

The Socioeconomic Impact of the Development of Abadaba Lake as a Boost to Tourism and Community Development in Imo State Nigeria.

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Abstract

The importance and impacts of tourism in development and actualization of the goals of Millennium Development Goals (MDG), particularly concerning poverty alleviation, environmental conservation, and generation of employment opportunities for women and the rural communities is gaining a lot of debate and literature. Furthermore, tourism could be a source of revenue through foreign exchange earnings and tax revenue to the government coupled with the multiplier effects of these revenues and this motivates each country towards developing their tourism potentials. Also of vital benefit is the new dimension in tourism named the ecotourism which has improved greatly the lives of the rural communities in areas where it is practiced. There is overwhelming discussions and reports by individuals, groups, and government and tourism industries of increasingly economic impacts of tourism at national, state, and local levels and not much have been said by the capitalist operators on the sociocultural benefits. The capitalist are more interested in the economic aspect of tourism since their interest is the return on their investment. However, tourism activity also involves economic and sociocultural costs, including the direct costs incurred by tourism businesses, government costs for infrastructure to better serve tourists, as well as congestion and related costs borne by individuals in the community coupled with the pollution of the societal culture through the infusion of foreign cultural and social life style. The importance of the development of Abadaba Lake in Obowo as a tourist location would be of great benefit to the rural community and the state at large. Hence the purpose of this study is to highlight the benefits of tourism worldwide which would also be applicable to Obowo community and Imo state through the development of Abadaba Lake.

Secondary data were utilized in the study and the findings shows that in majority of locations, countries and literature, the benefits of tourism outweighs the few negative impacts and with good planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, these negative impacts would be controlled. We therefore suggest and encourage the government of Imo State and all the stakeholders to put in place the process of the development of Abadaba Lake as a modern tourist center with state of the art amenities as this would increase the socioeconomic benefits both to the rural communities and the state.

Introduction

The importance and Development of tourism has been highly patronized by most governments in the recent time and states that has natural resort and tourist locations have intensified efforts to developing them for not only for the purposes of revenue generation but also to market their sociocultural heritage to the outside world and also attract foreign investment and partnership.

This fast emerging sector is competing highly in revenue earning after the industries like automotive and oil. In any development of tourism, there is need for the government to undertake some studies to enable them determine the extent of the socioeconomic impact of the tourism project hence a feasibility and environmental studies are necessary. A feasibility study determines the feasibility of undertaking a given action to include political, physical, social, and economic feasibility. The economic aspects of a feasibility study typically involve a financial analysis to determine financial feasibility and a market demand analysis to determine market feasibility. The environmental assessment is also of great importance as environmental assessment determines the impacts of a proposed action on the environment, generally including changes in social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, and ecological systems. These assessments are very important before the designation of a tourist project and location so as to ensure the project would not endanger the serenity and comfort of the environment and the people. Looking at only the economic benefits from tourism without sequential analysis of the social and environmental impacts would be a costly oversight. This makes a good understanding of tourism's economic, social and environmental impacts very important for the tourism industry, government officials, individuals and the community as a whole.

Imo state being naturally blessed and endowed with two popular lakes should intensify efforts to get them well developed. The two lakes in Imo State are the Oguta Lake which is more popular because of the level of developments successive governments have done there and the Abadaba blue lake which has been much neglected due to some political reasons. Abadaba Lake is one of the two lakes in Imo State and it is situated in Odenkume and Okwuohia in Obowo Local Government and Umuezegwu in Mbano. The Lake is about 45 minutes from Owerri and less than 30 minutes from Umuahia, Abia State. The proximity of the Lake to Chief Sam Mbakwe Airport in Owerri is an added advantage to tourist who would be visiting the place. Obowo and Abadaba Lake is about twenty minutes' drive from the Imo State airport. According to the Imo State Planning and Economic Development Commission (2005), Imo State lies within the tropical region of the Niger Delta, humid and the vegetation is equatorial rain forest with an average maximum temperature of 34°C and an average minimum temperature of 25°C. This Commission recognizes the importance of the development of tourism in Imo state coupled with the floating of many hotels in the state which has made the state a good relaxation city in the East of Nigeria. The commission stated thus; "this sub sector remains a potential source of inflow of the needed foreign earnings, employment generation, wealth creation and poverty reduction. Government, while reaping the benefits accruing from tourism, will also put in place adequate machinery to combat increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS, crime and environmental degradation that is associated with this subsector which are capable of threatening its continued growth and success".

