

Potentials and Impediments in the Development of Ikeji Festival for Cultural Tourism

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Abstract : Nigeria is a country with many ethnic groups and therefore endowed with festival of different types and nature, yet no concerted effort is committed towards their development for cultural tourism. This paper assessed the adequacy of tourism potential of the festivals, and most importantly investigated the impediments surrounding their non-development. Ikeji, a masquerade festival of the people of Arondizuogu clan in Imo State of Nigeria was selected for the study. Ethnographic research using observer-as-participant technique was used for conducting the study. This was supplemented by focused group discussion (FGD), key informant and unstructured interviews. The result revealed that there exist so much potentials like masquerading, cultural dances, native and highlife music, drumming, role reversals and traditional dishes in the festival. It was further deduced that poor supply of amenities and infrastructural facilities, insecurity of life, lack of trained indigenous experts in tourism, lack of awareness and publicity for the festival on the part of the host communities were responsible for the non-development into tourism destinations. The implication of this is that unless the government resolves to provide the needed resources for the development of the enormous festivals, and restores security and peace in the country, cultural tourism will rarely thrive in Nigeria.

Keywords : festivals, cultural tourism, tourism potential, cultural resources, tourism development

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