

People's Perception on the Impediments to the Development of Tourism in Mubi Region, Adamawa State

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been identified as one of the most profitable and fastest growing industries globally. This enables it to contribute to the provision of skilled and unskilled labour and also increase the foreign earnings of many nations. It also contributes to the nurturing, exploration and conservation of cultural and the preservation of historical sites worldwide. To this end, this study has as its objective identifying the impediments to the development of tourism in Mubi Region of Adamawa state, Nigeria. The study achieved this objective by sourcing the primary data through physical observation, collection of coordinates of identified tourism sites using the Global Positioning System (GPS), review of relevant literature and the administration of structured questionnaire. Findings show impediments include lack of the awareness of infrastructure (70%), socio-economic benefits of tourism, lack of funding and lately insecurity. To address these problems, the study recommended the need to create educational and civic awareness, provide infrastructure and permanently addressing the issue of insecurity and terrorism in the region especially around tourism sites. These, the study believes will go a long way in promoting tourism development with its attendant benefits to the locality and the nation in general.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, impediments, development, sites, region, People's perception

Introduction

Tourism has been recognized as one of the major items of international trade, a tool for foreign exchange earning among countries. Consequently, "tourism is a composite of activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience, that is, transportation, accommodation, eating, and drinking establishment, entertainment, recreation, historical and cultural experience, destination attractions, shopping and other services available to travelers away from home" McIntosh, Goeldner and Brent Ritchie (1995).

Tourism has been identified as one of the most profitable as well as the fastest growing industries in the world. Experts identified tourism as one of the top three money spinning sectors globally, alongside oil and gas, and the automotive industry (Kadiri, 2012).

Many nations have had to shift gear from their primary sources of foreign earnings to packaging their culture and tourism as a product. To this end, countries such as Kenya, South Africa, and Gambia etc. have made tourism their main stay.

According to Orga (2010), in Kenya, tourism has displaced tea and coffee and horticultural produce as the country's leading export earnings as it has in Costa Rica. In Nigeria, states such as Cross River and Osun are seen to assiduously work towards boosting their internally generated revenue through the development of the tourism sector. Tourism has been found to be of immense importance to the preservation of culture and tradition, education, arts and crafts, the promotion of eco-tourism, provision of skilled and unskilled employment and ultimately increase in the foreign earning capacity of the country McIntosh, Goeldner and BrentRitchie (1995).

Tourism has always been considered a vital medium for widening the scope of human interests (Eagles, 1997). It contributes positively to the nurturing and exploration of historical, natural and cultural heritage of nations. At the local level, domestic tourism creates an understanding and appreciation of the attractions thereby, contributing to sustainable tourism development (Eagles, 1997).

The success of tourism in any country depends on the ability of that country to effectively identify, map and manage her tourism facilities towards effective marketing both locally and internationally. A good example, according to Achibong (2009) is the generating plant procured for the Sukur Kingdom that was said to be left at the Yola Office of the Nigerian National Museum and Monument for over six years and was never sighted as reported by the then Director of Monuments, Heritage and Sites in 2006- Akin Liasu.

Adamawa is one of the most endowed states of Nigeria both culturally as well as physically. With 70 ethnic groups and their distinct cultures, Adamawa stands as one of the state with the most ethnic groups and distinction nationally making it a true microcosm of Nigeria. Thus, Mubi region otherwise, known as Adamawa North Senatorial District, comprising of 5 local government areas with over 12 tribes and varying cultures is a true depiction of not only the state of Adamawa but the nation in general. Also, the region is blessed with numerous physical features dotting round almost all the local governments, with distinct cuisines, hospitality enclaves and economic activities, thus, increasing the geographical spread of its tourism potentials.

Studies carried regarding tourism in Mubi region of Adamawa, Nigeria (Mshelia, 2004 and Amos, 2014) proves that the region is indeed blessed with both natural and cultural attractions. Natural tourism sites include the Sukur kingdom, Nigeria's first UNESCO declared cultural heritage site, Lake Yinagu and Kamale peak among others. Culturally, the Vulma dance of Mubi south and the Mandrizhin festival of Mubi north which is also practiced in Michika, Madagali and the northern parts of the Republic of Cameroun are prominent among others. However, the tourism potentials of the region are not being harnessed and the importance seemingly unknown to the residents.

The study aimed at the identification and mapping of tourism sites using GIS as well as the identification of factors impeding the growth of tourism within Mubi region through the following objectives;

- To map the spatial locations of tourism attraction sites in Mubi region.
- To identify factors impeding the growth of tourism in the study area.