Abadaba lake has a temperature of between 25°C to 34°C during the raining season and the nights are cool during this period with the lowest temperature ranging from 10°C to 20°C recorded between June and September, which is the rainy season. The blue lake is a cloud in the sky when viewed from a far distance but as one approaches, the highly serene lake presents and entertains the viewer with cool and calm picture and wonders of nature. The lake mysteriously shares a boundary with another water called Onuiyi river and the two does not mix or flow into each other. The development of lake as Abadaba Lake Resort, a tourist center was among the projects the Late Samuel Mbakwe administration embarked upon but the military intervention of Major general Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) in December 31, 1983 disrupted it as the civilian Governors were all arrested and detained. Obowo naturally and historically are peaceful and loving people who take much delight in welcoming visitors and ensuring not only their comfort and happiness but also their security hence the urgent development of the Abadaba Lake Resort would be a project both the local communities and the state would benefit immensely from. The development of the abandoned and dilapidated Abadaba Lake Resort would play active role in enhancing the social economic development of Obowo Community and her environs and also Imo State as tourism is a fast emerging source of revenue in many countries in the recent past. Not only the expected revenue, the development of the lake would also increase creation of jobs thereby reducing the problem of unemployment facing the state, boost the slow rate of industrialization, empower the local people through their production of local services and artifacts and women can make traditional wears and other attractive things the tourist would like to buy as souvenirs. Generally, the development of good tourism in Imo State would help the state out of the current situation of massive unemployment, increased poverty especially in the rural communities, reduction in the internally generated revenue, enhance the empowerment of communities and help in building strong social linkages amongst the communities and groups of tourists who would be visiting the state.

The performance of other similar tourist attraction projects within Nigeria especially the Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort in Ekiti State West of Nigeria and the Obudu Cattle ranch Cross River State South- South geopolitical region of Nigeria should be of emulation by the Imo State Government.

Literature Review

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have recognized the relevance of tourism and stated that over the past years, travel and tourism have been an important economic sector in the world economy. The socio economic growth rate of international tourism has been faster than the world economy and this trend seems likely to continue in next decades (OECD, 2010). Researchers are saying that tourism is becoming the world's second largest industry, directly accounting for 3.8% of global growth domestic product in 2009 as explained by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2010). According to (UNWTO 2012), in 2010, some 940 million international tourists were recorded. Tourism is one of five top export earners in over 150 countries, while in 60 countries it is the number one export. It is also the main source of foreign exchange for one third of developing countries and half of least developed countries (LDC). President & CEO World Travel and Tourism Council, Scowsill (2014) stated that "the measure of money spent by these international tourists, rose by 3.9% at a global level year on year, to US\$1.3trillion, and in 2013, Travel & Tourism's total contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of global GDP (US \$7 trillion), not only outpacing the wider economy, but also growing faster than other significant sectors such as financial and business services, transport and manufacturing. In total, nearly 266 million jobs were supported by Travel & Tourism in 2013", and with predicted growth rates of over 4% annually, the industry is a very viable sector and countries, investors and practitioners are encouraged to see the tourism sector as a boost in growth and development. This development have really motivated lots of countries and communities who have the potentials and have the economic foresight to capture on this to earn more revenue to their economy. Ecotourism is a new development in tourism. In their definition, The International Ecotourism Society defined "ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people". They went ahead to define 'community-based ecotourism' as a "form of ecotourism where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community" (World Wide Fund for Nature, 2001. P2).

In Nigeria, the policy on the operation of tourism involves all the three tiers of government. That is the national level, the state and the local governments. The local governments has the responsibility for identifying potential tourist attractions in their areas. They are to serve as information centres and preserve and maintain monuments and museums in their areas of jurisdiction. On the part of the state government, the national body requires and mandates the state to initiative projects, control land allocation and development of tourism in the state as well regulate the operation of Hotels, Restaurants and other institutions as directed by the Federal Government policies. The National council for Culture and Tourism is the highest decision making body on tourism in Nigeria and we have the National Tourism Corporation with the responsibility of promotion, marketing and dissemination of information to the tourism industry (Falade & Gana 2006). In line with this procedure, the development of tourism project like the Abadaba Lake lies within the jurisdiction of the state Government, hence the call for them to step up action in the development of this project that has been assessed by various governments to be of great benefit to not only the community development of the area but also to the state government through the socioeconomic derivatives. The new evolutionary trend in tourism named ecotourism is a very welcomed system in Imo State considering the fact that most tourist locations are in the rural communities and calls for the need for government to develop such areas so as to attract foreign tourist with the abundant benefits this would bring to the communities in question. In the Philippine the local government has the mandate to craft their own tourism plan, their socioeconomic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. Including setting out the priorities over the medium to longer term and how the local authority intends to contribute to community well-being (Javier & Elazigue 2011). The importance of community-based eco-tourism and the benefits have been recognized and expressed by various authors and this same applies to Nigeria and Imo state in particular (Chan & Bhatta 2013, Burunakitti et al 2012, Ghaderi and Henderson, 2012, Manu & Conrad-J.Wuleka 2012).

