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ABSTRACT

Eco-tourism are ecological ways of conservation of flora and fauna species found in protected areas. The focus of the study on the contributions to ecotourism in selected host communities of Old Oyo National park. The specific objectives of the study were to: (i)examine community participation in service rendering in the two host communities selected in the study; (ii) examine the level of poverty through ecotourism in the two communities; and (iii)determine the relationship between employment and monthly income in Igbeti and Sepeteri selected for this study. Both Primary and secondary sources data were used. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from each ward. Two hundred and seventy copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed to the respondents in Igbeti and Seperti. Descriptive (charts) and inferential statistics (Chi-square) were used to analyze the data collected. Findings revealed that the communities were involved in transportation service in the study area. Also it further revealed that the communities in the entertainment of the eco-tourists and some of the indigenes were involved in tour guidance and lastly, the Conclusively, the indigenes that are close to the national park should be given opportunity to work in the park and other infrastructures should be provided for the host communities. Therefore, the study recommends that government should provide basic infrastructures to the host communities and souvenirs should be produced to show case the wealth of the host communities.

Key words: eco-tourists, Communities, environment, tour guide and park

INTRODUCTION

Background to Study

Ecotourism is an important aspect of tourism that is fast growing in Nigeria Ijeomah, Abubakar, Ezcano and Adetola (2019) in their study of tourist attractions and satisfaction in eco destination in Lagos State that satisfaction derived from the attractions were serene environment and facilities available but on the other hand, broken bottles, harassment by tout were the main challenges in the eco-destination. Also, Eco-tourism refers to a responsible travel to natural areas where the environment is conserved for sustainable livelihood of the local people (Wright and Boorse 2011). According to Randall (2011), "Eco-tourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry", according to the world tourism organization (WTO) with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide and 6% of the world gross domestic product, 11.4% of all consumers spending on the market and should not be taken lightly.

In addition, Ijeomah and Bernard (2012), in their study ascertained that the host communities in Nigeria had to continuously pay the price of living permanently in a pristine or rural environment for rendering the service of eco-tourism. This is a strong deviation from the true

between March and April. The park experiences the harmattan period from November till February. During this period, the temperatures at night are quite low. Jeep tracks could however be slippery or impassable during the raining season. The best time of visits to the park is during the dry season (Old Oyo National park annual report 2012). Fauna is relatively more abundant in the Southern part of the Park. However, the following animals are few of the existing mammals in the old Oyo National Park as presented in table 1.

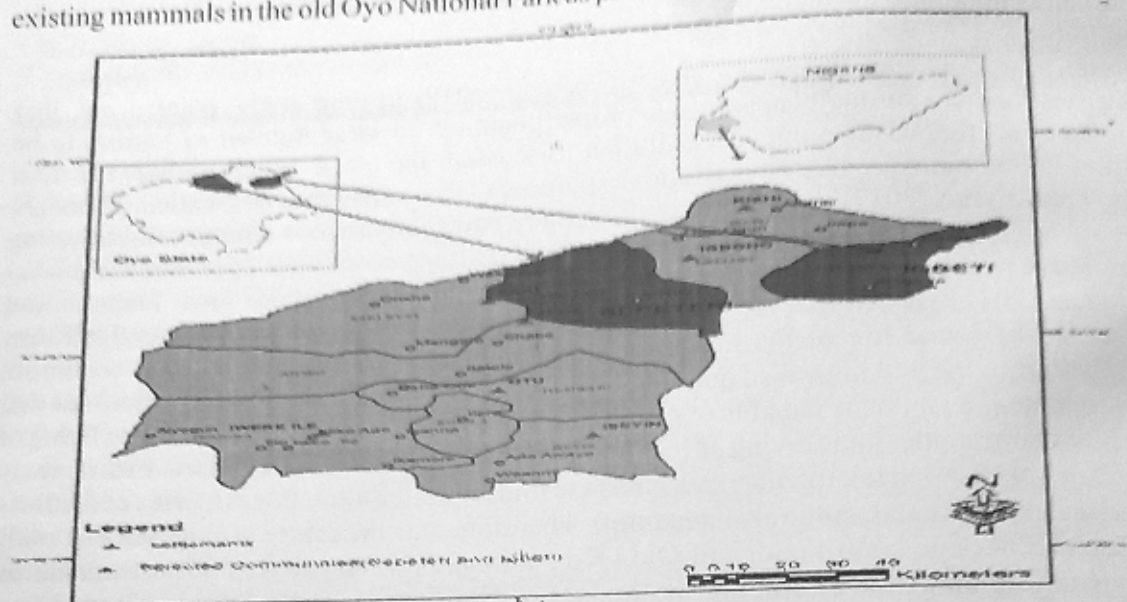


Figure 1.: Selected host communities (Igbeti and Sepeteri) Old Oyo National Park.
Source: Old Oyo National park annual report (2012)

