

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY THROUGH TOURISM: THE ROLE OF ICT IN EXPLORING TOURISM POTENTIALS IN RURAL AREAS

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Abstract

Tourism has become one of the most significant export sectors in many developing countries. A general consensus has emerged that it does not only increase foreign exchange income, but also creates employment opportunities, stimulates the growth of the tourism industry and by virtue of this, triggers overall economic growth. As such, tourism development has become an important target for most governments, especially for developing countries. Nigeria is among the richly endowed potential tourist destinations in the world. Its tourism attractions are abundantly available especially in the rural areas and they are untapped. However, the accelerating and synergistic interaction between technology and tourism in recent times has brought fundamental changes in the industry and the perceptions of its nature. To explore the potential of rural tourism and have the tourism sector of Nigeria contribute maximally to the national economy as a major export earner like petroleum, this paper suggests local content development in the area of information and communications technology (ICT). This is after the paper had examined the Global Tourism Industry; Rural Tourism Potentials in Nigeria; the state of ICT in Nigeria

Keywords: Nigeria, Diversification, ICT, Rural Tourism

1. Introduction

Nigeria, the most populous black nation with over one hundred and fifty million people and over three hundred and fifty-six thousand square miles land mass is blessed with abundant human and natural resources (Okikilinks, 2010). For decades, the country has been over relying on oil to drive its economy. Following the massive decline in global oil prices and the damage it has done to the Nigerian economy and the 2015 budget, it is imperative now for handlers of the economy to seriously explore other viable means of saving the economy from total collapse.

In the last six months, global oil prices have been experiencing sharp decline leading to severe fall in revenue. As a result, the country's budget benchmark price for this year is pegged at \$65 per barrel (PMNEWS, 2015). The continuous fall in the global oil prices forced the federal government to adopt austerity measures, reduce oil benchmark prices severally; from \$78 per barrel to \$65 while the Central Bank of Nigeria has devalued the naira (PMNEWS, 2015).

Regrettably, the global benchmark which has greater influence on that of Nigeria's benchmark fell recently by \$ 1.92 to \$ 51.18 (PMNEWS, 2015). For the Nigerian economy largely import-driven and oil-dependent, this implies a shortfall in revenue gap, increase in prices of goods and services and inflation, if nothing drastic is done to cushion the effect.

Previously, from the result of the decline in the oil revenue generated by the Nigerian government, and fallout from the global financial crisis, the Nigerian government had started looking for other ways to generate revenue to stimulate the country's economy. The Nigerian government selected tourism sector as one of the government priority sectors crucial to its economic survival -part of the government seven point economic growth agenda and its 2020 program for sustainability economic development (Isioma and Ashikodi, n.d.). The government anticipates that the tourism sector repositioning will make it a major source of revenue generation (Isioma and Ashikodi, n.d.).

One major area where Nigeria could muster some financial strength from the industry is through rural tourism. Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience

can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions.

This is a non-experimental and explorative paper. It examines how information communication technologies (ICTs) have been transforming global tourism industry; it identifies some rural tourism potentials in the country; examines potential ICT tools that could be applied in harnessing such tourism resources; looks at obstacles in the use of ICT for harnessing rural tourism potentials in Nigeria; and suggests measures to repositioning Nigeria's ICT sector for exploring rural tourism potentials

2. Literature Review

In the last fifteen years, an evident contribution of ICT in the field of tourism and travelling has been accomplished with necessary adjustments (Sigala, 2003; Paraskevas and Buhalis, 2002). Its significant impact is evident in the context of spatial and temporal convergence, which is clearly reflected in the reduced time required to achieve greater spatial mobility of people and information. Moreover, the process of globalization is to a great extent influenced by ICT which contributes to spatial and temporal convergence (Knowles et al., 2001; Mazarr, 2005). At the same time, ICT boosts the globalization of industry by providing efficient tools for vendors to develop, operate and globally distribute their offer (Buhalis, 2003). Smaller operators and tourist agents must use the exponential growth of internet users in their business through stronger partnerships and connections, and through the increased efficiency of their functions and high quality services based on the work and knowledge of specialized and trained personnel, which will be manifested in productivity growth (Kogliah et al, 2008; Hashim, 2007).

Competences acquired through knowledge and experience, and presented through the ability to adapt, are the core of the strategic approach to the interaction with customers, suppliers, alliances, and network formations. The above-mentioned points result in the creation of a broad research area dealing with the significance of new technologies, interpretation of events, and

attempts to predict future technological development. The most important advantage of ICT is both availability of information to the increasing number of people and reduced production cost due to increased efficiency (Kevin and Stiroh, 2003). Knowledge is created, shared, and widely accessible (Rooney, Hearn and Ninan, 2005). Interested market participants share information, specifications, and production process beyond national borders, and thus contribute to greater transparency resulting in lower prices. At the same time, ICT enables companies to have access to a number of markets and to use global supply chains in a simple and acceptable way. Although ICT has a strong impact on all sectors, tourism is one of those that are highly sensible to ICT (Shanker, 2008).

Fast and synergistic interaction between technology and tourism has led to changes in the industry and in our perception. Information and communication industry is becoming a key player in the competitiveness of tourism entities and destinations, as well as in relationships which define the tourism system (UNWTO, 2001). Development of web browsers, data transfer capacity, and network speed had an impact on a number of people worldwide who use technology to plan their trips. ICT driven business re-engineering changes the structure of the entire system of tourism and creates a completely new range of opportunities and threats for all participants. It can be concluded that ICT has led to radical changes in terms of effective and efficient relationship of entities in tourism in two ways. The first relates to the manner in which businesses and clients interact, and the second refers to regulation of relationship among entities, thus determining business operation in the tourism market (Buhalis, 2003).

There is also opinion that the benefits of ICT in the mediation will be evident in the operating costs rationalization, and in the use of differentiated strategies that will individualize the mass market (Buhalis and Zoge, 2007). This could result in requirement to create new opportunities and new tourism products according to the criteria of high quality and personalized services (Egger and Buhalis, 2008) accompanied by the creation of new “consumer area”. It is therefore assumed that the complexity and diversity of travel markets require innovative travel agents who offer solutions in multichannel management, while coordinating the processes so as to create the economic benefit based on a range of market opportunities.

ICT has strongly influenced growth in tourism and travel industry in the last fifty years, especially in the field of automation of distribution and creation of new sales channels (Golob and Regan, 2001), which prompted agents to change themselves by using transformed forms of

communication and applying innovative solutions that used to be eligible only for direct channels.

Against that background, ICT had a strong impact in terms of creating opportunities – flexibility to create products with innovative tools, fostering awareness through the availability of information –in promotion and distribution of holiday packages. On the other hand, the understanding of indirect forms of tourism distribution system is shifting from the traditional linear model where products and services reached consumers indirectly through travel intermediaries such as travel agents (Lubbe, 2005), whereby travel agents were viewed as intermediaries and conveyors of suppliers' products and services to consumers (Lubbe, 2005).