- To demonstrate the application and potentials of GIS techniques in tourism related data management.

Materials and Methods

Mubi region is made up of five out of the 21 local government areas namely Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North and Mubi South (Fig. 1). The five local governments are further divided into 25 districts. The district is headed by a traditional leader called the district head (Mshelia, 2004). The region is culturally rich and is blessed with scenic horizons and a pleasant weather.

The region was delineated on the basis of socio-political factors to form Adamawa north senatorial district as defined by INEC (1996). It lies between latitude 9° 30' and 11° north of the equator and longitude 13° and 13° 45' east of the Greenwich meridian. Mubi region is bounded in the north by Borno state, in the west by Hong and Song local government areas and in the south and east by the Republic of Cameroon (Figure 1), (Mshelia, 2004). It has a land area of 4728.77 km² and a population of 968,969 persons in 2011(1991 Census Projected Figure).

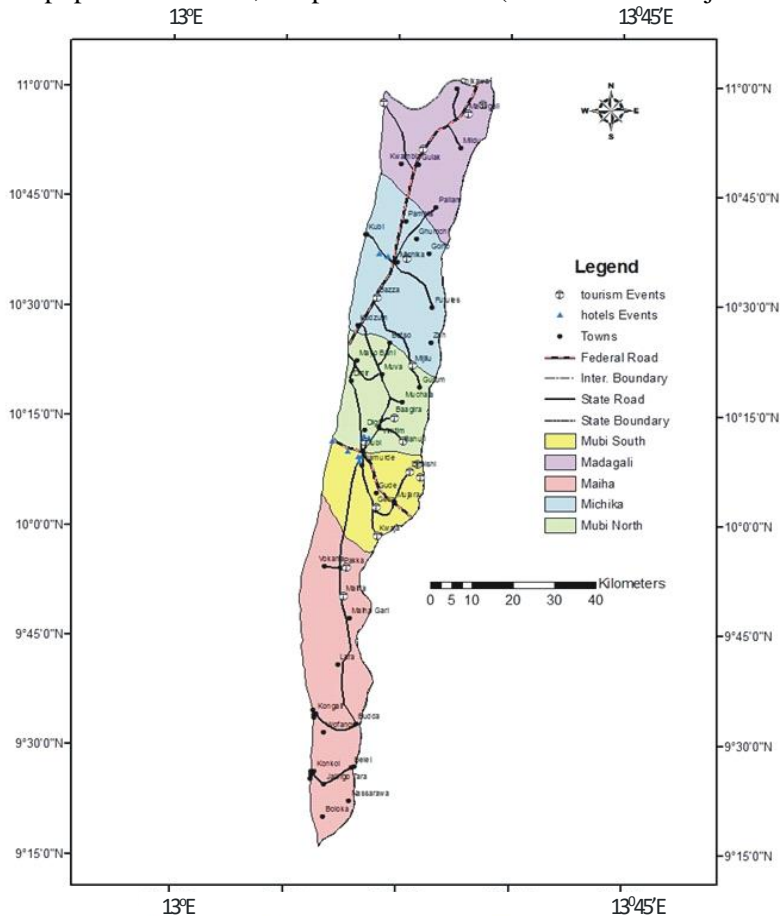


Figure 1: The study Area
Source: Adebayo (2004).

The area has a tropical climate marked by two seasons-the dry and wet season. The wet season commences in late March/April and lasts till October every year. While the dry season starts in November and lasts till February, resulting in a slightly cool period, there is a gradual increase in temperature from January to April with seasonal maximum occurring in April. The average mean annual rainfall ranges from 700mm in the north-west part to 1600mm in the southern part. Mubi region being situated on hill ranges has a relatively friendly weather that is cool most of the year, creating a heavy contrast from what is obtained in Yola, the state capital, thus, providing a good scene for holiday and resorts (Adebayo, 1997).

Landform types in Mubi region can be grouped into valleys and troughs, upland plains, lowlands and hills/mountain ranges. The lowland areas constitute about 32.58%, while mountain ranges which are the most striking landform features constitute about 26.56% and the upland plains 40.85%. Elevation (altitude) is a local factor which affects temperature in the tropics. The effect of elevation is noted in Mubi region, being situated on hill ranges. These create appealing picturesque, enhancing scenic beauty as well as a soothing ambiance.

