

NEEDS OF THE HOST POPULATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE LAKE BOSOMTWE BASIN OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Understanding residents' needs is essential for the long term sustainability of tourism destinations. A popular axiom underlying needs assessment is that understanding human needs is half the job of meeting them. This paper assesses the needs and deficiencies of the communities around Lake Bosomtwe in order to inform tourism development in the basin. A resident survey conducted in the basin in January, 2006 revealed that the communities in the basin have similar needs. While the leading need of the individual was micro credit that of communities was social amenities. The hierarchical arrangements of community needs are social amenities, health, education, economic improvement, recreational facilities, security and environmental protection. Based on the top needs of the communities, it was concluded that most of the needs and aspirations of the people are consistent with tourism development as they constitute an important prerequisite for tourism development in any attractive destination.

Introduction

One of the core components of tourism development at the destination level is the assessment of the needs of the host population. D' Amore (1983) recommends that at the local level, tourism planning and management should be based upon the development goals, needs and priorities identified by residents. According to Ashley *et al* (2001), to ensure continuous support from residents needs assessment must form an essential component of the planning process since it helps to define the ways in which tourism can best serve the host population. From resource management and sustainable tourism perspectives, assessment of the needs of host population is essential throughout the planning process.

Thus, for tourism to be sustainable, it is essential to evolve strategies that are consistent with community needs.

Traditionally, needs assessment offers a rational approach to determining priority and resource allocation (Pennington, 1980). In addition, it helps to make informed need-based decisions, develop strategies to resolve the identified needs, gauge the residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism as well as obtain baseline data to evaluate the success of tourism projects. Forstner (2004: 497) contends that in order to realize the potential gains from tourism for local communities, its development has to be reoriented to the interests of local stakeholders, in particular the poor. Stevenson (1952) sums the importance of the needs assessment in the following words 'that understanding human needs is half the job of meeting them.

Although needs assessment is recognized as one of the core components of the planning process, it has been lacking and rarely implemented (Knox, 2002, Pennington, 1980 and Queeney, 2000). Queeney (1995) believes that if conducted properly, needs assessment can revolutionize planning and help planners as well as pro-poor advocates to design effective and responsive programmes.

At the moment, there is a growing concern that the host populations, especially the poor in most tourism destinations do not gain enough from tourism ventures (Ashley *et al* 2001; WTO, 2004). Hence, the efforts by pro-poor advocates to promote tourism that will unlock more benefits to the poor (Ashley *et al* 2001). As English (1986) remarked, it is unusual in developing countries to find tourism receipts channelled back to local communities or even to the management of the protected areas that generated the income.

Although the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) puts the needs of the host population and future generations at the centre stage of all development, very little attention has been paid to such needs in tourism development. Despite the fact that tourism is about meeting the needs of both tourists and hosts, the industry has paid less attention to the latter (Murphy, 1985; Sharpley, 1994). Murphy (1985), reports that more emphasis has been placed on the convenience of tourists while local disillusionment with the industry has been given less attention. Reinforcing this position, Sharpley (1994) posits that a considerable amount of research has been undertaken into the desires, motivation and behaviour of tourists in relation to tourism development; this has been at

the expense of the host population. Thus, tourism has invariably been seen through the traveller's eyes at the expense of the host population. This paper aims to fill part of the gap by examining the needs and priorities of individuals and communities around Lake Bosomtwe, an emerging tourist destination in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Figure 1).

Literature Review

Eadington and Smith (1992) describe tourism as one of the new industries that have emerged to address the needs of societies. In support of this view, Fredline and Faulkner (2000) maintain that developing a proper planning/management regime on community needs is an essential ingredient of sustainable development. Generally, need is defined as a gap between "what is and what ought to be," and needs assessment is a tool used to identify the gap and help determine if it can be bridged through the proposed project (Aherne *et al* 2001:7; Gupta, 1999:4; Knox, 2002:44; Pennington, 1980:1). Often, needs assessment is directed towards identifying individual needs, but it can also focus on groups, communities, organizations as well as society (Kolette, 2003).

According to Stufflebeam *et al* (1985) the concept of needs assessment evolved in the mid 1960s as a direct off shoot of the social action legislation of the period. Assessments of needs were often required as a basis for identifying programme goals and for determining the level of funding required to address those goals at the local or national level.

