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## **Community-Based Tourism Development In Selected Villages In Enugu State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the tourism potentials of Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu villages with a view to harnessing their potentials for sustainable tourism development. These villages were chosen because of the plenitude of tourist attractions (natural and cultural), which they offer; their proximity to the state capital and other valuable opportunities. The paper uses ethnographic method to elicit information and analyze the data collected from respondents. It is contended that a well executed community-based tourism (CBT) will not only create employment opportunities in the selected villages, but will also raise their standard of living.

### **Introduction**

One of the major challenges facing the modern world is poverty. In Nigeria, high level of poverty remains a major impediment in the effort to achieve the millennium development goals. Consequently, the need to harness community-based tourism (CBT) as an additional source of income generation and job creation becomes imperative. CBT occurs when decisions about tourism activities and development are driven by the host community. It is also used to describe series of activities that encourage and support a wide range of socio-economic development goals.

It is obvious that no country of the world today, whether developing or industrialized can afford to reject the blooming significance of tourism to its economic, social, political and cultural development. Countries of the world have become aware of the numerous benefits accruing from tourism and are working more than ever before to develop their tourism industry. According to some observers, tourism may now be the single largest industry on earth (World Travel and Tourism Council, 1995). Tourism is certainly a very important vehicle for the transfer of capital worldwide. In human

history, tourism is the only industry that accounts for the largest migration of people all year round. Unlike other industries, tourism industry takes the customer to the product, rather than delivering the product to the customer (Manning, 1998).

Tourism has become a significant and even essential part of the local community. Its potential to alleviate poverty is numerous. It has a unique potential to carry exchange and investment directly to the local level, and can as well make significant contribution to rural development, particularly in agricultural transformation, community enrichment and social empowerment. It enhances the social standard of any given community and can change both the environment and the lives of the members of that community.

Enugu state is endowed with natural and cultural tourism resources located all over the state, having the highest concentration in traditional rural communities, which when harnessed can produce a distinctive tourism industry capable of generating income and raising the living standard of the local communities. Communities suffering economic bottleneck often have the necessary drive to actively consider development option, and an appealing opportunity is the potential offered by tourism. Therefore, the development and marketing of tourism potentials through community-based tourism will not only end at boosting the economy of the area and upgrade the living standard of the people, but will also better the social, political and the cultural lives of the host.

This paper examines the tourism potentials of Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu communities and suggests ways of harnessing and promoting them. Using the Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) method of Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery, the paper advocates that CBT can play an important role in the economic rejuvenation of the host communities and the state at large.

### **Community-Based Tourism (CBT): A Review of Related Literature**

A community is a group of people living together in an acceptable environment or locality having a common interest with a collective responsibility to make decisions by representative bodies for survival ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)). For the purpose of this paper, community-based tourism is defined as a form of tourism which occurs when issues concerning tourism development and its associated activities are discussed and decisions taken among members of the host community ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)). It is a type of tourism in which local communities (usually, poor and economically backward people) invite

tourists to their communities, having provided overnight accommodation for their comfort.

Aspects of community lifestyle often result to cultural exchange when tourists come in contact with the host. In most cases, “such remote ethnic communities may be vulnerable to outside influences and decisions about the way tourists are hosted must be owned by the community for successful and sustainable tourism” (SNV 2003). Tourists come in contact with local habitat and wildlife, participate in different cultural festivals, respect traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom through community based tourism. Conversely, the host community becomes aware of the commercial and social value placed on their heritage thereby inducing community based heritage conservation.

Arguably, this type of tourism is indeed aimed at upgrading the living standard of the local residence as revenues are generated through communities’ initiatives and/or self developmental projects like construction of bridges and roads, town halls and rural electrification, sign posts/road signs, among others. It is natural that income generated from tourism is used to conserve the resources of nature as well as renovating and building new facilities for tourists up keep and influx respectively. Thus part of the income generated from tourists is set aside for projects which provide benefits to the community holistically. As rightly argued by World Bank (2000) a sense of pride among the local population is usually associated with community based tourism, such that money generated is used to maintain and upgrade cultural assets like archaeological ruins, historical sites, traditional craft production and the like.

However, it should be reemphasized that for tourism to become community based, members of the community must have some development initiative through self help projects. Such community development initiatives as outlined by Eze-Uzomaka (2006) include building of schools, town halls, construction of feeder roads and drainage system, electricity, water projects, establishment and maintenance of local markets etc. She noted that these projects are usually financed by the community themselves through levies and contributions from indigenous groups like village improvement unions, age grades, groups of wealthy individuals or families and committee of friends (Eze-Uzomaka, 2006).

