

## **IMPACT OF SCULPTURE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Sculpture is one of the oldest art forms. Sculpture is the branch of the visual arts that operates in three dimensions. It is one of the plastic arts. Sculpture has existed as landmark, monument, architectural embellishment, cultural symbol, and independent aesthetic object. This traditional notion of sculpture serves as a point from which subsequent modifications of sculpture for the protection of our environment and tourism development. The thrust of this paper is to highlight the significance role of sculpture to environment protection and tourism development. The primary objective of this paper is to unmask the positive impact of sculpture on environmental protection and tourism development in Nigeria. Based on the theoretical nature of the article investigation is based on qualitative method. The data were collected from primary sources of the authors personal experience, practice and observation and from secondary sources like books, journal article and internet materials. Data from these sources were thoroughly, examined, reviewed and analysed for effective result. The paper unravels the prevailing problems facing the practice of sculptural art, the protection of our environment and tourism development due to the lukewarm attitude of most Nigerians towards sculptural practice. The poor maintenance of culture which has bedeviled the country has affected our environmental protection and tourism developments in Nigeria. The paper in the premise of the recommendations and conclusion of this study submits that the sculptural art is lucrative and employable genre of the visual arts that can enhance and facilitated the reduction of unemployment situation in Nigeria. Sculptors are self-employed artists as well as employer of labour. The adequate attention should be given to sculptural art and sculptors should be supported with soft loan without collateral and interest to start their own business and our maintenance cultural should be improved. This will enhance the improvement of our serene and friendly environment and tourism development of our dear country.

**Key words:** sculpture, environmental protection, tourism development and Nigeria

## Introduction

Art is the basic of the society and its various genres could be used at various spheres of life for human development, societal growth and transformation. Art tells so much about the people or societies. The human race would have been unaware of anything in the universe without art. Sculpture as one of the sub-genres of art is the branch of the visual arts that operates in two or three dimensions. The two-dimensional sculptural pieces are those art works that could be attached to textile or used as accessories to enhance one's look. These could be masks, heads or images of legends worn in the neck in form of necklace (The Arthur M. Sackler Museum). This thesis will focus on the three-dimensional sculptural art which, according to Hutter (2014), has been characterized as "the art of representing observed or imagined objects in solid materials and in three dimensions". Sculpture is one of the oldest art forms, clearly embracing artifacts found in the caves of prehistoric times as well as objects produced in all subsequent cultures. Public sculpture has existed as a landmark, monument, architectural embellishment, cultural symbol, and independent aesthetic object. This traditional notion of sculpture serves as a point from which subsequent modifications of sculpture for the protection of our environment and tourism development.

Today, sculpture embraces many new forms representing new technologies and materials resulting in installation sculptures, light-based sculptures, and other forms of sculptural expression. In at least some of its manifestations, public sculpture offers a bridge between cultural particulars and the universal, which can be appreciated by all persons irrespective of their cultural origin (Carter, 2010). One of the most common purposes of sculpture is in some form of association with religion. Cult images are common in many cultures, though they are often not the colossal statues of deities. When these sculptural pieces or objects have been reconstructed, they tell us a great deal about the life and customs of the people who made them (Andrews, 1983). Sculptural arts are made in consonance to the sculptor's imagination, purpose, vision, inspiration, background and the client's choice. Sculptural arts are most successful when based on implicitly or explicitly shared meanings between the artist and the community, and consist of actions or works executed on behalf of the community as a whole. (Carter, 2010).

In sub-Saharan Africa, sculpture is made and used for particular, practical purposes. In many instances it is used to mark events or stages of life, like fertility, birth, transition, death. For example, among the Yoruba in Nigeria, Ibeji twin-figurines (from *ibi* first born and *aji* two) are produced at the birth of someone's twins (a common occurrence in this ethnic group). Ikenga figures embody protective spirits for worldly success and to protect the household. Ancestor figures remind the people of those gone. Other carvings are used for initiation and coming-of-age rituals, for harvest festivals and celebrations, for funeral occasions (Roese n.d.). Sculpture typically persists in a fixed and determined space becoming more or less permanent features of the environment. Whereas, the spectator has a choice to avoid a theater or musical performance in a public space, sculpture and architectural pieces remain accessible at all times to people using the environment (Carter, 2010). In his affirmative view Green (2012) states that sculptural arts in public or open place are free. There are no tickets. People do not have to dress up. You can view it alone or in groups. It is open to everyone". Sculptural arts enhance tourism potential, cultural development and economic improvement of a given place.

