

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Current State of Selected Heritage Resources in Uzo Uwani South Eastern Nigeria

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Received: 11 July 2023 Accepted: 19 July 2023 Published: 31 July 2023

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Abstract

This paper discusses the state of Heritage Resources in Uzo Uwani area of Enugu State. The researcher focused on five study locations within the study area which includes Abbi, Adada, Akpugo, Nrobo and Ugbene Ajima. Uzo uwani is endowed with diverse unique Heritage resources. Despite the relevant these, products, they are facing challenges. The culture, that produced, protected and preserved this heritage are now indirectly destroyed through commercialization and modernization which if not checkmated will produce people with western cultures in the near future. The current state of the resources is best described as endangered and it is arguably almost at the verge of extinction if nothing is done and very fast too. However, the cultural objects are left in the open air thereby exposing them to various vagaries deterioration due to neglect and poor handling. Close observations reveals that local hunters have turned locations of these resources as goldmine for hunting and poaching of animals which has resulted in regular brush burning in the area. The annual bush burning for farming activities and human neglect have done more harm than good to these resources the study recommends preservation of heritage resources endangered by the public, Christianity and vandalism which can be forestalled through the following means, legislation, awareness public enlightenment and exhibition.

Key Words: Heritage, Resources, Preservation and Sustainable Tourism.

1. Introduction

Heritage resources are one of the major components of tourism and its preservations for sustainable tourism development are vital. Sustainable tourism development refers to a level of tourism activity that can be maintained over a line time because it results in the net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environment in which it takes place. This is a descriptive study which discusses the state of heritage resources in UzoUwani Local Government Area of Enugu state and its possible preservation for tourism development. All the identified heritage resources are in deplorable states as a result of abandonment, western influence, iconoclasm and human activities. This implies that these resources

exist but their existence is currently threatened. The local communities of Uzo Uwani stand to gain a lot if these heritage resources are presented and revamped. Measures like community involvement, community orientation, public awareness, sensitization campaigns, systematic documentation, revamping of the festival were identified as possible preservation and promotion measures for the examined heritage resources in the area.

Heritage Resources are relatively permanent, although highly tenuous, features of the environments if they are present; their integrity is highly susceptible to construction and ground – disturbing activities (Bramwell and Lane, 2012). Heritage resources have been selected as a valued Environmental component

Citation: Cyriacus Chijioke Oji, Edwin Emefesi Okafor, Patrick Uche Okpoko. The Current State of Selected Heritage Resources in Uzo Uwani South Eastern Nigeria. *Annals of Archaeology*. 2023;5(1): 28-43.

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(VEC) in recognition of the interest of provincial and federal regulatory agencies who are responsible for the effective management of these resources. For centuries cultural heritage has represented more a source of inspiration for writers, poets or historians. This is particularly true in developing regions, where heritage tends to be less monumental and more connected to the living practices of communities. More than ever before, the heritage resources continue to perform its irreplaceable role as a vector of meaning and identity for communities and individuals. However it is striking how far the very definition of what constitute the cultural heritage in both its tangible and intangible forms has evolved within the scientific community over recent decades to include an increasingly large section of the environment and human forms of expression maintain the heritage resources is of vital importance in addressing risks relating to natural and man-made disasters. Experiences has shown that the degradation of natural resources, neglected areas, urban sprawl and poorly engineered new constructions increase the vulnerability of communities to the risk of disasters especially in poorer country (Murzyn – Kupisz 2012).

2. The Study Area and Scope

The study area comprises four quarters namely, IGBO ANO, ADADA, OGBOLI and MBA ANO. These quarters are made up of different towns as follows: IGBO ANO – Abbi, Nrobo, Ugbene and Nimbo, ADADA - Akpugo, Nkpologu, Uvuru, OGBOLI –Adani, Ogurugu, Igga, Ojor, MBA ANO - Ukpata, Nkume, Adaba and Umulokpa. This study focuses specifically on the first and second quarters of Uzo Uwani. These people are predominantly farmers.

Two reasons influenced my choice of Igbo ANO and ADADA quarters. The area offers a great opportunity for cultural activities. Secondly to evaluate cultural and natural heritage in some selected towns within the two quarters. These include cultural festivals, sacred places, works of arts, indigenous technology, traditional farming system, palm wine tapping, healing system, bone setting, rivers, streams, title taking and other tourist sites which are the backbones of heritage industry in Nigeria.

3. Methods of Data Collection

Considering the nature of this research, the researcher adopted a qualitative method. This is pertinent because qualitative research is more significant to the research

of this nature in which detailed analysis of the subject matter is defined. The instruments used in collecting data for this study includes interview, focus group discussion and direct observation. The purpose was to examine the people's view of their culture in the context of heritage resources in the area.

One of the instruments I employed in getting information from my respondents was interview which is a process of engaging the respondents in conversation so as to collect information. This was a purposeful conversation in which the interviewer had a set research agenda that had to do with key points or questions that must be addressed (Ruane, 2005). These questions constituted the interview guides which were relatively unstructured tools that list the general topics or issues covered in the interview. As rightly pointed out by Okpoko and Ezeh (2020), this instrument enables the collection of a relatively large amount of information in a short period of time and from a small number of respondents. It also provides opportunity for further clarifications. The emerging issues can be pursued without negatively affecting the quality of the empirical data collected (Okpoko and Ezeh, 2020). This method enabled the researcher to select some personalities from each of the areas studied in order to obtain detailed information.

The researcher used purposive sampling in selecting his respondents. The selection began with familiarization visits to obtain permission from the village heads, chief priests, elders and leaders of the communities involved. As the research progressed, other respondents were selected using snowball sampling method. This method enabled the researcher to identify members of each group of interest in the target population who have some vital information on my research interest. Among this group are (18) elders, civil servants, (4) seven (7) local traders, three chief priests and four (4) youth leaders between the ages of 30 and 55 years. Their selection was based on their involvement in heritage preservation and maintenance in the area. Men formed the majority of the respondents for three reasons. First, they are the custodians of these resources secondly; they are the clan heads/village heads and youth leaders of the host communities. The six women interviewed were the wives and errand women of the chief priests, hence they are directly involved in the maintenance and up keep of the heritage resources in the area (see table1).