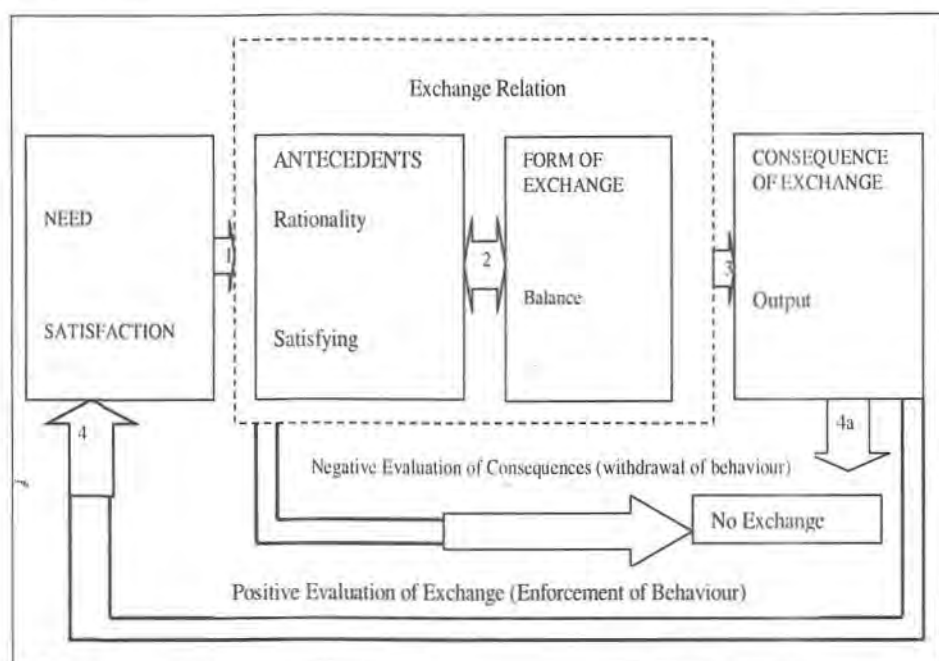
Though many writers, including Altschuld and Witkins (2002) and Knox (2002), acknowledged that needs assessment does not guarantee success, there is a general agreement that it can provide useful information to enhance the achievement of project goals. It is commonly regarded as a continuous process and not an end in itself. In most cases, the data gathered can be used to plan the objectives of projects, develop marketing strategies and make an evaluative judgment objective.

Studies including Moore (1980) and Knox (2002) confirm that needs assessment can deal with desires, interests or deficiencies of both individuals and groups. However, Aherne *et al* (2001) caution that needs differ from wants and demands, but all play a role in planning projects, and each can be identified in a needs assessment.

Most researchers point to economic benefits as the most important elements sought by locals (Keogh, 1990; Bruner, 1996; Haley *et al* 2005). According to Bruner (1996: 290), "what most Ghanaians want from

tourism is economic development, including employment, new sources of income, better sanitation and improved roads." Keogh (1990) had earlier linked this observation to the fact that the majority of residents of most destinations see tourism as an economic tool.

At the heart of needs assessment is the social exchange model. Hence, the social exchange process model developed by Ap (1992) was employed to help facilitate the understanding of residents' needs and tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin. The model outlines the processes by which residents become involved in tourism exchanges, continue these exchanges, and become disengaged from the exchanges (Figure 1)



Source: Ap (1992)

Figure 1 Model of Social Exchange Process

The basic components involved in the exchange process are need satisfaction, exchange relation, consequences of exchange, and the no-exchange outcome. Linking the components are a set of processes that are presented as flows shown in Figure 1: (1) initiation of exchange; (2) exchange formation; (3) exchange transaction evaluation; (4) positive evaluation of exchange consequences, that is, reinforcement of behaviour;

