ORNAMENTAL FISH TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
Aquaculture is a section in eco-tourism that could be of great advantages for the nation if given the necessary attention. This sector has long been neglected probably due to lack of awareness of its large potentials which if wedged together with tourism their prospects are far enriching. Ornamental fishery sector is under-exploited despite the presence of over 100 species of beautiful, colorful, unique and stunted varieties in Nigeria. This research work was carried out in Lagos State Fish Farms, Ikorodu, Lagos State. Data were gathered through personal interview, observation and carefully drawn questionnaire, which were given out to 50 respondents that were randomly selected, an explanatory survey design was adopted for the study and the data generated was analysed in simple percentage. With the above discovery, it was noticed that if the government can invest and develop in ornamental fishery business as tourist destination, the public will understand and accept this type of tourist attraction which both excursionists and tourist can visit. It can also be used as a breeder for selling of different ornamental fishes which is very important in the world economy.

Keywords: Ornamental fish, Tourism, Sustainability

Introduction
Tourism includes ecotourism according to Fadipe (2007) which includes fisheries; the meeting point could majorly make fishery an element of tourist attraction. Fishery is not concerned with capturing or culturing fish for human consumption only there are other areas of human satisfaction that could be aroused. Aquaculture is of great advantages for ornamental purpose, Chukwura (2008), believes that this sector has long been neglected probably due to lack of awareness of its large potentials which if wedged together with tourism their prospects are far enriching.

Ornamental fisheries sector is under exploited despite the presence of different species of beautiful, colorful, unique and stunted varieties in Nigeria Maritime State; like Lagos, Ondo Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross-River and Edo states. Despite the abundant resources of tropical, aquatic life and right climate for breeding only 5% of our potential is being exploited presently, as indicated by Fasakin (2008). Apart from few aquarium-keepers, ornamental fisheries were almost non-existent up till early 1980s. Most hobbyist had to depend on imported ornamental fishes despite the fact that there are exportable indigenous species like long nose Petersii, short nose Pelmatochromi ssp. Psettus sebae, Osphronemus spp. Ornamental fisheries is overwhelmed with aesthetic appeal. Nnawe (2007) assumes that the development of recreational and ornamental fishery sector in the Niger Delta of Nigeria will boost the development of ecotourism project in the area. Ornamental fish industries is concerned with production and marketing of live attractive or fancy fishes for the sole purpose of beautification of homes and public places with the utmost aim of creating joy of the mind through friendly feeling; as stated by Fashakin (op.cit.) which is
what tourism stands for. Most species of ornamental fishes occur normally in tropical and semi-tropical freshwater, brackish water and marine. The group includes representative of several families and species of small, colorful and unique fishes. These special habitats abound in Nigeria with a friendly ecosystem and they are convertible to attraction elements for eco-tourism enterprises development.

Fashakin (2008) further states that ornamental fishes are kept alive in aquaria and are therefore referred to as aquarium fishes. A number of freshwater and brackish water fishes which are suitable for aquarium purposes abound in this country and many of them are already well-known in the international circle as elements for fishery tourist attraction. Ornamental fisheries according to Bolarinwa (2003) in combination with tourism can shoot up our desire to make Nigeria international tourist destination; thereby bringing foreign exchange to the country as ornamental fish trade is flourishing worldwide, yet Nigeria’s share of the trade is very meager. Perhaps if joined up with tourism a boost will be witnessed.

An estimate of global trade in ornamental fish will worth about $1.7 billion dollars per annum. About 6% of this huge sum is controlled by Singapore, 30% by Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. Nigeria contributed 20% of the African market share despite her vast natural resources of tropical life and right climate for breeding. The major importing countries are United States of American (USA), Japan, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom and the Netherlands. USA alone accounts for 54% of the estimated wholesale trade in ornamental fish. Fasakin (op. cit.)

Fishery in eco-tourism should be an issue to be looked into by a nation so as to be one of the alternative source of revenue instead of total dependence on crude oil alone. Ornamental fishery production has not been fully taken into consideration due to some reasons which includes: lack of awareness about the possible use of ornamental fishes as an element of attraction, lack of technicalities in the area of culturing ornamental fishes, paucity of information on available source of ornamental fishes, and the non interest of private individuals in breaking a truce in the area of making ornamental fishes an element of tourist attractions. However this research work will help to understand the development of ornamental fishes as a source of tourist attraction and to enlighten the public of the benefit associated with it other than eating and commercialization.

Tourism in the recent times has become a home jingle. Unlike in the long past when it only enjoy lip services from the government; Afolabi (2010) defined tourism to mean leaving ones abode to different places for pleasure purposes which include visitation to eco-tourist sites; the sum purpose of tourism is to leave the tourist in the state of joyous mind, happy feelings, and merry recreated embodiment. To achieve the above there are so many factors to be met on the attraction element. Fishing according to Bolarinwa (2003) is the breeding and culturing of fishes are for various purpose like aesthetic, ornamental, beautification and commercialization.