This paper advocates that since the major aim of community-based tourism development is to solve community oriented problems and provide their needs, Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu communities can alleviate poverty and improve their living standard through a well developed

community-based tourism. The potential tourism resources in these communities are unique and can satisfy tourists' curiosity, anxiety and quest to feel nature as well as foster a sense of cultural belonging. No doubt, Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu villages could serve tourists even with minimum entrepreneurial skills so long as the attractions are harnessed to an appreciable height. Generally, community based tourism avail tourists the opportunity to know the social, cultural and religious practices of the host and allow the local residence to understand the need for preservation of their tourism resources.

### **Potential Tourism Sites in Enugu State: An Assessment of the Selected Sites**

Enugu state lies in Latitude  $60^{\circ} 27'N$  and Longitude  $70^{\circ} 29'E$  and typically a scrap-foot town, which lies on the plain close to the east facing escarpment of the Enugu – Awgu cuesta (Ofomata 1975). The state shares borders with Abia State to the South, Abonyi State to the East, Benue State to the Northeast, Kogi State to the Northwest and Anambra State to the West (ESMIC 1997).

The major tourism sites in Enugu state are located in Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu. Owing to their rich natural and cultural beauty, these villages are obvious tourist choices, even at their underdeveloped stage. The Ezeagu tourist resources include a three kilometer cave, a cold and warm spring, a waterfall, and a lake. Awhum destination is of great religious importance. It houses a waterfall, a cave and a monastery. Pilgrims are continuously attracted to this site following the believed curative nature of the water from the fall. Opi on the other hand has emerged as another tourist site because of its lake system, good number of caves/rock-shelter and a waterfall. Umundu people are endowed with various skills ranging from iron smelting/smithing to varieties of industries that have the potential to attract a sizeable number of tourists every year. It is obvious that community-based tourism will thrive well in these areas if given proper attention.

Ezeagu is located in the south central part of Enugu state and about nine kilometers away from Enugu-Onitsha Express Way. Ezeagu (popularly called Ezeagu tourist complex) is situated in the western part of Ihuezi Obinofia Ndi-Uno. While Ihuezi Obinofia Ndi-Uno is in the southern part of Ezeagu Local Government Area. It has boundaries with Oji River and Udi Local Government Areas. Awhum waterfall is located 4km south-east of Awhum local government headquarters and is 24km from Enugu (Coal City). It lies in Longitude  $7^{\circ} 25' 0''$  East and Latitude  $6^{\circ} 32' 0''$  North of Awhum.

From Enugu-Otukpo high way, Awhum waterfall, which measures about 30m in height is in between Abor and Okpatu villages. Opi is located on latitude  $6^{\circ} 9'N$  of equator and is situated in the dry savannah land of eastern Nigeria. Opi town is located 62 kilometers north of Enugu (the state capital), 21 kilometer south of Obollo Afor and about 10 kilometers southeast of Eha Alumona. The small village of Umundu is located east of Ezimo in Udenu L.G.A. It is approximately 2km from Obollo-Afor, the headquarters of Udenu L.G.A.