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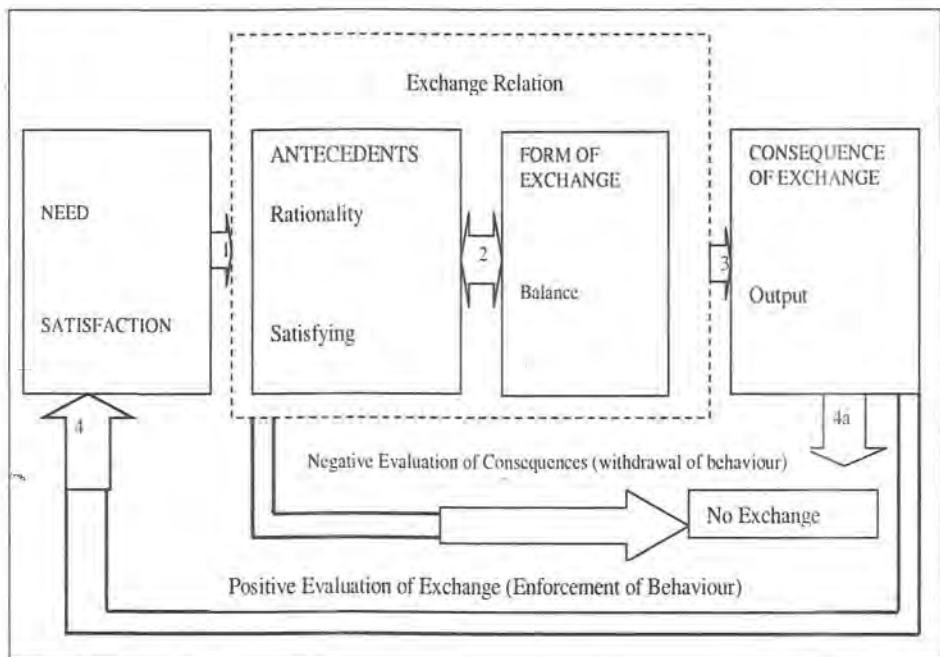
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and (2a) and (4a) negative evaluation of exchange consequences resulting in a reduction of exchange behaviour or possibly the withdrawal of exchange behaviour which results in no-exchange.

The model assumes that social relations involve an exchange of resources among social actors and the primary motive for initiating exchange from the residents' perspective is to improve the community's economic, social, and psychological well-being, and that residents' perceptions and attitudes are predictors of their behaviour toward tourism. According to Ap (1992: 671) satisfaction of actors' needs provides the rationale for engaging in social exchange. Houston and Gassenheimer (1987) indicated that satisfaction of needs provides the starting point for any exchange. Satisfaction of these needs motivates the behaviour of the actor to engage in an exchange relationship because he/she "believes it is appropriate or desirable to deal with the other party." Unless a need exists there is no rationale, motivation, or basis upon which the actor can develop a willingness to initiate exchange with another party.

Our understanding of human needs can also be traced to the works of Maslow (1943, 1970) and McGuire (1974). Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a useful summary or inventory of human needs that may guide tourism developers. As Herrington (1993) suggests, Maslow's list of needs can assist in designing products that are consistent with the needs of consumers/tourists as well as with those of the host population.

Methodology

The Study Area

The Lake Bosomtwe basin is a popular tourist destination in Ghana, West Africa. The meteorite depression is situated in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, about 32km south east of Kumasi, the regional capital. It is roughly circular in outline and nearly 8km (5 miles) in diameter (Figure 2).

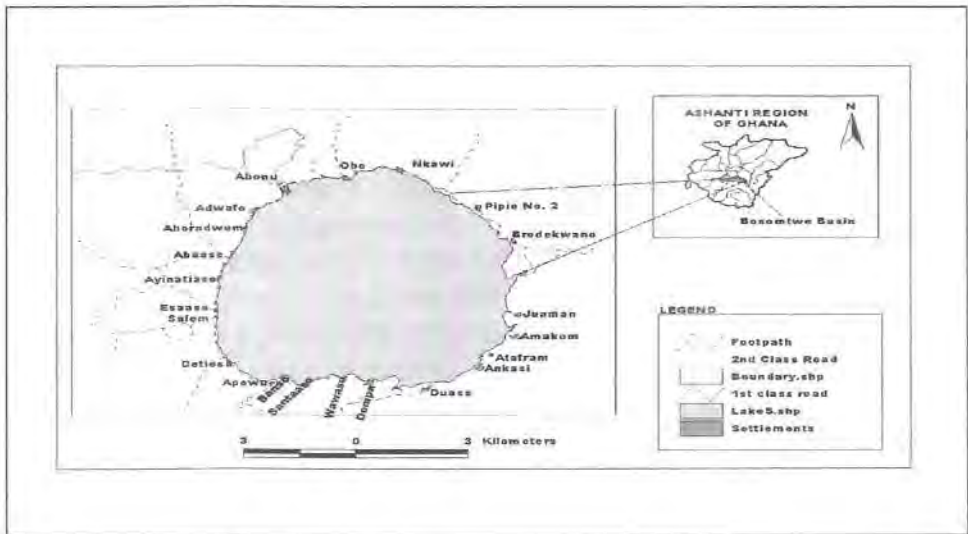


Figure 2 Map Showing the Lake Bosomtwe Basin, Ashanti Region, Ghana

The basin is occupied by 22 small villages, most of them with a population of less than a thousand people. Administratively, the basin falls under the jurisdiction of two districts in the Ashanti Region, namely Bosomtwe Atwima Kwanwoma to the north (12 settlements) and Amansie East in the southern half (10 settlements). Traditionally, each community has a Chief who mobilizes his people for development. Generally, the Chief is the custodian of the community lands and of the customary practices of the people.