The thrust of this paper is to highlight the significant role of sculpture to environment protection and tourism development. The primary objective of this paper is to unmask the positive impact of sculpture on environmental protection and tourism development in Nigeria. The paper will attempt to unravel the prevailing problems facing the practice of sculptural art as well as envisage the future of sculptural practice in Nigeria on the premise of the recommendations and conclusion of this study.

Based on the theoretical nature of the article investigation is based on qualitative method. The data were collected from primary sources of the authors personal experience, practice and observation and from secondary sources like books, journal article and internet materials. Data from these sources were thoroughly, examined, reviewed and analysed for effective result. This investigation will be done under the following sub-headings: Conceptual definitions of sculpture, environmental protection and tourism development, impact of sculpture on environmental protection, tourism development, conclusion and recommendations.

### **Conceptual definitions:**

#### **Sculpture**

The term sculpture came into use in the 14th century. It is derived from Latin word *sculptura* meaning "to carve, engrave," as well as *scalpere* which means "to carve, cut. (Online Etymology Dictionary, Douglas Harper, 2010). Therefore, it could be argued that sculpture is the art of carving, modeling, welding, or otherwise producing figurative or abstract works of art in three dimensions, as in relief, intaglio, or in the round. the art of making figures or designs in relief or the round by carving wood, moulding plaster, etc, or casting metals, etc

Sculpture is the branch of the visual arts that operates in three dimensions. It is one of the plastic arts. Durable sculptural processes originally used carving (the removal of material) and modelling (the addition of material, as clay), in stone, metal, ceramics, wood and other materials but, since modernism, shifts in sculptural process led to an almost complete freedom of materials and process. A wide variety of materials may be worked by removal such as carving, assembled by welding or modelling, or molded, or cast ( The Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 2007). Sculpture is seldom one of the plastic arts and very durable because of the materials used in its construction. Sculptural processes originally used carving (the removal of material) and modelling (the addition of material, as clay), in stone, metal, ceramics, wood and other materials but, since modernism, shifts in sculptural process led to an almost complete freedom of materials and process. A wide variety of materials may be worked by removal such as carving, assembled by welding or modelling, or molded, or cast. Today's extensive inventory of materials has encouraged the proliferation in every direction of the type of forms that an artist can make. An artist can work with thin metal wires, with massive concrete, with projected light, or with sheets of transparent glass, as well as with older materials, clay, stone, wood, or wax (Andrews, 1983:2). The basic difference of various type of sculptures are in the round, free-standing sculpture, such as statues, not attached (except possibly at the base) to any other surface, and the various types of relief, which are at least partly attached to a background surface. Relief is often classified by the degree of projection from the wall into low or bas-relief,

high relief, and sometimes an intermediate mid-relief. Relief is the usual sculptural medium for large figure groups and narrative subjects, which are difficult to accomplish in the round, and is the typical technique used both for architectural sculpture, which is attached to buildings, and for small-scale sculpture decorating other objects, as in much pottery, metalwork and jewellery. Relief sculpture may also decorate steles, upright slabs, usually of stone, often also containing inscriptions.

### **Concept of Environmental Protection**

In the context of this paper environment is the place where human beings live, near and far, their home, sharing same with plants and animals. While environmental protection consists of the set of measures that are taken at public and private levels to care for our natural habitat, preserve it from deterioration and contamination. Prevent or limit the felling of trees, give better treatment to the waste, prohibit the hunting of animals in danger of extinction, reduce the consumption of energy, pesticides, fuels and other pollutants, minimize noise, do not throw garbage, recycle it. The rapid population growth and the expansion of agriculture and industry have contributed to environmental deterioration and climate change all over the world, Africa inclusive therefore there is need to take adequate care of the environment, protect it, because if we continue to deteriorate it, as so far, this precious treasure that ensures our existence, succumb. Karamanos (2001); Blackman (2008); Solomon (2010) in their individual investigations, posit that environmental protection is a practice of protecting the natural environment on individual, organizational or governmental levels, for the benefit of both the natural environment and humans. Due to the pressures of population and technology, the biophysical environment is being degraded, sometimes permanently. This has been recognized, and governments have begun placing restraints on activities that cause environmental degradation. Since the 1960s, activity of environmental movements has created awareness of the various environmental issues and it need to be protected or prevented through various means and spheres of life.