Mubi region is the second most populated region in Adamawa state (Nwagboso and Uyanga 1999) with a projected population, as at 2011, of 968,969 persons with density of 205 persons per square kilometer. The total population of Adamawa State, as recorded in the 1991 population census was 2,102,053 with 50.01% being female. The census revealed that the literacy level to be 44.6% and about 41.4% being gainfully employed. With 68 languages and 70 ethnic groups, Adamawa is noted as being linguistically heterogeneous in nature epitomizing a true microcosm of the general linguistic diversity of Nigeria and indeed Africa. The urban areas in Mubi region have land uses such as transportation, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational exist. While in the rural areas residential, fishing, livestock rearing activities and farming are predominant. These avail in large quantity, varieties of fresh farm produce for the exotic cuisines the region is known for. Also, traditional music and folklores are enjoyed most evenings and during ceremonies in rural and semi urban areas of the region.

According to Mshelia (2004), Mubi region is endowed with diverse ethnic groups and cultural heritages which show a vast potential for tourism development. The region consist of several ethnic groups core existing in harmony and they range from the heterogeneous ethnic groups of Fali, Gude, Njayi of Mubi North, Mubi South and Maiha Local Government, the homogenous Higgi and Marghi of Michika and Madagali Local Government. The common languages of communication are Hausa and Fulani. Other ethnic group presents are Igba, Kilba, and Yoruba (Adebayo and Dayya,2004).

Methods employed include reconnaissance survey, data collection through questionnaire design and administration, data input, data manipulation, data analysis and the production of the tourism map of the study area. The stages are presented below.

A preliminary visit to the region was carried out to appreciate its tourism potentials and to identify likely challenges to encounter in the course of data collection through physical observation and interviews. This proved very valuable going by the topography of the region and its peculiar road network.

Primary data was collected in the field by means of physical observation. Also, oral interviews, the use of structured sets of questions were administered to locals and the various government agencies in charge of tourism and tourist site locations. Data collected here include the coordinates of physical and cultural locations and their attributes, the assessment of the physical conditions of the tourism features. Other data collected include data on the prominent cultural activities, sites and their historical/backgrounds. This is to give the researcher a first-hand information on the spatial and non-spatial information on the sites concerned. Measurement here entailed the collection of the coordinates of identified tourist sites as well as capturing still and motion images of such locations. For these, a hand held Global Positioning System equipment and a Samsung Digital Camera were used. These data aided the hot-linking of still images and the hyper-linking of motion pictures, as well their attributes and classification.

The secondary data was sourced from published and unpublished materials related to tourism development such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, articles from the internet, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Agency for Museum and Monument. This aids the synthesis of past researches, thoughts/perspectives and details as captured by other writers in relation to tourism mapping and management generally.

A HP Laptop Computer and HP office-jet scanner 5600 series were used for data input. The map of the study area was scanned into the computer and non-spatial details of the tourism sites were inputted using the keyboard. Still and video images of the tourism sites were saved on SD Memory Card and transferred into the computer with the aid of a Card Reader.

The map of the study area was scanned using Corel Draw and exported to ILWIS for geo-referencing. Hp office jet scanner 5600 series and Hp laptop were used for data input. The map of Mubi Region was scanned into the computer with tourism site details of Mubi region entered into the system with the aid of the keyboard. The still and motion images of the sites were captured on memory card and transferred into the computer using a Card Reader.

Software used in data analysis includes Corel Draw 11, Microsoft Word 2007, ArcGIS 3.2a. The UTM coordinates of the tourism attraction sites was collected and used for the development of database for the research. Following the scanning of the township map using Corel Draw 11, it was exported into ILWIS environment where it was geo-referenced by inputting the values of the four corners of the map as tie points. These ensure that features fall on their exact ground coordinates.

The various local governments within the region and identified tourism attraction sites were digitized as themes applying the on-screen capability of the Arc view software and linked to the main view for further analysis. HP 5100 printer is used for output presentation.

The findings from the questionnaire administered using simple random sampling were analyzed using the statistical tool of the simple percentage to avoid complicated interpretation.

The data analysis was carried out using Arc view 3.2a. From the database, the find icon of the software is used to find the location of any cultural or physical tourism site which is highlighted in yellow. Using the “query” and “identifier” menu displays all information about a particular site or sites depending on the criteria. This information includes the local government, ward, type of tourism facility and status etc. Using the “promote” menu selected records can be collected for advanced analysis.

The application of the hot-link and hyper-link features of the software on the map thus, displays images with text, video and sound of that particular feature respectively.

