



The Confluence Beach Hotel Lokoja as a tourism tool for economic empowerment

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Abstract

In recent years, tourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors around the globe. Its rapid growth and multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy of any given destination made it a viable tool for development. Considering the immense benefits of tourism, this research evaluated tourism as a tool for economic empowerment in Kogi State Nigeria, using the Confluence Beach Hotel as a case study. The Niger and Benue are the two largest rivers in West Africa and they meet at Lokoja in Kogi state, forming a Y-shape in what is a magnificent union and they then drain southwards into the ocean. While the Niger is brownish in colour, the Benue river is light green in colour. Fishing is carried on extensively on the rivers. There are also ferry and boat services as well as cruising facilities within the view of the confluence. The Confluence Beach Hotel was erected in 1999 in this unique geographical location and primarily offers accommodation, as well as food and beverage services to visitors along with other services and facilities. Since its establishment, the hotel has attracted both domestic and international tourists'. Their expenditure serves as a veritable source of income for members of the local community. The research employed a quantitative method and a questionnaire given to a study population of 100 people comprising the hotel visitors and some locals. Only 86 respondents returned the completed questionnaire and the data supplied were analyzed through the use of simple percentages to evaluate the response of the respondents. From the findings, the study reveals that the Confluence Beach Hotel has positively contributed to the economic well-being of the state and the host community.

Keywords: Tourism, development, Beach, Hotel, empowerment

Introduction

Tourism is a purposeful temporary journey to different destinations for different reasons. From the historical accounts of travel, man has unconsciously engaged himself in tourism right from when he wandered through the dark forests of the untamed world, in search of food, shelter, adventure, knowledge, and new terrains to conquer. Travelling was difficult and precarious, especially without a place of rest and refreshment for the night. However, today tourists travel to a number of choice destinations which are proliferated with a variety of accommodations which



are designed to provide a 'home away from home'. Since staying away from home is one of the requirements of tourism, tourists require a location where they can rest and revive themselves during their travel through, or their stay within, a tourism destination (Cooper et al. 2005). To cater for this need of staying at a destination, the tourism industry offers accommodation which forms the bases from whence tourists can engage in meaningful tourism activities at the desired final destination. Available to tourists then, are a range of accommodation types which are not limited to only hotels.

A hotel simply put, is a "home away from home". They offer guests services especially room and food, in hospitable manner. That is why hotels have been described as places which provide a space to stay, food to eat, drinks and some facilities to enjoy at a fair value price. In Cooper et al's (2005) opinion, hotels are major providers of leisure, sporting and entertainment facilities as well as business and conference services. Therefore, hotels not only meet the visitor's basic requirement – of shelter for the night – but also add value to the experience by providing ancillary services and products (Page, 2009: 263). The hotel guests in consuming all the services and facilities offered, inject money into the economy of the destination. Thus, a hotel is a tourism business which attracts tourist expenditure through its primary offer of accommodation. The hotel guests, visitors or tourists, as the case may be, spend money in the retail shops within the community, consuming recreational facilities, transportation, and eat in restaurants and eateries, which directly or indirectly creates employment. Walker and Walker (2011: 63) assert that hotels provide substantial direct and indirect economic impacts to the communities in which they are located. For the direct impact, consider a hotel that has an average of 240 guests a night who spend \$250 at the hotel and in restaurants and stores in the community. That would mean $\$240 \times \$250 \times 365 \text{ days} = \21.9 million a year infused into the local economy. The indirect impact in their opinion comes from money spent by the employees (wages and salaries) of the hotel in the communities and also money used by the hotel to purchase all the items to service the guests needs. Considering this importance of the hotel business to destination economies, Page (2009: 263) concurred that a hotel is not simply a premises with rooms, food and beverage services, but rather a business, oriented towards a constantly changing clientele. This forms the premise of this research work which is set to evaluate the economic impact of the Confluence Beach Hotel Lokoja, to the local community.

