controversial external effects of the transportation sector, and result in global warming. Changes in the water cycle, noise level, higher energy consumption, pollutant emission, and the spread of diseases (Lim & Mcaleer, 2005).
- **Cultural and heritage challenge:** Chen & Jim, (2010) stressed that individual's attitudes often affect tourists who travelled out for education purpose.

- **Insecurity:** This has to do with attacks and terrorist threats to tourist destinations. The government should make sure there is strong security in order to protect and safe guard tourists who are coming into the state. In a situation where there is insecurity, it stops or hampers tourism to the state, for example, 2021 Cross River State Carnival Festival could not hold because of insecurity in the State.

- **High tax rate by the state government:** The government tax rate on the tourism industry is always at a higher rate, which has made some industries to shut down.

- **Energy and material saving challenge:** Energy is one of the important factors in tourism industry. In this regard, it needs much more attention, as tourism activities in natural resources have led to negative impact such as severe degradation of natural landscapes, a lack of water provisions, pollution of coastal zones, and the contraction of massive transport and building infrastructure (Michalena & Tripanagnostopoulos, 2010)

The major challenges in tourism industry which Cross River State has include failure to upgrades tourism centres in the entire Senatorial Districts and lack of collaboration with local and foreign investors (Omang, 2012). However, a bigger challenge is to maintain the quality of education and learning, the involvement of high costs needed for the establishment of research facilities and lack of government supply.

Prospects: Tourism is seen as the world best industry which aims at packaging and marketing the tourism potentials of the state with prospect of contributing

significantly to health and job creation as a means to socio-economic empowerment of the people of the state. The government should look into maintaining the tourist attraction centres, by creating access roads, upgrading the facilities, reducing taxation, collaborating with local and foreign investors for funding, hiring of experience workers with high profile to look into affairs of the industries. If all these are put in place, the tourism industry shall generate more funds for the state.

Conclusion:

Tourism development is highly appreciated by many countries of the world due to its economic development. This impact cannot fully be felt by the citizenry of the industry if it is not fully developed. The contribution of the government and rural dwellers magnet to tourist attraction has also been identified as a point on which the wheel of tourism rotates. Cross River State environment is generally friendly for investment in tourism. It is the hope that with good tourism education accompanied by the clean environment, good security network etc. tourism will continue to thrive in the state to boost economic development of the area.

Recommendations

- 1). The government should restore most of the tourist sites, parks and other entertaining site attractions, to keep the tourist tempo high in order to be attracting tourists to the state.
- 2).The government should collaborate with private sectors in maintaining the tourism sites.
- 3). The government and rural dwellers should collaborate to provide accessibility to the tourism sites by building good roads.

- 4). The government should create forum to hold conferences, talk shows on tourism every month, quarterly or yearly to educate people toward “tourism development”.

- 5). The government and the different communities should work hard to improve the security network of the state, especially, in the recent spate of inter-tribal wars.

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