

The role of cultural resources in Tourism development in Awka

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Abstract

Cultural resources are physical features, both natural and man-made, associated with human activity. These include all products of man's cultural life which could be mobilized in other to meet the needs of tourism development. Tourism is today a global industry which cuts across all other sectors of the economy. Not only does tourism boost the economy of host community it is also a marker identity. Considering the benefits of tourism, the government of most countries are developing their tourism industry. However, in Nigeria, specifically Awka, the development of tourism is basically geared towards construction of magnificent hotels and other infrastructural facilities needed in tourism destinations at the expense of cultural heritages which are incessantly destroyed. The objective of this article is to showcase some Awka cultural resources, identify the challenges of their development and suggest ways these could be harnessed for tourism development and sustainability.

Key words: cultural resources, tourism, development, Awka

Introduction

Cultural resources are physical features, both natural and man-made, associated with human activity. The man-made resources include objects shaped or created from human actions while natural resources include those physical and animal features used by humans for specific purposes apart from its natural use. In its entirety cultural resources stand as anything which represents human past experience and most times are unique to certain groups. Therefore, cultural resources, constitute unique medium through which all people regardless of background can express and distinction themselves from their neighbours. It stood as an evidence of man's existence in the past and today as man's cultural identity. As the product of human culture it embraces man's diverse belief, festivals, traditional architecture and technology, dance, drama, dressing, diet, arts and craft etc which are the features of any society both past and present. It cuts across man's society and can be used as blue print for development in the society. It values and ideas constitute necessary ingredients for the pursuit of unity in a nation with proliferation of tribal groups. And also cultural resources in particular festivities encourage travel to consume the uniqueness of cultural display by various ethnic groups. This movement of people on the basis of culture points to tourism - the temporary movement of people to places of interest. Enoh (2003) describes tourism as travelling for recreation. She further acknowledged that man, from ever-since the earliest civilizations had some unobligated time set aside for such recreational activities. Therefore, tourism is not new to man at all. It flourished through interaction with

other cultures perhaps it was such tours that brought the earliest Europeans – the Portuguese to the then Benin Empire of Nigeria.

Presently, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity and it is generally thought of as an activity in which individuals explore a culture that is foreign to them for the most part. It is a medium through which foreigners (Tourists) come into contact with other often highly unique cultures. Most times the cultural endowments of a country lure people into tourism. Hence, on a closer look at cultural resources and tourism one would observe that these are indeed complementary. On one hand cultural resources promotes tourism development and tourism on the other showcases and preserves a people's cultural heritage. The data used for writing this work were elicited from interviews and other written work related to the subject matter.

Study centre

Awka is the capital of Anambra state which was created on August 27, 1991 out of the old Anambra state which had Enugu as its capital. The town is located between latitudes 6.24°N and 6.28°N and longitudes 7.00°E and 7.06°E on the South eastern part of Nigerian with a population of 116208 persons according to a 2006 population census (NPC, 2006). The location of the town lies on the border of Enugu and Anambra state respectively. The town was originally occupied by the renowned Igbo race even though there is no written evidence of when the first person came to settle at the place, and yet Awka town 'was not a mystical figure that was sent to earth by God' (Offidile, 1988). The history of its origin follows the oral tradition of having been discovered by a man called *Nneoshi* who had two sons *Ugwoba* and *Ọka*. *Ọka* been the second son pitched his tent in the place known as Awka. He accommodated strangers from amongst which came *Nnebuzo*, the master blacksmith, *Umudioka*, the carver etc. the amalgamation of these subgroups into Awka thirty-three (33) villages constitute the population of the town in addition to people from other ethnic tribes in Nigeria.

The name Awka was originally spelt *Ọka* but with the introduction of the English alphabet it is now spelt "Awka". The natives of the town before the inception of British were renowned blacksmiths and carvers of wooden objects (Ezenagu, 2009). These indigenous industries and other cultural resources of the people not limited to traditional festivals, folktales, norms, values, shrines, sacred groves and traditional architecture are gradually facing the challenge of extinction if not well documented with proffered medium of preservation.

Statement of Problem

Awka as a tourist centre is fast developing in its tourism industry. Tourists cannot resist the tempting leisure of some of the magnificent hotel structures dispersed all over the town for relaxation and enjoyment purposes of the scenic beauty of the town. In other words tourism development in Awka is channelled majorly towards accommodation and amenities which comprises the construction of hotels and infrastructural development not limited to accessible roads, electricity, constant water supply etc. Unfortunately, no effort is made to harness the unique cultural resources of the town especially, the natives of the land who have turned the beautiful sites of former river path of Obibia Ngene in Umubele and Umuike villages respectively into refuse dump which could serve as a good tourist site.