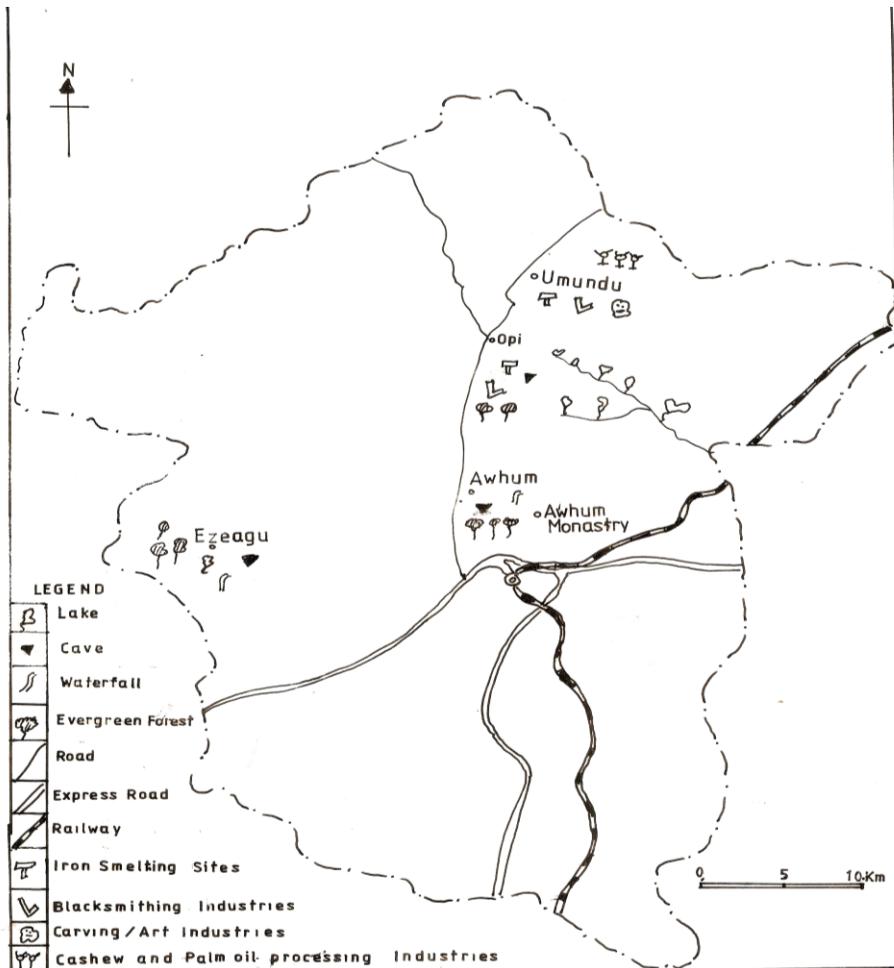


FIG. 1. MAP OF ENUGU STATE SHOWING THE STUDY AREAS

### 1) Ezeagu Village

Three major attractions were identified among which are *Ihuneke* Lake, *Ihu-ogba* cave and *Ogbagada* waterfall. The three attractions were classified major because of their individual values to Ezeagu people as well as their potentials for tourism development. *Ihuneke* Lake is a fresh water lake covering an area of about 5sq.km, and it is surrounded mainly by bamboo tress and other flora species. The adjoining virgin landmass is a good ground for the establishment of a recreational park including hotels, shopping complex and golf course. The lake is usually cold in the afternoon and slightly warm in the morning and evening respectively. It is about 6.9 meters deep and this enables boat activities and comfortable swimming (Ezeh 2006). Among the faunas found in and around the lake are Pythons, Guinea fowls and Crocodiles. It is locally believed that mermaid spirits appear in the lake at intervals of time. However, the movement of the lake can hold tourists spellbound as its direction changes periodically; thus, in the morning the lake flows downwards, at noon it flows upwards and at sundown it becomes stagnant.

*Ihu-ogba*, a popular cave in Ezeagu is located east of *Ihuneke* Lake. Its hosting of the famous *Ogba* deity popularized the cave given rise to religious activities within the cave such as sacrifices and spiritual consultations. The name '*Ihu-ogba*' is derived from the local dialects '*Ihu*' meaning face and '*Ogba*' meaning cave, which literally mean "the face of a cave". The origin of *Ogba* is unknown among the people of Ihuezi clan. However, a single date of 3000 years has been given by Enugu State Tourism Board ([www.enugustatetourism.org](http://www.enugustatetourism.org)). This has not been substantiated by any scientific investigation such as historical, archaeological, anthropological, lexico-statistical and genetic methods, among others. *Ogba* has two entrances with three chambers. The first and major entrance measures about 3.1 meters in height and 1.8 meters wide. While the second entrance measures 2.8 meters in height and 1.9 meters wide. The first and the largest chamber is 2,960 meters wide and 13.2 meters high (Ezeh 2006). It is inhabited by bats of different sizes, and when disturbed, they take to their flight producing a hurricane sound. The population of the bats runs in thousands if counted. Another significant feature of this chamber is that it has an opening at the top from where sun rays lighten the cave. The walls of the cave taste salty. The second chamber is more of a corridor that links the first and the third chambers. It measures 22sq.km with a height of 2.6 meters (Ezeh 2006). This

chamber is very dark and it links the major entrance to the third chamber. The third chamber which measures 18sq.km is the darkest of all the chambers and visibility is often difficult even with a torch light. It is believed to be the habitation of the spirits of *Ogba*.

The warm and cold spring in Ezeagu is called '*Agada*'. It is one of the major sources of water for the community measuring about 126 meters wide with varying depths that range from 0.8 to 3.2 meters respectively (Ezeh 2006). The waterfall locally called '*Ogbagada*' is about 23 meters high. The water rushes down the cliff with thunderous sound that attracts attention. One great phenomenon about *Ogbagada* is its associated ability to signal the beginning of hammatan through an unusual loud noise from the falls. Furthermore, when a titled or aged man in the village is about to die or immediately he is dead; the fall also produces louder sound that everybody around the village can hear. Both *Ogbagada* waterfall and *Agada* warm and cold spring are popular picnic arena for fun lovers. Other minor attractions in Ezeagu worthy of note here are Odor-Ugwu cave, *Ogba Umuogubi* cave, *Ogbo Gwoo Gwoo* cave, *Ogba Agana* cave, *Ngene Mkpume* spring water, *Ogbavuruvuru* stream, thick forested vegetation, hill and the people's diverse cultural activities.

