

CONTRIBUTIONS OF IKOGOSI WARMSPRING AND ARINTA WATERFALLS ECOTOURISM CENTRES TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF HOST COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

There has been an acknowledgement that sustainable management of an ecotourism centre is dependent on the benefits that such centre offers the host community. This study examined the contributions of Ikogosi warm spring and Arinta waterfalls ecotourism centres to socio-economic development of the host communities. Sixty pre-tested questionnaire were administered to respondents in each of the villages. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that 43.8 % and 53.9 % of respondents in Ikogosi-Ekiti and Ipole-Iloro respectively are farmers. Fuel wood accounted for 44.8 % and 42.3 % of products harvested by respondents in Ikogosi-Ekiti and Ipole-Iloro respectively. Majority of the respondents in the study area are involved in ecotourism activities as tourist or staff of the centres. The result also revealed that the centres have greatly benefited the host communities in terms of infrastructural facilities, economy and job opportunity. It is recommended that government, through public private partnership should dam Arinta waterfalls at the downstream and harness the water for irrigation purposes for dry season farming.

Keywords: Ikogosi warm spring, Arinta waterfalls, ecotourism centres, socio-economic, host communities

1. INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism has attracted increasing attention in recent years, not only as an alternative to mass tourism, but also as a means of economic development and environmental conservation (Stankovet.al., 2011). Ecotourism being a nature based tourism, takes into account the natural ecological attraction, their conservation and development. Its aim is to protect the environment, making it profitable to the community people by generating revenue, educating and serving the pleasure of tourists. Ecotourism has been described as “travelling to relatively natural or undisturbed areas with the specific objectives of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery of wild plants and animals found in these areas (Blamey, 2001).

There has been an acknowledgement that sustainability of an ecotourism centre is dependent on communities benefiting directly from it; thereby enabling them to conserve and protect the resources upon which tourism is based (Scheyvens, 1999). Tourism is widely perceived as the business activity connected with providing accommodation services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure. Because of the complexity and dynamic nature of the industry, it is also considered by many to be the world largest industry (Kukoyiet. al., 2013). Indicators of sustainable ecotourism includesocio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. The socio-cultural activities helped to empower local people, enhance community equilibrium and as well encourage inter-cultural values and relation between host communities and tourists; the economic sustainability encourages infrastructure, equal distribution of revenues, promotes market value and as well finances, while environmental sustainability encourages the establishment and maintenance of stable ecosystem in protected areas(Blamey, 2001).

A viable ecotourism centre helps in community development by providing the alternative and sustainable source of livelihood to local community. It has contributed to conservation of biodiversity; promotes small and medium tourism enterprises; stresses local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural people; and above all includes the learning experiences (Telfer and Sharpley, 2007). Access to adequate environmental amenities is fundamental for the sustainability and quality of life. Ecotourism centre has help in involving local community for conservation of the ecology and biodiversity which in turn provides the economic incentives to the local community; sustains the health and well-being of local people; involves responsible action on the part of tourist and the tourism industry (Gelominoet. al., 2015).

Tourism has grown faster than any other trade in the world (Agbu, 2002). It is an important factor in the world trade and a major element of payment of many countries. The international tourism has long been a major source of foreign currency earning and it has created jobs for local people and increase the economy of nations (Ayodele, 2002). Since tourists spend money on travel, hotels, food, entertainment and recreation, they can be an important source of income and thus of economic development for the communities with few other possible sources of revenue. Sustainable development and tourism present change which refers to the movement from one state or condition to another. Whether such a transition is positive or negative depends on the original criteria by which change is measured. Sustainable tourism should maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (World Tourism Organization, 2001). Sustainable tourism exemplifies the relationship between ecotourism and sustainable development (Buchsbbaum, 2004).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Area

Ikogosi-Ekiti ($7^{\circ} 35' 0''$ N., $4^{\circ} 92' 0''$ E.) and Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti ($7^{\circ} 40' 0''$ N. $4^{\circ} 59' 0''$ E.) are located in Ekiti West Local Government, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The towns are situated between lofty, step sided and heavily wooded, north-south trending hills. They are about 5km distance apart and lies on an area underlain by metamorphic rock. The landscape is generally undulating, consisting of old plains broken by step-sided out-crops that occur in groups of ridges (Ogunjemitet *et al.*, 2013). The climate of the area is tropical climate of West Africa monsoonal type with two distinct seasons. These are the rainy season (April-October) and the dry season (November-March). The annual rainfall ranged from 1,200 mm to 1,500 mm. Temperature ranges between 21°C and 34°C with high humidity. The South Westerly wind and the North-East trade wind blow in the rainy season and dry (Harmattan) season respectively. The vegetation is of tropical rain forest.

