



Review Article

Conflicts of Traditional Norms in the Packaging of Ikom Monolith for Tourism in Cross River State

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Abstract: The Ikom Monoliths represent one of the masterpieces of Nigerian Arts and a perfect tourism Showcase for tourists. Unfortunately, some locals or Tour Guides have continuously or erroneously projected the monoliths according to their subjective mythological beliefs as warriors, deities, or gods of Stone with powers to cure ailments like barrenness, epilepsy, and madness. This subjective point of view is neither scientific nor marketable to critical global minds. Rather, the Monoliths should be promoted or marketed as efforts of early settlers with astronomical awareness and capability for iron works and Artistry as depictions of these stone works range from noteworthy effigies or representations of village beauties, cultural emissaries, gifted farmers, shrewd hunters, wise chiefs and prominent dignitaries and positional astronomy. Furthermore, the astronomical angle when verified can make it an exciting visit for adventure Tourists. As a Tour Guide, the content of the packaging can make or mar a Cultural Product depending on the information you set out to transmit or dish out to your Regular and Potential Tourists. This paper intends to highlight the beliefs or myths that have either rebuffed or attracted Tourists, or Researchers, and the curious public to the Ikom Monoliths.

Keywords: Traditional Norms, Monoliths, Tourism, Marketing

1. Introduction

The carved monoliths consisting of more than 300 carved stone monoliths found in an area of about 350 square miles along the middle of the cross River, an area politically referred to as Central Cross River State. These Monoliths came to the limelight in 1905 by Charles Partridge and later surveyed and documented for the Nigerian Department of Antiquities in 1968. Philip Allison 1905 cited in Ajoma[3]. These enigmatic stone works are located within the Bakor clan made of five sub-clans, Nnam, Nta, Nselle, Abanyom, and Ekajuk. The carved monoliths were arranged in perfect or broken circles. Within the circle were other numbers of stones that were not carved, which are reported to possess sacred functions than the carved ones. Other monoliths that were not part of the circle

were either clustered around the base of a tree or stand or severally in selected places within the village. Besides the sacred content of the uncarved stones, they constitute some form of aesthetics to the environment.

2. Method of Data Collection

The in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic. During in-depth interviews, the person being interviewed is considered the expert, and the interviewer is considered the student. The researcher's interviewing techniques are motivated by the desire to learn everything the participant can share about the research topic. Researchers engage with participants by neutrally posing questions, listening attentively to participants' responses, and asking

follow-up questions and probes based on those responses. Thus, ethnography may be defined as either a qualitative research process or method (one conducts an ethnography) and product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation. The ethnographer goes beyond reporting events and details of the experience. Roller and Lavrakas assert that IDI holds a unique position within the qualitative research methods [9], and leads to other consequences of research interest. This method was useful in this study because it consists of the researcher or interviewer and his/her informant(s) or interviewee(s) in that it took different modes such as in a one-on-one (face-to-face) and mobile phone discussion to discover personal information about the research interest and make it known to the public [4].

3. Ikom Monoliths and Its Origin

According to Allison, the majority of the monoliths depict a male figure and there are few that represent a female figure, and in some instances, a fish is also carved implying the nearness of art work close to a river. [1]

Recent research has properly renamed the monoliths as *atal* by Ekajuk and not *akwanshi* which only refers to a different type of stone. Linguistically, Prof. Eyo is of the view that *akwanshi* is used only by the Nta- sub-clan and refers to smaller carved stones. His position is that the word *Atal* is used by all the Nnam because it contains a syllable that is common to all the sub-clans that constitute Bakor (5)

The study of the Nnam monolith has revealed and cleared the misty air that is not correct, when the head of the lineage died; he was memorialized by the carving and installation of a monolith. In the study by Christa Charlie of the Nnam monoliths, it became clear that although the monoliths represented dead persons, they did not connote lineal ancestors, but ancestors which included legendary and historical persons such as famous warriors, or beautiful women or queens. However, archaeological findings at Alok, Emangabe and Old Ntrigom in Nnam sub-clan have fixed the date of the monoliths as ranging from 200 Ad to 500Ad [5].

