ASSESSING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE TOURISM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN NGERIA

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Abstract

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses, activity facilities and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home which success highly depends on community participation and planning. Thus, this study was conducted to assessed community participation and planning of Erin Ijesha waterfall (Olumirin Waterfall) tourism Osun state Nigeria. Data on socio-economic background of the people and migration were the main type of data obtained through Structured questionnaires used to elicit information from respondents on the impacts of the waterfall within the community and the State in general, survey of focus-groups and discussion sessions were also held to clarify necessary issues. Results indicated that, Ijesha people are jealously and actively involved in the planning of Erin water fall activities which have impacted positively on their socio-economic life's such as trading, investment, and hospitability. At the peak of tourism activities (Easter, Christmas etc) proceeds realized served as precursors to many incomes generating activities. The tourists activities make the community united, Erin waterfall activities represent or symbolize welfare, Erin people have close relationship with other communities because of tourism link and has tourism affected/influenced Erin people social lives positively. Thus, the Erin people are willingly to; ever want tourism be part of Erin-Ijesha water fall in Erin-Ijesha, due to the values of the Erin waterfall to the people, Erin people now taught their kids about tourism and what they can do with it when they grow older, simultaneously preserving their culture and nature, Erin people think that they could have more possibilities to take part in the decision-

making and decide on their terms regarding tourism development Erin in the future and participation in tourism has been regarded as a positive force for change and passport to development

Keywords: Erin Waterfall; Community Participation, Precursor, Erin People.

Introduction

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses, activity facilities and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) claims that tourism is currently the world largest industry with annual revenues of over $3 trillion dollars. Tourism provides over six million jobs in the United States, making it the country's largest employer. Within the context of tourism planning, community participation can be defined in the following way: “a process of involving all [stakeholders] (local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people, and planners) in such way that decision-making is shared” (Haywood 1988, cited in Okazaki 2008: 511). Community participation is a topic debated within various research regarding sustainable tourism development (Prentice 1993; Simmons 1994; Jamal & Getz 1995; Joppe 1996; Li 2006; Okazaki 2008). Generally active local participation in decision-making is alleged to be a precondition for benefits to reach communities.

Local Participation and Perceptions towards Tourism

A number of researchers have noted the need for further analysis within the field of resident perceptions, since the findings show many diverse indications of host communities‟ quality of life and their willingness to participate (Doxey 1975; Murphy 1985; King et al. 1993; Johnson *et al*., 1994; Lankford 1994; McCool & Martin 1994; Simmons 1994; Williamson & Lawson 2001; Scheyvens, 2002). According to several previous studies (Brougham & Butler 1981; Joppe 1996; Mason & Cheyne 2000; Macleod 2004; Lepp 2008), communities are not homogeneous groups of like-minded

people, but instead a collection of individuals with ambivalent or mixed feelings in relation to the perceived impacts they have of tourism.

Previous findings reveal that there are little attitudinal studies that have focused on communities either in the pre-development stage or prior to any tourism development (Hernandez *et al.*, 1996; Mason & Cheyne 2000; Harrill 2004; Lepp 2008). Findings show significant level of opposition and negative reactions of suspicion, anxiety and fear locals have towards a proposed plan of tourism development at an early stage. Hence, there is a need and interest for studying feelings, hopes, expectations and concerns of residents that have little or no prior experience with, or knowledge about tourism.

Local participation in tourism has been regarded as a positive force for change and passport to development. This, however according to Mowforth & Munt (2009) represents an over-simplistic conclusion. The principle behind local participation may be easy to promote, however the practice is far more complex. Generally, it is often assumed that members of a community are willing and able to participate equally (Hall, 1995). Yet, it is the combination of the two words „local" and „participation" that is paradoxically implying local residents being so often left outside of the planning, decision-making and managing of tourist development (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Clearly, the ideal would be for communities to decide the form and function of tourism developments and have full control over any tourism schemes in their location. In reality however, local residents often lack the experience, resources and hence even interest, needed to establish successful tourism ventures (Scheyvens, 2002).

Understanding How a Community Constructs, Perceives and Participates In Tourism Development

As noted, tourism is a powerful agent of change in the developing countries, and the potential negative impacts are often due to locals having no control over its development. In order to understand why residents respond to and participate in tourism development the way they do, one needs to look at bit more elaborated into various community aspects. The complexity and significance of local participation in tourism development is easier comprised by understanding how a community constructs their development.

