

Geotourism Potentials in parts of Anaguta Enclaves of Jos, North-Central Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Three sites comprising of two water springs and a unique rock outcrop also known as Usharu Utura were located and described in this paper. These areas located within the Anaguta enclaves of the Jos Plateau have great geotourism potentials comparable to other famous places in Nigeria. The water springs are currently under utilized just for domestic purposes and the unique rock is poorly preserved. Ignorance and availability of other known geotourist sites on the Jos Plateau may be responsible for the neglect. Public enlightenment and preservation of these areas through public and private sector partnership is therefore recommended.

(Keywords: geotourism, springs, rock, Jos, Anaguta)

INTRODUCTION

Plateau State, Nigeria's foremost tourists' destination, is located beautifully in the center of the Country. Located in the Middle-Belt Zone, it lies between Latitude 8°24'N and Longitude 8°32' and 10°38'E. The northern part of the State is mostly rocky and the area contains within its environs chains of hills and many captivating rock formations. Its picturesque landscape ranges from bare rocks and artificial hillocks and deep gorges from years of tin mining in Jos. With a land mass covering thousands of kilometers, the State has an estimated population of about three million (Anon, 2009).

The Jos Plateau in Nigeria is popularly referred to as the home of peace and tourism. Some of the hidden geotourism potentials lie within the Anaguta enclaves. Most of these Anaguta enclaves are situated within the Neils Valley of the Younger Granites of the Jos Plateau (Figure 1). These enclaves are inhabited by the five clans of the Anaguta Chiefdom which are comprised of

Anabor, Andoho, Anagohom, Andugom, and Andirgiza. The study areas is comprised of Mazah, Dogon Dutse, and Rizha. These three areas have water springs and a unique rock structure that are of significance to geotourism and are waiting to be developed and explored by visitors. This paper will attempt to highlight these three areas in the light of their geotourism potentials.

GEOLOGY OF THE STUDY AREAS

Mazah is located in a depression and sitting on the Basement Complex. The Basement Complex rocks which are exposed within the stream channels include Pan African Granites, gneisses, and migmaties. These rocks are cross-cut by dolerite dykes in many places (Figure 2).

The settlement is surrounded by the Younger Granite Complex where the Mazah water spring derives its source. The River Mazah is structurally controlled exhibiting a trellis drainage pattern while its tributaries are morphologically controlled (Figure 3).

Dogon Dutse, otherwise known as *Usharu Utura*, is a rock that stands uniquely on the Younger Granite close to the University of Jos Guest House.

The Rizha community is located close to the Rifin Jaki Ring Dyke along Bauchi road and has a water spring whose source is from a fractured aquifer on the Younger Granite. The Rizha River is also structurally controlled.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Locations and elevations in the study areas were measured with a global positioning system (GPS).