The GIS database relating to the identified cultural and natural sites was structured to follow a relational database model format. The core of the database, the spatial component was developed using ILWIS software while ArcView GIS software was used as a front-end development platform for enhanced cartographic presentation and visualization by assigning labels and suitable graphic symbols. The summary of the procedure followed in the development of the spatial database included the following:

- a. Acquisition of the map of Mubi Region.
- b. Preliminary/Field survey to determine the reliability of the map, location of tourist sites and likely challenges to be encountered.
- c. Converting of the analogue map into digital format by scanning, geo-referencing and digitizing.
- d. Editing to remove errors.
- e. Cartographic presentation.

Database for tourism sites were developed based on the location, the latitude and longitude coordinates, the specific address, Local Government located in and the tourism type to differentiate between natural and cultural sites. Others are period when visitors would better appreciate the sites or when such cultural festivals take place. Database for tourism sites were developed based on the location, the latitude and longitude coordinates, the specific address, Local Government located in and the tourism type to differentiate between natural and cultural sites. Others are period when visitors would better appreciate the sites or when such cultural festivals take place.

Tourism being the activities of persons travelling to and staying outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure etc., the need to capture information on accommodation becomes imperative. This will enable guests and interested bodies access information on hotels available within sites of interest. This information includes; the name of the hotel, number of rooms, minimum and maximum cost per night, the availability of a generating set and air-conditioner, specific address and Local Government located in. Others are the coordinates, the availability of a restaurant, bar and images of the hotels to give the visitor a view.

Results and Discussion

Globally, series of factors are found to affect the appreciation, growth and development of tourism. These factors differ from one country or region to the other. In Mubi region, physical examination by way of reconnaissance and other visits were carried out, the residents and other stake holders were interviewed.

Awareness of Tourism as a Concept

Data collected in this section captured the level of awareness of what tourism stands for, the awareness of their existence within their locality and to get an idea of their levels of participation of the residents.

The research revealed that a significant percentage of the respondents are not aware of the existence of cultural sites and the importance of preserving cultural festivals, 60% admitted knowing about tourism, while 40% do not. The result also reveals that those in urban areas are most informed and have a better understanding of what tourism stands for than their rural counterparts. Also, 40% admitted having tourism and cultural sites within their locality, while the remaining 60% are not aware of the existence of such even when they have in their locality. A large percentage of the former could name some of the tourism and cultural sites within their locality. In Mubi North, the Mijilu dance was mentioned by many, the Vulma dance by those of Mubi South

Availability Infrastructure within the Region

Thirty percent agreed that infrastructure is available to aid the promotion of tourism, while 70 percent agreed otherwise. It is worthy of note that all those that agreed to the availability of infrastructure are mostly found in the urban and semi urban areas of Mubi North and South, and some in Madagali Local Government Areas. Common among the infrastructure named in these areas are access roads, portable water and healthcare facilities. Also, about 20 percent of the roads are in good condition. Most respondents answered, they do not have access to good roads, pipe borne water and other basic infrastructure.

With respect to the availability of local cuisines, only 20% of the respondents agreed to their availability. Again these are in the urban and semi-urban areas with most, while 80 percent responded that the local cuisine are not available, the same percentage agreed that cuisine and accommodation are equally important to the promotion of tourism. Just like the cultural dances, some exotic cuisines are becoming less prepared and only known to the elderly members of the communities.

Local entertainers are becoming less available as only 60% attested to their non-availability and 40% acknowledging their availability. Local entertainment is basically limited to occasions and other celebrations. Most of the entertainers have resulted to securing other vocations as means of livelihood contrary to what is obtained in the past.

Availability of Accommodation within the Region

Data regarding accommodation reveals that 40% agree that it is very important to the promotion of tourism in their locality. While 25% see it as important, 35% think it is not important. Large percentage accepted that the available accommodations are being patronized. However, in Maiha, not a single hotel or restaurant is available as at the time of survey.

Lack of Basic Hygiene within the Region

International tourism thrives with cleanliness and a culture of hygiene as health and safety are of great concern to tourists. 70% of those interviewed acquiesced that the environment is not hygienic enough to encourage tourism, while 30% think otherwise. In Most rural areas in Nigeria and some urban areas, public hygiene rules and laws are absent and not adhered to where available. It is common sight to see piles of refuse in rural and urban areas, around tourism sites and unwholesome practices. Closely related to this is the unavailability of hygiene facilities in some rural homes and public places. Indiscriminate defecation and refuse disposal is still a concern in Mubi Region.