Like in Nepal, tourism “is one of the biggest foreign currency earners with total earning of USD330 million in 2010, whereby average income per tourist per day is USD43.2, and average length of stay per tourist is 12.67 days” and despite this huge amount of money, tourism is not creating the expected positive impact in Nepal rather the negative impacts are more glaring due to the diversion of the revenue generated by tourism into other matters outside the development of the communities. “tourism is not contributing much to the development of larger communities, rather inducing many negative impacts on them. Several studies in PAs of Nepal pointed that unplanned or ill-planned tourism development is responsible to numerous problems of environmental degradation, waste generation, pollution, and loss of socio-cultural values and traditions” (Chan & Bhatta, 2013 P. 70 - 71).

Also in Nigeria, official records estimated the revenue generated from tourism to be about N1, 232.2 billion (3.3percent) to the GDP in 2011(Tunde, 2012). According to Javier & Elazigue (2011) the Philippine tourism sector has been contributing to poverty alleviation through the creation of rural employment, “tourism’s direct contribution to Philippine GDP is around 2% and employment generated is around 1.5 million jobs; in 2006, there were over 3.49 million people directly and indirectly employed in the tourism industry”. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government efforts to develop tourism was highly encourages and they focused on a new approach to tourism which they named “pro-poor tourism”, which focuses on unlocking opportunities for specific groups within the society (Lewis & Brown). Pro-poor tourism (PPT) is “tourism that generates net benefits for the poor” (Ashley et al, 2001). Despite the oil revenue which is the main stay of the economy, records has it that poverty and unemployment is high in this small Island and the government is extending her tentacles to curbing these social ills. The importance placed on tourism as an enabling sector to reposition Trinidad and Tobago was emphasized in their Vision 2020 tourism development plan as stated “By the year 2020, the Trinidad and Tobago tourism product will be a significant economic sector contributing significantly to the nation’s GDP, through job creation and increased revenues, driven by a uniquely differentiated, internationally competitive product, complemented by comprehensive, fully functional physical infrastructure, modern, competitive institutional framework and supported by the people of Trinidad and Tobago”(Lewis & Brown).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC 2012), in Kenya, the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP was KES167.6 billion (5.7% of GDP) in 2011 and 13.7% at full impact level and is forecast to rise by 4.3% in 2012. Travel and Tourism directly supported 313,500 jobs (4.8% of total employment) and 11.9% at full impact level. A focus on the sub-Saharan country shows that the travel and tourism sector contributed directly to about 2.6% of total GDP (USD33.5bn) and 2.4% of total employment (5,265,000 jobs) in 2011. In Sri Lanka, the contribution of Travel & Tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 7.5% (LKR407.5bn or US\$3,388.1mn) and created 503,000 jobs in 2009 (Ranasinghe and Deyshapriya).

Mazumder et al (2009 P. 146) while explaining the importance the Malaysian Government is placing on tourism stated that “the development allocation for this industry has been increasing over the years. It has been increased from RM605.5 million in the 7th Malaysian plan to RM1009.0 million in the 8th Malaysian plan period, experiences 60% increase in its allocation. In the 9th Malaysian plan period, the allocation reached to RM1367.0 million”. According to Economic Report 2007/2008, gross tourism earnings have increased to RM38.2 billion in 2006, responsible for 6.7 per cent of nominal GDP of Malaysia. The records of countries investments in tourism and contribution of the sector to GDP explicitly signifies the socioeconomic impact of the sector in all the countries.

