

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES AND PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE RESOURCES IN IGBOLAND

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Abstract

Heritage resources abound in the shores of Nigeria with enormous tourism potentials. These heritage resources do not only depict the cultural and historical transmutation of a people but also function in the image design and promotion of a locality. This reveals the unique role of heritage resources to structural development of an area. Heritage resources have of recent been a victim of degradation and social abuse arising from seasonal ignorance; hence minimizing its potentials to the socio-economic development of an area. Previous studies have worked on sustaining and preserving heritage resources both for posterity, culture and identity promotion, and tourism through various means including legislations, policies, architectural design, etc. This paper is emphasizing on the adoption of community development approaches in the preservation of heritage resources in Igbo area of Nigeria. Its modalities, applications, challenges and prospect were discussed with emphasis on selected communities from the South-East Nigeria. Ethnography was the major research approach adopted for the study. Such understanding will serve as a catalyst in aiding general restoration and preservation of heritage sites in Nigeria and other African states.

Keywords: *Heritage Resources, Community development, Community development Approaches, Preservation, Sustainable development.*

Introduction

Of recent, heritage tourism has been identified as the bedrock of tourism in Africa owing to the distinctive availability of heritage resources across various cultural areas in the continent. These include cultural (festivals, traditional ceremonies, language, belief system, norms and value system, dress pattern, cultural objects, traditional dishes, unique religious centers, etc), natural (caves, historical hills/mountains, water bodies, unique vegetation/climate, unique land formations, etc) and built (architectural pattern, traditional habitats, village squares, settlement pattern, etc) heritage resources. These are amongst the essential external components of human existence (Scham and Yahya, 2003), hence their relevance to both the present and future generations of the human society (Lipe, 1984). Heritage resources do not only reflect the cultural and natural antecedents of a people but also carry the historical attributes of a people. This is amongst the reasons for its position as the backbone of tourism in Africa for both cultural/identity promotion and economic benefits. This is peculiar to already discovered and preserved heritage resources (Deeben,

Groenewoudt, Hallewas, & Willems, 1999). Despite the historical position of heritage resources to the human society, it was noted that amongst the major challenges of archaeology today is “the accelerating destruction of the heritage of past societies” (Ashmore & Sharer, 2005: 238). This scenario which is detrimental to the preservation of human past that is enabled in the heritage resources has stimulated varying degrees of efforts. To this regard, “archaeologists have attempted to stimulate public awareness and concern over the physical threats to archaeological remains throughout the world” (Ashmore & Sharer, 2005: 238). These destructive tendencies have dealt badly on the heritage resources which have preserved human historical facts through the generations. This state of pandemonium in the preservation of heritage resources made an American author to lament as thus:

The next fifty years...are going to be the most critical in the history of American archaeology. What is recovered, what is preserved, and how these goals are accomplished during this period will largely determine for all time the knowledge available to subsequent generations of Americans concerning their heritage from the past. The next generation cannot study or preserve what already has been destroyed (McGimsey, 1972:3; cited in Ashmore & Sharer, 2005).

Since much of the historical attributes of the human past is embedded in the natural formations of the heritage reserve, its neglect and destruction will definitely lead to the loss of human past which will eventually make the interpretation and understanding of the human future cumbersome and unbalanced. The causes of this decay in heritage resources was traced and discussed by Ashmore and Shaver when they asserted that;

The destruction of the world’s archaeological heritage has three principal Sources. The first and the most senseless is the looting that robs the remnants of ancient societies for artifacts or art to be sold to collectors. The second is the constant destructive effect of expanding societies all over the world. Everyday activities such as farming and construction, though not intended to obliterate archaeological information, nevertheless take their toll. The third is theft of heritage through cultural subjugation or warfare; here, damage may take the form of physical destruction, injurious interpretation or both (2005:239).

Also, some other studies pointed at inadequate legislation as amongst these course (Ekechukwu, 1990; 2008; Nwankwo & Ukaegbu, 2013; Nwankwo, 2013, e.t.c) and poor implementation of available legislation in the management of rich heritage resources. This attitude of none or poor preservation of the heritage resources is much pronounced in the developing nations where poor funding and nonchalant attitude of the government have not helped matters (Nwankwo, 2013). In this part of the world, indiscriminate and unlawful movement of movable heritage resources is common.

Ashmore and Sharer (2005) insisted that this particular act may have been instigated by the desire of some notable museums to buy cultural materials from individuals to enrich their museums. They went further to note that “the demand for prized archaeological specimens has grown so much that collectors are turning to museum collection to satisfy their appetite for antiquities. Robberies of archaeological museums are becoming more common place” (Ashmore & Sharer, 2005:242). People discovered the economic gains in the antiquity market and decided to exploit the market either with or without ignorance of the implications of the act to the socioeconomic and socio-cultural growth of their various communities. Besides, community development can be seen as the willing participation and involvement of the members of a given community in the development, sustenance and promotion of their community (Imhabekhai, 2009; Anyanwu, 1992; Ezeh, 1999; Abiona 2009; etc). Jarvis went ahead to define community development as “a process of enriching the social, economic and political and educational life of a geographically demarcated area often through the process of actions, community education and development education” (Jarvis, 1990; in Imhabekhai, 2009:3). Community development as a concept has over the years contributed to improvement of the human society more especially the rural areas. It brings out the right attitude from the people towards making their community more habitable and enjoyable. The concept has been found to be more proactive in the rural areas due to the communal lifestyle, traditional values and kinship system.