In the community, it is believed that in those days old people used the stones to hold their festivals, but now the present generation does not know their uses. The local tour guide highlights that most of the old people who used to believe in and take care of it are dead so no one is really taking care anymore [11], [12]. But Prof. J K Obatala who was on one of his expeditions in the research of the monoliths identifies superbly executed concentric circles. He states that the Monoliths at many other sites also bear intricate geometrical designs-concentric squares, spirals, an analemma, a circle with a cross inside, an Eight-point star, and, at Ntitugor village, a circle inside concentric triangles. He retorts, what will all these mean? What knowledge or insight were the ancient Black Astronomers, Engineers, Artists, and Mathematicians trying to pass on to posterity. Where did the stones come from? And how did they transport these heavy boulders from the stream to the various sites of the stone or Calendar circles all of them several kilometers from the source [8]

Further excavation shows that apart from the astronomical angle under investigation owed to the ongoing activation of the alignment tests to Solar astronomy, you would find a cluster of dark solid masses- the exposed portions of partially buried shards of 8cm by 6cm fragments which contain rill-like markings on its inner surface and could thus have been used for refractory purposes. It might be a shard, either from a crude smelting furnace or from a shattered tuyere(the device that carries heat to the furnace)... This strengthens the hypothesis that the Monolith site may harbor the ruins of the ancient Iron working Industries that once thrived in what is now the Nnam area (Ikom) of Cross River State.

3.1. Packaging of Ikom Monoliths for Tourism in Cross River State

The notion of tourism is already a house hold affair in Cross River State though the radicalization of our opinion and concepts have been of no consequence hitherto. What does this mean? What is meant by this simple statement is that it is not our knowledge of what is tourism (packaging) that is lacking but the instrument i.e. the motivation (will) for transforming this knowledge into practical and effective usage. This important instrument (will) can only be found in a “National Policy or State Policy” as the case may be which encompasses definite strategies for planning development financing, promoting, and marketing of tourism products (monoliths) [7]

By and large, a policy is an unquestionable cornerstone of any development programme which spells out our aspirations, and how the organisation intends to achieve them. It maps out strategies for achieving such aims and aspirations. Indeed, a policy is like a building plan upon which a financial plan is based for the contractor to systematize its operations.

Tourism contributes immensely to personal life, economy, culture, and political system. Through tourism the individual acquired a deeper sense of his heritage, his environment and the culture which he belongs.

Tourism may be where a country or state has an inbuilt competitive advantage or even with some types of tourism, a complete monopoly. Therefore, the concept or notion that a country or state which is endowed with these infinite potentials need to properly package them so that tourism can avail itself as instrument and vehicle for Economic Transformation and Growth.

What is therefore the value of heritage or archaeological remains (monoliths)? There is a need to assemble these objects and an effort made to understand them and to use them in providing educational service to the public and serves as a teaching aid for institutions about life and folklores, which will illuminate the indigenous religious and economic systems. This in addition to the tourism wants and desires alike, will form the content of the tourism package.

3.2. Tourism Package

What is a tourism package? The tourism package is the tangible aspect of a tourist's products which a tourist

purchases for a given sum without making a distinction between the various components and content in the package.

It is well known that Nigeria is immeasurably rich in natural resources. However, this natural wealth is extremely fragile and what has been built up over decades can be destroyed in a matter of minutes. This is not common with only natural resources, but also with other aspects of the state's life. The packaging of the monoliths should note the fragile nature of the traditional contents and marketing of these aspects should be in the past [7], [10].

3.3. Belief Associated with Stone Carved



Figure 1. The Paramount Stone Monolith.

It is a paramount stone where rituals are been carried out on stone to appease the ancestor before the new yam festivals. The stone has a triangular sign on it, there are four triangle squares and the two triangular squares the former depict the four age groups in the community. The two triangle squares represent the two groups of warriors who carry elephant tusk Arobe and Nkpanyang. It has a latitude of $06^{\circ}19'42.3''$ and longitude $008^{\circ}39'07.9''$ with a height of 43cm and 117m as elevation, a distance of 5.57

Stone monolith representing the female vision of Ekpe secret society. It always comes out in the night. It is believed that any man who sees them will die. It has a latitude of $06^{\circ}19'41.8''$ and longitude $008^{\circ}39'07.0''$ with a height of 80cm, elevation of 120m and has a distance of 8.97. Stone monolith representing a visionary.

