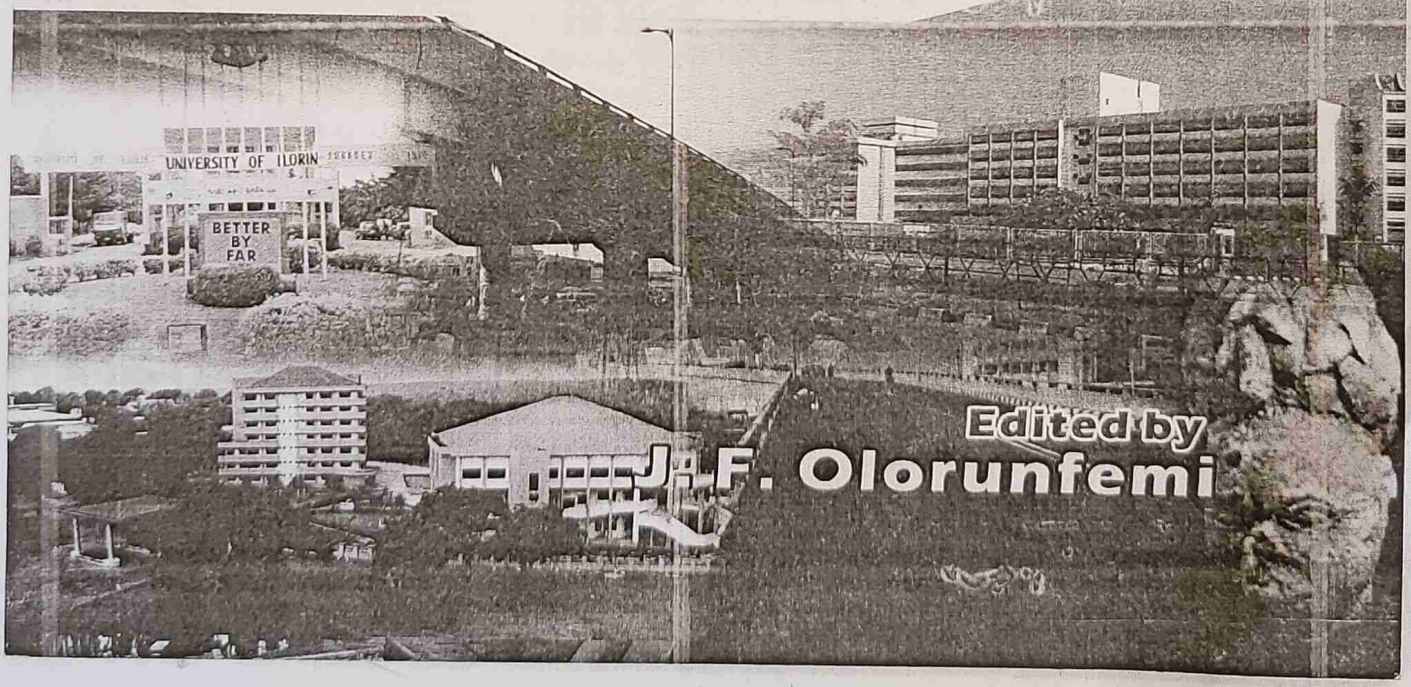
'Kwara State: A Geographical Perspective'



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CHAPTER NINE

Tourism Attractions and Facilities in Kwara State

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Introduction

Tourism has been defined in various ways by different authors reflecting the broad spectrum of disciplines and professionals that lay claim to the subject matter. Notwithstanding these variations, tourism may be thought of as the relationships and phenomena arising out of the journeys and temporary stays of people travelling primarily for leisure or recreational purposes. The duration of these stays may vary. For statistical purposes, a four-night minimum is commonly accepted for domestic tourism while stays of only twenty-four hours are universally recognized in the case of international tourism. Tourism is regarded as one of the fastest growing economic activities in the world (Filion et al, 1994)

Mathieson and Wall (1982) indicated that tourism comprised of the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during the stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater for their needs. This definition explores travels, activities and facilities as the main hub upon which tourism is built. The World Tourism Organization (2004) defined tourism as the act of travelling for the purpose of recreation and the provision of services for this act. Jafari et al (1981) takes it further by conceiving tourism as the study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs and the impacts that both he and the industry have for the host socio-cultural, economic and physical environments. This explains that tourism comprises of a system with various subsystems contributing to the functioning of the whole and has impacts on the environment which may be positive or negative on the people instigating or receiving the phenomenon.