Study Area

The Confluence Beach Hotel, is located along Ganaja Road, Lokoja, in the state capital of Kogi, and was built by ex-governor, Abubakar Audu, to serve as a first-class accommodation and tourist centre for guests within and beyond the state (Itodo and Usman, 2016). It is one of the most renowned tourist attractions in the state and it is strategically located in close proximity to the unique Confluence point of the Niger and Benue rivers. Therefore, tourists' cannot resist the tempting leisure possibilities of the magnificent hotel structure for their relaxation and enjoyment in the picturesque beauty of Nigerian nature (Ezenagu and Iwuagwu, 2016). The confluence point appears to be like a giant "Y" when seen from a distance. It constitutes a rare sight that would attract any visitor which can be viewed from the hotel. The Confluence Beach Hotel is owned by the Kogi State Government, built during the administration of ex-governor Abubakar Audu in 1999, and commissioned by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2000, as part of Nigerian Government's efforts to expand and develop the tourism sector. According to the Assistant Manager, Mr. Abdullah, the 5-star hotel commenced full operation on 20th May, 2000 and was first managed by the Ikeja Hotel Limited for period of five years. It is presently



managed by the State Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The first set of structures built at the hotel comprise 151 rooms and chalets, a reception hall, laundry, lobby, two conference halls, restaurant, swimming pool, a mosque, a basketball pitch and a small wild park. Later an additional 100 rooms were constructed and all these facilities are managed by well-trained staff and good hotel management.

Origin of hotels in Nigeria

Hotels as we know them today, are a western invention, but the primary activities of hotels which provide for the welfare of strangers in need, actually stem from African traditions. In other words, before Nigerians had contact with the western world, the services which hotels offer their guests were an attitude embedded in the African culture known as hospitality – offering help to strangers. Buttressing African hospitality, Moila (2002: 2) has noted that it is an African custom to offer hospitality even to strangers. Hospitality is perceived and practiced by Africans as open-handed, instinctive and the most natural thing in the world. Within the sphere of this cultural perception, travelling in any ancient African society to different destinations, was a well established habit since travellers could easily seek places of rest and refreshment, mainly with families within the route to a particular destination.

However, with the coming of the Europeans, especially the early missionaries, whose daily activities were amongst the people, there was a necessity to erect rest-houses at certain places as points of rest and refreshment during a journey. With these rest houses, came improved land transportation by rail and road. Transportation systems became effective and thus improved trading relations (transportation of goods) but on the other hand, they also enhanced tourism. The railway system brought about the establishment of guest inns at most railway terminals to provide sleeping and other basic facilities for the teeming travellers and railway staff. With the introduction of automobile vehicles into the country, coupled with the construction of roads, came the promotion the development of towns and then cities. Gradually many rural communities were becoming more accessible with the construction of roads and provision of infrastructural facilities including electricity, clean water, hotels, health care centres etc. manifested. The many services and facilities promoted tourism, and especially the commencement of the aviation industry which made it easier for international tourists to access the country. The need to cater for the various categories of both international and domestic tourists led to the proliferation of accommodations – hotels in the country with unique facilities.

Literature review

Tourism is a multidimensional, multi-faceted activity which touches many lives and business activities. The industry specialises in providing tour related services, a conglomeration of services offered by restaurants, hotels, motels, travel agencies, transport etc., to tourists (Olatunji and Ezenagu, 2016; Ezenagu, 2013). Considering the broad nature of services offered by different sectors of tourism, the industry is highly labour intensive. In other words, it is invariably a significant source of employment creating different degrees of jobs ranging from skilled to unskilled labour. That is why today, tourism is recognized as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Such rapid growth and its concurrent development practices are the stronghold of most world economies (Kukoyi and Ezenagu, 2013). On this assumption, so many nations of the world are becoming tourist destinations not just to entertain tourists but to empower their economy through tourist expenditure. In effect, greater international attention and



recognition have shifted to tourism as a vehicle for poverty alleviation, employment generation and wealth creation. Therefore, no country of the world whether industrialized or developing, can afford to ignore the importance of tourism to its economy (Ezenagu, 2013). Significantly, this sector has been shown to be providing income earning opportunities for a large number of people through the satisfaction of tourist needs (expenditure) which in turn is injected into the destination's economy. Following the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) report in 2015, Travel & Tourism contributed a total of US\$7.2 trillion to world GDP, representing 9.8% of global GDP, also 2.5 million new jobs were generated directly in the sector in 2015, taking the number of direct jobs to 108 million. In total, 7.2 million new jobs were created as a result of direct, indirect and induced activity. This WTTC analysis substantiated that visitors' expenditure on accommodation, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping, is an important contributor to the economy of many destinations, creating much needed employment and opportunities for development.

