

Community Participation in Tourist Resort Development in Gashaka Gumti National Park, North Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper attempts to evaluate the level of community participation in tourism resort development in Gashaka Gumti National park. Questionnaires were administered in all the officially recognized Communities by the National Park with a view to getting first-hand information from the members of the Communities. Data collected includes socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, as well as tourist attractions and facilities available in the national park. Findings of the study revealed that different forest, animals and birds species attracts tourists to the park. Communities, facilities such as schools, health centres, and television viewing centres, electricity, and public tap water among others were also provided in the communities within and around the National park. However, only about 10% of the respondents have access to tap water because over 50% of the respondents get water from rivers and streams. Most of these facilities were provided by the Adamawa and Taraba States and the Local Government Areas of Toungo, Gashaka and Sardauna. The paper also discovered that tourists were mostly attracted by the presence of standard restaurant and indoor and outdoor sporting facilities in the National Park. Recommendations were also made on how to improve the partnership programmes between the National Park and the Communities.

Keywords: Tourists Resort, Gashaka-Gumti, National Park, Community Participation

INTRODUCTION

Community participation is defined as an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify their problems and needs, and increasingly assume responsibilities themselves to plan, manage, control and access the collective actions that are necessary (Peter *et al.*, 2014). These actions are always positive, with the aim of giving the communities a direct voice in decision making process that affects them. Community participation has become one of the main strategies of ecotourism development recently in many countries Nigeria inclusive. The Community-Base Ecotourism projects have been introduced to the villages, where the local people could have more opportunity to participate and control ecotourism in their areas (Mutegi, 2013).

Koch (1994), Drake (1991) and Ashley (1995) have stated that community participation in wildlife tourism (eco-tourism) would bring so many advantages to the residents or their neighbours such as jobs and business opportunities, training, increased skills and the local institutional capacity; upgrading of infrastructure; increased interest and pride in their culture, assets, identity of an area It is an opportunities for the communities to earn collective income and serve as a catalyst for improving the local management of the natural resources. It is also a strategy for the rural economic development and as such community participation in wildlife tourism has some advantages over other sectors of the economy.

Ecotourism can often generate higher cash returns locally than other uses of wildlife. In fact, these local earnings can off-set the cost of wildlife damage to crops and livestock lost and access to core wildlife areas so that wildlife becomes a net benefit to the local residents and hence an asset to protect. Also in areas of high tourism potential, returns can exceed returns from other land uses, and so justify maintaining or restoring wildlife habitat. Also the value that tourists place on the local natural and cultural resources can in turn increase the recognition of their value among the local residents (Baez, 1966).

Generally, tourism development depends more than any other industry, on the good will and cooperation of the local population (Murphy, 1995). Community participation in wildlife conservation and tourism development has worked with measurable success and joy, under the Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) particularly in Zimbabwe (Marindagomo, 1990, Matzke and Nibane, 1996, Olthof, 1995 and Hill, 1996).

Community participation in tourism resource management has the potential capacity of increasing income and employment opportunities, developing skills and institutions, which would empower the local people (Ashley and Gerland, 1994). Therefore, ecotourism could encourage and attract more economic growth, equitable distribution of resources and in the process alleviate poverty. Also community participation could guarantee local support for conservation and natural resource utilization (Ashley and Gerland, 1994).

Community participation in ecotourism has been classified into four (4) types, in which the local people may be involve in from low to high levels (1) Direct benefit involvement of individuals or group of people (2) Community institution managing and set up service system in the villages (3) Community institution investing or co-investing in tourism business, which they have the power of sharing or power to control tourism resources, so that they can have more power to deal with tourism industry and they can also play a meaningful role in the community based tourism development (4) Community institution that provide services to the tourists under the planning and managing by the local organizations. The ladder model thrust considers the community institution as the representative of the community.

However, there are eight (8) ladders of citizen participation, viz. manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and empowerment. Armstein and Dewar (1999) categorized these ladders as the outcome of direction, manipulation, negotiation and full empowerment, While Wilcox (2000) had altered the Armstein model to five (5) stances i.e. information, consultation, deciding together, acting together, and supporting independent community interests.

Therefore, the focus of this paper is on the need and importance of involving the local people in the park communities in the management of national parks through meetings and participation in different activities and programmes of the park. In fact, it is only when rural communities share/participate in the control and management of the wildlife resources and derive economic benefit from the sustainable use and management of the wildlife resources, then conflicts and competition for the resources which threatened protected areas particularly in National Parks, would be minimized (Ashley, 1995).