According to Vasudavan and Standing, travel agents have three basic tasks: (1) to perform the function of information broker, passing information between buyers and suppliers; (2) to process transactions, including printing tickets and forwarding money to suppliers; and (3) to advise travellers (Lubbe, 2005). In that sense, travel agents were viewed as agents of suppliers who paid them commission for selling their services. However, new distribution system encourages travel agents to actively change the way they do business and hence establish significant competitive advantage. Travel agents with once restricted market coverage due to their size, now have access to a much larger market owing to new technologies. Golob points out that local travel agents who have used GDS (Global Distribution System) have adapted marketing strategies and expanded their services in an effort to realize an increased competitive advantage (Golob and Regan, 2001).

Travel agents who successfully used internet as distribution channel had an easier access to global market. In such a way internet created the possibility to penetrate new market segments, and encouraged global alliance with the aim of enriching tourist offer, advertising and booking through cross-organizational booking systems. New distribution channels cannot be seen separately from other operating segments (Mamaghani, 2009). In the domain of ICT development, displayed either through the possibilities that internet placed before a modern tourist, or through travel agents that derived benefit from the inclusion in GDS systems, there is an evident quantitative growth in traffic, accompanied by a qualitative transformation of travel intermediaries. Especially conspicuous are those entities that apply ICT in the creation of new offer and affordable trips (Almandari, 2002).

Travel agents have to adapt their websites and online bookings to the overall “experience” and expectations of tourists; moreover, future travel agents will have to keep up with competing destinations that offer user friendly activities, values and conveniences (Mamaghani, 2009). This way the technology does not change only one business segment, but with efficiency and performance of its innovative tools it bears upon the radical changes in distribution channel and/or methods of its implementation and promotion regardless of the market entity in question, thus leading to higher or lower competitiveness. Those travel agents who ignore new technologies or avoid their implementation (due to high costs or lack of staff expertise) reduce the possibility to compete and adapt to dynamic market environment.

Owing to the popularity of internet applications, most travel agents accepted internet as their marketing and communication strategy dominated by re-engineering model of relationship. (Özturan and Roney, 2004; Buhalis and Law, 2008). This phenomenon affected market activities of travel agents owing to the development of flexible products and services and advantages of World Wide Web (WWW) and its application for the purpose of promotion and sales. This clearly shows that the benefits of ICT are applied to the area of products and travel agents’ distribution channels, which means distancing from traditional concept of distribution channels in tourism. Wolfe, Hsu and Kang point out that the reasons for avoiding on line shopping of tourism products lie in the lack of personal service, security, and lack of experience (Wolfe, Hsu and Kang, 2004), and to this we can add psychological barrier, as well as too many products and services. This is proven by the fact that many travellers use internet for information, while they shop off line (Buhalis and Law, 2008). However, the importance and role of modern technology in the travel agents’ distribution system cannot be denied (both in the process of signing contracts and providing services), which is particularly pronounced in the potential distribution of service segments and integrated tourist products. On the other hand, the gradual increase in ICT dominance in the field of information about destination products and services shows what will be imperative in the future. This is evident in abandoning traditional ways of obtaining information, while at the same time travel agents try to keep pace with the competition by introducing innovation through multimedia and interactive video for promotion.

This is an additional incentive to involve ICT intermediaries with the aim to inform potential consumers about services, products, and destination. Social networks, forums, discussion groups represent a new platform for obtaining more information about services, which is useful both to tourists and travel agents, while the information about the characteristics of tourists, their expectations and experiences is easily accessible. Due to the fast data transfer via internet, the time spent on communication and agreement between agents and customers is greatly reduced. The satisfaction of tourists and their behaviour depend on the response of travel agents to online inquiries, and it is well known that responsible reactions and fast responses to enquiries are essential for success of small and medium enterprises (Beldona, Morrison and Leary, 2005; Pechlaner, Rienzner, Matzler, and Osti, 2002).

3. Global Tourism Industry

Information communication technologies (ICTs) have been transforming tourism globally. The ICT driven re-engineering has gradually generated a new paradigm-shift, altering the industry structure and developing a whole range of opportunities and threats. Compared to other sectors of the global economy, the tourism industry is one of the fastest growing, accounting for more than one third of the total global services trade. International tourist arrivals have grew by 4.3% between 1995 and 2008 (Bethapudi, 2013).

Table 1: Receipt from international tourism, world exports and gross national product (GNP) of some selected countries (US\$) 1998-2008

Country	Tourism Receipt (1)	Export (2)	GNP (3)	% (1)/(2)	%(1)/(3)
Egypt	1,586	4,352	34,073	36.4	4.7
Nigeria	78	7,383	40,301	1.1	0.2
Morocco	933	2,872	14,363	33.0	6.5
Kenya	344	961	7,414	35.8	4.6
Gambia	36	-	175	-	20.6
Mali	37	260	1,555	14.2	2.4
Togo	40	220	984	18.2	4.1
Mexico	3,479	20,656	150,251	16.9	2.3

Spain	14,760	34,160	233,261	43.2	6.3
Unite Kingdom	10,235	131,210	599,804	7.8	1.7
USA	23,505	254,122	453,859	9.2	0.9
Italy	12,174	116,575	598,590	9.2	0.5
France	11,870	143,391	718,101	8.3	1.7

Source: Ogbu et al (2011).

Table 1 reveals that from 1998 to2008, Spain earned US\$14.8 billion amounting to 43.2 percent of her total export and 6.3 percent of her GNP. The corresponding figures for Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Kenya, Mexico, United Kingdom, Italy, France etc are respectively US\$1.5 billion, 36.4 percent; US\$78 million, 1.1 percent and 6.2 percent US\$ 933 million, 33 percent and 6.5 percent, US\$ 344 million, 35.8 percent and 4.6 percent, US\$ 3.5 billion, 16.9 percent and 2.3 percent US\$ 10.2 billion, 7.8 percent and 1.7 percent and US\$ 9 billion 6.3 percent and 1.7 percent. While Kenya`s contribution to total export is 35.8% and 4.6% to the export and GNP respectively, Nigeria`s contribution is just a very negligible 1.1% export and 0.2% GNP. This ought not to be so in view of enormous resources that are scattered all over the country (Ogbu et al., 2011). There abound several untapped attractions in the rural areas.

4. Rural Tourism Potentials in Nigeria

Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroun in the east, and Niger in the north. The country rests its coast in the south on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. The strategic location of the country as the most populous black nation on Earth sandwiched in over 350 ethnic groups and diverse religious(Augustine and Henah, 2013).

Nigeria is predominantly a rural society as the vast majority of her population dwells in the rural areas (Ele, 2006; Nwuke, 2004). Indeed, about 70 percent of Nigerians dwell in the rural areas (Aboyade, 1976). Specifically, these rural areas refer to the geographical areas that lie outside the densely built-up environment of towns, cities and the sub-urban villages and whose inhabitants are engaged primarily in agriculture as well as the most basic of rudimentary form of secondary and tertiary activities (Ezeah, 2005). Infact, a rural area, which is the opposite of an urban area, refers to the country side whose population engages mainly in primary production

activities like agriculture, fishing, and rearing of livestock (Ele, 2006). Indeed, 90 percent of the rural labour force engages directly or indirectly in agriculture (Nyagba, 2009).