However, the discus has been on the preservation of heritage resources and its major challenges, outlining various causes of these challenges to the sustainability of the heritage resources which are potential tourism base if well harnessed. Previous studies suggested and tested some measures like promulgation of relevant legislation, use security agencies, employment of monitoring committees, adequate funding, public-private partnership, e.t.c (Ekechukwu, 2008; 1990; Nwankwo, 2013; Nwankwo & Ukaegbu, 2013; Ashmore & Sharer, 2005; etc) on the control of challenges of presentation of heritage resources. This current study appreciated these efforts. Owing to the position of heritage resources to the promotion and economic gains of tourism in the African communities, more especially rural areas where ignorance, poverty and poor funding are amongst the major impediments to the sustenance of heritage resources, other measures are sorted for to augment and improve the preservation and sustenance of heritage resources more especially in the rural areas. To this regard, this study was aimed at adopting community development approaches as a measure to augment previously suggested measures from earlier studies in the management, preservation and sustenance of rich heritage resources in the Igbo culture area.

Methodology

Ethnographic method of research i.e. interviews, observations, fieldwork, etc, was used to source primary data from the study area and documentary sources to review

and get acquainted to the previous studies with respect to community development approaches to heritage preservation and sustenance. The study area has approximately one thousand, one hundred (1100) urban and rural areas across the five states of the region i.e. Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The study had a large population including youths and adults from the study area with the exception of youths below the age of twenty (20 yrs). This made the study population to be approximated at nine million (9000000) judging from 2006 Nigerian National Population Census (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). With the aid of purposive and cluster sampling techniques, five indigenous communities (i.e. Ndiowu-Anambra, Inyishi-Imo, Nru-Enugu, Ozziza-Ebonyi and Umudike-Abia) were sampled from each of the states in the study area as representatives. ArcGIS 9.3 Extension tool was used in locating the study area on the map of the region understudy. Finally, descriptive and narrative methods of data analysis were employed in analyzing soft and hard data sourced from the field.

