

Cultural Tourism and Community Involvement: Impacts on Sustainable Tourism Development in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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The study examines the level of community involvement in cultural tourism and how it affects the sustainability of the tourism industry in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It employs the theory of demand and supply and the consumer culture theory as the basis for its theoretical underpinning. Samples were taken from the six communities in six local government areas randomly picked from the three senatorial districts in the study area. The questionnaire served as instruments for the work thus, four hundred and twenty (420) questionnaires containing closed-ended questions were administered on the population. The data collected were subjected to both descriptive and inferential analysis. This involved the use of tables and charts to analyse the data collected, it also employed the use of chi-square (χ^2) analytical method to test the hypothesis. Results show that communities have not been actively involved in developmental projects and this neglect, however, has reduced the morale of inhabitants in participating in cultural activities. Also, government has not been actively involved in the cultural tourism sector, focus and emphasis had been placed on eco-tourism thereby, neglecting the cultural aspects of tourism. The study suggests a bottom-top approach towards cultural activities, i.e. inhabitants who are the custodian of the culture should be carried along in any of the developmental projects. They should also be sensitized on the benefits involve in sustaining these cultural entities and how it can help in rejuvenating tourism, which will in turn, serve as tools for regional development in the study area. The study will be of high relevance to the policy makers and will provide points of reference for researchers and academics.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Community Involvement, Regional Development, Conceptualization.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism can be described as a form of nomadism that characterised *Homo sapiens*, which is both normal and under the right conditions, pleasurable. Furthermore, they emphasized that tourism is associated with travelling away from one's home for twenty four (24) hours, using one's leisure time to travel and taking holidays and travelling for business [1]. Technically, tourism can also be seen as activities of a person travelling outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from place visited [2].

Tourism is centred on the fundamental principle of exchange between people and is both an expression and experience of culture [3]. Tourism is cultural and its practices and structures are very much an extension of the normative

cultural farming from which it emerges. As such, it has a vital part to play in helping us to understand ourselves and humanity and the multi-layered relationships between humanity, material and non-material world we occupy and journey through [4].

Out of all the elements of tourism, culture has been the main pull factor which influences visitors' initial decision to travel to destinations in different parts of the world. Thus, in most regions of the world, particularly in Europe and North America, cultural attractions have become important in the development of tourism. At the global level, cultural attractions are usually perceived as being icons of important streams of global culture [5]. Culture can be described as the patterns of behaviour and thinking that people living in the social groups learn, create and share. Culture distinguishes one human

group from others. It also distinguishes human from other animals. People's culture include their beliefs, rules of behaviour, language, rituals, arts, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion and political and economic systems [6].

Culture is the conditioning elements of behaviours and the products of the behaviours, "consisting of 12 elements viz: handicrafts, language, traditions, gastronomy, art and music, history, local work, architecture, religion, educational system, dress and leisure activities [7]. Sharply (1994) states that from a social and cultural perspective, the rapid expansion of tourism is important in two respects: Firstly, the development of tourism as vehicle for economic modernization and diversification almost invariably leads to change and development in the structure of society. Secondly, all tourists, to a lesser or greater extent, inevitably take on holidays according to their own beliefs, values and behavioural modes [8]

Sustainable development on the other hand is the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs [9]. Development is seen as the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. It is a multi-dimensional process, involving major changes in social structure, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. It is essentially a process of generating allocating resources efficiently for achieving greater socially satisfying ends. Development can also be seen as an incident that causes a situation to change or progress; the process of changing and becoming larger, stronger or more impressive, successful or advanced, or of causing somebody or something to change in this way [10].

