

## **Gender Empowerment – In Cultural Tourism Participation In Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *Cultural Tourism is a global activity that promotes the cultural activities of a Nation; the participation in the cultural activities can be seen in the ways or behavior of people in the country or Nation. It will be right to say that cultural tourism is the way of life of a particular race and Nation. Notwithstanding the cultural tourism of a Nation shows the heritage, history and festivals of that particular race. In some Nations the gender participation in the cultural tourism and exhibition is mentored and prohibited; in this study the researchers; will overview the participation in cultural tourism, examining the reasons of low participation of women in the activities; the impact of religion on the cultural tourism' growth and the health hazards arising from the activities of the cultural tourism. A simple percentage method will be use to analyze the data collected from interviews and conversion, critical assumptions will be made. This lead the researchers into the conclusion that women has been marginalized in the participation cultural tourism due to religion, marriage or lack of fundamental right especially in Africa; and recommended that cultural tourism should be made open and a police of equal right of participation be given for genders.*

**Keywords:** *Culture, Gender, Cultural heritage, Cultural Tourism, Festival.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Tourism has assumed a vital role in the development of destinations around the world, in most cases; culture is a major asset for tourism development as well as one of the major beneficiaries of this development. Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets and cultural events and festivals play an important role in the formation and strengthening of cultural tourism in today's tourism industry. Cultural Tourism in Nigeria is one of the potentials that have not being fully harnessed; the cultural tourism activities of the Nation have also not being packaged to attract investors, encourage tourist participation both domestic and international, generate economic benefit and more especially empower and encourage women participation. As the world's largest service industry, tourism is increasingly perceived by proponents as a socioeconomic panacea for indigenious communities. A central tenet of this argument presumes that tourism can help ensure environmental conservation and simultaneously, both employ and empower women and ethnic minorities (Greg Ringer 1998).

The participation in the event and festivals of the Nation is still on the low end, there seems to be low participation of women in cultural tourism especially in festivals. While the specific nature of gender relations varies among societies, the general pattern is that women have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. This pattern of disparity based on gender is both a human rights and development issue. Women's rights have long been a key issue for global development and international policy; the UN Millennium Development Goals have also brought gender equality to the forefront of the international development agenda. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving all the Millennium Development Goals.

Cultural/heritage tourism is a rapidly growing niche market. This market is fueled by an increasing number of domestic and international tourists, and by the increasing availability of global communication. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the rate of women participation in cultural tourism with a view of promoting gender equality

The aim of this study would be achieved through the following specific objectives.

1. To examine the people's attitude as to regards to cultural tourism.
2. To identify the major participants and stakeholders in cultural tourism
3. To identify the various factors that constrain women participation in cultural tourism
4. To examine the problems affecting the development of cultural tourism in Nigeria.
5. To highlight effective measures to plan, manage and develop cultural tourism in order to promote and empower gender participation in cultural tourism

### **1.1. Tourism**

Hunziker and Krapf (1942) defined tourism as "the sum of the phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non – residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity. Tourism involves the temporary movements of persons from one destination to another, such movement must be aimed at achieving some desired objectives, and in addition the movement may be within or outside a geographical boundary (Davidson 1993:2). Tourism is also define as "the temporary short- term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and activities during their stay at these destinations: Because of people inclination to seek out novelty, including that of traditional cultures, cultural tourism has become a major new area of tourism demand, which almost all policy makers are aware of and are anxious to develop.

### **1.2. Cultural Tourism**

Cultural Tourism is the subset of tourism which is concerned with a country or region culture specifically their lifestyle, history, religion, art and other elements that helped shaped their way of life, it can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), their values and lifestyle (Garrod & Fyall, 2001). Cultural tourism has also been defined as the movement of persons to cultural attraction away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural need which include the solidification of one's own cultural identity. Cultural tourism has a long history and it is also one of the forms of tourism that most policy makers seem to be betting on for the future. The World Tourism Organization, for example asserted that cultural tourism accounted for 37% of global tourism, and forecast that it would grow at a rate of 15% per year. Due to the modern trends of tourism its demand has been rapidly growing from the 1990's but especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The recent trends of extraordinary growth of cultural tourism development are due to several phenomena experienced in social life, the increase of education level of the population and the trends of the tourism industry.