This business of travel upon which tourism industry is built cannot survive in the absence of accommodation. The accommodation sector is by a long way, the largest and most ubiquitous sub-sector within the tourism economy (Cooper et al., 2005). It appears to be one of the basic requirements of tourist stay in any destination. In Page's (2009) opinion, accommodation provides the base from which tourists can engage in the process of staying at a destination. The hosting of guests in various accommodations is the commencement of tourism expenditure in any destination. Available at most destinations are various kinds of accommodations most commonly hotels. Tourist hotel's as commercial establishments specialize in the provision of a place to stay (accommodation) as their major service to tourists, and sell food and drinks to their guests and some of these products are bought directly from locals. For example, carvings for decorations, bananas, vegetables, local wines, hence contributing in building the local community's income for their future development (UNCTAD, 2007). In other words, a hotel is a tourism business unit which as its main endeavour, rents room accommodation to the general public for a minimum duration of one night (Jafar, 2005: 288). In addition, hotels provide a base for business travel, meetings and conferences and these are also lucrative, high-yielding business opportunities (i.e. they attract high profit margins due to the expenditure by business travellers and delegates), with rooms being hired for meetings, and functions being provided along with entertainment. Both business travellers' and leisure travellers staying in hotel accommodation, have a higher propensity to spend whilst they are away, rather than when they are at home. Therefore, hotels also have the advantage that hosting guests has the potential to generate additional revenue from food and beverage services (Page, 2009: 258).

From the above citations, it is clear that hotel investments are appealing from a development impact perspective, creating jobs and generating foreign exchange and tax revenue (Cain, 2012). To buttress the economic importance of hotels to host communities, Cain (2012) from the IFC, sponsored research on the economic impact of the 148 room Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda where IFC made an investment in 2008, and found that the hotel generated \$85 million of economic activity in the first few years. In addition, and more directly important, the hotel employs 350 permanent staff. This includes jobs created indirectly through suppliers, and the number increases to over 1,100. Furthermore, Cain also made reference to 123- room Monasterio Hotel in Cusco, which employs 308 permanent staff. The hotel guests, average daily expenditure outside the hotel was over \$300, benefitting local tour operators, transport companies, restaurants and shops. This analysis clearly validates British hospitality reports which stated that Hospitality is one of the main pillars of the UK economy and the economic



driver of almost every part of the country. It is the fifth largest industry in the UK, directly employing over 2.4m people and accounting for a further 1.2m indirect jobs through the industry's multiplier effect on other sectors. In Nigeria, the hospitality industry contributed N680.1 million to the Nigerian economy in 1980, N492.4 million in 1984 (using 1984 constant basic prices for both periods), N477.9 million in 1990, N591.9 million in 2000 (CBN, 2003), N1950.0 million in 2004 and N2, 390.0 million in 2006 (using 1990 constant basic prices) (CBN, 2006). From the afore-going, the hotel business while primarily established to provide accommodation for its guests, goes beyond what is a commercial outlet with outstanding facilities capable of influencing the economy of host community positively, both directly and indirectly.

Population, Data analysis and interpretation

The population of this study consisted of the locals of Lokoja town and also tourists who visit the Confluence Beach Hotel. In analyzing data from the 86 copies of questionnaires returned a simple frequency table was adopted to interpret and analyze the research findings following detailed and descriptive interpretations of the tables.

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 59 | 68.6% |
| Female | 27 | 31.4% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The table above shows that 68.6% of the respondents were males accounting for the majority of visitors. While the remaining 31.4% were females.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 18-29 | 17 | 19.8% |
| 30-39 | 30 | 34.9% |
| 40-49 | 21 | 24.4% |
| 50 above | 18 | 20.9% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The result on table 2 shows that 17 people out of the total population were between the ages of 18 – 29 (19.8%), 30 persons were between the ages of 30 – 39 (34.9%), while 21 persons out of the total population were between the age 40 – 49 (24.9%) with 18 persons who were of 50 years and above constituting 20.9% of the total population.

