

SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEACE AND TOURISM AS REFLECTED IN THE PATRONAGE OF RESORTS IN JOS PLATEAU

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between peace and tourism using the patronage statistics of sampled resorts in the Jos Plateau over the cycles of incessant insecurity episodes in the study area for a twenty-one-year period. During these periods, the image of Jos Plateau region oscillated between a positive image (when the region enjoyed peace, safety and calmness,) and a negative image, (during the cycles of violent communal clashes that transpired in the region). The study was undertaken at nine sampled tourist sites in which 1014 tourists were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. The study established that peace, safety and security are required for a positive destination image and effective patronage. The study confirmed that Jos Plateau region is very rich in tourist attractions, which if adequately planned, developed, promoted and managed, will make her one of the leading tourist destinations in Nigeria. Consequently, there is a sharp drop in the patronage of resorts during these turbulent periods, and that needs to be addressed. The study revealed glaringly that peace does not symbiotically coexist with violent circumstances. Jos Plateau was perceived positively in terms of her rich and unique tourism attributes. In contrast, incidences such as communal crises and terrorism/insurgency which received negative reportage gave the region a negative image.

Keywords: *Peace, tourism, symbiotic relationship, insecurity, crises, Jos Plateau*

Introduction

Literature abundantly reveals that there exists a noticeable symbiotic relationship between a peaceful atmosphere and tourism development at a destination (Gontul, 2006). The fact underlying the relationship is that tourism is a peace generator and allows people to know each other closely. It creates an opportunity for people to work together and to learn to appreciate each other's cultures. Tourism is a giant "communication generator" that allows mutual understanding and appreciation (Gontul, 2006). In 1988, Louis D'Amour called tourism "the world's peace industry", which others, including academics, agreed to strongly.

Tourism has been hailed as "the global peace industry". As is frequently implied, there is a strong link between tourism and peace. As early as 1929, for instance, the British Travel and Holidays Association declared "Travel for Peace" as the theme of its inaugural meeting. In 1967, the UN's International Tourism Year adopted "Tourism: Passport to Peace" as its slogan. In 1986, the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IITP) was founded, and two years later, it organized its first global

conference entitled Tourism: A Vital Force for Peace. Mathai (2008), declared in her keynote address: Tourism can be a great vehicle for peace promotion. A number of researchers have postulated that tourism promotes peace. For instance, D'Amore (1988) noted that among the positive benefits attributed to the social and cultural impacts of tourism are the promotion of goodwill, understanding and peace between people of different nations. He also stated that "tourism represents a powerful force for improved relations among people and nations of the world; relations which emphasize a sharing than a lack of trust bred by isolation".

Chacko (1998) regards tourism as a vehicle for contributing to change in an imperfect world and states that the industry has the ability to strengthen national pride, dissipate barriers among people, build communication and spread understanding. In fact, tourism is frequently posited as the fundamental key to world peace. We can find many examples where tourists and locals have shared positive experiences, but we can also find counter-examples where exposure to another culture, especially when it goes against the tourist's cultural or moral principles, produces negative intercultural feelings rather than positive ones. Recently, it is argued that it is not very clear if tourism actually generates peace or not, but what is clear is that providing a safe, clean and caring locale makes life a lot nicer not only for visitors/tourists but also for the residents. Tourism has the potential to be a powerful social force, capable of instigating positive social, political and environmental change. Tourism, in dollar terms, is arguably the largest industry in the world and is responsible for the largest movements of people during peacetime. In summary, the importance of the tourism industry according to Okpoko et al (2008) includes:

- i. Promotion of peace and unity between the visitors and the host communities.
- ii. Avenue for recreation which has social benefits as well as curative and preventive therapy for mental and physical health
- iii. Creation of employment opportunities in the various sectors of the tourism industry e.g., hotels, restaurants, transportation, resorts and souvenir shops. Entrepreneurship in Hospitality and Tourism
- iv. Revival of arts and crafts, cultural events and sports.
- v. Income generation and also a source of foreign exchange reserve through international tourism.
- vi. Preservation and conservation of cultural monuments and natural resources as in the creation of protected areas such as parks and game reserves
- vii. Enhances physical development through infrastructural provisions.
- viii. Diversification of national, regional and local economic base through effective use of tourism resources.
- ix. Enhances educational enrichment through research and establishment of learning institutions.
- x. Encourages technological inventions that can enhance tourist visits and consumption.
- xi. Promotes and encourages active private sector participation.
- xii. An avenue for curative and preventive therapy for mental and physical well-being.
- xiii. Creates a better international image and increased foreign investment.
- xiv. Promotes rural-urban integration and redistribution of national wealth.