Brief note on the study Area

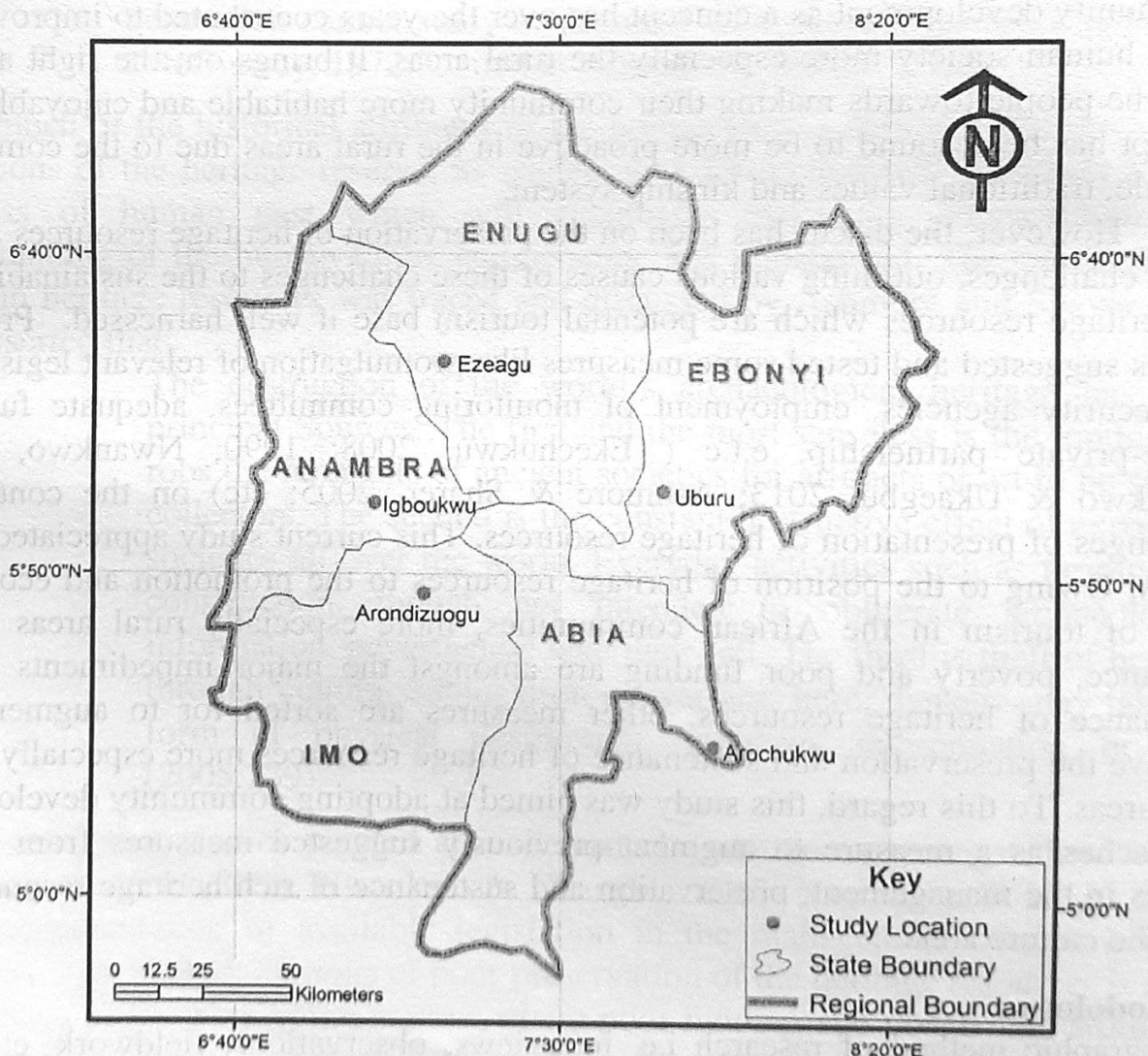


Fig. 1 : Map of the South-Eastern Nigeria showing study locations.

Igbo is one of the tribes within the geopolitical entity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is located at the eastern part of the country where states like Anambra, Enugu, Abia, Imo and Ebonyi are located. Geopolitically, the area is referred to as South-East zone of Nigeria. Igbo language is the generally spoken language in the area. The study area has abundant heritage resources both natural and cultural, which also instigated the choice of the area for the study. The area was also chosen for the study due to its proximity in knowledge and distance to the researchers.



Plate 1: Three Igbo women in the early 20th century (Basden, 1921).

The region has a formidable traditional structure which enables unified communal living and community development. The traditional structure of the region under study as seen below in Figure two will not only facilitate the adoption of community development approaches to heritage preservation in the zone, but will also ensure sustenance of such projects in a traditional Igbo community setting. To ensure effectiveness and sustenance, consultations and planning/organization starts from the top echelon (the community head), who collaboratively work with other institutions down the echelon.

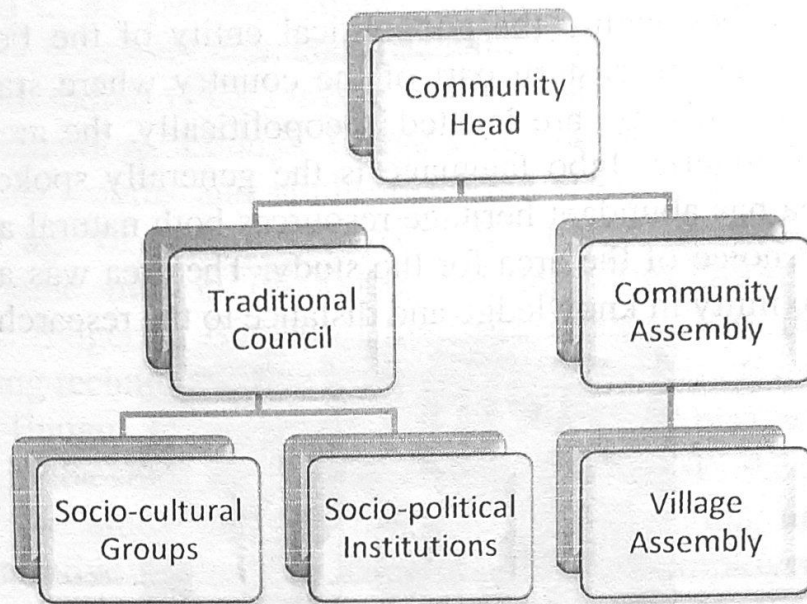


Fig. 2: Structure of a traditional Igbo Community for effective community development.

Heritage Industry in Igbo Land

“...heritage sites are precious reminders of some of the world’s most socially, politically and technologically advanced ancient civilization” (Global Heritage Fund, 2009:7). They are pin-pointers to the historical roots and identities of communities. Both historical communities and other communities that are non-ancient civilized have their identities and true nature embedded on the available heritage resources in their locality. In most cases, these heritage resources are pronounced. It will be pertinent at this juncture to have a more interpretation and dissection of the concept of the heritage industry for vivid understanding. Having seen the heritage resources as all the antecedents of a given community reflecting their historical and cultural origin and significance, heritage resources can be dissected using the diagram below;