Group of Informants	Number of Males	Number of Females	Age Range
Elders	10	6	35 – 95 years
Civil servants	8	1	35 – 58 years
Local traders	5	2	35 – 70 years
Chief priests	3	-	45 – 80 years
Youth leaders	4	-	30 – 55 years

Focus group discussion (FGD) sessions were held in the communities selected for the study which includes Abbi, Adada, Akpugo, Nrobo and Ugbene Ajima. The aim was to appreciate the groups view and understanding of the subject matter. Abbi, Nrobo and Ugbene Ajima nine (9) people in their group, respectively while Adada and Akpugo had six (6) members each (see table 2). Each community had two different sessions and the rationale for their selection was based on their interest and involvement in the preservation and up keep of their traditional festivals/resources. The focus group discussion afforded the researcher the opportunity to reach out to more people within specified time limit and also to interact with

different category of persons. The interaction among group members produced dynamic and insightful exchange of information that might not have been possible in one on one interview (Ruane, 2005). The focus group data were solicited through open-ended questions which gave the respondents the opportunity to interact freely as they discussed (Okpoko and Ezeh 2020). During the sessions, participants took their time to air their view on the subject matter. This method afforded one the opportunity to interact with the people in their social settings since the duty of the researcher is to carefully, moderate, listen, observe and eventually analyses the data using an inductive process (Okpoko and Ezeh 2020).

Group of Informants	Males	Females	Total
Abbi Community	7	2	9
Adada Community	5	1	6
Akpugo Community	6	-	6
Nrobo Community	8	1	9
Ugbene Ajima	7	2	9

Direct observation was used specifically for an on the spot assessment of the shrines and other heritage resources in the area. This approach involved the collection of data/information using ones senses. By observing, I was able to document activities, behaviour and physical aspect of their culture without having to depend on the willingness of people or ability to respond accurately to questions. This method is useful when there is physical evidence or products or outcome that can be seen. This method was supported with field note and photograph (camera). Direct observation allowed a more systematic and structured process using well designed observation forms. The main advantage of direct observation is that an event, facility, structure or process can be studied in its natural setting, thereby providing a richer understanding of the subjects.

3.1 State of Heritage Resources in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area

The researcher focused on five study locations within the study area which include; Abbi, Adada, Akpugo, Nrobo and Ugbene Ajima. Uzo Uwani is endowed with diverse unique heritage resources. Despite

the relevance of these products, they are beset with challenges. The cultures that produced, protected and preserved this heritage are now indirectly destroyed through modernization and commercialization which ended up producing a people with western culture.

The identified heritage resources in Uzo Uwani were classified as natural and cultural heritage resources. These have further been delineated into tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources refer to those resources we can see and touch which consists of shrine, sacred groves, water bodies, arts and crafts etc. while the intangible resources involve those resources we cannot see of touch but can feel them like festivals, marriage expressions, knowledge etc.

3.2 State of Ezugwu Deity

The above named deity is located in Umushere village in Uwani Abbi, one of the four quarters that make up Abbi town (see fig 3) the origin of the deity is still shrouded in mystery. There has been no archaeological investigation to find out where it settled first or what its major occupation was, my informant Mr Okagu was of the view that;

Ezugwu was a mercenary who came to Abbi to aid the indigenes to fight their enemies especially the people of Nimbo. The shrine is characterized by solemnity, quietness and fright suggesting the presence of an extraordinary being.

During my first field work, people were seen feasting and beating the local drums in jubilation for what the deity had done to one of them but my subsequent visit saw the site in a bad shape following the death of the chief priest. The death of the chief priest dealt a heavy blow on the activities of the deity and its shrine was left unkempt. According to my informant:

The chief priest of the deity is usually the eldest man in Umushere village of Abbi and that is the only criteria. Based on that, nobody assumes the position unless one becomes the eldest man.

The environment was so unkempt with nobody on sight to cater for it unlike before now. The shrine attendants had all deserted the area and the replacement of the dead chief priest was yet to be done due to the rigorous process involved. Be that as it may, most of the artifacts and costumes of the deity are in a sorry state with little or no attention.

The current state of the shrine is best described as endangered and it is arguably almost at the verge of extinction if a replacement of its chief priest is not made urgently. This replacement was said by my informant to be taking this long due to the influence of Christianity on the people. Most people do not want to get involved due to their Christian belief. This is the most threatening challenge facing the shrine in recent time. Preservation of the site is very important because of its capacity to promote the past way of life that is useful to contemporary societies. Moreso, this deity is a rallying point for cordial relationships among the people and should be taken care of for the promotion of social control in the area. One of my respondents made it clear that;

The deity is said to have power to inflict serious hardship on anybody in Abbi and beyond that does evil. Such hardship includes famine, poor harvest, drought and barrenness, untimely death of both young and old people among others. For one to know the remedies, it requires consultation with the gods to find out the sources of the punishment and the possible ways to appear before the deity.



The Shrine of Ezugwu Deity in Abbi



The Chief Priest of Ezugwu Deity Performing some Rituals at the Shrine

3.3 Ohe Shrine

Ohe shrine is located in *Okpara Ugwu* village in *Nrobo* town. According to my informant, the deity is the queen mother of *Nrobo* people. Be that as it may the shrine is properly cared for. The deity has its chief priest living very close to it and this has made a lot of people to value it. However, the cultural objects are left in the open air thereby exposing them to the vagaries of weather. Consequently, these objects from my field experience are in various stages of deterioration due to neglect and poor handling, more so, the road that leads to the shrine is more or less a death trap because the shrine is located on top of a hill and it is very risky to drive through the road to the top. Based on this, one of my informants made it clear that:

The path that leads to hill top where the shrine is located from the base is narrow and sometimes quite difficult to pass with fragments of rocks littered all through the passage and walkway. For a stranger, it requires extra carefulness to avoid dislocation and unnecessary injury. With the advent of Christianity and western education, some youths who thought that the deity was responsible for their backwardness, attempted to destroy the Ohe shrine but the elders made it clear to them that the deity was made by the people. It is supreme and any fight against it is a fight against the people. The deity is an agent of social control in the town according to my informant.



