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Terrorist Cultural Heritage Destruction and Ecotourism in Nigeria: Philosophical Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is an important aspect of a people's life. Without cultural heritage, a people lose their sense of identity, cohesiveness, values; and their entire wellbeing is gravely impacted. Cultural heritage includes a people's customs, places, practices, values, artistic expression, and landscapes. It is made up of tangible and intangible resources. Especially for tangible or material resources they are vital for eco-tourism. There will be no base for eco-tourism without the land, places, cultural artifacts, and monuments. Though cultural heritage is very important to cultural wellbeing and tourism in Nigeria, it is endangered by the activities of terrorists. This paper critically analyses the cultural destruction and threat posed by Boko Haram and other terrorist activities and how these have impeded eco-tourism in Nigeria. It will use viewpoints from both the western and indigenous philosophical tradition to highlight the significance of cultural heritage, the immorality of cultural destruction and the ethical imperative to promote eco-tourism. The paper finds that cultural heritages are being destroyed in Nigeria by terrorists and thus impeding ecotourism. It concludes that there is need to end terrorist cultural heritage destruction in Nigeria to promote ecotourism.

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the destruction of cultural heritage in Nigeria by terrorists. This destruction has led to slow growth of both the tourist and ecotourist industry. Tourism is an important aspect of the life of a country. Both the country and the citizens need tourism. Knoema (2019) states that: "In 2019, contribution of travel and tourism to GDP for Nigeria was 20.4 billion US dollars. Contribution of travel and tourism to GDP of Nigeria increased from 2.9 billion US dollars in 2000 to 20.4 billion US dollars in 2019 growing at an average annual rate of 13.69%." It contributes great benefits to a country and the citizens in terms of knowledge, acquisition of information and facts for research, economic empowerment, understanding among cultures and so forth. The tourist industry in Nigeria has been endangered by terrorism.

A critical analytic method is used here to clarify the terms underlying this paper. The situation of terrorist cultural heritage destruction (TCHD) in the country is then examined. The immorality of this TCHD is also outlined. Thereafter the paper makes a brief conclusion. It should be noted right away that this paper is not in the field of sociology, political science, or social sciences. It is written from a moral philosophical point of view or an applied philosophical viewpoint. Writing of the significance of heritage, Centre for Heritage and Society of the University of Massachusetts (n.d) says that, "It can be the platform for political recognition, a medium for intercultural dialogue, a means of ethical reflection, and the potential basis for local economic development. It is simultaneously local and particular, global and shared." The point in this paper is to see cultural heritage as a means of ethical reflection.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

"Terrorism" or "terrorist" is a difficult term to define. It is filled with nuances for one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter, as Fotion, Kashnikov & Lekea (2007) note. "Terrorism" or "terrorist" comes from the word, "terror". For Chaturvedi (2006), terrorism is: "the use of violence or indulgence in violent activity for any political end or in order to put the public in fear" (p. 304). Chaturvedi (2006) notes that defining it in terms of wanting to instil fear in the public is a better definition as it reveals a cardinal motive for terrorism. The violence caused by terrorists is randomly arbitrary. Chambers (1993) defines terror as: "extreme fear; a time of, or government by, terrorism; a person or thing causing extreme fear or dread" (p. 1787). What causes intense fear and panic is considered to be terror. Chambers (1993) states further that terrorism is "organized system of violence and intimidation, esp. for political ends" (p. 1787). The word, "terrorist" refers to the person that commits acts of organized violence and intimidation for political or even other ends such as religious and economic. It can also be used as an adjective to refer to destruction and harm caused by terrorists such as when you say, "terrorist violence," "terrorist incident," etc.

With the term, "terrorism" defined, it is important to define the term, "culture." Chi (2013), cites another of his previous works to assert that: "culture is the total way of life of a people or the way people do their things that differentiate them from other people and are transmitted from one generation to the other" (p. 2). In Chaturvedi (2006), "culture is the sum-total of a people's way of life…. which manifests itself in art, literature, religion, fashion, manners, modes of living and ideas" (p. 75). It is important to note here that culture can be divided into material and non-material aspects. Material aspects of culture are those aspects that can be seen, touched, physically felt, and are perceptible to the five senses of eye, skin, ear, nose, and tongue. Material aspects of culture include buildings, farmlands, streams, food, means of transportation, clothes, money, trees, agricultural products, religious shrines, palaces, etc. Non-material aspects

of culture are those aspects that cannot be perceived by the physical senses but are perceptible in the mind and they include people's values, norms, ethics, philosophies, theologies, spiritual beliefs, concepts, etc. It is important to state here that a people's culture is its heritage. Centre for Heritage and Society of the University of Massachusetts (n.d) states that: "Heritage is the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture. Most important, it is the range of contemporary activities, meanings, and behaviours that we draw from them."