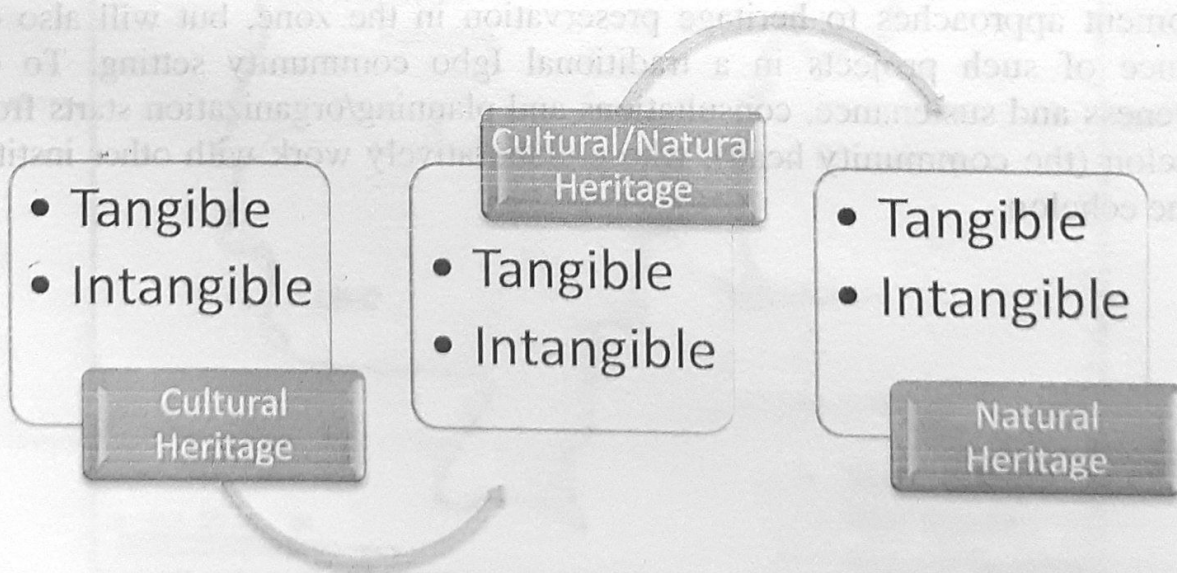
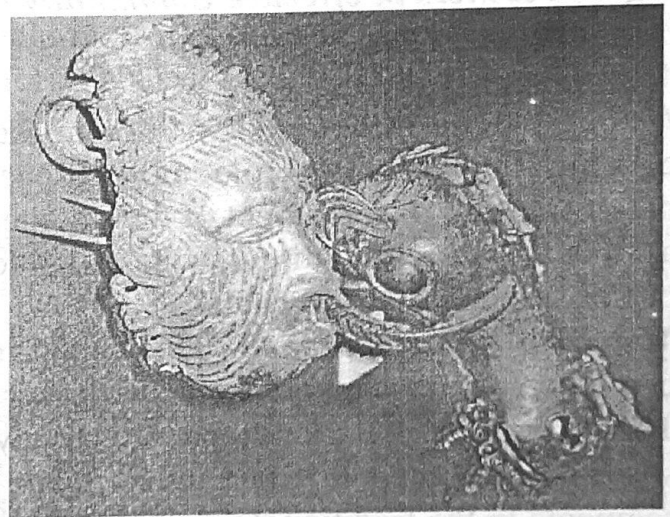
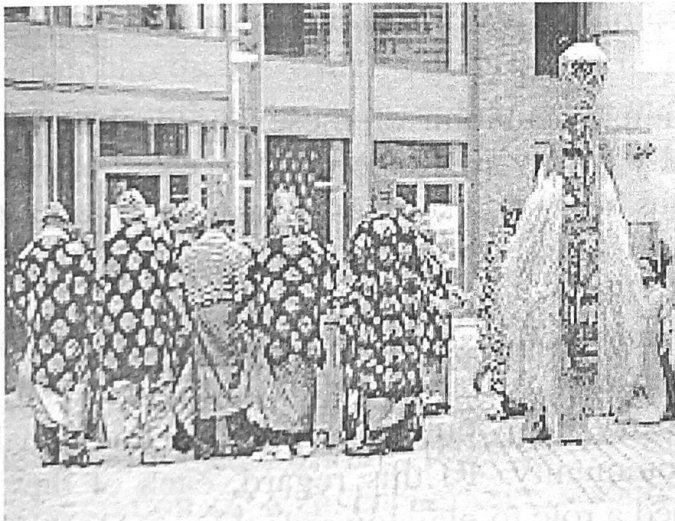


Fig. 3: Components of the Heritage Industry in Igbo land.

From the above diagram, heritage resources can be broadly classified into natural, cultural and natural/cultural. Each of these broad categories has both tangible and intangible aspects as shown in the diagram. By natural/cultural heritage resources, it means those natural heritage resources like hills, mountains, rivers, waterfalls, caves, wildlife, etc that have religious and cultural significance to the community. In most cases, belief system is attached to such heritage resources. However, a combination of the entire broad and sub-categories of heritage resources are commonly referred to as heritage industry of a given locality and hence can be used for heritage tourism promotion. However, most of the broad and sub-categories of the heritage industry as envisaged in figure three above are found in the study area. These include; rock-shelter, caves, streams, waterfalls, wildlife, rivers, festivals, traditional architecture, norms, value system, etc. These heritage resources are found in the various nooks and crannies of the study area with some still lying unharnessed for tourism promotion and many of them are posed with challenges of abandonment, misrepresentation, misinterpretation, religious iconoclasm, development activities, theft, etc.



(1) New yam festival in Igbo Land (2) Bronze from the ninth century town of Igbo Ukwu (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people)

Plate 2: Examples of Cultural heritage resources of Igbo origin.

Community Development Approaches and Preservation Heritage Resources

Community development has various approaches aimed at bringing improved standard of living in a community as was noted by Anyanwu when he asserted that “There are still a number of operational approaches to community development, apart from how the units and agencies concerned with this activity may approach their responsibilities” (Anyanwu, 1992: 106). The efficient application of these approaches is a function of combination of three factors; members of the community concerned, the outside investors and professionals (Abiona, 2009).

