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MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS SITE: PROTECTION, PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION OF ART WORK AND MONUMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This desk review explores the management of cultural monuments in Nigeria, focusing on the protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of significant sites such as the Nok Terracotta Figures, Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Sukur Cultural Landscape, Ogbunike Caves, and the Benin City Walls. These monuments not only serve as vital tourist attractions but also play a crucial role in safeguarding Nigeria's rich cultural heritage and promoting cultural tourism. The review synthesizes existing literature to highlight the historical, artistic, and cultural values of these monuments, emphasizing their contributions to understanding past civilizations, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship, and embodying community identities. Key themes include the importance of interdisciplinary management approaches that integrate conservation, community engagement, and sustainable tourism practices. By analyzing best practices and current challenges, this study aims to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive framework for effective management strategies that ensure the longevity and relevance of Nigeria's cultural monuments for future generations.In conclusion, this review underscores the need for a balanced approach that respects both the physical integrity of these sites and their cultural significance, fostering an environment of preservation and appreciation.

Keywords*:* Cultural Monuments, Preservation, Protection, Rehabilitation, Heritage Management, Artistic Value, Historical Significance.

Introduction

Monuments, preservation, and rehabilitation of artwork are crucial elements in the cultural heritage of Nigeria. Nigeria is a country rich in history and diverse cultural traditions, and its monuments and artworks play a significant role in preserving and showcasing this heritage (Eze & Uche, 2018). Monuments, in the context of Nigeria, refer to structures or sites that hold historical, cultural, or artistic importance (Adeniran & Oyinloye, 2017). These can include ancient ruins, archaeological sites, historical buildings, statues, and landmarks. They are tangible reminders of the past and serve as a connection between the present and the country's history. Preservation of artwork and monuments involves the protection and maintenance of these structures and artifacts to ensure their longevity and cultural significance (Ajayi, 2015). It includes preventive measures to safeguard against natural disasters, environmental degradation, vandalism, and theft. Preservation also involves documentation, research, and conservation techniques to restore and maintain the original condition of these artworks and monuments (Akinyemi, 2018).

Rehabilitation of artwork and monuments focuses on restoring and enhancing their value, both aesthetically and functionally (Fafunwa, & Olaleye, 2017). This process

may involve repairs, cleaning, reconstruction, or adaptation of the structure to meet modern needs while respecting its historical and cultural significance (Jaiyeola & Adeleke, 2019). Rehabilitation efforts aim to revitalize the artwork or monument, making it accessible and relevant to contemporary society. In Nigeria, various organizations and government agencies are responsible for the preservation and rehabilitation of artwork and monuments (Kolawole & Olatunji, 2016). The National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) is the primary agency entrusted with the preservation, documentation, and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage (Eluf ioye & Adebisi, 2016). They work in collaboration with other institutions, such as universities, research centers, and international organizations, to ensure the protection and conservation of Nigeria's artistic legacy.Efforts to preserve and rehabilitate artwork and monuments in Nigeria are essential for several reasons. Firstly, they contribute to the understanding and appreciation of Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage among its citizens and visitors (Ojo & Shonibare, 2017). These monuments serve as educational resources, allowing people to learn about Nigeria's history, traditions, and artistic achievements.Secondly, the preservation and rehabilitation of artwork and monuments promote tourism and economic development. Nigeria's cultural heritage has the potential to attract both domestic and international tourists, leading to increased revenue and job opportunities (Opele et al., 2015). By preserving and showcasing its monuments and artwork, Nigeria can capitalize on its rich cultural assets.

Cultural monuments and significance in relation to history, artistic and cultural value cultural monument refers to physical structure, object, or site that holds significant historical, artistic, or cultural value. These monuments are typically recognized and protected due to their importance in preserving and commemorating aspects of human civilization and cultural heritage. Nigeria is a country rich in cultural heritage and has a wealth of historical monuments that reflect its diverse cultural heritage. These cultural monuments are significant not only for their architectural beauty but also for their historical and cultural importance.

