THE DECREE NO. 77 OF 1979 AND NIGERIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE: AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an appraisal of the weaknesses of Decree 77 of 1979 in safeguarding the cultural heritage of Nigeria. Nigeria is blessed with a wide range of cultural resources, both tangible and intangible. The conservation and preservation of these resources have been a serious problem, leading to the promulgation of laws governing their protection. The laws governing the preservation of Nigeria's cultural resources trace their origin to the colonial period, when the need to collect and preserve heritage objects arose. This led to the establishment of Museums in Nigeria by 1952, although different forms of museums (traditional Museums) existed informally in the Pre-colonial era. Having recognised that colonial regulations (the 1953 Antiquities Ordinance and commission) were not able to control the illicit trade in antiquities, the military government led by General Yakubu Gowon promulgated the 1974 Act. This indigenous Act was again not effective, which subsequently led to the promulgation of Decree No. 77 of 1979 that led to the establishment of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). The institution was able to establish different museums and museum centres in Nigeria. The paper, however, observed that although the decree through the NCMM has done so much in its efforts to safeguard Nigeria's cultural heritage, there is an urgent need to review the decree. The paper also suggests that traditional management and enforcement systems should be integrated into the maintenance and protection of cultural heritage in Nigeria. Information for this paper comes solely from secondary materials.

Introduction

One of the most important and pressing issues in Heritage Management in the World has been the effective protection and preservation of the World Heritage by the use of Heritage legislation. Over the years, copious legislations have been promulgated for the protection of cultural properties, but these have not been effective in protecting antiquities. In Nigeria and many other countries, theft and illegal exportation of antiquities have been a recurring problem (Eze-Uzomaka, 2014).

Nigeria is blessed with an enormous cultural heritage resources considering the diverse human resources that are found in the country. Like most countries of the world, Nigeria has recognized the importance of cultural heritage (CH) and has tried to harness its potentials into national developmental programme. Though not successful, the country have given heritage some amount of relevance in her economic, historical, political, educational, recreational, and religious advancement (Onyima, 2016, cited from Arua *et al.,* 2019).

The National Tourism Policy (1990) of Nigeria emphasizes on identifying unique natural and cultural resources across the country and packages them to promote the heritage of Nigeria. It emphasizes the conservation, preservation and presentation of CHs of the various ethnic groups of the nation like food, arts and crafts, proverbs, myths, history, traditional ceremonies, traditional dances, drama, languages, body ornaments, historical sites and landscapes, modes of dressing, museums, amongst others.

With this development, heritage tourism is beginning to thrive in Nigeria (Usman, 2007; Boukes and Stylianou-Lambert, 2013).

Just like many other African countries, Nigeria was late in promulgation laws for the protection of CH. This for Eze-Uzomaka (2014, p. 140) "must have been due to the fact that they were colonised by the British government until the year 1960 when they gained their independence from the colonial rulers. In 1897, the British expedition to Benin, Nigeria claimed so much of Nigeria's works of art as the British carted away to Europe all the works of art they could lay their hands on and burnt the rest with the city. Colonial administrators and their team of workers collected several works of art and carted these off to Europe where most of them are still today. Others were burnt in burn fires after they had been declared "fetish" by missionaries (Nzewunwa 1989, p. 34)".

However, by 1953, the Antiquities Ordinance known as Ordinance No. 17 established the National Department of Antiquities. The Ordinance also provided for the establishment of museums, archaeological excavations, and protection of monuments and handling of antiques. This was followed by the promulgation of the Antiquities (Export Permits) Regulations in 1957.

Further, the Antiquities (Prohibited Transfers Decree No. 9 was pass in 1974 by the military government of Nigeria for the purpose of locating or moving of antiquities. The operation of this Decree continued until 1979 when it became clear that a review of legislation protecting the CH of the country was necessary. Thus, a new Decree (No. 77 of 1979) came in place and dissolved both the Antiquities Commission and the Federal Department of Antiquities, and merged them to form the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM).

Therefore, after over 40 years of the existence of the NCMM, one expects there would be some form of achievements made by the commission that demand a scholarly interrogation. It is upon this premise that the present authors have carried out this research to appraise the effectiveness of the commission in the conservation, preservation, protection and management of the CH of Nigerian people.