Study area

Gashaka-Gumti National Park is located in the remote mountainous region of North-Eastern Nigeria, between the boundaries of Adamawa and Taraba states. It has a total land area of about 6,731m². Ecologically, the National Park is situated in the sub-region of Guinea Savannah

Zone of Africa, in the subtropical zone of the south-eastern highlands of the Savannah area of Nigeria, south of the River Benue. The National Park is divided into two sectors, the Northern Gumti sector is located in Adamawa State and Southern Gashaka sector located in Taraba State. The National Park is the main watershed/catchment area of River Taraba, the major tributary of River Benue. It also shares international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon, adjacent to Faro National Park. Immediately to the south of the National Park is the magnificent and inspiring Mambila Plateau. However, its successful development is linked not only to efficiency but human qualities such as hospitality and personal attention. Tourism supposedly provides a variety of benefits to remote areas and can lead to further improvement, involvement and participation of the communities concerned. Presently, almost all the national parks in Nigeria believed that the security, protection and success of tourism development depend on the support and cooperation given by the local communities. Therefore, there is the need to find ways of balancing the needs and aspirations of the local people against the need to conserve their environment for future uses.

Gashaka Gumti National Park provide some social services with a view to winning the support and cooperation of the local people, such as employment opportunities, providing school materials, grading of roads, providing health equipment to clinics, constructing bridges and culverts across rivers and streams and formation of clubs and cooperative societies with the view to integrating and involving them in the management of the park. Also formed are Park Community Development Association and Park-Community Relationship Committee which serves as a channel for interaction and providing facilities and services to the park communities and for the purpose of visiting the communities formally and informally.

There are also Community Liaison Officers and Environmental Protection Officers who regularly visit the communities and sometimes stay with the people, discuss and report back the outcome of their interactions to the park management. The report enables the park management to prepare its management strategies in terms of rural development or environmental protection programmes for proper management. Gashaka-Gumti National

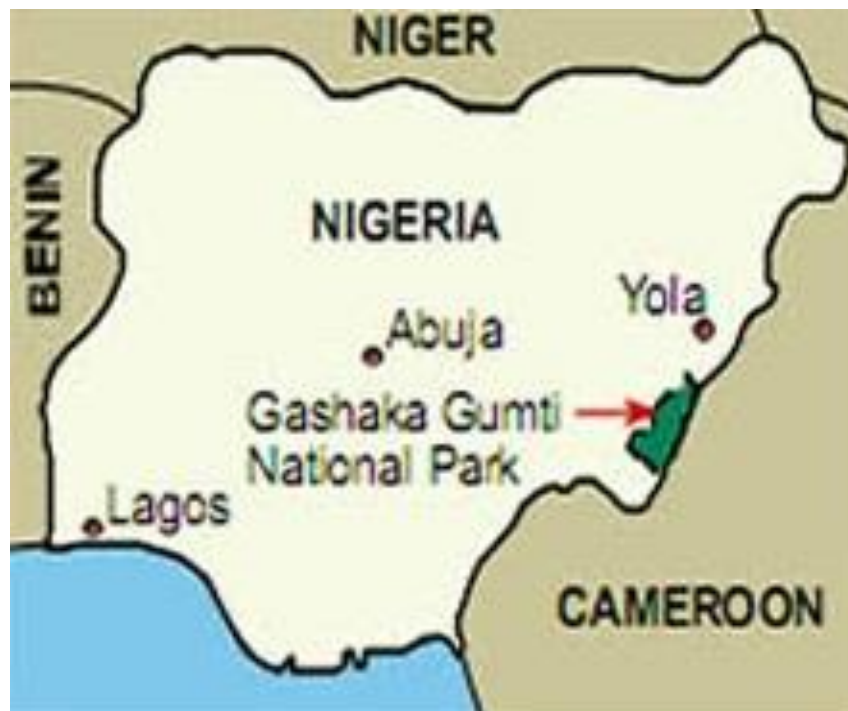


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria Showing Gashaka-Gumti National Park

The park is also divided into six (6) ranges and each range has five (5) sub-stations/bids and each bid is manned by 3-4 rangers. They include Toungo Range, Gumti Range, Gam-Gam Range, Fillinga Range, Mayo-Selbe Range and Central Squad-Serti.

