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Assessment of Revenue Generation Avenues in Ecotourism Destinations of Plateau State, Nigeria (Pp. 441-452)

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Abstract

Inadequacy of information on marketable tourism products per ecotourism destination has led to erroneous packaging of unviable products in many tourism sites in Nigeria. Avenues of revenue generation in ecotourism destinations of Plateau State, Nigeria was studied using information obtained through structured questionnaires, field survey and administrative records. A set of structured questionnaires were randomly administered to 50% of tourism officials in Rayfield Resort (RR), Naraguta Tourist Village (NTV), Jos Wildlife Park (JWLP), Jos National Museum and Zoo (JNMZ), Assop Falls (AF), and Pandam Wildlife Park (PWLP). In all, 268 officials were sampled. Data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis in form of percentages, graphs and frequency of counts. All respondents (100%) identified poverty as a factor militating against revenue generation in all tourism sites. Crises / fear affects revenue generation in JNMZ (100%) and NTV (100%); being tourism sites in Jos North Local Government; and JWLP (60.5%) located in Jos South Local Government Area. Other factors are poor funding in PWLP (90.0%), JWLP (80.2%), NTV (86.2%) and JNMZ (65.3%); and location of PWLP (100%). Low patronage (100%) and lack of awareness (100%) limit revenue generation in PWLP and AF that are located outside Jos city. Facilities in PWLP and RR are under utilized. Also,

inadequacy of facilities limits revenue generation in PWLP (60.0%), JNMZ(60.0%), RR(60.9%) and NTV (58.6%). Revenue generation through gate fees in JNMZ was highest in 2003 followed by 2002 and 2004 while that of JWLP was highest in 2002 as affected by seasonality. Between 1999 and 2004, the month of December had relatively high revenues due to festivities.

Keywords: Revenue generation, ecotourism destination, Plateau State, Assessment, Avenues

Introduction

The economies of many households, communities and countries are sustained through colossal profits made from tourism. In situations when communities adjoining tourist centres complain of aculturization of contra culture and usurpation of ‘virgin areas’ by tourist industry, as in the case of Masai people in Kenya (Kamuaru, 1996), contribution of tourism is still applauded by tourism economists (Miller and Tangeley, 1991; Wall, 1996; Ashley *et al*, 2000; Ogbuewu, 2003; Yunis, 2004). This shows that there are many invisible but salient contributions made by tourism in the economy (Eltringham, 1984; Falade, 1994; Ayodele, 2002). Surprisingly, it is only about one percent of the total revenues generated through tourism that get directly to the government in form of get fees (Eltringham, 1984); whereas tourism at its present stage in Nigeria is mainly sponsored by different levels of government. For instance, ecotourism activities in national parks and game reserves in Nigeria are financed through annual subventions from federal and owner – state governments respectively.

The management of most popular tourist sites rarely depends on government subvention alone. If otherwise, several tourist ecodestinations would have been shut down due to the attendant economic challenges posed by tourism (Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2007). Tourism centres create other sources of revenue to augment the government subvention. These sources of revenue differ among ecotourism destination depending on the ecological setting, kinds of tourism activities created and tourism products packaged. Nonetheless, the commonest source of revenue to tourism managers is gate fee. Because of the consistency and ease of financial information accessibility, this work which is part of a doctoral report, would be centred on revenues generated only through gate fees; which depends on tourism patronage.

Information on revenue generation in tourism site is a prerequisite to high tourist patronage as it gives an insight on the activities to be created that can attract high tourist influx in a given ecological setting and season. Paucity of information on creation of marketable activities in ecotourism sites has led to the packaging of unviable tourism products in error, which adversely affects patronage and could lead to closure of ecodestinations.

This work surveys sources of revenue generation in different ecotourism sites of Plateau State, analyses the trend of revenue generation from gate fees, and surveys the factors responsible for low revenue generation in ecotourism centres in Plateau State.

Methodology

Plateau State lies between between latitudes $8^{\circ}31'$ and $10^{\circ}30'1$ North, longitudes $8^{\circ}30'1$ and $10^{\circ}45'1$ East of the equator. It shares common boundaries with Nasarawa, Kaduna, Bauchi and Taraba states. The ecotourism centres in the State are Jos Wildlife Park (JWLP), Jos National Museum and Zoo (JNMZ), AssopFalls (AF), Rayfield Resort (RR), Pandam Wildlife Park (PWLP) and Naraguta Tourist Village (NTV).

Information for the study were obtained with the aid of structured questionnaires, field survey and administrative records. A set of questionnaires were randomly administered to fifty percent of tourism officials in each tourism centre as shown in table 1.

