RESPONSIBLE TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND YOUTHS
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Introduction

Tourism is a global business that promotes the visiting and
hosting of people for mutual benefits. It is a complex network of
exchange of wealth and experiences. Tourism involves the
visitors and their hosts as well as the gamut of professionals and
enterprises which provide not only the tourism product and
services but also the desired enabling environment to make the
sojourn feasible and worth the while of all stakeholders.

As a heterogeneous and human oriented product, tourism is a
strong global socio-economic force that can generate sales,
employment, foreign exchange earnings, balance of payments
and critical infrastructure development that benefit both the local
communities and the visitors alike (Oh, 2005; Durbarry, 2004;
Narayan, 2004; Frechtling and Horvath, 1999; Glasson et al,
1995; Lankford and Howard, 1994).

Furthermore, by attracting the consumer to the product at the
point of production rather than transferring the product to the
consumer in his home, tourism serves as a catalyst for
development in the tourist receiving region (UNWTO, 2004:9).
Such development, according to the World Travel and Tourism
Council (WTTC, 2011:1) are in the areas of job creation, exports generation and investment stimulation. The job opportunities created by tourism are mainly in the micro, small and medium size enterprises. Tourism creates jobs for the self-employed, for indigenous communities and for women and young people whether they are highly skilled or unskilled.

In 2011, the global direct and indirect employment generated by tourism was 258 million (8.8% of total global employment) according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2011:1). In Nigeria, the figures are put at 1,774,000 jobs (2.9% of total jobs). This is expected to rise by 6.8% in 2012 to 1,895,500 jobs and rise by 4.4% pa to 2,912,000 jobs in 2022 (WTTC, 2012: 3)

The direct contributions of tourism to Global Gross Domestic Product (GGDP) on the other hand are estimated at US$1.8 trillion in 2011 and the total contributions at US$6.0 trillion (9.1% of GGDP). In Nigeria, the total contributions of tourism to GDP according WTTC (2012: 2) was NGN1, 232.2 billion (3.3% of total GDP) in 2011 and a forecast to rise by 10.8% in 2012 and by 7.0% pa to NGN2, 690.8 billion in 2022.

Similarly, spending by foreign visitors will continue to be vital to the economic fortunes of many nations as such visitor exports are expected to grow by 6.6% per annum, reaching US$1.8 trillion in 2021 (WTTC, 2011:2). More so, industry investment, currently estimated at US$652 billion is forecast to double in real terms over the next ten years to reach US$1.5 trillion, with particularly rapid growth in emerging and developing economies (ibid, 2011:2).
In Nigeria, visitor exports generated NGN117.6 billion (6% of total exports) in 2011 and forecast to grow by 1.5% in 2012 and to grow by 2.4% pa from 2012 to 2022 to reach NGN151.5 billion in 2022 (8% of total exports) according to the WTTC, 2012:4). In like manner, tourism investment in 2011 was NGN251.5 billion (7.7% of total investment). This will rise by 2.3% in 2012 and by 6.5% pa over ten years to NGN483.4 billion in 2022 (5.7% of total investment) according to WTTC.

The question then is what opportunities are there for women and youths in responsible tourism in the developing countries and Nigeria in particular? This paper will therefore attempt to answer this question by explaining what responsible tourism entails, what opportunities it holds for women and youths and the strategies that need to be adopted to exploit such opportunities.

**Responsible tourism**

Responsible tourism can be viewed from two main perspectives. The first is from the perspective of the tourist who ensures that his activities have minimum negative impacts on the socio-cultural values and physical environment of the host destination. This is achieved by using the local resources reasonably, learning appropriate cultural behavior and being environmentally sensitive as well as by seeking positive relationships with the hosts. The second is from the perspective of the tourism investor who before he makes his investment decision ensures that he is considerate of the aspirations of the host population and is prepared to work in partnership with them.
The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in 2002 describes Responsible Tourism as that which:

a) Minimizes negative economic, environmental and social impacts.

b) Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhance the well being of host communities.

c) Improves working conditions and access to the industry.

d) Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances.

e) Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage embracing diversity.

f) Provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues.

g) Provides access for physically challenged people.

h) Is culturally sensitive, encourages respects between tourists and hosts and builds local pride and confidence.

i) Is integrated in the local ecosystem.