Cultural Tourism gives visitors the opportunity to understand and appreciate the essential character of a place and its culture as a whole, including its: history and archaeology; people and their lifestyle (including the ways in which they earn a living and enjoy their leisure); cultural diversity; arts and architecture; food, wine and other local produce; social, economic and political structures and landscape [11]. On a final note, sustainable cultural tourism is a tourism attempting to make a low impact on the environment and local culture as possible, while helping to generate future incentives to host communities while ensuring that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists. It is against this background that this study attempts to examine the impacts of cultural tourism and community involvement in the sustainable tourism development and regional development in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cultural tourism in Nigeria is one of the very complex and rich aspects of our life, which is not receiving the attachment or analyses it deserves [12]. Tourism has always been seen as a veritable tool for development as its significance has been recognised in the developed, developing and less developed countries, although managing cultural resources has been a problem in their countries. Culture is a fluid and problematic concept to deal with as it involves both ways of life, tangible and intangible expressions and manifestation of society's values and beliefs. Increasingly, various forms of intangible heritages are being mobilized for tourism purposes and

experiencing living heritage is a particularly enriching experience for both tourist and the community. Tourists' demand to see cultural displays and rituals can thus produce conflict in local community over time [13].

Tourism has always been a tool for economic development, but, for developing countries, it is an increasingly important export as the economic, social and environmental impact remains very uneven between and within developing countries. Mass cultural tourism development is an attractive option precisely because it can generate foreign currency quickly, particularly by relying on international town operators who can access international markets easily. However, it has been highlighted by numerous studies; there are serious drawbacks, to this according to UNESCO. First, it tends to shift the power of development away from host government and communities towards the foreign operators and towns generating nations. This includes the power to terminate development and switch investment to other destinations.

Second, it tends to be limited spatially to particularly attractive development sites and pristine environment and does not seek to engage with problem zones and communities. Third, levels of investment tend to be directed toward surface issues of aesthetic concern and the needs of lowest communities. Fourth, economic returns to be restricted to short term gains in terms of employment in the tourist sector and in related serious and this results in poorly paid and insecure jobs in the service sectors and lastly, the culture of the host community is only marginally engaged in through mass tourism. Because the emphasis of development is upon fixed and limited locations and upon the provision of predominantly hedonistic activities, culture can often be reduced to brief selection displays through limited interaction between host and guest [13].

There are abundant natural and cultural resources for tourism industry to flourish in Nigeria, unfortunately, the organizational framework is still very weak and this aspect is too crucial to be wished away, if we really want to promote stable tourist business in this part of the world. The purposed against the background of collectivity orientation, which brings together the government, the expert and the grass root people. It is wrong to assume that government policies on tourism industry coupled with the expertise of archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, hoteliers and others will produce a positive result without sincerely recognising and appreciating the centrality of the grass root people.

Indeed, much of the tourism development efforts in Nigeria has failed to bring about result basically because there remains a communication gap between the experts, on the one hand and the people (the of most, if not all, these resources) on the other. In fact, there are still many resources and /or potential tourist attractions in the rural setups, which are yet to be known, let alone harnessed, by the government and its agents [14].

Different limitation, has been affecting the development of cultural tourism in Ekiti State and the country at large. The limitation ranges from the part of the government and the custodian of these cultural elements, no wonder, there seems to be not much work and conference on the existence of some of the cultural tourists resources because of the wide-gap between the government and host communities, thus a reason for this study.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to examine the rate of community involvement in cultural tourism especially towards a sustainable tourism development in Ekiti State, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set: to look into the level of government involvement in the sustainability of cultural sites and festival; to examine the level of community involvement in decision making as to the sustainability of the sites and festivals; to find out if the bottom-top approach is being imbibed by the government in sites and festivals and to suggest ways by which custodians of these cultural heritages and government can be involved so as to help in the sustainability and development of the tourism sectors in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

THE STUDY AREA

The study area is Ekiti State. Ekiti State is a landmass located between latitude $7^{\circ}15'N$ and $8^{\circ}14'N$ of Greenwich Meridian and longitude $4^{\circ}35'E$ and $5^{\circ}55'E$ of the Equator. It covers approximately $6,353\text{km}^2$ bounded by Kwara State to the North, Kogi State to the East, Osun State to the West and Ondo State to the South. The State is mainly an upland zone, rising over 250m above sea level and with rock outcrops.

