



DETERMINATION OF CONSTRAINED FACTORS TOWARD ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper determined mostly opinion of some constrained people of productive factors toward age (14-64). Purposive ecotourism and accidental development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria as a tool for sustainable. Five hundred (500) copies of questionnaires were administered to members of the communities orally. The study targeted

Keywords:

Community, economic, environmental, participation, sustainable development.

sampling methods were used to select samples. Firstly,

INTRODUCTION

A leading global industry, ecotourism is contributing to a significant proportion of world production, trade, investments and employment (UNWTO, 2012). Reports show that, international travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes has become one of the fastest growing economic activities worldwide (UNWTO, 2012; 2015). No place is too remote to be visited. If the attractions are properly packaged and presented. These remote and scattered locations harbour different types of ecotourism system ranging from aquatic tourism to wildlife and discovery waiting exploring to the benefit of humanity (Bola, 2010; Eja *et.al.* 2012). Only in current times of insecurity (insurgencies,

purposive sample was used to select four (4) Local Government Areas. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics student t test was used to test for significant difference between those that had positive view(x) and those that had negative view (y) on ecotourism potential for: (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) environmental sustainability. The results show that Nasarawa State offers a wide variety of potential tourism sites which include Farin Ruwa Waterfall, Hunki Lake and others. Community views of development is capital intensive is the least recognized factor (49.5%). It was concluded that Nasarawa State offers a wide variety of potential ecotourism sites which the local community believed in could be a sustainable development tool if well planned, implemented and managed these sites in participatory manner. It was recommended among other things that tourism development should be encouraged and supported via participatory approach to achieve sustainable development. The results portrayed that inadequate community participation was the most recognized constrains to ecotourism development (86.5%) and that ecotourism

banditries, kidnappings) that people are afraid of travelling to remote places for pleasure, expeditures, holidays, relaxation and recreations (Osu, 2016).

Ecotourism has become a key strategy to generate economic, social and environmental benefits to communities, foster community development and alleviate poverty (Ujih, 2018). Tourism development is one of the major sectors to diversify the nations' economy, socially and ecotourism promotes peace.

It can be assumed that with the inclusion of 'encouraging and developing domestic base tourist enterprises' as one of the objectives of the tourism policy, the Federal Government has an agenda for the local inhabitants of the geographical location of the tourist attraction. It wouldn't come too much of a surprise that even though, there

are many tourist centres in Nigeria, according to Aiyelabola (2012), tourism is largely neglected.

Nigeria tourism potentials can only be utilized sustainably, if there is political will by the governments in providing adequate security, building roads, airports, electricity, telecommunication and even internet facilities linking the sites. And then put in place a comprehensive data base for both inbound and outbound tourists' movement and encourage active private participation in areas such as hotel accommodation, transportation and tour guide activities (Eja *et al.*, 2012)

Ecotourism has no doubt wage enormous economic impact on all sphere of the society to become one of the fattest growing industries globally (Aliyu, *et.al*, 2013). The strength of tourism performance is obvious in poverty reduction, employment generation and income redistribution effect on rural communities (Kurian, *et.al*, 2010). With the revolution in tourism industry, both the government and private entrepreneurs have started to optimize the opportunities of attracting tourists to their countries. In other to explore these numerous potentials that are inherent in tourism industry, many countries have started to design their regions, cities and states in a manner that will attract tourist and tourist investors (Gil and Ritchie, 2017). The development of tourism as an alternative revenue sources is the new strategy in most countries because of its multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy, creating large volume of job for both skilled and unskilled labour (Ayeni and Eboho, 2012).

Nasarawa State is highly prospective for growth and development considering its natural resources endowment such as solid minerals and diverse attractive resources of nature that can be developed as tourist sites. Its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria is an added advantage to enhance accessibility which is major barrier to tourist development. However, the State is surviving at the mercy of Federal allocation to the neglect of sources of internally generated revenue (IGR). Its primary occupation is agriculture, with over 90% of its working population involved with little or no mechanization to the neglect of other development potentials (Yaro and Ebuga, 2013). Nasarawa State is blessed with attractive natural resources when properly planned, developed and implemented participatory would be of immense benefit to all and sundry, as ecotourism is a more sustainable way of protecting natural environment, socioeconomic, cultural and ecological benefits for local communities.