Some notable cultural monuments in Nigeria include:

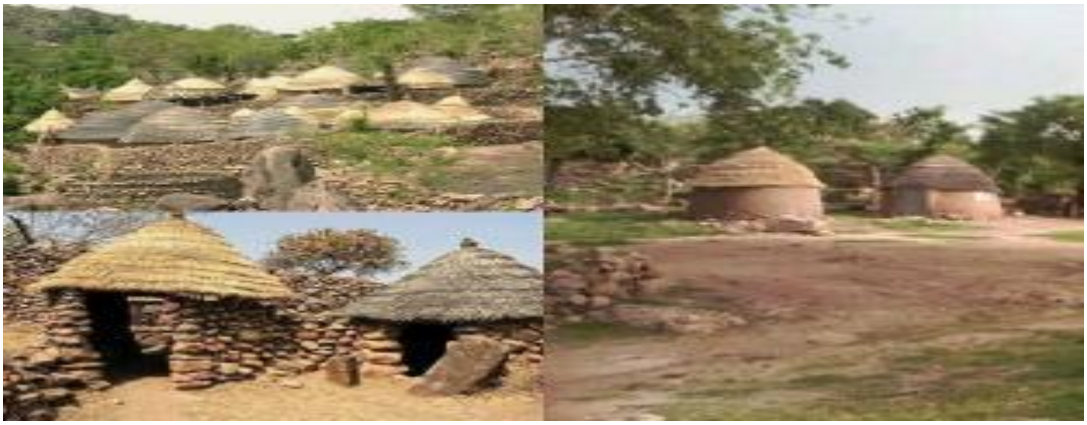
Nok Terracotta Figures: These ancient terracotta sculptures, dating back to around
500 BCE, were discovered in the northern part of Nigeria. They depict human figures, animals, and other intricate designs, representing the artistic skills of the Nok civilization.




Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove: Located in Osun State, this sacred grove is dedicated to the river goddess, Osun. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is known for its beautiful sculptures, shrines, and artworks that are associated with Yoruba religion and mythology (Daramola & Olaniyan, 2019).



Sukur Cultural Landscape: This cultural landscape in Adamawa State is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It features a fortified settlement, terraced fields, and a palace complex, reflecting the architectural and cultural practices of the Sukur people.



Ogbunike Caves: Situated in Anambra State, these caves hold spiritual significance for the Igbo people. They consist of a series of interconnected chambers and tunnels, adorned with stalagmites and stalactites, and are used for religious rituals and ceremonies.



Benin City Walls: The ancient city of Benin, in present-day Edo State, was once surrounded by massive walls and moats. These walls, built in the 13th century, are a testament to the architectural and engineering prowess of the Benin Kingdom.



The abve cultural monuments not only serve as tourist attractions but also play a crucial role in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage and promoting cultural tourism. They provide a glimpse into the rich history, traditions, and artistic achievements of the Nigerian people.

The significance of cultural monuments

According to the litearature, the significance of cultural monuments can be understood in three main aspects:

Historical Value: Cultural monuments provide insights into the past, allowing the understanding and learning from previous civilizations. They serve as tangible evidence of the events, achievements, and traditions of a particular time period. By preserving cultural monuments, we can ensure that the history and heritage of a society are not forgotten.

Artistic Value: Cultural monuments often showcase exceptional artistic skills and craftsmanship. They include architectural marvels, sculptures, paintings, or other artistic creations. These monuments not only represent the artistic achievements of a specific culture but also inspire and

influence future generations of artists. They serve as a testament to human creativity and the aesthetic expressions of different societies.

Cultural Value: Cultural monuments are deeply rooted in the traditions, beliefs, and values of a community or a nation. They embody the cultural identity of a particular group of people and play a crucial role in preserving their heritage. Cultural monuments serve as symbols of cultural pride, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among individuals. They also attract tourists and visitors, contributing to the promotion of cultural exchange and understanding.

