



Research Article

The Role of Government in the Preservation and Promotion of Nigeria's Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

It is not farfetched that despite various cultural heritages around, not all are well sustained. In view of this, the focus of this study was on preservation and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage as examined through the selected case study. The objectives were to identify cultural heritage, examine the importance of cultural heritage, investigate the role of government in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and recommend the formation and implementation of policies that encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage. The primary data were obtained via the use of structured questionnaire administered on the selected respondents. Simple random sampling was applied in the selection of the respondents, using the Yaro Yamen formular. The formulated hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and non-parametric chi-square. From the tests conducted, the results showed that the importance of cultural heritage cannot be overestimated and the government has the role of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. It was concluded based on the results that government has a major role in preserving cultural heritage. Hence, government should formulate and implement policies that that would encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage.

Keywords: cultural, heritage, preservation, sustainability.

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Introduction

Nigeria is blessed with outstanding cultural, natural and significant heritage sites, which are listed among the UNESCO Heritage Sites. These sites exist nowhere else in the world and have become a great interest to visitors and Nigerians. However, the list of Nigerian heritage sites, which are on both the tentative and World UNESCO Heritage sites are

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Sukur Cultural Landscape in Adamawa State, Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State, Oban Hills in Cross River State, Oke-Idanre Hill, in Ondo State, Ogbunike Caves in Anambra State, Alok Ikom Monoliths in Cross River State, Ancient Kano City Walls in Kano State, Gashaka-Gumti, National Park in Taraba State, Arochukwu Long Juju Slave Rute in Abia State, Surame Cultural Landscape in Sokoto State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are stated as follows:

1. To identify cultural heritages and their importance in Ondo State.
2. To investigate the role of government in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.
3. To recommend the formation and implementation of policies that encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage.

Significance of the study

This study will address the poor ways in which cultural heritages are been managed, uncared attitudes of some government office holders and citizens, poor state of the cultural heritage environment and poor patronage of tourists of the cultural heritage sites.

Literature Review

It is disheartening according to Charles (2016), to know that many citizens do not take cognizance of the importance of the national cultural heritages all over, by mishandling these heritages in various ways, ranging from turning the natural environment to dunghills, destroying the infrastructures on ground and so on. Anjorin (2017), in his collection of poems, states that whatever possession is ever invested on, must not be allowed to waste. It is in view of this, that Kolawole (2014) points out that the government should endeavor to put resources and whatever it takes, to preserve and promote its cultural heritage, knowing fully well that these must be passed on from one generation to another.

Nigeria has a rich collection of cultural and natural heritage, this includes historic buildings, monuments, parks, archeological sites, landscapes and sites, gardens, festivals, groves, battle ground, caves, tombs, palaces, carvings, and paintings, these heritage resources are among the priceless and irreplaceable possession of nation and mankind. Some of them have been designated as state, national and international heritage because they are of outstanding values.

Nigeria's rich cultural heritage boasts of huge eclectic and colourful festivals that are full of rhythm, brilliant colours, fun and great pace. Their origins are steeped in great traditions of religious obeisance, traditional games, folklore, dance and drama. These festivals present an ever present reminder of the finest of the country's heritage which should be enjoyed and appreciated from generation to generation. They also form a great treasure to be continuously showcased to the world with a systematic process where local and international stakeholders in the arts, culture and tourism sectors in both the public and private sphere can enhance their promotional & commercial interests respectively.

The Concept of Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage, as understood by Central European University's Cultural Heritage Studies Program, is the legacy of physical artifacts (cultural property) and intangible attributes of a group or society inherited from the past. Cultural Heritage is a concept which offers a bridge between the past and the future with the application of particular approaches in the present. Due to its attached values for these groups or societies, cultural heritage is maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

The concept of cultural heritage developed as a result of complex historical processes and is constantly evolving. The concept of the cultural and natural heritage is based on historically changing value systems. These values are recognized by different groups of people. The ideas developed and accepted by these different groups create various categories of cultural and natural heritage (world heritage, national heritage, etc.).

Cultural heritage objects are symbolic. They represent identities in terms of culture and natural surroundings. Connection to and traditional activities around these objects create a sense of community. At the same time, the selection of which objects, monuments or natural environments are preserved sets the future trajectory for various cultural narratives and societal consensus about both the past and present.

Idanre Hills consists of spectacular valleys with a high plain and the valleys are interspersed with magnificent inselbergs that is about 3,000 feet above the sea level. It was listed in 2007 on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. There are attributes such as the old court, Owa's Palace, Agboogun foot print, shrines, burial grounds and mounds and the Omi Aopara which is the thunder water. It is a tourist attraction center that brings thousands of visitors all through the year. Idanre Hills consists of spectacular valleys with a high plain and the valleys are interspersed with magnificent inselbergs that is about 3,000 feet above the sea level. It was listed in 2007 on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. There are attributes such as the old

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court, Owa's Palace, Agboogun foot print, shrines, burial grounds and mounds and the Omi Aopara which is the thunder water. It is a tourist attraction center that brings thousands of visitors all through the year. Ogbunike Caves in Anambra State, Alok Ikom Monoliths in Cross River State, Ancient Kano City Walls in Kano State, Gashaka-Gumti National Park in Taraba State, Arochukwu Long Juju Slave Rute in Abia State, Surame Cultural Landscape in Sokoto State.