It has a two-star inscription which means, the man that has the ability to see into the future, a visionary is one who can envision the future. Divination can be seen as a systematic method with which to organize what appear to be disjointed, random facets of existence such that they provide insight into a problem at hand. For some groups, this can involve the supernatural. It has a latitude of $06^{\circ}19'41.2''$ and longitude $008^{\circ}39'07.3''$ with a height of 80cm, elevation of 125m and

has a distance of 8.54



Figure 2. Stone monolith representing children.

Children gather and play around the stone scarifies are made to the stone before the celebration of the new yam festival. They are an evidence of fowl feather and blood on the stone. It is used by tourism bearux as their logo. It has clockwise and anti-clockwise, the stone is painted with green, red, blue, white, and yellow. It has latitude of $06^{\circ}19'107''$ and longitude $008^{\circ}38'53.4''$, it is 94cm in height, 141m in elevation and has distance of 1.8ft apart [3].

Cross River State natural, mineral, and spiritual resources can be packaged and marketed. And if they are to be sold, they must be open to other attitudes, and ways of thinking.

This discourse would want to acknowledge that too often, Nigeria's image or fashion for tourism marketing purposes was not created by Nigerians themselves, but by the Travel Trade operating in the generating markets. The image that Nigeria presents to the world is therefore at times seriously distorted because it reflects outmoded conceptions that no longer bear any relation to present-day Nigeria. The packaging of the monoliths for tourists must bear this notion in mind. What aspects of the monoliths do we want to package; So our packaging of the monoliths does not distort or compound the negative image.

It may be necessary to digress at this point to ask what should be done to the misguided or distorted image of Nigeria?

Inclusive of the marketing efforts, the first step is to project the country's (Cross River State) image in the light of its historical, cultural, and political background. In this way, it can be given the widest possible publicity. It may sometimes be possible to ask diplomatic missions to assist in these efforts. All the same, the most important to note will depend on the information on our tour packages.

3.4. Tourism and Culture

Tourism today connotes the promotion of all tourist attractions in a destination and helping the socio-economic balance among communities. A well-packaged monolith can help ameliorate the lots of the Bakor communities. Adaka Akong (2012)

Culture and tourism are very closely related subjects. In fact, tourism thrives on culture. Each society possesses its own distinct culture to the extent that the member of one society behaves differently in some significant respect from the member of every other society. It is this difference in the cultural factor that allures and motivates tourists to leave their countries, state to another to relax, to observe, and to learn.

The packaging of the monoliths should give credence to this notion to satisfy and quench tourist's wants and desires.

The tourist value of modern communities lies in the manner it organizes social, historical, cultural, and natural elements into a stream of impressions. Hoebel sees culture as a result of social inventions that are based on the learned and shared process and progress. This social intervention abounds in Cross River State and more important is the fact that we have also learned to control, preserve and use nature to our advantage [6].

Anthropologists have grouped culture into material and non-material culture. The former is concerned with the direct production of overt actions. They consist of tangible goods i.e. the artifacts and paraphernalia of a people as products of technology which depicts in the making of the monoliths. Consequently, this discourse stands on solid grounds to opine that the monoliths be packaged as the exchange of technology and level of the invention of that age in the carving of stones.

While the intangible or non-material elements of culture consist of behaviour per se. These are the non-tangible elements of a culture such as the rituals and other systems of beliefs held by a people. Cultural productions are powerful agents in defining the scope, force, and dimension of civilization. Viewed from that perspective, civilization is the creator of morals, orders, as well as its destroyer, and the breakdown of old local culture becomes an enlargement of man's view of the state. The breakdown of culture then becomes organised for the cultural experience to generate specific feelings and beliefs which are later sold to tourists. The tourists, most of the time are in search of the broken down culture. Thus one can argue with some precision that all tourist attractions are culturally determined.