Ekiti State, like all Yoruba States, has a lot to offer in culture. Many cultural or traditional festivals are usually held at different times of the year in all towns and villages in Ekiti State. Apart from these festivals, there are many other cultural attributes of the Ekiti people that must not be overlooked. The main staple food of the people of Ekiti is pounded yam and Vegetable soup. In areas like Ipoti-Ekiti, Ogotun-Ekiti and Ipole-Iloro Ekiti are known for the production of beautiful mat and mat-based products such as table mats, conference bags, purses, hand fans, cup covers e.t.c. also, in towns like Isan Ekiti and Ara – Ijero Ekiti, and Ire Ekiti because of the high quality of ceramics are known for the production of ceramic pots, candle holders, plates, spoons, cups etc.

Also, there are cultural sites and historic sites in Ekiti State examples are: Olosunta rocks, Erin-Ayonigba River, Ikogosi cold and warm spring, Esa cave e.t.c. The dress code for typical Ekiti man is Buba (round neck shirt) and Sokoto (trouser) while women dress in Buba (blouse) and Iro (wrapper). Traditionally, the natural rulers in Ekiti State, whose people are Yoruba, are usually described as sacred and/or divine Kings (Obas). They are always approached with great respect, Infact the ceremonies between their appointments and coronation are culturally elaborated. Places of traditional rulers are true symbolical relics of the people culture and tradition. Some of the richly endowed artifacts oriented palaces in Ekiti State are the Ewi of Ado's palace, Elekole of Ikole's palace, Oore of Otun's palace, Alawo of Awo Ekiti palace and a host of others.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The subject of tourism in this generation has attracted the concerns of many scholars. This has been attributed to the developmental role that cultural tourism has played. In developed world today, culture has been a way of colonising other people, thus most developed countries these days can attribute their level of development to the cultural tourism. This has thus, aroused the mind of geographers, sociologists, economists, political scientists, doctors, lawyers and other professionals globally as the enormous effects of cultural

tourism on development cannot be overemphasised. The history of tourism indicates that tourism is a socio-cultural event. Resort development and sightseeing came about partly through fashions and social responses to the natural and built environments. Tourism is a global phenomenon which is essentially taste driven, with regions coming in and out of fashion and often the topic of social conversation. This is often embodied in the concept of which places are in 'vogue' and 'must see destination' [15].

There are two ideas about the socio-cultural effect of tourism. First, that the interaction between host and guest could dilute or destroy traditional cultures. This reflects the literature that considers tourism primarily as a threat to culture and peoples. Second, that the interaction between host and guest could create new opportunities for peace and greater understanding. This alternative perspective acknowledges the benefits that tourism can have in allowing exchange of culture in promoting greater awareness on both sides [1].

There are three elements of cultural tourism namely, non-material customs e.g. dance, folklore and traditions; material customs e.g. crafts and products; and acculturation (Long term change). Laying more emphasis on acculturation, tourism results in the transformation of cultural events into commercialized products or spectacles which are devoid of all meaning. Culture may be trivialised by tourism in an attempt to make it a product for tourists to consume, furthermore, tourism results in the preservation and revitalization of traditional cultural practices by providing financial support and engendering community pride, this is thus seen as positively contributing to the goals of sustainable tourism. [7]

As tourists are becoming more sophisticated, their need to recapture the past has been increasing. Tourists have been visiting cultural / heritage sites more frequently. Cultural tourists offer several benefits to tourists and residents, as well as governments. First of all, cultural tourism protects historic, cultural and natural resources in communities, towns and cities. People become involved in their community when they can relate to their personal, family, community, regional or national heritage. This connection motivates residents to safeguard their shared resources and practice good stewardship. Second, cultural tourism educates residents and tourists about local/regional history and traditions. Residents will become informed about local/regional history and traditions which can be shared with tourists.

Third, cultural heritage builds closer, stronger communities. Knowledge of heritage provides continuity and context for communities which instills respect in their resident, strengthens citizenship values, builds community pride and improves quality of life. Fourth, cultural tourism promotes the economic and civic vitality of a community or region. Economic benefits include: the creation of new jobs in the travel industry, at cultural attractions and in travel – related establishments; economic diversification in the service industry (restaurants, hotels/motel, bed and breakfasts, tour guide services), manufacturing (arts and crafts, souvenirs, publications), and agriculture (especially gardens or farmers' markets); encouragement of local ownership of small businesses, higher property values, increased retail sales and substantial tax revenues [16].