The Nigerian society is culturally rich and characterized by its “more than the usual” hospitality. Her people dwell richly in welcoming visitors, using various approaches and means such as dance, drama, mouth-watering dishes, artworks, crafts etc. The country is equally blessed with locations such as beaches, unique wildlife, tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls and great art works that showcase the lifestyle and creativity of the people. A good number of these have been developed into tourist sites that attract several foreign and local tourists. It is a truism that the availability of tourism products and services as well as tourism destinations stimulate tourism development in any country (Okpolo et al, 2008; Holloway 2001). These products and destinations are abundantly available in Nigeria especially in the rural areas and they are untapped. These rural tourism resources can be classified into four main categories: farm/agritourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, wildlife/eco-tourism. They are found in all the 36 states of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. See table 1 in appendix for rural tourism classifications in Nigeria. These enormous untapped resources explain the basis of often assertion that Nigeria is not lacking but adequately endowed in terms of potentials for tourism development. However, there is need to examine how ICT tools can be used to harness these resources for wealth creation.

5.Examination of Potential ICT tools and how they can be applied in harnessing rural tourism resources in Nigeria

ICT tools in tourism industry

In essence, ICT is the technology required for information processing. These are innovative tools that form an integrated system of software and networked equipment that facilitates data processing, information sharing, communication and the ability to search and select from an existing range of products and services for an organisation’s benefits (Buhalis, 2003).

ICT-based tools/applications can be grouped into three sectors: ICT equipment, software products and ICT services and carriers (Erdmann and Behrendt, 2003). This can be further subdivided into microelectronics, new functions, networks, ICT devices and interfaces, software,

knowledge management, services and applications (Erdmann and Behrendt, 2003). Today, ICT applications include cell phones applications, Internet, wireless, voice-over information processing, Geographical Information Systems, Global Positioning Systems, Location Based Services, convergence (data, voice, media), digital radio and applications on demand. These ICT applications depend on a variety of products such as personal computers, net servers, mobile phones, cables, satellites and peripheral devices (screens, printers, scanners). These technologies are used by consumers, businesses, tourism marketing organisations, regulatory agencies, natural resource managers, local government, transport system managers, students and researchers, making their influence pervasive throughout the tourism system. Table 3 reveals potential use of ICT tools in tourism industry; Table 4 displays capabilities of a Geographical Information System and its use for monitoring tourism sites; ICT-based tools/applications that are used to manage the information requirements of tourism are indicated in Table 5; Table 6 shows ranking of ICT-based Tools/Applications for Tourism; Table 7 presents individual criteria scores used by World Economic Forum Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index when ranking countries for tourism competitiveness (139 total countries ranked).

Table 3: potential use of ICT tools in tourism industry

Different aspects of tourism industry	Application of ICT
Site development	GIS used for identification of Tourist site and destinations
Marketing	Advertising, promotion
Operations	Buying and management of supplies and services
Customer services	Management of customer relationships through booking travel, lodge etc
Monitoring	GIS and GPS is also used for managing and monitoring tourist sites.
Information Management	Computer simulation Destination management system Economic impact analysis software Environment management information system Geographical information systems Global positioning system Decision support system/Tourism information system Weather, climate and ocean change forecasting software
Tourist Satisfaction	Wireless technology Location based services Intelligent transport system Destination management system
Interpretation	Location based services
Enabling Partnerships	Destination management system
Community Participation	Community Informatics Geographical information system
Energy Consumption	Carbon calculators Virtual tourism Intelligent transport system

Source: United States Agency for International Development (2006)

Table 4: Capabilities of a Geographical Information System and its use for monitoring tourism sites

Examples of Functional Capabilities of a Geographical Information System	Examples of Basic Questions that can be Investigated Using a Geographical Information System (After Rhind, 1990)		Examples of Tourism Applications
Data entry, storage and manipulation	Location	What is at?	Tourism resource inventories
Map production	Condition	Where is it?	Identifying most suitable locations for development
Database integration and management	Trend	What has changed?	Measuring tourism impacts
Data queries and searches	Routing	Which is the best route?	Visitor management/flow
Spatial analysis	Pattern	What is the pattern?	Analysing relationships associated with resource use
Spatial modelling and Decision support	Modelling	What if.....?	Assessing potential impacts of tourism development

Source: Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999)

Table 5: ICT-based tools/applications that are used to manage the information requirements of tourism

Phase	Task	Source	Tools
Information gathering and modelling	Information gathering	On-line market data, statistical sources, questionnaires	Electronic search tools i.e. scanning, browsing, retrieving
	Performance monitoring	On-line performance	Statistical tools
Analysis and forecasting	Market analysis and segmentation	Market data	Market portfolio, data mining
	Forecasting and extrapolation	Historical performance data, market data	Econometrical models, simulation
Planning and decision	Product planning and creation	Market data, "own" infrastructure	Optimisation models, simulation
	Distribution channel selection	Market data	Optimisation models, simulation
Implementation and operation	Information distribution	Performance data	Statistical tools
	Negotiation and sales	Performance data	Decision models, game theory

Source: Werthner and Klein (1999)

Table 6: Ranking of ICT-based Tools/Applications for Tourism

Ranking	ICT-based tools/applications
1	Destination management system
2	Intelligent transport system
3	Tourism information system
4	Environment management information system
5	Location based services
6	Global positioning system
7	Geographical information system
8	Community informatics
9	Economic impact analysis software
10	Carbon calculators
11	Virtual tourism
12	Weather, climate and ocean change forecasting software

13	Computer simulation
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Source: Ali (2009).

Table 7: ICT and Tourism Competitiveness Rankings

Country	ICT Component Rank					Overall ICT Rank	
	Extent of Business Internet Use	Broadband Internet Subscribers	Internet Users	Telephone Lines	Mobile Phone Subscribers		
Switzerland	15	3	10	2	35	2	Successful eco-adventure destinations in Adventure Tourism Development Index
United States	7	18	15	20	76	21	
Mexico	78	53	77	74	92	75	Markets striving to grow eco-adventure arrivals
Kenya	73	127	103	119	115	112	
Ethiopia	134	136	136	125	139	138	

Source: Heyniger (2011)

Relevance of the use of these ICT tools

The use of ICTs is a relevant opportunity for growing and strengthening a local tourism industry, and for the development of destinations economies overall. Specifically ICTs have the potential to increase destination incomes for financing economic and social development in (UNCTAD, 2005; UNWTO, 2003): developing and reinforcing local tourism and tourism-related entrepreneurship and activities; developing genuine tourism offerings that rely on local productions and traditions (for ex. food, furniture, handicrafts and constructions); enabling direct promotion and commercialization of local tourism offerings in international markets reducing dependence on big foreign intermediaries.

Basically ICTs allow destinations to improve online presence (i.e., visibility and participation to Internet market) and offline connectivity (i.e., collaboration, clustering as well as intersectoral linkages among local public and private tourism and tourism-related actors) required to compete in nowadays global tourism market(Petti and Passiante, n.d.). An example of a destination in a developing economy that has taken advantage of the internet facility in Cross River State and Obudu Cattle Range. In this particular case, the public sector (Cross River State government of Nigeria) uses the internet to promote the destination and hospitality features in its territory.