It has been proven that the absence of terror or violence along with related factors is usually a precondition generally accepted for the development of destinations by would-be investors (Wahab, 1995). Researchers have equally shown that political instability and relations influence the images of

destinations in tourist-generating regions (Goodrich, 2002; Hall & Sullivan, 2004). The negative images that are projected due to crisis and political instabilities are often difficult to dislodge even after the end of such a crisis. Governments and authorities from nearly all tourist-generating countries rightly hold the lives of their citizens dearly. To this end, threat to lives, personal safety and properties of tourists and their possession overrides any other considerations. A good example is the United State Information Service (run by the US government) which gives periodic information on its database to American tourists and citizens on crisis-ridden regions and nations. Goodrich (2002) asserts that the US government outlined regular travel advice and warning to its citizens to avoid some countries as a direct off-shoot of the 9/11 al-Qaeda.

Jos Plateau region is in the process of rebuilding its image as a tourist haven and a peaceful and hospitable region. Developing a successful marketing framework and strategy that would reconstruct its perceived dented image into a positive and favourable one requires important information on several issues. These include knowledge about its perceived image – what it was before the crises, how much dent has been created by the unfavourable circumstances, and what the current perceived image is in the present reconstruction efforts, which will guide the direction and magnitude of image projection required. It is also important to understand the factors that would influence tourists' perceived image of the state. The foregoing background has stressed the need to assess the relationship between peace and tourism in the patronage of resorts on the Jos Plateau.

Literature Review

Empirical findings show that very often the responses of the tourism industry to crises of any nature are predictable; usually resulting in a sudden reduction in the numbers of tourists and deepening economic woes/misfortunes of the host region or tourist destination. For example, Mwathe (2011) reported that the political crisis in Egypt which engulfed the nation in 2011, occurred at the peak of tourist flow. Already, the impact was seriously felt in a massive reduction in tourist visits to historical sites in Luxor, Aswan and Cairo, coupled with the cancellation of hotel reservations and bookings. Bankole (2013) revealed that conflict and insecurity are the key factors that cause poor tourism patronage thereby hindering tourism development in Nigeria. According to Gonap et al (2018), the enabling environment simply does not exist in Plateau State as a result of insecurity and instability. For tourism to flourish the State need to be peaceful and safe for all.

There seems to be so much consensus among scholars on the negative impacts that terrorism/insurgency and crisis have on the global tourism industry. Abraham (2004) and Wahab (1995) opined that random acts of terrorism curtail travel activities and may remain so until the public memories of the publicized incidents fade. The effect of crisis and terrorism can be enormous even on developed economies. Sinclair (2003) who studied the negative effects of the September 2001 al Qaeda air strikes on the US was of the opinion that the repercussions of the strikes extended beyond the activities that were directly associated with tourism. The following sectors and stakeholders suffered considerable losses: aviation, hospitality, suppliers of intermediate goods and services, as well as employees and investors in the tourism industry.

The impact of terrorism/insurgency and crisis, however, can be more severe on developing economies and emerging tourist destinations. This is because competition for the global tourism business is keen, and developing a world-class tourist destination requires a huge investment in infrastructural facilities and security outfits. This huge financial commitment notwithstanding, a sudden eruption of crisis or terrorist act is capable of driving away tourists and slowing down economic growth. Essner (2003) reported that the Kenyan economy lost a whopping 12% of its annual gross domestic product (GDP) which is tourism driven due to the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi in 1998, and a beach hotel in Mombasa in 2002. Similarly, the suggestion that militants in the Niger Delta sometimes choose to target tourists, tourist destinations and economic facilities with the intent of gaining publicity and furthering their ideological objectives seems true (Adora, 2010). Bunuzigha (2010) reported that tourism and socioeconomic development of the entire region have suffered greatly because of deliberate economic sabotages experienced frequently on facilities (oil installations, road networks, tourist destinations etc.).