In recent times, the issue of ecotourism have created and received much more significance in our society as such most rural communities are now embracing ecotourism as a way of getting out of the poverty and financial crisis they are in. The new theory that led to the evolution of “ecotourism” from the old mass tourism was highly traced in the study conducted by Chan & Bhatta (2013) and they also explained the significance of each of the method. Ecotourism strives to minimizing negative impact on the environment, representing the local cultures and actively contributing to the economic well-being of host communities as well as the stakeholders involved and it has provided opportunities for rural communities to earn income and created tourism related jobs through the conservation of local ecosystems and culture. The beauty of this is that it improves community’s income generation from natural resources without destroying the environment. “Ecotourism is tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas” (Manu & Conrad-J.Wuleka 2012).

In this case the tourist gets involved deeply into the culture and living style of the community and gets fully integrated; immersing him or herself in nature and the community in question. The community based ecotourism has improved employment, financial benefits, foreign exchange earnings, exhibition of culture and exports of cultural related carvings and artifacts and increased the general wellbeing of the communities, no wonder the World Tourism Organization declared the year 2002 as International Year of Ecotourism. World Tourism Organization stated “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximize tourism’s socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development”.

Tourism have helped a lot of countries to boost their economy and provided lots of services creating a positive socio-economic impact on the people in terms of job creation thereby reducing unemployment, poverty reduction, income generation, infrastructural development, community empowerment and other positive impacts, tourism has also have cultural infiltration which has both positive and negative impacts (Stylidis, 2007, Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2013, Scheyvens, 2011, Winters et al., 2013, Ramukumba et al 2012, Gilaninia & Sharifi 2013, Tunde, 2012). In the Southeast Asian developing countries, tourism has appeared to be the engine of growth and development as the sector yields foreign exchange, utilization of locally endowed resources, motivates improvement in the nation’s infrastructures, creates employment opportunities, serves as avenues for transfer of new technology and managerial skills and also helps in the linkages between one sector and the other as there is inter dependency in services. With all these benefits, one would strongly say that tourism is very vital in economic growth and development (Mazumder et al 2013).

The empowerment of the rural communities as a result of tourism and in this case particularly ecotourism could be empowerment of host communities economically, psychologically, socially and politically. Tourism has also accounted for about 7% of the world’s capital investment with Nigeria recording a whopping number of 828,906 tourist registered in 2007 and about 900 billion tourist arrive worldwide, and the provision of good transportation and telecommunication network, an attractive natural environment of the host regions, their buildings patterns , their people, culture and history has impacted heavily on people’s choice for places to visit during their holidays (Fatai, 2011, George et al 2009). The importance of adequate security of lives and property in any tourist location is of great importance as no tourist would like to go to a place with high security threat, this then calls for tour organizers and governments to ensure adequate security of the tourist. The recent trends of high rate of terrorism, suicide bombing, kidnapping and plane hijacking and crashing, natural disasters like earth quakes, typhoons, landslides, coupled with inter-tribal fights and threats is of high risk to tourism (Nanda et al 2013).

Tourism is highly vulnerable to these internal and external shocks and there is need for good control for tourism to continue to be relevant to every economy. Hence it is a two edged sword which in the words of William Shakespeare; “it can make or mare” the nation. This is why there is need to have proper legislation and monitoring of tourist especially in this era of global increase in terrorism. Medically, tourism can help in the dissemination of diseases if the health status of the tourist are not well scrutinized and this is why there are high cases of HIV/AIDS in most popular tourist locations. In the case of the study area, the development of Abadaba Lake as a tourist centre would automatically boost the communities and encourage businesses such as hotels, restaurants, car rentals, bureau de change, parks and all other businesses for the purpose of the visitors and the multiplier effects would be enormous despite the revenue it would be attracting to the Imo State Government. The social impact of tourism in Bali Indonesia has been identified mainly as the rapid movement of the traditional farmers to the cities and tourist locations to catch up with the dollars inflow through the sale of Souvenirs and rendering other services. Culturally the traditional dances have been changed to appeal to the foreigners who visit the places and also these cultural dances and displays that used to take longer time to come on stage are now performed more frequently at times every week so as to entertain the tourists and attract money. Likewise their sacred temples which now witness more visits and tourist centers are now built close to these sacred Temples as tourists visit them. The negative environmental impact included the pollution of the area due to the heavy influx of tourists, the disappearance of natural vegetation as most forest were cleared to build houses and places of interest and the scarcity of water associated with much use of the local sources of water for the golf courses and other resorts. Economically Bali is the highest income earner to the Indonesian Government as a result of tourism. (Pearson – Geography 2015).