The house of Ohe chief priest



Location of Ohe shrine

3.4 Ugbene Ajima Sacred Grove

The forest of *Ugbene Ajima* sacred grove is located on the outskirts of the town of *Ugbene Ajima*. The grove which has been in its primary context over the years has been tampered with by road construction, deforestation, human activities/farming and population explosion among others.

Road construction has divided the grove into two and affected its natural setting and lay out. Developments of this type will put archaeological site/evidence at risk. This risk can be reduced and the most effective method for this is the collection of data prior to the commencement of the project. In recent times the quest for quick money has making made those who claim ownership of the grove to sell timbers found in the grove. Most of the tall trees have been cut down by timber dealers. The grove is currently undergoing degradation from the boundary. In addition to the pressure from population explosion and expansion, the deforestation of the grove is resulting from farming practice, and felling of trees for firewood, the grove

hosts different species of animals and plants that have medicinal values. Thus, it serves as a valued resort for traditional healers.

Moreover, illegal hunting of wild animals is on the increase as observed by one of the respondents. Close observation reveals that local hunters have turned the grove as a goldmine for hunting and poaching which has resulted in regular bush burning in the area. The annual bush burning for farming activities and human neglect have done much harm than good to the grove resulting to the assault on the ecosystem.

The results of the focus group discussion revealed that the grove represents a place where tourists can experience and learn about ecological and cultural aspects of a conservation area. My respondent made it known that;

Findings revealed that the local communities have respected and protected the grove through traditional mechanism like sacred sanctions, local laws and taboos which included the prohibition of felling of trees, defecating inside the grove and hunting.

The grove is a very important reservoir of biological diversity, preserving unique flora and fauna species. Over the years sacred groves have been threatened all over the world and *Ugbene Ajima* sacred grove has not been spared from such threats. Today the communities of *Ugbene Ajima* no longer have the traditional and cultural respect for it as economic hardship continues to linger. Deforestation and felling of trees for timber are on the increase while clearing of the sacred grove for developmental projects have not helped matters. Their development of eco-tourism in the sacred grove could be one of the alternative options that may attract

local communities to save the remaining patches of the grove. As one of the respondents remarked;

Our local communities could engage in eco-tourism activities with their areas to boost their local economy if properly guided by an expert. Income from such activities may help in arresting the ugly trend of economic hardship and therefore may dissuade them from destroying such prestigious resources.

Ugbene Ajima sacred grove is an example of cultural and ecological co-evolution site that requires further research based on a hybrid of social and scientific methods.



Ugbene Ajima sacred groove

3.5 Isieke Deity of Ugbene Ajima

The deity is situated at Amachukwu village Ugbene Ajima. The advent of Christianity has dealt a big blow on the deity as most people had detached themselves from the deity (see fig 18). This detachment had led to its abandonment. Though the deity is still believed to perform and protect the indigenes of Ugbene Ajima, the shrine is still very unkempt and bushy; samples of the reports gotten from the field reveal that taking care of the deity is very tedious for the chief priest who is a retiree. Though he is doing his best, his best is not good enough as the surrounding of the deity is still in a sorry state. As observed by one of the respondents:

The deity is an ancestral deity of all the Ugbene Ajima people and it is expected that everybody in Ugbene should be loyal and continually appease the deity. Since the advent of Christianity, many people have detached themselves from the deity.

Research result reveals that the challenges of these resources will limit their tourism value if they are not properly taken care of. The resources are not only unkempt but exposed to the risk of vandalism and

annual bush burning as the case of *Ugbene Ajima* sacred grove where human neglect contribute to its bad state.

3.6 Mmanwu Festival in Abbi

A mask is a disguising dress which hides the personal identity of the one who wears it. The personal identity of the one who plays the masquerade is hidden and totally suppressed as secret. What comes to recognition is only the presentation of the new personality which is believed to be transformed radically in the direction of the form or shape of the object marked. Information from field observation revealed that the masquerade assume the form of a tenacious beast such as mgbedike or agaba idu or form of delightful and elegant dancer such as *ulaga* or the form of a youthful athlete such as akatakpa. On this note, one of my respondents said:

Manwu (masquerades) are the spirit of their ancestors who had been committed to mother earth at their death and reincarnated through tiny ant holes. The usefulness of manwu to the traditional Abbi society is deemed so precious that it is seen as an integral part of their existence.

Establishing the above claim, many respondents agreed that *manwu* was the bed rock of socio-political change and control in the town before the invading and leaching of their traditional value by the European culture. Before now, *manwu* wield immeasurable powers and have the authority of ordering people to comply with societal norms and values. It served as village task force which compels the people to join in communal work and exact force on defaulters. Affirming the above statement Okagu Festus (President General of Abbi town) revealed that:

History has not forgotten Omada Idenyi Ugwoke who ran mad and died after seven days for disobeying the dictates of the masquerade. The festival has faced a lot of challenges due to modernization, Christianity, change and religious dogmatism. Most people of the study area now pay little or no attention to the promotion of manwu festival because they see it as fetish and should be abandoned. Since the people do not appreciate its values they do not participate in its preservation process.

This has led to breakdown of their societal norms as rightly pointed by respondent who made it clear that:

Before now, the masquerade sat on the throne of judgment on behalf of the society as an arbiter over allegations or disputes.

