



Advancing Community-Based Tourism (CBT): Imo State Oil Producing Development Commission (ISOPADEC) As A Key Development Stakeholder

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Abstract

Tourism generates revenues and foreign exchange, provides jobs, enhances rural development, and reduces poverty. However, there seems to be inadequate systematic and scientific focus on tourism in the Imo state oil-producing areas (ISOPA), which is a part of Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Focusing on Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta Local Government Areas (LGA), this study, which was based on the tourism-led growth hypothesis (TLGH), adopted a mixed method approach to obtain data from the two LGAs. Through, landscape reconnaissance of tourism features, participant observations and self-administered questionnaires, it sought to ascertain the role of Imo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ISOPADEC) as an intervention stakeholder for advancing community-based tourism (CBT). Findings reveal that numerous tourism resources abound in ISOPA, including phenomenally fascinating landscapes, unique cultural heritage, and other natural endowments. All these are adequate to provide sustainable tourism futures. However, tourism development stakeholders are yet to appropriate, harness or direct concerted efforts towards the very crucial role that the sector can play towards community development. Hence, tourism development currently has no significant impact on revenue generation in ISOPA. This study therefore recommends a holistic review of the roles of ISOPADEC, which should direct community efforts towards non-oil alternative revenue sectors, especially tourism and culture. This requires the enumeration, harmonization, development and marketing of identified tourism resources in the area. Synergy amongst stakeholders would largely advance policy prospects toward revenue diversification, rural development and proper integration of stakeholders, to reduce youth restiveness, rage and unemployment.

Key words: Community-Based Tourism, Cultural Resources, Stakeholders, Revenue Generation,

1. Introduction

Tourism is a global phenomenon and a source of immense opportunities across communities, countries and continents. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the contribution of the sector to global GDP was over 10 percent, supporting 11 percent of livelihoods worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). The tourism sector plays a significant role in the generation of foreign exchange earnings, revenue, jobs, rural development and enhances poverty reduction, thereby expanding national economies. Due to its dependence on a variety

of supplies and services, the multiplier effect created by tourism also generates significant direct and indirect benefits for other sectors. Hence, to reduce inequalities and encourage diversification, some economies turn to the tourism sector and develop it as part of their broader strategy. Tourism sector's role as an essential tool for development, prosperity and well-being is also demonstrated by its capacity to transform nations economically, socially, and environmentally while stimulating investments. Although it can be reduced and balanced out by the positive effects of tourism,

tourism might have some negative impacts on local communities. However, the advantages that tourism provides and its positive effects far outweigh the negative ones (Asa, *et al.*, 2022); especially where sustainable tourism approaches are adopted.

In recent years, travelers have become more adventurous, seeking out uncharted locales where they can immerse themselves in rural communities and discover new experiences. As a result, when they travel, they do not just want to see new places; they also want to learn about local history, culture, and ethics, so they can go beyond the typical travel experiences and have real, life-changing encounters. Such tourism-related activities help a nation's economy and give local communities a chance to educate and entertain visitors about their culture while promoting their history and heritage. It is therefore expedient to explore initiatives to encourage stakeholder involvement in tourism development within communities, involving youth and women in unharnessed regions of emerging markets like Nigeria and particularly in Imo State.

Communities adopt diverse methods to recreate, enhance and promote their natural endowments and cultural heritage as means to attract visitors. Such efforts highlight their offerings, inform and educate locales, the publics and visitors, thereby increasing opportunities for more tourists who desire authentic rural experiences. Communities endeavor to create strong destination identities with their endowments. Though labeled hostile, unconducive, restive and having witnessed underdevelopment over the years, Imo State Oil Producing Areas (ISOPA), which is part of Nigeria's Niger Delta region possesses a unique cultural heritage, fascinating landscapes and other natural endowments that can adequately provide a sustainable tourism future. Her people's hospitality is unrivaled and the region's original economic architecture strategically supplants oil. Tourism can transform this environment to offer authentic ingenious experiences to the traveling public and generate both socio-economic and political benefits.

A cursory review of literature reveals that research endeavors on diverse perspectives of the challenges in Nigeria's Niger Delta region

have been undertaken and also still dominate discussions in several academic platforms. Such studies have focused on corporate social responsibility (Amaeshi, *et al.*, 2006; Renouard & Lado, 2012); women and youth empowerment (Iruonagbe, 2008); conflict resolution (Afinotan & Ojatorotu, 2009); securing peace and development (Francis *et al.*, 2011); environmental challenges (Kuenzer *et al.*, 2014); environmental conflict and sustainable development (Babatunde, 2014); conflict and insecurity (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017); marginalization, insecurity and militancy (Mba, 2022). However, even as part of the entire Niger Delta, there seems to be an inadequate systematic and scientific focus on the Imo state oil-producing areas except for the recent works of Omodu *et al.*, (2022) and entrepreneurship development by Emerole *et al.*, (2018). It is therefore apropos to take up this challenge of providing a community-based tourism (CBT) dimension to this discourse. Against this context and with the desire to bridge this lacuna in literature, this study, therefore, investigates the place of ISOPADEC as a major stakeholder to midwife CBT as a development alternative and intervention in ISOPA.