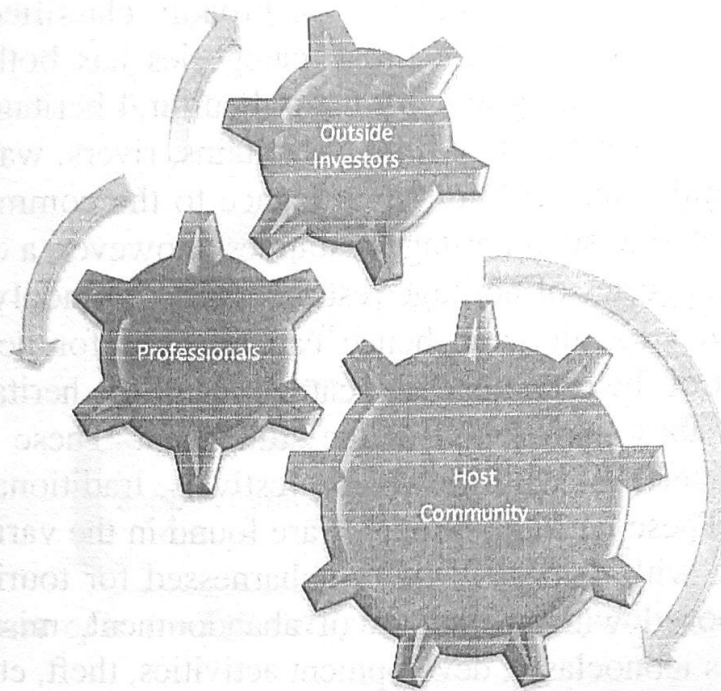


Fig. 4: Partners in effective Community Development Approaches in Heritage Preservation in Igbo Land.

Amongst these three major parties in the implementation of these approaches, the community has major role more especially when it concerns the preservation, promotion and development of their numerous heritage resources. It will be cognizant at this juncture to discuss these approaches and their application to heritage preservation in the study area.

Matching grant approach- This is the initiation of a self-help project by the host community with support from two other parties (Anyanwu, 1992; Abiona, 2009). They initiate those plans and effectively carry them out using various traditional structures (as seen in figure two) in the community. To this regard, each of these segments in the traditional echelon is assigned a role to play towards the actualization of the community's collective purpose or felt need. This could be in the form of institution of various functional committees by the community head to manage various aspects of their heritage resources towards ensuring their preservation and sustenance. The community initiates the project and arrange for its effective planning, organisation and sustainability. This approach is also called 'bottom-up approach' to community development. This is a better approach than 'Top-down approach' since the felt need community is considered in their significant order.

The sectoral Approach-“In this approach, different agencies, professionals or government ministries may undertake various development programmes within the same country...”(Anyanwu, 1992:107). In this approach, the initiative is extrinsic to the community but is aimed at helping the community. This will be more productive with the help of the community towards the sustenance of the project. In heritage

preservation, the sectoral approaches are expected to come from cultural institutions, archaeologists, relevant government cultural agencies, etc. These bodies are expected to design a strategy in which particular heritage resources can be preserved and sustained in a given community. A good example of this kind of project is the one that is currently done by the Global Heritage Fund who organizes a programme and raises funds to that effect to safeguard and preserve endangered heritage resources of great historical significance around the globe.

Integrated Approach- “It is a joint effort of government, non-governmental organization and the community to implement a project. All resources of the community whether physical or monetary must be united with those of government or non-governmental organization in this approach” (Abiona, 2009:86). This entails merging together of external efforts and that of the community where a given heritage resources is located. In this case, the village or community head sets up a vibrant committee that will work in harmony with the external bodies towards the preservation of endangered heritage resources. In most cases, while the external help provides the expertise, the community provides the labour and the security aspects. This arrangement would be more comfortable in the preservation of monuments and alike, like that of Chief Odo Nwokolo’s place at Ukeche, Enugu State. The meeting of this committee is mostly in the community and is conveniently fixed to accommodate the personal schedule of individuals involved.

Partnering Approach- This is another vibrant approach in community development that will be effective in preservation of heritage resources. “It is a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more sectors, intending to take action in an issue to achieve development in a way that is more effective, efficient and sustainable than could be achieved by any one sector alone” (Abiona, 2009: 87). It entails the working together of two external concerned institutions in the preservation of a given heritage resources. For instance, National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) and the Nigerian Tourism Development Cooperation (NTDC) can partner in the preservation and promotion of a given heritage resources. While the NCMM is interested in preservation, NTDC will be interested in promotion of such resources to boost tourism in the area. The community still has a role to play by way of providing conducive atmosphere and support for the programme to thrive in their area. This kind of partnership will help in the preservation of archaeological heritage resources that are of great significance to the community. A good example is the various iron smelting sites around the Nsukka area, more especially the Lejja site which is currently attracting international attention.

Community schools approach- This is another vital approach in community development that ensures sustainability. “This method is an attempt towards creating

an education-centered community...to harmonize education to become a learning environment directly related to community life process and problems” (Ezeh, 1999:31). It is the establishment of learning centres or programmes for the members of the community to learn about themselves and their environment. “The underlying aim of this method is to create positive change in the community by raising critical consciousness of common concerns. It holds that community people is capable of participation but have not done so because they may have lacked the necessary consciousness, competence or confidence” (Eze, 1999; 31). For heritage preservation, such schools or learning centres are meant to impact knowledge on the members of the community on the nature and significance of available heritage resources in their locality. This is pertinent owing to the fact that most people from most of these communities do not understand in clear terms the existence and significance of most heritage resources in their areas. Apart from its preservative target, this method also ensures sustainability since the community members are meant to understand and appreciate heritage resources in their area. Such understanding will ignite patriotic spirit in the members of the community to work assiduously towards ensuring the preservation and sustenance of available heritage resources in their environment. The curricular should be well articulated and designed by experts to ensure that the benefit of the approach is maximized.