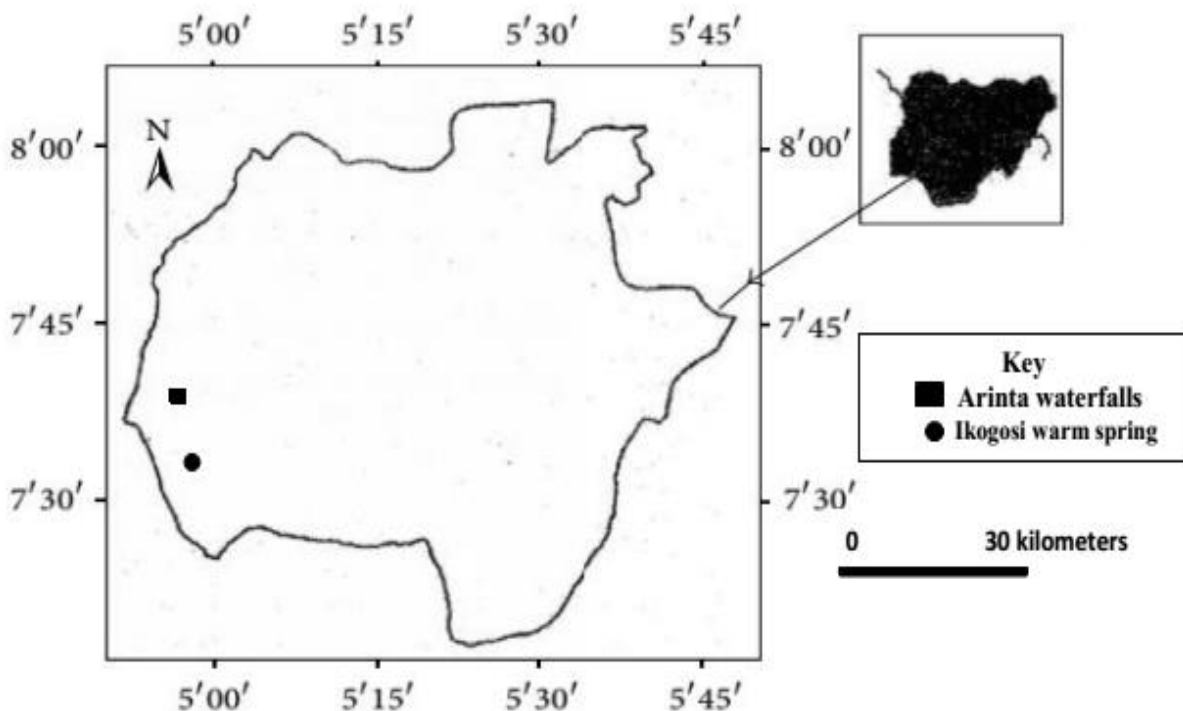


Figure 1: Map of Ekiti State showing the location of the study areas

2.2. Data Collection

Pre-tested semi-structured interview guidewas designed to obtain information on socio-economic characteristics of the respondents inthe two host communities (Ikogosi-Ekiti and Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti). Questions concerning theproducts derived from the ecotourism centres and the benefits of the ecotourismcentresamong others were asked from the respondents. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from 60 randomly selected respondents in each of the community. In all 120 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the selected respondents

(Table 1). The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher through personal interview. This method allowed for easy retrieval of the questionnaire.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents in the study area

Villages	Respondents
Ikogosi-Ekiti	60
Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	60
Total	120

2.3. Data Analyses

Data collected from the respondents were collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics presented in tables and percentage.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Results on sex, age, marital status, educational background and occupation are presented in Table 2. The result shows that 55% and 63.3% of respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively are male. Respondents' age distribution in Ikogosi shows that 41.7% of the respondents are between 51-70 years while in Ipole-Iloro, 45 % of the respondents are between 31-50 years old. The marital status of the respondents shows that 76.7% and 88.3% in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively are married. Result on educational status of the respondents in Ikogosi shows that about 90% had at least secondary school education while 73.4% had at least secondary school education in Ipole-Iloro. Result on occupation shows that 43.8% and 53.9% of respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively are farmers.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Ikogosi-Ekiti		Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sex				
Male	33	55	38	63.3
Female	27	45	22	36.7
Age				
≤30	6	10	6	10
31-50	34	40	27	45
51-70	15	41.7	24	40
>70	5	8.3	3	5
Marital Status				
Single	6	10	3	5
Married	46	76.7	53	88.3
Divorced	5	8.3	—	—
Widow	3	5	4	6.7
Education				
Non Formal Education	2	3.3	4	6.7