The basin is one of the most deprived parts of the Ashanti Region and unemployment is a major problem (Government of Ghana, 2000). Located in the forest belt of Ghana, the majority (over 80%) of adults combine fishing and farming which are experiencing decreases in output due to population increase. However, the basin has both natural and cultural resources for tourism development. These potentials include water sports, adventure, village stay, rich culture, ecotourism, farm tourism and educational tours. However, most of these are yet to be translated into reality.

Data Collection and Related Issues

Data for the study were obtained through a survey of 628 household heads or their representatives (any household member over 18 years) that resided around Lake Bosomtwe in January, 2006. A multi stage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the subjects. The first stage involved the use of simple random techniques to select eleven out of the twenty communities. However, Abonu, the most developed community in terms of tourism related infrastructure, was purposely selected to serve as the experimental unit. The second stage consisted of the proportional allocation of the 660 respondents (sample size) among the twelve selected communities. In the third stage, the random sampling

technique was used to select the required stratified sample size for each community. These methods generated a total of 628 respondents in the following representation: 93 for Abonu, 30 for Adjaman, 81 for Amakom, 35 for Obo, 42 for Pipie, 83 for Ankasi, 34 for Apewu, 51 for Bansa, 37 for Detieso, 96 for Duase and 40 for Esaase.

Data were collected through an interview questionnaire which consisted of two sections: community needs and residents' socio-demographic characteristics. The first section measured the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities around the lake. In an open ended format respondents were asked to state six of their pressing needs as individuals and those of their communities. Given the open ended nature of the questions, the post coding method (compilation of responses, development of coding scheme) was followed to assign codes to responses for analysis. As Kolette (2003) maintains, effective needs assessment does not have to be costly, nor does it have to be performed at the most rigorous and complex level. However, it has to be well planned with attention paid to thoroughness and details. Hence, care was taken so that the codes reflected all the respondents' verbalization and feelings. The section dealing with socio-demographic characteristics of residents demanded information on their age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, religion, occupation and income. Questions were asked orally (face-to-face conversation) and were directed at the household head or his/her representative who constituted the object of the research. This approach was favoured over that of self responding or writing due to the relatively high illiteracy rate in the Ashanti region. The illiteracy rate for the region is 40% and the situation is often worse in the rural areas (Government of Ghana, 2000).

The study instrument was pretested during the last week of November, 2005 on forty eight respondents who were purposely selected during the community entry stage. The pilot survey helped the researcher to assess the viability of the survey instrument and the necessary modifications were made before the actual fieldwork. It also threw more light on some of the problems that were likely to be encountered during the main survey. A total of 660 household heads constituted the sample, out of which 628 (95%) provided usable data for the study. The difference of 5 percent was due to respondents either refusing to participate or ending the interview process half way.

The analytic hierarchy process model (AHP) developed by Saaty (1977) was employed to calculate the priority of needs at both individual and community levels. The model is underpinned by three fundamental calculations namely: scaling the elements, building a comparison matrix and calculating the eigenvalues. The structure of the AHP model minimally consists of a goal, criteria and alternatives (Figure 3).

Using the frequency scores as input, a pair-wise comparison matrix was built (see Table 2). The matrix is divided into two halves by a diagonal line with values

above forming the main ratings while those below represent the reciprocals. The matrix was then used to compute the uni-dimensional priority of the need (Table 3). Here the following procedure was followed:

1. The values in each column of the pair-wise comparison matrix in Table 2 were summed up
2. Entries in each column were divided by the total of the column to obtain the normalized matrix in Table 3
3. An average of each row of the normalized matrix was obtained by adding the entries in a row. The averages were taken as the estimates of the overall priorities for the identified needs in terms of the reliability criteria.

