

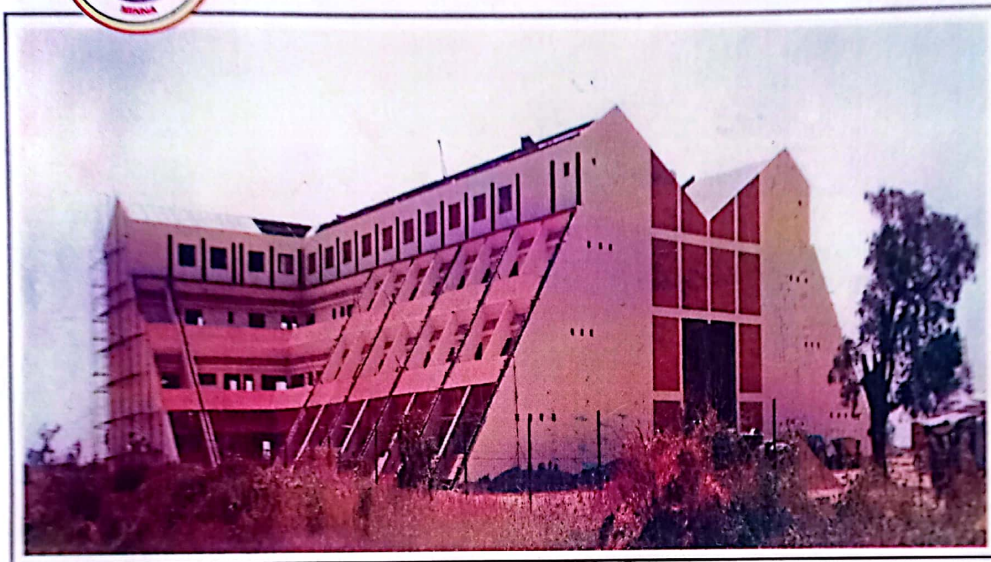


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THE BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS OF KANJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

Any nation that wastes her resources will never make a good history. It has been observed that there are many tourist centers or attractions that reflect country's cultural heritage all over the world such as Royal Castle Warsaw, Poland, Sidney opera House, Australia, All Giza Pyramids, Cairo, Egypt and Kenya National Park. The countries that possess these tourist centers have benefited immensely both economically and socially. As these countries celebrate the gains of effective tourist utilization, Nigeria is still struggling with her tourism sector. It is within this context that this research examines the factors militating against effective development and utilization of tourism in Nigeria using Kanji Lake National Park as case study. Findings reveal poorly maintained facilities, lack of tourist experts, poor funding and low patronage as the major problems militating against effective performance of the center. The paper recommends development of a business plan, employment of experts, detailed maintenance plan and upgrading existing facilities. It is believed that this will go a long way in giving the center a new look with a view to achieving the much desired productivity geared toward effective income generation and preservation of national cultural heritage.

Key words: *economy, management, preservation, resource and tourism*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is traveling for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or the provision of services to support their leisure travel. Tourism is therefore a popular global leisure activity which accords people to travel to distant parts of the world to see great buildings or other works of art, to learn new languages, to experience new culture or to taste new cuisine. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) forecasts that international tourism will continue growing at the average annual rate of 4% and that by 2020, Europe will remain the most popular destination in the world.

Tourism is also vital for many countries due to the income generated by the consumption of goods and services by tourists, the taxes levied on businesses in the tourism industry, and the opportunity for employment in the service industries associated with tourism. These services industries include transportation services such as cruise ships and taxis, accommodation such as hotels, restaurants, bars and entertainment venues, and other hospitality industry services such as spas and resorts. Today, tourism plays an integral role in American economy, society and culture. The Travel Industry Association of America reported that in 2001, tourism generated 7.8 million American jobs and revenues in excess of \$45 billion.

In less than two hundred years, touring has changed from the activity of a small elite to a mass phenomenon spurred by a thriving economy, improved transportation, national pride, and an increased desire to escape the pressures of modern life.

However, in Nigeria, much is yet to be realized from the tourism industry (sector). In 1998, the revenue generated from tourism was in the sum of \$78 million in spite of the available natural resources nature has endowed the country. This paper therefore highlights issues in tourism development. It discusses the policies needed to increase the benefits and ameliorate the problems militating against effective development and utilization of tourism in Nigeria using Kanji Lake National Park as case study.

2.0 KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

2.1 BRIEF HISTORY

The Kainji Lake National Park was established in 1979 by the amalgamation of two former game reserves-Borgu and Zuguma into one under Decree 46 of 29th July 1979, thereby making Kainji Lake the premier National Park in Nigeria. With an area of 5340.82sqkm, the Park was subsequently reconstituted under Acts 36 of 1991 and 46 of 1999 which established seven additional National Parks in Nigeria. The Park is a conservation area or nature enclave.