Data on annual revenue collected from administrative records were subjected to graphical analysis while information on sources of revenue were ranked and coded. Data on factors militating against revenue generation were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results and Discussion

Sources of Revenues in Various Ecotourism Destinations

Table 2 shows that sources of revenues to tourism sites differ based on geographical location. Issuance of permit is a major source of revenue in Pandam Wildlife Park, a minor contributor to revenues of Jos Wildlife Park and a non contributor to revenues of other tourism sites in Plateau State. Generation of revenue through issuance of permit is determined by the location of ecodestination, resources in the park that could benefit local people in the vicinity, occupation and needs of the people neighbouring the park. Majority of the Hausas living in Pandam, Namu and Kayarda communities adjoining Pandam Wildlife Park are cattle rearers and pay

money to obtain permit to graze their cattle along the bank of Pandam Lake during drought – when vegetation in other arrears have become coarse.

During the same season, many households from communities bordering Pandam Wildlife Park also obtain permits to harvest dry grasses (before late burning) to build their local thatch houses. Collection of grasses for thatch houses is also done in Jos Wildlife Park but at a relatively very low scale due to the size of the Park which is only eight square kilometers. Collection of grasses can only be carried out in Jos Wildlife Park and Pandam Wildlife Park, being tourism sites with wilderness areas. On weekly basis, permits are issued to fishermen who operate in the six water bodies located inside Pandam Wildlife Park (PWLP). Fishing contributes much revenue in PWLP as some employed indigenes fish for the management of the park during “open season”.

Sale of ticket to tourists is a major contributor to revenues in JNMZ and JWLP; and contributes some revenues in PWLP and Rayfield Resort (RR). This can be ascribed to the fact that both JNMZ and JWLP are located in the middle of Jos city, hence are easily accessible to many city dwellers unlike other ecotourism destinations. This agrees with the reports of Ijeomah (2007) that many urban dwellers in Lafia, Nasarawa State desire to visit the Farin Ruwa water fall in Wamba Local Government Area but are discouraged by the far distance of 130km from Lafia. Also people living in Jos rarely visit the Pandam Wildlife Park that is a distance of 311km apart but always visit JNMZ and JWLP (located inside Jos city) to recreate during working hours and office breaks. The high tourist influx of these tourism sites reflects in their revenues from gate takings. This supports the documentation of Ijeomah (2007) that in 2003, JNMZ and JWLP generated about ₦3,846, 600.00K and ₦2478,070.00K respectively from gate fees alone.

PWLP is presently the only tourist site with lodges among all tourism sites in Plateau States. However, the lodges are rarely occupied by tourists. Less revenue is generated from lodging. The charge for accommodation in the lodges of Pandam Wildlife Park is ₦500.00K per room for a night which is relatively a meager amount when compared with the charge at the Arakhuan Tourist Camp (₦10, 000.00k) of Okomu National Park and the Yankari Wildlife Park, Bauchi. Boating and sales of food and drinks contribute some revenues to PWLP.

Renting of Halls and Premises for social activities is a major contributor of revenue in JNMZ and JWLP. This cannot be unconnected with their location in the city where a lot of social functions hold. And organizers of these functions in cities are always willing and able to hire befitting venues. The JNMZ's auditorium was hired at the cost of ₦5,000.00K per day. In 2005, the National Association of Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) booked it for all the Saturdays though at the cost of ₦3000.00K (with discount) (Ijeomah, 2007). Using of JNMZ'S facility for shooting of films attracts ₦5000.00K per day. In JWLP, revenues are generated from various groups that make use of the Pine forest for meetings and picnics. This agrees with the report of Ijeomah (2003) that about 8 different groups of people were in the Pine forest of JWLP on 12th October 2002 for picnics, religious and educational activities.

The Naraguta Leather Industries rely solely on the sales of souvenirs. It is an open place and people do not need to pay any gate fee to enter the ecodestination. Rather, people are attracted through advertisements. Naraguta has the largest concentration of souvenir market in Plateau State. Apart from gate fee, all parks have sources of revenues. This is in line with the findings of Ijeomah (2007) that PWLP generated the sum of ₦287, 115.00K; ₦283, 631.00K; ₦373, 632. 00K; and ₦345, 888.00K in 2002; 2003; 2004; and 2005 respectively from accommodation of tourists, sales of drink and issuance of permit.