Conceptual Understanding

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), though an institution, has the "Museum" and a sub-institution and major component of the commission that demands adequate conceptual explanation into that of "Heritage Legislation".

***The Museum*:** The word museum is derived from the Greek word 'museion' (Okita, 1985 cited from Okpoko, 2006). The word museum has over the years been subjected to diverse meanings due to various scholarly interest, orientation or perception. To some, it may mean a place where dirty objects made by ancient people are kept while others may see it as a house where people go to admire ancient cultural objects (Odofin, 2000, p. 40).

According to Momin and Okpoko (1990, p. 157), "museums are institutions (publicly or privately owned) which collect, preserve and display objects (both natural and cultural) with the basic aim of entertaining, educating and providing materials for research on aspect of man's heritage and development". Encyclopedia America (1975, cited from Okpoko, 2006) defines museum as an institution for research, teaching, exhibition and conservation in one or more fields of human activities such as art, science, history or industry. Desvallees and Mairesse (2009), on the other hand, define the term museum to mean either the institution or the establishment or the place generally designed to select, study and display the material and intangible evidence of man and his environment

Just like individuals, many organisations across the globe have also attempted to define a museum on different occasions, especially organisations such as the American Association of Museums and the Museum Association in Great Britain, amongst others. With the formation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1946, the definition of museum began to reflect its statutes, particularly, in Article 3, section 1, which is presently accepted in several countries of the world (Reddy *et al,*

2018). The definition of museum by ICOM in 2007 is the most widely recognized.

According to ICOM statutes, Article 3, Section 1," a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM, 2007). Museums are therefore, operated to achieve the following objectives;

1. The provision of experience of educational value, preservation of people's culture and scientific heritage and associated records (Odofin, 2000, p. 11; Okpoko, 2006, p. 3; Momin and Okpoko 1990, p. 157).
2. Museums enlighten and educate the public just like other agencies of knowledge and culture such as schools/universities, libraries, etc.
3. Museums preserve the tangible evidence of man's activity, creativity as well as providing useful information about past environment. Such materials then attract, entertain and arouse the curiosity amongst the people.

Museums therefore "Give people opportunities to rediscover themselves and to identify their place in the past and the role they can play in the contemporary world" (Momin and Okpoko, 1990, p. 158)". The link between the past and the present of man is presented by museums through their collection, preservation, exhibition and education (Kimbers, 2007, p. 101). Thereby making them repositories of knowledge (Soyinka, 2006).

***Heritage Legislation*:** This is generally the preparing and enacting of laws by local, state or national legislatures (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). In this research however, we have consider legislation to be "laws, rules, regulations, acts, bills, statutes, enactment, charters, ordinances, measures, canons or codes, which affect protection and or management of archaeological and or CH of a country" (Eze-Uzomaka, 2014, p. 135). This means all applicable laws relating to the protection, reconnaissance and preservation of archaeological, historical or cultural evidences, remains, sites, features or artifacts (Law Insider, 2021).

Legislation protecting CH emerged first in classical antiquity in the Mediterranean Basin, as royal edicts by Alexander the Great and later by Rome were proclaimed to protect archaeological remains deemed to represent the heritage of the state. This was driven by the recognition in the Mediterranean Basin that physical materials from the past represented a record of CH for subsequent generations. Similar proclamations and expectations developed later in the eighth-century Islamic caliphates of the Middle East and in imperial China in the eleventh century, then at the national level in Sweden in 1666 and Russia in 1704. All of this set a cultural precedent, such that the emergence in Europe of Humanistic Antiquarianism, along with Enlightenment

values, drove interest in the archaeological past, precipitating sequentially ethnological and archaeological societies, and then acceptance in the 1820s of national heritage legislation (Neumann, 2014).

Other country of the world followed latter in the 20th century. For instance, in Czechoslovakia in 1850, the Emperor promulgated a decree that established the Imperial Royal Central Commission to handle finds from excavations, notification of accidental discoveries, and protect and preserve ancient roads (Princ, 1984). In Denmark, the Nature Protection Act of 1937 protects all ancient monuments. The Australian government established the Native and Historical Objects and Areas Preservation Act in 1955-60. And in 1972, the Western Australian Aboriginal Heritage legislation was promulgated. This was followed by the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act of the Northern Territory in 1978. Then the Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Heritage Protection Act of 1986 was been promulgated to protect places and artefacts of particular significance to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in accordance with their traditions" (Prott and O'Keefe, 1984).