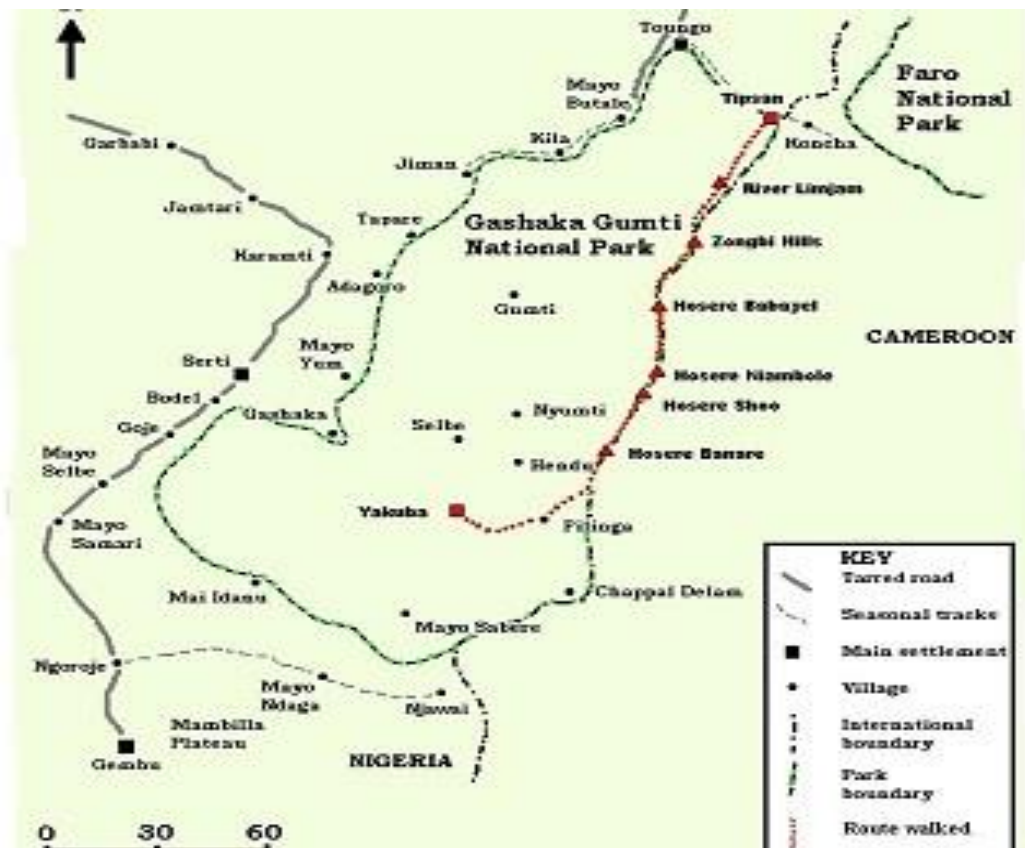


Figure 2: Map of Gashaka-Gumti National Park

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were administered in all the officially recognized fourteen Communities by the National Park with a view to getting first-hand information from the members of the Communities. Simple Random Sampling Method was used in administering the Questionnaires. Data collected includes, socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, the tourist attractions and facilities available in the national park. Also interviews and discussions were conducted with some key members of the communities. Analysis was done using frequency and percentage tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic characteristics of the respondents

Age of the respondents

The age grouping of the respondents from the national park communities shows that, 13.2% of the respondents are between the ages of 15 – 20 years, 8.3% of the respondents are between the age group of 21-25 years, 22.8% of the respondents are within the age group of 26-30 years, 20.1% of the respondents are within the age group of 31-35 years, 17.8% of the respondents are between the age group of 36-40 years and 17.8% of the respondents are above 40 years.

The overall percentage of the males and females in the study area shows that 62.2% are males and 36.8% are females.

Marital status of the respondents

On the marital status of the national park's communities, 50.0% of the respondent were married, while 29.9% of the respondents are single, 11.0% of the respondents are widows and 10.1% are divorcees, this shows the rural nature of the communities with few cases of widows and divorcees. It also shows that young people both male and female do marry early in the rural areas considering the percentage of single people. Many parents in the support zone communities do not acknowledge the importance of sending their children to school, when they could be usefully employed somewhere such as assisting parents in the farms and cattle grazing. Therefore, ladies are lured for early marriages and the prospects of making money through farming and other petty business is limited. This is showing the attitudes cultural and traditional norms and values of park communities.

Respondent's level of Education

On the level of education of the parks communities, 22.1% of the respondents have obtained primary school certificates, 21.4% of the communities have obtained secondary school certificates, 17.8% of the respondents obtained tertiary institution certificates (OND, HND, NCE, B.Sc., M.Sc. and above) 20.1% of the respondents have attended adult education classes and 18.6% of the respondents attended Islamiya/Quranic schools. This shows that although the population is rural but have attended certain level of literacy. Generally, there are 21 primary schools within the park support zone communities and three (3) secondary schools. The primary schools were built by the three (3) LGA bordering the park Sardauna, Gashaka and Toungo and by Ardo Shanono at Shirip, NCF at Gashaka and the Secondary schools by Taraba and Adamawa states at Mayo Selbe, Serti and Toungo. In fact out of the 21 primary schools only 9 have permanent structures.