Over time, media coverage of disasters in tourist destinations has assumed a worldwide dimension bringing closer to people the coverage of crises that conveys vivid images of damages of properties, loss of lives and human suffering. Sadly, these economic and social disruptions are brought unfettered in most cases to the homes of would-be tourists around the world through print and electronic media. Essner (2003) noted that most countries or regions battling the negative effects of crisis expend a considerable amount of finance on advertisement and image laundering. Generally, tourism researchers seem to agree on the following when considering the interrelationship between political unrest, terrorism and tourism (Adora, 2010; Essner 2003; Mwathe, 2011):

- That tourism can be a harbinger of socio-economic development of the host or tourist destination if properly managed.
- That tourists might be vulnerable and easy targets for terrorists and criminals partly because they are out of their familiar environment and so are likely to be more at risk. Moreover, they are believed to be affluent and may be able to afford ransom prices in case of kidnapping. Furthermore, it seems terrorist groups are of the opinion that it is a lot easier to score cheap political points and gain publicity by attacking tourists.
- That all forms of crises (either natural or man-made) are capable of grounding the global tourism business if not proactively tackled.

Richter (2004) identifies four specific types of political discord with tourism. Firstly, political instability in a region may negatively affect neighbouring nations (or regions) because of interruption of air, sea or land routes or because publicity about instability makes the whole region volatile. Secondly, internal upheaval within a country may be far from tourist areas or close enough to spill over into areas frequented by tourists. In either case, tourists are dissuaded from coming or staying because of the conflict. Thirdly, activities or agitations of anti-government forces may embarrass the government and weaken it economically and politically by drawing attention to the prevailing tension and insecurity in the area, and may sometimes deliberately target tourists. Finally, tourism development may itself be a factor in political instability.

The perceived risk and perception of safety greatly influence travel intentions. When risk makes a destination perceived as less desirable, the potential traveller can:

- (i) Change their destination choice, or
- (ii) Acquire additional information for further processing.

Tourists are particularly vulnerable to both man-made and natural disasters. Their mobility means they are difficult to account for and to reach with relevant information or warnings; it equally places them in unfamiliar environments often with a low level of connectedness with local communities. They also have language barriers to contend with. In a holiday mindset, they may have difficulty absorbing information related to physical hazards or disasters (WTO, 1992).

The Study Area

Plateau State comprises two geographical entities: Jos-Plateau in the northwestern part of the state and the adjoining lowlands (Benue trough) in the southeastern part of the state. The Jos-Plateau zone has a total area landmass of about 9,400 sq. km with an average rise of about 1250 meters above mean sea level. The highest peak on the Jos-Plateau attains an elevation of 1829 metres above sea level around the Shere-Hills.