Artistic preservation and awareness

The word preservation is an act of caring to preserve something from destruction, decay, theft and vandal. Art endeavours are outcomes of creative ingenuity of man to consciously produce or arrange forms, colours, and other elements in a manner that portrays beauty and even functionality. It includes a beautiful ancient works of previous civilization. Art is referred to as an individually or collectively created products of value, imagination, expression and application of various skills in the various branches of creative activity such as architecture, painting, sculpture, music, dance, theatre, film, graphic art design, etc. (Folarin, 2001). Art and culture are heritages that contribute a sense of identity to both individual and community of any nation. Heritage is therefore referred to as any valued property, such as historic buildings, artworks, books and manuscripts and other artefacts that havebeen passed down from the previous generation to another. They are special values, and so are worthy of preservation for the oncoming generation to learn from them. Here for this study, we are concerned with the traditional Nigerian art made during the prehistoric period in the country. It is interesting to note that Nigeria is a country in the Sub-Saharan African that has produced a large variety of high-quality ancient artworks in durable and diverse media (National Commission of Museum, 2009). This was made possible by the diverse groups of Nigeria who contributed immensely to the artistic richness of the nation. The exquisite Nigerian artworks heritage; it creates awareness on the socio-economic gains of heritage management in Nigeria. Heritage's Identity Heritage is what connects the past with the present and the future through stories as well as traditions, objects, buildings and Places captured through memories and are kept over time (Upper Hutt City Council, 2014). It should be echoed that memories of the past linger on in the heart of eyewitnesses or people who have insight into a particular scene, events, and history of a place and people's lifestyle. A particular adage in Yoruba says: “o se oju mi koro” I am an eye witness.

Art heritage here refers to those rich art objects and non-material attributes of culture acquired within the society and passed-down from generation to generation (Ok poko, 1990).Heritage includes diverse beliefs, festivals, diets, art traditions, medicines, architecture, dances, drama, indigenous crafts and technologies of a given society (Olaniyan, & Ajayi, 2019). The traces of some of these resources are either historic or ethnographic in nature, or the partial remains are contained in archaeological sites, museums, Palaces, shrines and also at strategic palaces in the cities and towns (Okpoko, 1990). Some notable

art heritage in Nigeria include Nok terracotta in Kaduna State, Benin bronzes and other materials from Edo State, Ife terracotta works in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Esie figurine soapstone in Kwara State, Ek pu ancestral figurine in Oron, Akwa-I bom State, and art traditions from other places in Nigeria.Beginning of heritage preservation.

The term heritage preservation has traditionally been concerned with the identification,interpretation, maintenance and care of significant cultural sites, physical heritage object of arts and materials. The birth of heritage management in Nigeria is a concept from colonial experience and it has its root in civilisation and urban development. Before this time, there was nothing as museum institution of any kind that has concern for art objects and materials, except the keeping of cultural objects in the palaces of traditional rulers and community or family shrines (Agbaje-Williams, 1996; Oyinloye, 2016). The concept that established National Museums in Nigeria was born from the idea of preven ting cultural heritage from deterioration by environmental and human factors: weathering agents, religion iconoclast, and neglect of traditional ways of life in favour of foreign religions as well as western civilization. The preserved heritages in Nigeria's national museums presently are collections acquired from diverse groups in the country. These objects are seen portraying national integration and unity of Nigerians. According to E boreime (2000), objects and materials were brought into the museums under one roof from different cultures to visually express the national ideal and unity as one nation made from different people.Benefits of art heritage preservationHeritage of art objects are beneficial to the people of contemporary time in many ways.

In the first place, researches have proved that every nation has some form of art heritage features she is proud of and would want the rest of the world to know about (Sowunmi, 2008). According to her, these features are regarded as positive attributes of culture that should enhance the image of a particular nation in the eyes of both her nationals and foreigners. Such art heritage is preserved in the museums and national galleries for tourists to visit from time to time, for people's enjoyment as well as gaining knowledge of past civilisation. In the course of visitors going to view art heritage exhibition, certain stipends are collected to augment government subvention in the heritage management institutions i.e. museum, national park, national gallery etc. Also, preservation and maintenance of valuable art heritage of a nation help protect the image and identity of such nation; thereby, their security and survival are also guaranteed (Sowunmi, 2008). Manament, protection and rehabilitation of artworks and monuments Artwork and monuments can be managed, protected, and rehabilitated through various strategies and approaches. Which includes

- **Documentation and Inventory:** Creating a thorough inventory and documentation of artwork and monuments is essential for effective management. This includes recording details such as location, condition, historical significance, and ownership.
- **Conservation and Restoration:** Regular maintenance and conservation practices help protect and preserve the artwork and monuments. This involves cleaning, repairing, and restoring any

damage or deterioration to maintain their original condition.