Ecotourism is a way to sustainable development and can be defined as "a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context. It has the appearance (in concert with best practice) of being environmentally and

socio-culturally sustainable, preferably in a way that enhances the natural and cultural resource base of the destination and promotes the viability of the operation". Community participation and conservation activities through sustainable development and planning create appropriate development frameworks and strategies that ensure favourable local attitudes, protection of local resources and, more importantly, the protection and improvement of the quality of life of communities' influenced by tourism development (Ujih,2017), community-based tourism shows a progression, from a development perspective, as it incorporates the ideas of participation, empowerment and the importance of the social, rather than just economic or environmental aspects to development. It is clear that without empowerment, sustainable tourism development by communities is difficult to attain

Therefore, this study was undertaken to identify the main constrains (challenges) relating to the development and management of ecotourism in Nasarawa State, using three major sectors of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental sustainability)

The need to determine factors of constraints in ecotourism development in Nasarawa State cannot be over emphasized. Especially, in the view of the present economic diversification plans of Buhari/Osibanjos administration which call for development and revitalization of other sectors (mining, agricultural and tourism sectors) that will boost the economic development and make development more sustainable than the fossil fuel mono-economy.

The conceptual scope of this research is ecotourism and its contexts include ecotourism development, community participation and geography of Nasarawa State (location, climate, relief, geology, soil, drainage, people, vegetation, land use culture and economic activities).

This research in its conceptual scope is mainly concerned with determination of the constraints to ecotourism development in Nasarawa State.

This study is not bound to any season in its temporal scope; it can be studied at any season since it does not involve comparison of seasonal variation and data on community-based ecotourism potential can be collected at any time using methods like questionnaires, observation and so on.

The spatial scope of this study is Nasarawa as it aimed to determine major constrains of community-based ecotourism development of Nasarawa State, however, questionnaire administration was concentrate on four Local Government Areas hosting major tourist site namely: Wamba, Awe, Nasarawa and Nasarawa Eggon LGA.

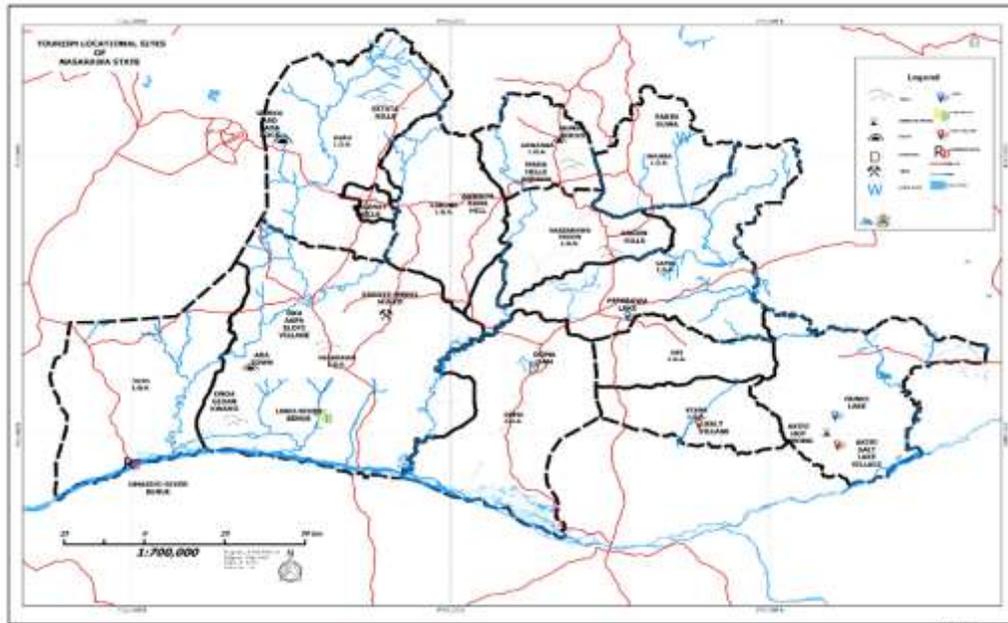
MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

Location

Nasarawa State, one of the 36 States in Nigeria was created on 1st October, 1996 out of Plateau State. It is located at the Centre of the Middle Belt region within latitude

8°N to 9°N and longitude 7°E to 9°E. The State shares common borders with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja on the West, Kaduna State on the North, Plateau and Taraba States on the East, and Benue and Kogi States on the South (Figure 1).