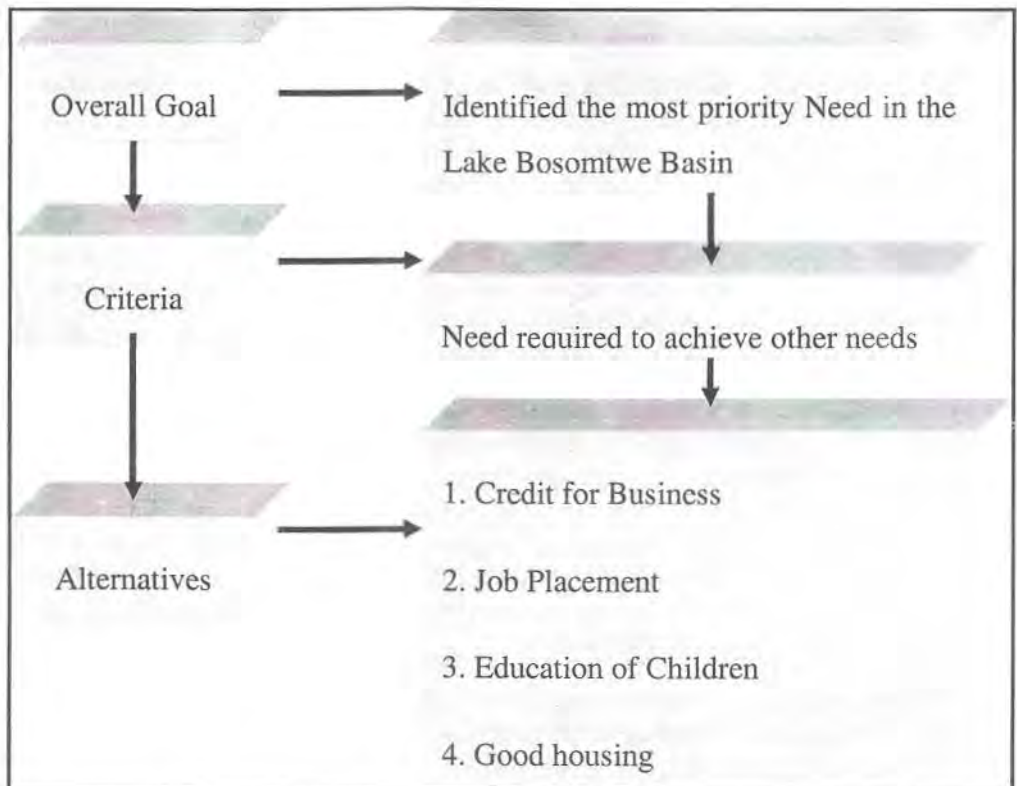


Figure 3 Hierarchical Structure of the Problem

Study Results

Needs of Individuals

As Altschuld and Witkins (2002:89) posit, data collected from a needs assessment has no value until it is synthesized into a usable body of information for making need-based decisions and for developing strategies to resolve the identified needs. Table 1 presents the critical needs of individuals in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin. These include access to credit, jobs, education for children, good housing, health services, transport services, safe drinking water, market centre, recreational facilities, and electricity. It is evident from the results that both the males and females in the basin have almost similar needs (Table 1).

Table 1 Needs of Residents around Lake of Bosomtwe Basin

Needs	Abbreviations *	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Rank
Credit for Business	CB	37.1	38.0	37.3	1
Job Placement	JP	27.5	26.6	27.2	2
Education for Children	EC	14.3	16.9	15.5	3
Good Housing	GH	10.7	10.6	10.5	4
Access to Health	AH	4.7	4.0	4.5	5
Availability of Transport	AT	3.0	1.4	2.5	6
Availability of Potable Water	AP	0.9	1.4	1.1	7
Market Place	MP	0.5	1.1	0.7	8
More Recreational Facilities	MR	0.8	0.0	0.5	9
Electricity	EL	0.5	0.0	0.3	10
Total		100	100	100	
N		657	350	1007	

The frequency count exceeds 628 because of multiple responses offered by respondents.

The comparison matrix suggests that the likelihood of a resident in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin identifying credit as the most important need is 124 times against 90.7 times for jobs and one for electricity (Table 2).

Needs of individuals by Respondents Profile

Table 4 presents the needs of the residents by their socio-demographic and economic characteristics. Variables considered in the analysis include "district of residence," "community of residence," "age," "marital status," "educational level" and "income."

Both similarities and differences were observed in the needs of the different groupings found in the basin. Irrespective of district and community of residence, age, marital status, education and income background, residents rated credit, availability of jobs, good education and housing as their four topmost needs (Table 4). Among the patterns and differences observed were that the ratings for credit, good housing and potable water increased with age whilst the ranking for job placement, market centre, availability of transport, recreation and electricity decreased with age (Table 4). Further, the married respondents attached much more importance to access to micro credit or soft loans (37.9%), health care (4.9%), potable water (1.2%), availability of market place (0.8%) and electricity (0.3%) than their single counterparts. On the other hand, the single respondents rated job placement (29.0%), good housing (12.8%), availability of transport (5.8%) and more recreation facilities (4.7%) much higher than their married counterparts. This is not surprising because often, people will like to have stable jobs and good housing before getting married.