The destruction of cultural heritage in Nigeria by terrorists either intentionally or unintentionally is immoral and unacceptable. Terrorism itself is immoral as it harms and destroys humans, the environment and civilization. Terrorism has great negative impact on the natural environment as it destroys the environment and thus impedes eco-tourism. The natural environment provides many benefits for humans, one of which is tourism. When the environment or places carrying historic cultural memory is destroyed those places that are suitable for ecological tourism are also despoiled. This certainly impedes tourist visitation to those places. This paper argues that terrorist cultural heritage destruction (TCHD) is unethical and that ending it will help to promote eco-tourism.

Before defining ecotourism, it is crucial to understand what is tourism or a tourist. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014) defines a tourist (or overnight visitor) as: a visitor whose trip includes an overnight stay. For the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the activities of visitors are what are referred to as tourism. The United Nations (2010) says:

> A visitor is a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure, or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. Tourism refers to the activity of visitors (p. 10).

With that definition in place, it is proper now to define, "eco-tourism." Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin as cited by New World Encyclopaedia (2016) defines it as:

> That form of environmentally responsible tourism that involves travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the object of enjoying, admiring, and studying the nature (the scenery, wild plants, and animals), as well as any cultural aspect (both past and present) found in these areas, through a process which promotes conservation, has a low impact on the environment and on culture and favours the active and socioeconomically beneficial involvement of local communities.

Wikipedia (2017) defines ecotourism as environmentally responsible and sustainable visit to fragile and pristine undisturbed natural places. The Wikipedia (2017) indicates further that the goal is to promote environmental education, conserve nature, enhance respect for human rights and people's culture, personal growth, and economic empowerment of the people in the area. Merriam-Webster (2017), defines it as: "the practice of touring natural habitats in a manner meant to minimize ecological impact." Manatee EcoTours (2020) quotes World Conservation Union to aver that ecotourism is: "Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples." New World Encyclopaedia (2016) cites Martha Honey who states that the characteristics of ecotourism include: travel to natural destinations, minimal impact on those places, building of environmental awareness, provision of direct financial benefits for conservation, and economic empowerment.

Having done the conceptual clarifications, the reality of TCHD in Nigeria is now discussed. Pertinent questions to ask are: is it true that TCHD is taking place in Nigeria? If it is taking, who is responsible or what factors are responsible? One of the persons or groups of persons responsible is the purview of this paper.

THE REALITY OF TERRORIST CULTURAL HERITAGE DESTRUCTION IN NIGERIA

Terrorists' groups and movements that use terroristic tactics are in operation in the country. The concern of the paper is not to discuss the origin,

history or other sociological factors responsible for terrorism in the country. It will suffice to describe the cultural heritage destruction that has taken place in the country. A prominent terrorist group in the country that has engaged in destruction of cultural heritage is Boko Haram. This group has destroyed both human lives and properties. Human lives as known are of incalculable value. Any loss of a human life is a loss of great gifts and potentials that could be of benefits to society. When properties are destroyed great cultural heritage of great value are equally lost. Boko Haram as the name indicates rejects western education and western values, even though they make use of western cultural heritages such as the internet, cell phones, guns, vehicles, and other modern means of communication. In Nigeria, Boko Haram has bombed places such as the police headquarters in Abuja, the United Nations building in Abuja, etc.

Among the places that Boko Haram has devastated is the ancient cultural heritage in Sukur. In 1999, the UNESCO named it as a world cultural heritage. Lau (2015) has shown that Sukur is an ancient settlement in which iron smelting technology, a flourishing trade, and a well-organized chieftaincy/political institution existed dating back many centuries. But as Lau (2015), reveals in December 2014, Boko Haram entered Sukur and destroyed and killed leading to the loss of lives, destruction of thatched houses, granary covers, destruction of the residence of the chief, and looting of fresh harvest. This has led to famine and loss of ancient cultural heritage. The destruction of Sukur kingdom, the first UNESCO world heritage site in Nigeria located in Adamawa State was confirmed by Saidu Audu, an official of the Adamawa State Museum and Monuments Commission (Garba 2017). Garba (2017), reports that the Sukur kingdom dates back to the 6th century and that the site was attacked by Boko Haram in September 2014. The Chairman of the Madagali Local Government Area in Adamawa State, as cited by Garba (2017), reveals that a great number of international visitors from Europe, Asia and America used to visit for tourism.