Table 3: Marital Status

| Reponses | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Single | 25 | 29% |
| Married | 55 | 64% |
| Others | 6 | 7% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014



Table 3 above shows that many of the respondents were married. In other words, 55 respondents which represent 64% of the total population, were married while the remaining 25(29%) respondents were single and only 6 (7%) respondents represent others (widows, widower, divorced or separated)

Table 4: Do you agree that the Confluence Beach Hotel is a tourist attraction?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 20 | 23.3% |
| Agree | 51 | 59.3% |
| Not Sure | 9 | 10% |
| Disagree | 6 | 7% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4 shows that 20 (23.3%) of the total respondents strongly agree that the Confluence Beach Hotel is a tourist attraction. 51(59.3%) respondents agree that the is a tourist attraction. 10.5% which constitute 9 respondents said they were not sure if the hotel is a tourist attraction or not, while 6 (6.9%) of the respondents disagreed that the Confluence Beach Hotel is not a tourist attraction. From the simple statistics, it is clear that Confluence Beach Hotel is a tourist attraction. The methodology is of course a limitation.

Table 5: Do you agree that the of Confluence Beach Hotel lures tourists to visit the Confluence point?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 9.3% |
| Agree | 68 | 79.1% |
| Not Sure | 7 | 8.1% |
| Disagree | 2 | 2.3% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 5 indicates that 8 respondents which constitute 9.3% of the study population strongly agreed with the above question. Also, 68 (79.1%) respondents agreed to the above question while 7 (8.1%) respondents were not sure. 2 (2.3%) respondents disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. With lower percentages of the total study population not in agreement, the implication is that the Confluence Beach Hotel lures tourists to visit Confluence point.

Table 6: Do you agree that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel have increased the flow of tourists to Lokoja?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 7 | 8.1% |
| Agree | 33 | 38.4% |
| Not Sure | 32 | 37.2% |
| Disagree | 12 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 2.3% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014



Table 6 shows 7 (8.1%) respondents strongly agreed that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel have increased the number of tourists to Lokoja. 33 respondents making up 38.4% of the study population simply agreed while 32 (37.2%) respondents were not sure if the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel activities could increase the number of tourists to Lokoja. 12 (14%) out of the 86 respondents disagreed and 2.3% of the study population strongly disagreed. Hence, following the above statistic, higher percentage of the total population actually agreed that the activities of Confluence beach hotel have increased the flow of tourist to Lokoja.

Table 7: Do you agree that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel attracts foreign tourists and investors to the state?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 9.3% |
| Agree | 46 | 53.5% |
| Not Sure | 30 | 34.8% |
| Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 7 indicates in a simple manner that 8 (9.3%) of respondents strongly agreed that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel attracted foreign tourists and investor to the State while 46 respondents simply agreed with the above question. 30 (34.8%) respondents were unsure while one respondent disagreed and one strongly disagreed with the above question. From the above statistics, since 54 respondents out of the total study population agreed with the above question, it implies that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel may indeed attract foreign tourists and investors to the State.

Table 8: Do you agree that the Confluence Beach Hotel has increased economic activities in the community through tourists' expenditure?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 5.8% |
| Agree | 44 | 51.2% |
| Not Sure | 27 | 31.4% |
| Disagree | 6 | 7% |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 4.6% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 8 shows that 5 respondents agreed to the above question and 51% of the study population that is 44 respondents, agreed, while 27 respondents were unsure. Six respondents disagreed along with 4 respondents who also strongly disagreed with the above question and they constitute a low percentage of the total population study. This implies the Confluence Beach Hotel has increased economic activities in the community through tourists' expenditure which is higher than expected.

Table 9: Do you agree that the Confluence Beach Hotel can create employment opportunities?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 38 | 44.2% |
| Agree | 41 | 47.7% |
| Not Sure | 7 | 8.1% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 86 | 100% |



Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 9 shows that the Confluence Beach Hotel creates employment opportunities for members of the community with 44.2% of respondents strongly agreed with the above question and 47.7% of the total population also agreed. Only 7 respondents were uncertain while none neither disagreed, nor strongly disagreed.

Table 10: Do you agree that the Confluence Beach Hotel stimulates development of other industries within the state?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 20 | 23.3% |
| Agree | 47 | 54.6% |
| Not Sure | 15 | 17.4% |
| Disagree | 3 | 3.5% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 10 shows 20 (23.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the above question. 54.6% of the total study population also agreed with the above question while 17.4% of the study population were not sure. Three respondents disagreed along with one respondent who also strongly disagreed. Thus, with higher percentages of the total study population in agreement, the implication seems to be that the Confluence Beach Hotel stimulates the development of other industries within the state.