The basis for this endeavor is rooted on the recognition that mere ownership of endowments has become mundane and clamor for resource control without adequate capacity to effectively utilize and benefit from it could be detrimental. It is therefore crucial for communities in ISOPA to look beyond oil for development, by incorporating some excluded populations and strategic stakeholders in developing the CBT initiative. This research becomes relevant and investigates the possibility of adopting this unharnessed option for developing the region.

Problem Statement

Crude oil discovered in commercial quantity at Oloibiri, present-day Bayelsa State in 1957 gave Nigeria the status of Africa's biggest petroleum-producing nation and sixth in the world (Yakubu, 2008). This led oil companies in the Niger Delta region to produce a huge amount of oil and gas, with revenues from funding Nigeria's socioeconomic development, accounting for 80 to 90 percent

of government income and 40 percent of GDP (Ambituuni *et al.*, 2014).

The region remains with an acute shortage of basic infrastructure. Developmental challenges associated with oil exploration are replete, with conflicts among stakeholders - multinational oil companies (MNOCs), joint-venture partners of the Federal Government of Nigeria, and host communities being persistent. Negative impacts of MNOC operations like gas flaring, environmental pollution, oppression, genocide, and rights denial result in the loss of livelihoods based on aquatic life and agriculture by vulnerable groups. The consequences like incessant youth restiveness also plunged the region into resource control conflicts while MOCs and their cohorts in government exploit these resources to develop other places, finance bureaucracies, and personalized conspicuous consumption (Dato-Bash in Adewumi & Olatumbosun, 2015).

With its plethora of flora, fauna, fashion, cuisine, robust marine ecology, and long coastline of unbelievable offerings, regrettably, the entire Niger Delta is presented as unconducive by the same parties that have unleashed excessive and unfettered resource looting. Under this cover, natural resources have been systematically destroyed in addition to either pilferage or illegal export of tourism assets, and cultural and heritage offerings (Meke, 2018). While fueling corruption, this injustice, offensive and negative narratives against the region continued over the decades, with even governments sponsoring or imposing leadership for youth groups (Emerole *et al.*, 2018). Similar to the experiences of the entire region, the area located in Imo State, earlier termed "ISOPA" has still not identified effective means of resolving the issues. Tourism now offers hope, hence, this study focuses on Oguta and Ohaji/Egbema local government areas (LGA).

Objectives

- i. To conduct a situation analysis of the tourism resources in ISOPA.
- ii. To ascertain the feasibility of tourism development as an alternative revenue generation strategy to oil in ISOPA.

- iii. To identify key stakeholders in the development of tourism within ISOPA.
- iv. To develop strategies for community participation in tourism within ISOPA.

2. Literature Review

The entire Niger Delta region of Nigeria comprises nine (9) states. This is home to about 1,500 communities and numerous oil and gas companies. Figure 1.0 shows the Niger Delta region that currently produces a sizable amount of oil and gas. Decades of oil exploration have resulted in the neglect of the region's tourism and heritage offerings, which are exploited by part of the mainly elitist leadership of community groups in cohort with federal government accomplices (Dibua, 2005); and sometimes pilfered alongside the oil resources leading to the impoverishment of the people. Translating the region to a destination fit for tourism has also been a mirage, due to inherent social insecurity (Nwagba *et al.*, 2022).

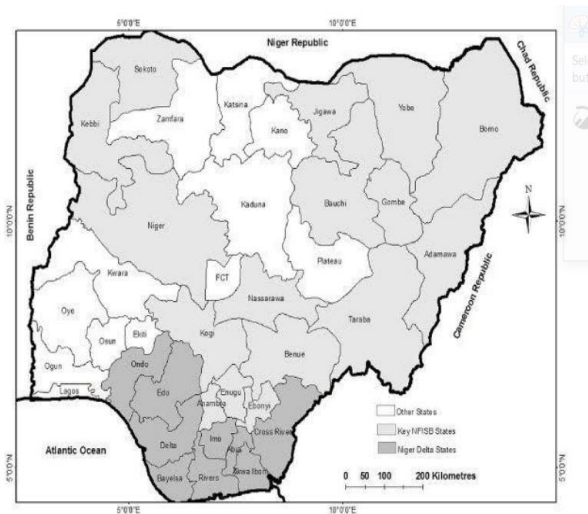


Figure 1.0: Map of Nigeria showing 9 States of the Niger Delta Area. Source: NDDC 2004

Various factors exacerbate the Niger Delta's numerous communities' declining access to agricultural lands, water resources, and biodiversity (Steiner, 2010). Aged farmers, including fishermen and women, also suffer untold hardship due to the degradation of their environment, and sometimes outright annexation of their farmlands by the oil companies. Spills and pipeline interdictions caused by aging pipelines are responsible for more than 550 oil incidents reported in a single year, according to Amnesty International.