Primary Education	4	6.7	12	20
Secondary Education	48	80	40	66.7
Tertiary Education	6	10	4	6.7
Total	60	100	60	100
Occupation				
Farmer	32	43.8	41	53.9
Civil Servant	10	13.7	3	3.9
Trader/Business	18	24.7	15	19.7
Artisan	10	13.7	12	15.8
Student	3	4.1	5	6.6
Total	73*	100	76*	100

*Multiple responses

3.2. Products and services derived from the centres by the respondents

Result on table 3 shows that fuel wood accounted for 44.8 % and 42.3 % of products harvested by respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively, while 10.4% and 15.4 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively were of the opinion that the vegetation at the watershed performed protective function. The result also shows that 29.9% and 26.9% respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively said products from the trees are used for medicinal purposes while 14.9% and 15.4% respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively said the trees are used for timber production. The result also shows that 60.6 % of the respondents in both Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro used the water for domestic purposes while 39.4 % and 33.3 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively use the water for healing of diseases and ailments.

Table 3: Products and services derived by respondents

Variables	Ikogosi-Ekiti		Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Vegetation				
Timber	10	14.9	12	15.4
Medicinal purpose	20	29.9	21	26.9
Shading/Protection	7	10.4	12	15.4
Fuel wood	30	44.8	33	42.3
Total	67*	100	78*	100
Water				
Healing	39	39.4	33	33.3
Domestic uses	60	60.6	60	60.6
Protection	-	-	6	6.1
Total	99*	100	99*	100

*Multiple responses

3.3. Communities' involvement in tourism activities at the watersheds

Result on table 4 shows that 91.7 % of the respondents in Ikogosiare involved in ecotourism activities at the warm spring. The result also shows that 63.3 % of the respondents visit the centre as tourist and 30 % as tourism staff while 6.7 % are involved as promoter to the warm spring. In Ipole-Iloro, 83.3 % of the respondents are involved in ecotourism activities at the waterfalls site. The result also shows that 85 % of the respondents visit the centre as tourist and 15 % as tourism staff.

Table 4: Respondents involvement in the tourism activities at the watersheds

Variables	Ikogosi-Ekiti		Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents involvement				
Involved	55	91.7	50	83.3
Not involved	5	8.3	10	16.7
How are you involved				
Tourist	38	63.3	51	85
Staff	18	30	9	15
Promoter	4	6.7	–	–
Total	60	100	60	100

3.4. Benefits of the ecotourism centres to the host communities

Table 5 present results on the benefits of the ecotourism centres to the host communities. The result shows that 93.3 % and 80 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively believed that the communities derived great benefit from the centres. The result also shows that 43.7 % and 43.5 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively said that the tourism sites have economic benefit on the host communities. While 29.1 % and 38.8 % respectively said that the centres have socially benefited the host communities. The result shows that 66.7 % and 75 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and Ipole-Iloro respectively opined that government benefited most from the two centres while the result also revealed that 68.3 % of the respondents in Ikogosi and 45 % of respondents in Ipole-Iloro strongly agreed that the existence of the ecotourism centres serve as sources of livelihood to the people.

Table 5: Benefits of the ecotourism centres to the host communities

Variables	Ikogosi-Ekiti		Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
The community benefited from the tourist centre				
Yes	56	93.3	48	80
No	4	6.7	12	20
Total	60	100	60	100
In what way has the community benefited				

Social	30	29.1	33	38.8
Economic	45	43.7	37	43.5
Cultural	28	27.1	15	17.6
Total	103*	100	85*	100
Who benefited most				
Government	40	66.7	45	75
The Community	20	33.3	15	25
The center provide source of livelihood				
SA	41	68.3	27	45
A	10	16.7	15	25
D	6	10	10	16.7
SD	3	5	8	13.3
Total	60	100	60	100

*Multiple responses

3.5. Social amenities at the ecotourism centres and the host communities

Table 8 presents the inventory of social amenities at the ecotourism centres and host communities. The result shows that Ikogosi warm spring centre is well equipped with the presence of facilities such as hotel, swimming pool, relaxation sport, fitness shop and multipurpose hall than the Arinta waterfall centre.