Masquerade plays several functions in Igbo land. This wonderful form of village recreational entertainment which sometimes can verge on terrorizing act is of great importance to tourism development. The appearance of a masquerade everywhere draws crowd and spectators. Even when the spectacle may appear rough and rowdy, it provides welcome fun. To buttress this point, one of my respondents said:

When the display takes place in an arena, no entrance fees are charged but spectators are expected to give out something on their own free will to the masquerade when the performance draws close to him personally. The masking pattern of the visible masquerade can have aesthetic appeal as a creative show of plastic arts.

The dramatic action of the masked masquerade as they strive to present their character motif in pantomime is also a form of artistic show (Onyeneke, 1997). Beyond the village open air entertainment show, the masquerade institution has functions which are deeply rooted in Igbo cultural life. It promotes social control in the community in many ways. In support

of this my respondent Ayogu, Gabriel said;

With strong appeal which it has for children and young people, and the impression which it makes on the people from an early stage of life, masquerade serve the primary function of introducing people from infancy to the dominant values and belief system of the society. As a tangible symbol of the community, the masked player is engaged by the community as the village police for enforcing concrete decisions and by laws made by the community. Rules made to promote the community positively can be directly handed over to the village masquerade to supervise and collect fines from defaulters and the general security of the community.

3.7 Odo Cultural Festival of Akpugo Ezedike

Akpugo is one of the make ups of Adada quarter of Uzo Uwani. One peculiar thing about this town in Uzo Uwani Local government Area is that they are the only town that performs *Odo* masquerade festival. From my field observation; I understood that this was as a result of culture contact between them and Aku town in Igbo Etiti Local Government Area. In grouping masquerades played in Igbo land into different classes, the dividing line is with visible and invisible masquerades. The invisible masquerades are those not meant to be seen and hence cannot be portrayed in any photography. This affirms what one of my respondents rightly said;

The invisible masquerade may be heard by the general audience particularly those initiated into performing society. When they choose to perform, no visible forms are presented instead, sounds only may be emitted and the secrets are reserved to members initiated into the masquerade cult. If the invisible masquerade want to perform by day, cult enclosures will be enforced on initiated members so as to prevent the people from coming out. This enclosure is obtainable in the Igbo Odo and Igbo Omabe areas of the northern Igbo.

Having said this, it is important to note that things had gone wrong with the above submission of my respondent due to westernization and Christianity some of these procedures had been tampered with. Most people no longer adhere to the norms guiding the *Odo* masquerade cult in the area. Be that as it may, the festival plays enormous role in projecting cultural and religious tourism in the area. This affirms the statement made by one of the participants that;

During Odo festival, people believe that Odo will take their petition back to their ancestors who will in turn answer their prayers by granting them bumper harvest, peace of mind, fertility and so on. The people also confess their sins to Odo and also ask for longevity from the masquerade. Barren women also beg for fertility.

The setback experienced by the *Odo* festival in recent time is gross lack of awareness on the part of the people, majority of them are quite ignorant of what is around them. Also the people have the erroneous impression that heritage resources belong to the past and should be regarded as such. Christianity on the other hand contributed greatly to this neglect as Okagu rightly said;

Most people has abandoned their primary obligation on account of their new found faith and this singular abandonment has done much harm than good to the upbringing of children in the area. Some of our costumes were seen as an obstacle to the spread of Christianity. The state of the festival could be likened to the state of masquerade festivals in Igbo land where Christianity and western civilization have relegated it to the background. The organization is no longer as it used to be due to the attitude of the Christian folks.

3.8 Ozo Title Taking in Abbi

Abbi is a community in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. It comprises of seventeen villages that majorly have their ancestral root at Nri in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State and Igala in Benue State. Ozo titleship was initiated in Abbi by a man from Enugu Abbi known as “Ezikeboshia” as my respondent revealed that:

Ezikeboshia went to Agu Ukwu Nri during their coronation and learnt how it is done. Upon his return, he initiated the ozo title taking and today Enugwu Abbi is known and respected as the village that brought the Ozo title in Abbi. Ezikeboshia was not selfish but carried everybody along. He first coronated a man from Isiama village before introducing it to his village. Today Isiama village is respected and known as the first village that benefited from the title while Enugu Abbi takes the second slot. Abbi people used to take the title of Ogbuefi and Ogbuanya for men and loloanyi for women who have distinguished themselves in the workings of the village democracy before Ozo title was introduced in Abbi.

The *Ozo* title taking is an age long tradition in the area, the title is taken by the free born and the well-to-do in the society, according to my informant;

The initiation was a tedious one and required elaborate ritual celebration with enough food and drinks. In recent times, the Ozo title is no longer ritualistic in nature due to the advent of Christianity. It is no longer meant for only those that practice African traditional religion but whomever wishes to join. The respect attached to an Ozo title man in the past was laudable and well known by the people but in recent time Christianity and western civilization have changed the status quo. Christianity is working against the ritual aspect of the title which is the basis that compelled those who took the title to be truthful and sincere in their dealings. Based on this, the Ozo title men who are known for peace and truth had violated it thereby losing respect from their subjects. By and large, Ozo title society is not only powerful but has final say in all civil matters within their area of coverage.

The *Ozo* title holder is complimented with “*otuji*” and the initiation into *Ozo* society is an elaborate and tedious process that lasts for as long as the title holder lives. The title confers nobility and perhaps royalty on the recipient. Based on this the prerequisite for initiation is that the intending aspirant must be a free born and an indigene of the community that confers the title on him. Information gotten through group discussion reveals that *Ozo* title is a manifestation as well as the meeting point of Igbo traditions of art, music, rituals, drama, and embodiment of authority as symbolized by “*Ofo*”. “*Ofo*” in this context depicts the staff of office which compels the title holders to always uphold the truth at all times. To support this claim, one of my informants said:

The title holders serve as a link between their communities and the past by reviving its cultural heritage and making it possible for the extraction of beautiful aspects of that culture on yearly basis. He pointed out that Ozo title plays the essential role in projecting and displaying the people’s cultural heritage. Also the individual who has taken the title must live a holy life, uphold publicly and privately the morality of the land and observe all the taboos, religious ceremonies and rituals of the gods and goddesses of the community. The Ozo title holders belong to the noble rank and they take preminence in all public entertainments and feasts irrespective of their age. It will be an insult for anyone to address him in public other than his title name. An Ozo title used to be a banker of the community because the community has enormous trust on him and they are seen as symbol of justice. The title is a revealer of a person’s status in the community and anyone with questionable character or whose paternity is in doubt is carefully excluded.