### **1.3. Festivals**

In most villages in Nigeria, festivals are quite inevitable because they go a long way in entertaining and uniting the villagers, attract tourist which will in turn boost the economy of the people by their expenditures and promote the rural areas. One of the branches of this festival is the masquerade festival. Mmanwu as it is called in Igbo dialect is a traditional masquerade of the Igbos, to whom it used to be a major form of entertainment. Masquerades can differ from community to community, and from village to village. Masquerades festivals generally last for weeks and some may span over months, and were performed during the end of the harvest or start of the new planting season. With the increasing rejection of Igbo culture, many communities have lost their masquerade traditions, but the more culture-conscious peoples have refused to let go, continuing in the noble entertaining tradition as in the past. However, the masquerade cult is restricted from women, and no woman goes close to one, indeed, it is a taboo for a woman to go close to one, society warrant that women will never wear masks, and they should not watch all types of masks especially the ancestors masks and that is one of the many reasons why it carries canes in order to scare them away.

### **1.4. Gender**

The equality of genders has always remained a contentious issue. Every sphere of life is characterized by differential status ascribed to men and women. Gender issues have emerged in every facet of our life, primarily concentrating on gender equality in areas like education, status, awareness, and availing of socio-economic opportunities. The domain of tourism too, has not remained free of gender concerns. It is seen that tourism has for long been divided on the lines of gender, creating a privileged and underprivileged class where women are relegated the disadvantaged status in availing tourism opportunities. It is believed that since long women's' leisure has been constrained, as it is intricately woven with family resources, time, obligations, childcare, culture or tradition, men's power and control. A common understanding of gender is that Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures, it includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men which are shaped by culture. Till now, in all spheres of life it has been understood that men have always enjoyed better position and privileges in society, as compared to women. While males are associated with power, females are identified as the 'fairer or weaker sex.' A gender hierarchy depicting a gender dominance structure exists in tourism as well. It is believed that tourism and leisure has always corresponded more to the lives of men than women, where men find more time and freedom to engage in leisure, while women remain constrained.

The concept of gender discrimination and how it affects women has now been recognized and incorporated in much development work, but it has been largely omitted in the theory and practice of tourism.

Promoting and enabling gender equality and women's empowerment in tourism matters, whether it is among hotel cleaners in London on the minimum wage, women in rural Africa trying to sell baskets to all-inclusive, or project managers at the heart of planning policies. All women deserve a fair future but are denied this because men control most resources and decision-making processes in tourism. Greater equality, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), is an essential component of a sustainable tourism industry. Yet, as a whole, the sector has paid scant attention to the rights and status of women, especially to those in poorer countries, and to the impact that tourism has on their lives and livelihoods. Where women are excluded from fair inclusion in both the formal and informal sectors, they and their societies suffer. The lack of equal opportunities for women, particularly in decision-making processes, has a negative impact not only on their personal and professional lives; it is detrimental to whole communities. The absence of women at the heart of decision-making in tourism continues to stall the advancement of women, men and their families, whether in rural Africa or urban Europe. Equality in Tourism believes that without a rigorous gender analysis in the thinking, development, practice and evaluation of tourism, women will continue to be exploited. In the same way as a human rights approach to business is now recognized as integral to sustainability, so must a gender approach become part of that same agenda. Without a gender dimension and a reframing of policies, any attempts to build sustainable tourism policies and business will be negated.

### **1.5. Culture And Gender**

Deem (1986) discusses that the history of culture is characterized by male domination of women, male domination in leisure dates back to the time of industrialization, when in almost all leisure contexts, women were considered subservient to men and their time was perceived to be more permeable than men's, since women continually adjusted their schedules to the needs of their husband and children (Carlos Monterrubio, 2009). Wimbush and Talbot (1988) identify that male power has a strong influence on women's leisure or tourism opportunities, friendships and social networks throughout their lives. In many societies, being feminine has been defined as 'sticking close to home', while masculinity has been the 'passport for travel.' Sinclair (1997) noted that the proper place for women was the home and tourism participation was exclusively a male domain.