What is Cultural Heritage?

Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS, 2002).

As part of human activity Cultural Heritage produces tangible representations of the value systems, beliefs, traditions and lifestyles. As an essential part of culture as a whole, Cultural Heritage, contains these visible and tangible traces from antiquity to the recent past.

Cultural Heritage is a wide concept. We prefer to concentrate on the similarities between the various heritage subsectors, instead of on their differences.

Cultural heritage types

Cultural Heritage can be distinguished in:

- Built Environment (Buildings, Townscapes, Archaeological remains)
- Natural Environment (Rural landscapes, Coasts and shorelines, Agricultural heritage)
- Artefacts (Books & Documents, Objects, Pictures)

Tangible and Intangible Heritage

Having at one time referred exclusively to the monumental remains of cultures, cultural heritage as a concept has gradually come to include new categories. Today, we find that heritage is not only manifested through tangible forms such as artefacts, buildings or landscapes but also through intangible forms. Intangible heritage includes voices, values, traditions, oral history. Popularly this is perceived through cuisine, clothing, forms of shelter, traditional skills and technologies, religious ceremonies, performing arts, storytelling. Today, we consider the tangible heritage inextricably bound up with the intangible heritage. In conservation projects we aim to preserve both the tangible as well as the intangible heritage.

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National Heritage

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. UNESCO encourages the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. The importance of culture and tradition cannot be downplayed in any society, because the unity and love among the people bring better cultural heritage for the land, and if properly harnessed, could usher in opportunities to eradicate unemployment, and boost revenue generation of the state.

Threats Confronting Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage

Owootomo, (2017), explains the greatest problem of preserving and promotion of cultural heritage as the societal value, modernization, religious and attitude of some citizens of this great country, Nigeria towards the National cultural heritage. Many citizens do not take cognizance of the importance of the national cultural heritages all over. According to Amimi (2014) education and improved standard of living encourage altitudinal change, habits and belief system, many people see cultural heritage as fetish, primitive and at variance with religious belief, some even perceive museum as a place where objects rejected by Christianity and Islam find refuge. Whereas, museum is a fine place where historical and contemporary artworks and relics of past human activities find abode, the sites and other cultural heritage endowment face serious attack and neglect as a result of these altitudinal change and belief system, uncontrolled urban development, low level of patronage and funding have done a deadly blow on the drive to preserve our heritage. There is a great encroachment into some of our heritage sites for farming and construction of roads and houses. There are also others like fire destruction vandalization, theft and outright looting, the younger generations are no longer interested in keeping our cultural heritage or preserving them as sacred like their forefathers. In line with the above this study determines how football (an essential part of our national lives) is significant in promotion and preservation of cultural heritage in Nigeria as well as a useful aspect of heritage for the present and future generations.

Heritage Promotion: Promotion is an activity of persuading people to believe or support an idea or way of doing things. Heritage promotion refers to the entire set of activities which communicate or publicize the value of heritage. The idea is to make people aware, attract and induce to the importance and relevance of heritage and the need for its preservation.

Heritage Preservation: This is the process or action of protecting, maintaining, and, or for stabilizing the existing materials, forms and integrity of historical or an individual component while protecting its heritage value rather than extensive replacement.

UNESCO Names Idanre Hills World Heritage Site

The State Commissioner for Information and Supervising Commissioner of Culture and Tourism Ministry, Mr. Kayode Akinmade in 2015, said that Idanre Hill would be enlisted into the prestigious World Heritage site by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organistaion (UNESCO) soon. Akinmade stated this while playing host to the House Committee on Culture and Tourism who were on over sight function to the Ministry.

Nigeria's rich cultural heritage boasts of huge eclectic and colourful festivals that are full of rhythm, brilliant colours, fun and great pace. Their origins are steeped in great traditions of religious obeisance, traditional games, folklore, dance and drama. These festivals present an ever present reminder of the finest of the country's heritage which should be enjoyed and appreciated from generation to generation. They also form a great treasure to be continuously showcased to the world with a systematic process where local and international stakeholders in the arts, culture and tourism sectors in both the public and private sphere can enhance their promotional & commercial interests respectively. Bottom of Form

Idanre Hills consists of spectacular valleys with a high plain and the valleys are interspersed with magnificent inselbergs that is about 3,000 feet above the sea level. It was listed in 2007 on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. There are attributes such as the old court, Owa's Palace, Agboogun foot print, shrines, burial grounds and mounds and the Omi Aopara which is the thunder water. It is a tourist attraction center that brings thousands of visitors all through the year.