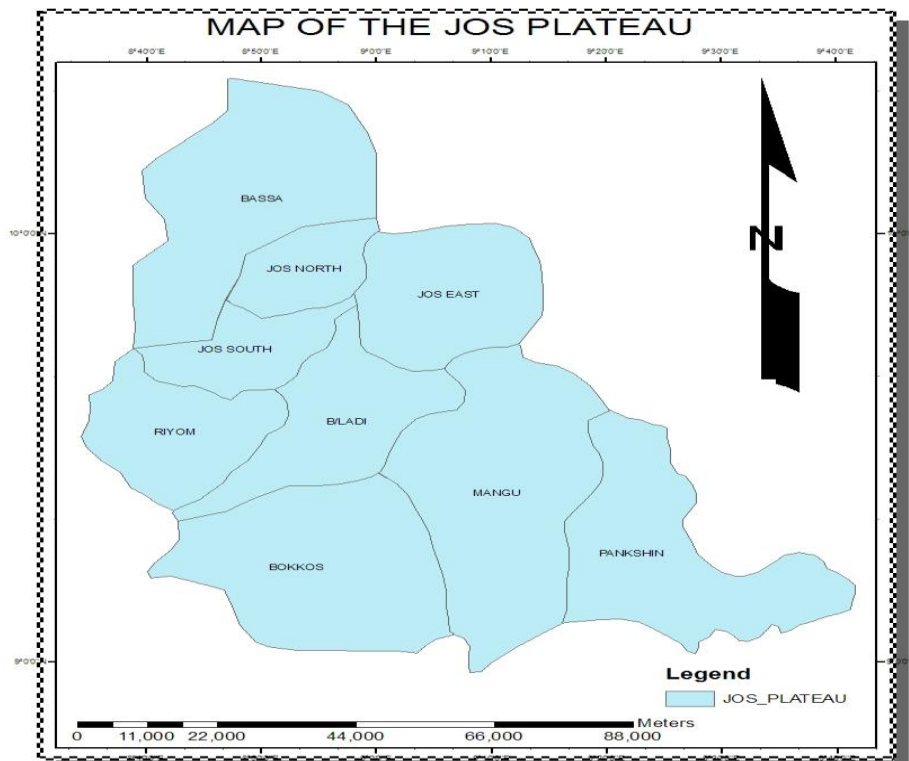


Figure 1: Jos Plateau Region
 Source: Bureau for Land, Survey and Town Planning Jos. Plateau State (2021)

Jos Plateau is blessed with many tourist attractions such as the beautiful hills at Shere; waterfalls at Assop and Kurra and the man-made Wild Life Park in Jos. There are other attractions such as the Jos Museum and Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA), the relics of Jos Main Market, Solomon Lar, have been inundated, suffused with and deeply enmeshed in a spectrum of recurring complex conflicts ranging from communal to political and ethno-religious conflicts (Gontul et al., 2006). This does not auger well for the development of the tourism industry in the region. The region was engulfed by Amusement Park, Professor Luka Bentu Indoor Theatre, a wide range of annual cultural festivals in all the nine local government areas of the region, art and crafts and traditional and modern architectural structures. With such natural and man-made endowment, Jos Plateau is a tourist haven. The region has, however prolonged ethno-religious violence since 2001, resulting in thousands of deaths, massive destruction of properties and scores of internally displaced persons. Fear, distrust and insecurity became entrenched into the day-to-day lives of the inhabitants. Settlement patterns became polarized as the residence of the state capital relocated from troubled neighbourhoods to safe zones based on religion and ethnic affiliations.

Jos Plateau attains an elevation of 1829 meters above sea level around the Shere Hills. The Jos-Plateau zone comprises nine local government areas which are: Jos-North, Jos-South, Jos-East, Riyom, BarkinLadi, Pankshin, Mangu, Bokkos and Bassa. The Jos-Plateau descends into the adjoining lowlands in precipitous steps and escarpments. Due to the steep escarpments of the Jos-Plateau, there are a number of waterfalls as the river valleys are traversed by hard-resistant rock outcrops at the escarpments. These numerous waterfalls serve as potential for hydroelectric power generation and the development of tourism resorts.

The Jos-Plateau is noted for its unique drainage networks, which are made up of streams that constitute the sources of major rivers draining the northern part of Nigeria. For this reason, the Jos-Plateau has been regarded as the hydrological centre of Northern Nigeria. This is owing to the fact that the watersheds of some river systems come together at a point near Rayfield in Jos town: with the Delimi River draining to Lake Chad; the Gongola, Wase, Shemankar, Ankwe and Mada Rivers draining into River Benue while Kaduna River drains into the River Niger (Gontul, et al 2006).

Some of the rivers and streams have formed spectacular waterfalls, which are part of the breath-taking tourist attractions on the Jos Plateau. For instance, the Sha Falls, Assop Falls, Kwooll Falls, and Kura Falls are among the most interesting tourist sites on the Plateau, which will give a good image if properly developed. The climate of the area is dominantly influenced by its relief and position along the passage of the inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ). The high altitude of the Jos-Plateau area has so much moderated its temperature, which has been described as “temperate-like”. The approximate maximum temperature is about 26°C while the mean minimum temperature is about 18°C and the average temperature is 22°C. The weather on the Jos-Plateau is generally cold, especially between December and February as a result of the harmattan (North East trade winds) winds and in July and August at the peak of the rainy/wet season. Generally, Jos-Plateau has been claimed to be the coldest area in Nigeria and Jos town is the coldest state capital in Nigeria. This cold condition is a special tourism asset on Jos Plateau, especially for domestic tourists (Pasquini, 2005).