Table 1: Dominant fauna in the park

S/N	Mammals	Common name
1.	Roan antelope	Hippotragus equines
2.	Western Hartebeest	Alcelahusbuselaphus
3.	Kob	Kobus kob
4.	Red flanked Duiker	Cephalopusrufilatus
5.	Grey Duiker	Sylvicapragrimmia
6.	Patas monkey	Cercopithecusaethiops
7.	Baboon	Papio Anubis
8.	Water Buck	Kobus defassa
9.	Bush Buck	Traagelaphusscriptus
10.	Oribi	Ourebiaourebi
11.	Warthog	Phacochoerusathiopius

Source: Old Oyo National park annual report (2012)

Flora

The entire Park lies in the southern part of southern guinea savanna. Several Botanists have classified the vegetation in the Park in different ways, but generally there are four sub- types. This consists of dense woodland and forests outlier in the southern part, Mixed open savanna woodland in the central part, Outcrop vegetation in the northeast and Piparian grassland and fringing woodland occupying the forest plains and valleys along the Ogun River (Old Oyo

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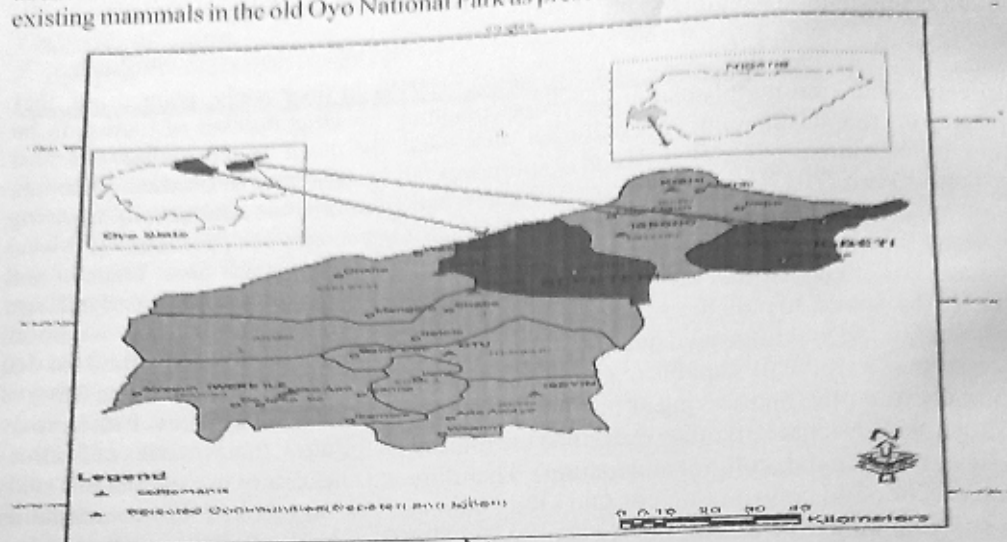


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concept of eco-tourism which emphasis local welfare of host indigenes with the primary concern of physical and infrastructural development of the host communities. Also, economic reliance of the indigenous populace through their ability to produce local tourist goods (which are majorly handcrafts and agricultural products and sometimes intangible services like entertainment, nature work, mountain climbing and others) for tourist to patronize and participation of the host community in the entire processes of rendering the service of eco-tourism as important stakeholders.

Gontul, IrimduGonap, Timchang and Anyaamele (2019) in their study, pointed out, that tourist attractions on the plateau needs proper planning for large number of tourists to be attracted to the destination. They further discussed the need to encourage the host communities, motivate every tourist and the purpose of the tourist must be satisfied. Although, Ajayi and Eveso (2017) pointed out in their study that ecotourism is a purposeful traveling natural area without distorting the ecosystem; but providing economic opportunities for local people to benefit from the resources and preservation of the natural area. Enemu and Oduntan (2012) viewed that there is public participation in tourism and this has significant effect in the social life of the host communities in terms of income, housing condition, standard of living and improved quality of life. Arowosafe and Oladeji (2017) discussed that eco-tourism is an industry capable of generating employment, improving standard of living of the host communities and serving as income earners to the country, if harnessed. In their study of Kanji Lake National Park, they described the impacts of the attractions in terms of facilities (physical, recreational, cultural and natural). Therefore, it is necessary to carry out this study on socio-economic contributions of Old Oyo National Park on selected host communities. This study is aimed at examining the impact of Old Oyo National Park in selected host communities. To achieve this, the following objectives are set to: examine the level of community participation in service rendering in the two host communities selected for this study; and determine the level of poverty reduction through ecotourism in the two communities.