The destruction of the viable Sukur ecotourist site has led to loss of income, some of the heritages, and human persons who worked in the site. It is painful to note that the destructions caused by Boko Haram has led to the internal displacement of millions of Nigerians in the North East, many others have left as refugees to neighbouring countries, and many others have died. In all the places that terrorists operate in Nigeria their activities and movements have negative consensus for human habitation and the natural environment. The fact is that human loss is a cultural loss. It is humans who create culture and preserve cultural heritage. In furtherance of these points the paper now examines the situation and impact of TCHD on ecotourism.

The Situation and Impact of TCHD on Ecotourism

The situation of ecotourism in Nigeria is indeed very poor. There are many potential ecotourist destinations but they are poorly utilized. Dorothy (2013) indicates that potential ecotourist sites include: Chad basin, Old Oyo Park, Kamuku Game Reserve, Cross River, Kainji Lake, Gashaka, and Okomu as listed by the Nigerian Park Authority. Ajibade, Ayodele and Adetor (2013), indicate that in a period of sixteen years running to 2006, only 39.158 tourists visited the Kainji Lake National Park. Nigerian parks that ought to be important ecotourist attractions are poorly patronized. Falade (2008) writes that:

Despite tremendous differences in size and management of protected areas, cultures, types of ecotourism enterprises (like La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resorts), and government involvement (like Obudu Cattle Ranch, etc), in most cases, ecotourism and nature- based tourism have not lived up to expectations in Nigeria. Nevertheless, they remain a potential avenue for conservation.

The significance of ecotourism to a country like Nigeria cannot be overestimated. Dorothy (2013) writes that; ecotourism creates employment for both skilled and unskilled persons, it generates income that can be used form nature protection/preservation of tangible cultural heritage. Because ecotourism is poorly underdeveloped in Nigeria, the effects of terrorism on the industry are often not discussed or simply neglected. But the fact is that terrorism contributes to its underdevelopment as it creates an unsecure environment for both business and tourism. In recommending solutions to the problem of underdevelopment of ecotourism, Idumah et al.

(2009), writes that: "adequate funding of the ecotourism sector, massive extension and enlightenment programme, security of lives and properties of prospective tourists, provision of infrastructure, among others," will help in improving the industry.

The issue of security of lives and properties cannot be overstated. Without security of lives and properties ecotourism is greatly impeded. This is why terrorism is a big threat and ought to be stopped to promote ecotourism. In examining the ecotourism potential of Kabuki Park in Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State, Osunsina, Ogunjinmi & Meduan (2008), note that both social disturbance and conflict are major factors that have reduced tourists coming to the park and unless these are eradicated the park will remain underdeveloped. Falade (2008), writes that ethnic conflicts, airline terrorism and personal safety considerations are among the many factors that impede ecotourism growth in Nigeria and worldwide. Nobody wants to be killed in the process of embarking on ecotourism. Because of this people run away from tourist sites that are prune to terrorism.

It is in the light of the above that this paper shows that terrorism which causes social conflicts and disturbances is not good for ecotourism. TCHD has serious impact on ecotourism. This should be obvious. Ecotourism takes place within the context of culture and human realities. The very idea of ecotourism reveals that it is humans who are taking to tour and visiting the tourist sites. It is humans who also work in those tourist sites and provides various services that make the tourist site to function. Ecotourist sites cannot function without tour guides.