Through sacred laws, sanctions and taboos, these attractions are conserved. One of such taboos is that a female does not enter *Ihu-ogba* cave on trousers and pants. Ethnographic sources revealed that a female student went against this taboo and was faced with continuous (nonstop bleeding) menstruation. The student regained her health after sacrifices were offered to *Ogba* deity. Again, a widow does not enter *Ihu-ogba* cave, *Ihuneke* Lake or *Ogbagada* waterfall when she is still mourning her husband. Ethnographic sources also revealed that people are forbidden to make loud noise close to and/or near the fall because it increases its noise to a frightening height when there is external noise by human beings etc. These taboos act as protective shields to the attractions, which ensure their continual survival till date.



**Plate 1: Agada Spring (Source: Eze 2006)**



**Plate 2: Ihuneke Lake**

**(Source: [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com))**

## **2) Awhum Village**

The tourism resources in Awhum are waterfall, monastery, and a cave. The road to Awhum through the monastery is completely untarred and the waterfall, which flows to the interior of Awhum lies at the north-east of Awhum monastery. The intricate phenomenon about the waterfall as held by oral tradition is its associated curative power as well as the belief that it has the power to dispel evil and satanic forces whenever it is sprinkled.

Awhum waterfall is surrounded by a breathtaking landscape. The evergreen vegetation is a unique scenic attraction of its own. The fact that the students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Enugu Campuses (UNN/UNEC), Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) and Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) always host their picnics there attests to the attractiveness of Awhum waterfall and its environs. Three kilometers before the waterfall is Awhum cave (*Ogba*) with an entrance of 3.2m high and 2.2m wide. The cave harbours varieties of biological species like wild animals and birds of different species. The monastery on the other hand is sacred because of its religious implications. It houses a number of pilgrims from different parts of the country annually especially its *Ugwu-amaugwu* calvary site, which hosts the crucifix.



**Plate 3: Awhum Waterfall**

**(Source: Adedayo 2007)**



**Plate 4: Awhum Cave**

(Source: [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com))

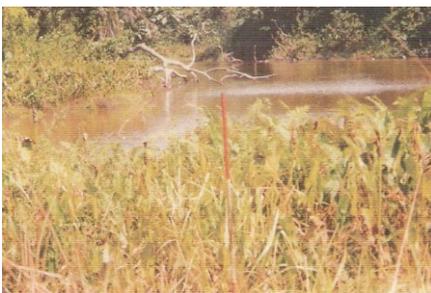
### 3) Opi Village

Opi has more than seven lakes connected to one another to form a network. It is usually called ‘Opi Lake System’. The lakes are Eze-agu iyi, Ogelube, Uhere, Orufu, Ikpa, Nkpo and Ozzi (the largest among the lakes). Ozzi is located at Ugwu-ozioke and is about 9m deep and 7km wide (Ezeh 2006). Its depth and width enables the smooth movement of locally made canoe from one end to another. Eze-agu iyi and Ogelube lakes are in close proximity with a separated distance of about 50m. Uhere River flows in between Eze-agu iyi and Ogelube lakes providing sand beach, crocodile and other aquatic species. The presence of these animals is supported by the thick vegetation around the lakes with an excellent breathtaking landscape. Ikpa Lake is located south of Eze-agu iyi and Ogelube lakes. It covers about 2km surrounded by a dense forest. This lake is unique for its religious implication. It is an important worship place by faithfuls of traditional religion. Orufu and Nkpo are located towards the east of Ikpa Lake (about 2km from Ikpa Lake) with a variety of tourism potentials awaiting development. The special but connected lakes of this type make up “Opi Lake System” and could take tourists almost round of Opi-agu, the headquarters of the communities that these lakes inter-connect. There is also a waterfall locally called “*Uhere*” situated at Ogbozalla Opi.

Like *Ogbagada* waterfall in Ezeagu, *Uhere* waterfall also has the potential of announcing the death of somebody through an intensive and frightening loud sound as it falls.

Opi lake system has attracted the attention of both domestic and international bodies, but the area is still at its undeveloped stage. Furthermore, a good number of caves/rock-shelter are found within Opi and its environs. These caves are symbolic as the people's religious rites and rituals are performed in these caves. It is a common belief in Opi that caves are common abodes of the gods. Perhaps, this explains why caves are regarded as sacred and it is a taboo for people to visit caves without permission from the chief priest who takes care of the deities. Among these caves/rock-shelter are *Ogba* cave and *Ntene* rock-shelter located at Idi-opi, *Ndukwa* cave located at Umuile, among others. Apart from their religious values to the people, Opi caves harbour varieties of biological species, which are hunted for protein by the people.