In Nigeria, currently women are looked upon as weak, not only physically, but even intellectually, an attitude of mind which, is entirely against nature. Nigeria is, today, saddled with many development problems and one of them is the issue of gender inequality. The issue of gender equity has been the concern of many countries of the world including Nigeria, gender inequality manifest itself in cultural tourism participation during festival, in spite of all efforts aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex. In a bid to achieve this, in 1995, the United Nations (UN) held a World Conference in Geneva where member states agreed to eliminate all laws that discriminate against women (Awake. 2000, p.4). The aim was to engender a sense of gender equality. But in spite of these efforts, we tend to encourage gender inequality through the use of culture and tradition in our community.

Against this background, I believe that understanding of opportunities and challenges associated with gender participation and cultural tourism in different socio-cultural, economic, and institutional contexts is important for developmental planning.

### **1.6. Festivals In Nigeria**

Indigenous festivals are a leading space of innovation in creating a sustainable secure and mature national culture for all people based on cross-cultural recognition. A Festival is an event ordinarily staged by a community, centering on and celebrating some unique aspect of that community and its traditions.

Festivals that celebrate tradition and display history are common to peoples and cultures all over the world. Festivals provide entertainment, which was particularly important to local communities before the advent of mass-produced entertainment. These celebrations offer a sense of belonging for religions, social or geographical groups. Festivals that focus on cultural or specifically ethnic groups seek to inform members of their traditions. In Nigeria, the many and varied festivals are usually colorful avenues through which the cultural heritage of the people is showcased and celebrated. Artistic presentations, singing and dancing and so on characterize these festivals and each of the diverse cultures in Nigeria has one or the other that has refused to lose relevance, in spite of the influences of modernization and Western religions.

The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) has been working with the States to upgrade the traditional festivals, which may become important sources of tourism revenue. Some festivals celebrated around the country are as follows:

#### **1.6.1 Argungu Fishing Festival**

The popular Argungu Fishing Festival is one of the most famous and exciting traditional festivals in Nigeria, the festival takes place at the Matan Fada River in Argungu, Kebbi State. The four-day annual festival

dates back to 1934 and has continued with more alluring dynamics every year. It is a competition among the fishermen of the area to determine who catches the biggest fish; the sound of a gunshot signals the commencement of the competition. This lasts for an hour, at the end of which each competitor presents his catch for weighing, to determine which fish is the biggest. The Argungu Fishing Festival attracts spectators from near and far. The festival is an all-men affair; women can only be there as spectators.

### **1.6.2. Eyo Festival**

The Eyo Festival, otherwise known as the Adamu Orisha Play, is a Yoruba festival unique to Lagos. Traditionally performed on Lagos Island, the festival is presently showcased by the people of Lagos as a major tourist event.

The word 'eyo' refers to the costumed dancers, known as masquerades, which perform during the festival. The origin of its observance is found in the clandestine activities of secret societies. It is believed that the play is one of the manifestations of the customary African revelry that serves as the forerunner of the modern carnival in Brazil. The participants pay homage to the reigning Oba of Lagos. The white-clad Eyo masquerades represent the spirits of the dead and are referred to in Yoruba as *agogoro eyo* (literally: "tall eyo"). The festival takes place whenever occasion and tradition demand, though it is usually held as part of the final burial rites of a highly regarded chief in the king's court. The festival is an all-men affair; women can only be there as spectators.