Whenever an oil spill occurs, many water bodies used for fishing, irrigation, domestic chores, and industrial purposes are polluted. The economic hardship in the area has also been made worse by the fact that many farmlands are no longer productive, which has led to many rivers lacking fish and other aquatic products. To cushion the effect of environmental degradation and address criticisms of corporate misdemeanors, and a key requirement for securing mandatory licenses, MOC stakeholders undertake social projects within communities as corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Starting with agricultural development in the early sixties, CSR activities have grown to include health care, roads, and civil infrastructure. In 2006, an innovation termed the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) was also introduced. The effect of these initiatives has been disputed by many stakeholders and particularly scholars as not far-reaching or deep-rooted (Frynas, 2009; Tuodolo, 2009); since many communities still face violence and other issues. It could be argued that many youths and host communities are not enrolled in the training programs. These programs also seem to ignore women, who make up a sizable portion of the population (Ekhatior, 2014). Others note that even the FGN's peace-building amnesty interventions through the Niger Delta Commission (NDDC) failed to make significant impacts, especially on entrepreneurship development or job creation, resulting from unresolved legitimacy crises, and ineffective and corporate inadequacies. As a result, it has been claimed that some of these CSR initiatives are not always sustained and carried out in a consistent manner (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006); and are particularly not commensurate with resources derived from the area or the suffering of the region's people.

For many years since the existence of the Commission, various approaches adopted have not achieved the much-desired results and neither adequately engage the youths nor add value to their lives. Albeit these interventions, tourism a known economic development agent with the capacity to deliver multiple benefits to stakeholders and stimulate long-term development is neglected

(Jemirade, 2021). Uduji *et al.* (2018), studied the CSR initiatives and interventions of MOCs. Their findings show, unfortunately, that despite the significant potential for growth in the field of cultural tourism, MOCs only devote a paltry one percent (1%) of their CSR budget to this endeavor. Also in their study, only thirty-five (35%) of the women respondents in the host communities state that they make a living from traditional crafts related to cultural tourism (Uduji *et al.*, 2018).

Performing arts, music, and handicrafts are just a few examples of the unique aspects of culture-related tourism that showcase various cultures. These may be used for financial gain, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2015). There exists huge potential for creating connections between the tourism and local handicrafts sectors due to low capital requirements and low access barriers, which could lead to locals having more employment opportunities (Uduji *et al.*, 2018). Crafts in Nigeria like textile, leather work, tie-dye, ironwork, pottery, ceramics, ivory, woodwork, and calabash decorations are plentiful in the region and are prized items for tourism growth. The life of the Niger Delta people can also be seen in their folklore, governance, dance, art, music, and environmental practices. The promotion of tourism can therefore greatly benefit from cultural resources. Furthermore, Uduji *et al.* (2018), posit that there is largely an exclusion of rural women and youths in culture-related tourism projects. This is due to widespread traditional beliefs held by the majority of the population that cultural matters are exclusively reserved for elders and an area where women and youth should not interfere. Imo State Oil Producing Areas (ISOPA), a part of the Niger Delta experiences similar unfortunate situations. Though it is argued that the CSR interventions by MOCs somehow improved the material well-being of people in some communities around oil production sites in ISOPA, inequalities or relational capabilities are deteriorating in those places (Renouard & Lado, 2012). While social projects are done within communities as interventions, unfortunately, do not include tourism, the revised and seemingly innovative Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) introduced still neglected tourism

development at the grassroots level, including ISOPA.

Governments create ministries, agencies, and other institutions to improve the social development of people and infrastructure. The Imo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ISOPADEC), alongside other state development commissions was fashioned alongside the model of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), which was established by the federal government. ISOPADEC was formally established in 2000, and its law was passed in 2007, and amended in 2009. It was reconstituted in 2010 after a board conflict. The intervention agency's primary duty is to manage the majority of the 13 percent (13%) derivation of Nigeria's oil and gas proceeds, which comes from two LGAs - Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta. Its mandate includes conflict prevention through a youth committee, construction projects, and the reduction of poverty through the engagement of youth skills in acquisition and development programmes, granting of microcredits, and the provision of health services (Francis *et al.*, 2011). Even after the commission was established, ISOPA still experiences unrest among young people, who are frequently unemployed, undereducated, and lack proper skills training. The government's inconsistent performance in carrying out and finishing development projects is a significant contributor to the aforementioned issues. Omodu *et al.*, (2022) claim, the commission has not improved the situation in the area.