### **The Concept of Tourism Development**

In discussion the impact of sculpture on the growth development and sustenance a people's tourism and culture, it is pertinent to dwell on the conceptual meaning of tourism, culture and development in relation to this discourse. Tourism is influenced by tourism potentials which are those extraordinary natural, cultural, art and other resources in a particular place, places or country serving as tourist sites or attractions, interesting and appealing to the sight and auditory organs of human beings (Akam and Bassey, 2014). In attempt of tracing the origin of the concept Akam and Bassey (2014) opine that from etymological point of view according to William F.Theobald tourism derived its name from the word *tour* which originated from the Latin word, *tornare* and the Greek term *torinos* meaning 'a lathe or circle; the movement around a central point or axis'. This meaning changed in modern English to represent 'one's turn'. The suffix *-ism* is defined as 'an action or process; typical behaviour or quality', while the suffix *-ist* denotes 'one that performs a given action'. When the word *tour* and the suffixes *-ism* and *-ist* are combined, they suggest the action of movement around a circle. One can argue that a circle represents a starting point, which ultimately returns back to its beginning. It is like a circle, a tour

representing a journey which is like a round trip, that is, the act of leaving and then returning to the original starting point, and therefore, one who takes such a journey can be called a tourist. Tourism could be defined as any travel made by an individuals or a group of individuals leading to spending some hours or nights away from ones home either within or outside ones' country for pleasure, leisure, business, education, health, religion or any other purpose but not for any paid employment. While the person or persons on such trip is/are tourist(s) (Akam and Bassey, 2014). In giving a definition of tourism Omeje (2006) asserts that; "tourism is the art or practice of travelling, temporarily out of one's place of abode, is a social phenomenon". Okpoko and Okpoko (2002) posit that: "tourism can be regarded simply as any temporary movement of people; either individually or in group from one place to another with the aim of achieving some desired objective". Tourism is the business of providing and marketing services and facilities for pleasure travelers (Nona, 1993 as cited in Ibimilua, 2009). It is a form of recreation that requires leaving home for some other places, whether near or far (Olokesusi, 1989).

Tourism is one of the major sources of income generation worldwide and it can expedite of in all facets of human endeavour. Most governments at various are able to generate huge capital for development of the society. Tourism has been discovered to be a very potent instrument for sustainable development towards community development due to it numerous benefits and income generation from tourism activities. Tunde (2012) states that hence, governments of many developing countries have begun to commit huge financial resources to the sector. Tourism is a means of rural and urban development, employment generation at all levels of government in developed Nations such as Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia and the United States (Hall and Jenkins, 1995 in Tunde, 2012). Omeje (2006: 73) submits that globally, tourism has been identified as tool for rural emancipation from poverty, alleviation. This position was strengthened by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an arm of the World Bank which identified the World Tourism organization as an invaluable tool for poverty alleviation, reduction in rural-urban migration, and provision of social infrastructural facilities in rural areas and creation of wealth among which employment and better standard of living are involved.

The term development, therefore, may not always mean growth; it does, however, always imply change. Akam and Bassey (2014) are of the opinion that development is an aspect of progression, increasing, improvement and advancement in every sector of any country or in an individual life for a better society and improve living condition of the people. Development in their view of encompasses continuous change in variety of aspects of human society. Development is a process that increases choices. It means new options, diversification, thinking about apparent issues differently and anticipating change (Christenson et.al., 1989). Frank and Smith (1999) posit that:

The term development often carries with it an assumption of growth and expansion. During the industrial era, development was strongly connected to increased speed, volume and size. Many are currently questioning the concept of growth for numerous reasons. There is a realization that more is not always better. Increasingly, there is respect for reducing outside dependencies and lowering levels of consumerism.

Development involves change, improvement and vitality-a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity, attitudes, the function of institutions and the quality of life. It is the creation of wealth-wealth meaning the things people value, not just dollars (Shaffer, 1989). What are the significance impact sculptural arts has in influencing the positive change, improvement and transform our tourism and cultural heritage becomes a topic of intellectual discourse as it will be unveil in this thesis.