There are also numerous archaeological sites of ancient iron smelting/smithing, which are potential tourist attractions. Of a truth, these sites are being harnessed archaeologically via field work by the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. However, they largely remain untapped for tourism purposes. This paper argues that CBT development in Opi village will not only bring the knowledge of these archaeological sites to the public (public archaeology), but will ensure their continual conservation, improve the people's economy and create job opportunities for the locals.



**Plate 5**



**Plate 6**



**Plate 7**



**Plate 8**

**Plates 5-8: Eze-Agu Iyi, Ikpa, Nkpo, and Orufu Lakes of Opi Lake System**

**(Source: Adopted from Eze 2006)**

**4) Umundu Village**

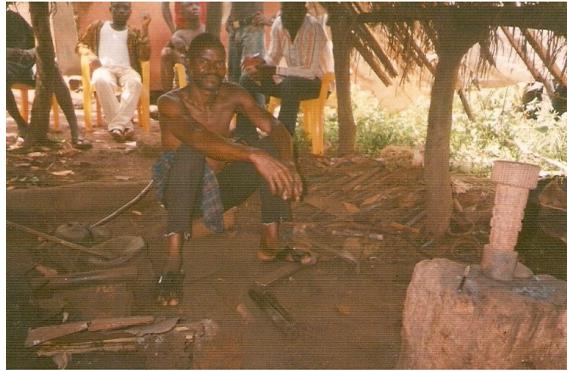
Umundu is another attractive site in Enugu state. From cultural perspective, Umundu possesses some promising potentials for tourism ranging from scenic landscape, archaeological sites to attractive economic activities. The geographical position and the physical features of Umundu make it a

beautiful rural village endowed with natural drainage and aesthetic scenery blended with little savannah vegetation (Ugwoke 2004).

The major attractions of Umundu are the ancient iron smelting sites, blacksmithing industry, carving/art industry, cashew and palm oil processing industries as well as its unique method of palm wine tapping. The village is blessed with plenty of iron ore (hematite) as evident in the proliferation of iron slags, which is a reflection of an intensive iron smelting activities in times past. Though the remnants of furnace walls exist, they are endangered as the people convert these sites into farm lands. There is therefore a clarion call for the conservation of iron smelting sites in Umundu and their reposition for tourism development.

Umundu farmers on the other hand depend on their local smiths for agricultural implements like hoes, cutlass as well as domestic utensils such as kitchen knives, tripod pots, door hinges and staples. Umundu crafts serve as title regalia, ritual emblems and body ornaments such as rings and anklets. Ethnographic sources revealed that Umuachene is the only clan in Umundu that tradition allows the right to be blacksmith. Perhaps, the restriction of the craft to themselves has contributed to the preservation of the cottage industry.

Cashew nut processing in Umundu is a profession mainly reserved for the women-folk. Indeed, it might be right to state here that cashew nuts consumed in Nsukka environs are produced in Umundu; thus, reflecting the increasing growth of the industry. However, the stages of cashew production from drying of nuts, frying of the nuts in a big frying pan (*Agbada*), stirring intermittently with elongated wooden pole (*Apara*), introduction of fire into the *agbada*, to the fast and special method of turning the nuts as well as hand-breaking the nuts constitute tourist marvels. Thus, the manual method of cashew processing in Umundu involves rigorous method, which exposes the operator to fire-hazards on one hand, while constituting dark tourism on the other hand. Palm wine, a drink tapped from palm oil tree (*Elaeis guineensis*) is also popular in Umundu. The whiteness and sweetness of palm wine signifies its natural state, implying the people's ability to harness the natural environment for economic gains.



**Plate 9: Black Smith Site**



**Plate 10: Abandoned Iron Smelting Site**

As can be seen from the above discourse, Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu host a variable number of resources which can be harnessed for tourism. The cultural and economic values of these resources are high as the residents derive and depend greatly on them for survival. The *Ogba* deity in Ezeagu cave is believed to be the protective agent of the land among other significant functions. The springs constitute a major source of drinking water for the communities, while the waterfalls, which are also a source of drinking water to the host villages, attract visitors from far and near thereby generating economic gains. In Awhum, the waterfall generates income for the community as visitors troop in for sight seeing, while the monastery is valued

