

Effect of Waste Management Control on Tourism Development: Ado-Ekiti as a Case Study

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Abstract

Increasing waste generation is synonymous with growing urbanization and human development which can be controlled by efficient and effective management. Some problems associated with waste management can be very severe, particularly in developing countries where technological know-how required for recycling human wastes and processing them into useful items, are inadequate. Consequently, poor waste management has constituted major hindrances to healthy living, environmental sustainability and development of tourism potentials. Ado-Ekiti, the capital of Ekiti State, South West Nigeria, is used as a case study. This work examined the implication(s) of poor waste management on tourism development, with particular reference to its aesthetic values. Relying on both primary and secondary data, this research found out that certain mountains in the study area (with a specific focus on Okeyinmi also known as Okuta-gbokuta-ru), have been turned to refuse sites, public toilets and even to an abode of social miscreants. Lack of political will, unstable government policies among other factors; have prevented the development and optimal utilization of the city's tourism potentials. However, effective and efficient management of municipal domestic wastes would go a long way in the development of the tourism potentials of the city; improve its internally generated revenue; provide employment opportunities and income earnings for jobless youths; engender community participation in heritage management and ultimately, alleviate poverty and underdevelopment.
Keywords: Underdevelopment; Eco-Tourism Potentials; Tourism Management; Waste Management and Community Participation.

Introduction

Waste management is the collection, transportation, processing, recycling or disposal of waste materials both municipal and domestic in an effort to mitigate their effects on human health, environmental sustainability, and aesthetics. Studies have shown that as urbanization continues to take place; engendering effective and efficient waste management practices have proven to be a major concern for public health, environmental sustainability and tourism development, particularly in capital cities of most developing countries, which are gateways and centres to businesses and other top class activities (Ogawa, 1997:1).

Ado-Ekiti, the capital of Ekiti State, Nigeria, is an ancient city in Nigeria, located between latitudes 7 034' and 7 041' North of the Equator and longitudes 5 011' and 5 016' East of the Greenwich Meridian. The area grew in a town of repute about 700 years ago, when the paramount ruler of the town called 'Elewi' joined the Princely adventure instituted by several children of Oduduwa (From Ile-Ife) to establish their territories (Ebisemiju, 1993). It became the headquarters of Ekiti Divisional Council in 1916 under colonial rule, and rose to the status of a state capital on October 1, 1996, after the creation of the Ekiti State by the Regime of General Sani Abacha.

According to National Population Commission (NPC) in 2006, Ado-Ekiti has a population of 257, 519. The city is strategically located at the convergence of major roads forming a radial pattern. *Okeyinmi*, the focus of this study, lies at the heart of Ado-Ekiti. It is popular for being a host the aesthetic mountain commonly called *Okuta-Gbokuta-ru* (meaning a small rock carrying a big one). The area spans about one kilometer.

Observable in Ado-Ekiti, poor management of human waste, coupled with the lack of political will on the part of successive governments to fully develop its tourism potentials have contributed negatively to the development of tourism in the city, particularly, at the *Okeyinmi*.

Consequently, poor human waste management had reduced the potentialities and the economic contributions of heritages (as critical assets for societal well-being and that of future generations), towards attaining socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, particularly in a period of serious economic downturn in Nigeria. This is particularly the case in Ekiti State, which has low internally generated revenue and often experience irregular payment of workers' salaries. This has resulted in an inability of the state government to embark on social infrastructure and other developmental programs.

It is against this backdrop that this work seeks to examine the effect of poor waste management on heritage development in Ado-Ekiti, with particular reference to *Oke yinmi*. This shall be done with a view to drawing out the contributions of tourism development to youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, community peace and security and enhancement of internally-generated revenue for the state government and the citizenry.

Waste Management and Tourism Development

Efficient management of waste is a global concern, requiring extensive research and development efforts towards exploring newer applications for sustainable and environmentally sound management (Bari and Haque 2012). Though a global phenomenon, Abila, and Kantola (2013) have expressed that the problem of waste management is a primordial and contemporary issue in developing countries of Africa, of which Nigeria is a good example.

The problems of waste management in Nigeria cut across concerns for human health, air, water and land pollution, environmental sustainability, disaster management, and sustainable tourism development, among others. The analysis of the key problem affecting the efficient management of municipal waste is critical for evolving a workable solution in an emerging economy like Nigeria (Abila and Kantola, 2013).

The continuous indiscriminate disposal of waste, in general, is accelerating, and it is linked to poverty, bad environmental governance, urbanization, population growth, poor standards of living coupled with low level of environmental awareness (Adewuyi *et al.*, 2009; Ogu, 2000).