More categorically, the use of ICT in tourism has the following advantages: optimal product information for customer; multimedia, global search engines, recommendation; reduction of effort for information gathering and travel planning (transaction costs); reduction of product complexity; information about customer for supplier; customer profiles and preferences (eCRM); customer behaviour and needs (web mining); flexibility of tourism offers; Customization of products; yield management & dynamic pricing; dynamic packaging; ICT tools have facilitated business transaction in the industry through networking with trading partners, distribution of product services and providing information to consumers across the globe; consumers can directly obtain information and plan their trip and travel with www; ICT pervades almost all aspects of tourism and related industry; internet offers the potential to make available information and booking facilities available to large number of tourists at relatively low costs; internet also provides a tool for communication between tourism suppliers, intermediaries, as well as end-consumers; ICT is useful to increase efficiency, reduce cost and improve customer service.

Factors that must be considered when applying ICT in tourism

Information technology (IT) is a driving force in the current information driven society. Its role in the tourism industry cannot be quantified. However, there are key factors that must be considered when applying ICT in tourism:

- 1.IT education and training for policy makers, managers and other players in the industry
- 2.Integration of various sectors like transport, lodge etc.
- 3.Technical Infrastructure
- 4.Human Infrastructure, which includes skilled people, vision and management.
- 5.Legal Infrastructure
 - a.Regulation of telecommunication providers
 - b.Subsides for Internet service providers
 - c.Legal framework for online advertisement or official endorsement for online marketing.
6. ICT culture
 - a.Create and sustain ICT environment
 - b.Maintenance and updation of websites
 - c.ICT training for all level of workers
 - d.Establish electronic linkages between all related sectors

6. The state of ICT in Nigeria

Over the years, the Federal Government of Nigeria has initiated or adopted several ICT related policies and laws aimed at guiding the development of the sector and harnessing its power for national development. But Nigeria, like other nations, faces the inevitability of the fast technological and market convergence of the global ICT industry and must therefore continue to evolve new ICT policy frameworks to accommodate convergence and maximize the potential of ICT tools for national development.

Prior to 1999, development in the ICT sector of Nigeria was far below expectation for a country of its size and resources. For example, total fixed telephone lines were less than 400,000 while regular internet users were less than 200,000 (National ICT Policy, 2012). From a policy and regulatory standpoint, the Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the National Telecommunications Policy (NTP) in 2000 to guide the development of the telecommunications industry in Nigeria. This was followed by the enactment of the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) 2003 to give legal effect to the NTP. Previously, the National Mass Communications Policy recommended the creation of a regulatory body to regulate Broadcasting and this led to the promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992 that established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). In a similar vein, the National Information Technology Policy was approved in 2000 to guide the IT industry in Nigeria, and was followed by the enactment of the National Information Technology Development Agency Act 2007 which became the legal platform for the creation of NITDA. It is noteworthy that there has never been a national postal policy, however, Decree No. 41 of 1992 established the Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) to provide postal services in Nigeria.

These policy and regulatory developments along with other government and private sector initiatives have resulted in significant improvement of the ICT sector. For instance, Nigeria has moved from approximately 400,000 available fixed telephone lines pre- 1999 to over 90.5 million available mobile telephone lines by the first quarter of 2011 (National ICT Policy, 2012), thereby making Nigeria's telecommunications market the fastest growing in Africa. There is now modest ICT deployment in the functioning of government organizations, as well as in the private sector. In addition, ICT now drives some activities in the financial and oil and gas sectors

while various e-Government initiatives are ongoing in various departments at the three tiers of government.

According to National ICT Policy (2012), available statistics¹ indicates the following:

- i. Mobile Penetration (per 100 people) - 55.76
- ii. Fixed penetration (per 100 people) - 0.48
- iii. Internet Penetration (per 100 people) - 23.48 (2010)
- iv. Internet Users (000) - 43,270 (2010)
- v. Broadband Penetration - 6.1% (2010)
- vi. PC Penetration (Number of PCs per 100) - 4.7 (2010)
- vii. Computers Assembled in Nigeria - < 500,000
- viii. Number of registered ICT companies - 350
- ix. Broadcasting stations nationwide - 308
- x. Post offices (total inc. postal agencies and post shops) - 1,065 (3,000+)
- xi. Licensed courier companies - 250

6.1 Obstacles to the use of ICT in Harnessing Rural tourism Potentials in Nigeria

The Information and Communications Technology has offered a world of opportunities to Nigerian. In spite of the gains, there are several impediments to the successful use of information and communication technology in exploring rural tourism potentials in Nigeria:

A formidable obstacle to the use of information and communication technology is infrastructure deficiencies. Computer equipment was made to function with other infrastructure such as electricity under “controlled conditions”. For so many years Nigeria has been having difficulty providing stable and reliable electricity supply to every nook and cranny of the country without success. Currently, there is no part of the country, which can boast of electricity supply for 24 hours a day except probably areas where government officials live. Invariably, epileptic electricity supply which is a general problem in Nigeria but it is worse in rural areas. Typically, in a month, electricity may be available only for twenty four hours cumulatively, a situation that makes life in the rural areas difficult and unattractive to the youths. Most rural dwellers are so poor that they cannot afford even the cheapest generating sets to illuminate their homes at night.

Another obstacle to ICT development in Nigeria is inadequate telecommunication facilities. Access to ICT is highly dependent on telecommunications infrastructure, particularly if one is focusing on telephone service, faxes, e-mail and the Internet. Though the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has rated Nigerian's Telecommunication Sector as the fastest growing in Africa, basic information infrastructures such as internet is almost not existing and services are generally too expensive to poor population in rural areas. The reluctance of telecommunications operators to deploy services in the rural areas has been cited as the major reason for the existence of a continuous inadequate telecommunication infrastructures and low penetration of basic telecommunication services in these areas.

The world is more connected online than ever before. The web, email, social media and other new technologies have radically transformed the ways in which consumers buy tourism products, broadening their access to information and travel opportunities (Etourismug, n.d.). There are few Internet providers that provide internet gateway services to Nigerians. Such Internet providers are made up of Nigerians who are in partnership with foreign information and communication companies. Many of these companies provide poor services to customers who are often exploited and defrauded. The few reputable companies, which render reliable services, charged high fees thus limiting access to the use of the Internet. The greatest technological challenge in Nigeria is how to establish reliable cost effective Internet connectivity. In a country where only about 0.6% of the populace has home personal computers, the few reliable Internet providers who have invested huge sum of money in the business have a very small clientele (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu, 2005). They have to charge high fees in order to recoup their investment in reasonable time.

Obviously, it is clear that the telecommunications development in Nigeria so far is fully depended on foreign technologies. In most cases, investments by multi-nationals have being a mere relocation of facilities without the transfer of ability to innovate since all the elements of technology required to make telecommunication succeed are most often transferred in a packages. The main constrain to rapid telecommunications development in Nigeria have therefore been attributed to lack of science and technology, capacity for operation and maintenance of facilities, technical and managerial activities etc (Alabi, 2004).