The *Ozo* title as the highest ceremony in Abbi has the capacity of attracting crowd from far and near. It is always a big occasion and highly respected especially during traditional celebrations in the community. The title holders are always seen as first class citizens.

3.9 Adada River

Legend had it that Adada River had its first origin at Ibagwa Aka in Igboeze South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The river relocated in anger to Lejja when the people of the area started defiling the river by defecating inside it, soaking cassava and depositing all sorts of dirty material inside the river. The dead bodies of people that died of leprosy and protruded stomach and other deadly diseases were not left out. As a result of this, the river disappeared suddenly from Ibagwa Aka to Lejja Ugwoke Ugwunye in Nsukka Local Government Area. One of my respondents authenticated this claim saying:

...the river flows out from a rock beside a hill popularly known as Adada hill. The volume of the water at the feet of the hill is very minute. Incredibly, the river continues to increase in volume and depth as it increases in length. It flows from Lejja to Obimo, Adada, nkporogwu, Akpugo, Okpata, adaba, nimbo, opanda, adani and finally emptied itself into the Omambala River in Anambra State. Due to the popularity and influence of the river on the people of old Nsukka division, they choose Adada as the name for their intending state. The scenic beauty of the river has attracted so many people who came there for leisure and recreational

activities. If properly harnessed, it will promote tourism development in the area, he concludes.

Today, Adada is being threatened by dam construction going on in the river for years now. It has affected the smooth flowing of the river and disturbed its natural route (see fig 8, 9). The Dam construction has rendered these valuable resources unproductive. Hence, the tourist flow in the area had reduced in recent time. This development has also affected the economic activities in the area.

Furthermore, tourism cannot be complete unless movement is actualized in a complete sense. This facilitates the movement of tourists from the time they leave their home to the time they return home. As Okpoko and Okpoko (2002) rightly said, “whatever the mode of transportation, some degree of comfort, convenience and service are required”. This is not the case with Adada River according to my respondent who said;

There is poor road network to the destination and the existing one is in bad shape and can only be accessed using heavy trucks or motorcycle. This singular factor is affecting tourist flow to the area. Following the removal of Enugu State University of Science and Technology from the area, the government has abandoned the road network connecting the heritage site and other neighbouring communities and towns.

The area has unique tourism features that can draw huge tourist traffic but the poor road network has made it in accessible.



Recreational activity in progress



The Location of Adada Dam under Construction at Nkpologu





Extension of the Dam under Construction at Nkpologu

4. Discussion of Findings

In this section of the study, the data collected will be analyzed with focus on the respective research objectives. Also emphasis will be on the various sources of data for the study which includes primary and secondary sources.

The State of Heritage Resources in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area

Uzo Uwani Local Government Area is endowed with numerous heritages, however both the cultural and natural resources are best described as endangered. This thesis derives from functional perspective which descriptively presents a historical, anthropological and archaeological account of heritage. Some daunting challenges such as trafficking of artifacts, theft and looting of cultural objects, vandalism, iconoclasm, Christianity, civilization and other human activities pose as barriers in preserving these resources. To this end, there is need for preservation of these resources before we lose them. Preservation is very important because of its capacity to promote the past ways of life that are useful to contemporary societies.

In our traditional societies cultural heritage occupies a special place and plays a vital role in the lives of every individual. For example the Ishi eke deity of Ugbene Ajima and other deities in the study area, were of tremendous help to them before now. However, most of these sites are now in sorry state due to lack of attention. There is gross lack of awareness on the part of the people, majority of them are quite ignorant of what is around them and they have the erroneous impression that these cultural heritages belong to the past and should be regarded as such (Ezeuzomaka, 1996). In other words, they are of the view that the heritage sites are fetish and should be abandoned. Most Nigerians are unaware of the value of these objects to their cultural heritage and even those who are informed about their value are often not sympathetic to the cause of preserving them (Ekechukwu, 1990).

Moreover, the advent of Christianity and western civilization has contributed greatly to this neglect unreservedly. Most people have abandoned their primary obligation, the yard stick for social control in the past, on account of their new found faith and this singular abandonment has done more harm than good to the upbringing of children in the area. African sculptural forms have suffered the worst humiliation in the hands of religious iconoclasts. They were seen as the main obstacle to the spread of Christianity and as a result, various terminologies were used to devalue our cultural objects (Oloidi 1988:225). More often than not, they were regarded as graven images, idols, fetish or devilish objects. Oloidi (1998) pointed out that these cultural objects were regarded as mere woods and therefore of no spiritual or aesthetic value to Africans. Having succeeded in brainwashing our people, our cultural objects were destroyed through burning in the public or being broken into pieces. Most of these cultural objects which the early missionaries regarded as fetish, mere woods and all that, were in high demand in Europe. Based on this, they employed several avenues used in procuring them for the massive exportation to Europe (Oloidi, 1998). Onah, (2014) pointed out without reservation that Igbo culture suffered tremendously in the hands of early missionaries. According to him, the white men believed that Africans are so backward in thinking and they referred to us as neighbours of the wild animals. He referred to the statement made by Hegel; Greek Philosopher that Africans should not count themselves as human beings since they still have a long way to go before they can fit in as human beings. Notwithstanding the fact that Hegel never visited Africa he claimed to have gotten his insight from the stories of other white men who had visited Africa. Conclusively, Onah made it clear that the impression of others about our cultural heritage is not the issue but what we think about ourselves and our heritage (Onah, 2014).