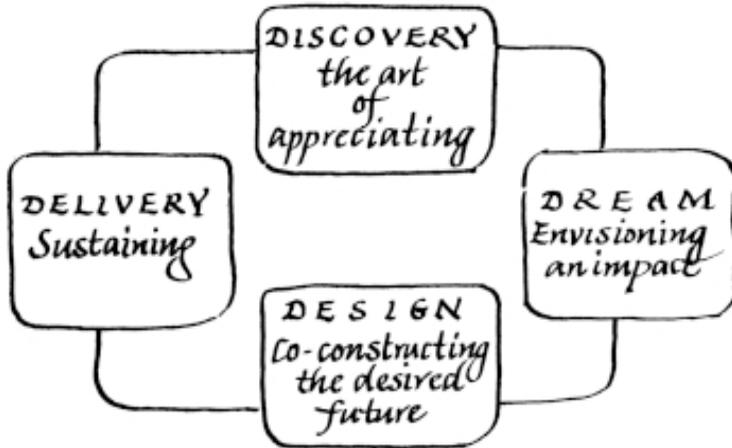
for its religious importance. The Opi lake system does not only provide the people with drinking water, but also serves as a habitat for aquatic species, which provide the residents with protein. The economic activities of Umundu people, which constitute tourists marvels are their means of livelihood as their products are sold not only to tourists as souvenirs but also to the general public in popular local markets like 'Afor' Obollo-afor market, 'Orie' Orba market, 'Eke' Imiliki-agu market, Obollo 'Eke' market, among others.

Although the tourism resources in the selected villages are highly valued by their residents, they remain largely untapped for tourism purposes. The road networks to Ezeagu, Awhum and Umundu are totally untarred, while that of Opi is fast deteriorating. All the villages do not have amenities and facilities for tourists' comfort. These notwithstanding, the villages were chosen because of the plenitude of tourist attractions they offer (natural and cultural), as well as their proximity to the state capital and other valuable opportunities.

### **Strategies for Harnessing and Promoting the Selected Sites**

The rationale for CBT as rightly argued by Brandon (1996) is anchored on an effective conservation strategy and development, which ensures from an environmental and economic perspective, that local people are involved. Thus, if otherwise, the resources on which tourism depends will likely over time, be destroyed and the investment lost. It is on this note that this paper seeks sustainable ways to effectively harness and promote the selected sites with a view to conserving the attractions while positioning them for tourism. These will in turn alleviate poverty among the host communities, generate income, create job opportunities, and above all, improve the living standard and/or the economy of the people under study.

As aptly argued by TMI (2000), CBT can and should encompass a range of activities that collectively contribute to improved conservation and development. Such activities include community-owned and managed lands used for tourism purposes with collective decision-making arrangements over the management and development of tourism. Thus, CBT development in Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu may focus on value-addition, building upon natural and cultural assets, to existing activities resulting in increased revenues and incomes to local communities and incentives to conserve resources. Since an important purpose of CBT is to generate economic benefits, and as enterprises to maintain profitability, it is useful to consider the options in developing and marketing a tourism product as the basis for developing strategies for CBT.

**Figure 2: The Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery**

**Source:** The Mountain Institute (2000)

The Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) approach exemplified in figure 1 has been developed by The Mountain Institute (TMI), building upon the ideas and field experiences of a number of TMI staff, NGOs and government partners, and communities in TMI project sites across the Himalayan region (in Nepal; Sikkim, India; and TAR, Peoples Republic of China). “The methodology provides the basic structure for Community-based Tourism planning in a variety of contexts and with a wide range of participants, from a village setting with illiterate or semi-educated participants to planning at the local or district level with community leaders, protected area managers, and government officials” (TMI 2000).

The primary value of APPA lies in its emphasis as process of lasting engagement and dialogue among stakeholders. “The approach has also been used for assisting organizations in their development, in addressing people-wildlife interactions and community conservation. APPA’s objective is to find and emphasize the positive, successes, and strengths as a means to empower communities, groups, and organizations, to plan and manage development and conservation. The model serves as a guide for planners and field-based staff to design, implement and manage Community-based Tourism; it is therefore a guideline for field application” (TMI 2000).

The development of Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action methodology known as the 4Ds of Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery,

constitute the sequential process of participatory CBT planning that builds upon local or regional tourism assets in order to develop a collective vision, plans, confidence and resources that will help to achieve the host communities' vision; thus, empowering communities with skills and plans to achieve it. The features of the above model (see figure 2) are summarized as follows:

1. Discovery, the act of appreciating – the best of what is, what gives life to this community, group, organization.
2. Dream, envisioning an impact – what might be, creating a positive image of a preferred future.
3. Design, co-constructing the desired future – what should the ideal be, a process of dialogue, consensus and further inquiry.
4. Delivery, sustaining – how to empower, learn, adjust and sustain (TMI 2000).