Also in separate studies conducted by various authors, it was discovered that tourism has both positive and negative impacts but more of the positive than the negative (Marzuki, 2011, Marzuki, 2008, Aref et al 2009, and Nathan et al. 2013, Eraqi, 2007). According to Ramukumba et al (2011) the tourism industry in George Town Province of South Africa is booming and attracted an estimated 3 527 652 tourists mostly the tourists came from Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Italy, UK, and France while domestically, the Western Cape Province and other parts of South Africa make up the visitors. From this number one could imagine the economic revenue generated directly and indirectly, hence the communities around the tourist area must have much to benefit and have good engagement in economic activities. In another development, López-Guzmán et al (2011) tried to categorize community based tourism which is more organizationally participatory and this is tourism linked to a community's inherent cultural and natural resources as one of the recurrent factors in fostering the development of such communities. The diversification of revenue generated through tourism would pivot economic growth and development when properly utilized especially in developing countries where insufficient funds and high level of corruption has been the problems drastically affecting their rate of growth and development.

Contrary to general views on the performance of tourism in locations and improvement in revenue and other social economic gains, Mbaiwa (2005) in his analysis reported that in Botswana the reverse is the case as it has negative impact on the communities and government revenue. He attributed this to the fact that Foreigners are the main operators and suppliers of tourism facilities hence there is capital flight from Botswana to the home countries of the major operators. Foreign companies and investors dominate the ownership of tourism facilities in the Okavango Delta Botswana and there is no adequate linkage between tourism and the domestic economy. Mbaiwa (2005) continued that hotel and restaurants generate the highest revenue from tourism in Okavango Botswana and these are mostly foreign owned, even the flights that bring the tourist and back are mainly foreign owned which see the revenue repatriated back to their homes as payments for the materials, return tickets and investment funds leaving the home economy with little. This becomes an exception where tourism contributes minutely to the socioeconomic development of the host communities. "Tourism in the Okavango Delta depends on international tourists, foreign companies largely own tourism facilities, tourism is generally organised from developed countries, and domestic tourism and citizen participation in tourism are very low. The industry is also characterised by the repatriation of revenue from Botswana, failure to pay tax by tourism companies and that tourism has weak linkages with the domestic economy" (Mbaiwa 2005 P. 169). Also Eraqi, (2007) reported the negative impact of tourism in Egypt despite the much acclaimed benefits worldwide.

The sustainability of tourism has also generated lots of discussions and literature (Chan & Bhatta, 2013. Tunde, 2012), likewise in Nigeria and the location under study, there is need for the government and people to adhere strictly to the conditions that assist in tourism sustainability. Sustainability of tourism is like that of projects and has a lot of social, environmental, cultural and political dimensions and implications. Hence it is important to always consider the issues of sustainability in every projects so as to achieve the desired long term goals (Isidiho & Sabran 2015, Zhang et al 2014, IFAD 2007j). Similarly, the sustainability of tourism is of importance and the World Tourism Organization WTO (2004), defined Tourism sustainability as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. "Tourism in the green economy refers to tourism activities that can be maintained, or sustained, indefinitely in their social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts: "sustainable tourism". Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO 2012).

Mbaiwa (2005) viewed sustainability in terms of sustainable development where he hinged it on three broad approaches and concerns, namely: social, economic, and ecological sustainability. To him economic sustainability is ensuring that economic needs of everyone is met while social sustainability is ensuring social equity such that decision making, management and distribution of cost and benefits are available accessible to all. Ecological sustainability emphasizes that the rate of renewable natural resources use should not be faster than the rate at which the natural process renews itself. This implies limiting the human stress and usage of environment so that it continues to be relevant to the community and the future. Also Javier & Elazigue (2011) see "Sustainable tourism development as the management of all resources that meets the needs of tourists and host regions while protecting the opportunities for the future, in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems"

Methodology

The study utilized secondary data. An extensive literature review was conducted using published reports and internet and all articles and publications were dully acknowledged in the references.