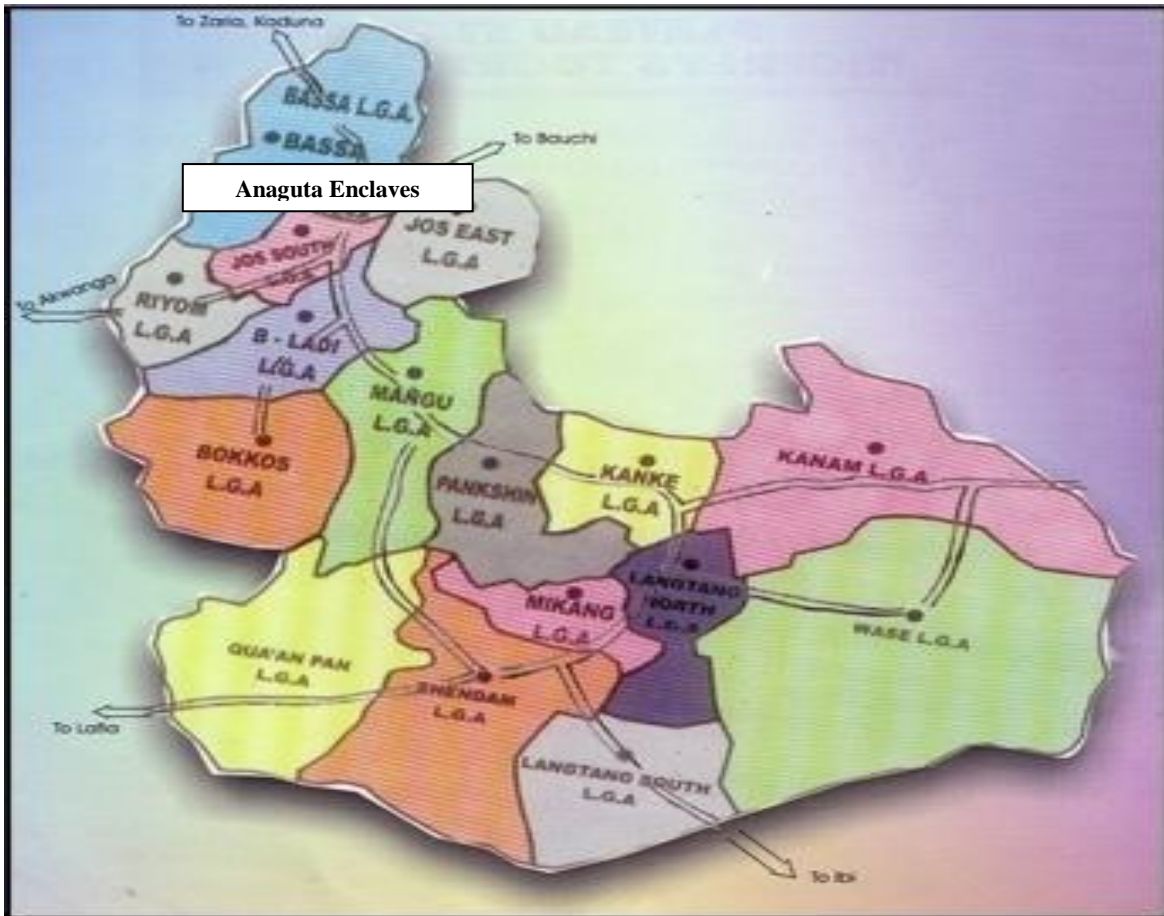


Figure 1: Map of Plateau State showing the position of Anaguta Enclaves.



Figure 2: Basement Complex Outcrop at Mazah.



Figure 3: Trellis Drainage Pattern along River Mazah.

The orientation of rock samples and rivers was carried out using a compass and clinometers. Rock samples were obtained with the aid of a geological hammer. Water samples were obtained and stored to avoid contamination. Photographs were taken using a Canon Power Shot[®] A570 IS digital camera.

DISCUSSION

Mazah Water Spring

The Mazah Water Spring known by the Anagutas as *Minimi Woho* is located on an elevation of 1053 meters above sea level. This spring lies between Latitude 9° 57.473'N and Longitude 8° 56.061'E (Figure 4). The natives climb up through narrow footpath to get supplies for drinking in their homes. Preliminary chemical analysis carried out by Aga et al. (2010) suggest that the water meets WHO permissible limits and compares favorably well with other spring waters in Nigeria that are packaged for sale. The source of the spring is from a highly fractured aquifer.

Dogon Dutse

Dogon Dutse, otherwise known as *Usharu Utura* by the Anagutas, means standing rock. The rock

is situated on Latitude 9° 56.199'N and Longitude 8° 54.440'E at an altitude of 1194 meters above sea level (Figure 5). The rock if preserved has the same geotourism potential with the famous Riyom Rock. The rock also has some spiritual significance to the Anagutas but is shrouded in secrecy. It stands at 1.7 meters tall with a cap rock that is almost spherical.

Rhiza Spring Water

This water spring is located along the Bauchi road beside the EMS ECWA Retreat Centre and located at an altitude of 1040 meters above sea level. It lies between Latitude 10° 00.058'N and Longitude 8° 54.657'E (Figure 6). The spring is utilized by the Retreat Centre for domestic consumption and gardening.

Tourists cannot avoid the temptation of the picturesque scenes and hills on the Kunga-Babale road where the spring is located. Many tourists have been known to take a detour to admire the scenery while some Christians utilize the prayer houses situated on part of the hills during retreats. A number of the hills are located on the steep descent from the Jos Plateau to the "lowland" in Bauchi through Toro.



Figure 4: Mazah Spring Water (*Minimi Woho*).



Figure 5: Dogon Dutse (*Usharu Utura*).



Figure 5: Rhiza Spring Water.

CONCLUSIONS

Geotourism potentials exist with the water springs situated at Mazah and Rizha. These sites are presently under utilized and are only accessed for local consumption. These springs could open up possibilities for development of bottled water factories like those of SWAN situated at Kerang in Mangu as well as for recreational areas built by the government and/or local investors.

The *Usharu Utura* at present is poorly preserved. When fenced with tourist guides on ground, tourists will find the place attractive and it will generate revenue.

As rightly observed by Ogezi et al. (2010), to facilitate public interest in geotourism, stakeholders must collaborate to sensitize the public, develop and preserve these sites for teaching, training, research, sustainable development, job creation, environmental conservation, and also explore alternative and traditional explanations/uses.

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