The key operationalization words generated from these definitions are movement, people and time. Spatial interaction is thus an inherent feature of tourism which readily lends the subject to geographical analysis, even when minimum trip length employed as a factor. The geography of tourism is therefore concerned essentially, though not exclusively, with the spatial expression of the relationships and phenomena to which short-term leisure travel gives rise. It is deductible from the foregoing that a more precise and encompassing definition of tourism can purposes driven, thus:

i. For purpose of study: in order to examine any phenomenon systematically, it is necessary to define what it covers;

ii. For statistical purposes: when a phenomenon is to be measured, it must be defined; in practice, available techniques of measurement frequently determine what is possible to measure and in turn tend to define tourism for particular purposes;

iii. For legislative and administrative purposes: legislation may apply to some activities and not to others;

iv. For industrial purposes: particular economic activities give rise to market studies and provide the basis for the formation of industrial organizations.

The concept of tourism provides a broad notional framework, which identifies the essential characteristics, and which distinguishes tourism from similar, often related, but different phenomena. Technical definitions evolved through experience over time, provide instruments for particular study, statistical, legislative and administrative, and industrial purposes; implying that there are different technical definitions appropriate for different purposes.

Study Area

Kwara State is located between latitude $8^{0}00$ 'and $9^{0}00'$ N and longitude $2^{0}45'$ and $6^{0}45'$W. The state is in the North-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It is bounded by River Niger in the north and east, Oyo, Osun and Ekiti states in the south, Kogi state in the east and Republic of Benin in the west (see Fig. 9.1). The state was one of the twelve states created by General Yakubu Gowon on 27th May 1967.

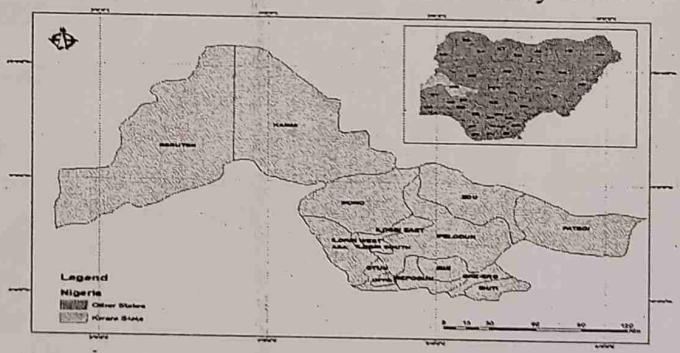


Figure 9.1: Kwara State showing the Local Government Areas. Inset: Nigeria showing Kwara State

Source: Bureau of Lands, Kwara State

Concept of Tourism

The concept of tourism was first formulated between the two World Wars and the definition put forward by the Swiss Professors Hunziker and Kraff was subsequently adopted by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST): Olokesusi (1989) viewed tourism as intertwined with leisure and recreation, while McIntosh and Gupta (1981) defined it as the aggregate of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business and the host communities.

Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity. Since then, the basic concept has been broadened to include various forms of business and vocational travel, because as long as they do not lead to permanent residence or to employment remunerated from within the destination visited, their economic significance is the same- the traveller is a pure consumer, and because it is often difficult or impossible to distinguish sharply between business and vocational and other travels in practice.

Five main characteristics of tourism may be identified conceptually:

1. Tourism arises from a movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations;
2. There are two elements in all tourism: the journey to the destination and the stay including activities at the destination;
3. The journey and the stay takes place outside the normal place of residence and work, so that tourism gives rise to activities, which are distinct from those of the resident and working population of the places, through which tourists travel and in which they stay;
4. The movement to destinations is of a temporary, short-term character, with intention to return within a few days, weeks or months;
5. Destinations are visited for purposes other than taking up permanent residence or employment remunerated from within the places visited.

Tourism Attractions and Facilities in Kwara State

Attractions refer to those sites that motivate the tourist to travel to destinations. Thus, it is arguable to say that without attractions, there will be no reason for tourists to travel. The attractions in Kwara state in this book adopted and modified Eja, Ukwayi and Ojong (2012) classification.