The objectives for establishing the Park include:

- i. Conservation of gene pool of indigenous plant and animal resources.
- ii. Promotion of scientific research and public education.
- iii. Promotion of cultural and ecological tourism.
- iv. Promotion of sustainable development of the Support Zone Communities.

2.2 THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE PARK

Kainji Lake National Park is sandwiched between the Guinea and Sudan Savannas in the North. As a consequence it displays a variety of vegetation types which form a mosaic of woodland savanna intersperse with patches of riparian forests along its major water courses. The resulting ecotone displays the following strata:

1. Burkina Africana/ deuterium microcarpum, woodland.
2. Afzelia Africana woodland.
3. Terminalia macroptera woodland.
4. Isoberlinia tomentosa woodland
5. Acacia complex
6. Riparian forest and woodland

Owing to initial sparse human population and long history of conservation of the area, the Park is home to a large pool of fauna resources among which are:

MAMMALS: Such as lion, Bushbuck, Mongoose, and Hippopotamus.

REPTILES: Such as Nile crocodile, Monitor lizard and Gabon Viper

BIRDS: Such as Secretary bird, White egret and Pied Kingfisher

FISHES: Such as African carps, Tilapias and Tiger fish

2.3 MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

For management purpose, the major departments at the administrative office include the following:

1. **Operational Department:** This department is sub-divided into two (2) sections:
 - a. Park protection and Conservation- This section caters for the protection of the resources of the park. The Park Officers otherwise known as Rangers are involved with this task. They are to go on patrol and surveillance on daily basis to check poaching activities. The Management Information Unit is under park protection and Conservation department. This unit collects and process data for park activities.
 - b. Eco-tourism section-Caters for the hospitality industry. The section offers catering services, lodging and attending to visitors and tourists.

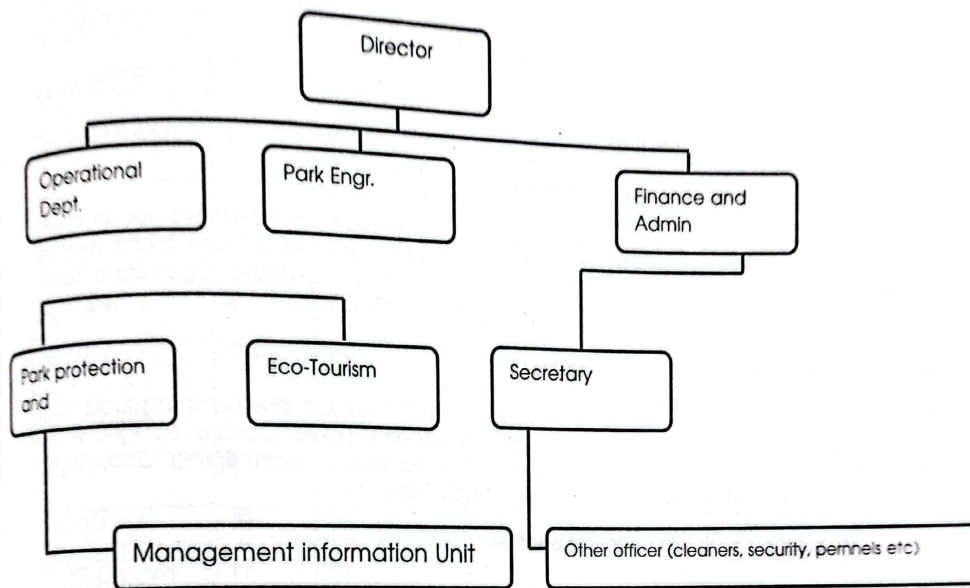
2. Park Engineering and Maintenance Department

This department is responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads within the park as well as the maintenance of the park facilities. Civil Engineers, Mechanical Engineers and Electrical Engineers work in this department.

Finance and Administrative Department

This department deals with all administrative issues. The department receives and attend to correspondence directed to the park as well as financial matters.

Fig1: showing the organization structure of management of Kainji Lake National Park



Source: author's Research (2008).

The organizational structure of the Park shows that the Director is the overall boss and co-ordinates the activities of the entire departments. He directs the subordinates and ensures comfortable environment for tourists at all times. He takes directives from the Conservator-General, National Park Service, Abuja. The Legal unit is directly under the office of the Director. The unit is concerned with litigation matters arising from combat with poaching activities such as illegal hunting, fishing and farming Poachers could sue or be sued.

