Introduction
A Review of the Increasing Importance of Tourism in the Developing Countries

Tourism, due to its diverse nature and with its far-reaching implications, lacks a concise and precise definition. However, tourism entails the movement of a person or persons away from home, and usually for leisure. And, such movements associated with tourism have tremendous social, economic and cultural impacts.

The industry of tourism is presently acquiring an increasingly social as well as economic relevance. According to Ekechukwu, a World Tourism Organisation forecast asserts that

Tourism and associated activities generate over 10 percent of Global Domestic Product and offer about 200 million jobs... the number of people travelling internationally will jump from about 613 million in 1997 to about 1.6 billion by the year 2020. It has also been identified as having the key to present and future economic growth.¹

However, with the promised economic largesse from tourism, it is obvious that the developed nations are benefiting from tourism more that the developing nations. The reasons for this are not far fetched. In the first place, tourism originated as a concept among the developed nations, so both the government and people of these nations are conversant with the concept. Again, since tourism is a capital-intensive industry, only countries with adequate financial buoyancy can invest in it. As a result, developed nations due to availability of funds can invest comfortably in the industry.

Given that the developed countries are likely to gain more from tourism, does this mean that the developing nations cannot benefit from same? Wahab cautions that even though there is an immense economic gain to be derived from
tourism that the developing nations should not see tourism as Manna from above.\textsuperscript{2} Quoting Williams and Shaw, Wahab advises that developing countries should strive to provide the necessary infrastructure needed for tourism as well as supply the needs of tourists.\textsuperscript{3} Again, the developing nations have also been advised to make their rich cultural heritage, the selling point of their own form of tourism.\textsuperscript{4} Another relevance of tourism to developing countries is that they can derive sustainable development from it.

In 1992, a UN Conference on Environment and Development UNCED – also known as Earth Summit, was held in Rio De Janeiro in Brazil with 179 countries in attendance. During the conference, a cross-national agreement on working towards sustainable development known as Local Agenda 21 was endorsed. LA Agenda 21, according to Jackson and Morpeth, aims at achieving sustainable development through planned, democratic, co-operative means including community involvement in decisions about the environment and development.\textsuperscript{5}

Following the endorsement of Agenda 21, tourism industry readily provides, the avenue for the achievement of sustainable development because, according to Jackson and Morpeth, the industry has been recognised as having an “increasing important economic, social, cultural and environmental, impact... and it has diverse implications for the achievement of sustainable development”.\textsuperscript{6} Again, through tourism, culture, art and industries can be preserved. For an effective tourism programme in communities, it has been advised that the people in the community should be allowed to participate at the planning level. This would enable them to be part of the programme and not to feel alienated from the tourism programme of the community.

Tourism, therefore provides an avenue for the preservation of indigenous industries and art, as well as for economic empowerment through job creation.

This paper aims at examining how the very important indigenous industry of blacksmithing in Awka can be prevented from going extinct through the tourism programme of Anambra State.

**The Geography and People of Awka**

Awka, the capital of Anambra State is located about 35 kilometres North East of Onitsha and about 72 kilometres South West of Enugu. It is enclosed by longitude $6^\circ 10'\ 6^\circ 10''$ and $7^\circ 8'\ 4'$ east and latitude $6^\circ 10''\ 4'$ and $6^\circ 15$ north.\textsuperscript{7} It has neighbouring towns like Amawbia, Okpuno, Isiagu, Nibo and Nawfia. The 1980 population census put Awka's population at 25,160. Awka is noted historically for blacksmithing.