Also few girls are encouraged to attend primary school within the predominantly Muslim communities. Most girls marry very early between the ages of 9-16; therefore, have little chance to complete their primary school. While some girls also dropped out of schools early as a result of unplanned pregnancy. Although the primary schools within the support zone communities offer free education, but substantial school fees are charged every term for secondary schools, therefore, many pupils are unable to complete their education due to financial problems. This is showing the educational opportunities available in the park communities and the problems surrounding it.

Occupation of respondents

On the occupation classification of the park communities, 20.0% are civil servants, 9.7% are self-employed, 19.0% are farmers, 11.8% are full time housewives, 7.5% are Fulbe cattle breeders, 2.9% are fishermen and hunters, 4.9% are petty traders and 6.9% are businessmen and women. This shows that members of the communities are involved in almost all the professions be it formal and informal sectors. It also shows that members of the communities engaged and participate in different profession in all the research settlements. In fact, 80% of the people within the support zone communities engaged in one form of agriculture or the other, where large agricultural produce are transported to other areas. Crops produced are Guinea corn, Maize, Rice, Yam, Potatoes, Beans and wide range of economic trees.

However, after farming, hunting is the second most important local activity, because most of the villages within the support zone communities were originally established by hunters. Hunting is widely practiced for both subsistence and commercial purposes, despite the fact that hunting within Gashaka, Toungo LGAs, and the National park boundary are prohibited. Therefore, enforcing the park laws and policies on farming, hunting, grazing, and honey collection, lumbering etc. with a view to conserving and protecting the flora and fauna of the park resources would not be easy.

Annual income level of respondents

On the monthly income level of the communities, 20.0% earned between ₦5,000 - ₦10,000, 12.5% earned between ₦11,000 - ₦15,000 monthly, 15.4% earned between ₦16,000-₦20,000, 81 respondents representing 11.3% earned between ₦21,000-₦50,000, 17.6% earned between ₦51,000 and ₦100,000 and 13.2% of the respondents earned above ₦100,000 per month. This shows that the income distribution among the members of the communities is widespread. Generally speaking, some support zone communities are in the remote areas; therefore, lack of access roads and associated problems involving transporting the surplus of agricultural produce to the local markets, is one of their greatest problems that affect their income seriously.

Household size of the respondents

Furthermore, on the number of people per household among the communities of the national park, 13.1% are living alone in their houses, 16.0% have two persons in their households, 12.8% have three persons in their households, another 12.8% have four persons in their households and 45.4% have more than five persons in their respective households. This shows that there are more people sharing rooms in few households. Considering the 2.5 persons per room approved by occupancy ratio of housing standard.

Table 1: Tourist Attractions Available in the National Park Communities

Types of attractions	Frequency	Percentage
Different forest/animal species sites	192	26.7
Different animal species sites	105	14.6
Rivers/streams/lakes	47	6.5
Different bird species sites	65	9.0
Different mountain ranges	30	4.2
Traditional festivals	29	4.0
All of the above	252	35.0
Total	720	100

On the availability of tourist attractions and potentials in their locality, members of the communities expressed their views and opinions accordingly. About 26.7% said there are different forest and animal species in their locality, that is in Gashaka and Kwano Forest area where animals like Baboon, Monkeys, Buffalos, Bush pigs can be sighted, 14.6% said there are animal species, in their locality, while 6.5% said there are Rivers, Streams, ponds and lakes in their locality, 4.4% said there are different bird species in their locality. Also 4.2% of the respondents said there are mountain ranges in their localities, 4.0% said there are different cultural and traditional festivals in their localities and 35.0% of the respondents said there is one potential or attraction in their localities which attract tourists to their environment. In fact, on the average almost all the communities in the national park are bestowed with some attractions and potentials which make them tourist destinations as shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Attractions Visited More by the Tourists in the Park Communities

Attractions visited	Frequency	Percentage
Wildlife, birds and plant species sites	328	45.6
Forest and mountain ranges areas	209	29.0
Traditional and cultural festivals	183	25.4
Total	720	100

On the attractions frequently visited by the tourists, 45.6% of the respondents said the most frequently visited attractions in their locality are animal, bird, and plants species, while 29.0% of the respondents said the most frequently visited sites in their locality are forest and mountain ranges and 23.6% said cultural and traditional festivals are the most preferred and visited attractions of the tourists. Table 2 shows that flora and fauna are the most preferred attractions in the national park, then followed by mountain ranges and traditions festivals. Therefore, tourists, visitation should be encourage, because tourism is considered by communities as a real alternative source of income and job opportunities, irrespective of the potential adverse effects that unrestricted tourists development may have in the communities.