The Effect of Insecurity and the Practice of Prominent Cultural Festivals on the Promotion of Tourism within the Region

The respondent agreed that factors responsible for the lack of growth in tourism in Mubi region are; lack of governmental support, which they closely link with the lack of awareness, lack of infrastructure and the lack of funds. However, 90 percent concur that security is most important in recognition and promotion of tourism.

Most of the educated respondents accepted that the insurgence in the north-east is seriously having its toll on the peace and the safety of residents and visitors alike in the region. Terrorism has been on the increase within the north-east region with series of attacks on settlements and travelers. Attacks in the northern part of the region have led to scores losing their lives. This has created fear into the residents as well as intending tourists.

No tribe exists without culture a way of life that distinguishes it from others. Like in other parts of the world where tribes go extinct, certain traditions are getting obsolete in Mubi Region. When locales were asked if they have cultural activities in their areas, 30%, mostly the aged admitted having some form of cultural festivals/activities. 70% mostly the youth, especially in Mubi South, are not aware of such or just have a passing knowledge of their existence. In Gyella, findings reveal that the Shalla festival is hardly practiced as before, thus getting extinct. However, in Madagali, they are well informed about their cultural festivals of Sukur Kingdom, cultural and the Yinagu fishing. The Vulma dance of Mubi South and the Wahili dance of Mijillu in Mubi north are acknowledged though their event are getting highly infrequent. Mandrizin, the colorful and rich initiation ceremony of young boys into manhood, a festival that is practiced by the people of Bahuli, Bagira, Jilvu and Muchalla, is fast losing its favor especially with the educated.

When asked if there were periods when cultural festivals were not observed, 70percent agreed that there were periods when the cultural festivals were not observed. In Mubi south, especially in Gella and Kwaja, the practice of some cultural festivals have been stopped, while the ones practice are done with great degree of inconsistency, a deviation from what is to obtain in the past. While some attribute this to modernization, others see it as a result of the embrace of contemporary beliefs and the association of such culture with traditional beliefs and practices.

Conclusion

Tourism has been found to be of immense importance to the preservation of culture, tradition, education, arts and crafts, and the promotion of eco-tourism in a region where certain culture and traditions are getting extinct. Its role in the provision of skilled and unskilled employment in a nation bedecked with unemployment and the resultant increase in the foreign earning capacity of the country cannot be overemphasized.

Mubiregion though well-endowed physically and culturally is yet to serve as a tourism haven within the north-east region. This has been adduced to the lack of awareness, infrastructural deficiency, lack of funding and insecurity among others.

The need to provide adequate infrastructure has been identified and will go a long way in attracting tourists from far and near. A significant proportion of the populace shows little or no knowledge of tourism, thus tourism education and awareness is necessary to ensure a total buy in by all. The absence of peace within the region remains the greatest set back to the development of tourism closely followed by the lack of basic hygiene culture.

With Sukur Kingdom World Heritage Site and a couple of other alluring tourism sites and cultural festivals, Mubi region is endowed. However, due to myriad of challenges it is yet to harness its potentials of providing means of livelihood for various classes of people, which will invariably culminate in improved lifestyle as well as regional economic development. It is believed that the implementation of the suggestions below will go a long way in changing the fortunes of the region for the better as regards to the promotion oftourism.

Recommendations

- i.** There is need to create educational and civic awareness. The ministry of education is expected to develop a curriculum for tourism right from the primary level. Schools should be directed to identify and organize expeditions to tourism sites. In the same vein, to conserve and preserve historic monuments/locations, there is need for the ministry of culture and tourism to carryout awareness campaigns on the constituents and potentials of tourism.
- ii.** It is pertinent for government, both state and local to provide infrastructure such as good roads, accommodation, electricity etc. in the region as the available ones are in a sorry state and is discouraging to tourism.

- iii. The need to improve security cannot be overemphasized. The north-eastern part of Nigeria has witnessed series of terrorism culminating to gross insecurity. This as an inhibitive factor to tourism and needs to be addressed squarely by the government.
- iv. The stakeholders within the region should work on Sukur and other identified cultural and tourism sites towards the development of Mubi Region Tourism Development Master Plan similar to those of Argungu, Osun-Osogbo etc.
- v. There is need for more in-depth studies into the identified tourism potentials of the region towards adequate documentation for posterity especially cultural festivals in Mubi north that are at the verge of extinction.
- vi. The Ministry of Health and environment in conjunction with the National Orientation Agency should work out reorientation program towards the provision and improvement of personal and communal hygiene especially in tourist sites.

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