Modern tourists like their predecessors are curious about the "Primitive people", poor people, ethnic and other minorities. The concern for naturalness, their nostalgia, and their search for authenticity is not merely casual but rather somewhat derived from their harmless attachment to the souvenir or destroyed cultures and dead epoch. This is fascinating! Take for instance how the Bini, Ife and Nok cultures have attracted thousands of tourists to this country.

4. Ikom Monolith and Other Related Tourist Sites

The Ikom Monoliths stand in the class of the Bini, Ife, and Nok cultures. The monoliths and their environment should be packaged in the like manner. The Cross River State Tourism Managers should make a conscious effort to redeem not only the monolith sites but turn the site into an attraction for Tourists. This is important; as such discoveries will contribute greatly to Nigeria's history and tourism in particular.

There are for instance, in Oyo (West), the historical Idanre Hills and the Ikogosi Warm Spring, the Ipole Flore. The Idanre with its 600 steps would fascinate tourists. And of course, the Ihiala Hills with the mysterious footprint (Bigfoot). It is the knowledge of such attractions that stimulates the desire of the

tourists to want to go beyond the other "mere" tourists to a profound appreciation of society and culture.

4.1. Implication

For the Cross River heritage and archaeological remains to have tourism meaning, there is a need to assemble these objects and efforts made to understand them and to use them in providing educational services to the public and serve as a teaching aid for institutions about the life and folkways, and illuminate the indigenous, religious and economic system. These are some of the roles tourism can successfully play if properly deployed and employed.

Contemporary world economic analysis has indicated that an economic system based purely on an oil well is unhealthy and unproductive with its downward trends. This is because an economic system depending on, and sustained by oil without the support from solid minerals, agriculture, for services and tourism offers the best alternative in this regard.

The Cross River State has therefore invoked a deliberate tourism policy phenomenon in packaging her infinite and mundane base resources including historical monuments or heritage (monoliths) natural beautiful scenes, warm climate, and scenic hills, wildlife, eco-tourism, peaceful atmosphere, and the rich culture with its inbuilt natural advantage.

4.2. Marketing Policies

For effective policy packaging and processing, Cross River State has created two important tourism institutions - the Department of Tourism Development and the State Tourism Bureau. As a policy directive, the Tourism Bureau is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring Standards and marketing i.e. packaging the State tourism products (the monoliths) inclusive for marketing to the tourists. To this effect, the private sector is also encouraged to engage in the packaging of the state tourist's product as complementary efforts. The proper packaging of the monoliths will enrich and make the state tourism products more inviting. [11], [12].

The effective management of the destination's culture (monoliths) for knowledge and economic inclusion is very relevant and significant in the present era. The present era of global information explosion driven by information and communication technologies an opportunity leveler - Scientific findings generate a lot of data that need to be processed to extract useful information. Knowledge which processes information can be effectively deployed to solve human societal problems and the latter constitutes wisdom (E.O. Denenu 2012) the importance of having reliable data for development planning is thus critical. There is therefore the need to process proper and useful information on the monoliths for the purpose of marketing (packaging) so that we do not kill the hen that will lay the golden egg.

The transition of the national economy from raw to natural resources - based ones to knowledge and skill-based ones now determine a nation's global economic inclusion and relevance. In this transaction, process information serves as a key resource (inputs) and its proper efficient use is key. The

packaging of the monoliths for tourists besides economic significance has a lot to add to the tourist's knowledge, without doubt, tourists enlarge and improve the personal horizon of places visited.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the above, the Tour Guide's predisposition for the authentic salient content of the Monoliths should center around the Marketable qualities of that which promotes the efforts of the early settlers as people with Knowledge of Ironworks smelting and Astronomy in line with the ongoing studies and hypothesis that entails the testing of the alignment of the monuments with the sun and eventually other celestial bodies. The predominant theme which is Solar astronomy is evinced in such symbols as the sun cross, spirals, concentric circles, and curiously an analemma. The analemma is the figure-eight design, which in astronomy results from plotting the position of the sun on a daily basis from the same location. Also, the presence of the star as found among the carved symbols indicates unequivocally an astronomical awareness Christening it in the future as authentic Calendar Circles.

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