 On many levels terrorism is bad for ecotourism. It drives fear and panic into people's minds and hearts. This being the case people cannot even pass through the roads to those ecotourist sites. During times of terrorism insecurity prevails in the land. People abandon their towns and cities because of terrorist attacks as is happening in places in Nigeria's North East. In search for safety and to be free from danger and threat to their lives not many people will be thinking of visiting ecotourist sites. It is recognized that human's first need and instinct is that of survival. When this need has been meant, then other needs can be meant. Terrorism causes big loses for ecotourist centres. Revenue of the sites goes down. It will affect the maintenance of the facilities of those sites. Terrorism as is being noted has grievous impact for the tourism industry. Oketola (2015), states that the following sites and places "such as the famous Argungu Fishing Festival, the Yankari Games Reserve, the Mambila Plateau, Othman Dan Fodio Tomb…the palace of the Emir of Kano… Kainji Lake National Park, Gashaka Gumti, Okomu, Chad basin, Kamuku" are poorly visited because of insecurity. On the other hand, Oketola notes that the "Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River State, Osun Oshogbo Festival and Eyo Festival in Lagos are well visited as they are presently free from terrorist attacks. The fact that the Bolivia Football Federation called off the March 26, 2015 international friendly game against Nigeria's Super Eagles over the fear of Boko Haram is a strong pointer to the dilemma visitors could face when contemplating to visit Nigeria. In fact, security alerts advising tourists against visiting Nigeria have been issued several times by Western and Asian countries where most tourists visiting the country come from. They have been asked to stay off the North-Eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe, which are susceptible to terror attacks.

Another grave impact of TCHD for ecotourism is the one that has to do with non-material aspects of culture. The destruction of reduction in human lives that should visit or work in ecotourist sites brings about the destruction also of the non-tangible aspects of culture. The non-tangible aspects of culture or non-material aspects was defined to include a people's beliefs, philosophies, theologies, spiritualities, values, knowledge, and ideas. Many of these, if not all, are in people's minds and hearts. Unless in places where they have been written down on paper or other storage processes. The death of people may lead to extinction of some non-material aspects of culture.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of ecotourism is that the tourist contributes money or finance to aid in the conservation of the fragile environment and to empower the people for sustainable economic development. This being the case, ecotourism is seriously impeded by TCHD. Who will contribute the money for nature conservation and economic empowerment of the

people if ecotourist are driven away as a result of fear arising from insecurity from terrorist attacks? The human beings whose economy needs to be empowered by ecotourist are human beings also. They themselves can run away from their localities as a result of terrorist activities. Terrorists have no respect for cultural artifacts and other heritages other than their own. Look at what happened in Syria and Iraq. The Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIS) have entered into ancient valuable cultural sites recognized by UNESCO and destroyed them. Terrorists do not value other people's religious beliefs other than their own. In Mali, terrorists have destroyed as noted by Worldwide Movement for Human Rights (2016), ancient mausoleums and mosques in Timbuktu that harboured ancient culture and history. If terrorist succeed in totally destroying local cultures of the people where ecotourist sites are located, there will be no culture to respect or protect.

Moral Imperative of Ending TCHD

Terrorist cultural heritage destruction (TCHD) is a grave moral evil. It is not a natural evil. It is a human act that is carried out deliberately and intentionally to destroy cultural heritage. Much of the destruction of cultural heritage caused by terrorists in the world is calculated before it is carried out. Think of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The group deliberately went to ancient sites and destroyed valuable cultural artifacts. They looted some to sell in the black market to make money for their campaigns. The destruction of mausoleums and mosques in Timbuktu was deliberate by radical jihadists. The destruction of the United Nations buildings in Abuja by Boko Haram was deliberate. Boko Haram saw the United Nations buildings as part of western civilization and attacked it. Boko Haram goes into towns and villages and pillages the villages. They do not care about the lives, properties, and valuable cultural artifacts in those places. It is well acknowledged that the possession of cultural heritage by a group is a fundamental group right and that right ought to be protected by individuals, groups, and governments. The United Nations (2007), in articles 11 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms that: "Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop

the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature" (art 11). This is inclusive of their natural landscape and environment.

In terms of ethics, any intentional or deliberate violation of the rights of others is immoral. What destroys the authentic values of a community or group is immoral. Cultural heritage is the value of a people. A people's cultural heritage such as their sacred sites, religious artifacts, landscapes, philosophies, theologies, and beliefs are carriers of their history, life, values, etc. To destroy any aspect of cultural heritage is to destroy a valuable aspect of the life of a people.