TOURISM

Tourism involves making a holiday involving an overnight stay away from the normal place of residence. This is in contrast to recreation which involves leisure activities lasting less than twenty-four hour. This holiday may be based on the cultural, historic, and social attractions of an urban centre, or the appeal of a different environment. Urban tourism increases the importance of the central place while tourism at the periphery can provide the income for economic development.

The United Nations classified three forms of tourism in 1994 in its recommendations on tourism statistics: These include Domestic tourism (which involves residents of the given country travelling only within this country), Inbound tourism (involving non-residents travelling in the given country) and Outbound tourism (involving residents travelling in another country).

3.1 TYPES OF TOURIST CENTRES.

The history of tourist centres in Nigeria can be traced to pre-colonial periods. The development has been greatly enhanced by the growth of the hospitality industry. The diverse multi-ethnic culture flora and fauna in the country has resulted in making it a tourist delight. A list of some of the existing tourist centres which are spread throughout the 36 states and Abuja are categorized as given below:

- a. Topographic/Geographic tourist centres.
- b. Water and Wetland tourist centres.
- c. Vegetation and Wildlife tourist centres.
- d. Man Made tourist centres.

a. Topographical/Geological tourist centres

These are centres that are present in places with unique land features, for example mountains, hills, rocks, caves etc. They are also referred to as fund or stock tourist centres. Some examples and their locations include: Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Zuma Rock in Niger State and Ogburuku Cave in Anambra State.

b. Water and Wetland tourist centres.

These are sometimes referred to as flow tourist centres. They are prevalent in places with continuous flow of the resources of nature e.g. Streams, Lakes, Oceans, Sunlight, Wind, Beaches and Tides. Examples in the country include: Ikogosi Warm Spring, Ondo State, Gurara fall, Niger State and Lekki Peninsula, Lagos State.

c. Vegetation and Wildlife tourist centres.

These are centres that are based on its peculiar vegetation and animals prevalent in the areas. These include: Kainji Lake National Park, Niger State, Yankari Game Reserves, Bauchi State and Old Oyo National Parks, Oyo State.

d. Man made tourist Centres

These are distinct from the natural ones. They fall under the composite tourist centres and have a predictable economic life. These include buildings of historical importance, parks, Abandoned mine sites, museums and monuments, Hotels and Resort. Examples include: The National Museum, Lagos, Oil Museum at Oloibiri, Rivers State and Tomb of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

3.2 ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM IN AFRICA

Tourism industry boosts the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country where it is popular and earns substantial foreign exchange. Tourism has been identified globally as the employer of labour and foreign exchange earners. Tourism products are many; it includes a host of intangible elements such as sense of fun, excitement and style. Though Nigeria has not really invested into opportunities in tourism, it has earned up to 86 Million Dollar in 1997 in the African tourism market.

Gujan (1994) opined that government alone cannot handle tourism development successfully. He said there is the need to promote tourism development through incentives. He further expressed optimism for Nigeria's tourism development as becoming a reliable foreign exchange earner in less than a decade. He also said that it is an acceptable fact that tourism, if properly developed makes substantial contribution to a nation's economy. He stressed that the economy of a country like Switzerland is fully supported by its tourism industry. Tourism alone is said to have earned Britain 196 billion naira in 1985, while the USA netted about 830 billion naira in the sector in the same year.

In African where the industry is still at its infancy, Faosake (2001) said that in recent years, tourism has become one major international economic activity. He stressed that it has been perceived to offer many benefits to countries in the developing world. He noted that tourism development in Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are part of their economic development strategies.

Table 1: Showing the Top Tourism Earners In Africa

| COUNTRY | RANK | TOURISM RECEIPT MILLION U.S \$ | % OF REGIONAL TOTAL |
|--------------|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| TUNISIA | 1 | 1,234 | 29.6 |
| MOROCCO | 2 | 1,102 | 26.5 |
| SOUTH AFRICA | 3 | 673 | 16.2 |
| KENYA | 4 | 410 | 9.8 |
| MARITIUS | 5 | 172 | 4.1 |
| ALGERIA | 6 | 132 | 3.2 |
| SENEGAL | 7 | 123 | 3.0 |
| SEYCHELLES | 8 | 81 | 2.0 |
| NIGERIA | 9 | 78 | 1.8 |
| SUDAN | 10 | 55 | 1.3 |
| COTE DIVOIRE | 11 | 53 | 1.3 |
| CAMEROUN | 12 | 50 | 1.2 |
| TOTAL | | 4,163 | 100 |

Source: World Tourism Development (1998)

3.3 AVAILABLE CENTRES/FACILITIES AT THE KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

Kainji Lake National Park has comfortable centres and tourist facilities at various locations. These include:

(i) Infrastructure

The park has its own functioning generating plants and boreholes to ensure constant power and water supply. The park is also linked up to the National Grid for electricity supply as well as network of Jeep tracks.