Social animation approach- “This method of community development is a social intervention aimed at fostering citizen participation in political and social decision making which affect them...It rests on the premise that visible public action can generate power and compel concession from the target-governmental authority” (Ezeh, 1999: 28). One of the major problems or challenges to heritage preservation in the study area is the non-involvement or consultation of the host community when designing programmes for the preservation of a given heritage resources. One of the heritage resources entangled in this scenario is the Chief Odo Nwokolo Palace at Ukehe in Enugu State, which was declared a monument by NCMM and took over from the community. This social animation approach entails consulting and seeking for the opinion of the host community when designing management programmes of a given heritage resources in their area. They stand to proffer quality suggestions and ensure the adequate implementation of the program. A local tour guide at Ezeagu in Enugu State, frowned at governments’ earlier programmes on developing the Ezeagu Tourist Complex which had failed owing to the non-involvement and consultation of the host communities when designing the programmes. He was of the opinion that consulting the members of the community would ensure a sustainable planning. In this regard, it is expected that every programme that is aimed at heritage preservation and sustenance as organized by NCMM, NTDC, State Tourism Board, Local Government Tourism Committees, etc, should seek the views of the host community which will not only make them feel important and recognized, but will equally ensure sustainable preservation of heritage resources in a given area.

Directive Approach- In this kind of approach to community development, the government or outside agencies give a full funding of the project and take complete control of the project without involving the community in whose land the developmental project is going on (Anyanwu, 1992; Abiona, 2009). Such projects are the initiatives and agenda of these external bodies. In heritage preservation, the application of this approach entails a complete management of heritage resources by government agencies and other external bodies. Some of the heritage resources in the study area are cost intensive and demand a high level of expertise to ensure preservation and sustenance in their management. A very good example is the sand beach between Oko and Amaokpala communities in Orumba North, Agulu Lake, Ajalli cave, Awhum Monastery, Ogbunike Cave, etc. Although, the communities may have little or nothing to offer in this approach, but their total support is very essential for the sustenance of the project. The nucleus of such projects does not lie with the host community, but for their sustenance. Such projects will be more effective in the management of natural resources as mentioned earlier. Apart from the supportive role, another role of the community in this approach is the provision of the historical background of the site under study. This is pertinent because knowledge of the past enables for sustainability of a given project (Nwankwo & Ukaegbu, 2011).

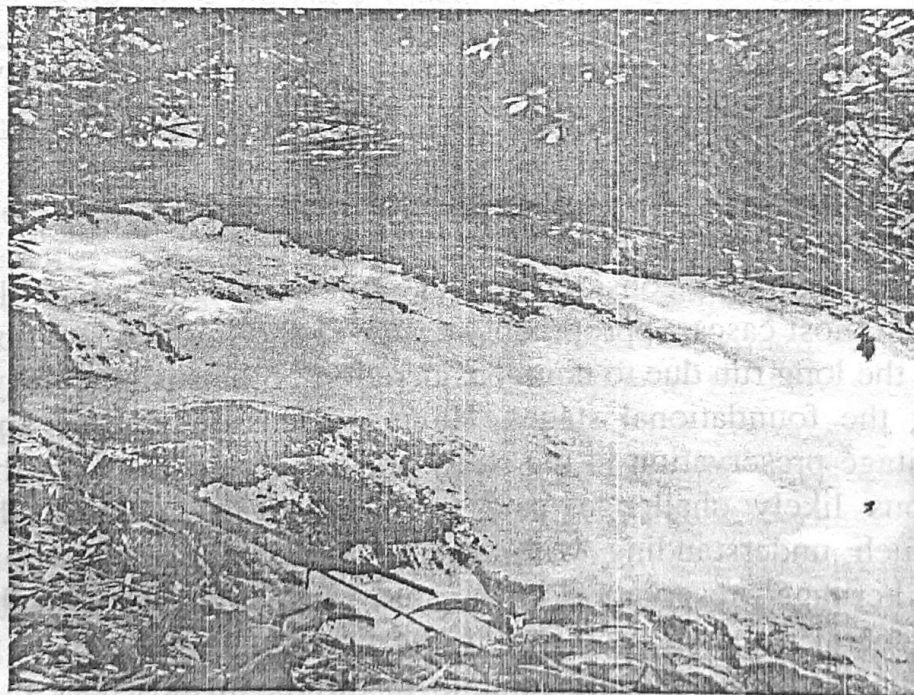


Plate 3: Ezeagu Water-falls, one of the natural resources at Ezeagu Tourist Complex.