Table 11: Do you agree that the State Government generates revenue from the activities of Confluence Beach Hotel?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 20 | 23.3% |
| Agree | 51 | 59.3% |
| Not Sure | 12 | 13.9% |
| Disagree | 3 | 3.5% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 11 shows that 20 (23.3%) of respondents strongly agreed with the above question while 51 (59.3%) respondents simply agreed. 12 (13.9%) respondents were not sure while 3 respondents disagreed and none strongly disagreed. This implies that the Confluence Beach Hotel activities generate revenue for the government.

Table 12: Do you agree that Confluence Beach Hotel brought infrastructural development to the community?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 22 | 25.5% |
| Agree | 52 | 60.5% |
| Not Sure | 9 | 10.5% |
| Disagree | 2 | 2.3% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014



Table 12 shows that 22 respondents or some 25.5% of the total study population strongly agreed with the above question. Also 52 respondents making up 60.5% of the population agreed with the above question while 9 (10.5%) respondents were not sure. Two respondents disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. Therefore, the responses imply that the Confluence Beach Hotel brought about infrastructural development to the community, inter alia, more tourism related industries, good roads, electricity, and health care centres.

Table 13: Do you agree that Confluence Beach Hotel has contributed to the development of tourism industry?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 2 | 2.3% |
| Agree | 50 | 58.1% |
| Not Sure | 29 | 33.7% |
| Disagree | 4 | 4.7% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.2% |
| Total | 86 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 13 shows that 2 (2.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the above question while 50 respondents making up 58.1% of the total study population simply agreed. 29 (33.7%) respondents were not sure. 4 (4.7%) respondents disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed. With more than 58.1% of the total study population in agreement, this implies that the Confluence Beach Hotel has contributed to the development of the tourism industry with the constant establishment of tourism related industries springing up to meet the numerous needs of the growing tourist population going to the state.

Discussion of findings

According to the data retrieved, it can be noted that the tourist attractions have a positive effect on the economic development of the state in question. This includes generating revenue for the state and host community, because the tourists that patronize the site, lodge not only at the Confluence Beach Hotel, but also at other reputable hotels within the state. They pay tour guides for sightseeing and patronise the works of local craftsmen and enjoy the local cuisine at restaurants in the town. Consequently, the income generated through tourist expenditure goes to the state account in a manner which boosts the local economy and improves the living standard of the people. It thus also brings about infrastructural development in the community. For the proper functioning of the hotel as a government establishment, it has brought good roads, electricity and clean water to the locals. Furthermore, the tourist site promotes cultural interactions which are important linkages. People from different backgrounds and diverse groups come together for the purpose of learning and relaxation. The host community tend to interact with tourists and seek to understanding other languages, lifestyles, and norms. These help the people of the community to broaden their horizons about life and additionally contributes to their knowledge.

The Confluence Beach Hotel provides employment opportunities for the populace. This means that people get to sell their product to tourists at various sites and also the majority of the hotel staff who are members of the community. With an increase in the flow of tourists in the community, there has been the establishment of numerous tourism related industries. These include people selling tourism product and services such as arts and crafts. The increase in



tourist flows also means more employment opportunities as the hotel needs to increase its staff strength so as to meet the growing needs of tourists.

Challenges of Confluence beach hotel Lokoja

Hotel business is an important service industry in most countries of the world, especially those attracting a large tourist trade. Despite its benefit to the economy of Nigeria its continued investment and upkeep is beset with so many challenges. Among them are high hotel charges and the slow pace of developing tourist sites that dot the various parts of the country (Akpabio, 2007). Part of the problem that affects the industry can be attributed to the erratic power supply that has rendered both the industry and the manufacturing sector in the country useless to the extent that most entrepreneurs have settled down with their business in the neighbouring countries like Ghana just because of the fact that power supply is available there (Laja, 2010). Therefore, with the slow development of infrastructural facilities which supports tourism and which facilitates the tourism industry, in addition, to the above problems, no foreign investors and tourists could reasonably be hoped show any interest either in investing or visiting any country with the above serious issues. Therefore, with these factors in mind, it is a wonder that a hotel business can survive in Nigeria.