Secondly, the increase in acceptance of modernity at the expense traditional forms led to demolition of traditional architectural designed buildings worthy of been inscribed National Monument. This is attested by the uncontrollable rate at which traditional architectural

buildings have been destroyed only to be replaced with modern houses. The traditional art and craft are not encouraged as people rarely patronize carved objects because of its attachment to traditional religion termed “idol religion”. Equally blacksmith products have been categorized under crude products as a result out-dated. Above all people’s lackadaisical attitude towards cultural activities especially traditional festivals and title taking is devastating. Therefore, it is sad to note that the various media through which Awka culture is manifested have lost their place in this present phase of tourism development.

Objective of study

From the foregoing, the general objective of the research work is to highlight the significant role of Awka cultural resources to tourism development. Other specific objectives include the following:

- To showcase Awka diverse cultural resources,
- To identify the challenges besetting the development of these cultural resources
- To proffer solution to problems besetting Awka cultural resources, and
- To produce a well documented essay on the role of Awka cultural resources with the aim of educating, reorienting and inculcating a sense of appreciation for cultural resources.

Literature review

Tourism is a dynamic, evolving, consumer-driven force (Walker, 2006: 335) which can be viewed as a multidimensional and multifaceted activity touching all aspects of “man and society be they social, political, economic, cultural, historical or physical environment” (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002: 19). Bearing in mind, this multidimensional nature, tourism as a concept has proved very difficult to define as experts have not been precise or totally consistent in the way it has been used Ekechukwu (2006: 183). This implies that tourism is a complex concept. In this vein, Page and Connell (2005:11) citing William and Shaw (1988: 2) opined that the definition of tourism is a particularly “arid pursuit” but important if one is to understand the nature, scope, impact and magnitude of the global tourism. Considering the broad spectrum of tourism scholars are compelled to define the concept as applicable to their field of interest. The Geographers are more concerned about the environmental impact of tourism, the Economist focuses on tourist expenditure and the economy of host community while the Social Anthropologist looks into the relationship between the social and cultural life of the host community and tourism. This broad view showcased the relevance of tourism industry which has earned the fame the “Highest employer of labour” since it’s an industry that cuts across all works of life.

However, Cooper et al. (2005) noted that the first attempt at defining tourism was made by Hunziker and Krapf of Berne University, in 1942. They held that tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to any earning activity. Their definition did not recognise same-day visitors (excursionists). The lopsidedness of the early definition gave rise to numerous attempts at defining tourism. Though Leiper (2004: 35) noted that no widely accepted definitions exist for “tourist” or “tourism”, and proposed a working definition for both. Leiper defined tourists as persons who travel away from their normal residential region for a temporary period of at least one night, to the extent that their behaviour involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit. Of course there would be no tourism without “tourists”. Tourists can be readily identified by the purpose and duration of the journey

where as for tourism no set yardstick. Bearing in mind the complexity meted out in defining tourism, Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) posed four different perspectives from which tourism can be identified namely: the tourist, the businesses providing tourist goods and services, the government of the host community or area, and the host community. More elaborately they described the industry in the following words:

Tourism is a composite of activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience; transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activities facilities and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are travelling away from home. It encompasses all providers of visitor and visitor-related services. Tourism is the entire world industry of travel, hotels, transportation and all other components that including promotion, serve the needs and wants of travellers. Finally tourism is the sum total tourist expenditures within the borders of a nation or a political subdivision or a transportation-centred economic area of contiguous states or nations (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009).