In other words, the cultural heritage of the people has since then continued to be looted and stolen.

Looting is an age-old threat and it continues to be a problem in the 21st century in all countries, but it is often exacerbated in developing nations. Much of Nigeria's valuable resources and antiquities have been smuggled through a number of means like theft, looting and illegal acquisition perpetrated first by the early missionaries and colonial administrators and consequently by trade and trafficking syndicates (Ekechukwu, 1990). In African traditional society, according to Ekechukwu (1990), these cultural artifacts, particularly the work of art, served various functions. They were linked with and directed towards assuring the cohesion of the group (Andah, 1988). Obviously, sculpture constitutes the bulk of Nigeria's resources in antiquities and in no doubt represent important land marks in artistic creations of the Nigeria people.

Apart from smuggling, looting and the dangers outlined above, there is also the problem of conservation and preservation of our cultural objects. To say that the country is rich in cultural heritage is not to admit anything beyond the truth. But most of all these cultural objects are in various stages of deterioration due to poor handling. It is worthy to note that in village shrines for instance, the objects are often left in the open air thereby exposing them to the vagaries of weather. Apart from the occasional rubbing of palm oil or chalk on the objects by priest as part of the ritual process especially during festivals, no other efforts were made to prevent them from decay, damage or attack by insects (Ekechukwu, 1990). Meanwhile, the chief priests and other agents of the gods lack the basic conservation equipment necessary for care of objects in their collections. Conservation of cultural heritage involves protection and restoration using any method that proves effective in keeping that property in an original condition.

The disdain of the western culture that had condemned Africa to darkness is based on prejudices and ignorance. The importance and artistic value of the Negro mosques were promptly acknowledged by white men but the existence of African sculpture was not. At the most, they conceded that there existed a more or less savage, primitive or exotic folklore. The source of African history was traced to antiquity; archaeology discovered prehistoric human settlements, yet at the same time, archaeological sites and landscapes have been and continue to be violated by major engineering projects such as road networks,

dams, deep plough etc. reporting on recent issues in museums, American underwater archaeologist Robert F. Marx described destructive practices from around the world and declared that most challenging problem confronting archaeologists is the accelerating pace at which sites are being destroyed (Ray Isar, 1984). The gap between the aims of cultural preservation and the desire for modernization has become a serious issue in light of the steadily diminishing residues of heritage, particularly in urban areas and an increasing rejection of traditional values by many classes of the society. The area of study is endowed with a lot of heritage resources as mentioned above. The state of most heritage resources in the area both cultural and natural are best described as endangered.

Preservation is very important because of its capacity to promote the past ways of life that are useful to contemporary societies. As Onyima (2016) rightly said, the past is essentially the key to the present and platform into the future. Before the advent of the Europeans, heritage resources were preserved in royal palaces, by kings, heads of families and kindred, the chief priests was in charge of shrines and sacred groves among others, (Fasuyi, 1973) the traditional activities, arts and festivals were managed by the traditional rulers. During that time, the cultural objects were in safe hands unlike what is obtainable today among some indigenes of Uzo Uwani. To them, the preservation of these cultural objects is evil and should be avoided. Thus the heritage resources are facing numerous challenges in recent time such as modernization, Christianity, looting and ignorance.

Moreover, some governmental projects affected some of the heritage resources in the area to a great extent. For example, the Ugbene Ajima sacred grove was greatly affected by road construction and the Adada River also faces enormous threat from the Dam construction which has affected its natural route and tributaries. Social change on the other hand has caused more harm than good to these valuable resources. Social change implies an alteration, modification or shift in behaviour, attitude, social institutions and social structures. Some of these social institutions and structures such as family, marriage, and kingship systems are threatened by the wave of modernization and globalization. For instance, the value systems has gradually been phased out as issues like respect for elders, chastity, integrity and morality are considered out-dated while wrong values like disrespect, nudity, fraud, kidnapping are enthroned in the area.

Research results reveal that the immediate challenge facing these sites will limit their tourism value if not properly handled. Most of these sites are not only unkempt but exposed to the risk of vandalism and annual bush fire.

4.1 Recommendations

Based on my field work experience and observations, it is undoubtedly clear that most of the heritage resources in the area need urgent attention for posterity sake. Though the people of the area are trying their best to uphold and safeguard these rich resources, it is clear that their efforts are not good enough considering the current state of these heritage resources in the area. To this end, all the stakeholders should get involved to preserve these resources which were handed over to them by their ancestors. They should be aware of the influence of westernization and Christianity on this resource as one of my respondent rightly said:

Christianity has done much harm than good to our tradition. Everything we believed in has been termed fetish and our cultural objects and festivals relegated to the background. According to him, a good number of our masquerade costumes and object had been set ablaze by the so called born again Christian. Something should be done and fast too to safeguard the remaining relics of our tradition. Evil practice is now on the increase because deities are rarely consulted in recent times due to the fact that the perpetrators have taken solace in the church. Based on this, swearing before the deity is idol worship for them and by so doing, crime is on the increase. Christianity has dealt with our pride and integrity as a people.

Preservation or salvaging of heritage resources endangered by the public or private works, effect of Christianity and vandalism can be forestalled through the following means; legislation penalties, Awards, Awareness campaign, exhibition etc. Having said this, recommend I following:

1. Cultural festivals in the area should be upgraded and properly documented: Festivals and dances should be video recorded and the video tapes kept in institutions involved in heritage management. The documentaries should be detailed and accompanied by voice clip for detailed account. The role the media is playing in various aspects of life is becoming increasingly greater each day especially in spheres like social interaction, cultural and educational. Awareness is highly dependent on media reporting because the vast majority of travel decisions are made by people who

have never seen the destination first hand themselves. The mass media both print and electronic broadcast or spoken words that reach a large audience become imperative. When this is done greater number of the population will be aware of what is around them and map out the modalities of safeguarding those resources. My respondent reacting to the importance of mass media in heritage development said;

Mass media is a significant force in modern culture. It is quite evident that the media has become an essential part of everyone's life and it plays constructive roles in today's society from increasing public awareness to collecting news and information about heritage resources in the area. It is good we encourage and make use of the media in showcasing our rich cultural past which is going into extinction, he concludes.