Discovery is a method in which we identify characteristics of the communities that attract or may attract tourists, and recognize strengths and skills of the communities that contribute to CBT. As argued by TMI (2000) discovery emphasizes the “good things” or successes at hand that can be strengthened, managed, and marketed as community-based tourism by the community to generate local benefits and support conservation.

In the “*Dream*” phase of the 4D process, participants *collectively* visualize how they would like to see their community develop and benefit from conservation-based tourism in the future, and how they as a community can achieve that Dream by building upon the tourism assets and strengths identified in Discovery to create the very best Community-Based Tourism possible. The collective nature of the vision is a vital aspect of the APPA approach that draws its strength from shared commitments and participatory action to empower communities toward self-reliance (TMI 2000).

Design is the most challenging part of the 4-D cycle as participants work together to construct their future dream. As aptly argued by TMI (2000) “...we often find that we cannot do everything, so an important aspect of design is to prioritize, and work together to develop plan and activities that help turn CBT dreams into reality. However, the key outputs of this step are strategies that build upon the existing assets and opportunities and outline how to overcome the constraints in product and service development (TMI 2000).

Delivery here refers to the ongoing implementation of the plans developed in design. “As the key to sustainable CBT lies in building the

community's skills and motivation to carry out the plans they have made; delivery also focuses on building community initiative, confidence, and commitment to action, and continues in the APPA style of building upon 'what works'" (TMI 2000).

As earlier noted the model presented above are meant to be a guideline for practitioners' initial use; thereafter, the user can adopt the approach to the specific situation, elaborating upon or simplifying the steps according to the planning objective, time available, and level of participant understanding. It is therefore instructive to point out here that since our study areas are not virgin sites, the discovery and dream phases may not apply. Thus, the design and delivery phases shall be explored.

In the design phase, the developer (tourism expert) along with town unions, age-grades and other trade unions such as Opi, Umundu, Ezeagu and Awhum improvement or progressive unions will work in concert to achieve a sustainable community-based tourism. A group of people (particularly men) within a particular age range in a community constitute an age-grade. Town unions, trade unions and age-grades are very valuable in this part of the world. As aptly argued by Okpoko and Okonkwo (2005) age-grade and groups constitute an enduring management system in traditional Nigerian societies – each age-grade has special or designated roles. Having constituted these organs, the attractions identified should be planned for further development based on the hierarchy of economic values.

The concept of total economic value as argued by IUCN (1998:11) is now a well-established and useful framework for identifying the various values associated with protected areas. The total economic value of a protected area consists of its use values and non-use values. A protected area's use values are in turn made up of its direct use values, indirect use values, and option values. Non-use values include bequest values and existence values. However, for the purpose of this study, the direct values of the study areas shall be examined (IUCN 1998:11).

The direct use values of a protected area are values derived from the direct use of the protected area for activities such as recreation, tourism, natural resource harvesting, hunting, gene pool services, education and research. In our study areas, Awhum monastery is rated high because of its religious implication to the people as well as tourists. The site holds enormous potential for tourism and in its undeveloped state; its economic value is high as there abound mini markets in the monastery where goods are sold to pilgrims. The cave (*Ogba*) provides games for hunters and a religious centre for some people, while the waterfall is a unique place for recreational

activities. Awhum is closely followed by Ezeagu village. Her natural endowments are known beyond her neighboring villages as well as the state as attested to by Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation survey work on the site in 2005. Ezeagu caves, lake and waterfall hold the potential for education and research as well as recreational activities. A small token is designated to the chief priest for sacrifice before approval is granted for one to explore the caves; while the lake and waterfall harbours varieties of aquatic species for protein.

Umundu, is earmarked the third to be developed because of the peoples' activities that constitute attractions for tourists. These activities generate income for the people. Products from blacksmiths are sold, used and reused within the village; while cashew and palm wine are everyday demand in her local markets. Finally, Opi lake system holds economic values to the people because of its aquatic animals hunted and sold for money. The lakes also provide sand beach from where builders' collect or buy sand for house construction.

Of a truth, these attractions hold much to be desired for cultural tourists when developed. Their development for cultural tourism will enhance their potentialities, while making the host communities have a sense of responsibility and ownership of CBT initiatives.; thus, building their confidence and commitment to such initiatives.

Be that as it may, the development of these attractions will indeed raise the interest of both domestic and international cultural tourists. Thus, a culturally attracted tourist enjoys a beach holiday, takes a short break, attends a conference or an incentive trip and can be readily attracted to a cultural site or event (around 65% of the market) (Bywater 1993). Silderberg (1995, cited in Sauerwein and Pechlaner 2002) further noted that cultural tourists earn more and spend more on vacation; they spend more time in an area whilst on vacation; they tend to stay in higher rated hotels; and they tend to shop more. It should be noted that those natural features like caves, lakes etc. studied here are viewed as cultural attractions because human beings have attached myths and values to them.