Ornamental fishery in reality of it is fun driven, games taking, before commercialization of fishing. These are the major reasons why people go-a-fishing for recreational reasons. These are key attraction elements of tourism. As many people make fishing an occupation a lot of people engage in fishing as a leisure and recreational activities so, if fishing and tourism develop along that line it is of great value. Obviously, ornamental fishes are in themselves attractive attraction basically on their uniqueness portable
sizes, colorations and sportish character among others.

Nnawe (op cit) said ornamental aquarium fishes can either be caught from the wild or/and raised in fish enclosures. Whatever methods are used to procure the ornamental fish from the level of the scientist through the pet dealer to the hobbyist will depend on the circumstances prevailing. The procurement of aquarium fish could be from rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, lagoons, and the sea using dug-out canoes (paddled and motorized). Bolarinwa (op.cit.) advised that the catching of the fishes must be done in such a way as not to cause any damage. The methods used include the use of scoop nets, set nets, trap enclosures (creeks, pots, etc) as stated by Ogunsanwo (2013). Lift nets, drag and surrounding nets are different methods systems used for recreational, sport, entertainment in tourism activities through special interest tourism.

The first important step to be taken is to satisfy the legal provision as the exercise would cover proliferation of fish habitat as attraction, Federal Department of Fisheries (2000), in other words there is a need for one to register with the federal department of fisheries (FDF) who is in charge of giving license to operators of fishery activities like culturing and pounding.

The federal department of fishery in collaboration with ministry of tourism and culture should search out for the numerous attractive fishes in the country; evidence abounds through various rivers, pounds, stream etc. In Nigeria ornamental fishes can be made recreational attractions through creation of pounds through some selected fresh waters which are commonly found around Nigeria soil.

Also, there are some tales about some certain ponds in Nigeria where the species of fishes are said to be ‘uncookable’, that no matter how long you cook them on fire they will not die and will not be done; one of such rivers is found in Ijelu-Ekit, and Osun river in Iworoko-Ekiti both in Ekiti State, also, Osun rivers in otan-aiyegbaju and Osogbo, both in State of Osun.

The development of the water bodies can become a tourist attraction, if the following can be put in place.

1. Water bodies can be dammed into ponds to breed different types of ornamental fishes according to the specific species in that environment in each pound creating a colony of fishery for tourist attractions.

2. Ornamental fish farm and horticulture can be created in form of mixed farming; that is ornamental fish ponds with a park of assorted flowers/floral designs. Hence, an attraction is created.

3. Establishment of aquarium industry/factory in Nigeria will boost ornamental and recreational fisheries for importation purposes.

There are three major packages of ornamental fishes which is suitable for tourist attractions, these are aquarium, recreational pond and fishing pond. The ornamental fisheries sector is under exploited despite the presence of numerous species of beautiful colorful varieties in Nigeria maritime states of Ondo, rivers, Lagos, Delta, and Cross Rivers, Nnawe (2007), Chukwura (2008), Fashaki (2008), but there have been no effort to culture them separately by either conserving them in their natural habitat or creating an artificial habitat for them at tourist centers. The unique thing about life is that both old and young are fascinated and attracted to ornamental fishes Bolarinwa (2003).

The research work was carried out in Lagos State Fish Farms, Ikorodu, Lagos State, text books; journals, magazines, and the internet were the source of
secondary data collected. Personal interview, observation and carefully drawn questionnaire were given out to 70 respondents that were randomly selected but 50 were filled and returned back to the researcher. An explanatory survey design was adopted for the study and the data generated was analysed in simple percentage.

Table 1: Have you been to a fish pond centre before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: fieldwork

With 64% No, this set of people does not know what a fishpond looks like

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to if they may like to visit one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4590</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: fieldwork

90% of the respondents show interest in visiting the fish pond if allowed to do so
Conclusion

With the above discovery, it is noticed that if the government can invest and develop in ornamental fishery business as tourist destination the public will understand and accept this type of tourist attraction which both excursionists and tourist can visit. It can also be used as a breeder for selling of different ornamental fishes which is very important in the world economy today.

The development of ornamental fish ponds is a task to be carried out by the Government, private investors and the interested individuals.

It is concluded from the research that with time. Ornamental fish ponds will be acceptable and it will also serve as a means of income for the tourism industry.

Recommendation

The followings are what are recommended in developing ornamental fish ponds to a source of tourism attraction to the nation.

i. Government should encourage young graduates to go into fish farm by making loans available for them.

ii. Correct ways of managing, sustaining and maintaining ornamental fish ponds should be reviewed.

iii. Professionals in the industry should train the farmers, and enlighten the general public about eco-tourism and ornamental fish farming.

iv. Lastly, the professionals can organize a workshop on the various benefits derived from ornamental fish farming business.

References

Bolarinwa, J.B. (2003); Relevance of Ornamental Fisheries and Floriculture to Housing In Nigeria. Published in the proceeding of the 21st Annual Conference of Horticulture Association of Nigeria