Tab. 1: A summary sheet of Community development approaches and heritage preservation

Approaches	Interpretation	Benefits
Matching grant approach/ Bottom-up approach	The community initiates	It enables the outside investor to work within the needs of the community
Sectoral approach	External agencies initiate	It encourages professionalism and sustainable management
Integrated approach	Community, government, others	It enables for easy funding of a project
Partnering approach	Two external bodies initiates	It encourages expertise and professionalism
Community schools method	Education and information	It promotes heritage enlightenment and sustainability.
Social animation method	Community involvement in decisions	It encourages project sustainability and functionality
Directive approach	Non Community involvement	It encourages objectivity and fairness

Challenges and Prospects

Challenges

Amongst the major consideration in project design and implementation is sustainability. In most cases, appropriately designed and implemented projects can be disgraceful on the long run due to non-consideration of the sustainability aspect of the project during the foundational stages. Having discussed various approaches that would aid heritage preservation in the study area, it is imperative at this juncture to consider various likely challenges and prospects of such approaches and their application. Such understanding will aid in confirming the credibility of these approaches to heritage preservation in the study area. Starting with the challenges, amongst the general research problems in the developing nations, is poor funding. These approaches require adequate funding to thrive. In most cases, people in the rural part of the study area are discouraged from any community development approach that demands contribution from the natives. Such projects thrive more if externally funded, either the government or other agencies. Government and non-governmental agencies are most of the time, interested in funding gigantic heritage resources with much socio-economic and tourism prospects, thereby negating the primary cause which is the preservation of the rich heritage landmark of the study area. Another challenge is infrastructural decay that is currently prominent in the

study area, more especially the rural areas where the bulk of these heritage resources are located. For instance, the accessibility rate of Ajalli cave is very low (Nwankwo, 2006). This challenge was also conspicuous at Ezeagu Tourist Complex where there were poor pliable roads to major features of the site. This particular challenge can discourage the application of most of these approaches in the preservation of heritage sites in the study area more especially those approaches that have to do with the contribution of external agencies. There is also a challenge of non-cohesive community. A community that is disintegrated will have problems in coming together for community development. Most of these approaches demand community inputs and support. Some communities in the study area do have the problem of non-cohesion and insubordination to the leadership of the community. Achievement of community development initiatives is most of the time, a function of cohesion, Unity and stability in the community. To this regard, it is a prerogative of the leadership of these rural communities to harmonize and ensure stability in their various communities for them to achieve meaningful community development both generally and in the area of heritage preservation in their localities.

Moreover, there is a challenge of iconoclasm and modernity (Nwankwo, 2011). These factors have initiated much neglects and disregard on most of the heritage resources in the study area. A good example is the famous Ikeji Festival which is prominent amongst *Aro* communities. This festival has been culturally devalued owing to the functionality of these two factors. Same is applicable with the destruction of some cultural heritage resources that have been labeled 'fetish' and 'diabolical'. Some natural heritage resources in the study area are equally abandoned by the people of the community owing to the same problem. This scenario is common with most caves in the study area excluding the Ogbunike cave which has gone through significant development for tourism promotion in Anambra State. The value of most of these heritage resources is fast diminishing as they are seen as having no socio-economic benefit both to the individuals and the community at large. This notion needs to be corrected for meaningful community development initiatives especially in the area of heritage preservation. For instance, heritage resources have contributed socio-economically to the people of Bauchi State in Nigeria, owing to the development and the appreciation of these heritage resources (Agboeze & Nwankwo, 2013). There is also a challenge of huge capital investment involved. During an interaction with a local tour guide at Ezeagu Tourist Complex, he noted that over Two hundred million Naira (N200,000,000.00) is needed for the development of the sites. This is a discouragement in the part of the host community. In most cases, people in the rural areas may not be able to raise one-tenth (1/10) of this amount for heritage preservation owing to their low income level. This is amongst the reasons why these host communities decided to abandon and devalue most of these heritage resources. It encourages negative attitudinal change towards heritage preservation in the rural areas. Also, another challenge to heritage preservation was conspicuously

observed at Ajalli cave in Anambra state, Obimo cave in Enugu state, Agulu Lake in Anambra State, etc. This was the socio-religious significance of most of these heritage resources to the lives of the people where they are located. For instance, Ajalli cave and Obimo cave are perceived as shrines harboring the 'gods of the land'. This made these caves to have much dos and donts which constitutes impediments to any significant programme for preserving the site. At Ajalli cave, amongst the dos and donts of these natural heritage resources with huge religious significance to the people is the prohibition of women from entering the site, prohibition of human touch, prohibition of human entrance, etc. This is a challenge to the preservation of such heritage sites considering the nature of the proposing programme to their preservation. Such sites can still be preserved but with collaboration with the community and respect to their belief system and cultural values. There should be frequent consultation and seeking of the community's consent before, during and after any significant development programme in the site.

In addition, robbery, kidnapping, physical humiliation and intimidations can arise owing to the remote nature of most of these sites. Most of these heritage resources are situated in the remote part of the community, far from where the people are living. For instance, the Ogba-eju rock shelters at Amagu-ita in Afikpo of Ebonyi state are located about 4 miles from where community inhabitants built their houses. This is also applicable to that of Ezeagu Tourist site. The rate of social ills can prevent or discourage heritage preservation managers from working at such sites more especially expatriates from UNESCO, GHI, etc. This particular challenge demands that the community and the government should not be left behind in any programme to preserve such sites. Apart from the government providing adequate government security, the community's eye-watch security and vigilante will aid in ensuring adequate security at such sites for the site, the materials and developers. Most of the communities in the study area have strong and viable vigilante groups for adequate security. Another possible challenge to heritage preservation in South-East Nigeria is non-articulated proposals and subsequent poor management strategies (Nwankwo, 2012). This particular challenge is mostly on the part of heritage managers which could be individuals, agencies, NGO's, heritage groups, heritage communities as may have been set up by the leadership of a given community. For instance, a well articulated proposal convinces potential donors or sponsors to the sustainable preservation of a given heritage sites. Such viable proposals attracts international heritage agencies like the UNESCO, GHI, etc to invest on the preservation of a given heritage site. This calls for an articulate structuring of the site and the heritage managers understanding the terrain and adopting sustainable approaches that will preserve and sustain such projects through ages (Agboeze & Nwankwo, 2013).