### **Impact of Sculpture on Environmental Protection, Tourism Development**

The significance role of sculptural art in the protection of environment lies in what could be best described as environmental art. Environmental art is an umbrella term for a range of artistic practices encompassing both historical approaches to nature in art and more recent ecological and politically-motivated types of works. The term "environmental art" often encompasses "ecological" concerns but is not specific to them. It acknowledges the early history of this movement (which was often more about art ideas than environmental ones) as well as art with more activist concerns and art which primarily celebrates an artist's connection with nature using natural materials Bower (2010). In related opinion Weintraub (2012); Czarruthers ( n.d ) assert that the term "environmental art" is used in a variety of different contexts: it can be used to refer to art describing the natural world, art that celebrates personal engagement with the natural world ("art in nature"), and to the practices of ecological artists, whose work directly addresses environmental issues ("ecological art" or "eco-art") through educating people about the natural world, or intervening in and restoring the natural world (St Bower (2010; Steinman, n.d) Rahmani (2013), Ecological artist, Aviva Rahmani believes that "Ecological Art is an art practice, often in collaboration with scientists, city planners, architects and others, that results in direct intervention in environmental degradation. Often, the artist is the lead agent in that practice or crusade for environmental protection through artistic works. For the purpose of this work environmental sculpture and its impact to environmental protection, tourism and cultural development in Nigeria





*Sculpture works in Cross River State, Nigeria*  
Source: [www.crossriverstate.gov.ng/tourism](http://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng/tourism)





*Sculpture works at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria  
Picture by: Reality Digital Studio*



The Nok Settlement located in Jabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State

Source: <http://www.northernnigeriatourism.com/states/kaduna.html>

Environmental sculpture creates the environment for the viewer. A frequent trait of larger environmental sculptures is that one can actually enter or pass through the sculpture and be partially or completely surrounded by it. Thus, Galston (n.d) is of the view that an environmental sculptor plans a piece from the very beginning in relationship to its surroundings. The site is a catalyst, becoming part of the creative process. This is quite different from a Nevelson sculpture which can usually be moved from place to place, like a conventional sculpture, without losing its meaning and effectiveness. The environmental



sculpture entails the idea that the piece also functions to alter or permeate the existing environment or even to create a new environment in which the viewer is invited to participate. The finished sculpture and site become one integrated unit, working together to create a unified mood or atmosphere. Investment in arts and culture is “creative place making”-which means using the arts to develop an area where people want to live, work and congregate (Galston (n.d); Watson, 2013).

Sculpture lives, because of the way it interacts with nature and the environment where it is placed. The play of sunlight throughout the day and the onset of twilight until finally the shadows of darkness fall upon it, create different emotive looks for the sculpture, causing it to be perceived differently by the viewer. Too much light and the piece is washed out, too little light (or too heavy shadow) and the piece can become washed out as well. However, in such cases, one may need to only change viewing angle to gain new perspective on the piece. It can be an emotional and moving experience for the viewer or nothing at all. Much depends on the eye of the beholder and their state of mind when viewing the piece. Sculpture also lives because we can interact with it, like we interact with the solid objects of the world around us...trees, rocks, waterfalls, buildings, or our friends and family. (<http://willpettee.blogspot.com/2010/08/importance-of-sculpture.html>). Ikwuegbu (2014: 156-157 ) argues that; “human beings use art and language to communicate, ideas, feelings, emotions, social realities and more in the society ... it reveal the way people shape their mores, values, beliefs, thoughts and emotion”. Art in general sculpture in particular is meant for the preservation, promotion and presentation or depicting a true culture of a given people and improve tourism potential of a nation.

Sculptural art works are symbolic in nature and they communicate non-verbally the people on the value of environmental prevention, tourism substance and culture development through the sculptural pieces. Akam and Bassey (2014) argue that besides appealing to the mind of audience and beautification of our environment, sculpture as visual art plays significance role in the prevention of our environment from hazardous materials that could be harmful to human beings and the entire environment .This could be done through proper waste management and recycling to enhance the prevention of natural disaster. Significantly, sculpture can protect our environment from degradation, tourism and cultural development by helping in the keeping our neat and friendly through recycling of environmental waste such as metal, iron, cans, copper wire, plastic, bottle tops/cock, scraps, and aluminum for the production of sculptural works. These wastes if left without proper management and recycling, they will cause global conflicts such as climate change, acid rain, flood disaster just to mention a few. Tourism strive more in a serene environment. Nwanna (2014:3-4) posit that that; “environmental arts are not only created to fit unto a particular environment but they are also environmental friendly and care for the natural environment... Environmental sculptures are three dimensional works of art created to improve the aesthetic conditions and protection of the environment”. Sculptural artists do not just use their creative expertise for environmental beatification but also in the protection of human race from environmental disasters (Akam and Bassey, 2014). Igboamazu (2014: 12-13) avows that sculptural arts have greater impact in environmental prevention through waste management and recycling. He uses El Anatsui’s art work *sasa* to buttress his point in the following words:

