

LECTURE NOTES:

Nigeria is a vast country with a population of over 140 million people covering about 923,768 sq.km of landmass, located wholly within the tropics. The country aptly described as the 'Giant of Africa' and the Heart of Africa is richly endowed with ecological and cultural resources, which are of universal recognition. The richness and diversity of the Nigeria culture is a manifestation of the socio-cultural differences of the over 250 ethnic groups that inhabit the land for ages. Nigeria's cultural heritage is woven from threads of history and diversity, legend and conquest.

Tourism is expected to play a vital role in the country's economy including: employment creation, generation of foreign exchange, attraction of investors, updating of people's knowledge, cross-fertilization of technological and educational know-how; cultural interaction; and promotion of cultural awareness, rural and urban integration.

The growth of tourism over the past 10 years (1988 to 1999) has not been very encouraging. This growth is however, likely to be more within the next decade. The current impact of tourism on other issues related to sustainable development, viz: social, institutional and cultural, including the preservation of cultural heritage: Its current impacts on the environment have not been established to be adverse and effort is being intensified in this regard to ensure that the environment faces no significant adverse impact. However, efforts can be intensified to;

- Promote environmental awareness amongst tourists and the general populace
- Adopt guided tour approach in National Parks and nature-based resorts
- Establish relevant institutional mechanism to implement government policy
- Monitor progress being made and review of strategies
- Overcome economic constraints that hinders effective monitoring and enforcement.
- Create/Improve sources and effectiveness of financing for tourism development .
- Develop infrastructure

- Provide necessary training and education to meet the manpower requirements of the industry by , establishing schools to train tourism officers and those in hotels and hospitality industry, introduction of departments of tourism in Colleges of Technology, inclusion of tourism in the education curriculum at tertiary and university levels , establishment of Conservation Schools.
- Regular update of publications relating to tourism including guides, maps and brochures
- Advertisements on print and electronic media, bill boards, communication facilities including the internet.
- Frequent review of Mapped and inventory of natural resources and ecosystem characteristics of the country.
- Development of indicators of sustainable development in various parts of the country
- Development and maintenance of infrastructural facilities like; road networks , Construction of Dams in environmentally friendly manner, provision and maintenance of water borne pipes, provision of sewage and sewage treatment plants ,Provision of refuse bins, vehicles and sanitary landfills, Improvement in solid waste management., continued improvement of Telecommunication systems.

Organisation of Tourism in Nigeria

The following establishments are responsible for sustainable tourism at the national state and local levels:

- The Federal Ministry of Commerce and Tourism
- The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) - in line with the World Tourism Organization Charter.
- The National Parks Board
- Federal Environmental Protection Agency

The administrative bodies responsible for tourism at the local level are:

- The State Tourism Boards (State government level)
- The Local Government Tourism Committees (Local government level).

Legislation and Regulations

There are laws and other regulatory mechanisms which seek to ensure sustainable tourism and that set aside specific areas or preserves for eco-tourism and nature-based tourism.

Existing codes of practice, standards and guidelines for the activities of industry in sustainable tourism include the following:

- Hospitality for Tourism Establishments Regulations (1997)
- Code of Conduct for Tour Operators and Travel Agencies

Others are;

The National Policy on the Environment (1989)

Nigeria's National Agenda 21(1999)

The Forestry Policy Trade and Tourism Policy (1990)

The National Housing Policy

The National Commission on Museums and Monuments Policy

The National Policy on Information (Tourism section)

The National Endangered Species Decree No.11 (1985)

Vision 2010: The Environment Agenda (1998)

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (1998)

The National Tourism Strategy Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) Decree

The National Conservation Strategy (1985).

Some of these instruments were established by both government and industry, and they are mandatory. Industry and consumers have been essentially cooperative with regards to their reaction to the existing codes, standards and guidelines. Issues relevant to sustainable tourism covered by the policies and strategies include:

- Upkeep of resorts
- Conservation of species, Development and safety of infrastructure,
- Safe environment (generally) including environmental impact assessment and safe and stable polity.

There are also established procedures to continuously monitor the progress of tourism development in order to make the necessary corrections or revisions to ensure sustainability.

There are deterrents in these strategies, as well, in form of fines and penalties to check, control or penalize damaging environmental practices on the part of business and visitors.

Programmes that Promotes Sustainable Tourism

- hotel development
- hotel classification
- establishment of Hospitality/hotels and tourism schools
- establishment of National Parks, Game Reserves, Game sanctuaries, botanical gardens, etc
- establishment of Tourists Associations
- Improve the activities of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)
- establishment of guides/hospitality associations for tourists
- promotional activities using local and international media including the internet
- development of beaches as marine and coastal tourists centres

Programmes to promote Ecotourism may include;

- the establishment and upkeep/maintenance of National Parks and other nature reserves, game reserves, sanctuaries, botanical gardens, zoological gardens
- by national and states and local governments.
- Establishment of nature-based and eco-tourism facilities by the private sector and non-governmental organizations and tourism establishments, etc

Private sector may also contribute to ecotourism by;

- local and international workshops and seminars
- cultural displays
- provision of transport systems, including boat regatta
- establishment of appropriate hotel facilities.