Study Area

Old Oyo National Park is located in Oyo State in the south-west of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 8° 15' and 9° 00' North of the equator and between longitude 3° 35' and 4° 42' East of the Greenwich meridian (Figure 1). The Park is approximately 300km from Lagos, 60 km from Ibadan, 160km from Ilorin, 660km from Abuja, 660km from Kaduna and 910km from Kano (Old Oyo National park annual report 2012).

The Park covers a land area of approximately (2,512) square km making it the fourth largest park. For easy accessibility, the Park is divided into 5 ranges which could be easily monitored. These includes; Sepeteri, Tede, Marguda, Oyo- Ile, and Yemoso. The dominant species of animals in each National park determines the animal that are indicated in her logo. Old Oyo National Park has kobo as her dominating specie of animal in the park.

Most part of Old Oyo National Park are lowland plains, undulating from 300metres to 500metres above sea level. Few hills, notable Yemoso and Gbongan, are found in the area. The greater part of the Park is watershed and it is well drained by two river systems; the Ogun river flowing southwards to the Atlantic Ocean, and the Tessi flowing northwards, to the River Niger (Old Oyo National park annual report 2012).

Annual rainfall in the park ranges between 900mm- 1,500mm, and the mean annual temperature is between 32°C - 37°C. The raining season begins in April and ends in September with the highest rainfall recorded between July and August. The dry season begins in October and last till about the early month of April. The driest and hottest periods

National park Annual Report 2012). Old Oyo National Park is not only wildlife based but has archaeological, cultural and historical sites.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary and secondary sources of data were used for this research. Primary data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire and field observation in the host communities, while the secondary source of data was obtained from text books, journals, published and unpublished work.

Simple random sampling technique was adopted in distribution of the questionnaire in Sepeteri and Igbeti. A total number of two hundred and seventy copies of questionnaire were administered in the host communities. One hundred and three copies were distributed to respondents in Igbeti and one hundred and sixty-seven in Sepeteri. The copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed in both communities. Descriptive (Simple percentages and charts) and inferential statistics (chi-square) were used for the analysis.

chi-square formula: $\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$

Where O is the observed variance,

E is the expected variance.

The hypothesis tested are stated thus:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between employment and monthly income in Igbeti and Sepeteri.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between employment and the income in Igbeti and Sepeteri.

Results and Discussions

The study showed public participation, entertainment, tour guidance, Poverty reduction through eco-tourism in the study area.

Community Participation in Eco-tourist Transportation

There are more people involved in the transportation of tourists through the use of taxis and motorcycles in host communities.

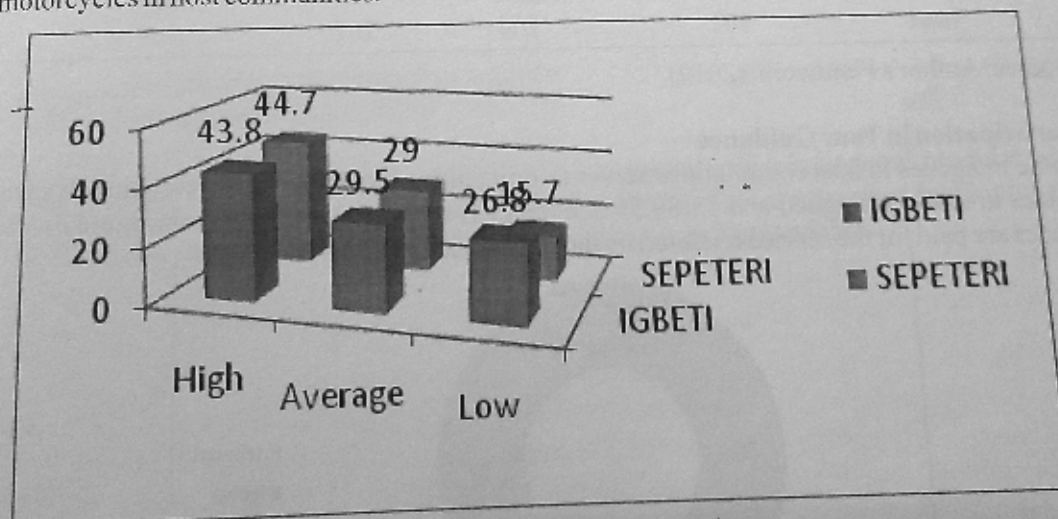


Figure 2: Community Participation in Eco-tourist Transportation

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019)