Jos-Plateau has made considerable efforts in promoting its tourism industry and the attempts have been very successful as the State is now known as one of the top tourist destinations for both leisure and business tourism. These include meetings, conventions and exhibition markets with great potential to be one of the leaders in Nigeria. Jos-Plateau has many positive attributes that help make the region Nigeria's leading tourist destination, such as the region's natural beauty, culture and traditions, the hospitality of the people and high standard of services and facilities.

Research Method

The data required and used for the study include the following.

- i. Possible causes of communal conflicts;
- ii. The effects (direct and indirect) of conflicts on tourism development; and
- iii. Level of patronage of the tourism industry before, during and after conflicts.

These formed the wide coverage of the primary data sources, which were collected by the use of questionnaire administration, oral interviews and observations. The sources of these are from the respondents in the study areas. Data from the secondary were collected from the Plateau State Ministry of Tourism and existing literature on tourism development. The methods and procedures employed in collecting data include the following:

- i. Selection of the study sample;
- ii. Questionnaire design and administration; and
- iii. Oral interviews.

The purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the study samples to identify the tourist attraction. All the nine (9) local government areas concerned were used for this research work. Sampling was carried out in each of the tourist sites viz: Jos Wildlife Park, Solomon Lar Amusement Park, Jos Zoological Garden, Museum of Traditional Nigeria Architecture (MOTNA), National Museum, Assop Falls Rayfield Resorts, Shere Hills and Riyom Rock. Personal observations and oral interviews were conducted randomly with some of the respondents. The selection of staff and tourists were strictly by convenience (i.e., those available at the time of the research). In addition, the Plateau State Ministry of Tourism officials were consulted. This helped in garnering some important information, which was not captured in the questionnaire

The secondary data were collected to confirm how the cycles of violent ethno-religious crises in Plateau State which started in 2001 to 2022 significantly affected the patronage of the nine (9) sampled tourist resorts. The researcher visited all the resorts to find out how they were affected by the crises and how they coped. Nine (9) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the management of the nine sampled resorts and all of them were validly returned. While 1005 question guides were administered to the tourist

at the nine (9) tourist sites using availability sampling (i.e. those on ground at the time of the research). The structure of the question was close-ended. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used.

Findings

Perceptions of Tourists about the Tourism Attractiveness of Jos Plateau Before, During and After each Cycle of Communal Crises

The sampled tourists were first asked about their general feelings about the tourism attractiveness of Jos Plateau before, during and after each cycle of the ethno-religious crisis experienced in the region (see Table 1). The table shows a significant shift in the perceived tourism image of Jos Plateau at the different time profiles (pre, during and the post cycles of ethno-religious/communal crises) witnessed in the region. While over 75% (about three-quarters) of the sampled tourists said that Jos Plateau was an attractive tourist destination before the eruption of the incessant ethno-religious crises, only about 6% of the sampled tourists felt that the region was still an attractive tourist destination during the crises periods, while about 19% of respondents felt that the State wore a negative (unattractive) tourism image after the periods of ethno-religious crises.

Furthermore, Table 1 shows that most of the tourists (about 75%) changed their perceptions of Jos Plateau from being positive (attractive) to being negative (unattractive), with about 6% maintaining that the region was still attractive during the sectarian crises, while about 19% said the state wore unattractive image after sectarian crisis. This finding shows significant changes in the perception of Jos Plateau from the pre-crisis period to the crisis period.

The region, which had hitherto been one of the most peaceful place in Nigeria, has been deeply enmeshed in political and ethno-religious conflicts characterized by genocidal attacks, bombings, maiming and killings of several persons, loss of business investments and property worth several billions of naira. Within the space of twenty-one years, several violent political and ethno-religious conflicts have been reported in Jos Plateau, and all efforts to restore peace are yet to achieve the desired end. It would seem that democracy has increased the culture of impunity while political differences are believed to have fueled the violence that has erupted. The incessant crises, with many gruesome outcomes, resulted in the first-ever State of Emergency imposed on the state in the current fourth republic dispensation. There were also periods when bombings were rife, especially in Jos, the state capital. Several villages were sacked by rampaging gunmen and hundreds of lives were lost along with properties worth billions of dollars. For over a decade, the profile of Plateau State as the “Home of Peace and Tourism” suffered greatly.