In New Zealand, efforts to protect and preserve archaeological monuments have been linked with the control of export, seen in the Maori Antiquities Act of 1901. By 1975, New Zealand had The Antiquities Act which focuses on the protection of relics. As noted earlier, by 1953, The Antiquities Ordinance known as Ordinance No. 17 brought into being the National Department of Antiquities in Nigeria. This was followed by The Antiquities (Export Permits) Regulations promulgated in 1957. Further, the Antiquities (Prohibited Transfers Decree No. 9 of 1974 proceed the Decree No. 77 of 1979 that established the NCMM. Many other countries of the world followed after Nigeria, which cannot be provided here because of space and context.

However, Legislations concerning CH resources are often promulgated but not effectively used. This is particularly the case of Nigeria, as much of the provisions of the heritage law are not put to practice.

Appraisal *of the Decree No. 77 of 1979*

Nigeria is rich in heritage materials (both tangible and intangible). This includes the rich archaeological and historical sites, numerous cultural and traditional landscapes, monuments, artefacts, antiquities as well as other artistic and cultural resources that characterized the various aspects of the people's cosmology, religion, literature, politics and government (Usman, 2007). Famous amongst the archaeological discoveries in Nigeria are the Nok terracotta figurines which is dated to between 500BC-200AD and said to be the earliest arts in Sub-Saharan Africa (Odofin, 2006). Others are the Igbo-Ukwu dated to the 9th century AD, Ife and Benin bronzes dated between 12th-16th century AD, the mysterious Niger-Benue Tada figurines, the Esie soapstone figures and the decorated stone circuits of Cross River area. The Sukur and Osun-Oshogbo World Heritage site, Benin and

Kano city walls, numerous rock shelters and abandoned settlements are also good examples.

Nigeria's heritage or cultural resources like in other countries within Africa have been under serious threats as a result of both human activities and natural agents. These irreplaceable resources are being destroyed, looted and illegally moved out of the country on daily basis by illicit traffickers including professionals and museum staff who are supposed to be the custodian of these materials (Stanyard and Dhaouadi, 2020).

As a measure to check this menace, Nigerian government (both colonial and post-colonial) put in place different legislative and administrative provisions for recording, investigating, protecting, conserving and preserving the public CH (Myles, 1989). Most places of cultural importance during the pre-colonial period enjoyed protection through religious and traditional taboos and sanctions (Odofin, 2006; Usman, 2007). These taboos and sanctions secured archaeological sites and other CH of Nigeria until the arrival of colonial masters. Examples include sacred grooves, royal palaces, shrines, walling systems amongst others.

During the colonial period massive construction works were carried out without consideration of their impact on the environment. This resulted in the widespread deforestation and devastation of previously undisturbed natural and historical landscape thereby leading to destruction of a lot of historical and cultural materials (Usman, 2007; Adewumi, 2013). This development motivated K.C. Murray and other concerned colonial officers to press for the need for a law as well as the establishment of an institution to protect Nigerian antiquity against destruction and looting. This prompted the establishment of the Antiquities Service and the office of a Surveyor of Antiquities on 28th July, 1943 to head the crusade. International laws are also made to protect CH of countries against destruction in times of conflict and protracted crises as well as deliberate targets (Kelly, 2021). this apply to places with clear based conflicts like Jos Plateau, Benue and Kaduna where there has been persistence farmer-herder conflict, and Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states where Boko Haram insurgence have been operating for long.

The Antiquities Ordinance No 17 of 1953 which replaced the legislation of 1943 empowered the Federal Department of Antiquities which was under the Federal Ministry of Information to conserve and control illegal exportation of Nigeria's antiquities. Antiquities were defined by Ordinance 17 as "any object of archaeological interest, any work of art or craft work of indigenous origin made before 1918 or of historical, artistic or scientific interest" (Odofin, 2000, p. 42.).