Factors Affecting Revenue Generation in Ecodestinations

Analyses of causative factors of low revenue generation in Table 2 showed that poverty is a major factor militating against revenue generation in all ecotourism destinations in Plateau State. This implies that the incidence of poverty is high in Nigeria and affects all sectors of the economy. This corroborates the reports of the Federal Office of Statistics (1999) and World Bank (1996) on the high poverty incidence in Nigeria. Also, poor funding was indicated by respondents from PWLP (90.0%), JWLP (80.0%) and JNMZ (60.0%). These are ecodestinations funded by the Plateau State Tourism Corporation and the Federal Government of Nigeria. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that there is always inconsistency in funding of projects by all levels of government in Nigeria. Projects are always funded based on the interest of the bourgeoisie at the helm of affairs, and government top priority which reflects in their policy and budget. Poor funding is a problem to officials of Naraguta Tourist Industry souvenir operators (80.0%). As private operators, they are not financially supported by

any organization. Frequent crises experienced in Plateau State militate against revenue generation in JNMZ (100%), NTV (100%) and JWLP (60.0%); being parks at the hearth of Jos city. Crises reduce tourist patronage. It leads to destruction of lives and properties, and impoverishes the people. This agrees with the findings of Eltringham (1984), Ijeomah *et al* (2005) and Edet and Ijeomah (2006). All respondents in both Rayfield resort and PWLP complained that tourism facilities were being underutilized. Utilization of lodges in PWLP is hardly maximized throughout the year. Boating facilities in these ecodestinations are rarely utilized.

PWLP management and Assopfalls do not advertise for visitors. Consequently, low patronage (100%) is often experienced in these parks. Moreso, the location of PWLP (100%) in a rural area far from Jos city affects revenue generation. Mismanagement militates against revenue generation in Rayfield Resort (RR) (100%). It was because of mismanagement in Rayfield Resort that led to the closure of the site, and the intervention of the Plateau State Ministry of Culture and Tourism that is presently in control of the site. The site is managed to render only skeletal services

Trend of Revenue Generation from Gate Fees

Revenue generation from gate fees is a function of tourism patronage. Figure 2 shows that revenue generated in JNMZ was highest in 2003, followed by 2004 and 2002. The month of November recorded the highest revenue in 2003 while December had highest in 2004. The highest revenue in 2003 was due to the fact that the national election of 2003 was finally accepted; hence people massively celebrated during the Islamic festival in November after passing through the tension of national election in a multiethnic third world country. Besides, more animals were procured in JNMZ. Revenues generated between 1999 and 2004 fluctuate on monthly basis as influenced by period festivities and political turbulence. The month of September 2001 had the least revenue in both JNMZ and Jos Wildlif Park (Figure 2 and 3). This can be attributed to the crises experienced in September of 2001 in Plateau State. This agrees with the findings of Ijeomah (2003), Edet and Ijeomah (2005) and Ijeomah (2007). The year 2002 had the highest revenue in JWLP as it was the peak of democracy, after about 19 years of military regime in Nigeria; hence there were much celebrations and festivities. Moreover, more attractive wildlife species were procured which pulled most tourists in Jos including some that would have visited JNMZ.

The revenue for 2003 was relatively low in JWLP due to tension and fear concerning the national election that was held; after the election revenue

generation in 2004 improved. Between 1999 and 2004 the month of December had high revenues due to festivities.

Conclusion

There are many avenues of revenue generation among ecodestinations in Plateau State. However, most avenues are underutilized. The commonest one is gate fee collection. Some ecodestinations do not collect gate fees but still generate revenues. Tourist centres in Plateau State have various tourist products which if properly developed and marketed will generate the much needed revenues that could economically sustain tourism institutions in the state. Each tourism ecodestination manager should package, develop and advertise all revenue accruable products in their tourism site. This will optimize incentives from tourism.

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Table 1: Officials Sampled

| Tourist Site | Number of officials sampled |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jos National Zoo and Museum | 167 |
| Jos Wildlife Park | 43 |
| Rayfield Resort | 5 |
| Assopfalls | 4 |
| Naraguta Tourist Village | 29 |
| Pandam Wildlife Park | 20 |
| Total | 268 |