Furthermore, the proximity of these villages to the State Capital in terms of road network is encouraging as there abounds link roads leading to Enugu where an air port is situated; though the link roads are fast dilapidating, they can be improved upon. This is in conformity with distance decay theory as postulated by McKercher and Du Cros (2002). The theory suggests that demand for tourism attractions varies inversely with distance traveled; that is, demand declines exponentially as distance increases.

Instructively, building of accommodation in-line with the local structures within our study areas will on one hand cater for tourists' comforts and on the other hand provide job opportunities for host communities. Other social benefits to be captured in our design phase include electricity, communication, good access road, pipe born water, security, catering services, rental services etc. These social benefits are tourism facilities and should be found within and/or around attraction sites. They are therefore tourism attending facilities that host communities benefit from in order to ensure a sustainable CBT development.

In delivering a destination site(s) to a targeted group (tourists), appropriate channels should be explored to reach vast audience – both domestic and international cultural tourists. To achieve this, the use of Internet as an information exchange system is encouraged as it has the ability to allow everyone to access the network. Thus, the potential of using the Internet for marketing activities is derived from its general use as an information exchange system in the digital age as information can be stored, indexed, retrieved, restructured and redistributed automatically by software and without human intervention. This makes Internet an ideal option for marketing (Zhenhua 2000). Other advantages that the Internet provides as a marketing medium for travel and tourism sector include global market reach, less capacity constraints, and the possibility of two-way communication (quick response to customers' information-based needs) (O'Connor 1999).

Furthermore, delivery of attractions can be done through the mass media. Here, advertisements can be placed on television and radio. Print media can also be used as information relevant for tourists on these destination sites can be placed on the pages of newspapers, magazines etc. Travel agencies are also valuable opportunities to be harnessed for wider reach out to tourists as they get in touch with tourists for either booking of flights/hotel rooms, package tours, or even advice clients on how and when best to visit a destination. The above options should be explored with a view to delivering the destination sites to the targeted group. Thus, as aptly argued by Middleton (1994) if an 'ideal' product exists and is available to a prospective purchaser, but the purchaser is not aware of it, then for that consumer, the product does not exist.

### **Recommendations**

It is obvious that when the tourism potentials of a place are harnessed, it can be packaged into viable tourism products. This will help tourists to know the contents of the available products of that destination as well as take the right

decision on which to patronize. Considering the tourism potentials of Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi, and Umundu in particular, which are still at its undeveloped stages, there is need for synergy of all the factors that will aid in the development and promotion of CBT in the selected villages. However, these factors can be assembled together through the following recommendations:

The development of tourism of any given area and its promotion is capital intensive and require huge amount of money. Government at all levels should release funds for tourism development and promotion of Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi, and Umundu villages through Enugu State Tourism Board and Local Government Tourism Committees. Tourism stakeholders are also encouraged to actively participate in funding these projects.

Nigeria however has a good vision for tourism, but is faced with the problem of non implementation of the existing tourism policies. Government policy on tourism has been in existence since 1982 as exemplified in decree No. 81, but its implementation has long been hampered by the uncoordinated and conflicting roles of some stakeholders in the development and promotion of the industry. However, this has been addressed to a large extent by the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan of 2006; there is therefore the need for an effective implementation of Nigerian tourism policy of .....with a view to encourage the establishment of CBT in most Nigerian communities and help to preserve, promote and present the tourism attractions of every community especially Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu communities of Enugu state.

Apart from being capital intensive, tourism also requires careful professional management. Therefore, there is need for capacity building through staff training. Tourism education should also be encouraged at all levels of formal education- nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary levels to inculcate the knowledge of tourism in the study train of the students. These will definitely increase the staff strength of the industry.

### **Conclusion**

CBT development and its promotion is one of the big tasks in the tourism industry, which requires both human and material resources. Enugu state is endowed with abundant tourism resources as exemplified in Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu villages. When properly developed as proposed in this paper, CBT can help to achieve substantial revenue to supplement other economic activities in these areas. For Enugu state to have its fair share of the global tourism market and have high visitor arrival, there is need to invest on CBT especially in especially in our study areas.

This paper has taking a critical look at the tourism attractions of Ezeagu, Awhum, Opi and Umundu using ethnographic method to extract information and analyzed the data collected from the respondents. The paper suggests ways in which the tourism potentials of the selected villages can be developed and promoted. Thus, in order to make Enugu state a long haul tourism destination, there is need to adopt the developmental and promotional strategies offered in this paper to help place the state ahead of other competing destinations around the world.

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