Map source: Authors GPS field coordinate & Produced by Nasarawa Geographic Information System (NAGIS)

Methodology

Reconnaissance Survey

Firstly a reconnaissance survey was carried out which gave an insight of: potential tourist sites (springs, water falls, rivers, rocks/hills, rich forest belts), cultural festivals, archaeological edifices, settlement pattern, major economic activities, land use, population, environmental and socioeconomic conditions of the area, language(s) and cultural ethics (dos and don'ts).

However, knowledge of population determined the number of questionnaire administered. Knowledge of language(s) determined the language(s) to administer questionnaire. Moreover insight on the locations of the potential tourist sites determined the spatial scope of the study and places of questionnaire administration. Four Local Government Areas (Awe, Wamba, Nasarawa and Nasarawa Eggon LGAs) were identified to have higher potential tourist sites than others. The Common languages in these LGAs and the State at large are Hausa and English language. Thus, questionnaires were administered in Hausa and English language.

Sources of Data

For the purpose of this research both primary and secondary sources of data were used; primary sources of data were both qualitative and quantitative and were obtained through questionnaire survey observation, interview, focus group discussion and mapping while secondary sources were collected from internet, journals, thesis, published seminar papers, and other published materials, reports of commissions/ organizations such as Nasarawa State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and others.

Materials and Methods of Data Collection

Methods used for data collection include questionnaire survey, observation, interview, focus group discussion and mapping. Techniques employed for data collection include photo camera, GPS and android phone.

Questionnaire Survey

One set of structured closed ended questionnaires was prepared based on the study objectives. The questionnaires were in four parts. First part of the questionnaire deals with the socio economic characteristics of respondents; the second part deals with identification of potential tourist sites in Nasarawa State. The third part deals with community views of tourism potential for sustainable development of Nasarawa State and the fourth part deals with factors that constrain tourism development in Nasarawa State. Five hundred copies of questionnaires were administered to members of the communities orally. Questionnaires were administered in public places. Places of questionnaire administration include markets, mosques, churches and schools. This was to give every potential respondent (youth) equal opportunity and avoid unnecessary denial of entrance into house hold for security reasons. Although, questionnaire was written in English language, it was administered in English and local language Hausa. This is to allow those that don't understand English to participate.

Questionnaire surveys have been found useful, structured closed ended questionnaires help to reduce flaws and enhance quantification. It is also useful to identify the needs and views of a large number of people in a standard format. However, it does not allow personal opinions which may be useful.

The interview methods

Oral interview was used to derive silent information that could not be derived via other means. Peoples' can be gotten through interviews. The interview offered the opportunity to dig deep into the matter under study. The questions were unstructured and open ended which gave the interviewees to provide much detailed explanation about the investigation in a conversational manner. The respondents may provide facts, opinions about events, and own insights about occurrences.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted groups to corroborate the findings from the quantitative result. Firstly, pre-arranged meetings were organized with stakeholders, the representatives of the following Nasarawa State government departments and ministries were in attendance: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of finance, Ministry of Industry and Investment and Local Government Councils were in attendance. Other representatives included traditional rulers, youth, women and development associations in the communities. Public Consultation is a key instrument for assuring social inclusion and sustainable development. Consequently, consultations were held at various levels with stakeholders including the residents very close to the tourist sites and youth and women group. Community Based Organizations (CBOs), community groups and leaders were consulted. Through this process, stakeholders concerns were addressed, views and inputs as regards the economic, environmental and social impacts of the those sites were discussed.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

This technique was used mainly because of the global positioning system (GPS) software was used to read location of the identified potential tourist sites on earth surface for mapping.

Sampling Technique

The study targeted mostly opinion people of productive age (14-64), as they are major beneficiary of tourism development in terms of employment, training/education, and social innovation and so on. Purposive and accidental sampling method was used to select samples from the entire population of residents of the study area. Firstly, purposive sample was used to select four (4) Local Government Areas (Awe, Wamba, Nasarawa and Nasarawa Eggon LGA) out of thirteen (13) Local Government Areas (Awe, Akwanga, Doma, Karu, Keana, Keffi, Kokona, Lafia, Nasarawa, Nasarawa-Eggon, Obi, Toto, and Wamba.) in Nasarawa Sate. The selections of these Local Government Areas were based on presences of

tourist sites in the areas than others. Secondly, accidental sampling technique was employed to select samples from the four Local Government Areas. Accidental sampling technique gives equal opportunity to anybody within the targeted age (14-64) to be selected. It is based on who was available and ready to respond.