Responsible tourism, it should be noted is neither “niche tourism” nor does it only take place in protected natural environments. It is about legacy and consequences of tourism
on the environment, local people and local economies. So can any tourism business whether located in a thriving metropolis or rural area be a responsible tourism oriented. Responsible tourism also includes the rights of animals to be treated with respect, emotional sensitivity and respect for special characteristics. It should not support tourism products and cultural practices that violate basic animal rights.

Both responsible tourism and sustainable tourism have a common objective of sustainable development. The major difference between the two however is that, in responsible tourism, individuals, organizations and businesses are asked to take responsibility for their actions and impacts of their actions. The emphasis on responsibility in responsible tourism means that everyone involved in tourism (government, product owners and operators, transport operators, community services, NGO’s and CBO’s, tourists, local communities, industry associations etc) are responsible for achieving the goals of responsible tourism.

**Women and the Economy**

Women, though created weaker than the men are as hard working as the men. Yet, women according to Todaro and Smith (2004) make up not only a substantial majority of the world’s poor but experience the harshest deprivation. The prevalence of female-headed households, the lesser access to education, credit facility for self-employment or formal sector employment, occupation of political offices and the limited control over their spouses’ income, all contribute to make women economically vulnerable. Hence, they along with children suffer more from malnutrition, disease and ignorance,
lack of clean water, sanitation and comfortable housing accommodation, especially in the rural areas.

Studies have also shown that women head approximately 20% of households in India, 17% in Costa Rica, 40% in Kenya and 16% in Nigeria where such women are either divorcees or widowed and the proportion is on the increase (CBN/World Bank, 1999; Todaro and Smith, 2004). Children in such households, depending on their numbers and the circumstances of the household heads are less likely to be well educated and are therefore, less likely to attract employment in order to contribute additional income for the household.

To overcome these problems in Nigeria, the White Paper on the Report of the Technical Committee on the Review of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria recommended as follows:

- That each component agency and intervention facility should give women at least 40% of the total intervention package;
- Women should be involved in at least 30% in all management phases of poverty alleviation programmes;
- SME programmes should concentrate more small scale investments on women and youth cooperatives and business groups;
- There should be household food security activities in which women predominate;
- Women and youths should be encouraged and assisted to have access to credit and extension services;
- Women and youths should be supported in informal sector and family-based income generating activities;
should strengthen their training and capacity building for women, youths and the disabled;
• Women and youths should be empowered through skills acquisition in various vocations including food preservation and processing, pottery and handicrafts.

Laudable as these recommendations are, appropriate poverty alleviation sectors especially tourism, has not been involved in the implementation of the recommendations that have been accepted by government. This therefore, confirms the observation of UNWTO (2002) that “until recently, tourism was not accorded any attention in the poverty reduction strategies of governments”.

Thus, tourism increases livelihood opportunities from the foregoing through a combination of elements such as:

- Increased regular wage income;
- Opportunities for small income to fill gaps;
- Business opportunities beyond agriculture;
- Better access to markets, infrastructure, information and financial assets.

**Opportunities for women and youths**

The traditional role of the woman in the typical African society is that of keeping and maintaining the home. Most women still do. Thus, women are often viewed as second class citizens and are commonly marginalized to very limited activities and privileges due to this erroneous perception. One of the biggest challenges of women empowerment and opportunities in Africa
is the 100% dependence on their husbands, as men are the traditional breadwinners of most families.

For all the impacts of tourism (environmental, socio-cultural and economic), the dispersion of wealth and empowerment of women and youths are among the industry’s most consistent and commendable positive influences. Granted, many of the most common jobs for women in tourism are low-skilled, low paying positions that may actually reinforce existing gender stereotypes. But, when approached with cultural sensitivity and commitment to the community, responsible tourism can provide opportunities beyond some women’s’ wildest dreams.