Discussions

The over view of the literature highlighted the importance of tourism in the socioeconomic, environmental and general development of communities and the emphasis has been on poverty alleviation and sustainability of the rural poor, income generation both to the local communities and the government, showcasing of the different cultures and artifacts, foreign exchange earning power and cultural integration. The cultural integration here also helps in strengthening the peace and love between one race and the other and between one social group and the other. The friendship and integration of tourism can be likened to that of football and sports generally. In these activities, people tends to be more friendly and united in sports despite their sociocultural cum economic and political affiliations and diversities. Tourism have helped in establishing new families through marriages and friendships, and most literature has been silent on this important and mutuality established through tourism (Stylidis, 2007, Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2013, Scheyvens, 2011, Winters et al., 2013, Ramukumba et al 2012, Gilaninia & Sharifi 2013, Tunde, 2012). The various literatures have also mentioned the various dimensions of tourism ranging from the traditional mass tourism to the new approaches of prop poor, indigenous and ecotourism which are all new innovations in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

However, the negative impacts of tourism were also mentioned and debated in some literature and these ranged from diseases spread during tourism, infiltration of cultures, environmental problems, waste generation, pollution, and loss of socio-cultural values and traditions created as a result of tourism expansion (Mbaiwa 2005, Marzuki, 2011, Marzuki, 2008, Aref et al 2009, Nathan et al. 2013, Eraqi, 2007 and Chan & Bhatta, 2013). The great benefits from tourism has made each nation to devote some resources in developing their tourist areas and this is a good approach to diversifying the sources of revenue generation in countries. The issue of sustainability in general and particularly to tourism has also been of interest to writers and advised various organizations, government and tourism planners and operators to look into this and ensure proper sustainability of the sector (Chan & Bhatta, 2013, Isidiho & Sabran 2015, Javier & Elazigue 2011, Zhang et al 2014, IFAD 2007j, Wearing & Grabowski 2011). Nigerian culture is very encouraging and inviting for tourists as they are very friendly and accommodating, Nigerians have natural joy welcoming visitors and makes sure their visitors are comfortable even if making the visitors comfortable is depriving Nigerians of their own comfort. This singular attitude makes tourist who visit Nigeria ends up repeating their visits from time to time and there have been cases of marriage ties as a result of the hospitality accorded visitors. This exertion was supported by Ismail et al (2013) as they stated "Nigeria a hospitable nation and the local norms and values combined with peaceful environment full of loving and friendly people makes her good and well tantalizing tourism destination".

Conclusion and Recommendation

The importance of the development of Abadaba Lake as s tourist location is of great importance to the people of Obowo Community and environs and also to the good people of Imo State. Having read through the literature from various countries one would not be mistaking in advising the authorities concerned in the development of Abadaba Lake to source funds and get the place developed. The lake need to be dredged and a nice architectural structures and decorations made around it. Also there would be need to build hotel around the lake as there was a move and plan to build a branch of Imo Hotels Limited close to the lake during the time of the first civilian Governor of Imo State Dee Chief, Barrister Sam Onunaka Mbakwe PhD.

The political will to develop Abadaba Lake is very important as the problem of the location is more of political interest than financial, the type of governors in the state after the militarily abortion of the regime of Chief, Barrister Sam Mbakwe PhD have not showed the continuity spirit in the completion of projects rather have been sectional and zonal in nature hence no active political will to complete the development of the Lake (Cole, 2012). The authors suggest that the present government of Imo State should in her budget include the speedy development of Abadaba Lake to a first class world standard tourist Centre with a nice hotel attached to it. Imo State for some years now have been recording a good holiday makers as Owerri the state capital has become a town of relaxation and one is not surprised that most hotels in Owerri are fully booked over the weekend. Hence the development of the lake would be a boost and extra entertainment to not only tourist but also to lodgers and travelers who would enjoy the serenity and the vegetation of the place.

It is our suggestion too that a big events hall be attached to the Abadaba development plan as that would serve for weddings, conferences, workshops etc. By so doing the place would become not only for relaxation and visit but an international center for conferences and workshops and this would add to the awareness of the Lake and increase in revenue. The contribution of this singular development to the socioeconomic, political and environmental development of the communities and Imo State would be so enormous and inestimable. Also to ensure safety of lives and property for the users of the tourist location, a Police station with police quarters has to be included in the master plan, this is necessary with the recent militarization by the aggrieved youths in the Niger Delta and the wave of kidnapping going on around the region. A strong security plan has to be in place as the development is going on. The management of National Institute of Freshwater Fishers (NIFF) were assured of the preparedness of Imo State government to assist the establishment in the development of Abadaba Lake in Obowo local government area. The Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chief Longers Anyanwu, made the pledge in a message delivered on his behalf by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Chief Augustine C.B Nwadike, when he played host to the visiting NIFF officers. Despite this assurance over five years now, nothing has been done to effect this promise. This paper calls on the current government of Imo State to see to the fulfilment of this promise considering the grassroots programme of this administration of Owelle Rochas Okorochoa on empowerment, poverty alleviation and rural development of the state.

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