The growth of recreation or tourism has bridged the gaps of oceans and miles to foster understanding among people of varying reactions and cultures. Omotoso cited that with proper management, tourism ensures the long-term conservation of areas of outstanding natural beauty which have aesthetic and cultural values. Omotoso cited example of tourism potentials in

Nigeria that were well utilised: Kainji National Park, Borgu and Zurguma National Parks and Yankari Game reserve. It helps to renew local architectural traditions on condition that regional peculiarities the ancestral heritage and cultural environment are respected for example, tourism plays a prominent role in cultural sustainability of Osun Festival in Osogbo and Argungu Festival in Argungu in Kebbi State [17]. Furthermore, in the same literature, he noted that tourism attributes to the rebirth of local arts and crafts and that of traditional cultural activities in a protected natural environmental setting. For example, bead and bangles making in Bida, dyeing, pottery and calabash carvings in the Northern part of Nigeria. In most of the favourable cases, tourism offers a way to revive the social and cultural life of the local government, thus, reinforcing the resident community, encouraging contacts within the country, an attracting young people and favourable local activities [17].

The theory of demand and supply and the consumer cultural theory serve as the anchor for this work. Supply and demand is an economic mode of price determination in a market and it is attributed to Alfred Marshall in 1890. It concludes that in a competitive market, the unit price for a particular good will vary until it settles at a point where the quality demanded by consumers (at current price) will equal the quality supplied by producers (at current price), resulting in an economic equilibrium of price and quality.

Based on Smith's (1995) observations, demand occurs at four different levels including:

- The amount of products that will be consumed at various prices
- Actual level of participation
- The unsatisfied component of participation
- The desire for emotional and psychologically based experiences [18].

Tourism demand is a result of a variety of social, economic, demographic and psychological factors peculiar to the individual [19,20,21]. However, extrinsic factors or determinants, such as government policy, media communications, marketing, societal norms and pressures, knowledge, information on and images of destinations, technological change and wider socio economic determinants have an equally important role to play in shaping tourism destination demand as shown in figure 1.

It should be noted that the host communities are the producers of these cultural heritages, thus if there will be demand for this heritages by consumers, the producers needed to be encouraged especially through involving them in developmental activities of such sites. Consumer Culture theory is a marketing school of thought, interested in studying consumer choices and behaviours from a social and cultural point of view. Reflective of a post-modernist society [23], it views cultural meanings as being numerous and fragmented [24] and hence views culture as an amalgamation of different group and shared meanings rather than a homogeneous construct.

Consumer culture is viewed as 'social arrangement in which the relation between life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend are mediated through markets [25] i.e., tourism market and consumer as part of an interconnected system of commercially produced products and wages which they use to construct their identity orient their relationship with others [26]. In view of this theory, it can be deduced that cultural tourism takes into consideration different

groups, cultural traits, cultural heritage, symbols, materials and all other elements of culture in order to survive and meditate in the tourism market.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was based on descriptive means. This involved gathering, analysis and application of facts in order to achieve stated objectives and to test the acceptability or otherwise of the hypotheses stated in this study.

Sample population was taken from the three senatorial districts of Ekiti State using the stratified random sampling techniques. The population was divided into strata ranging from senatorial districts to communities involved in cultural activities. The three senatorial districts are Ekiti North, Ekiti Central and Ekiti South senatorial districts. Six Local Government Areas were then picked in twos from each of the senatorial districts; these are Ikole and Oye Local Government Areas from Ekiti North, Ado and Irepodun/Ifelodun LGAs from Ekiti Central and Ikere and Emure LGAs from Ekiti South senatorial districts.