Table 3: Communities Sources of Water Supply

Type of sources of water supply	Frequency	Percentage
Public water tap	69	9.6
Rivers/streams	380	52.7
Wells	99	13.8
Rain water	41	5.7
Bore holes	131	18.2
Total	720	100

However, on the sources of water supply of the communities 9.6% of the respondents said public water tap is their source of water supply, 52.7% of the respondents said rivers and streams are their major sources of water supply, 13.8% of the respondents said well water is their major source of water supply, 5.7% of the respondents said rain water is their major source of water supply and 17.1% of the respondents said borehole is their major source of water supply. This shows that rivers, streams, borehole and wells are the major sources of water supply of the communities followed by public water tap and rain water. Therefore, the national park management need to do more with regard to water supply by intensifying efforts toward providing clean and portable water to the park communities. Because the more the communities benefits, the more they would support the conservation programmes of the national park, which would entice them to participate in any activities organized by the National Park.

Table 4: Facilities and Services available in the Communities

Facilities and services	Frequency	Percentage
Water tap	48	6.7
Electricity	62	8.6
Health centre/clinic	271	37.6
TV viewing centre	27	3.8
Primary school	165	22.9
Secondary school	129	17.9
Adult education classes	18	2.5
Total	720	100

On the communities’ facilities and services, 6.7% of the respondents said they have public water tap in their localities, 8.6% of the respondents said they have electricity in their localities, and 37.6% of the respondents said they have health facilities (clinic/health centre). Also 3.8% of the respondents said they have TV viewing centre, 22.9% of the respondents said they have primary school in their locality, 17.9% of the respondents said they have secondary school in their locality, while 2.5% of the respondents said they have adult education classes in their locality. This shows that primary, secondary schools and health facilities are available in most of the park communities, followed by electricity, water tap and TV viewing centres. For instance, all the health facilities operating in the park communities are managed either by (Sardauna, Gashaka and Toungo LGA), Private individuals or churches. Therefore, positive local attitudes toward tourism depend on whether or not the host communities are receiving socio-economic benefits or some form of compensation in return for restriction on access to resources they have been harvesting and enjoying prior to the park establishment.

Table 5: Providers of Facilities/Services in the National Park Communities

Providers of facilities	Frequency	Percentage
State government	315	44.0
Local government	301	42.0
The national park	66	9.0
Private organizations	38	5.0
Total	720	100

On who provided the facilities and services to the communities within and around the national park, 38.6% of the respondents said the facilities and services in their localities were provided by the state government (Adamawa and Taraba), 41.8% of the respondents said the facilities and services in their localities were provided by the Local Government Areas (Sardauna, Gashaka and Toungo) While 9.2% of the respondents said the facilities and services in their localities were provided by the national park management and 5.3% said the facilities and services in their localities were provided by private organisations (NGO's) and individuals. This shows that the management of the national park has to be on their feet by providing more facilities and services to the communities and involve them in the parks conservation and protection programmes because it is only through involvement and participation with benefits, that the communities would feel obliged to support the management of the national park. This is also indicating that the national park has done little in terms of providing facilities in the communities, therefore, there is need for the park management to register it’s presence by touching the lives of the communities, through the provision of facilities and services. Because it is the only way that can bring the two stakeholders closer and work together as partners in progress in the park programmes.

Table 6: Facilities/Services that make the Park more Attractive

Facilities and services needed	Frequency	Percentage
Standard restaurant of five star class	48	34.7
Different snacks points on the sites	8	5.8
Both indoor / outdoor Sporting facilities	54	39.1
Library and museum services	8	5.8
Stable water and electricity supply	20	14.5
Total	138	100

Allen, *et al.*, (1998) in a study conducted in Colorado (USA) determines which of the seven dimensions of community life is more important: public services, economics ,environment, formal education, medical services, citizen participation and involvement and recreation services, found that the relationship between tourism development and satisfaction or importance of community dimensions are generally non-linear with citizen involvement, public services and environment being the most sensitive in tourism development.

Additionally, on facilities and service that make the park more lively and attractive, 34.7% of the respondents said the national park should have a five star standard restaurant, 5.8% of the tourists said there is need to have different snacks points at the attraction sites within the park, 39.1% of the tourists opined that there is need to have both indoor and outdoor sporting facilities in order to engage the tourist after they returned from the game viewing trips either in the morning or in the evening. Also 5.8% of the tourists observed that there is need to have good library and museum services in the park, so that tourists could have access to important document that are related and educative about the park and 14.5% of the tourists said only stable water and electricity supply that would make the national park more lively.