Support for development is influenced by perceived benefits, perceived returns, and satisfaction. This can be achieved if communities develop trust in relevant institutions, and possess the power to influence tourism and neighborhood conditions to engender it. Key stakeholders in such initiatives include host communities, support sectors, development agencies, intermediaries, facilitators, businesses, government, community-based organizations (CBOs), government planners, industry experts, policy-makers and non-governmental organizations. Tourism development thrives when key stakeholders are recognized and involved. ISOPADEC is the most critical and vital stakeholder upon whose foundation the

development of tourism potentials in the area can be successful.

ISOPA has abundant crude oil deposits, upon which part of the state's economy rests. Also endowed with a plethora of flora, fauna, cuisine, robust marine ecology, tourism and fascinating cultural offerings, numerous animal and plant species, including timber, fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, palms and bamboo, can be found in the area. Among the various animal species inhabiting ISOPA are traditionally conserved monkeys existing in harmony with humans in rural communities (Osugwu, 2022); squirrels, antelopes, and reptiles, with multiple species of birds, insects, and invertebrates found in various communities (Kuenzer *et al.*, 2014).

Tourism is a major source of revenue for many world economies. It has a high growth rate, attracts investment and adds value, among other factors. Development, incentivization and promotion of tourism attractions, cultural festivals, art, craft and music can create employment and provide economic empowerment for the youths, women and people, often excluded from interventions and GMoUs (Uduji *et al.*, 2018). These tremendous opportunities exist to expand ISOPA's earnings base and develop her abundant natural and cultural resources.

Successful tourism thrives on partnerships amongst stakeholders including governments, investors and institutions with youth and women providing souvenirs, culinary experiences, activities and educational tours. Ancillary services like consultancy and advisory are provided by other stakeholders (Untari & Suharto, 2020). Conflict in the ISOPA would cease when key stakeholders, particularly the vulnerable groups are involved in decision-making, integrated into economically viable and socially sustainable activities and the conditions of especially women and youths are improved.

There is a unique opportunity to grow tourism in ISOPA. As an activity that voluntarily and temporarily takes people away from their permanent abodes for pleasure, excitement, experience or relaxation, it is classified into different forms. These include cultural, nature-

based, recreational, religious, sport, conference tourism and other emerging forms. Having become a major source of revenue to different economies of the world, its high growth rate at the global level, labour intensiveness, investment attraction and value addition to local resources among other factors (UNWTO, 2021); makes it a development option for ISOPA.

Though tourism is still in its infancy in Nigeria, tremendous opportunities exist to expand the earnings base and develop the country's abundant natural, cultural and tourism resources. Albeit regrettably, ISOPA has been presented as uncondusive, the people have maintained their traditional occupations like farming, fishing, palm oil processing, hunting and animal husbandry, notwithstanding the government's neglect of infrastructure in the area. The people are naturally friendly, accommodating and welcoming especially to visitors. Many cultural offerings and festivals also adorn the entire landscape of the area, these include dances. The identification, development and promotion of these tourist attractions as well as the commodification of multiple cultural festivals, dances, art, craft and music in the region would create employment and provide economic empowerment for the youths and peoples of the region. For communities to plan, develop, manage, and control tourism, several initiatives must be implemented.

These initiatives encourage residents to participate in tourism-related activities and to provide the goods and services that tourists want. Taking into account tourism as an optional tool to boost local economies, harnessing tourism based on resources available in communities, turns into a poverty reduction tool that benefits the local community in a variety of ways, such as by providing educational opportunities, environmental conservation efforts, and income-generating activities (Cooperation, 2014). This is also referred to as community-based tourism (CBT), according to Lo and Janta, (2020), who emphasized that it gives visitors the experiences they desire, enables them to interact with local resources, understand and learn about community

culture, and also learn about traditional lifestyles. It helps communities develop successfully and provides income for them.

The role of development agencies and partners in initiating, supporting and developing tourism projects cannot be overemphasized. Such partners include government agencies, international organizations, international NGOs and local partners. However, while financial and technical support for tourism development tends to come from international development partners, they require investment from local development partners.

Implementation plans often focus on the development of a portfolio of attractions and culminate in properly packaging these for visitors to enjoy. These include pastimes related to natural and cultural heritage, organized entertainments, health and wellness; active pursuits such as sports, water-based activities, hiking, walking, and cycling; recurring festivals and events; support services like rural accommodations, tour guiding, village dance classes, village cooking classes; ancillary services like security, consultancy, advisory, etc.