4.2 Enlightenment Programme

The benefits of awareness campaign cannot be overstressed in the development of heritage resources across the world. This has to do with engaging the public on the importance of heritage resources in their domain. It helps to promote stewardship of cultural heritage and making it relevant to the society by providing the public with the means for re-constructing their own past. The major goals of heritage resources are preservation of fragile sites of our prehistoric and historic past that are being destroyed at alarming rate through the process of development, ignorance and vandalism. Preserving these resources can go a long way in strengthening communities and promotion of public dialogue. Based on this, one of my respondents was of the view that:

Heritage resources in Uzo Uwani have a unifying force on the indigene of the area especially the festivals. According him, the Ozo title taking has played a major role in bringing justice and fair play to our people. He affirms this by saying that Ozo title ceremony attracts visitors from far and near but our people should make it unique by setting a day apart for the event. If this is achieved, the event will be more colorful in nature unlike what it is at present which is on individual basis.

I therefore recommend that the politicians and heritage developers should be made to appreciate and value our heritage through formal and informal education through Television and Radio broadcast, public lectures, exhibitions, Newspapers and Journals, internet, museum displays. With proper education the policy makers and legislators will be convinced to take adequate measures to prevent the destruction of

heritage resources by providing funds for preservation of these resources. By so doing, crucial information in the past can be recorded and preserved for the future (Oji, 2008).

4.3 Provision of laws and Ethics for the Protection of our Cultural Past

Legislation is needed to ensure site protection especially in some areas where vandalism and site destruction is on the increase. Most communities of the world have laws designed to protect their heritage resources and Nigeria is no exception. Facts from archaeological records reveal that most of Nigeria's valuable resources in antiquities had been smuggled out through a number of means like theft, looting and illegal acquisition perpetrated by the early missionaries, colonial administrations and traders. Our heritage resources suffered the most humiliation through religious iconoclasts who saw these artifacts as the obstacles to the spread of Christianity and as a result, various unsuitable terminological descriptions were employed to devalue them. In view this, one of the respondents said:

Christianity has caused us more pains in recent times, most of our costumes and work of arts were burnt on a regular basis because of the new found faith of our people. They now regard us as sinners and our tradition obsolete. Our shrines and deities are not left out in this; they were regarded as graven images, idols, fetish object that should be discarded.

Having said this, provision of laws and ethics for safeguarding our cultural past becomes paramount. It is needed to ensure site protection and conservation: New laws that will restrict domestic trafficking in heritage resources are needed.

This study revealed the true state of the heritage resources in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State ranging from neglect, abandonment, destruction and effect of religion and theft. Apart from deterioration and reckless abandon, natural and human activities such as bush burning, vandalism and weather cause more harm than good than to these resources. In the light of the above expositions generated by the findings of this study, I have discussed what heritage resources and tourism are and what they are not in an attempt to justify the need for their inclusion in the national economic planning for preservation and sustainability. This study reveals that heritage resources are of paramount importance in sustaining the host community if properly handled. Having said this, the following recommendations are made;

4.4 Community Involvements

The involvement of communities has become an important approach in preservation; management and promotion of heritage resources. It provides a common ground for engagement and cooperation with the host communities and stakeholders. Having the knowledge of what heritage resources are can act as an enabler of sustainable development thereby providing direct and indirect benefits to the daily lives of the people. The people protect what they value and what is meaningful to them will gain support of the community for its proper safeguarding and use, community involvement in heritage becomes more and more relevant in preservation management and promotion of heritage in the world. It is important to develop a common understanding of what community involvement is all about.

The preservation of these heritage resources should be communicated through an integrated education approach in this global society. Sustainability in the preservation of these resources through education should be encouraged for safeguarding our cultural past. Specialized publications in Educational institutions, historical and cultural associations should be encouraged public bodies concerned with heritage industry should organize programmes to publicize the dangers of destroying cultural properties by short sighted and uninformed individuals. Moreover, museums and other educational institutions should organize programmes and museum display/exhibitions on the danger of destruction of cultural property. Public lectures will also go a long way. With proper education the policy makers and legislators will take adequate measures to prevent the destruction of heritage resources. Efforts should be made to educate the people on the importance of preserving these heritage resources within the area as a means of enhancing awareness on its importance to the history of the people and for posterity.

The appreciation of heritage resources should be communicated through education and should be encouraged by all and sundry. It is one of the ways tangible and intangible heritage can be safeguarded. I therefore recommend that efforts should be made to educate the people on the importance of preserving the heritage resources within the area as a means of enhancing awareness on its importance to the history of the people and for posterity.

4.5. The Role of the Media

Digital storage has played a major role in the

preservation of heritage resources in recent time. It has enabled the sharing of heritage resources around the world. Digital storage no doubt is the trend for the future and should be encouraged. The media should publicize the nature of the deterioration of the heritage resources to the public to enable a rescue work on such sites. At this juncture, I recommend that the politicians and policy makers should be made to appreciate the value of this resource through mass media. Festivals and traditional dances should be video recorded and kept in galleries. This will go a long way in preserving the festivals and its memories. Folklores and traditional songs should be recorded and kept in archives and libraries for reference purposes (Oji, 2003:51).

By and large, the role the media is playing in various aspects of life is becoming increasingly greater each day especially in spheres like social interaction, cultural and educational aspects of our life. The media has a crucial role to play in publicizing emerging destinations because the vast majority of travel decisions are made by people who have never seen the destination first hand themselves.

4.6 Establishment of a Community Museum

For posterity sake, museum establishment in rural areas could make recording of the oral traditions of the people easy and safe. The valuable oral tradition collected from sites visited are only recorded on the pages of academic papers and have not been made available to the younger generations who are indigenes of these areas but they will have opportunity to learn about their heritage resources when these are recorded and displayed.