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Akinmade stated this while playing host to the House Committee on Culture and Tourism who were on over sight function to the Ministry. According to him, the on-going process of inscribing Idanre Hill cultural landscape into the World Heritage list is in top gear. Akinmade, who noted that the state is blessed with rich cultural endowment,

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fascinating sites and historical monuments opined that various beautiful and entertaining festivals such as Igogo in Owo, Odun Oba in Ondo, Orosun at Idanre, Sibi in Akure, Aringiya in Ikare-Akoko, Boat Regatta in the riverine areas have placed the state over and above its peers culturally. The commissioner while highlighting the giant strides recorded by the Governor Olusegun Mimiko led administration, said government has built a world class resort at the foot of Idanre Hills to create an irresistible facility for tourists and visitors as a tourist destination not merely as only an attraction. According to him, the 18 holes Golf Course was revitalized to blend with the habitat which spread hands of fellowship with Mechanical Tourism Village in Ondo as well as International Event Centre (Dome) in Akure and Shoprite slated for commissioning today to create a wider tourism traffic in the state. He submitted that the purpose of harnessing tourism potentials of the state was for creating employment, empowering the citizens, boosting revenue generation, mobilising wealth and sustaining the social relaxation dream of the people.

Akinmade, however solicited the support and cooperation of the House Committee on Culture and Tourism in a bid to harness the state tourism potentials to create wealth for the benefit of all. The Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Bankole Felemu commended the Commissioner and the management team of the Ministry for their creativity and professionalism being displayed in tapping the God-given endowment and cultural values of the state for maximum benefit of mankind.

Bankole, who explained that the visit was to familiarize with the Ministry on areas of need, encourage the Ministry officials to scale up actions and programme that would further promote the image of the state culturally. While responding to area of challenges earlier enumerated by the ministry, the chairman pledged the support and cooperation of the State House of Assembly to ensure an improved budgetary provision and its performance for the Ministry.

Methodology

The design used for this study is descriptive survey design, because the study is aimed at collecting data on the Role of Government in the Preservation and Promotion of Nigeria's Cultural Heritage, a case study of Ondo State, Nigeria and describing the data collected through a questionnaire in a systematic manner. Furthermore, the choice of descriptive survey design is appropriate since the number of element (population) under study is known.

The target population for this study consists of staff of hospitality industry staff of Idanre hills, participants at Mare festival, residents of Idanre hills area, professional tourists, all in Ondo State. Hence the population is 405. Simple random sampling (balloting) was used to select the two hundred and one (201), using the Yaro-Yamen formula. The data gathered was subjected to statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Summary of Questionnaire Items

Statement	F _{value}	P _{value}	Remarks
i. Does cultural heritage comprise of built environment, natural environment and artefacts?	4.01	0.183	Significant
ii. Is Idanre hills a world heritage site?	0.93	0.437	Significant
iii. Can you say it is important to preserve and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage?	2.19	0.259	Significant
iv. Is it actually the role of the government to preserve and promote its cultural heritage?	50.51	0.019	Significant
v. Many citizens do not take cognizance of the importance of the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage	2.16	0.262	Significant
vi. Cultural heritages are not important and should therefore not be preserved or promoted	157.97	0.006	Not significant
vii. Are there possible policies that encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage?	1.53	0.342	Significant
viii. Is there any need for preserving and promoting cultural heritage?	2.26	0.272	Significant
ix. Do you observe the mishandling of cultural heritage by people within or outside the cultural heritage?	1.58	0.336	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Summary

This research work has considered the Role of Government in the Preservation and Promotion of Nigeria's Cultural Heritage, a case study of Ondo State, Nigeria. From the analysis done in this study, the findings of this study are summarized as follows;

1. That cultural heritage comprises of the built environment, natural environment and artefacts
2. That Idanre Hills is a world heritage site.

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3. Also it is important to preserve and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage

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4. That it is actually the role of the government preserve and promote its cultural heritage
5. Many citizens do not take cognizance of the importance of preservation and promotion of cultural heritage
6. Cultural heritages are important and should therefore be preserved or promoted
7. There are possible policies that encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage
8. There is need for preserving and promoting cultural heritage
9. It is observed that mishandling of cultural heritage by people within or outside the cultural heritage often takes place.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research study, the researcher made the following conclusions:

1. That cultural heritage comprises of the built environment, natural environment and artefacts
2. That Idanre Hills is a world heritage site.
3. Also, it is important to preserve and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage.
4. It is actually the role of the government to preserve and promote its cultural heritage
5. Many citizens do not take cognizance of the importance of preservation and promotion of cultural heritage
6. Cultural heritages are important and should therefore be preserved or promoted
7. There are possible policies that encourage the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural heritage
8. There is need for preserving and promoting cultural heritage
9. It is observed that mishandling of cultural heritage by people within or outside the cultural heritage often takes place.

Recommendations

1. The government should coordinate sensitization tours on the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage sites.
2. The government should endeavour to monitor activities carried out on heritage sites.
3. Government should introduce new policies on preserving and promoting cultural heritage

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4. Government should reengineer the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage

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5. Buildings should be constructed and maintained for tourists so that they will not have reasons to litter or destroy any heritage site.
6. Increase spending on cultural heritages.
7. Citizens should be made to know the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage.
8. Special funds should be allocated to maintaining cultural heritage
9. The government should step up the campaign against the mishandling of cultural heritage.

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