Following the ambiguous nature of their description of the industry they summarily defined tourism to include the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host government, host communities and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors. Yet this definition seem not sufficient enough thus for coherence in the definition of tourism scholars have adopted the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) definition that "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

However, from the above definition it is clear that what is now considered as tourism was related to humankind's insatiable curiosity. Their desire to travel to learn about other people and their culture has always been an essential motivator. Hunziker and Krapf expressed this well when they pointed out, that there is no tourism without culture (Dewar, 2005: 125). Culture itself is the totality of a groups' pattern of behaviour. Thus, based on the urge to satisfy tourist curiosity to see other peoples in their authentic environment and to view the physical manifestation of their lives as expressed in arts and crafts, music, literature, dance, food and drink, play, handicrafts, language and ritual (Dewar, 2005: 126) gave rise to cultural tourism - any journey motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution (Walker and Walker, 2011) these elements constitute cultural resources. In other words, all cultural materials including cultural landscape that have survived from the past, are potentially cultural resources- that is they have some potential value or use in the present or future (Cleere, 1984: 1). Cultural landscapes can be divided into "those rich non-material and material attributes acquired within the society and transmitted through generations" (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002: 38) while Ogundele (2001: 109) subdivided them into archaeological and ethnographic materials. The archaeological include ancient monuments and settlement sites as well as the artifacts associated with them while the ethnographic resources are present day material and non-material dimension of human culture. Facets of this material culture include iron working, raw materials, the techniques involved and the end products , pottery technology, wood carving, cloth weaving, mat weaving, dyeing, leather work and settlement forms. Similarly, the non-material aspect involves cultural festivals. All the above material and non-material cultural resources constitute the African heritage which Ozo-Eson, (2012) described as aspect of African social lives which are highly appreciated and valued by the society and which were passed on from generation either consciously or unconsciously by our ancestors. They include the socio-political organizations, cultural patterns, and the mode

of production, the religious organizations, arts and crafts, and literary works and so on. All these are characteristics of any given society which are potentials that could be harnessed for tourism development (Ogundele, 2001, Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002). Development here involves the mobilization and uses of human and resources both natural and cultural within a state to meet the needs and possibly the wants of the citizens of such state (Fadahunsi, 1986). In view of this, tourism development in Nigeria specifically requires human effort in harnessing and packing tourism potentials which abounds all over the country. This development of various cultural resources of most countries (Saudi and Israel have renowned religious tourist centres) into tourist attractions prompts the rise of various tourism service industries which Walker (2013) described as the world's largest industry or collection of industries. These industries according to Cooper et al., (2005:4) made tourism a major force in the economy of the world, an activity of global importance and significance.

Cultural resources and tourism development in Awka town

Cultural resources are the major attraction of cultural tourism in most countries. It consists of both cultural material (Archaeological/Historical resources) and non-material (Ethnographic resources) remains of a people's life transmitted from one generation to another. At present archaeological sites are yet to be established in Awka. However, ethnographic material abound since they involve material and non-material remains of the community which could be harnessed to which Okpoko and Okpoko (2006: 61) asserted that in the tourism industry, ethnographic assets are very valuable. In Nigeria, the ethnographic resources in and outside the museum include war dresses, traditional and royal crafts, leather works, calabash decorations, woven cloth, ornaments, pottery, wood carving and bronze objects Momin (1986) in Okpoko and Okpoko (2002). The following rich ethnographic resources of Awka are indispensable to tourism industry.

Festivals

Festivals are memorable events set aside to commemorate important events in the life of people and communities such as coronation, worship of god(s), rites of passage, birth, death, history of origins, commencement of planting season etc. Ekpanobi and Ezeako (1990:134) defined festival as any special occasion, observation or celebration which may be religious or secular in nature and which is generally marked by merry-making, performance of music and the like. In other words festivals is an indispensable activity in African community it comprises of cultural display such as music, dancing, masquerading etc. hence, Awka is endowed with colourful traditional festival s celebrated monthly expect the fourth month of its lunar calendar. These festivals guides and directs activities throughout the year. The period of the festivals could be regarded as a public holiday as all is meant to participate therefore nobody goes to farm or work. The feasts celebrated in Awka are as follows:

Feast	Month
Egwu Imoka	May
Onwa Ukwu	June
Obubu Amanwulu	July
Onwa Evurum	August
Chi	September
Alo	October
Otite	November
Owuwaji	December

Ede Omoa Sel	January
Onwa Egwu Ovbube	February
Agbala Imoka	March
Ede mmou	April

Most of the above named festivals have gone into extinction due to the impact of modernity coupled with the fact that it does not involve the entire community. Of all the named festival, Imoka and Otite respectively have survived till date because they are the only festival celebrated by the entire community. For this research work only Imoka festival will be elaborated upon being the festival that draws attention of Awka neighbours while Otite is solely celebrated by Awka people as a form of reunion.