### **1.6.3. Durbar**

The Durbar festival dates back hundreds of years to the time when the Emirate (state) in the north used horses in warfare. During this period, each town, district, and nobility household was expected to contribute a regiment to the defense of the Emirate. Once or twice a year, the Emirate military chiefs invited the various regiments for a Durbar (military parade) for the Emir and his chiefs. During the parade, regiments would showcase their horsemanship, their preparedness for war, and their loyalty to the Emirate. Today, Durbar has become a festival celebrated in honor of visiting Heads of State and at the culmination of the two great Muslim festivals, Id-el Fitri (commemorating the end of the holy month

of Ramadan) and Ide-el Kabir (commemorating Prophet Ibrahim sacrificing a ram instead of his son). Of all the modern day Durbar festivals, Katsina Durbar is the most magnificent and spectacular. The festival is an all-men affair; women can only be there as spectators.

### **1.6.4. Sharo/Shadi Festival**

The Sharo (also called Shadi) Festival is celebrated among the Jafun Fulani. Referred to as the Flogging Competition, it is a traditional rite for young men. The participants are escorted by girls to the event venue and led into a ring formed by spectators, their chests exposed. They are not allowed to wear shirts or cover the upper part of their bodies. The drumming, singing and cheers of the crowd combine to create an atmosphere of excitement.

Each participant is flogged by another and they are expected to endure the pain for as long as the exercise lasts, to demonstrate and prove their manhood. The festival is an all-men affair; women can only be there as spectators.

### **1.6.5. New Yam /Masquerade Festival**

The New Yam Festival is a popular annual cultural festival in Igbo land, Southeast Nigeria. The festival is held at the end of every farming season, usually in August, to mark the beginning of harvest. Symbolically, the festival, known as Iri ji ohu, Iwa ji or Ike ji in the Igbo language presents the people with the opportunity to make sacrifices and thank their gods for granting them a bountiful harvest. Iri ji or Iwa ii literally means "eating new yam".

The festival also celebrates the abundance of food that replaces the scarcity usually experienced between planting season and harvest time. This festival is, therefore, a popular celebration among the Igbo's, who are predominantly farmers and eat yam a lot. It attracts prominent Igbo sons and daughters from all over the world, as well as guests who grace the occasion.

The festival is also marked with the appearance of different masquerades, dancing, drumming; hence women are not allowed to come near the masquerades.

### **1.6.6. Osun/Osogbo Festival**

Among the cultural festivals highly regarded in Nigeria and the South West region in particular is the Osun/Osogbo Festival, which usually takes place in July and August of each year. The festival takes place in the Sacred Forest of Osun and lasts for a week. It is used as an occasion to reverence and honor the river goddess, Oshun of Osun State.

The people of Osun believe firmly in this goddess and therefore, thousands converge to attend the event annually. Some people come in from other parts of Africa and beyond, as it attracts Osun people in the Diaspora. The devotees believe in the potency of the goddess to hear their requests and provide solutions to their problems.

### 1.6.7. The Calabar Carnival

The Calabar carnival is one of the most celebrated festivals in our nation, the carnival is well known around the globe. The carnival is tagged ‘Africa’s biggest street party’. Created as part of the vision of making the Cross River State in Nigeria, the number one tourist destination for Nigerians and tourist all over the world the carnival which begin on every 1<sup>st</sup> of December and last till 31<sup>st</sup> December has boosted the cultural mosaic of the Nigerian people while entertaining the million of spectators within and outside the State, and boosting the industry for all stakeholders.

The Calabar Festival is a celebration of the diverse culture of the people of the state. The Calabar Carnival is a very spectacular event, with dancers in colourful costumes and long, feathered headdresses dancing along the major streets in the state capital, as sonorous music fills the air. The street parades showcase up to 50,000 young people, twisting their supple bodies into admirable spectacles. The occasion attracts no less than two million people from different parts of the country and beyond to Calabar every year.

## 1.7 Methodology

The Tourism and cultural centers in the six geopolitical zones was treated as the population of this study. The operator and organizer of the cultural activities are in the better position to access the factors affecting gender participation in the cultural tourism participation in Nigeria, therefore, frequent visit was dully considered in specifying the population of the study through Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC), Abuja. 43 questionnaires were distributed to each of the zones for equal representation therefore; a total of 260 questionnaires were floated in the NTDC head office on convenience basis while the valid questionnaire was 254. Self-administered approach was applied for data collection and survey were completing anonymously and returned were analyzed through percentage method.