The need for good education for children was observed to increase with higher education and income. Thus, the more educated a person is, the higher the chances of passing on similar or better education to his/her wards. However, needs relating to job placement, access to health care, availability of transport and access to potable water were noted to decline with higher income.

Table 4 Needs of Residents of Bosomtwe Basin by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Needs										
	AIH (%)	CB (%)	JP (%)	EC (%)	GH (%)	PW (%)	MP (%)	AT (%)	MR (%)	E (%)	Total (N)
District											
Bosomtwe-	4.8	33.6	24.9	17.8	13.0	1.7	1.5	2.5	0.2	0.0	477
Kwanwoma	4.2	40.8	29.2	12.8	8.5	0.6	0.0	2.5	0.8	0.6	530
Amansie-East Community											
Abonu	7.4	25.8	22.7	19.6	13.5	3.7	1.2	5.5	0.6	0.0	163
Agyaman	0.0	22.4	30.7	20.4	26.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	49
Amakom	2.6	41.0	25.6	13.6	10.3	0.0	4.3	2.6	0.0	0.0	117
Adwarfo	0.0	35.7	31.0	21.4	9.5	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42
Pipei	8.3	45.0	23.3	11.7	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	60
Obo	6.5	37.0	21.7	23.9	8.7	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	46
Ankaasi	3.8	37.4	37.4	13.6	3.1	0.8	0.0	0.8	3.1	0.0	131
Apewu	5.1	33.8	16.9	15.3	11.9	0.0	0.0	13.6	0.0	3.4	59
Banso	4.1	40.5	29.7	8.1	13.5	0.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	74
Deteyiso	10.3	36.2	20.7	19.0	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	58
Duase	2.2	50.0	32.6	10.1	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	138
Esaase	2.9	40.0	24.3	14.3	12.8	2.9	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.4	46
Age											
< 35	2.9	32.7	35.3	13.4	8.5	0.3	1.0	3.9	1.3	0.7	306
35 – 54	3.4	39.8	24.9	16.5	10.9	1.3	0.9	1.9	0.2	0.2	522
>55	10.1	38.5	20.0	14.5	13.4	1.7	0.0	1.7	0.1	0.0	179
Marital Status											
Single	0.0	32.6	29.0	15.1	12.8	0.0	0.0	5.8	4.7	0.0	86
Married	4.9	37.9	27.0	15.2	10.4	1.2	0.8	2.2	0.1	0.3	921
Education Level											
Primary & Below	5.5	37.4	24.9	16.8	10.6	1.5	1.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	273
Middle/JSS	4.4	38.5	28.6	12.6	11.2	1.1	0.5	1.8	0.8	0.5	642
Secondary +	2.2	30.4	23.9	28.3	6.5	0.0	0.0	8.7	0.0	0.0	92
Income											
<Ghc100	4.6	34.7	31.7	13.8	10.6	1.8	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	218
Ghc100 - 399	4.2	38.0	25.3	15.7	11.1	1.2	1.2	2.4	0.3	0.6	332
>Ghc400	4.4	38.4	26.4	15.7	10.4	0.7	0.7	2.4	0.7	0.2	453

The frequency count exceeds 628 because of multiple responses offered by respondents.

Exchange rate: 1 Ghanaian New cedi (Ghc) = 0.9902 US Dollar (USD)

* Refer to Table 1 for the full meaning of abbreviations of needs

Needs of Communities around Lake Bosomtwe

Table 5 provides the specific details of the community needs and their priorities. Seven areas of needs emerged from the twelve selected communities, namely social amenities, health, education, economic, recreational, security and environmental protection.

Table 5 Needs of Communities around Lake Bosomtwe

Main Needs	Specific Needs of Communities	Male (%)	Femal (%)	Total (%)	Priority
Social Amenities	Provision of potable water, electricity, toilets, bus services, telecommunication facilities, post office and road rehabilitation	52.4	50.3	51.6	0.52
Health	Health post and trained medical staff	16.3	13.7	15.6	0.16
Education	Building of secondary and technical school, posting of trained teachers, retention of teachers, and construction of new buildings.	14.6	14.7	14.6	0.16
Economic	Provision of market, cold store, job openings, additional income and availability of credit facilities	9.2	16.4	11.5	0.12
Recreation	Provision of receptive facility, football pitch, community center, and more recreation facilities	4.0	2.8	3.6	0.04
Security	Police station	2.3	1.8	2.2	0.02
Environmental	Beautification of the community, protection of the lake and planting of wawa trees	1.2	0.3	0.9	0.01
Total		100	100	100	
N		1331	604	1935	

The frequency count exceeds 628 because of multiple responses offered by respondents.