Companies like Shell, Agip, Seplat and Addax, which operate in the area can be institutional stakeholders that would be involved and benefit from the project. Others are hotels, restaurants and transport companies in addition to businesses providing ancillary services. A well-defined plan, as well as a coordinated strategy that incorporates social, environmental and economic concerns for sustainable tourism development, is therefore desired to be championed by ISOPADEC.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of development have changed over time. Earlier and predominantly followed Euro-American models, assumed that the values and standards of developed nations were superior to those of developing nations. Brohman (1996) suggests that after World War II, mainstream development theories were focused on top-down approach to economic growth. From the 1960s, the tourism industry became an effective developmental tool and was adopted by many countries to advance

their economic development (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). However, the processes that usher in the development of tourism are affected by economic, socio-cultural, and political forces. This study advocates the use of dominant theories and frameworks of development, stakeholder engagement (Freeman, 1984); alternative development, and conflict resolution (Graham & Glad, 2020); for actions that could produce much-desired development in Imo State's oil-producing areas, utilizing ISOPADEC as an intervention agency.

It would recommend tourism approaches within a trajectory of these dominant development theories that map the conceptual changes from development predominantly concerned with economic growth and inequality to those concerned about social, human and environmental issues, incorporating youth and women. The development frameworks provide a basis for understanding how tourism has developed in other environments and works as a development tool. Therefore, the stakeholder theory and the tourism-led growth hypothesis (TLGH) would be adopted for this study. The stakeholder means "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 2010). The effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder approach has been demonstrated in rural and tourism development (Phanumat et al. 2015).

Empirically, a surplus of literature reveals the long-term impact of tourism on economic growth, known as the tourism-led growth hypothesis. As opined by Alhwaish (2016), it can act as a growth stimulus by contributing to GDP growth, job creation, and even foreign exchange generation. Circumstantially, economic growth has positive impacts on tourism development, as it galvanizes tourism activities by developing facilities, including transportation, information, and communication technology. Falade *et al.*, (2014) surveyed tourism's crucial role in the development and growth of countries, especially developing ones. They note that tourism had always been recognized as a remunerative industry that positively contributes to a country's GDP, citizens'

quality of life, and employment. Also, tourism is a major part of international business and proves to be an important instrument to expand revenue sources of countries as an alternative to depending on mono sources or products, like petroleum.

Eziocha, *et al.*, (2015) investigated, the impact of international tourism on the revenue generation of developing countries. Using the ordinary least square (OLS) method of regression analysis, they examined the impact of international tourism on Nigeria's fiscal earnings. Data provided by the World Bank in 2011 showed the impact of international tourism on the revenue generation of developing countries was positive. Thus, results indicate a positive but insignificant relationship between international tourism and fiscal earnings. They concluded that international tourism increases fiscal revenue earnings but such earnings are sub-optimized.

Ding *et al.*, (2016) surveyed whether international tourism can lead to economic growth. They developed a tourism-growth model that extended the Solow (1956) model and estimated the model. Using a cross-section of 109 countries, they found out that taking into account standard income determinants, international tourism loses its marginal explanatory power, even within predominantly tourism economies. Their findings also indicate that investments in tourism in and of itself seem to be insufficient for economic growth. They concluded that to contribute to the long-term growth of an economy, tourism is most operative when it is combined into a broad development strategy. Naseem (2021) studied the role of tourism in economic growth: empirical evidence from Saudi Arabia. Using annual time series data from 2003 to 2019. The study made use of multi methodologies, employing basic statistics, correlation coefficients, the unit root test, the Johansen co-integration test, the co-integration regression test, and the Granger causality. The results show that economic growth has a long-run relationship with tourism receipts, tourism expenditures, and the number of tourist arrivals; the number of tourist arrivals has a strong relationship with economic growth. The

results confirm the concept that tourism promotes economic growth in Saudi Arabia.

Lee and Syah (2018) study in Indonesia was to examine the mass impact of tourism on the regional tourism destination from the economic and environmental perspective from 1980 to 2015. The research employed the triad of fully modified OLS (FMOLS), Dynamic OLS (DOLS), and Canonical co-integration regression. The outcomes depict a long-run equilibrium relationship between tourism employed, environmental degradation, and economic growth. They concluded that tourism growth will have a positive impact on the economy. Badulescu *et al.*, (2020) investigated the relationship between Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and international tourism in Romania for the period 1995 to 2016. Utilizing the Johansen

cointegration test and Granger causality. The results established the growth-led tourism hypothesis (GLTH) in the long run.

3. Research Design and Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in Imo State, one of the five states in Nigeria's southeast geopolitical region and also one of the nine Niger Delta states. The state occupies a total area of about 5,100 square kilometers and is located between latitudes 4° 45'N and 7° 15'N and longitudes 6° 50'E and 7° 25'E (www.imostate.gov.ng).

The study specifically concentrated on the two Local Government Areas (LGA) producing oil in the state, namely, Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta shown in figures 2.0 and 3.0 above, which are the study sites.