### 1. Research Questions

- Q1.** What Cultural Tourism Activities do you attend most?
- Q2.** Who participates most in these activities of cultural tourism?
- Q3.** What are the factors that affect the participation of gender in the tourism activities?
- Q4.** What are the impacts of lack of participation on people?
- Q5.** What gains accrue from cultural tourism in the Nation?

**Table 1: Result Showing Demographic Analysis.**

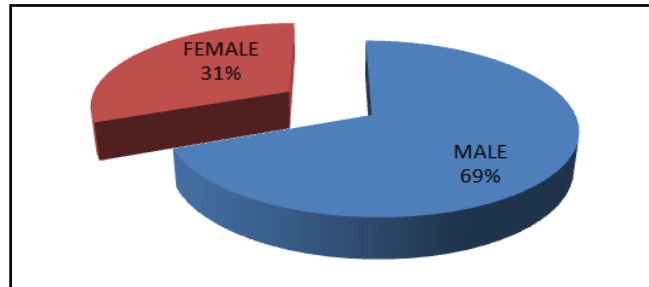
Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 or below	82	32%
	21-25	61	32%
	26-30	32	12%
	31-35	21	9%
	36-40	25	10%
	41 or above	33	13%
Gender	Male	155	61%
	Female	99	39%
Highest Level of Education	Bachelor	129	51%
	Masters	51	20%
	M.Phil	47	18%
	PhD	27	11%
Occupation	Employed	88	35%
	Self-employed	36	14%
	Students	92	36%
	Others	38	15%
Income	10,000 – below	46	18%
	11,000 – 20,000	56	22%
	21,000 – 30,000	26	11%
	31,000 – 40,000	31	12%
	41,000 – 50,000	29	11%
	50,000 – above	66	26%

Source: Researcher’s field work, 2015

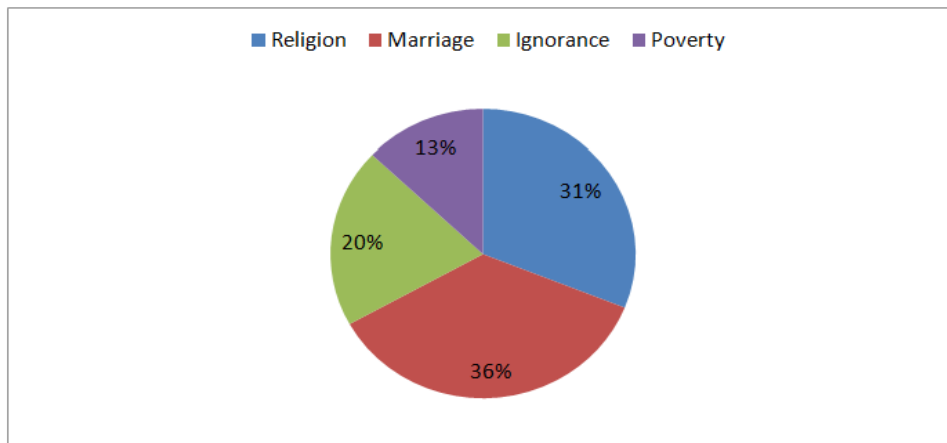
**Table 2. Result Showing The People Attitudes As Regards To Cultural Tourism**

Question	Variables	No of Responses	Percentage
Are you aware of any cultural tourism in Nigeria	Yes	254	100%
	No	0	0
Which cultural events do you attend the most	Argugu	53	21%
	Osun osogbo	52	20%
	Durbar	42	17%
	New yam	51	20%
	others	56	22%

Source: Researcher’s field work, 2015.