(ii) Kob Amusement Centre

The centre is situated at Wawa office, Borgu sector. It has, among other facilities, an Annex of Oil River Tourist lodge, mini-zoo/museum, recreational facility, canteen, bar, Zik of Africa Hall for meetings and the Weaver Bird workshop, which also serves tourist needs. Tourists book here before proceeding to Oil River Tourist camp for viewing.

(III) Museum

At the Kob Amusement Centre in Wawa, visitors/tourists are welcome to the Modern Park Museum where fascinating wildlife trophies and traditional gear/costumes, African cultural art-facts are displayed to show the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria.

(IV) Power Chute

The power chute is an equipment at the park for aerial viewing. The power chute is used by tourists to fly over vegetation in the air to clearly view animals in the park. There are two (2) power chutes in the entire park.

(VI) Water Bus

A 30-seater 'water Bus' is provided for tourists who wish to take a Lake adventure trip. One will have the opportunity of viewing migratory birds and reptile species as well as visit the historical site of Old Bussa.

(VII) Sporting Facilities

Sporting facilities such as Table tennis, Swimming pool, swing, Merry-Go Round have been put in place for physical exercise.

(VIII) Conference Facilities

A conference hall for meetings/conferences, seminars, workshops, wedding ceremonies is available for groups who require a natural and conducive environment for fruitful deliberations

(IX) Kali Hills & Shrines

This is a rich historical site of the kali people who are believed to be descendants of a run-away Saudi Arabian Prince-Kisira. At the hills, visitors are informed about the cultural beliefs of these people. How they worshipped their gods and goddess such as kidaun, Oll-Banawule, Daudu and their supreme god, 'Lashi' at his 'Tanakpwe' (Sanctuary).

4.0 BENEFITS OF KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK

Tourists, Visitors and the people of Nigeria have benefited from Kainji Lake National Park in the following ways:

Education/Research Purposes.

Tourists visit the park to learn more as well as to delve into and study the natural ecosystem. Tourist activity also takes the form of study trips and attendance at courses and conferences with specified education aims in view. The National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research, Federal College of Freshwater Fisheries Technology and Federal College of Wildlife Management were all established as a result of the existence of Kainji Lake National Park.

Revenue Generation

Development of tourism in a country offers a more reliable alternative for mobilization of desired foreign exchange and local revenue. Revenue for Kainji Lake National Park are from residential accommodations, gate entry fees, meals, park viewing, guided tour, vehicles chartered for park viewing and park viewing equipments.

Social and Spiritual Benefits

Kainji Lake National Park offers tourists environment for relaxation, wildness experience, game viewing, sport fishing and Lake cruising. However, the sport fishing is never allowed on large scale as the carrying capacity is not enough or the level of sustenance yet to be reached. Also, some tourists do visit Kainji Lake National Park to commune with God. They believe that quietness brings a lot of inspiration. From the research conducted, the people of New Bussa commented on diverse ways they have benefited socially and economically. Table 2 shows the varying proportions of how the residents have benefited.

Table 2 showing response of residents of kainji on benefits derived from kainji lake

| S/No | VARIABLES | RESPONSE | %RESPONSE |
|------|----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES | 23 | 23.5 |
| 2 | FRIENDSHIP | 15 | 15.3 |
| 3 | EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT | 7 | 7.1 |
| 4 | INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES | 11 | 11.2 |
| 5 | INCOME GENERATION | 15 | 15.3 |
| 6 | NO BENEFIT | 27 | 27.6 |
| | | 98 | 100 |

Source: Author's field work (2007)

5.0 PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST THE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE PARK

The management of Kainji Lake National Park is faced with some problems which has hinders its effective performance. These include:

Poaching Activities.

Among the poaching activities in kainji Lake National Park are illegal hunting, fishing, logging, illegal grazing, farming, lopping of trees, firewood collection and burning of trees for charcoals. These activities not only destroy the habitat of animals but also the environment exposing it to erosion problems. The park officers are usually attacked by poachers (Hunters, Nomadic Fulanis, loggers) and some had lost their lives in this process, while many are injured.

Inadequate Facilities/Low Patronage of Tourists.

The two (2) power chutes and a water bus available for the use of the tourists are not adequate if it is expected that the inflow of tourists should be high. The flow of tourists will be affected if this problem should persist.