Following the same procedure applied at the individual's level, it was noted that the likelihood of a community identifying social amenities as the most important need is 57.33 times against one for the environment. The degrees of priorities attached to the "community needs" were social amenities (0.52), health (0.16), education (0.15), economic improvement (0.12), recreational facilities (0.04), security (0.02) and environmental protection (0.01).

As evident from Table 5, security is gradually becoming an important need among some of the communities, especially in Ankaasi in the Amansie East and Abonu in Bosomtwe Kwawoman District. These communities now need permanent police stations to deal with the rising incidence of crimes such as vandalism, street brawl fights and robbery often associated with tourism.

Discussion

The needs of the residents of the Lake Bosomtwe basin can be said to be basic human needs and to reflect the needs of most rural families and communities in Developing Countries. Most of the needs were found to occur in the list of human list generated by Starch (1923). Besides, about half of their needs fall into Maslow's ladder of physiological needs. With the exception of the micro credit, the rest of residents' needs coincided with the basic things people consider when selecting a housing location. The set of needs identified also supports the notion that human beings generally have a diversity of needs (Murray, 1938 cited in Arnould *et al.*, 2002).

Both males and females in the basin were found to have similar needs. This is in consonance with the findings of most psychologists and consumer behaviourists, that basically people experience the same kinds of needs and motives, particularly in the same environment. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997), there are constants that tend to operate across many types of people, cultures and areas. Murray (1938), in particular believes that everyone has the same basic set of needs but individuals differ in the priority ranking of these needs.

The priority analysis suggests that individuals in the basin favoured the fulfilment of the lower order needs before the higher ones. This was found to be in consonance with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Thus, the lower order needs become the building blocks for the higher needs. At the individual level, micro credit becomes the need whose satisfaction will propel the higher needs. In other words, personal incomes generated through self employment or some other gainful employment is the basic/primary need of residents of the basin. This is not surprising since personal income is the most personal of all the 10 needs; the rest are communal needs.

At the community level, social amenities was identified as the need to be satisfied before achieving most of the higher needs. To most residents,

investment in social amenities will in turn attract investors, qualified teachers and health staff to the community. In Ghana, it is a common practice for public officials to refuse posting to deprived areas, hence most communities are making efforts to address this development constraint.

As evident from the result, education is one of the core needs of the communities around Lake Bosomtwe. This may be linked to the realization that knowledge, skills and performance abilities have become a requirement in all professions and personal activities, including employment opportunities in the tourism industry. Kasworm and Marunau (1997) caution that the future viability of most economies is dependent upon knowledge, a skills-based workforce as well as leadership that recognizes continuous education of employees.

The finding that the majority of the needs of the residents of Bosomtwe Basin were economic (small loans, jobs, good transport system and market place) lend support to the observation made by Bruner (1996). Bruner noted that what most Ghanaians want from tourism is economic development including employment, new sources of income, better sanitation and improved roads. The result is also consistent with the finding that economic benefits are the most important elements sought by locals (Keogh, 1990; Haley *et al.*, 2005).

The high need for small loans may be a pointer to the deterioration of the basin's economy and the quality of life of the people. The strong need for credit facilities may be attributed to many factors. First, it is more likely that credit was stressed because of its ability to fulfil several needs. Among the people of the basin soft loans are needed to maintain and expand farms, buy fishing gear, enter into trading or expand business, including tourism related ventures. In this wise, a credit facility is seen as a means to an end. Access to micro credit is prioritized because it has not been available in the area for a very long time. For people who are cash strapped, no other interest exists but credit or cash.

The next factor may relate to the high dependency ratio in the area. As a net out migration area, the few able bodied residents may be over burdened with additional mouths, which makes savings impossible. Given this situation, the people naturally have to look outside for capital. Another dimension was that the study was conducted at a time a number of micro credit facilities were being offered to deprived communities; hence the people might have used the study as a platform to express their interest in financial assistance.

The rating of recreation as a higher order need is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Given that the area lacks basic amenities such as potable water, good schools, health facilities and housing, it is only natural that the need for recreational facilities would be relegated to the background. Thus, it is after some lower order needs are satisfied that the people will aspire to meet their recreational needs.