The physical environment in most rural and remote settings is characterized by some combination of heat, dust and humidity, each of which is a challenge for standard computers.

High speed CPUs generate enormous amounts of heat that, if not properly dissipated, reduces performance or can render these systems inoperable. Dust threatens sensitive electronics by shorting circuits and impeding airflow and heat dissipation. Humidity leads to condensation, corrosion and even mold, all of which can cause electrical problems and possibly shorten equipment lifespan (Ebo et al., 2012).

Many Nigerians live in rural areas and are predominantly poor farmers and fishermen who are illiterate and speaking local languages, ICT face tremendous challenge to be effectively used by these people in their rural communities. ICT requires that users have some skills. However, in Nigeria, the government focuses more in educating and exposing people in the city on ICT skills and forgetting those in the remote villages (Allafrica, 2015). Worse still, there are inexperienced computer users; lack of trained technical support ; wdespread poverty and associated security risks; reluctance of experienced or trained computer users to work in rural communities.

According to Ifidon (2006), Nigeria is a “nation without information policy”. There is regrettably lack of proper planning of policy with constructive analysis and consultation of people in the field for the realization. There seems to be the rush to borrow what exist in the developed world without taken cognizance of the different circumstances and peculiarities of operation (Baro, 2011). The lack of information policy coordinating, the acquisition, organization, and dissemination of information, especially for developmental purposes tends to be a major problem in Nigeria just like in all African countries (Mostert, 2001).

6.2 Measures to Repositioning Nigeria’s ICT for exploring rural tourism potentials

There is need for Nigerian to begin local content development in the area of information and communications technology (ICT) with the aimed of driving growth in the tourism industry and other sectors of the economy. The essence is to increase the participation of local firms in driving development in the ICT industry (Okonji, 2014). This will encouraged Nigerians to believe in locally developed ICT products and endeavour to patronise locally developed solutions. In order to achieve that, Nigerians have to begin to look inwards for local software that could meet their needs

Concerning the deteriorating power supply situation in the country, the government and all stakeholders needed to work together towards addressing the anomaly, as inadequate power supply had continued to pose a huge threat to local manufacturing of technological products.

To succeed in using ICT to explore tourism potentials in rural areas, technical expert or trained computer users should be encouraged to stay and work in the rural areas, remuneration to help them live as if they are in the urban area should also be given to them. In addition, the national ICT policy should ensure that the critical masses of people living in the rural areas are given the necessary ICT education.

There is need for more measures to be put in place to ensure increased Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in ICT sector. This is to ensure that the opportunities created by these FDI inflows is maximized while nurturing local participation and positive partnership with the multinational companies.

In partnering with multinational companies to provide ICT facilities in Nigeria, these companies should be encouraged to cite assembly plants in Nigeria to produce mobile phones, laptops, tablets and other ICT facilities. That way, it will be possible for technology firms to do a total “Nigerian content” in their businesses (Opara, 2014). Thus having applications on local culture, e-commerce, e-education that are tailored to the Nigerian market.

There is the need for the government to get serious with the local content programme, as strict adherence to that will ensure that local computer manufacturers are well empowered to compete with foreign brands and possibly implement some price reduction schemes for customers. In the same vein, government should work towards making the exchange rate better so that prices of locally-assembled computers or imported ones will remain competitive.

6.3 Conclusion

Tourism has become one of the most significant export sectors in many developing countries. A general consensus has emerged that it not only increases foreign exchange income, but also creates employment opportunities, stimulates the growth of the tourism industry and by virtue of this, trigger overall economic growth. As such, tourism development has become an important target for most governments, especially for development countries.

However, the accelerating and synergistic interaction between technology and tourism in recent times has brought fundamental changes in the industry and the perceptions of its nature. Adoption of new technologies has reshaped the entire process of tourism service development, management and marketing, as well as entire tourism industry as a whole. Due to the increasing impact on efficiency and effectiveness of tourism organizations, ICTs is perceived as an integral part of the contemporary tourism business. To exploring the potential of rural tourism and have the tourism sector of Nigeria contribute maximally to the national economy as a major export earner like petroleum, there is need to build a strong ICT sector.

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Appendix

Table 1: Rural Tourism Classifications in Nigeria

STATES	FARM/AGRITOURISM	CULTURAL TOURISM	NATURE TOURISM	WILDLIFE/ECO-TOURISM.
ABIA	The State boasts of a large variety of traditional Festivals/dances in virtually all the autonomous communities in the State. These are celebrated at various seasons in the year. Officially, there is the State-owned Ugwuabia Festival. Ugwuabia (the pride of Abia) festival is a grassroot festival where all the LGAs in the State come to showcase the best of all their culture in a carnival; Iwaji Festival annual New Yam Festival	The long juju of Arochukwu, The Ohafia war dance festival; Textile weavers of Akwete; AmaforIsingwu bi annual Iza aha ceremony; The Akpe Festival in Umuahia	Isiukwuato water fall in Umuogwugo (Isiukwuato LGA); Azumini Blue River in Ukwa East LGA; Amakama cave Amakama Umuahia South LGA; -Ngodo cave at Ngodo Isuochi, which has both stalactite and stalagmite inside.	Amurum Woodlands ; Obibia forest reserve; Obaku forest reserve
ADAMAWA	Adamawa plays host to 32 festivals, including the three-day Zhita in Bazza as well as Dukwa and Yawal in Madagali. There is also Sorro a Fulani day-long observance commemorating the initiation of a group of boys into manhood. It is held in Yola and usually takes place in February.	Many cultural festivals like harvest festivals, installation of chiefs, wrestling contest and hunting attracts a sizeable number of tourists; Vunon is a native wrestling contest and festivities of Bachama people of Numan, Adamawa State; Khombalta/Shadi Festival; Mba Festival; Tiwie Festival;	Koma hills, three sister rocks (Song Local Government); Lamured hot spring;	Girei Forest Reserve; Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve; Zangula River Forest Reserve; Maki Forest Reserve; Gashaka Game Reserve;
AKWA IBOM	There are several festivals in Akwa Ibom State throughout the year. Some of these include Mbre Mmong, a water festival celebrated in the Nsit Ubium LGA which features a boat regatta. The Ekpe outings, celebrated in Uruan and Oron LGAs, feature impressive displays of masquerades.	Usono Ekong, a festival of traditional heroes and heroines and war generals; The Ndap Ekpo/Ukappa Ison Ekpo festival is a feast for the celebration of ancestral masquerades and spirits for their guidance and protection of their communities;	The rolling hills and incised valleys and ravines in Itu, Ini and Ikono Local Government Areas, Itu offers excellent hilly scenic beauty, in addition to the confluence of the Enyong Creek and the Cross River.	Akai Idip Ekpe sacred forest in Asanting Ibiono community; Drill Ranch; some forest reserves such as: Stubbs Creek, Ogu Itu, Obot Ndom, Uwet Odot; Obeaku forest reserve
ANAMBRA	Ekwulobia New Yam Festival; N Omaba Yearly New-Yam Festival; <u>Aguluzigbo</u> New-Yam Festival; Ozubulu New-yam festival; Okija New-Yam Festival; Ihiala New - Yam Festival; Nanka New -Yam Festival;	There is the yearly Ofalla festival; the Ijele masquerade ; Aghalieaku Cultural Festival, Ozubulu; Ijele masquerade-listed in UNESCO Archives as Intangible cultural element .	Ihuneke Lake, Ihu-ogba cave and Ogbagada waterfall located in Ezeagu Village; waterfall, monastery, and a cave located in Awhum Village. Eze-agu iyi, Ogelube, Uhere, Orufu, Ikpa, Nkpo and Ozzi lakes located in Opi Village;	Udi/Nsukka game reserves; Akpaka game reserves; Agulu Crocodile Lake located along Awka road in Agulu, Aniocha Local Government Area;
BAUCHI	Lake Efi Fishing Festival	the durbar is a popular festival here; the Kyaro war dance performed by the Warji ethnic groups, Afizere dance which is a traditional dance of the Jarawa people, Takai dance which is popular among the Hausa-Fulanis, the Ngat-al-Bajar dance, in umaish; Kunshu festival	Wikki Warm Springs; Marshall Caves; Tunga Dutse; Kalban Hill; Kariyo Hill; Paliyaram Hill; The Tonlong Gorge; Dukkey Wells; Panshanu Stone Heaps (Kwandon Kaya) in Toro Local Government, Babban Gwani at Kafin Madaki in Ganjuwa Local Government;	Yankari game reserves; Lame /Bura game reserves; Sumu Wildlife Park in Ganjuwa Local Government; Premier Game Reserve