Imoka festival

This is the most populous and important of all Awka traditional festivals. It marks the beginning of a new planting season and it is a medium through which the people thank god for the past year praying for a prosperous new planting season. The feast is attached to Imoka god and is generally celebrated in the fifth week of Awka first lunar month (May). It lasts for one native week (four days) namely *Eke, Ori, Afor, Nkwo* excluding the first day of the event. It starts and ends on an *Afor* day. During the festival young men roam the street accompanying masquerades while titled men sit amongst themselves displaying their titled regalia especially their stool of office.

The food attached to this feast is the pounded yam and *avbulu* (bitter leaf) soup. The features of the festival include Masquerade parade at different villages squares entertaining people, display of various dancing group, mock battle of endurance of pain by young men (this involves the use of stick to flog people until one person quits) etc. On the last day of the event, at *Ameyi* village square masquerades perform theatrical display in form of mock trials after which the festival ends with the narration of memorable stories of Awka great men by an orator.

Arts and Craft

Arts and craft are cultural objects most of which are by hand. In Asakitikpi (2004: 189) view it includes anything that man requires manual dexterity or the application of artistic skill to accomplish. In other words, craft refer to an activity involving a special skill at making things with the hands (an important part of African arts and crafts), for example, traditional craft like basket weaving, carved wooden and stone objects, bronze cast objects, figurines made from clay, potteries, iron objects, etc. (Jabbe, 2004: 200). Crafts therefore portray a physical representative of man's perception of his immediate environment. This is applicable to Awka wood carvers who carve objects out of their mental perception to represent their religious beliefs. Awka people are known for their mastering in blacksmith and wood carving especially the title stool. To this, Okpoko and Okpoko (2002: 63) attested that it is therefore no accident that Awka and Nkwerre people in Igboland are acknowledged masters in blacksmithing. These indigenous technologies specifically wood carving and blacksmithing are enterprising trade which have produced series of cultural objects. The blacksmith produces both sacred and utilitarian objects such as *Opu-eke* (sacred horn made from iron used during Imoka festival), anklet- used by Ozo titled men, variety of cooking utensils. The blacksmith trade in Awka is protected by the *Akputakpu* god, the blacksmithing god known to be a blacksmith who smith in the night. Awka wood carvers on the other hand produces prestigious wood cultural objects used in decorating titled men reception house (*Obi*) and shrines such as ancestral figurines, emblems of gods, *Ikolo* drums, title stool, masquerade head mask, etc.

Traditional shrines

A shrine as described by Idowu (1996: 127) is primarily the face of the divinity. There the divinity is represented by the emblem which is regarded as sufficient reminders of his attributes. Idowu also noted that the Yoruba believes that a shrine is only a local meeting place between the divinity and the man. Therefore the shrine is a religious centre where man commune with the gods. In other words religious centres have been very important resources centre in the history of man Okpoko and Okpoko (2002: 60). There are so many shrines in Awka but notable amongst them is the Imoka shrine.

Sacred grove

The grove is open woodland and often dedicated to a shrine, the entire place are naturally quite frightening and connotes the presence of something beyond the mortal man's perception. In Awka the attachment of grove to a shrine makes it sacred. This sanction on the grove helps in preserving the landscape features as people are prohibited from entering the grove to farm, fetch fire wood or hunt animals therein. Thus, Awka people attach so much significance to sacred grove to which Cleere (1984) asserts that because human beings generally modify the landscapes in which they live, and because they attach names, myths and effective values to features of the territory they inhabit, the landscape of past cultures may also qualify as a cultural resources. Presently only *Imoka* sacred grove has been left unaltered since the advent of modernization and could be harnessed for tourism development.

The role of Awka cultural resources in tourism development

Awka town is endowed with unique cultural practices to which Okpoko and Okpoko (2002: 61) noted that today's cultural practices have continued to excite great interest among tourists. These cultural resources when properly harnessed will play a significant role in tourism development as cultural resources are the anvil on which Awka tourism development can be forged.

Awka traditional festival

Imoka festival is one of the cultural activities that open door to the inflow of people into Awka. As rightly put by Okpoko and Okpoko (2002: 61) traditional festivals have been known to represent important resources centres for participants and admires. Of all Awka traditional festivals the Imoka festival in particular draws the attention of Awka neighbours in the past and even till date.