Advocates of participatory planning in tourism development, Murphy (1985) formed the basis for many studies when it comes to classic review of community participation. A clear message he already tried to get across in his book *"Tourism – A Community Approach"* (1985), was that in order to rectify tourism planning weaknesses, focus and emphasis needs to first and foremost be put on the community of a destination. He further recognized that experts cannot judge the perceptions, preferences and priorities of host communities. Thus, the potential social benefits can only be possessed by a transparent and community-oriented approach, which understands the local image and views tourism as a local resource (Murphy, 1985). The debate around the relationships between tourism, communities, development and participation has evolved significantly since then, within socio-cultural impact studies (Nash 1977; Pizam 1978; De Kadt 1979; Mathieson & Wall 1982; Krippendorf 1987; Lea 1988; Doğan 1989; Cater 1995; Rátz & Puczkó 2002). Nevertheless, issues that regard the strengthening of communities through tourism participation are still increasingly important and require further research and analysis (Simmons 1994; Joppe 1996; Pearce et al. 1996; Ashley 2000; Scheyvens 2002; Macleod 2004; Mitchell & Muckosy 2008; Simpson 2008). As Pearce et al. (1996:1) argue, a "better long-term planning for tourism must be guided by a more sophisticated understanding of how communities react to the burgeoning phenomenon of tourism".

The significance of community tourism development

This constant issue is getting tourism practitioners and academicians all the more aware, yet the unequal and sometimes detrimental outcomes make one question what really goes wrong within development schemes. Evidently, the tourism industry has great potential to affect the lives of community residents. Presents successful cases of community-based tourism in Calabar is as a result of fair and environmentally responsible model is rooted, but the communities" quality of life improved significantly as earlier noted by Bartholo *et al*.,(2008). They further discuss the concept of „situation-centred" development. This notion of development, which goes beyond economic considerations, adapts to the locality, reinforces the centrality of local knowledge and recognises ordinary people as actors in the process of transforming their territories (Bartholo *et al.*, 2008).

On the contrary, Mitchell & Muckosy (2008) argue that community-based tourism (CBT) can be a misguided quest. Their research, situated in Latin America, show that CBT rarely reduces poverty and that communities should instead try to access mainstream tourism markets, which may have a more beneficial impact than traditionally thought. They further state that many CBT projects have failed and initiatives collapsed when it comes to achieving pro-poor benefits. This is mostly due to the lack of financial viability; poor market access and poor governance. Many CBT cases are not participatory in local power structures and decision-makings, and as a result the solution, according to Mitchell & Muckosy (2008), would be to link poor communities with major tourist flows, rather than pursuing „alternative" tourism. Yet, Poon (1989, cited in Mowforth & Munt, 2009) argues that rather than relying on multinational corporations, what holds the key to future survival for tourism in developing countries is fostering indigenous skills, creativity and innovativeness. Hence, this may lead to communities managing to take a degree of control and exercise power over tourism developments in their localities (Mowforth & Munt, 2009).

Perceptions at a pre-development stage

There is little attitudinal research that has focused on communities either in the pre-development stage or prior to any tourism development (Hernandez *et al.,* 1996; Mason & Cheyne 2000; Harrill 2004; Lepp 2008). Harrill (2004) noticed that nearly all attitudinal studies have been measured after the tourism industry was well-established in the area and residents had already become familiarised with the phenomenon. In their research in Puerto Rico, Hernandez *et al.* (1996) found ambivalence regarding perceptions towards an instantly built resort enclave, yet the locals had generally positive feelings during the development phase. Hence, all the aforementioned study results do not support the tourism cycle development model by Doxey (1975), since the model does not include a pre-development phase, is only concerned with slowly growing tourism developments, but above 11 all because it suggests that attitudes start at a favourable stage and end up in a resentful or antagonistic stage (Hernandez *et al*., 1996).

Therefore objectives of this study are:

1. To find out how community participate in the Erin-Ijesha water fall tourism planning and development

2. To find out how the community perceives tourism development

3. To find out socio-economic impact of participating in the Erin-Ijesha water fall tourism planning and development , Erin-Ijesha, osun state, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Erin Ijesa Waterfall, also known as Olumirin Waterfall is not only a site to behold; it is also one of the wonders of the world. The waterfall is situated within latitude $7^0 30^1$ and $8^0 45^1$ North and longitude $4^0 31^1$ and $50^/$ East. Erin Garden is a thick forest, which houses Erin Ijesa waterfalls, which lies some kilometers east of the Ilesa – Akure Road. It is said to have been founded by a woman called Akinla, a grand-daughter of Oduduwa, in the year 1140 AD, during the migration of the Ife people to Erin Ijesa (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The area can also serve as a mountaineering exercise. The breeze at the waterfalls is cool and refreshing. The whole scenery is fascinating and idyllic. The waterfall is used for drinking and as medicine by indigenes and other tourists alike (Tourism Magazine, 2009). Erin- Ijesha falls within the tropical belt with alternating hot dry and warm humid seasons. The atmospheric temperature ranges from 30 – 340C while the annual rainfall averages 1500 cm. The access road to Olumirin Waterfall has been improved and graded while recreational facilities are being provided in the interest of tourists (Tourism Magazine, 2009). Erin Ijesa Waterfall is a cascading fall surrounded by towering mountains that gives you that sense of wildlife mixed with serenity as you behold the beauty nature has to offer.



Figure 1: Erin Ijesa(Olumirin) waterfall gate

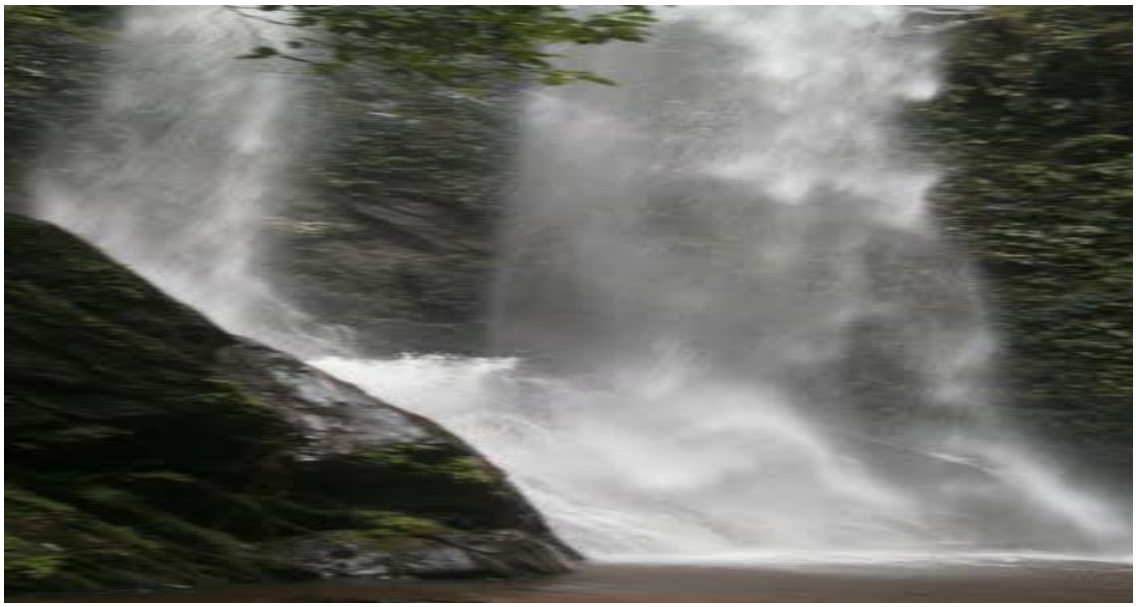


Fig. 2: Erin Ijesa(Olumirin) waterfall

Collection and Analyses of Data

The questionnaire (yes or no) was used for the study was designed by the researcher with consultation of her educational experts. A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires was issued and distributed to collect data from respondents. In addition, focus-groups discussion session was held with Erin people to clarity necessary issues. Both primary and secondary data were collected and used for the study. Secondary data were related literature materials while the primary data will be filed data-information given by the respondents using questionnaires or discussions. Out of 400 questionnaire issued, three hundred and eighty 380 were received and 350 correctly filled. Therefore our results and discussion is based on 350 completed filed questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency table

Results and Dicussion.

Table: 1 Marital Status of Respondents

NO	STATUS	N	PERCENT RESPONSE
1	Married	180	51.43
2	Widow/widower	70	20
3	Single	50	14.30
4	Divorced	30	8.57
5	Separated	20	5.7
		350	100

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 1: shows that 180 (51.43%), 70 (20%), 50 (14.30%), 30 (8.57%) and 20 (5.70%) respondents were married, widow/widower, single, divorced and separated, respectively. All respondents were adult and independent citizen of or living in Erin community.