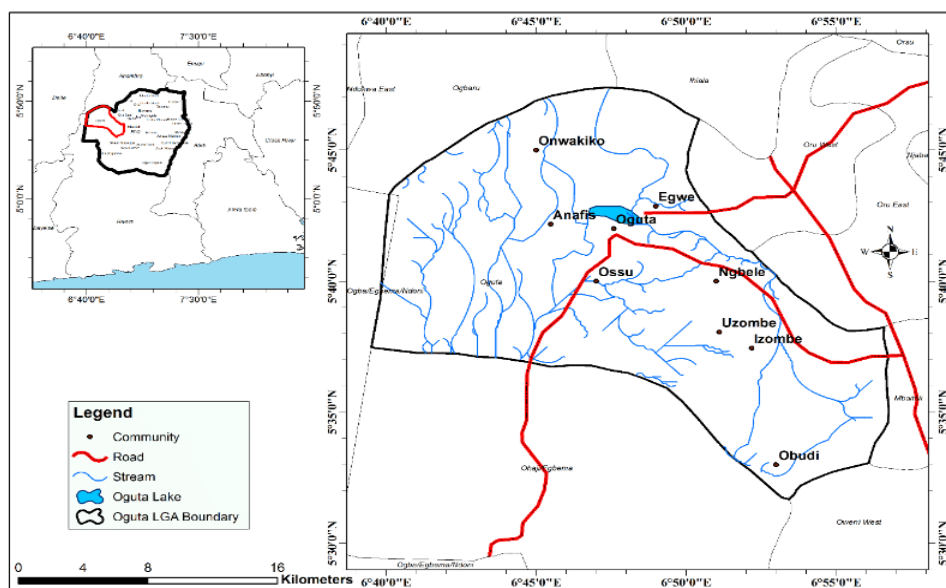


Figure 2.0 Map Showing Oguta LGA.

Source: Nwaogu, 2017

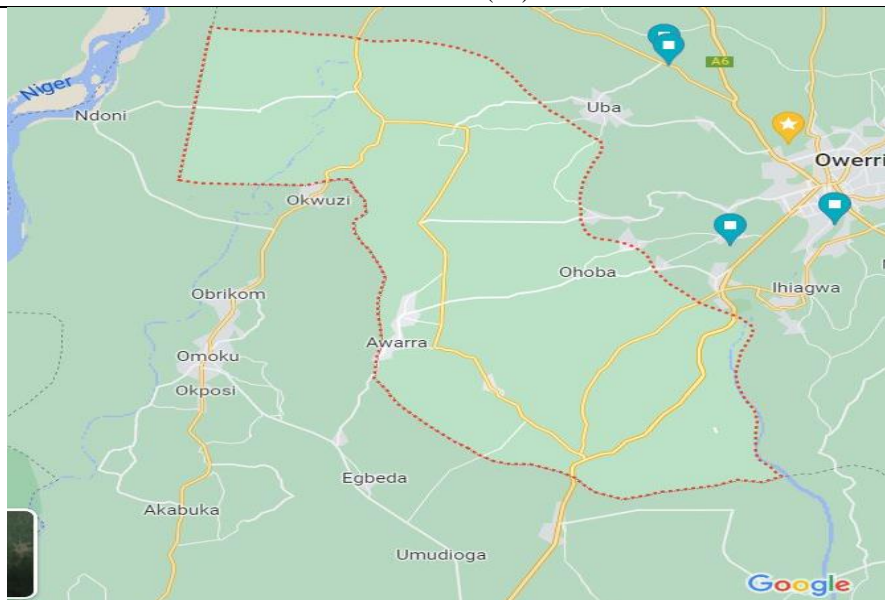


Figure 3.0 Map of Ohaji/Egbema LGA. Source Google Maps

The areas are diverse, naturally endowed and among the most fertile parts of the state, with people who possess entrepreneurial and community spirits. The ISOPA people have also maintained their traditional occupations of farming, fishing and palm oil processing, though at a subsistence level, notwithstanding the government's neglect of infrastructure and constant environmental damage. As far back as 2004, Gabriel noted that the ecology of the region is characterized by a variety of ecological systems. These include lowland rainforests, mangrove and freshwater swamp forests, and coastal ridge barriers. These all provide homes for various plants, fish, reptiles, mammals, and mineral species. Rural women's economic activities, which focus primarily on fishing and seafood gathering, are greatly influenced by this ecology. For domestic, small-scale food processing and income generation, the dense mangrove vegetation, marine, and brackish habitats along numerous rivers and creeks are dependable sources of fuel wood. They engage in subsistence farming based on the availability of arable farmland. In tropical rainforests, farming is also the main source of income, and women predominate in retail, both locally and internationally.