BAYELSA	Seigben Ogugu Fishing and Feasting Festival; the canoe war displays and boat regattas and dances; Okelede New Yam Festival; Odemimon Festival to commemorate the Harvest season in Otuoke community; Obunem Festival to kick start the eating of new yam in Epie clan	The Ogoriba Uge festival; Liberation Festival; Kabo Seigbein; Boro Uge festival; Pulou Uge to celebrate the discovery of crude oil in the community; Eremutoru Festival Peretoru in Ekeremor LG; kpai-Kpai Festival Ekowe in Southern Ijaw LG;	Seigben Ogugu Lake is in the Southern Ijaw LGA; Okpoama Beach; the Agricultural Palm Beach; Agge Palm Beach; Atlantic Ocean beaches	Turtle Station at Akassa in Brass Local Government Area
BENUE	Akata Fishing Festival ; Igede-Agba Yam Festival of the Igede people of <u>Oju</u> and <u>Obi</u> local government areas; Ikoyogen Cattle Ranch	The state possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage which finds expression in colorful cloths, exotic masquerades, sophisticated music and dances. These dances include Ingyough, Ange, Anchanakupa and Swange among the Tiv and Anuwowowo and Obadaru among the Idoma..	Enemabia Warm Spring; Natural Okpoya; The Akate lake; Anibilla Hills; Gulgur Fall And Beach; Jande Dwer Stream; Mkar Hill; Vandeika Rock; Enamabia Warm Spring; Ikyogen Hills; The Rare Manatee, Katsina-ala River; Ushongo Hills	Montane game reserves; Nile crocodile farm located in Katsina-Ala town, Makurdi, Gboko; the Ikwe Park; Mela Game Reserve; Wooded Trench; Anwase-Abande Ranges
BORNO	Kyarimi Park in Maiduguri for animal and bird lovers and where the only captured hippopotamus in West Africa is harboured	The Durbar; the Dikwa and Marte Development Association (DDA and MDA) and Menwara festivals.	Gwoza Hills Natural; Lake Tilla; Lake Alau ;Lake Chad; Jaffy Falls situated in the Kwaya-Kusar LGA	Sambisa game reserves ;Chad Basin National Park; Abba Kari Zoo, Maiduguri; Sanda Kyarimi Park;
CROSS RIVER	Obudu cattle ranch; new yam festival, Abi LGA; Fishing Festival, Ebom; Boat Regatta, Akpabuyo LGA; New Yam Festival, Biase LGA; Ugbani (Women New Yam Festival), Biase LGA; Cassava Regatta, Buanchor; Boat Festival, Calabar Municipality;	Leboku festival in Ugep, northwest Calabar; Ekpe Masquerade Cultural; The Cross River State Christmas Festival; The Cross River State Carnival Float; The Yakurr Leboku Yam festival; the Calabar Boat Regata; Anong Bahumono Festival which holds in Anong Village, during which different cultural dances are showcased, including Ikpobin, Ekoi, Obam, Emukei and Etangala Dances;	Cross River; Obudu International Mountain Race; Obudu Mountain Range, Afi Mountain Range; Kwa Falls; Agbokim Falls; Rock with foot prints; -Ochako lake located at Eprinyi (Yala L.G.A.) - Ejagham lake located at Abia (Etung L.G.A.) - Refome located at Ebom (Abi L.G.A.) - Wobie located at Urugham (Biase L.G.A.)	Coercopan, Ishie Close, zoo Calabar; Cross River National Park Eco-Tourism/ Wildlife; Drill Ranch, Calabar Zoo; Afi Forest Reserve; Afi Wildlife Sanctuary; Afi River Forest Reserve; Agoi forest reserve; Cross River North forest reserve;
DELTA	Iwaji festival: This festival is celebrated to commemorate the harvest period particularly the abundance and availability of New Yams.	Almost every village celebrates a traditional festival. Some of the important festivals celebrated in the State are Adane Okpe, Iyeri, Edjenu, Okere Juju, Ine, Ulor, Ukwata and Ore-Uku;	Asaba Beach; River Ethiopia Source; Eni Lake, Uzere, Isoko South Lga (Traditional Sanctuary Of Aquatic Animals; Okpuzu Fall, Ibusa, Oshimili North Lga; Lyiada Valley, Ogwashi-Uku, Aniocha South Lga; Otu – Ogwu Beach, Asaba Oshimili South L.G.A	Orle River Game Reserves; Iri-Ada-Obi Game Reserves; Red Mangrove Swamps, Warri South, Warri South-West, Burutu And Warri North LGAs;
EBONYI	Edda New Yam Festival –also Known as Joku, Ihejoku or Njoku-ji, the EBADEP farm Ezillo in Ishielu L.G.A; Uboma Fish Pond	This state has a rich cultural heritages. This is expressed in the colorful dances namely Nkwa Umuagbogho of Afikpo and Nkwa Nwite; Masquerade Festival-Omaba Ekpe and Ogbodu masquerades.	Unwana and Ndibe Beach at Afkpo; Uburu Salt Lake, Uburu; Amanchore cave; Mkpuma Ekwa Oku Rocks; Oguta Lake Holiday Resort; Abadaba Lake Holiday Resort;	Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary;
EDO	The palm tree of lands of NIFOR	A combination of historical festival in the Edo kingdom;	Amahor Waterside; Sand beaches of Agenebode; Somorika Hills	Okomu National Park; Ohosu game reserves;
EKITI	New Yam festival; Raw Material Display Centre	Some major festivals are common to all the Ekitis and these are Egungun festival,	Kogosi Warm Spring Resort is located In Ikogosi; Arinta Water Falls, Ipole-Iloro, Olosunta Hills,	Akure, Akure-Ofosu, Ala, Aramoko, Egbe, Ipele-Idoani, Irele,