The current economic recession has untold consequences on businesses in the country from which hotel industries are not exempted. In other words, Nigeria's hospitality sector has been hit hard by the economic slowdown, with occupancy rates in hotels falling below 35 per cent this year due to the contraction of economic activities in the country (Chima, 2016). To buttress this, Onehi et al. (2016) interviewing Mr. Gabriel Agada, Chairman of Chida Hotel Abuja, stated that the once lucrative hotel business is suddenly becoming unprofitable due to the current economic challenges in the country. He stated that:

“Presently, business is not okay...There is very low patronage. Moreover, in one single day, we may have a power supply for only five hours. We use generators for the rest of the day. For five hours, we use one drum of diesel to power our generator and a drum is 220 litres. A litre of diesel is N200. The money guests pay do not offset the huge bills we have to pay”.

In a situation where the hotel business bears the large burden of guest expenditure owing to the sharp drop of occupancy rates, this has led most hotel management laying off some of their staff in order to remain in business. Big hotels have continued to lay off their workers. The Southern Sun and Intercontinental Hotel, all had to lay off some workers because of the recession (Chima, 2016). Apart from reducing the workforce, the current economic recession in the country has forced some hotel operators in Asaba to slash their tariffs by between 35 per cent and 39 per cent to attract customers and remain in business. One of the operators, Mr Clement Odeiga, General Manager of Nelrose Hotels, said patronage had dropped significantly in the last six months, as such the only way to remain in business, was to reduce charges so as to attract more customers. He stated that “we have reduced the rates for our super executive room from N40,000 to N25,000, while our standard room now goes for N15,000 as against N25,000” (Leadership newspaper, 2016).

In the case of the Confluence Beach Hotel Lokoja, the hotel lacks a needed regular maintenance culture. According to Itodo and Usman (2016):



“the hotel swimming pool, basketball pitch, wildlife park and one of the conference halls, amongst other facilities are in terrible state, while some of the rooms are submerged by flood waters some time ago and have been abandoned. Besides, furniture in some of the rooms and chalets are in deplorable shape, especially those affected by flooding. Cobwebs have covered most of the rooms while the environment is overgrown with weeds, and this is an indication that all is not well with the once flourishing hotel. Some of the rooms and chalets, the basketball pitch and the swimming pool have been taken over by weeds due to lack of maintenance.”

The Confluence Beach Hotel is in a state of neglect and this could be as a result of the fact the hotel is owned and managed by the government and consequently suffers from mismanagement which is the result of the change of hotel management following what were clearly political appointments. This has greatly affected the hotel's productivity which is capable of generating revenue for the state, if made functional, and properly maintained rather than left to dilapidate and teeter on the brink of disaster.

Conclusion

All over the world, tourism constitutes a temporary movement for recreation, leisure, religious, family matters or business. Looking at the broad scope of this industry, it goes beyond mere temporary travelling around the world to lucrative economic enterprises set to rejuvenate or boost the economy of any nation as the case maybe (Olatunji and Ezenagu, 2016). The tourism industry consists of all the firms, organizations and facilities which are intended to serve the specific needs of tourists at various destinations, especially lodging, which provides tourists with places of rest and refreshment. The accommodation sectors especially hotels, offer rooms and other services to tourists for a specific amount. Tourists in the course of lodging are seeking to satisfy their numerous needs by patronizing other tourism related industries within the community. Thus, tourism holds great benefits for the host community, state and nation at large and these include the growth and stability of the community, increase in standards of living, generating employment opportunities, bringing in much needed foreign exchange etc. It can be deduced that the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel bring about economic empowerment in the state but it is not sustainable due to severe mismanagement and lack of genuine care. From the analysis of the findings, it can be concluded that, tourism has contributed to economic empowerment of the Kogi State through the activities of the Confluence Beach Hotel, but this is unlikely to continue due to the above factors .

Recommendations

Confluence Beach Hotel is a tourist attraction positioned to promote socio-economic development to the state. Achieving the above aim is not without some challenges to which the following suggestions are recommended:

1. There should be a supplementary funding from the State Government and others to provide more amenities and needed upgrading of the existing ones in the hotel.



2. The Government should renovate and restructure the Confluence Beach Hotel to become a greater tourist attraction as this will boost the local economy.
3. Development of marketing and a sensitization policy to attract both local and foreign tourists would help improve both the local and national economy and must be vigorously sought and effectively implemented.
4. The indoor sport hall should be provided to accommodate associated games within the area in order to complement existing amenities.

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