As contended by Awosusi (2010:1; Bangboye, 2012: 2), waste management in Nigeria is constitutionally a local government function. However, virtually all the state government in Nigeria have taken over the responsibility of waste management in their various domains (ELRS, 2009). In Ekiti State, the State Waste Management Board (EKSWMB) existed as the sole public Agency responsible for waste management and was established on the assumption that individual Local Government Authorities were incapable of performing the function of waste management. Despite this, government's effort is grossly inadequate for a city like Ado-Ekiti, with an estimated population of 257, 519 people, generating about 9, 518 tons of waste every month (Ogwueleke, 2009; Amber and Kuller, 2009).

Findings, however, show that activities of EKSWMB are marred by poor logistics, lack of expertise and technical know-how, poor sanitation legislation, and weak implementation. One major consequence of this has been the slow development of tourism potentials in parts of the state like particularly Ado Ekiti, where a mountain with fantastic aesthetic values has been converted to a dumpsite as well as a haven for criminality.

It is important however to note that tourism development connotes the development of the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism. It equally suggests the ability to effectively and efficiently manage tourism potentials to meet the present needs, without jeopardizing the needs of the upcoming generations.

As a guideline for achieving sustainable tourism development, the United Nations World Tourism Organization Network (UNWTO) expressed that any such attempt should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute key elements in tourism development, maintain essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host community, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Theoretical Framework: Ungoverned Spaces

The "Ungoverned Space Theory" is adopted as the theoretical handle for this study. Teresa Whelan and Jennifer Keister have argued at different times that ungoverned spaces pose security threats not only to those

of their host countries but also to foreign countries as well. According to Whelan, ungoverned spaces include both physical and non-physical areas where there is an absence of State capacity or political will to exercise appropriate control. Physical spaces, according to her could include; land areas such as the Sahel region, where terrorists successfully conduct attacks in the past, maritime areas, such as the African Coastal Waters in the Gulf of Guinea or the Swahili, and other public spaces where criminality is pervasive. In a related manner, Keister (2014) argues that ungoverned spaces are not ungoverned, but exist under authorities other than the formal States. Using political economy as a tool of analysis, ungoverned spaces exist because integrating them offers little benefits and may pose a high cost to the host regimes (Keister, 2006:2).

Our case for this study, – the *Okeyinmi* Mountain area in Ado-Ekiti, is recognized for harboring social miscreants, drug merchants, and consumers and rapists. There have been registered cases of rape, theft, and armed robbery in the area, apart from its notoriety for uncontrolled waste disposal and open defecation. Similarly, religious activities which characterize mountainous areas in Ekiti have equally been hampered. However, promises by the government in rehabilitating the area has not materialized. Ungoverned spaces pose great threats to national, regional and international peace and security, besides their daunting effects on the development and utilization of natural and cultural heritages.

Finally, Keister (2014) suggests that ungoverned spaces can be properly managed by replacing or reforming them; outsourcing them to local loyalty, and co-opting and using as local governance contractors.

Methodology

Data for the purpose of this work were collected from both primary and secondary sources. A visit was made to the study area to observe the state of the natural heritage directly, and interviews were conducted with key informants. One of such was the Paramount Chief of the community; and a retired government official. Secondary data were derived from published texts. Data obtained were analyzed qualitatively and descriptively.

Discussion

It was established that wastes are poorly managed in Ado-Ekiti, with EKSMB lacking the capacity to cope with the quantum of waste generated. Besides, it was discovered that some of the houses around the study lack basic infrastructures, for example, toilet facility. Residents, therefore, resort to the mountain as their toilets. The environment also provides an abode for drug merchants and criminals.

It was also discovered that though the present government, through the Ministry of Environment, has recently mounted a barricade to prevent illicit waste disposal. However, the move has proven inadequate, as people still dump waste around the mountain! Furthermore, it was found out that all efforts by successive governments in the State to develop the natural heritage had failed. This has to do with lack of political will.

It was also gathered that one or two private individuals and corporate bodies particularly from outside Ekiti State had visited the area whether for research purposes or consultation with the Paramount Chief of the area on how to develop the tourists' attraction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that poor waste management, unstable government policies and lack of political will have adversely affected tourism development in Ado-Ekiti. However, the following recommendations are made:

The government should invest heavily in natural and cultural heritage development. In addition, a reliable working partnership should be instituted with the host community and the private sector in heritage development, conservation and sustainable waste management to facilitate the attainment of goal 16 of Sustainable Development Goals which is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”

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