This period marked a turning point in the history of the legislation to preserve CH in Nigeria. In March 1953, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who was the then Prime Minister and Minister of Works introduced the Bill in the House of Representatives. In

the bill he emphasized the importance of CH which according to him serves as a source of pride and inspiration to Nigerians, both in the present and in the future (Ugwuanyi, 2018).

The Antiquities Department established by this Ordinance was to be responsible for the establishment of museums, supervising archaeological excavations, declaring and protecting monuments and controlling the movement of antiquities (Nzewunwa, 1984). A total of 55 national monuments were declared between 1959 and 1964 following the passage of the Ordinance (Osuagwu, 2009).

The Antiquities Commission was established that same year to formulate policies relating to the conservation of Nigeria's antiquities, while the Department of Antiquities was to implement such policies. In 1957, the Antiquities (Export Permits) regulation was enacted with the aim of controlling the exportation of Nigeria's antiquities. The Antiquities (Prohibited Transfer) Decree was also enacted in 1974 under Decree No.9 by the Military regime of General Yakubu Gowon, to check illegal exportation of cultural objects seen that this was not properly addressed by the 1953 Ordinance. The 1974 Act did not provide adequate protection for immovable CH. This was however due to "the porous national border of Nigeria and the lack of institutions with the responsibilities of checking and monitoring these antiquities" (Folorunso, 1996, cited from Kimbers, 2007, p. 102).

The problems associated with 1974 Act led to the promulgation of a new law to address the grey areas. This was Decree No. 77 of 1979. As narrated earlier, this new law dissolved both the Federal Department of Antiquities and the National Antiquities Commission and in addition, formed the NCMM. This Commission was given powers to generate funds and enter into contract. It was also given fresh power to designate national monuments and provide for stiffer penalties against the destruction, unauthorized alteration and removal of monuments in Nigeria. By this Decree, the NCMM is a corporate body and legal entity that can sue and be sued. Under this Decree the National Commission for Museums and Monuments was to administer and maintain National Museums, antiquities, monuments amongst others. The Decree was therefore to correct the lapses that were observed in the legislation of 1943, 1953, 1957 and 1974 as well as their impact on the activities of the Federal Department of Antiquities (Akinade, 1999).

The NCMM presently manages 51 museums as well as 65 national monuments and sites. About 100 proposed sites and monuments also await designation by the Commission. The Commission has in recent times observed that over 65 monuments and heritage sites have been vandalized, in some cases outright destruction and removal (Sowole, 2020).

Functions of the Commission are stated in Section 3 (1) of Decree No. 77. They include:

a. To administer national museums, antiquities and monuments.
b. To establish and maintain National Museums and other outlets for or in connection with but not restricted only to the following-
   i. Antiquities,
   ii. Science and technology,
   iii. Warfare,
   iv. African, black and other antiquities,
   v. Art and crafts,
   vi. Architecture,
   vii. Natural history, and,
   viii. Educational services.
c. To make recommendations to any State Government or other persons or authority concerning the establishment and Management of museums or antiquities and Monuments declared to be National Antiquities and Monuments, and
d. To approve any museum, that is privately established and maintained, and also withdraws such approval at any time.

The responsibility of the Commission in protecting Nigeria's CH including those privately owned have been emphasized in part 2, Section 15 which states that, "the Commission may with the consent of the owner of a monument, or if it appears to the Commission that the monument is in danger of decay, destruction, or removal or damage from neglect or injudicious treatment, maintain such monument and may; a) have access at all reasonable times to the monument for the purpose of inspecting it and doing such acts as may be required for its maintenance thereof; and b) where practicable remove the monument or any part of it for the purpose of repair or protection for such period as may be agreed between the owner thereof and the Commission."

Section 19 (1-14) of the Decree provides for regulations guiding archaeological excavation in Nigeria. Such laws are aimed at preventing the destruction of archaeological sites and monuments by amateurs. Part 9 (1) states that the applicant must be certified by the Commission to be "competent by training and experience" and that the person should have the financial means or other support of an archaeological or scientific society or institution of good repute. Illegal excavation and removal of archaeological materials destroy the basis for studying those heritage resources and national identity, thereby making them meaningless.

Subsection (5) of part 4 also provides for action against persons that contravene the conditions stated in section 4 (1-4). This is because trade in archaeological and heritage material has become a global concern (Hodge, 2021). To control indiscriminate movement of archaeological materials from excavations, Section 20 (1-3) makes it mandatory for every excavator to report his discovery to the commission if the person discovers an object of archaeological interest.