Data were collected using the primary source of data collection. The instrument devised is the questionnaire. A total number of four hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed accordingly among respondents in the six communities using the 2014 projected population culled from the 2006 population data using an annual growth rate of 3.2%. Data collected were coded and represented on frequency tables. Also, the data were subjected to test using the double Chi-square (χ^2) with the aid of the SPSS program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of participation of inhabitants of host community can also be of high relevance towards the development of cultural tourism, thus 37.6% said that they were involved in cultural tourism through agriculture, 45.7% were involved in trading, 15.5% participated through services like barbing, teaching etc. while 1.2% participated in other ways. Most of the respondents participated averagely in the cultural tourism thus 29.8% participated excellently.

24% were above average, 38.3% were average, and 1.2% was below average, while 6%, representing twenty eight (28) respondents out of the four hundred and twenty (420) were very poor in their level of participation as shown in table 2. Findings from Chris (2003) shows that community participation in tourism activities can sustain and increase connections among people, contributes to economic development of business districts and neighbourhoods and also provide shared cultural experiences among family, friends, neighbours and others that strengthen social ties.

Furthermore, it will also encourage children and youth to participate in community-sanctioned activities, strengthens the ability of arts organizations to engage in education and community outreach and it will help community-based organizations to rely on arts and cultural programs for member services, social programming and fundraising [27]. Active involvement of residence of host community will surely help in the development of cultural tourism because they are the owner of these heritages, thus they know how best they can be involved in it to making it a successful and active tourism site.

40% of the respondents noted that they have been carried along and allowed to make decisions on developmental projects while 60% were against the opinion.

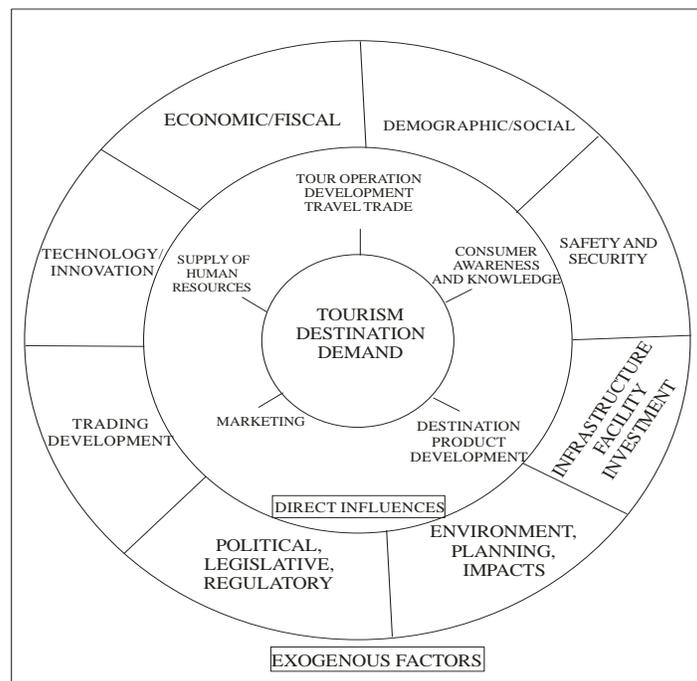


Figure 1. Factors Shaping Development of Tourism Destination Demand [22].

Table 1. Form of Participation in Cultural Tourism

Form of participation	F	%	C%
Agriculture	153	37.6	37.6
Trading	192	45.7	83.3
Services (Barbing, Teaching etc)	65	15.5	98.8
Others	5	1.2	100
Total	420	100	

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 2. Ratings of Level of Participation

Ratings	F	%	C%
Excellent	125	29.8	29.8
Above average	101	24	53.8
Average	161	38.3	92.1
Below average	5	1.2	93.3
Very poor	28	6.7	100
Total	169	100	

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

This has always been a serious problem militating against the development in Third World Countries. Government and politicians are no more close to the grass root people, thus they make use of Top-Down approach (authoritative approach) than Bottom-Top approach which take into cognisance the opinions of the grass-root people before embarking on any developmental project. This is shown in table 3.

Table 4 shows that 42.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that government has intervencen on development of cultural sites in the study area while 57% noted government has not done anything as to the development of cultural sites in the study area. Culture is an important aspect of tourism that

should not be ignored, thus the Government and policy makers should help in developing elements and especially infrastructure and social facilities that can attract more tourists to cultural sites. This will surely have a positive effect on the revenue generation status of the State at large.