A) **Natural Attractions**

The physical attractions in Kwara state are: Owu falls, Imoleboja Rockshelter, Ero-Omola waterfall, Wanzaya cave and Watana Rock. The features and locations of these attractions are discussed in Table 9.1 below:

Owu Fall: This is located in Ilere District of Ifelodun LGA and represents one of the highest and most spectacular waterfalls in West-Africa. It is a perennial waterfall cascading from a height of about 120 meters to the base where it forms an ice-cold pool. It is surrounded by a luxuriant vegetation and beautiful landscape, which provides the site with a refreshing atmosphere. However, there is no good road to the site.

Imoleboja Rockshelter: This massive rock formation with natural architectural design, capable of accommodating about 100 people at a time is located at Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero LGA. It is a good site for picnic and monumental experience. The Rockshelter at various times served as a safety hide-out for local maidens protesting against their peers who engaged in pre-marital relations and subsequently become pregnant.

Wanzaya Cave: The cave located at Tsaragi in Edu LGA is about 25km in length. It served as protection for the communities. It bursts out at Apado in Ilorin East Local Government Area

The Watana Rock: This is a massive rock formation with a flat top. It is possible to drive to the top of the rock because of its low gradient. The site is located at Gwette village in Baruten LGA. It stands out uniquely and is a very good site for picnic, camping and mountaineering.

B) **Cultural Attractions**

This covers historical sites, architectural sites, monuments, industrial sites, museums and ethnic sites among others. These are found across geographical regions depending on people's religious affiliations, artworks, dance, songs etc (Eja et al, 2012). Some of the numerous cultural attractions in the state as stated in Table 9.2 include:

Alfa Alimi's Mosque at Ilorin and Kuho: This mosque is located behind Emirs Palace in Ilorin. It was built by Shaykh Alimi in 1831. The mosque was the first mosque constructed for congregational prayers in the town. He was the progenitor of the Fulani dynasty in what is today known as the Ilorin Emirate comprising of Five LGAs including Asa, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Moro. It is reported that he would have made Kuho his permanent base if any of the seven wells dugged around the site had produced water. The mosque at Kuho near Temidire village in Asa LGA had become a great centre for religious tourism where people gather to perform various religious activities.

Esie Museum: This is the first museum in Nigeria and was established in 1945. It is located in Irepodun LGA and houses the largest collection of stone images discovered in 1775. These stone images are believed to be images of human beings turned to stones through supernatural spells.

Traditional weaving centres: Weaving centres spread across various local government areas of the state. They are local weaving industries that provide employment for the youths, but in addition it serve as a form of tourism activity (educational visits by local students within and outside the state is a common phenomenon. The products are popularly called Aso Oke with various brands including Sanyan.

Dada Pottery: This workshop located in Okekele area in Ilorin has sustained the production of old traditional household equipment used in the olden, pottery products include cooking pots, flower pots and water storage containers among others. It is one of the biggest traditional pottery factories still in existence in the country and it is patronized by tourists for education and business.

C) **Events**

The state has numerous festivals spread across various local government areas. Some of these are listed in Table 9.3:

Ikan Festival: This festival marks the initiation of a new group of warriors and the retirement of the older group who had served the community for seven years as warrior to defend the land against external aggression during tribal wars. The immediate junior

age-group to this group is known as Odofin-Ikan who takes over from the retiring Ikan group.

Moremi Festival: This is a prominent festival at Offa town in Offa LGA. The festival also referred to as Onimoka festival features wrestling combat between the traditional ruler of Offa and his second-in-command. This coincides with the popular eating of the new yam (which signifies the ruler declaration for indigenes to eat newly harvested yam. This action is referred to in vernacular as "LA'ARE". The Offa people derive their popular nickname "Ijakadi Loro Offa" from this festival.

Awon Mass Wedding Festival: This is the period in Shao when all young women of marriageable age are given out in marriage during the ceremony. This is the only period in Shao when wedding ceremonies take place. It attracts people from within and outside the state.

Epa Festival: This is a colourful festival celebrated by wards in Ekiti and Oke-Ero LGAs of the state. The gods at the wards, heroes and heroines are carried by men who dance about at the village squares. Prayers are offered for good health and bumper harvest, during such celebrations.

The tourist sites and their corresponding local government areas are as indicated listed in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 respectively.

Table 9.1: Natural Tourist Attractions in Kwara State.