The significant quality of *sasa* is in its construction with industrial waste materials-caps of bottle, and sardine tins flattered and stitched together with copper wire. These items were picked from drinking places and trash bins thrown away recklessly by business operators and domestic consumers... The contribution of *sasa* to sustainable environment is immense for what would have happened to thousands of those materials whose recyclability status were unutilized by a generation who seem ignorant about the peril being imposed on their environment.

Sculptural pieces are precious to the society for the environmental protection, beautification of our cities, towns and public places for tourism attraction, cultural identity and preservation of the people heritage by using its non-verbal language to communicate to different audience in different time and place on topical issue(s). Images of environmental disaster or degradation could be created in sculptural arts through the imagination and creative of the sculptor to educate, enlighten and sensitize the audience on the danger associated with unprotected environment. Akam and Bassey (2014) affirms that such visual art works will definitely create mental picture in the mind of audience as well as change their mindset towards embracing the campaign for environmental protection because sculpture is non-verbal communicative genre of visual. In relation to this argument Ikwuegbu (2014:158) opines that:

Sculptors use signs to communicate to spectators through the finishing, texture, smoothness, curvatures, adopted to created sensation, which makes the spectator to move towards the object to feels its tactile qualities, since the meaning of signs may be ascertained by sensory means, it is a physical thing or event whose function is to indicate other things.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The sculptural art is lucrative and employable genre of the visual arts that can enhance and facilitate the reduction of unemployment situation in Nigeria. Sculptors are self-employed artists as well as employer of labour. All over the world art in general and sculptural art has contributed in no small major to economic development of many countries. Watson (2013) contends that creative businesses play a huge part in the California economy. These businesses comprise the arts, design, digital media and other fields that utilize a creative workforce. More than 134,000 creative businesses employ 500,000 Californians, with another 100,000 freelance or part-time creative workers in the mix. In addition, the Golden State's 4,553 arts organizations contribute \$3.56 billion annually to its economy. In fact, this can be replicated in Nigeria if only adequate attention is given to art in general and sculptural practice in particular. Despite the unprecedented impact of sculptural arts and its practice to the protection of our environment for viable tourism and cultural development, this genre of the visual art has faced a lot of relegations and lukewarm attitude from the society. It is on this premise that the paper recommends as following:

- The adequate attention should be given to sculptural art and sculptors should be should be support with soft loan without collateral and interest to start their own business.

- Poor maintenance culture is one the biggest problem facing Nigeria and it has affected the sculptural arts. Most sculptural pieces are either poorly maintain or not maintain at all. Sculptures are often painted, but commonly lose their paint to time, or restorers. Many different painting techniques have been used in making sculpture, including tempera, oil painting, gilding, house paint, aerosol, enamel and sandblasting. (The Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 2007). This poor maintenance has negative impact on our tourism sector and cultural heritage. Because when tourists visit any our tourist sites and discovered that sculptural pieces are unkempt, they will be discouraged to make a return trip. The bad news of our unkempt tourist site, artifacts, monument or sculptural pieces will be spread across the globe to discourage potential tourists from visiting our tourist sites. This no doubt will affect income generation from the tourism sector. Therefore, the paper recommends that, all sculptural pieces across Nigeria should be maintained regularly by weeding of grasses within the sculptural art. Any sculptural work which painting is fading out should be repainted. Also beautiful and decorative tents should be built to house some sculptural work that might be affected by the weather during wet or dry season.
- National Commission for Museum and Monuments in conjunction with Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Culture and National Orientation as well as Ministry of Environment and Law Enforcement Agencies to ensure that our sculptural arts well maintain and owners these tourist sites where our cultural heritage of sculptures who default should be brought to book irrespective of the position occupied by the person, agency or organization.
- Individual, groups or cooperate organizations should contribute in sponsoring the erecting and maintenance of sculptural arts in our various villages, cities and town. They can take the responsibility of maintaining the existing sculptural pieces like what some corporate organizations and banks are doing as part of their corporate responsibilities. This will enhance the improvement of our serene and friendly environment and tourism development of our dear country.

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