The result showed that the respondents in Igbeti, and Sepetiri accounted for 44.7% and 43.8% respectively, the respondents participate highly in the transportation of tourist from one place to the other. In Igbeti 29.5%, of the respondents perceived that transportation were on the average as well as in Sepetiri which the respondents accounted 29% this was because the patronage of people at this period was moderate. More so, 26.8% and 15.7% of the respondents in Igbeti, and Sepetiri had low participation which was as a result of the season in which the tourist visits the destination especially during the raining season the services rendered is low (figure2). It implies that both communities were involved in local transportation services. It can be further deduced that most of the people in the host communities are involved in transportation service during the festive period and dry season, this is because most tourist patronize the park at this period while the number of tourists reduces during the raining season. This is in line with the studies of Arowosafe, and Oladeji, (2017) on Strategy for Development of Marketing Plan in Kanji Lake National Park, Nigeria.

Community Participation in Tourist Entertainment

Sixty-Eight (68%) of the respondents in Igbeti were involved in the entertainment of the tourists and 76.9% in Sepetiri through songs and dances. Other respondents were of the view that entertainment of tourists was with the local meals accounted for 32% in Igbeti and 23.1% in Sepetiri respectively as shown in table 2. It implies that most tourists are entertained by the indigenes with songs, dances and local meals. Hence the culture heritage of the community is show cased. This is supported by the study of Enemu and Oduntan (2012) on public participation in tourism in Osun, Osogbo Sacred Grove.

Table 2: Participation in Tourist Entertainment

S/No	Types of Entertainment	Igbeti		Sepetiri	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Songs and dance	70	68.0	128	76.9
2	Local food	33	32.0	39	23.1
	Total	103	100	167	100

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019)

Participation in Tour Guidance

Some indigenes in host communities serves as tour guides More than 73.2% were involved as guides to tourists in Igbeti and 55(89.5%) in Sepetiri respectively as shown in figure 3. The guides are paid for the service rendered by the park management.

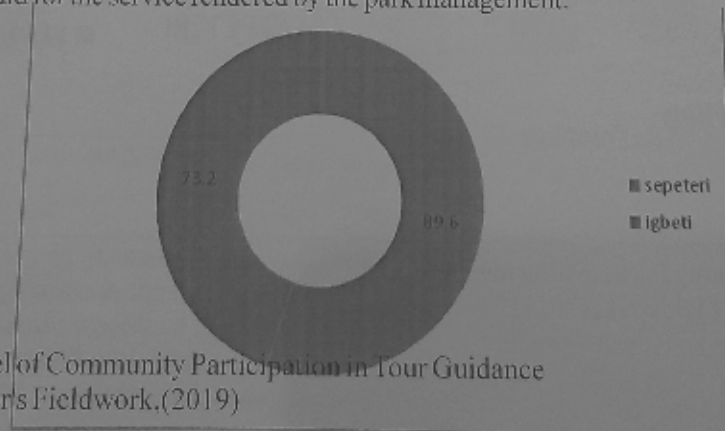


Figure 3: Level of Community Participation in Tour Guidance

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019)

Poverty reduction through Eco-tourism:

Employment in the study area accounted for 45.5% in Igbebi and 52.4% for Sepeteri. This indicates that most respondents in Sepeteri are involved in different kinds of employment in the park (either full time or part time employment) than in Igbebi. The income generated by respondents in Igbebi accounted for 2.8% while 4.5% accounted for income generated in Sepeteri. This showed that a lot of the respondents in Sepeteri generates more income than those in Igbebi. It implies that income generation were due to sales of local products to tourists. The standard of living of the respondents are higher in Sepeteri which accounted for 43.8 % while 34.1 % in Igbebi had led to reduction of poverty in both communities (See Figure3). Provision of infrastructure accounted for 13.5% in Sepeteri and 10.7% in Igbebi. It implies that employment, income generation, provision of infrastructure (pipe-borne water, access road, hospitals and schools) aid improvement in the standard of living of both communities.