The festival draws the attention of people because of the display and parade of colourful masquerade of all sizes during the event coupled with the display of different dance styles by various groups. This festival has the potential if properly harnessed to promote tourism development. When it is properly packaged by organizing the various activities that feature during the event and given proper publicity. This would attract sponsorship of reputable organisation like Osun-Osogbo had been sponsored by MTN, Coca-Cola, etc. It will turn out to be one of the sources of tourist attractions in the state. In this vein the significance of Imoka festival to Awka tourism development is both economical, aesthetic and social symbolic as the significance of this festival to tourism ranges from symbolic through informational and aesthetic to economic (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002).

The festival will promote the establishment of tourism related industries in the town to cater for the needs of the tourist consuming the festival. Based on this, *Imoka* festival will open up economic avenue both for the state and town. It will serve as a source of revenue for the state while boosting local man-power of host community members who will cease the opportunity to showcase their creative art objects for the visitors and also entertain them with their local cuisine.

Awka traditional shrine

Imoka shrine in Awka is a religious centre serving not only as a place of worship but also as traditional museum where ritual objects of great importance are kept. Religious centres since antiquity to date are important repository of the history of man. In its religious capacity Awka shrines serve as locations for traditional festivals which attract both adherents and visitors from all across the nation and beyond (Ezenagu, 2016). Since participation in these events is open to non-adherents makes it's an important tourist attraction. In view of this, Awolalu (1979: 116) stated that the Osun shrine in Osogbo is rapidly becoming a tourist centre. Today we have so many religious tourists visiting world religious cities like Mecca in Saudi, Jerusalem, etc. likewise in Nigeria there are numerous examples of local shrines that have been points of attraction for adherents and admirers (Okpoko and Okpoko, 2002: 61). Imoka shrine is amongst such shrine that contains the cultural history of its people which is appealing to adherents and admirers. It can serve as an indigenous museum where cultural rituals objects of various purposes are displayed. Cultural tourist visit local shrines to admire the aesthetic value of the objects on display and also from it learn the history of the people.

Sacred grove

The Imoka grove possesses an undisturbed landscape because of the sanction which prohibits human activity within the grove. This has helped to preserve the grove and maintain its natural scenic beauty. Imoka sacred grove is a vast land dotted with tall trees and grasses in *Amenyi* Awka. It possesses a peaceful atmosphere as a place where people would love to retire to after a hard day for relaxation. Such a place could be declared a National monument and henceforth a natural museum like Osun-Osogbo scared grove for more effective use in other to retain its natural beauty.

Arts and Craft

The major craft Awka is known for is its Blacksmith industry. Its locally made products are quite unique and attractive. Likewise Awka wooden objects especially Awka title stools could be sold as souvenirs to tourists. These highly priced art works can be displayed in different craft shops around the town for tourist purchase as souvenirs. Through this means tourism does not only create jobs for artisan but also aids in job retention because without the demand of these art works by tourist most craft would have languished in to relative obscurity instead of experiencing the rather buoyant demand of today. The craft market will further serve as a medium for the preservation of Awka craft which has in the past be their icon of identity.

Benefits of cultural resources and tourism development to Awka community

Cultural resources are of immense benefit to Awka community. Foremost it is the community cultural mark that is a medium through Awka people distinguish themselves from their

neighbours. For instance their mastery of blacksmith is known throughout Igbo land. Also it promotes cultural tourism. Thus far tourism is known to be the business of travel of which travelling to admire and participate in various cultural activities is no exception. In other words, cultural tourism is promoted through cultural resources which in Awka are sustained through its traditional festival, dance, title taking, arts and craft.

Through this avenue tourists will flow into the town while the joy of these cultural events enhances peace and unity among host community and its visitors. Hence, the preservation of cultural resources for tourism development promotes cultural education and awareness. Prior to the advent of western model school, Awka people were educated in the traditions of the town with the use of oral literature emanating from ritual ceremonies (Ezenagu, 2016). In essence, cultural resources are used to educate the host community and its visitors on the host community's historical background.

Further, tourism development is vital to Awka community as the inflow of tourist into the community will bring about rapid infrastructural development. The presence of tourism development in the community will bring about the establishment of other tourism industries. Therefore, tourism industries boost the economy of the host community through tourist expenditure. This is based on the fact that from the arrival to the departure of tourist, they never cease spending money from the country of residence on the host community's economy.