Table 3: Showing the response of staff in respect of the adequacy of tourist facilities.

| VARIABLES | NO. OF RESPONDENTS | % OF RESPONSE |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| SATISFIED | 8 | 29.6 |
| NOT SATISFIED | 19 | 70.4 |
| | 27 | 100 |

Source: Authors field work (2007)

From the above table, 70.4% of the staff sampled said they were not satisfied justifying the inadequate state of the park. Table 4: showing tourists flow into Kainji Lake National Park from 1995 to 2005

| YEARS | NIGERIA | | | | | FOREIGNERS | | | | | OVERALL TOTAL |
|-------|---------|----------|--------|---------|------------|------------|----------|-------|---------|------------|---------------|
| | ADULT | CHILDREN | TOTAL | % ADULT | % CHILDREN | ADULT | CHILDREN | TOTAL | % ADULT | % CHILDREN | |
| 1995 | 991 | 749 | 1,740 | 57.0 | 43.0 | 498 | 904 | 1,402 | 35.5 | 64.5 | 3,142 |
| 1996 | 499 | 500 | 999 | 49.9 | 50.1 | 500 | 490 | 990 | 50.5 | 49.5 | 1,989 |
| 1997 | 400 | 505 | 905 | 44.2 | 55.8 | 403 | 562 | 965 | 41.8 | 58.2 | 1,870 |
| 1998 | 402 | 707 | 1,109 | 36.3 | 63.7 | 399 | 601 | 1,000 | 39.9 | 60.1 | 2,109 |
| 1999 | 440 | 260 | 700 | 62.9 | 37.1 | 186 | 216 | 402 | 46.3 | 53.7 | 1,102 |
| 2000 | 314 | 400 | 714 | 44.0 | 56.0 | 453 | 500 | 953 | 47.5 | 52.5 | 1,667 |
| 2001 | 107 | 293 | 400 | 26.8 | 73.2 | 150 | 206 | 356 | 42.1 | 57.9 | 756 |
| 2002 | 615 | 385 | 1,000 | 61.5 | 38.5 | 204 | 404 | 608 | 33.6 | 66.4 | 1,608 |
| 2003 | 400 | 303 | 703 | 56.9 | 43.1 | 491 | 310 | 801 | 61.3 | 38.7 | 1,504 |
| 2004 | 473 | 327 | 800 | 59.1 | 40.9 | 600 | 368 | 968 | 62.0 | 38.0 | 1,768 |
| 2005 | 996 | 579 | 1,575 | 63.2 | 36.8 | 596 | 904 | 1,500 | 39.7 | 60.3 | 3,075 |
| Total | 5,637 | 5,008 | 10,645 | | | 4,480 | 5,465 | 9,945 | | | |

Source: Kainji Lake National Park Traffic Flow Record. (2006)

From table 4, the Nigerian tourists flow dropped from 1,109 in 1998 to 700 in 1999 and also dropped from 1,000 in 2002 to 703 in 2003 respectively, while the flow of foreign tourists dropped from 1,000 in 1998 to 402 in 1999, 1999 and 2003 are years of government transition in Nigeria. This could be the reason why there were such falls in both circumstances. The other reasons that could be associated with the drops in those years could be fear on the part of tourists of not been confronted by poachers as well as inadequacy of tourist facilities.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation will in no small measure ameliorate or reduce to the barest minimum the problems that have earlier been highlighted.

development of a business plan

There should be a comprehensive business plan involving the participation of the host community, private sector and the host government, that is Niger State government. With this in place, the people will be carried along thus discouraging Poachers activities. This also could be enhanced by show casing the corporate image of the park via newspapers, radio, television and the internet.

Employment of experts.

Satisfaction of tourists should be the hallmark of the managers of Kainji Lake National Park. The expertise of the Environmentalists such as the Facilities Managers, Planners should be welcomed to curb the ineffectiveness of the recreational facilities at the park.

Detailed maintenance plan

It is recommended that detailed maintenance plan policy be put in place for the proper functioning of the various aspects of the Park. There should be in place effective routine, preventive and planned maintenance programmes.

Other notable ways of tourism development are:

Encourage formation of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the local community with interest in Conservation and Environmental programmes.

Organize wildlife extension programmes to communities around the park

7.0 CONCLUSION

The need and importance of tourist has been widely accepted and recognized in modern life. No doubt, Nigeria's tourism resources are immense and call for the exploitation of such resources for the good of mankind. This paper examined the multi-dimensional nature of tourism, the militating factors against effective development and utilization of tourism in Nigeria using Kainji Lake National Park as case study and identified various strategies that should be put in place so as to reduce these negative effects. It must however be noted that a sustaining future for mankind depends on a caring partnership with nature.

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