Most times, communities depend on one another to make events a reality, but the percentage of respondents who agreed with the assertion was low thus 35% of the respondents agreed with the assertion while 65% disagree as they believe that they didn't rely on neighbouring towns and village for the success of cultural events.

Table 3. Decision Making by Host Community on Developmental Project

Decision making	F	%
Yes	168	40
No	252	60
Total	420	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 4. Government Intervention on Development of Cultural Sites

Government intervention	F	%
Yes	178	42.4
No	242	57.6
Total	420	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 5. Dependency on Neighbouring Communities for Successful Cultural Events

Are you dependent on neighbouring communities	F	%
Yes	147	35
No	273	65
Total	420	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 6. In what ways are you Dependent?

Ways of dependency	F	%	C%
Agriculture	34	8.1	8.1
Trading	60	14.3	22.4
Services	47	11.2	33.6
Others	6	1.4	35
Missing	273	65	100
Total	169	100	

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 7. Financial Gains from Cultural Tourism

Is there any financial gains	F	%
Yes	208	49.5
No	212	50.5
Total	420	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

This is not surprising because most communities keep secrets of their cultural heritages i.e. each community has its own peculiarity. This is shown in table 5. Out of 35%, which represent one hundred and forty-seven (147) respondents of the four hundred and twenty (420) respondents, 23.1% believed that they were dependent on neighbouring communities in agriculture, 40.3% noted that it was trading that makes them dependent, 32% went for services while the remaining 4.6% opined that the host communities were dependent on other communities in other ways not in the options as shown in table 6.

Table 7 shows that 49.5% of the respondents agreed that there are financial gains from cultural tourism while 50.5% believed that there are no financial gains from cultural tourism. This implies that even those involved in commercial activities have little gain from the proceeds of their products. Government has been the major policy makers and thus, they can really help in making policies that can promote cultural

tourism although, in the study area, that has not been the case as 25% representing 105 respondents agreed that there has been projects by government to promote cultural tourism.

The remaining 75% of the respondents were against them as they noted that the government had not embarked on any projects to encourage cultural tourism in the host communities. Government show no particular attention to these festivals and sites. Cultural tourism can be said to be a long term project i.e. the gains may not be immediate, but it is an aspect of tourism that most developed countries see as a yardstick for development in the long run because its effects cannot be over-emphasized when it booms. In developing countries like Nigeria, due to the nature of the political system, most political appointees do embark on projects that are not futuristic in nature thus, a reason for the low percentage of respondents who believed that there are projects to promote cultural tourism as shown in table 8.

Table 8. Projects by Government to Promote Cultural Tourism

Is there any Project by Government to Promote Cultural Tourism	F	%
Yes	105	25
No	315	75
TOTAL	420	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 9. Actual Values for Ratings of Community Involvement in Cultural Tourism

	E	AA	A	BA	VP	Total
Ire	31	12	20	1	8	72
Ikole	20	13	21	1	3	58
Ado	35	47	40	1	9	132
Igede	13	10	27	1	4	55
Ikere	16	10	34	1	2	63
Emure	10	9	19	0	2	40
Total	125	101	161	5	28	420

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Table 10. Expected Values for Ratings of Community Involvement in Cultural Tourism

	E	AA	A	BA	VP	
Ire	21.4	17.3	27.6	0.9	4.8	
Ikole	17.3	13.9	22.2	0.7	3.9	
Ado	39.3	31.7	50.6	1.6	8.8	
Igede	16.4	13.2	21.1	0.7	3.7	
Ikere	18.8	15.2	24.2	0.8	4.2	
Emure	11.9	9.62	15.3	0.5	2.7	
				CHITEST		0.03

The Calculated Value is 0.03 (Calculation from MICROSOFT EXCEL, 2007)

Source: Author's Computation, 2014

As noted by Thomasian (2008), the industry contributes directly to jobs, tax generation and wealth e.g. the creative economy of Arkansas employs nearly 27,000 individuals and generates \$927million in personal income for their citizens yearly [28]. Noteworthingly, this shows that cultural tourism if well developed through policies can serve as sector for accruing finances not only for personal use but for governmental use.