In the process of the destruction of cultural heritages, terrorists often destroy human lives. The world's cultural heritages in terms of tourist sites, ecotourist sites, location of the place of celebration of cultural festivals, sacred groves, and artifacts are not located in space or outside the earth. Most of the cultural heritages are located in the vicinity of cities, towns, villages, forest, or wilderness near cities. It is humans who create culture and are responsible for that culture. Even when it comes to ecotourist sites they are linked with people. It is humans who take care of the sites as tour guides, gardeners, conservationists, hostels, and other facilities for people to be able to visit those sites. The human lives that are destroyed by terrorists are a great loss to ecotourism. The population of those to visit these sites is depleted. The workers in these sites are also affected as some of them are killed in the process of terrorists' attacks. Human life is valuable and people have a right to life. It is immoral to take another human life outside the legal provisions of the law. Taking another human life except in recognized cases of self-defence, a just war, punishment from a law court; is criminal and is a grave moral evil. The right to life is a fundamental human right that ought to be respected. But terrorist do not care about this right to life. They waste and destroy lives without thinking. Nearly all religious philosophies affirm the right to life. They see it as a sacred value and that humans have dignity. No one has the right to take another person's life.

Christian philosophy and ethics teach that humans are created in God's image and likeness. All humans are equal and are to be treated with love and respect. In Hindu philosophy, all life including that of humans, and even animals are sacred. Non-violence towards plants, animals, and humans is a fundamental value. All life participates in and is a manifestation of *Bramah*, the Supreme Being. It is painful to note that though there is this sacred value for life in Hinduism, yet the caste system is practiced, in which some persons are condemned to the lower classes of society and are actually discriminated against. This should not be seen as an endorsement of devaluation of some human life. The *Agori* philosophy has arisen in India to criticize the caste system and to affirm the equality and value of all life. The point is that Hinduism affirms the protection of life. Islamic teaching and philosophy also endorse the sacredness of life and the need to protect life. The terrorists that misuse Islamic religious texts are not to be seen as the mainstream of Islam. They are on the fringes and are condemned by many Muslims. Islamic philosophy teaches tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, and peace. Life is also a sacred value in African Philosophy and culture. In African culture life is a great gift from the creator and practices such as murder, suicide, kidnapping, and even homicide are condemned. Hospitality, solidarity, and togetherness are cherished values in African culture. The destruction of human lives and the devastation of the resources to sustain that life by terrorists are evil and abominable. It is not an acceptable practice in many philosophies, religions, and culture.

It has also been noted that TCHD has grave economic and financial implications. Finance and economic empowerment are an important aspect of the people that live in localities where ecotourist centres are local. One great benefit of ecotourism is that those who visit ecotourist centres contribute to the local economy through their financial donations, and other fees that they pay to keep those centres running. The lives and wellbeing of people in those localities are improved. This in turn contributes to the national economy. When ecotourist centres are deprived of funds as a result of terrorist attacks, the lives of people are hampered. There are people who work in ecotourist centres and depend on this income as their source of livelihood. Humans have a right to food, water, and shelter among many others. For them to be deprived of this is immoral.

This paper wishes to state clearly that TCHD is a crime against humanity. It is also a war crime. This is clearly stated by the United Nations. The fact is that terrorists have declared war on society and its culture. Terrorists are willing to do battle anytime. The terrorist group called *Boko Haram* does not discriminate between soldiers (combatants) and innocent civilians. All are targets for them. In the history of war and in ethics there are conditions for a war to be moral and just. The war that *Boko Haram* and other terrorist groups are fighting against society cannot be a just war. This is so because it cannot meet the criteria of the just war. The criteria for a war to be just are: the war must be just, it must be declared by a lawful authority, proportional means must be used in combat, and care must be taken to ensure that civilians as much as possible are not harmed. Boko Haram and other terrorist groups care nothing for these principles. Not to talk of environmental wellbeing, they care nothing for that.

CONCLUSION

It has been clearly shown from the above that terrorism is not good for the tourist industry in Nigeria. It has also been revealed that TCHD is immoral. It destroys cultures, environment, and people. Terrorism is a grave danger to the tourist industry. It is imperative that society must work to eliminate it totally. If this is done, it will help in building a better Nigerian society.

The goal of the paper was not to examine every issue related to tourism or terrorism. That will be beyond a short paper like this. The goal was to show that terrorism in its various ramifications hinders ecotourism. It was also to highlight the fact from an ethical perspective that society and individuals have a moral responsibility to end it. This is why the immorality of TCHD was highlighted. That highlight clearly reveals that indeed TCHD is a grave evil. It should be eradicated. It should not be ignored. The ecotourist industry is important for the country as the paper has revealed. Philosophers, moralists, ethicists, and others should ensure that TCHD is engaged first and foremost theoretically and them people's mindsets will be transformed to engage in practical actions to end it.

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