		Ogun festival ; Ado masquerade festival; Edeijan, Semuregede-Ode, Odokorosoyin, Ogun-Ijero, and Osayin-Isinbode;	Natural Caves in Ikere-Ekit.; Efon hills are the watershed of River Oni, River Olua, and River Owena;	Ise, Little Ose, Ogbese, Okeluse, Oluwa, Onishere, Owo forest reserve
ENUGU	Iri-iji ikeji (New yam festival); Nnekeji Festival of Achi; Afo-Oha Festival of Achi	Mmanwu (masquerade) festivals; Odo Cultural Festival In Ngwo; Enugu <i>Festival of Arts</i> ; Egba- Eze festival; Ani Onwa Ano festival; Onwa Ebo festival; Isiogba Festival of Achi;	the Heneken Lake in Ezeagu, Awhum Waterfalls, the Odukwa Cave in Ezeagu; Ogbagada River, Ihenke Lake, Opi Lake System and Akwuke Attakwu beach; Okpara Coal Mine; Miliken Hill; Iva Valley Coal Mines; kalagu Coal Mines; Nike Lake	Udi/Nsukka game reserves; Nike Lake Resort; Ngwo Pine Forest, Akwari-ani forest reserve; Agu-Obu-Owa Ude forest reserve
GOMBE	kamo, yeku, bashari, ilar-zhare, yilin, chugothe, dambang, kuram, kamo hunting festivals;	the Kaltungo Cultural Festival in Kaltungo; Chigote' <i>festival</i>	Tangale Dome Shaped Rock/Hill; Tula Highland Hills; Bage Hills of Funakaye, Kilang Hill in Kaltungo and Binga Hills of Pindiga in Akko Local Government Area;	Gombe National Park; kanawa forest; Tukulma Forest Reserve;
IMO	Ahiajoku <i>Festival</i> , observed in all the <i>farming</i> communities; Ekpukele – during the new yam festival; NGOR OKPALA LGA; iriji festival (New Yam festival)	Eyiri-eyi Obohia; Iwakwa of Ihitte Afor Ukwu; Inunkwu of Oparanadim; Ituaka of Ahicara Ofiri; Mbomuzo festival; Igbu - Ewu Ukwu festival;	Rivers such as Imo, Otamiri and Njaba; lakes such as Oguta and Abadaba;	Imo State Botanical Garden; Ohaji Ezealor forest reserve; Obigbo Obokofia forest reserve; Ofili-Anozie 1 forest reserve
JIGAWA	Fishing village	Sallah Festivals	The Wawan Rafi lake; The age-old Dyina pits at Ringim, Hadejia; the Hadejia River valley; Shadai; Kiyawa/Jahun Sand Dunes Picnic Centre	Baturiya birds sanctuary; Hadejia Nguru wetlands and birds sanctuary; Gawa Eco-Tourism Wildlife Park
KADUNA	Yula Farm Resort	The ancient Nok Culture	Maitsirga Water Falls In Kafanchan; The Kerfena Hills In Zaria; Kufena Hill; River Kaduna; The Legendary Kasugu Well; Kagoro Hills	Kamuku National Park; Trappco Ranch and Resort; Gamji Park
KANO	Kusalla Dam and Fishing Centre	Exorcism (bori); Durbar Festival; Kurmi Market; Minjibir Weaving Centre; Dawakin Tofa Pottery;	Dala hill; gwaaron dutse hill; bagauda <i>lake</i>	Falgore game reserves; Kogin Kano Game Reserves; Audu Bako Zoological Garden; Falgore Game Reserve
KATSINA	Jaci fishing festival; Akata Fishing Festival; Katsina Sallah Durbar Festival;	Gobarau Minaret; Katsina Durbar; Kallon Kuwa post-harvest youth cultural festival.	Karishin Hills and Caves	Taskar Mamman Shata forest reserve; Kurma Forest Reserve;
KEBBI	Argungu fishing festival celebrated at the matan fada grand fishing river in argungu local government of kebbi state. the festival features, aside from fishing competition, motor rally, agricultural shows, traditional wrestling and boxing; agricultural fair	Uholo Festival in Zulu Area; Karishi Traditional Settlement; the Tomb of Abdullahi Fodio; Germache Shrine In Zulu; Kambari Festival at Ngaski, Yauri Emirate by the Kambari Tribe	Kebbi state is endowed with economically viable rivers such as the Niger and the Rima; the Esie Stone images at Esie, in Irepodun L.G.A. of the state; the spectacular Owu Falls at Owa Kajola, in Ifelodun Local Government Area;	Wasaini Forest Reserve; Bagga Forest Reserve; Giro Forest Reserve; Wara Forest Reserve

KOGI	'Eche Ori' new yam festival; Apanigbe fishing festival in Mopa; Emidun new yam festival; Ogidi Ela new yam festival	Ovia Festival Among The Ogori and Mangogo People; Ita-Okueta Weaving; Ogani Festival, Ankpa/Idah; Oluwo Festival, Agbaja; Italo Festival; Egbe Festival; Ugani Festival;	Kpata Rock; Expansive Mount Patti; Agbaja Plateau; Koton Karfe Cave; Eganaja Warm Spring; The Confluence Of Rivers Niger & Benue	Gbedege Forest Reserve; Swamp Forest Reserve ; Ajaokuta Forest Reserve; Okene Waterworks Forest Reserve;
KWARA	Imole Basket – Inishan and Ogbo-Omu-Aran	Kwara State has a very rich and highly interesting cultural heritage. The Durbar is usually held in honor of a new Emir or Chief, to welcome an August visitor and on Muslim festivals of Idel-Kabir and Id-el-Adha.	Magiro Cave; Zekana Cave; Makewizi River (Crocodile); Ozia Rock; Kinanoyara cave; the Magnetic Quiver at Gwattekuta; Oko Hills – Owaro Oko; Okene Hill – Inisha	Ebbe Kambe game reserves; Kainji Lake National Parks
LAGOS	Lagos Seafood Festival; Eko o ni baje New Yam festival	The Eyo Adamu Orisa festival takes place in Lagos; Epe-Marina Cultural tourism zone; the Sangbeto Masquerades of Badagry; Lagos Black Heritage Festival; Eyo festival; Egungun festival; Jigbo festival; Igunnuko festival; Agemo festival; Ifa cultural festival.	Bar Beach;Tarkwa Bay;Badagry Beach and Lekki Peninsula.; Kuramo Water Argentinad tourism zone; Badagry Marina Recreational zone; Eleko beach	Taylor Creek game reserves; Omo Oluwa forest reserve; Ologe Lagoon forest reserve; Yelwa forest reserve
NASSARAWA	Keffi Hunting Festival	Dyeing Pits And Calabash Carving In Lafia; Kambari Festival At Ngaski	Its temperate climate makes it a tourist centre. Lafia the state capital has an enviable weather with a fascinating rocky environment;Farin Ruwa Falls in Wamba local Government area; Hunki Ox-Bow Lake;	Nassarawa game reserves; Farin Ruwa wildlife.
NIGER	Harguwa Festival; Bigyama Festival; Bassange Rege; Gupya Festival; Anakpe Festival; Ebiko Fishing Festival; a bee tree; Ladi kwali pottery centre	Akpazuma Festival; Durbar Festival; Gani Festival; Odire Festival; Essan old kingdom ruins	Kainji Lake National Park; Gurara Falls in Bono. Mayanka Falls and Zuma rock both in Suleja; Gurara Waterfalls; Baro empire hill; Pissa cave; Pati-woli (mountain); Gurara water falls; Like o. mystic river; Gwagwade moving rock; River chimbi; Rataya giwa mountain; Sanjir mountain; Regge hill	Alawa game reserves; Karabana; Dagida game reserves; Kainji Lake National Park; Ibbi national park; Crocodile pond; War bee; Zugurma national park
OGUN	Odun Omo Olowu: Yam festival;	Some leading traditional festivals observed include Olumo, Ogun, Igunnuko, Egungun, Gelede, Obalufon and Oro.	Olumo Rock located in Abeokuta ; Orisagamu stream; Yemoji Natural Swimming Pool at Ijebu-Ode; Tongeji Island, Ipokia; Ijamido River Shrine, Ota	Imeko game reserves; Omo biodiversity forest Reserve; Oba Hills forest reserve;
ONDO	the Olokun festival	Orosun festival; Igogo Festival; the Ero Festival; Egungun Festival	Idanre Hills; the Cave of Ashes (also known as 'Iho Eleeru')	Ifon game reserves; Wildlife Park of The Federal University of Technology, Akure; Idanre forest reserve;
OSUN	Fish & Fishless Stream, Olorunda; annual festival and food fair; the festival of Orisa Ogiyan;	Osun Oshogbo festival takes place around August/September time frame;	River Osun; Igi-Nla (Mysterious Tree); Olumirin Waterfalls, Erin-Ijesa; Ipetu-Ijesa Forest Reserve (White Porcupine); naturally	Forest reserves-Ago-Owu, Ife, Ikeji-Ipetu, Oba Hills, Shasha; Ibodi Forest