For the purpose of knowing the validity of the State of development of cultural tourism in Ekiti State, one hypothesis was tested i.e.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between the efficiency of cultural tourism sites and community involvement in cultural tourism

Community involvement in cultural tourism may be a yardstick to the development of cultural tourism in the state. To ascertain the relationship between the two variables i.e. community involvement and cultural sites efficiency; hypothesis was tested as it enabled the researcher to deduce the extent to which community participation can effectively affect the development of cultural tourism in the study area. Tables 9 and 10 showed the actual and expected chi-square value of community involvement in cultural tourism.

Table 9 and Table 10 show the actual value and the expected value for ratings of community involvement in cultural tourism and thus, the calculated value results from M.EXCEL CHITEST Analysis is 0.03.

$$\text{Degree of freedom (df)} = (r-1)(c-1)$$

Where r = number of rows = 6
 c = number of columns = 5

$$\text{Therefore } df = (6-1)(5-1) = 5 \times 4 = 20$$

Since, the computed chi square (X^2) value of 0.03 is less than the table value (see Appendix 4) of 31.4 at 20 degree of freedom, then, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. This means that the statement that there is no significant difference between the efficiency of cultural sites and community involvement was negated. The implication of this is that there is no significant difference between the efficiency of cultural tourism sites and community involvement in cultural tourism. This position is expected based on the findings at the cultural sites during the fieldwork.

For instance, it was evident that the host community still need to be actively involved in cultural tourism activities so that it can help in the proper efficiency of the cultural sites. Also, the main reason that was noted to be attributed to the non-involvement of people in cultural tourism activities is the foreign culture that they had adapted themselves to. For instance, it is generally observed in Nigeria that most people have forgotten their own natural culture. For example, the mode of dressing of a typical Yoruba man is *Buba* and *Soro Attire (Aso Ofi)* with *Fila* but now due to the imbibement of foreign culture, it is very hard to see the dress on them again.

This has been a real threat to the development of cultural tourism in the study area. A personal interview conducted with an indigene of Ire Ekiti revealed people hardly participates in the cultural festivals in the town [29]. This was due to the growth in foreign religious beliefs, thus, many people refuse to involve themselves in cultural activities, thus this call for enlightenment, i.e. people should be enlightened on the need to preserve and conserve cultural tourism heritages and festivals so that they can be actively involved in it towards ensuring the sustainability of tourism in the study area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of analyses show that there is still a wide gap between government and host communities. Cultural tourism is no doubt a tool for sustainable development in the study area, but there is need to develop this sector as it has been noted in this research work that the State of development of cultural tourism in the study area is nothing to write home about thus the following recommendations are made.

Policy makers will need to support the development of cultural tourism in the study area should be made. It has been made known by the respondents that there has been no meaningful development of cultural tourism sites, this may be as a result of not considering cultural tourism as a yardstick for development, thus, it is recommended that policies that will help in identifying and harnessing cultural tourism sites should be made as this will surely help in increasing revenue generation and even help in the sustenance of our cultural heritages.

Up till date, the type of democracy being practiced in Nigeria is still Autocratic in nature. This is evident in top-down approach used by almost every government ruling one State or the other. According to the study, the ratings of bottom-top approach is very poor in the study area, this implies that the host communities are not carried along especially in decision making. It is noteworthy that these host communities are custodian of these cultural heritages/festivals, then, they should be allowed to decide on what should be put in place to ensure the development of these cultural tourism sites.

A "Bottom-top" approach is one of that works from the grass root, there is no form of imposition from the government, no wonder, it was discovered that "Bottom-top" approach allows for what experimentation and a better feeling for what is needed at the bottom. Government should stop imposing on host communities instead; they should give the host communities chance to decide on what best can be done to develop the cultural sites/festivals they have in custody.

Host communities should be actively involved in cultural festivals; their reactions to these festivals will tell to what extent cultural tourism will be developed in the study area. They could also be encouraged by provision of incentives to people living in the host communities.

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