Table 7: Communities Perception on upgrading the National Park

Communities perception	Frequency	Percentage
Facilities & services	200	28.0
Electricity supply	50	7.0
Job opportunities	220	31.0
Small scale industries	40	6.0
More income generation	210	30.0
Total	720	100

On the perception of the National Park Communities regarding upgrading the Park from Game Reserve. That is the Benefits the Communities are likely to enjoy. The communities perceived three major benefits and advantages with regard to upgrading the national park, the communities said they expected to benefit from the provision of more facilities and services with 28.0% of the respondents expressing the opinion, 7.0% of the respondents said they expected electricity supply from the National grid, 31.0% of the respondents said they expected more job and employment opportunities from the national park, 6.0% said they expected the establishment of small scale industries, 30.0% of the respondents said they perceived more income generation as a result of upgrading the national park. Therefore, the opinion expressed by the respondent’s shows that job opportunity is the most perceived and expected benefit from the national park followed by more income generation.

Akiss *et al.*, (1996) discovered that, the resident’s perception on tourism development will be an inverse relationship between the level of tourism development and the perceived impacts on the social, economic, and environmental status of the host community. Therefore, if ecotourism is to be develop successfully, community support must be high, strong and encouraging. With respect to tourism benefits, the respondents stated that they perceived more job opportunities for the young and able people in the support zone communities.

However, the communities stated that the national park has positively affected their lives since its establishment, mainly in terms of local economic benefits. This sentiment is also shared among the park staff, particularly the rangers. This is significant, by recognizing that attitudes

towards tourism development largely depend on the perceived or perception as opposed to actual cost and benefits (Lindberg, *et al*, 1996).

Table 8: Communities Expectations from the National Park

Communities expectations	Frequency	Percentage
Fulfil promise made by the park	379	52.6
Provide employment opportunities	180	25.0
Access roads and supply of drugs in clinics	161	22.4
Total	720	100

However, with regard to expectations from the National Park, members of the communities stated that they want the park management to do more in improving their relationships, this was expressed by 52.6% of the respondents who said the park management should always fulfil the promises made to the communities in order to build confidence and trust between them. Also 25.0% of the respondents said the only way to improve cordial relationship between the communities and the national park is by providing more employment opportunities to the youth and any interested persons and 22.4% of the respondents said the national park management should construct more access roads and supply drugs to their clinics and health centres are the best way to improve cordial relationships between the communities and the national park. These views were expressed by many authors, who stated that communities that derived benefits from ecotourism activities normally support the parks conservation programmes wholeheartedly. Also if communities are contented with the park programmes there would be greater opportunities for enhancing tourism development through positive intercultural interaction with the local residents, (Mutegi, 2013, Ashley and Gerland 1995).

Table 9: The positive effects of Tourists Visits on the Park Communities

Effect of tourists visit	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness on conservation and job opportunities	339	47.0
Income generation and community projects	228	32.0
Educational development and animal protection	153	21.0
Total	720	100

On the positive effects of the Tourists Visit to various localities/communities within and around the National Park, members of the communities have learned, benefited and experienced many things as a result of the Tourists Visit to their localities/communities. The tourists visit to the National Park have impacted positively on human development of the communities as expressed by the respondents. For instance, 47% of the respondents said the tourists visits created awareness on the importance of tourism development to the communities as well as increase on job opportunities for the livelihood of the members of the localities, 32% of the respondents said tourists visit has improved their sources of income and community development through different petty business activities in order to meet their daily needs and wants and thirdly 21% of the respondents said tourists visits has impacted the communities on access to education as well as conservation education and wildlife protection programmes of the national park. In fact, all these are social services that have positively impacted on the communities and have seriously influenced the relationships between the communities and the National Park management.

Table 10: Impacts of the Tourists Visit on the Communities

Impacts of the tourist visit	Frequency	Percentage
Adulteration of culture & tradition	130	18.2
Change of behaviour & attitude by youths	122	16.9
Influences the youths modes of dressing & speech	156	21.6
Learning foreign norms & values	162	22.5
Encourages immortality among the youths	150	20.8
Total	720	100

On impact of tourists visit on the communities, four impacts have been observed by the respondents. For instance, 18.2% of the respondents said the tourists visit have negatively impacted on the culture and traditions of the communities, 16.9% of the respondents said the tourists have influenced the change of behaviour and attitudes of the youths towards elders, 21.6% of the respondents said tourists visit have influenced the youths mode of dressing and speaking, 22.5% of the respondents said the tourists visit have influenced the learning of foreign norms and values and 20.8% of the respondents said the tourists visit to the communities have encourages immortality among the youths as shown in Table 10.