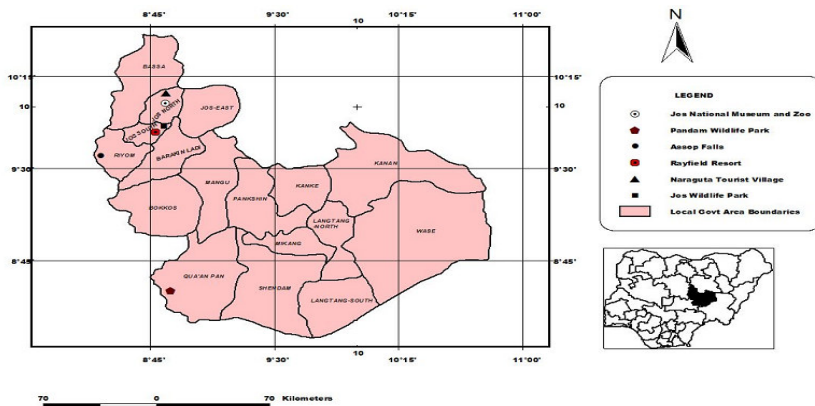


Figure 1: Map of Plateau State showing some ecotourism destinations

Table 2: Sources of income generation in tourism sites

| Sources of revenue | of | Tourist site | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Jos Museum/zoo | National | Jos Park | Wildlife | Pandam Wildlife Park | Assop Falls | Rayfield Resort | Naraguta Leather Industries |
| Issuance permit | of | O | | x | | xxxx | O | O | O |
| Fishing | | O | | O | | xxx | O | O | O |
| Sales of ticket | | xxxx | | xxxx | | xx | O | xx | O |
| Lodging | | O | | O | | xx | O | O | O |
| Horse riding | | O | | x | | O | O | O | O |
| Sport fishing | | O | | O | | x | O | x | O |
| Boating | | O | | O | | x | O | xx | O |
| Mountaineering | | O | | O | | x | O | O | O |
| Renting of halls and premises | | xxxx | | xxxx | | O | O | O | O |
| Sales of food and drinks | | xx | | xx | | x | x | xx | O |
| Sales of souvenir | | O | | O | | O | O | O | xxxx |

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Key: xxxx - contributes strongly
 xxx - contributes much
 xx - contributes some
 x - contributes minor
 O - contributes nothing

Table 3: Percentage distribution of tourism officials based on factors militating against revenue generation in ecotourism destinations

| Problems | Tourist Centres | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|--------|--------|---------|
| | PWLP (%) | JNMZ (%) | JWLP (%) | AF (%) | RR (%) | NTV (%) |
| Location | 100 | 0 | 0 | 25.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Crises / Fear | 35.0 | 100 | 60.5 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Underutilization of resources | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Lack of facilities | 60.0 | 60.0 | 0 | 50.0 | 60.0 | 58.6 |
| Poor funding | 90.0 | 65.3 | 80.2 | 0 | 0 | 86.2 |
| Low patronage | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 62.0 |
| Lack of awareness | 100 | 0 | 50 | 100 | 40 | 37.9 |
| Poverty | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

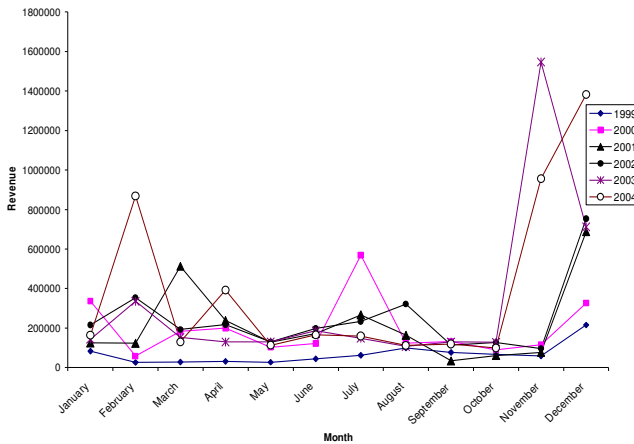


Figure 2: Revenue generation trend from fees in Jos National Museum and Zoo on monthly basis

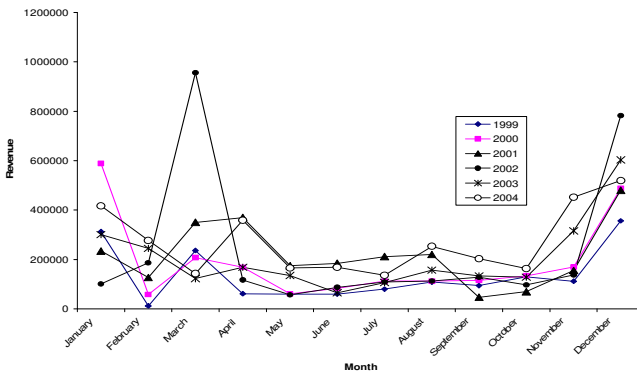


Figure 3: Revenue generation trend from gate fees in Jos Wildlife Park on monthly basis