Arising from these cycles of bloody sectarian crises, an assessment of the people’s perceptions and feelings about the region as a tourist destination over these different time profiles is very crucial and critical. All things being equal one would expect that a peaceful period at a destination should project and impress a positive image to the visitors while a crisis period would send out a negative image. The situation, however, substantially improved to about 51% attractiveness after the crises (from an 84% unattractive rating during the crises periods) as peace measures were intensively mobilized and substantial peace was regained. It should, however, be noted that the use of the term “after the crises” or

“post-crisis period” is relative because shortly “after” and longer “after” have very different healing possibilities and magnitudes. The longer the post-crisis period, the better the peace healing/restoration process and/or positive image recovery. Also, an all-inclusive wide consultative and interactive (holistic) peace restoration is rather more sustainable than an enforced peace made under the gun which is very fragile. A positive or negative perception, therefore, depends on the sustainability of prevailing circumstances, the magnitude of previous circumstances, and the workability and general public acceptability of all stakeholders of peace and image recovery measures mobilized.

As patronage of tourist resorts declined during each cycle of the major ethno-religious crises, all the sampled tourist resorts confirmed that their incomes (revenues) declined in direct proportions. At such times the resorts find it difficult to meet workers’ welfare needs. The sampled resorts claimed to witness late payment of salaries and other entitlements. None of them retrenched their workers nor employed new ones even where vacancies existed. They claimed to use such a coping strategy only if they had eventually witnessed very poor patronage below their thresholds. The patronage statistics show that even during the crises in the region a good number of tourists still visited. None of the sampled resorts gave an estimate of how much money they made nor lost during the crises as a result of the fall in their patronages. Another coping strategy of the sampled resorts was to review shift periods for their staff, especially in times of curfew impositions due to crises/conflicts. Peace, safety and security are the pivot on which a good tourism image rotates. Crises and civil disturbances dent the good image of a destination. The return of peace would gradually lead to regaining confidence and a rising positive image profile for the region.

Discussion

The findings of this study have clearly revealed a strong relationship between ethno-religious conflicts and patronage of tourist resorts in the study area. Over the years, Jos Plateau and Plateau State in general have been widely known and acknowledged as a tourist haven of both natural and cultural uniqueness and beauty. The region is a land of very beautiful, unique natural sceneries, rich colourful cultural and historical heritage, clement weather with very hospitable and peace-loving inhabitants. From all over Nigeria, Jos, the capital city of Plateau State was a preferred venue for national and international conferences, seminars and workshops for both public and private sectors. For quite a long time, Plateau State lived up to its self-proclaimed sobriquet as the “Home of Peace and Tourism.” Unfortunately, this positive and favorable image has been dented by recent communal crises and conflicts that have overtaken the “peaceful” nature that the state was known for and marred the tourist attractiveness that the state had been associated with. Between September 2001 and 2022, Jos Plateau has been embroiled in a series of communal crises and conflicts that have resulted in the death of thousands of people, destruction of properties worth billions of naira and poor patronage of tourist resorts. This is similar to the opinion of Bankole (2013) who revealed that conflict and insecurity are the key challenges that cause poor tourism patronage thereby hindering tourism development in Nigeria

The once peaceful city of Jos known for its hospitality and a viable industrial base is now a shadow of its former self. No thanks to the carnage and mayhem that have bedeviled the state in the last two decades. Indeed, tourism cannot thrive in a crisis-prone environment. This is in line with the findings of Gonap et al (2018) who said that the enabling environment for tourism simply does not exist in Plateau State as a

result of insecurity and instability. As a much-celebrated home of peace and tourism in Nigeria, a lot has been expected of the state in terms of high tourist presence and patronage, but these expectations were dashed as the hospitality industry collapsed with the closure and winding up of many hotels in the state. Big-time hoteliers who operate five- and three-star hotels have closed, and some have relocated to cities such as Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. Tourism, which is a great revenue earner for the state, has nosedived to a point where the state can no longer pride itself as the indisputable “home of tourism in Nigeria”. Today, the once-busy Jos Museum; the Jos Zoo and the Jos Wildlife Park are no longer thronged by tourists from other parts of the country. The Assop Falls and Kurra Falls are no longer well patronized.