From Table 1, Erin people jealously participated in all planning stages of project life. From the need identification (80%), project plan drawing (70%), labour (80%), creating of awareness (58%), protection of the project (55%) and acting as pressure group to set things done on project site (60%). They also contributed to finance the project (40%), monitoring of the project (30%), supervision (35%), regular maintenance (10%), complimentary tourists or their agencies (30%) and identification of project needs for execution. Above confirmed the facts that Erin people are in partnership with the tourists working to preserve their treasure.

This supports Nnodim (2002) opinion that the objectives of community programmes may remain an illusion without the full participation of the people in their development programmes and projects.

The respondent's participation in all stages of the project life is in line with UNDP report of 1997, which described participation as end in itself and the fundamental right of the people to determine decisions which affect their lives. This also bring to the fore the opinion of D' Sliva, E and Prysouth,(1996) they see participation as sharing of tasks and responsibilities in planning, construction and management of a project.

Table 1: responses on participation and planning in Erin_Ijesha water fall tourism.

QUESTION	FREQUENCY	YES %	FREQUENCY	NO%
1) Was the tourism need/idea conceived by Erin people?	280	(80)	70	(20)
2) Was the project plan draw exclusively by Erin people?	245	(70)	105	(30)
3) Is project financed by the Erin people?	140	(40)	210	(60)
4) Is the labour used for the project provided by Erin people?	280	(80)	70	(20)
5) Are the Erin people monitoring and evaluating the project?	105	(30)	245	(70)
6) Is supervision done by Erin people?	122.50	(35)	227.50	(65)
7) Are Erin people participated in creating awareness ad educating people about project?	203	(58)	147	(42)
8) Is the project protected and secure by the Erin people?	192.50	(55)	157.50	(45)
9) Is it the responsibility of Erin people to do the regular maintenance of the project facilities?	35	(10)	315	(90)
10) Do Erin people merely complement the efforts of the tourists or agencies?	105	(30)	245	(70)
11) Do the Erin people identify project needs and request tourists authorities to execute?	157.50	(45)	192	(550

12) Do Erin people equally act as pressure group demanding for government and tourists on what to be done?	210	(60)	140	(40)

Source: field survey, 2015

Also, for Erin people to act as pressure group fully participate in societal development and self actualization is a right step in the right direction as rightly pointed out by D' Sliva and Prysouth (1996), that there is need for Erin people to fight for recognition and demand their right from the tourist and government if they do not want their dreams fro self actualization prolong.

From Table 2 all the respondents agreed that Erin water fall activities impacted positively on their socio-economic life's they made progress financially socially, and otherwise. Economists are aware that these progresses have multiplier effects in both the individual and the national development at large. A number of benefits of tourism for both the tourist and the host community accrued.

The tourism there also creates jobs in many different areas. With tourism come hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies, tour companies, service stations, souvenirs shops, sports equipment rentals, and much more. All of this creates many different levels of employment for people in a given community, allows local people an opportunity for economic and educational growth that would not otherwise be available.

Table: 3 Economic impact of Erin waterfall tourism on the Erin people

Question	Frequency	Yes (%)	Frequency	No (%)
1. Are doing business in Erin-Ijesha?	245	70	105	30
2. Do you cherish Erin-Ijesha business environment?	315	90	35	10
3. Have visitor been coming in from outside regularly fro Erin tourism?	350	100	Nil	Nil
4. Do visitors number increased during festive season?	350	100	Nil	Nil

5. Do your business profit turnover increased during festive peak period?	350	100	Nil	Nil
6. Is it profitable to do business in Erin as compared to neighboring community?	28	80	70	20
7. Have you been investing in other business using the proceeds realized from the tourism activities?	315	90	35	10

Source field survey: 2015

In addition, it allows both the tourist and the local community chance to experience other cultures, which broadens understanding, it generated income is tremendously beneficial to the host country and it's local communities. Tourism generated income can be used on a national and local level to better education, improve infrastructure, to fund conservation efforts, and to promote more responsible tourism.

Summary and conclusion

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses, activity facilities and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups traveling away from home which success highly depends on community participation and planning. Erin water fall activities impacted positively on their socio-economic life's they made progress financially socially, and otherwise. Economists are aware that these progresses have multiplier effects in both the individual and the national development at large. A number of benefits of tourism for both the tourist and the host community also accrued.

The tourism there also creates jobs in many different areas. With tourism come hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies, tour companies, service stations, souvenirs shops, sports equipment rentals, and much more. All of this creates many different levels of employment for people in a given community, allows local people an opportunity for economic and educational growth that would not otherwise be available. We therefore

recommend that government agencies, tourists authorities and the communities should expand more on the project.

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