**Fig 1:** results showing the major participants in cultural tourism

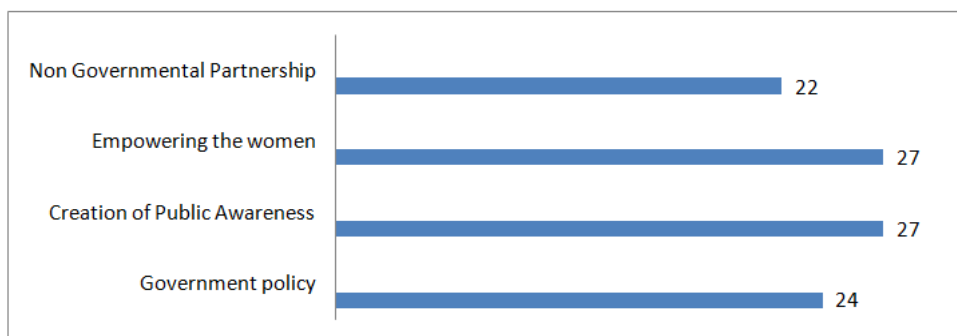


**Fig 2:** pie chart showing the factors affecting gender participation in cultural tourism.

**Table 3. Result Showing The Effects Of Lack Of Cultural Participation**

Effects of Lack of participation	Dismissal of Norms	50	20%
	Abuse of Heritage	79	31%
	Impartation of fear	105	41%
	Misleading of the future	20	8%
Gain of Cultural Tourism	Employment/Empowerment	50	20%
	Development of Nation	66	26%
	Conservation of Heritage	110	43%
	Other	28	11%

Source: Researcher’s field work, 2015



**Fig 3:** bar chart showing ways to enhance women participation in cultural tourism

## **II. Discussion Of Findings**

Poles apart demographic gauge were tailored to weigh up the demographic information of the respondents. The frequency and percentage, highest level of (32%) of the people cultural sites and centers more frequently is (20 or below) and 82 was the frequency of the respondent out the total number of respondents, 61% were male, while 39% are female. Educational level really gave a picture of varied results. Highest level of 51% of respondents has bachelors' degree, and only 11% has PhDs, 36% of the respondents were students and 14% were self employed. Income level of 26% of the respondent earn above 50,000 and 18% earn below 10,000. Judging the correspondent on the basis of age, gender, level of education, occupation, income level and frequent of visits. The result depict that every citizen of the country is aware of one or more cultural events, 21% of the respondent selected Arugugu Cultural carnivals as their favorite tourism destination, whereas 20% recognized new yam and osun osogbo festival as their choice while 22% depicts people interested in other festivals like the calabar carnival, ofala festival, Benin festival etc.

It was also discovered that the male folk are the major participant of the festival having 69% while the women that participate in cultural tourism are 31%. The factors that led to this disparity include religion 31%, marriage 36%, ignorance 20% and poverty 13%. In order to ensure gender equality the following are suggested; the empowering the women 27%, creation of public awareness which can be seminar or training 27%, the partnership of nongovernmental organization with the government 22%, lastly the formulation and implementation of government on gender related issues 24%. It is also important to note that the development of cultural tourism will: generate employment and empower women 20%, development of Nation 16%, conservation of heritage 43% and others 11%.

These finding are slightly different due to the different political, social and economic factors, etc widespread in this developing country.

## **III. Conclusion And Implications**

The study premeditated the determinant of cultural tourism participation, in Nigeria. The domino effect of the study discovered that religion, marriage, ignorance and poverty play a significant role in determining the gender participation in cultural tourism. The tourists are motivated when they are aware of gender equality in participating at the exhibitions, festivals, carnivals etc. It was also discovered that women are most marginalized in the issues of cultural tourism and events, most in the Northern areas of the Nation.

It was also discovered that lack of gender equality participation in the cultural tourism, lead to factionalized employment and empowerment in the favor of males, thereby are the discrimination of our norms and values, mismanagement of our heritage (abuse), imparting the women with fears of the unknown and exposing our future to risk of forgetting their origin, belief, values and norms.

Keeping in the finding of the study, the government and the manager of National Tourism events should focus on the following:

1. Ways of liberating women from the bondage of marriage, ignorance, religious imposition and poverty.
2. Policies should be enacted to empower women and youth to participate mostly in the cultural tourism, to enhance the development of cultural tourism activities in the Nation.
3. Restrictions should not be allowed in any country, state, or community about or on cultural tourism, events, and activities.

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