Sample Size

Sample sizes were determined by Yamane (1973) a standard statistical formula:

$$S = \frac{N}{3 + N (ME)^2}$$

Where S= sample size, while N = population ME = margin of error allowed (0.05).

DISCUSSIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A total of five hundred (500) samples were selected from the four (4) Local Government Areas (Awe, Wamba, Nasarawa and Nasarawa Eggon). The distributions of questionnaire across these four (4) Local Government Areas were based on their projected population size collected of 2006 from NPC office, Lafia (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample Size

S/NO	SELECTED LGA	POPULATION SIZE	NOS OF QUESTIONAIRE ADMINISTERED	% OF SAMPLE
1	Awe	11648	122	24.4
2	Wamba	10245	100	20
3	Nasarawa	12,245	148	29.6
4	Nasarawa Eggon	11654	130	26

Analysis of Data

Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed by using frequency distribution, percentage and mean statistics. Descriptive statistics such as multiple bar charts, tables, diagrams were used to portray findings. Moreover, inferential statistics student t test was used to test for significant difference between those that had positive view(x) and those that had negative view (y) on tourism potential for: (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) environmental sustainability in Nasarawa ecotourism development perspectives.

Factors that Constrain Ecotourism Development in Nasarawa State

Factors that constrain ecotourism development was found to include inadequate community participation, poor funding, tourism development is capital intensive, negligence and poor social and physical amenities. On average, seventy-seven per cent (77%) of respondents recognized these factors as constrains to tourism development in Nasarawa State. Table 2 and figure 2 shows that inadequate community participation was the most recognized constrain to tourism development (86.5%) followed by poor funding (84.75%), negligence (84%), poor social and physical amenities (82.5%) and that tourism development is capital intensive is the least recognized factor (49.5%).

Table 2: Percentage of Respondents' Recognition of Factors that Constrain Ecotourism Development

LGA	Inadequate Community Participation	Poor Funding	Capital Intensive	Negligence	Poor Social and Physical Amenities.
	Percentage of Respondents' Recognition				
Awe	82	79	41	80	81
Wamba	92	89	45	95	95
Nasarawa	80	74	59	70	68
Nasarawa Eggon	92	97	53	91	86
Average	86.5	84.75	49.5	84	82.5

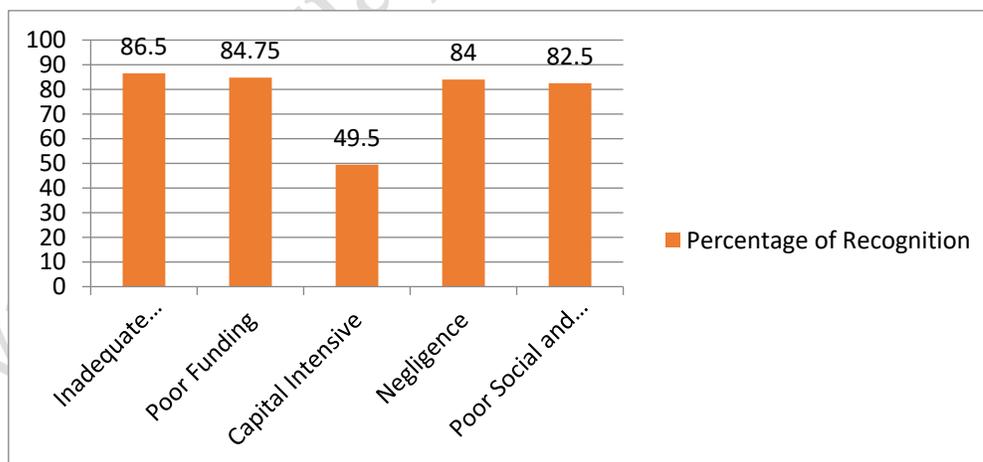


Figure 2: Percentage of Respondents' Recognition Factors that Constrain Ecotourism Development

The high recognition of inadequate community participation as constrain to tourism development is an indication that the community desire to participate in tourism development. The relatively low recognition of capital intensive as constrain to tourism development as argued by most of the respondents during focused group discussion is that other development sectors are also capital intensive.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier reports in the topic of study. Its uniqueness is its holistic approach to tourism development potential for the achievement of the three major sectors of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental sustainability) earlier studies concentrated on the contribution of tourism to one or two of them. It is in support of the popular opinions that the impacts of tourism are felt in a society socially, environmentally and economically.