Moreover, photograph is of vital importance in archaeological field work. It immortalizes artifacts as well as the process of safeguarding them. Properly trained archaeologists, anthropologists or an expert in cultural studies are the ideal persons to manage the cultural past of the people.

Museums play a vital role in the preservation of heritage resources. Some museums undertake heritage protection functions themselves and manage the heritage of a region or nation. Many museums also give advice on development proposals and undertake field work, meeting the complex requirements of curators, deliberate collections of artifacts management and conservation as well as the need to respond to the continuing challenges to the museum's right and title. Museum plays active role in both preserving and shaping the public view of the past and reflect its prospects.

4.7 Enlightenment Programme

Enlightenment programme, public lectures and other means should be employed in educating the people of Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State on the importance of preserving their heritage resources. For this information to be adequately appreciated and disseminated to the people, all stakeholders must join hands and this will help to inform and teach the people the importance of preserving our heritage and educate them more on the effect of bush burning on the cultural properties. Bush burning has dealt a lot of untold harm/destruction to our monuments and sites. A good example is the Cross River monoliths which lie across the Ikom and Ogoja Local Government Areas. According to Ejikeme et al (2020), bush burning and vandalism constitute some of the major challenges faced by the site.

To be kept alive, Heritage Resources must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly maintained and learned within communities and generations. This is why the people should be made to know the value of what is around them and safeguarding measures put in place to ensure that these heritage resources can be transmitted from one generation to another. Public awareness plays an important role by alerting the public of what is around them.

4.8 Legislative Protections of the Resources

In archaeological development, legislation is needed to ensure site protection especially in countries where vandalism is compounded by deliberate destruction of heritage resources by those who have no interest of heritage at heart. The establishment of a legal instrument for the protection and preservation of Nigeria cultural properties started when the colonial government headed by Sir Benard Bourdillon established a Native Authority Ordinance No. 17 of 1943 and to the Customs Ordinance No. 21 of 1943 prohibiting sales, destruction and export of African antiquities and works of arts. Extension of these laws to the area of study will be much helpful in safeguarding the resources for posterity. Since the government recognize the historic environment as a fragile resource and has adopted policies for understanding its significance, appropriate management should also be put in place. Having said this, new laws that restrict domestic traffic of Heritage Resources are needed.

5. Conclusion

Tourism is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for socio-economic development, because of the

possible backward and forward linkages with the rest sectors of the economy, which allows it to facilitate employment opportunities, income, local economic development, and enhance the quality of life (SEPO, 2006). However, Hall (2007) argues that the extent to which these benefits accrue to a nation crucially depends on local conditions.

Furthermore, Manwa (2012) argue that for tourism to be sustainable the community has to benefit directly from it, this will enable them to protect and conserve the resources upon which it is based. This is further emphasized by Smith (2007) that apart from the type of tourism, the extent to which tourism confers economic benefits on any country also depends on the expectations of the tourists and the host country's ability to provide appropriate and adequate facilities. And unless economic policies to promote tourism remain a focus in developing countries, tourism will not be a potential source of economic growth (Ekanayake and Long, 2012). This has been a problem for the developing countries with inadequate infrastructure generally and tourism supporting infrastructure in particular.

There is nowhere the problem of inadequate infrastructure is most pronounced than in Nigeria where the dearth of infrastructure is compounded by the inability to maintain the few existing ones and replicate infrastructure to areas lacking in amenities usually outside of the capital and major cities. In Nigeria, lack of infrastructures is most pronounced in the rural areas where incidentally most of its tourist sites are also located.

Nevertheless, efforts at developing infrastructure to support tourism in Nigeria, paltry as these may be, happen only in the urban areas (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). This is where and how tourism is expected to have its most impact on economic development given the infrastructure and income it can attract to rural Nigeria to spur economic growth and development in rural areas and the regions (SEPO, 2006). In this regard, tourism can facilitate the replication of infrastructure to the regions and the rural areas of Nigeria, which are usually the areas which lack amenities.

A lot has been said and done about our heritage resources which are gradually going into extinction in recent time. In error, most people are having their blame on the church for not safe guarding our culture. But my opinion is that the church cannot do much since they are seeing it as fetish, based on this, the

government at the grassroots should make it a point of duty to mobilize the stakeholders for reforms with the assistance of the traditional rulers. By so doing, all these cultural festivals and other indigenous technologies and ceremonies can be harmonized for posterity sake. When this is done, we can showcase to the world the excellent heritage at our disposal.

The disdain of the western culture that had condemned Africa to darkness is prejudice and ignorance. The importance and artistic value of the Negro mosques were promptly acknowledged but the existence of African sculpture was not. At the most, it conceded that there existed a more or less savage, primitive or exotic folklore. The source of African history was traced to antiquity, primitive man and settlement patterns were discovered by archaeologists, yet at the same time, slavery continued to rage on African soil. Everywhere Africans were abused and deprived of even belonging to the human race. We have to wake up and fight, getting rid of ignorance in its entirety to enable us restore our heritage.

Many Nigerians have demonstrated and provided hope for the future. Meanwhile, the rich cultural heritage in North-West Yoruba land needs urgent attention to harness for tourism development. From this development, it is obvious that the values of cultural heritage will go a long way in our efforts to develop a viable tourist industry in Nigeria.

Having said this, I challenge the government on the need for heritage reform. Doing the same thing our forefathers did centuries ago in a more reformed and civilized way. This will go a long way in correcting some anomalies associated with some cultural heritage in most areas. In other words, it is practically impossible to develop a viable tourist industry in Nigeria without taking some culturally relevant variable into consideration. Knowledge of how people live, the way they appreciate outsiders, their dietary habits as well as their artistic traditions, etc. are fundamental to the survival of national tourism (Okpoko, 1990).

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