Table 11: Services Provided by the Communities to the Tourists

Services provided to the tourists	Frequency	Percentage
As a guide	201	27.9
As house keeper	94	13.1
As interpreter	156	21.7
Accommodation	64	8.9
provide food	147	20.4
Any other work	58	8.0
Total	720	100

However, members of the communities were asked if they would like to work with tourists and in what capacity, 77.8% of the respondents said yes and 20.2% of the respondents said no. They also expressed their reasons and area of interest accordingly. 27.9% of the respondents said they would like to serve the tourists as a guide to take them round the national park, 13.1% of the respondents said they would like to work with the tourists as housekeepers, 21.7% of the respondents said they would like to work with the tourists as a local language interpreters, 8.9% of the respondents said they prefer to provide accommodation to the tourists, 20.4% of the respondents said they prefer to provide food ingredients to tourist and 8.0% of the respondents said they would like to work with the tourists in any available capacity. Table 11 expression of area of interest by the members of the communities revealed that most of the residents prefer to serve tourists as guide, house keeper and local language interpreters and others prefer to provide food and accommodation and the rest have not specify the capacity in which they would like to serve the tourists.

Table 12: Benefits Received by the Communities after Upgrading National Park

Benefit received	Frequency	Percentage
Sitting of primary schools in our localities	220	30.5
Construction of clinic/health centres	121	16.8
Construction of access roads & culverts	125	17.4
Digging of wells/boreholes in our localities	122	16.9
Employment and loans to generate more income	132	18.4
Total	720	100

On benefits enjoyed or received from the national park, since it was upgraded 30.5% of the respondents said they have benefited with the sitting of primary schools in their localities (Primary Schools in Gashaka and Bakin Daga villages), 16.8% of the respondents said they have benefited with the construction of clinics and health centres in their localities (Gashaka Clinic), while 17.4% of the respondents said they have benefited with the construction of access roads and culverts. The 35 km road from Mayo-Selbe to Mai-Idanu and Yakuba, 16.9% of the respondents said they have benefited from the provision of wells and boreholes, 18.4% of the respondents said they have benefited by obtaining loans to generate more income and have benefited from the park employment opportunity. Generally, there are three major benefits received by the communities, they are primary schools, clinics and health centres and construction of roads and culverts. These are followed by drilling of boreholes and wells and obtaining loans for income generation.

Table 13: Other Assistance Received from the National Park by the Communities

Other assistance received	Frequency	Percentage
Small scale loans as source of income	47	6.5
Employment opportunities	283	39.3
Provision of books & seats to schools	196	27.2
Provision of drugs to clinics/health centres	102	14.2
Assisted farmers with fertilizer & chemical	36	5.0
Inoculation of our cattle	56	7.8
Total	720	100

On other assistance received from the national park management, 6.5% of the respondents said they have received small scale loans to boost their source of income, 39.3% of the respondents said that members of their communities have been given employment opportunities to work with the national park, 27.2% of the respondents said they have received textbooks and schools seats from the management of the national park, 14.2% of the respondents said they have also received drugs in their clinics and health centres (Gashaka Village), 5.0% of the respondents said they have received fertilizer and chemicals for their farm usage 7.8% of the respondents said their cattle were inoculated by the management of the national park. Also wooden Boats were donated to the Support Zone communities at Kam Mayo-Yum for River crossing. In fact this is clear indication that the communities have benefited a lot from the national park. Lindberg and Enriquez (1994) discovered that, communities that shares the benefit of ecotourism brought by the protected areas they would willingly participate and involve in the protection of their areas and facilitates any developmental activities. When sharing does not occur, the results are the opposite and negative changes in the protected areas and communities may prevail.

Nelson (2000) acknowledges that in order for all participants to benefit from ecotourism, attention need to be given towards the preparations and understandings of the participants, taking into account the level of community participation and social impacts of such involvement. But in a situation where the residents had positive attitudes towards tourism and limited awareness of employment or investment opportunities, lack of awareness along with increased activity by outside investors, without formalized planning, the possibilities for the community to further benefits from tourism will be limited Cambel, (1999).

However, on taking advantage being closer to the National Park, 54.7% of the respondents said the communities used the opportunity during meetings to expressed their views, problems and cement their working relationships with the national park management and community leaders, 22.0% of the respondents said the communities took advantage by participating in the

park conservation and protection programmes and the available employment opportunities offered and 23.3% of the respondents said the communities took advantage by participating in the parks conservation and environmental education awareness programmes. This revealed that the communities are relating and interacting with the park management very well.