The paper therefore agrees with UNWTO that tourism has enormous economic power and high potential for employment creation, capacity to spread socio-economic benefits to all levels of society and to all parts (including remote areas) in both developed and developing nations. More so, its sustained resilience in times of crisis is a plus for the sector in the fight against poverty and discrimination against women. This is further consolidated by the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme introduced by UNWTO in 2002. The programme focuses on long standing work to encourage sustainable tourism – social, economic and ecological – which alleviates poverty by bringing development and jobs to people living on less than one dollar a day.

Women in particular constitute 46% of the tourism sector’s workforce globally, although this varies from 10% in some countries to 80% in others. However, in countries where tourism is a more matured industry, women generally account for 50% of the workforce (Hemmati, 2007). Self-employment or
community-based tourism initiatives by local women cooperatives and groups on the other hand, help to create financial independence for women and challenges them to develop the necessary skills and improve on their education. These in turn increase their selves-esteem and help to create more equitable relationships in families and communities (ibid).

In a study on Women in Tourism Employment by London Thames Gateway Forum in 2000, tourism development was identified as a catalyst for regeneration efforts in the Thames Gateway Area. At that time, tourism was already a well developed sector and served as an important factor contributing to economic development goals through income generated by the tourist trade and the job created such that tourism supported about 6,000 jobs locally, out of which women constituted 60% in the London Borough of Greenwich.

Another evidence of the opportunities provided by responsible tourism for women and youths is an attestation by the ministers and heads of delegation from the 49 so-called least developed countries of the world in a meeting in Gran Canaria, Spain in 2001. The ministers identified tourism as one of the few economic sectors through which their countries have managed to increase participation in the global economy. This is principally so because of the comparative advantages that the countries enjoy in the provision of tourism services. Such success, they noted, had been achieved despite insufficient priority they had accorded tourism as a sector for socio-economic development in their various countries. Hence, the ministers unanimously adopted tourism as an engine of employment creation, poverty alleviation, reduction in gender
inequality and protection of the natural and cultural heritages (UNWTO, 2002).

Strategies/ Approaches

The following cross-country evidences are the strategies adopted by some countries to provide opportunities for women and youths through responsible tourism by UNWTO 2006.

➢ In Humla in Nepal for instance, the earnings from tourism makes a significant difference to the welfare of households, enabling them to buy shoes, clothes, salt and flour from Tibet. Without such earnings, families would have been more severely underfed and poorly clothed than they currently are.

➢ In Buraidah City, of Al-Qassim Province in Saudi Arabia, King Abdul-Aziz Women Charity Committee train women to produce cultural and traditional silver decorative products and sell them in tourist festivals and public events in the province. The programme also supplies local markets with new and different designs of silver and cultural products thereby providing the women with not only skills and gainful employment but also ready market for their products. A similar opportunity can be provided in other parts of developing countries through women cooperatives and craft villages. A number of indigenous craft that are no longer in the markets could be revived, modernized or simply reproduced for sale.
Farm Project provides a good example of how tourism can partner with other sectors of the economy for sustainable development. Here, a (10 ha) tourist resort with 20 rooms, a restaurant, a bar/reception area, a museum, a mini zoo and swimming pool co-exist with a (40 ha) farm of livestock, vegetables and an orchard. The project has 50 employees. Of these, 10 who work in the tourist resort are all women above forty years except one. The project stimulated the provision and maintenance of the 70km rural road, supply of electricity, portable water and telecommunication services in the area.

- Similarly, the Food Court Project in Medan, Indonesia is classical. The project is located in a historic area with many old buildings but characterized by high level of poverty and criminality due to youth unemployment. To solve the problem, the project is designed to enable the area function as shops in the day time and serve as food centre in the night. This way the “night citizens” were recruited and they stopped their wrongdoings. In all, over 350 people were provided with employment as waiters, clearing and plate washing personnel. Others are security, parking and administrative staff.

Thus, poverty was not only reduced but a new attraction was created in the area by changing its image from an unsafe place to one to visit and spend the night. Medan has also become a component of a local identity and the promotion of local food and most parts of this country are endowed with
varieties of food, snacks and drinks that could be standardized, better packaged and presented in our hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, transport terminals and such other public places and during events. The multiplier effects of such actions will go a long way to providing various opportunities for women and youths.
Reference


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