The statistical records of patronage of sampled tourist resorts show that during and shortly after each cycle of the bloody communal fighting, the number of visitors to the region declined significantly. The statistics confirmed that any destination that is experiencing crises can surely project a poor image and unattractiveness during such periods and even afterwards until peace is relatively restored at the destination. During a crisis period the news report about the place in view sends bad signals that cause fear in potential visitors to the place. This finding is in line with the opinion of Mwathe (2011) who reported that the political crisis in Egypt which engulfed the nation in 2011 occurred at the peak of inbound tourist flow. The impact is seriously felt in the massive reduction in tourist visits to historical sites in Luxur, Aswan and Cairo coupled with the cancellation of hotel reservations and bookings. Associated with this has been the assumed loss of the hard-earned positive image of the region. Many residents have relocated to other preferred destinations and the stream of tourists, visitors and new residents had dwindled. The reputation of the Jos Plateau as a peace and tourist haven has suffered calamitously nationally and internationally, especially since the colourations of the conflict are religious and ethnic in nature.

There is no doubt that destinations, where the safety and security of lives and property are guaranteed to an acceptable level are preferred to those considered as dangerous. Each destination is imbued with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), which the potential tourist evaluates in reaching a decision on whether to visit or not. With recent advancements in information and communication technologies, information on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of most destinations is available to tourists for informed decision-making. Jos Plateau is in the process of rebuilding its image as a tourist haven and a peaceful and hospitable destination. Developing a successful marketing framework and strategy that would reconstruct its dented perceived image into a positive and favourable one requires important information on several issues. These include the knowledge about its perceived image – what it was before the crises and how much the cycles of bloody ethno-religious conflicts have impacted the tourism industry under unfavourable circumstances. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) (1992) has stressed the importance of positive images for the tourist destination.

Jos Plateau enjoyed a long period of positive image as a tourist destination. Unfortunately, recent communal crises and conflicts in the region appear to have dented that image. After more than a decade of deadly communal crises, Jos Plateau is beginning to reset itself as the prime tourist destination in Plateau State. The peace profile of a destination is directly correlated to its tourism destination image as confirmed by this study. The region which was known for peaceful co-existence of people of different

faiths and ethnic nationalities for many years went through myriads of serious communal clashes since 2001, which projected a negative image of the state. Thus, a destination with a good tourism image could all of a sudden cripple into a destination with a bad image due to the eruption of communal crises or any natural disaster. The unhealthy situation became quite worrisome to governments, private individuals and corporate bodies (organizations).

But despite the bad image being given to the region as the epicentre of communal conflicts in Plateau State due to the incessant ethno-religious crises, it suffices to say that a good number of tourists still visit the state. Some tourists are very adventurous and curious and would take any risk of going to a crisis-torn destination. If tourists still patronize such a destination, then it can now flourish as a dark tourism destination with a bad or distorted image. Indeed, all over the world, dark tourism is booming amidst our numerous escalating man-made and natural disasters (crises) scenes. For instance, bombed places/facilities, war-torn places, flood scenes, plane crash or accident scenes, fire disaster sites, etc., have all become attractive disaster or dark tourism destinations

The region has a very good share of tourist attractions that can be projected and perceived as a tourist destination with a good image. Nevertheless, no matter how a tourist destination with a good image could turn into a flourishing dark destination with a very bad image, it is an undesirable fact that no booming destination with a good and bustling image would wish to turn into a dark tourism destination no matter the good benefits the latter holds. The emergence of dark tourism, no matter how big it flourishes, is only incidental and never to be sustained. The struggles for all destinations are to achieve a peaceful and positive image that guarantees sustainable markets. Effective mechanisms that can ensure sustainable peace in order to project a good image must be mobilized and enthroned by all destinations. This is the challenge that Jos Plateau must face in order to restore its good image as a “home of peace and tourism” from imminent snowballing into a dark tourism destination in spite of its rich tourist attractions.

Conclusion

The study has investigated and established that Jos Plateau has rich and unique tourist attractions, but the cycles of incessant communal crises and terrorism/insurgency that rocked and befell the region have significantly affected the patronage of her tourism resorts. The study revealed glaringly that peace does not symbiotically co-exist with any violent crises. Jos Plateau was perceived positively in terms of her rich and unique tourism attributes. Unfortunately, incidences such as communal crises and terrorism/insurgency have painted the region with negative or mixed images, thereby reducing substantially its patronage during such periods of conflicts.

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