S/NO	Tourist Attraction	Location/Accessibility	Time of Visiting
1	Imoleboja Rockshelter	Located at Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero LGA. It is about 90km from Ilorin the state capital and accessible by road.	All round the year.
2	Owu-Fall	Ilere District in Ifelodun LGA. It is accessible through State and local roads. It is 112 kilometers to the state capital	All round the year.
3	The Watana Rock	Located in Gwette Village of Baruten LGA and accessible by typical rural road.	All year round
4	Wanzaya Cave at Tsarahi	Tsaragi in Edu Local Government Area	All year round
5	The "Ahoyaya" waterfalls	Jebba	All round the year.

Source: Adapted from Kwara State Diary, 2016

Table 9.2: Cultural Tourist Attractions in Kwara State

S/No	Tourist Attraction	Location / Accessibility	Time of Visiting
1	Adin and Black Soap Industry	Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero LGA. Accessible by road at about 84km to the state capital.	All round the year.
2	Alfa Alimi's Mosque and Residence	Behind Emir's Palace in Ilorin. Accessible by road, air and rail.	All round the year.
3	Dada Pottery	Located at Dad, Okelele Quarters in Ilorin. It is accessible by road, rail and air.	All round the year.
4	Ero-Omola	Along Osi, Idofin-Igbana road in Oke-Ero LGA. Accessible by road at about 102km to the state capital.	All year round
5	Esie Museum	Located in Esie, in Irepodun LGA. It is about 53km from Ilorin and accessible by roads.	All year round
6	Extension of Kanji Lake National Park	Located in Kaiama Area of Kwara State and accessible by road.	Best viewed between December and June
7	Hide and Skin Tanning Industry	Located in Okelele Area of Ilorin East LGA and accessible by road, rail and air	All year round
8	Lord Lugard office/Residence	Gudu is in Edu Local Government	All year round
9	Ningurume fish pond	Ningurume village in Baruten LGA. Accessible by road.	Time is determined by the Chief Priest.
10	Ogunjokoro Iron Mass Park	Located in Gbodomi, near Jokoro, in Ipaiye district of Moro LGA. It is about 105km from Ilorin and accessible by road.	All year round
11	Okuta-Ilorin	Located at Idi-Ape Quarters in Ilorin. It is accessible by road, rail and air.	All year round
12	Olofa Palace	Located in Offa LGA and accessible by road and rail. Offa is 56km from Ilorin.	All round the year.
13	Sheikah Alimi Mosque (Kuho)	Located at Kuho near Temidire Village, Asa LGA of Kwara State about 54km from Ilorin.	All round the year.
14	Historical cemetery where	Jebba	All round the year.

	British railway men died and first Chief Justice of Northern Protectorate Nigeria were buried.		
15	The Jebba Colony where panoramic view of Jebba Township could be properly viewed	Jebba	All round the year.
16	The Juju Rock	Jebba	All round the year.
17	The Mungo Park cenotaph (in memory of Mungo Park and the Lander Brothers)	Jebba	All round the year.
18	The wreckage of Mungo Park's Ship	Jebba	All round the year.
19	Traditional weaving centres	Heart of Ilorin and accessible by road, air and rail.	All year round

Source: Adapted from Kwara State Diary, 2016

Table 9.3: Major Events as Source of Tourist Attractions in Kwara State

S/No	Tourist Attraction	Location / Accessibility	Time of Visiting
1	Agan Festival	Obbo-Aiyekunle, Egosi in Ekiti and Oke-Ero Local Governments.	Month of December every year.
2	Ikan Festival	Etan and Opin in Ekiti Local Government.	Once in every seven years.
3	Awon Mass Wedding Festival	Shao in Moro Local Government.	October of every year.
4	Epa Festival	Ekiti and Oke-Ero Local Governments.	Once in every three years.
5	Moremi Festival	Offa in Offa Local Government.	Between July and August of every year.
6	Patigi Regatta	Patigi in Patigi Local Government.	Between October and April.

Source: Adapted from Kwara State Diary, 2016

Conclusion:

Tourism in Nigeria and Kwara state has not been well developed nor fully explored. Consequently, its benefits to government and its citizenry are very minimal. There is the need to pay urgent attention by the state government to provision of necessary infrastructures that will enhance and improve the development of these tourist sites.' This will enhance the state government revenue base and improve the well-being of the people.

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