This study identified numerous natural attractive potential tourist sites in Nasarawa State. This support the view that in Nigeria, the vast tourism potentials such as table mountains beautiful landscapes, colourful folks, overwhelming serenity wildlife, waterfalls and other rich festivals, architecture, and craft can diversify and drive its economy (Osu, 2016).

Community views on tourism potential of Nasarawa State were assessed under the three major sectors of sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental. Firstly, for economic and social sustainability potential of tourism development in Nasarawa State, it was found that most respondents (> 90%) had a positive view on both economic and social potential of tourism in Nasarawa State. However, student t test was used to test for significant between those that had positive view(x) and those that had negative view (y) on tourism potential for economic and social sustainability each at 95% significant level. The results show significant difference between those that had positive view on tourism potential and those that had negative view. Then because those that had positive views had higher mean in each case than those that had negative views. It was concluded that majority of the community have positive views on tourism potential economically in terms of providing job opportunities for locals, enhancing income, and increasing their GDP and socially in term of *development of social amenities in the community, promotion of culture of the people, enhancement of recreation and reduction of depression*. This suggests that local communities in Nasarawa State believed that tourism could be an important tool to enhance the economic and social sustainability. Secondly, community view of environmental sustainability potential of tourism development in Nasarawa State, it was found that majority of respondents (> 60%) had a positive view on the potential of tourism in enhancing environmental sustainability such as *conservation of resources, reduction of land degradation, conservation of*

biodiversity and reduction of pollution. The student t test was used to test for significant between those that had positive view(x) and those that had negative view (y) on tourism potential for environmental sustainability and no significant difference was found between those that had positive view on tourism potential for environmental sustainability and those that had negative view. This suggests that local communities in Nasarawa State believed that tourism could enhance environmental sustainability. This will now depend on planning, implementation and management of tourist sites. The finding that inadequate community participation was the most recognized constrains to ecotourism development.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research portray firstly that Nasarawa State offers a wide variety of potential tourism sites. Secondly the community believed these sites could be a sustainable development tool if well planned, implemented and managed. Thirdly, inadequate community participation was the most recognized constrains to tourism development followed by poor funding, negligence, poor social and physical amenities and tourism development being capital intensive.

Therefore, it is concluded that ecotourism development should be encouraged and supported via participatory approach to achieve sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

- It was found that inadequate community participation was the most recognized constrains to tourism development followed by poor funding, negligence, poor social and physical amenities and tourism development being capital intensive.
- Community engagement and impact of development must be given high cognizance as lack of community acceptance can have adverse effect on any development. If tourism is planned well, it will be a source of opening up the rural areas which will balance tourist demands, local human, cultural and natural resources. Examples elsewhere have shown that a top-down approach to tourism development may not suit the interests of local communities who have to deal with new challenges associated with tourism development.
- Since tourist centres are ultimately government regulated and owned, the government should provide a sustainable and conducive environment for tourism investment to thrive. Finance, which is very crucial to any development project, should be provided either by the government, private

sources or PPPs, but subject to community opinions and suggestions through adequate consultations and engagement.

- There is a need for ecotourism promotion and awareness. It is indeed disheartening when majority of people living in a neighborhood are insensible of the vast natural endowment within their community. Community interest and social capital can be developed through coordinated attempts and effort by the developers and planners by designing sustainable means of engaging with local community groups.
- Local communities should be involved in decision - making processes at the beginning stage of tourism planning to be able to share their input in tourism development plans.
- Understanding the type of tourism development and its compatibility with the community's needs is important to determine the suitable type of development that leads to sustainability.
- There is a desire among local communities to be more actively engaged in local development affairs to have their voices heard by the political and government elites.
- Local communities living around or in close proximity to protected areas are frequently overlooked in ecotourism development and management. Sometimes this is because they are scattered and isolated making communication difficult. At other times developers wish to avoid taking the time and effort to inform local communities of specific tourism development plans, or seek to marginalize them so as to deprive them of anticipated economic benefits. However, the needs of local communities should be taken fully into account, particularly since they are often dependent on the natural resources that attract tourists to the area. The planning process should initiate the development of mechanisms that ensure that local communities receive a share of the benefits of tourism development.

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