- **Security Measures:** Implementing security measures such as surveillance systems, alarms, and physical barriers can help prevent theft, vandalism, and unauthorized
- access to artworks and monuments.
- **Environmental Management:** Controlling the environmental factors that can damage artworks and monuments is crucial. This includes monitoring temperature, humidity, lighting, and exposure to pollutants.
- **Public Awareness and Education**: Raising public awareness about the significance and value of artwork and monuments promotes their preservation. Educating people about their historical and cultural importance encourages responsible behavior and respect towards these treasures.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships**: Establishing collaborations with relevant stakeholders like government agencies, conservation experts, community organizations, and artists can enhance the management and protection of artwork and monuments (Odion & Povona, 2018). This can include joint efforts in conservation projects, funding initiatives, and policy development.
- **Legislation and Regulation:** Implementing laws and regulations specific to the
- protection and management of artwork and monuments helps ensure their long-term preservation. This can involve restrictions on alteration, export, or sale of culturally significant pieces.
- **Monitoring and Research:** Regular monitoring and research on the condition and conservation techniques of artwork and monuments can lead to the development of improved management practices and strategies (Fagbami, Adekanbi & Opele, 2021). By implementing these approaches, art works and monuments can be effectively managed, protected, and rehabilitated, ensuring their preservation for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

Rehabilitation of art work and monuments

Rehabilitating art in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on various aspects. Below are ways in which art can be rehabilitated in Nigeria:

Promote art education: Enhance art education programs in schools by incorporating it into the curriculum and providing resources and training for art teachers (Osinub i, & Alao, 2018). This will help nurture artistic talent from a young age and create a strong foundation for future artists.

Support art institutions and galleries: Provide financial support and resources to art institutions and galleries to enable them to showcase and promote local artists' works (Onibokun & Adegborioye, 2016). This will create a platform for artists to exhibit their artwork and gain recognition.

Foster collaboration and networking: Encourage collaboration between artists, art institutions, and other stakeholders in the art industry (Adewole & Opele, 2019). This can be done through organizing workshops, exhibitions, and art festivals where artists can network, exchange ideas, and learn from each other (Opele & Tomori , 2024).

Improve infrastructure: Invest in the development of art infrastructure, such as art studios, exhibition spaces, and art libraries. This will provide artists with the necessary facilities and resources to create and showcase their artwork.

Encourage public art projects: Promote the integration of art into public spaces by commissioning public art projects. This will not only beautify the environment but also create opportunities for artists to showcase their work to a wider audience.

Provide funding and grants: Establish funding programs and grants specifically for artists in Nigeria. This financial support will enable artists to pursue their artistic endeavors, create new works, and contribute to the growth of the art industry.

Raise awareness and appreciation: Educate the public about the value and importance of art in society. This can be done through art exhibitions, workshops, and public awareness campaigns. Increased awareness and appreciation will create a demand for art and encourage its rehabilitation. By implementing these strategies, art in Nigeria can be rehabilitated, allowing artists to thrive and contribute to the cultural and economic development of the country.

Conclusion

Management of cultural monument sites plays a crucial role in the protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of artwork and monuments. By implementing effective strategies and practices, we can ensure the longevity and cultural significance of these invaluable treasures. Through comprehensive planning, conservation efforts, and community engagement, we can safeguard our cultural heritage for future generations to appreciate and learn from. It is our responsibility to embrace the importance of these sites and work together to protect and preserve them, ensuring that they continue to inspire and educate us about our shared history and cultural identity.

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