		Idi-Baba Cultural Centre; the Olojo Festival; the Iwude festival; Oke-Maria Spiritual Site;	Carved Foot-Prints; Mineral Spring; Imesi-Ile Mysterious Caves and Rocks;	Reserves (for Monkeys); sun Osogbo Sacred Grove and World Heritage Site;
OYO	the New Yam festival	Sango festival; Egungun festival; Obatala festival in Igangan ; Okebadan Festival; Samodun Festival, Oyo; Agidan Festival, Oyo; Polo Festival; Ijinle Festival; <i>Beere</i> Festival, <i>Saki</i> , Oyo State; Orisa Popo Festival; Gelede Festival	Ad o-Awaye Suspended lake,	Wase rock bird sanctuary; Dampier sanctuary; Okpara game reserves; University of Ibadan Zoological Garden; Agodi Gardens; Oke-Ogun National Park; Ijaife forest reserve; Gambari, Igangan, Ijaye, Lanlate, Osho forest reserves.
PLATEAU	Panyam Fish Farm	Major festivals in the state include, Mandieng, Pisdung, Puskat, Bit, Geomai, Kwa-Kwa ; Afrizere Cultural Festival; Irigwe New Year Celebration; Taroh Cultural Day; Pan Cultural Festival;	its picturesque landscape include chains of captivating rock formations beautifully shaped and bare rocks, chains of hills, artificial, hillock and deep; Asop falls, located 64 kilometres on the Jos Akwanga Road and the Kura falls surrounded by beautiful lakes;	Kambari game reserves; Hadeji Batariya wetland game reserves; Ibi game reserves; Pandam game reserves; Wase Rock game reserves; Pai River game reserves;
RIVERS	the fishing festivals in kaiama and amassaona, the yam festivals in ikwerre and ogba,	Masquerades are very common. They are very colorful and artistic in their make-up and paraphernalia. They are usually common sight during festive occasions. Masquerades are either religious or historical personifications of the rich legends of the people	Port Harcourt Tourist Beach; Ifoko Beach, Ifoko; Finima Beach in the Bonny LGA	Stubbs Greek game reserves; Elephant Sanctuary at Ikuru community in Andoni Local Government Area; the Port Harcourt Zoo in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area ;
SOKOTO	Hunting (halbi); Romo Fishing Festival; Community Farming (Aikin Gayya); Kalankuwa;	Sharo'- Flogging; Doro' Kicking; Shan Gumba'- Pab Driking; Surame; Alkalawa; Degel; Gudu; Tafkin Kwato;	Gilbadi Rock Formation; Kware Lake; Wurno Lakes; Warm Spring at Bilbul Wamakko;	Kwiambana game reserves; Dutsin Kiyi Forest Reserve; Kaikaimako Native Area Forest Reserve;
TARABA	The Nwunyo Fishing festivals in Ibi which usually holds in April each year. During the festivals, activities such as canoe racing, swimming competition and Cultural dances are held.	Purina of the Chamba, Puje of the Jukuns, kuchicheb of the Kutebs (Takum), Kati of the Mambilla and a host of others. MIHU is an initiation into manhood and harvest festival of the Jengo people of Jeniu, Taraba State.	Gilbadi Rock Formation; Kpambo And Fikiyu Mysterious Rock Formations; Marmara Pound In Wukari; Barup Timga Water Falls; The Bitako rocks in Zing Local Government Area, the Fikyu, and Kpambo, Kumbo rocks in Ussa and Donga Local Government Areas and fascinating mountains shapes in Bete, Rufu and Zing	Kashimbila game reserves; Gashaka Gumti National Park; Marmara crocodile pond; Ngel-Nyaki Forest Reserve; Donga River Basin Forest
YOBE	the Fishing and Cultural Festivals held annually in jakusko Local Government area of the state; Bade Fishing Festival; Kamti Festival	The state has annual festivals like Durbar festivals, impressive Sallah ceremonies; Barakau Festival;	Chad Basin; Bula Tura Oases; Dokshi Spring Water; Tulo-Tulowa; Goya Valley; the Kaska desert;	Nguru wetlands bird sanctuary; Dagowa Bird Sanctuary; Gujba Forest Reserve
ZAMFARA	Agrifestival-showcasing achievement in agriculture	some tourist attractions which are of historical or religious importance include Jata, an ancient settlement of Zamfara located around the hill with a	Kanoma Hills; Dashi Natural Tunnels; Kwatarkwashi Rock/Natural Spring; Rivers- Ka, Bunsuru, Gagare and Zamfara; Lakes- Dangulbi (Kakale) and	Kalale Hipopotamus Pond; Maru Wildlife; Kuyambana Game Reserve

		large cave around where traditional practices were performed; Durbar festival event	Bakura (Natu).	
FCT	Agricultural Festival (AGRIFEST) in Abuja	Bwari; Kuje; Madala; Papa	Aso Rock, Zuma Rock; Minister's Hill;	Jabi Lake & Park; wildlife sanctuary; Gwagwa Forest Reserve;

Source: compiled by author from various sources