Implications for Practice and Research

The way the outcomes of the needs assessment are handled in the basin has implications for residents' co-operation, future assessment of their needs and their continuous support for tourism. According to Knox (2002:77), without the use of the findings, it becomes difficult to obtain co-operation for future assessment. Generally, the findings of the assessment should be available to all stakeholders involved in the process, who should be encouraged to utilize the findings of the report (Altschuld and Witkins, 2002:5; Knox, 2002:71). Given that tourism thrives on the good will of the residents, it would be important that tourism development in the basin is informed by the key needs of the people. To achieve this, it would be prudent for the Bosomtwe and Amansie East District Assemblies to enact laws that would ensure that about 10 percent of tourism receipts from the basin returned to the communities to address some of their needs.

Lack of access to safe drinking water in basin has serious implications for the health of the residents as well as for the image of the area as a tourists' destination. Safe water is required to prevent the frequent outbreaks of water-borne diseases, including diarrhoea and cholera, which are common in the basin. As at the time of the fieldwork, communities such as Obo and Esaase did not have bore holes, and were depending on the lake for their drinking water. This is not a pleasant situation because the availability of both quality and quantity water supply is essential to tourism development.

The lack of well resourced health posts in the basin has implications for tourism development. Traditionally, a well equipped health facility is required in order to respond to emergency cases involving visitors and the host population. As at the time of the fieldwork, the two existing health posts were ill-equipped to respond to emergencies relating to road accidents, drowning and other severe conditions.

Since resources are always limited, and the needs of the communities and individuals are intertwined, it would be advisable to identify the core needs which when addressed would impact on the majority of the people. With specific reference to the basin, education, potable water supply and access to micro credit may be described as the core needs which when addressed would serve as a platform for solving other related needs. For example, provision of quality education would help prepare residents for good jobs in the tourism industry.

Given that access to micro credit is critical to residents' ability to contribute meaningfully to the tourism industry, steps must be taken to address it. Most of the residents would like to contribute to tourism development by establishing food joints and accommodation facilities. But they do not have the start-up capital for such ventures. In order to address these constraints the government, through the Kuntunasi Rural Bank, should initiate a special tourism related micro

finance scheme for the Basin. The interest rate on the proposed loan facility should be moderate enough to enable the local people to access it.

Since human needs are not static, there will be the need for regular assessment of needs in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin. Pennington (1980:10) states that needs assessment is a transitional process, from the present to the future. Thus, results from a needs assessment can provide baseline data for monitoring changes in human needs in the basin and also help to determine the extent to which tourism has contributed to addressing the needs of the people.

Conclusions

The purpose of the research was to assess the needs and deficiencies of the communities around Lake Bosomtwe in order to inform appropriate tourism development in the basin. The data used for the analysis were collected in January 2006 in 12 communities around Lake Bosomtwe. Based on the main findings five main conclusions were drawn.

First, the result has demonstrated that well planned needs assessment could serve multiple functions. This research has highlighted not only the needs of the residents and communities, but also what is needed in the area for effective tourism development. Queeney (1995:17) maintains that a solid needs assessment can support project/tourism planners, practitioners and the host population, as reliable data can substantially increase tourism planners' ability to provide a responsive tourism development.

Second, the needs assessment succeeded in revealing the potential needs of both the communities and individuals residing around Lake Bosomtwe. It is evident from the results that the people are well aware of their needs and deficiencies. Like most rural communities in developing countries, their needs are basic, ranging from lack of good drinking water and jobs to availability of credit facilities.

From the survey, it is clear that most of the needs and aspirations of the people are compatible with tourism development. Elements such as good roads, good drinking water, a clean environment, a stable power supply, an efficient communication system, secured and peaceful communities and, above all, good image, are important prerequisites for tourism development in any destination worth its name. Traditionally, tourists are known to prefer destinations with good image and secured environment. Providing such amenities for visitors amounts to satisfying the needs of the host population.

It is evident from the result that residents' support for tourism in the Basin will largely depend on how the district assemblies that share the area are able to merge the industry's and the communities' aspirations. The social exchange

guiding the paper suggests that residents would continue the exchange process if they consider it to be beneficial.

Moreover, most of the needs and aspirations of the residents around Lake Bosomtwe are consistent with the Millennium Development Goals, a UN declaration that seeks to rid the world of poverty by 2015. The declaration binds countries to do more to tackle inadequate income, widespread hunger, gender inequality, environmental deterioration and the lack of education, health care and clean water. Hence, attempts by the district assemblies to use tourism to address the needs of residents of the Bosomtwe Basin are a contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, tourism presents a useful opportunity for addressing most of the Millennium Development Goals in that part of Ghana.

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