Study Design

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for this research and are essentially survey-based. The quantitative approach was based on the participant's responses using

structured and validated questionnaires. The purpose is to evaluate ISOPADEC as an intervention agency for advancing community-based tourism (CBT) development in the oil-producing areas of Imo State. The nature of the research problems calls for combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. To that extent, the effort is to create an understanding, trust and partnership between stakeholders and develop entrepreneurship programs for youth and women in the Niger Delta. The operational strategy for the study also included resource situation analysis, stakeholders' orientation, focused group discussions, trust building and capacity building.

Population and Sampling

The study focused on the indigenous people of Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta LGA of Imo State. The area is diverse, naturally endowed and one of the most fertile parts of the country. The people possess entrepreneurial and community spirits. The ISOPA people have also maintained their traditional occupations of farming, fishing and palm oil processing, though at a subsistence level, notwithstanding the government's neglect of infrastructure and constant environmental damage. The research population therefore focused on two LGAs of Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta and the sample population was taken from both. Adequate efforts were made to ensure gender representation. Hence, 55% and 45%

distribution were for female and male respectively.

Instruments and Method of Data Collection

A total of 120 self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data for the study. It contained pre-formulated structured questions in a pre-determined sequence of a structured questionnaire, to sample the indigenous people of Oguta and Ohaji /Egbema Local Government Areas. Data gathered from the questionnaire were used to answer the research questions and test the hypothesis. Of the total number of 120 questionnaires distributed, 100 were returned and validated for analysis.

Instruments and Method of Data Analysis

The fundamental and linear equation, which forms the model is drawn from the theoretical literature and empirical literature reviewed in the previous section. As a result, the model is specified below:

Model Specification

The tourism-led growth hypothesis (TLGH), also commonly referred to as the growth

hypothesis is proposed for the specification of the model. Note that tourism development causes economic growth. This implies that, greater economic growth can be experienced if the government encourages economic policies that promote tourism development (Sokhanvar *et al.*, 2018). Econometrically, the study adopts a stochastic model specification of the implicit form below:

$$REVGEN=f(TRMDEV).....(1)$$

Where

REVGEN = Revenue Generation in ISOPA
TRMDEV=Tourism Development in ISOPA

This can be explicitly written as:

$$REVGEN = a_0 + a_1 TRMDEV + \mu.....(2)$$

Where: REVGEN and TRMDEV are as defined earlier; a₀ = Constant; a₁ = coefficient of the parameter estimates; μ = error term.

On the apriori, tourism development in ISOPA is expected to have a positive sign.

4. Results, Interpretations and Discussions

The first research objective was satisfied through reconnaissance of the study area.

Table 1: List of tourism resources identified in ISOPA.

Tourism Resources in ISOPA				
	RESOURCE CLASSIFICATION	RESOURCE TYPE	LOCATION	STATUS
	<i>Natural/Scenic Resources</i>	Lake	Oguta	Underdeveloped
		River	Urashi - Oguta	Underdeveloped
		River	Njaba - Oguta	Underdeveloped
		Confluence	Oguta - Urashi Ughammiri	Underdeveloped
		Obaranta Site	Mmahu	
		Calabari breach	Orsu Obodo	
	<i>Festivals, Heritage and Cultural Events</i>	Otammiri blue river	Umuagwo	Revered and sacred
		Deities and shrines	Various communities	
		Nmanwu festivals	Various communities	
		Iriji (New yam) festivals	Various communities	
		Okorosha cultural festival	Izombe	
	<i>Wildlife & Fishes</i>	Iyioka lake fishing festival		
		Ukwutu lake fishing festival		
		Monkey and habitats	Ejemekwuru, Ose moto Ezi Orsu	
		Antelopes and other game	Forests in several communities	
	<i>Hospitality/Accommodation Facilities</i>	Manatees & Fishes	Oguta lake	UnderDeveloped
	<i>Ancillary Services</i>	Diverse bird species	Forests in several communities	
	<i>Other resources</i>	Oguta lake motel (<i>closed for renovation</i>) Crystal Lake hotels and golf course Oguta lake Golf course	Oguta	Developed
		Traditional healers, herbalists, diviners, local musicians, village markets storytellers,	Various communities	Developed

		local craft award-winning folklore, ferry enterprises		
<i>Historic Buildings, Monuments and Relics</i>	Oil exploration facilities	Oguta and Ohaji/ Egbema LGA	Underdeveloped	
	Adapalm Estate	Ohaji/Egbema LGA		
	Royal Niger Company Old warehouse	Orsu Obodo		
	Damaze Ogbuagu Arthur Nzeribe's Home	Oguta		
	Palaces of Traditional Rulers			
	Ojukwu Bunker	Oguta Lake		

Plate 1- 4 show pictures of some of the tourism resources in ISOPA.