Plate 4: *Thatching with palm leaf mats, among the Igbo people in the early 20th century. An example of communal effort in community development. (Source: Basden, 1921)*

Prospects

Despite these challenges, there are still prospects of sustainable heritage preservation in the study area. There has been an understanding and appreciation of cultural values in the South-East zone Nigeria, owing to the renewal of annual cultural festival in most communities in the study area i.e Nsukka Cultural festival, Ozubulu Cultural festival, Ndiowu Day', etc. All of these are aimed at resuscitating various cultural festivals of the people using it as a medium of unity, cultural and identity promotion of the people. Such events arouse interests and cultural promotion and preservation hence, the optimal appreciation of people's cultural values. It is also a medium of heritage preservation hence it promotes heritage resources and their socio-cultural values. There is also a global development which points at the prospects of heritage preservation. This is evident in the formation of various international agencies that are interested in world heritage preservation. An example of this is the institution of the Global Heritage Fund (GHF) which "...was established in 2002 in Palo Alto, California with a mission to save endangered world heritage sites in developing countries through science and community involvement" (Global Heritage Fund, 2008:3). This agency is much committed in partnering with host communities, resuscitating and preserving heritage resources more especially national heritage sites in various communities around the world. UNESCO equally has similar role to heritage preservation through cultural promotion and declaration of world heritage sites. Such declared world heritage sites are wholesomely taken care of by the UNESCO. An articulate proposal to these and some other international agencies with interest in heritage preservation would attract the needed resources for

programmes aimed at the preservation of heritage resources. There is also an improved infrastructural development in the study area. The government of the day is working assiduously to link-up communities, both rural and urban, with adequate road network to promote accessibility to most communities. The governors of the South-East zone of Nigeria are currently embarking on infrastructural developmental projects to promote accessibility of the rural area in their various states. A typical example is the construction of Aguluezechukwu-Ugboji-Ndiokpalaeze-Ajalli road in Anambra state by the state government, etc. Such infrastructural development empowers the rural communities and ensures even accessibility of these heritage resources for programmes aimed at heritage preservation in a given community.

Finally, the existence of various national laws and policies in Nigeria, give legal backings to the preservation of these heritage resources. A good example is the existing Decree 77 of 1979 which established the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). This body is empowered to ensure the preservation of the rich heritage resources in Nigeria with emphasis on museums and monuments. Also, the establishment of the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission (NTDC) in Act 81 of 1992 to promote heritage resources through cultural promotions and tourism. There are some other national agencies that are charged with similar responsibilities. There is also existence of the Nigerian Cultural Policy of 1988 which is aimed at promoting various cultural attributes in Nigeria. These are amongst the pin-pointers to the sustainable heritage preservation in the South-East zone of Nigeria.

Conclusion

...heritage sites are threatened by a host of factors. Chief among these threats are is the lack of economic opportunities for the local population. The realities of everyday life and the daily struggle for existence lead to looting, poaching, logging and slash and burn agriculture which threaten the integrity of these unique and irreplaceable cultural resources (Global Heritage Fund, 2009:3)

In support of this view on the state of heritage resources, Ashmore and Sharer (2005:243) noted that “vandalism and looting are serious problems, but well-intended activities can also be harmful. Although done in the name of progress, the opening of new lands to agriculture, construction of new roads and buildings and creation of flood-control projects inevitably destroys countless remains of past human activity”. Heritage resources are endangered in the society today. Amongst the major threats to heritage resources apart from those listed above is the attitudinal approach by the host community by way of neglect, abuse, misinterpretation and abandonment. These heritage resources need sustenance and preservation in the various communities where they are located for socio-cultural and economic promotion of the locality. In this paper, approaches to community development were adopted as techniques of heritage preservation in South-East Nigeria. These approaches corresponds with the

socio-political structure of the study area and will be very efficient in heritage preservation if timely and adequately harnessed by responsible instruments including the host community hence "...successful long-term sustainability is ultimately dependent on local community engagement and stewardship" (Global Heritage Fund, 2009:5). This is because the host community is the nearest neighbor to these heritage resources and has a great role to play in their preservation and sustenance. There is the need for the community to be organized and adequately structured to enable for free flow of information and responsibility to promote heritage preservation initiatives; hence preservation initiatives are potential source of necessary financial and technical management capacity aimed at ensuring heritage assets in any locality (Global Heritage Fund, 2009). Various challenges to these heritage preservation initiatives should be exploited by the community leadership, members of the host community, government agencies, relevant intentional agencies, community development specialists, heritage conservatives or managers, etc, towards ensuring preservation and sustenance of heritage resources in the South-East zone of Nigeria, Nigeria and Africa at large where attitudinal approaches to heritage preservation is still growing.

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