Problems besetting cultural resources in Awka community

The inception of the British in Nigeria introduced modernity, a concept Nigerians are seeking to naturalize. The acceptance of modernity without caution led to the negligence of traditions under which cultural materials flourish. Under the influence of modernity, people developed lackadaisical attitude towards cultural materials which were either regarded as archaic material or fetish. The cultural materials especially, shrine and sacred grove because they were attached to traditional religion most people regard them as fetish. This gave rise to the destruction of cultural objects in both shrines and sacred grove. For instance old architectural building of great historical importance are pulled down and replaced with a modern one.

Traditional shrines are incessantly destroyed by over-zealous Christians in the community and since the shrines are simply protected by indigenous norms not by the laws of National Commission for Museums and Monument (NCMM) the culprits are not brought to book for destroying important cultural materials. The destruction of shrines coupled with the people's lackadaisical attitude towards traditional institution of title-taking led to the decline of craft industry. Most carved objects are ritual objects used for various initiation rites without which the industry might collapse. This lack of patronage does not encourage the makers of these objects. In effect most wood carvers and blacksmith have abandoned this age long tradition for other viable business.

Also the absence of a museum in Awka equally contributed to destruction of many important craft objects. With the museum, most art works which would have been destroyed if left in traditional shrines, could be preserved in the museum for posterity and for future generations to enjoy. At least with a museum, the *Imoka* sacred grove would have long be declared a National Monument like the *Osun-Osogbo* grove before the World Heritage inscription. What is left of the sacred grove barely the trees where the sacrifices are made to the god and where few of the moneys which are still the emissaries of gods dwell due to human encroachment. Most areas of the land are gradually been taken by people constructing residential homes close to the grove. Furthermore, there is no room for salvage

archaeology. Presently, so many construction works are being executed in different parts of Awka without any effort made to salvage any endangered archaeological site or materials. Without salvage archaeology so many cultural sites will be lost to posterity.

Solutions to the problems besting Awka cultural resources

To ensure the preservation of Awka cultural resources there is need for cultural education and awareness. This could be achieved using the mass media, cultural seminars, school curriculum etc. through this medium the people will be enlightened concerning the significance of cultural resources which they destroy at will. Once the people understand that it is their cultural identity and national pride they will be willing to protect it and also patronise art works. Today most carvers now carve objects depicting contemporary ideology and issues no longer restricted to ritual activities. The inclusion of contemporary ideology to traditional art creates room for patronage both as tourist souvenir and gift item.

Also the government through the National Commission for Museums and Monument (NCMM) should establish a museum in Awka. The museum would be in a better position to collect and at the same time provide shelter for cultural objects and protect what is left of *Imoka* sacred grove. It would equally create an avenue for essential cultural education.

Furthermore, for proper harnessing of Awka cultural resources there is need for comprehensive register of Awka tourist attractions. With such register care would be taken to ensure that they are well packaged so as to attract the target audience. In nutshell when Awka cultural resources are well preserved its tourism potentials harnessed there is no doubt that tourism industry will not strive in Awka.

Conclusion

This research work anchors on the role of cultural resources in tourism development in Awka. It revealed Awka unique cultural heritage, its value to tourism and its benefit to the community at large. For the development of tourism industry in Awka its cultural resources have a significant role to play. Although tourism development in Awka is geared towards the construction of hotels and other infrastructural facilities there is nonetheless a huge need to harness cultural resources as tourist attractions. It is through tourism that people will come to appreciate cultural resources especially the cultural events such as traditional festivals, dance, cuisine etc. In order to meet tourist tastes these could be harnessed and repackaged adding some modern forms of entertainment. For instance the *mmonwu* (masquerade) festival instituted in Anambra and Enugu states...was directed towards generating tourist traffic Okpoko and Okpoko (2002: 63). Also the modernization of traditional arts to contemporary art works is equally geared towards promoting the industry so that art works of today no longer depicts religious activities. This innovation has inevitably increased its patronage by both tourist and members of the community. Furthermore, the movement of the Nigerian museums beyond the borders of urban centres deeply into the rural areas is channelled towards the preservation of *inter alia* cultural resources. Although large numbers of people move down to the urban centres the rural areas is still richly populated with people who are by and large well versed in arts and crafts and whose objects are constantly facing the threat of destruction (Ezenagu and Oluwole, 2014).

The objects are the physical evidence of the unique way of life and viewed through their functionality in the community and they thus constitute a rich cultural material which serves as a mark of special and unique identity. In conclusion cultural resources are priceless heritage which deserve to be conserved and preserved by both the state and community at

large as they create a pathway for the development of tourism industry and also uplift the local community in general.

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