Table 6: Facilities at the ecotourism centres and the host communities

Infrastructural facilities	Ikogosi-Ekiti	Ipole-Iloro-Ekiti
	Status	Status
Hotel and restaurants	√	√
Federal/State chalets	√	X
Relaxation sport	√	√
Swimming pool	√	X
Beauty centre	√	X
Fitness Shop	√	X
School	√	√
Health centre	√	√
Arts and crafts shops for souvenir items	√	X
Electricity	√	√
Shopping mall	√	X
Car parking facility	√	√
Staff quarters	√	X

Worship centre	√	√
Market	√	√
Road	√	√
Concrete walkway	√	X
Multi-purpose conference hall	√	X
Water bottling plant	√	X
√ = present	x = absent	

4. DISCUSSION

The result from this study revealed that the presence of Ikogosi warm spring and Arinta waterfalls in the study area has brought a lot of development into the two host communities. The high level of civilization observed among the people in the two communities could be linked to high literacy level especially among the aged people as revealed by the result on educational status, where majority of the respondents between age 50 and above have at least secondary education. The presence of First Baptist Church of high architectural design, Mission House and Primary School in Ikogosi over the decades could be linked with the visitation of the white Baptist missionaries to the cold and warm spring in the early 30s. The implication of this was the opportunity of early western education for the indigenes of the town; this early exposure to western education probably has greatly influenced the peoples' lifestyle and occupation with most of the respondents being civil servant, trader or artisan. This submission corroborates the findings of Orimaye *et al.*, (2018) on residents' perception of ecotourism impact in the study area where quite a large number of the indigenes are successful business men and women.

The building of chalets for accommodation by government in the early 70s and the establishment of Warm Spring Hotel by one of the indigenes in the early 80s; even when other big towns around could not boast of any and the extension of electricity and tarred road to the towns are some of the infrastructural development that the presence of these natural water resources has brought to the area. The upgrading of Ikogosi warm spring to a resort centre of international standard by the State Government in the recent times with building of more infrastructural and other recreational facilities coupled with rehabilitation of the existing facilities at the two centres has also contributed immensely to socio-economic development the two towns. This observation agrees with the findings of Kayode, (2011) that tourism development and influx of tourist into a tourism site usually have positive impact on the host communities.

The establishment of Gossy Bottle Water plant by UAC of lately under public private partnership programme using the natural warm spring is another developmental benefit not only to the area but to the state as a whole. Also the presence of these ecotourism centres and the establishment of the Gossy bottled water company have served as source of employment for the people in the host communities as revealed by the result on benefits of the ecotourism centres, where majority of the respondents agreed that the centres provide them a source of

livelihood. Also the use of the centres by groups and government officials for conferences, seminars and retreats has greatly contributed to the economic wellbeing of the people of the study area and by extension the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of the State as revealed by the result on the respondent opinion on the benefit of the centres to the host communities. This observation has further confirm the submission of Orimayeet *al.* (2018) who reported that Ikogosi warm spring has economic benefit to the people of the community.

On the cultural perspective the study has revealed that the two watersheds has greatly contributed to the immediate household needs of the respondents in terms of provision of timber, fuel wood, medicinal herb and water for domestic uses. This observation confirms the assertion of Adebayo, (2010) that local communities benefit significantly from protected vegetation of Idanre hills through provision of wood for caved outpost and decorative doors. The presence of these natural water resources has attracted tourists from far and near throughout the year with peak visitation during festive periods and it has made the whole area the tourism hub of the State.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Result from this study has revealed that the presence of Ikogosi warm spring and Arinta waterfalls ecotourism centres has tremendously help in infrastructural development of the host communities and it has also imparted positively on the socio-cultural and economic development of the people in the area. The result also revealed that because of its uniqueness of Ikogosi warm spring as ecotourism centre; it has received more attention from government the Arinta waterfalls centre and is well developed in term of infrastructural facilities been put in place. Consequence upon the result of this study, it is recommended that Arinta waterfalls could be harnessed for micro-hydro power station to provide electricity and at the same time the water could be harnessed for irrigation purposes at the downstream for production of vegetables during the dry season. This could be achieved through Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme that would include the community, private investors and the government as shareholders. This will provide employment opportunity for the people in the area and also give them sense of belonging in the management of the centre.

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