The law further provides for the protection of Nigeria's CH against looting and vandalism. This is contained in section

21(1-2). This section of the decree prevents unaccredited agents from buying cultural materials. It also forbids the selling of any antiquity to anyone that is not an accredited agent. Section 25 on the other hand prohibits export of antiquity without a "Permit." Section 22 permits the Nigerian Police Force and Officers of the Department of Customs and Excise to seize the antiquities, arrest the said agent (suspect) as well as prosecute him/her. This has helped though very little, in controlling illegal trafficking of Nigeria's CH (Odubayo, 2005, cited from Kimbers, 2000, p. 107).

The decree in section 18 provides stiffer sanctions for any person who, willfully destroys, defaces, alters, removes or excavates any monument. This is to prevent arbitrary destruction of any monument or material of cultural importance in Nigeria. In recognition of the benefits of these CHs to the public, the Decree also provided for public access to monuments as well as payment of such entrance fees which is to be determined by rules made by the Commission with the consent of the Commissioner.

A study of the Decree indicates that it is deficient in terms of enforcement and effectiveness which have rendered its provisions ineffective. These shortcomings are yet to be addressed and over the years the impact of the Commission has not been adequately felt by the public. As contained in section 3 (1), the decree empowers the Commission to establish and maintain museums and other museum out-lets. Despite this the Commission has over the years been poorly funded to meet this obligation by government to enable it safeguard these irreplaceable treasures properly. To ensure effective management of immovable CH, a Department of Monuments, Heritage and Sites have been created for the proper management of immovable CH and headed by a Director. This task was hitherto under the Director of Museums and Monuments and supervised by museum curators in their respective domains. Decentralization of power has made it possible for the Commission to maintain the museums (though without meaningful upgrades) because of poor funding.

The Museum hierarchy has through the relationship with members of its immediate communities ensured that these heritage resources are maintained. However, in the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture in Jos, maintenance is a serious problem. Most of the traditional buildings at the museum are already collapsing due to neglect occasioned by poor funding.

Further, Nigerian museums have continued to face prevalence theft activities. This can be attributed to lapses associated with the enforcement of the relevant laws guiding the activities of the Commission. Today, a lot of Nigeria's CH resources have found their way into different museums in other countries of the world through the activities of antiquity looter as well as professionals including Museum officials (Rodney, 1972; Akinade, 1999; Eluyemi, 2002; Onyima, 2006; Ojedokun, 2012; Gundu, 2014, 2020; Nomishan *et al.,* 2021).

We have witnessed individuals, government establishments and states destroying CH in Nigeria through construction, farming, buildings and other activities without being punished. Examples of this include the demolition of the Ilojo Bar in Lagos in 2016 by the Lagos State Government under Mr. Akinwumi Ambode, yet no one has been prosecuted in respect to the serious crime. Generally, issues bordering on culture are not taken seriously in Nigeria which is responsible for the recent lawlessness and general social instability. This further indicates that Decree No. 77 has become helplessly weak in providing protection to CH in the country.

For instance, the Decree states that, an offender upon conviction can pay a fine of two thousand naira or imprisonment for three years. The penalties against willful destruction or defacing of CH were retained from the 1974 Act. This is evidently too weak to serve as deterrent to other intending culprits in the contemporary Nigeria. This legal problem have accounted for the serious problems mentioned earlier. Nigerian antiquities were/are being openly sold in European and American markets by art dealers who connived with illegal miners and dealers, professionals and museum officials (Gundu, 2012, 2020). Poor funding of the Commission have largely contributed to its inability to function well. In attempting to control these illicit activities, the Artifact Rescuers Association of Nigeria (ARAN) comes in to purchase cultural materials that would otherwise be exported illegally or destroyed (Stanyard and Dhaouadi, 2020).

Decree No.77 of 1979 did not make provision for traditional management and enforcement systems in the maintenance and protection of CH in Nigeria. This can be attributed to the inability of the Federal government to acknowledge the role of the public in safeguarding these heritage materials and the need to also involve them in the formulation of laws related to heritage protection. Nigeria inherited the colonial system of heritage management which did not put into consideration the interest of local people regarding their heritage (Ugwuanyi, 2018; Nomishan *et al.,* 2021). With this situation most communities feel alienated from their heritage and are no longer interested in its maintenance.