Table 14: Promises Made by the National Park to the Communities

Promises made by the park	Frequency	Percentage
Security\Cordial relationship	348	48.3
Construction of community hall	198	27.5
Schools, access roads and clinics	174	24.3
Total	720	100

On the promises made to the members of the park community committee during meetings 48.3% of the respondents said the park promised the communities protection, security, good working relationships, improved and better park conservation programmes, 27.5% of the respondents said the national park promised to involve them in the conservation programmes and construction of the community village Hall and 24.3% of the respondents said the national park promised the communities new schools, grading and construction of access roads and health centres. Table 14 shows that the national park management fulfilled the promises made to the communities. In summary the national park was able to provide most of its long and short term projects to the park communities.

Table 15: National Park-Staff Relationship with the Communities

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	78	38.2
Partially satisfied	81	39.7
Not satisfied	45	22.1
Total	204	100

Members of staff were asked if they are satisfied with the relationship between the national park and the communities, 38.2% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the relationship between the national park staff and the communities, 39.7% of the respondents said they were partially satisfied with the relationship between the national park staff and the communities and 22.1% of the respondents said they were not satisfied with the relationship between the national park staff and members of communities because some communities connived with outsiders to commit illegal activities in the national park, as shown in Table 15. Although relationship between the park management and the communities is cordial, the relationship between farmers and pastoralists is not good. Because during dry season when forage is often scarce, livestock moved into farms and destroy crops. This leads to serious conflict and problems between farmers and the pastoralists particularly in areas like Filinga and Sabere. However, despite this apparent problems and conflicts farmers and pastoralists depend upon each other.

Farmers in remote and inaccessible areas such as Gumti, rely upon the pastoralists to buy their surplus farm produce each year. Pastoralists in the highland areas such as Chabbal Yumti depend upon the presence of local farmers to supply them with their grains needs Dunn (1994). Generally, if the park communities are satisfied or contented with the park management

performance there would be greater opportunity for enhancing tourist experiences through positive intercultural interaction with the local residents.

Members of staff were asked on the strategies to improve the relationship between the staff of the park and the gateway communities, 70% of the respondents said the only way to improve good working relationship is through employment opportunities, that is employing people from the park communities to work in the national park, 17% of the respondents said the only way to improve their relationship is through involving members of the communities in the decision making policies and conservation programmes of the park and 13% of the respondents said the only way to improve the relationship between the national park and the communities is through the provision of health facilities and schools materials and equipment in various localities within the communities as shown in Table 15. In an ideal ecotourism situation, there should be a symbiotic relationship between the local host-communities and the national park including its resources and park staff that manage them. The local communities are more liable to support the conservation efforts of the park and may even act on behalf of the national park staff for the protection of the resources available in the national park, Therefore, if the communities benefit from the protection and conservation programmes through sustainable harvesting of the important park resources such as forests and watersheds and provision of facilities, utilities and services.

Members of staff were asked on programmes that can improve their relationships with communities, 19.6% of the respondents said community development programmes that can involve the whole national park communities to participate, 1.5% of the respondents said community economic programmes through financial assistance in order to empower them. Another 1.5% of the respondents said the park should support the communities to preserve their local values and norms, 2.0% of the respondents said the national park should support the establishment of community base organizations in all the localities to serve as a bridge for meetings between the communities and the national park, 1.0% of the respondents said the national park should support the identification and protection of the community's assets.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tourists are usually attracted by the types of forest, animals and birds' species present in a park, although this depends on the facilities and services provided by the management of the park. Findings of the study revealed that different forest, animals and birds species attracts tourist to the national park. Community facilities such as schools, health centres, and television viewing centres, electricity, and tap water among others were also provided in the area. Most of these facilities were provided by the state and local governments and people were mostly attracted by the presence of standard restaurant and indoor and outdoor sporting facilities in the area. It is hereby recommended that:

- a) There is need for the Management of Gashaka-Gumti National Park to create and provide alternative sources of income to the members of the park communities that are affected by the rules and regulations of the park that forbids, restricts and control farming, hunting, fishing, lumbering, bee keeping and honey collection among others through soft loans and empowerment scheme.
- b) There is need for the park management to review its rules and regulations that restricts the park communities from benefitting or using the resources available in their domain particularly the farm radius, animal grazing and any other economic activities in their respective communities.

- c) There is need to improve the good working relationship between the national park and the support zone communities residing within and around the boundary of the park through employment opportunities and soft loans.

The national park management should maintain and intensify the quarterly community-park consultative meetings with a view to complementing the Park Rangers official functions, who regularly and constantly visit the communities and report the outcome of their visits and interactions to the national park management for proactive action.

- g) There is need for the national park management to diversify their programmes with a view to engaging the members of the support zone communities to generate more income. The diversification should focus on three areas: (a) modern bee farming and honey collection in some selected support zone communities of the national park where people could be trained and empowered to enable them participate fully. (b) Modern fish farming should be introduced in some selected communities in the park to earn additional income, with a view to encouraging them support and obey the park's rules and regulations.

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