Plates: (1) Research Team at Otammiri River, Umuagwo (2) Village masquerade , MMahu (3) Oil Installation (4) Monkey habitat near homes at Ejemekwuru (5) Okorosha, Izombe (6) Ponton at Oguta lake jetty (7) Imo Hotels (8) Oguta Lake Golf Course (9) Igwe-in-Council, Nkwesi

Emanating from the third objective, the following key stakeholders in the development of tourism within ISOPA are identified - Imo state government, ISOPADEC, Local Government Authorities, Town unions, Traditional rulers, Age grades, Oil and Gas companies, the

academia, international development partners, transport and hospitality business, security agencies and others. The second objective is presented and analyzed using Table 2 below.

Table 2: Ordinary Least Squares result between revenue generation and tourism development.

Variables Entered/Removed^b

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	TRMDEV ^a	.	Enter

- a. All requested variables entered.
- b. Dependent Variable: REVGEN

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.113 ^a	.013	.003	1.87153

- a. Predictors: (Constant), TRMDEV

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.451	1	4.451	1.271	.262 ^a
	Residual	343.259	98	3.503		
	Total	347.710	99			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), TRMDEV
- b. Dependent Variable: REVGEN

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.112	2.773		7.254	.000
	TRMDEV	.159	.141	.113	1.127	.262

- a. Dependent Variable: REVGEN

Source: SPSS Output of the study

The results as presented in table 2, is the Ordinary Least Squares result between revenue generation and tourism development. From equation 2 the regression equation is fitted thus;
 $REVGEN = 20.112 + 0.159TRMDEV + \mu \dots \dots \dots (3)$

A cursory examination of table 2 and equation 3, suggests that revenue generation and Tourism development although linearly related, tourism development cannot significantly explain the variations in revenue generation in oil-producing areas of Imo State. Its probability is 0.262 with 1.127 as t-calculated. The coefficient of tourism development which is 0.159 implies that a unit increase in the independent variable (tourism development) will lead to the dependent variable (revenue generation) increasing by 0.159. The R-Squared value of 0.013 gives the variation in revenue generation that is explained by tourism development. Thus, 13 percent of the variation in revenue generation

is explained by tourism development in oil-producing areas of Imo State.

The fourth objective was achieved through focused group discussion (FGD). It was gathered that, the community-directed model is the most efficient strategy for ISOPADEC as an interventionist stakeholder for advancing CBT in the area. Here the communities will lead in the participation process. This would make them part owners of the venture. The programme would stipulate the benefits accruable to each of the stakeholders identified.

Hypotheses Testing

This section captures the single hypothesis formulated for the study

Hypothesis one:

H₀₁: Tourism development has no significant impact on revenue generation to oil in ISOPA. OLS Regression was used to assess the predictive power of tourism development and revenue

generation to oil in ISOPA.

The variability explained by the model was not significant $p = 0.262$ at 5% levels ($P > 0.05$).

Similarly, t calculated (1.127) < t tabulated (1.96).

Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and the conclusion is that there is no significant

relationship between tourism developments on revenue generation to oil in ISOPA.

Discussion

On tourism development's effect on revenue generation in ISOPA, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and the conclusion is that there is no significant relationship between tourism development and revenue generation in ISOPA. This is in line with Eziocha, et al (2015) on international tourism and fiscal revenue earnings in Nigeria. The study investigated the contribution of international tourism in Nigeria to the country's fiscal earnings during the period 1995 to 2010. The results indicated a positive but insignificant relationship between international Tourism and fiscal earnings. Our findings show the trajectory of revenue prospects in the area. The positive relationship existing between the independent and dependent variables though not robust shows signs of good fortunes for revenue generation concerning tourism development in the area. The proper harnessing of the tourism resources and the contribution of stakeholders in the development of tourism within ISOPA will be a defining factor in revenue dynamics in the area.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Findings reveal that numerous tourism resources abound in the area and identified stakeholders in the development of tourism in ISOPA are very crucial towards the community-directed approach for tourism development as advocated by this study. Tourism development in the area is also a positive function of revenue generation in the study area. Based on the above findings, there is a need to holistically redirect efforts away from relying entirely on oil sector revenue. The alternative is the service sector revenue, especially tourism. It is expected that the impressive performance of tourism

development implies the same for the revenue generation in the area. Hence it recommends the enumeration, harmonization, development and marketing of identified tourism resources in communities within ISOPA. This can assist to direct approaches towards tourism development. It is expected that proper synergy amongst the stakeholders will largely advance policy prospects toward revenue diversification in the area, consequently, moving away from the monopoly of oil revenue sources. In all tourism development which is a positive function of revenue generation means better fortunes ahead, therefore government's fiscal policy should be redirected towards revenue generation diversification with proper engagement of the stakeholders. The ISOPADEC is an interventionist agency that should focus on policies with special emphasis on the promotion of tourism due to the great and unexplored potential abound for the sector throughout ISOPA. Synergy amongst stakeholders would largely advance policy prospects toward revenue diversification, rural development and proper integration of stakeholders to reduce youth restiveness, rage and unemployment.

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