Before the advent of colonialism, most communities had traditional ways of protecting their heritage. These heritage materials were under the custody of traditional and/or religious leaders who guarded them jealously. The sacredness associated with these chief priests had taboos that protected these materials from looting and vandalism. This can however not apply to all heritage materials and sites. The World Heritage Sites of Osun Oshogbo and Sukur are exceptions. In these places conservation activities are jointly carried out by UNESCO, NCMM, the communities as well as some NGOs that are also partners in such project.

Over the years, Nigerian government have also established other institutions like National Council of Arts and Culture (NCAC), Centre for Black and African Civilization (CBAC) and National Institute

for Cultural Orientation (NICO) to manage different aspects of the country's heritage resources. However, rather than assisting in this role, it seems the coming of these bodies have further caused confusion to the NCMM. This duplication in the administrative framework for the conservation and management of Nigeria's heritage constitute a great challenge in the implementation of UNESCO Convention (Usman, 2007).

Also, by allowing the Federal Executive Council to appoint the chairman and members of the Commission, it has exposed the Commission to the danger of political manipulation by the Federation Chief Executive. Although it is expected that such persons should be appointed based on their specialized knowledge in relevant area of heritage, culture, natural history, science and technology, there is generally lack of professionalism in the management of Nigeria's CH. Appointment is often done based on political patronage which has contributed to lack of efficacy and capacity to implement the mandate of the Commission. This again contributes to the ineffectiveness in the leadership of the Commission and its museums. This is because most leaders of the Commission lack the expertise to know what is needed so as to influence the allocation of funds from the Federal Treasury for the purpose of safeguarding CH.

Furthermore, the Decree does not give the much-needed attention to public awareness. As a result, the public is mostly ignorant of the place of museums in national development. Less or no regard is therefore given to cultural education and consequently the unprecedented level of destruction done to archaeological materials, theft as well as exportation of Nigerian antiquities.

Empowering only the Commission to carry out the roles preserving and protecting monuments and sites in the country is not also appropriate. CH can be better secured if the States and Local Government Councils are given adequate opportunities to be involved. This is because they are closer to the cultural materials than those at the Commission. The two tiers of government should be empowered to assist in this role if CH resources in Nigeria are to be properly safeguarded.

It is however appropriate to call for the review of the Decree (No. 77 of 1979). The National Assembly should consider as necessary, the urgent review of Decree No. 77 of 1979 to empower it towards a proper and adequate protection of the cultural antiquities of Nigeria. In this review therefore, penalties for violating the CH law in Section 13-20 should necessarily be raised to a fine of ₦1,000,000 for indigenes and ₦5, 000, 000 for foreigner, and 20 years imprisonment, as against the previous fine of ₦2000- and 3-years imprisonment. As proposed earlier by the National Assembly, the new law should provide that culprits be arraigned before Federal High Courts as against Magistrate courts which failed to be effective. This is just a few suggestions to be added to what the National Assembly may deem appropriate to include in the proposed new law on heritage protection.

Significance *of Functional Heritage Legislation in Nigeria*

Seen the numerous problems confronting the effectiveness in the implementation of Decree No. 77 of 1979, there is every need to review the legislation as articulated above. This is necessary if certain measures are to be taken to ensure that its impact is made effective and felt by Nigerians in its management of CH in the country. This is because Nigeria has come of age and it is time to realise that preserving and safeguarding her CH is a necessity and should be perceived as a nonnegotiable means of promoting unity and patriotism amongst her citizens.

Heritage is the historical root and identity of a people (Kristiansen, 1989). It has become part of a people's legitimate claim over ownership of land and resources. This means that it can contribute to strengthening the people's dignity and sense of belonging (Usman, 2007).

Heritage can inculcate the spirit of patriotism in a people, thereby building in them the spirit of pride and self-respect, necessary for national development. Patriotism is key in maintaining social standards in pursuit of national goals. According to Gubam and Nomishan (2021), knowledge of CH enriches the lives of a nation's citizens and enables them to manage contemporary problems more successfully. This can re-position the people in a better way to approach problems using their tradition methods (Gubam and Nomishan, 2021). Hence CH represents a people that are endowed with good reasoning and critical faculties - living in accord with ethical principles.