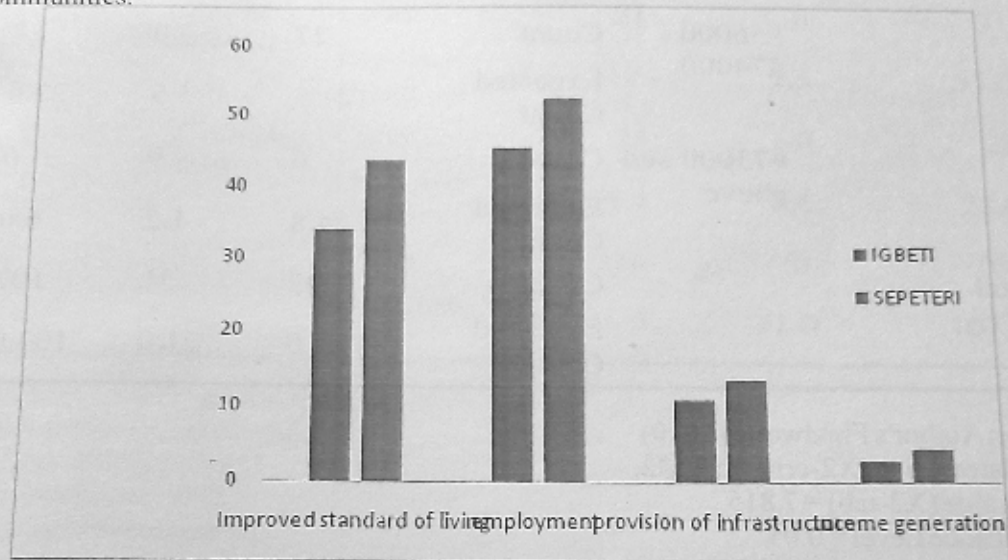


Figure 3: Poverty reduction through ecotourism

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019)

The communities are involved in the ecotourism showcasing their indigenous products which enhances reduction of poverty in sales of local products. This is supported by Gontul et. al (2019) in their study of assessment of tourists' motivation in Plateau State.

Table 3a: Relationship between employment and monthly income in Igbebi

Monthly income			Employment		Total
			Yes	No	
Income	#18000 - #36000	Count	13	21	34
		Expected Count	27.1	6.9	34.0
	#37,000 - #55000	Count	36	0	36
		Expected Count	28.7	7.3	36.0
	#56000 - #74000	Count	27	0	27
		Expected Count	21.5	5.5	27.0
	#75000 and above	Count	6	0	6
		Expected Count	4.8	1.2	6.0
	Total	Count	82	21	103
		Expected Count	82.0	21.0	103.0

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019)
 Calculated value (χ^2 -crit) = 53.532,
 Table value (χ^2 -tab) = 7.815
 Significance Level = 0.05
 DF (Degree of Freedom) = 3

The results of chi-square indicated on Table 3a. The decision rule says that reject null hypothesis (H_0) when the calculated value is greater than tabulated value at alpha 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This means that there is a wide relationship between employment and monthly income to explain socio-economic contribution of ecotourism in Old Oyo National Park. This result implies that there is indirect employment (corner shop, local hand craft industry and entertainment) which have significant impact on monthly income of respondents in Igbebi.

Table 3b: Relationship between employment and monthly income in Sepeteri

Monthly income.			Employment		Total
			Yes	No	
Income	#18000- #36000	Count	23	51	74
		Expected Count	51.4	22.6	74.0
	#37,000- #55000	Count	34	0	34
		Expected Count	23.6	10.4	34.0
	#56000- #74000	Count	31	0	31
		Expected Count	21.5	9.5	31.0
	#75000and above	Count	28	0	28
		Expected Count	19.4	8.6	28.0
Total		Count	116	51	167
		Expected Count	116.0	51.0	167.0

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2019).

Calculated value (X²-crit) = 92.274

Table value (X²-tab) = 7.815

Significance Level = 0.05

DF (Degree of Freedom) = 3

The decision rule says that reject null hypothesis (H₀) when the calculated value is greater than tabulated value at alpha 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted. This means that there is a significant relationship between employment and monthly income to explain socio-economic contribution of ecotourism in Old Oyo National Park (See Table 3b). This result implies that direct employment by the park management as tour guide, cleaners or indirect employment such as corner shop, local hand craft industry, entertainment among others enhanced the monthly income generated by respondents in Sepeteri,

The study therefore concludes that the contributions of eco-tourism in the study area had promoted the cultural heritage through the involvement of indigenes in tourist activities. Socio-economic aspect of the life of the people as livelihood of the indigenous people in the host community improved. The study therefore, recommends that the government should enact a local content policy in the eco-tourism industry whereby indigenes of host communities are employed. Also, the government should support local capacities in production of crafts and other local tourist goods and Park management should embrace indigenous knowledge and community participation where by culture, heritage, lifestyle and rural experience are marketed to tourist alongside other attractions.

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