Heritage materials are repositories of cultural education, identity and history. They are good potentials of national integration, this is seen in the way they stimulate the spirit of loyalty in individual citizens (Eboreime, 1995). Archaeological materials helped in no small measure in galvanising Nationalists to fight against external forces. It represents the people's source of pride and identity, and therefore demands to be protected jealously. As posited by Kelly (2021), heritage protection is important in peacebuilding and development.

Apart from the above obvious benefits of heritage protection to the nation, there is more to gain in preserving and managing heritage resources in the country properly. As rightly articulated by Nomishan *et al.* (2021, p. 146), "countries that properly manage their CH resources, such as Israel, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, China, USA, Britain, France, South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya, provide essential socio-economic opportunities to their citizens. This is seen in the ability of CH resources to attracts investments (internal and external), which in turn provide job opportunities through increased cultural tourism, better/improved infrastructure, and promotes patriotism amongst the citizens." It also provides local businesses opportunities to host communities, thereby leading to economic empowerment at the lowest stratum of the society.

No doubt increased (cultural) tourism activities in a locality can also attract different social amenities such as a good transportation network, schools, electricity, potable water, good accommodation, standard worship centres and financial institutions, amongst others. Though the coming of tourism in an area can sometimes be accompanied by some bad and unfamiliar social behaviours brought about by the visitors, the positive impacts of (cultural) tourism far outweigh the negative ones.

Conclusion

Nigeria, as a nation, is blessed with a lot of archaeological and other cultural resources, most of which are yet to be tapped. These important and irreplaceable resources require protection by the Federal, State and Local governments, as well as the general public.

It is in this regard that most nations of the world, including Nigeria, having realised the place of CH in nation building, put some measures in place to protect their CH from loss through deterioration or disappearance (UNESCO, 2017). This is in recognition of the fact that heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to the future generations UNESCO, 2003). These resources are sources of life and inspiration, and are "priceless and irreplaceable, not only to a nation, but to humanity in general.

The implication here is that their loss through any means constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the people of the world (UNESCO, 2017). Apart from the local measures being put in place by the government of Nigeria to protect and preserve the cultural property within its domain (NCMM Decree No.77, 1979; Cultural policy of Nigeria, 1988), there are eight conventions and about ten recommendations of UNESCO concerning the protection of World cultural and natural heritage to which Nigeria is also signatory (Usman, 2007).

Further, if museums are to perform their roles of preserving, protecting and showcasing the nation's antiquities effectively, the various provisions of Decree No. 77 of 1979 against theft and illegal removal, possession and exportation of Nigeria's CH must be enforced. The Decree should be reviewed and made to provide for stiffer penalties by authorities like the Police, DSS, Customs, NSCDC and also the law courts, to deter the offenders. Cases involving issues regarding cultural materials should be referred to higher courts and not magistrates' courts, where they are handled with laxity. The new law should give room for the traditional system of managing and protecting CH in Nigeria.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments should be made to as a matter of necessity, to realise its functions of creating awareness and educating the public regarding the importance of their CH. Museum staff as agents of cultural awareness, are also placed in the best position to carry the public along in programmes regarding CH. This should be done through constant organisation of

workshops, seminars, visits to schools and marketplaces, exhibitions, quizzes and debates amongst pupils/students in primary and secondary schools, and staging simple plays amongst others. Concentration should be given to the rural areas, as this will help enlighten the rural people of the importance of heritage sites and materials in their localities. It is most appropriate to rigorously engage the rural people because of the fact that, they constitute the closest public to these heritage resources.

This will further help in promoting the willingness to preserve the cultural materials within their communities. Stakeholders and private individuals (both in the country and in the diaspora) should consider giving support to the preservation of CH resources. Finally, the appointment of executive officials of the NCMM and other heritage related institutions by all the authorities should give priority to professionalism and expertise. This will help eliminate nepotism in the CH sector to pave way for its smooth running.

All this is to make sure that there is sustainable development in the management of CH materials in Nigeria. By sustainable development, we refer to efforts that will ensure future interests are also guaranteed.

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