



## Assessment of Tourist Influx and Community Participation in Management of Ecotourism Site in Kainji Lake National Park, New-Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** This research work focused on assessment of tourist influx and community participation in management of ecotourism site in Kainji Lake National Park. Purposive sampling technique was used to administer one hundred (100) questionnaire to five (5) surrounding communities (Wawa, Malale, Leshegbe, Ibbi and Pelegi) while simple random technique was used to administered twenty (20) questionnaires to the staff of Kainji Lake National Park. This puts the sample size to one hundred and twenty (120) respondents. The total number of tourist influx of Kainji lake National Park for a period of 2010-2020 was 33907 in which year 2013 recorded the highest number of tourist with 7,730, followed by year 2011 with 6,103 and 2019 was the least with 254. The expectation of surrounding communities from ecotourism management revealed that improvement in standard of living and infrastructure development are the major expectation with a mean of 4.73 and 4.44, follows by business opportunity with a mean of 4.39 while urbanization is the least expectation with a mean of 3.03. Communities participation in ecotourism resources management showed that community involved in decision making recorded the highest mean of 2.84, followed by community are consulted in ecotourism development and involvement in conservation activities with a mean value of 2.73 and 2.60 each while not involving in poaching activities recorded the least mean of 1.00. The study therefore recommends that provision of stable government strategies and policy to improve ecotourism site in the study area.

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Ecotourism also known as ecological tourism, has been a growing phenomenon since the 1950s and 1960s as the First World grew in its appreciation of nature and its vulnerability to human development and population growth (Roche and Wallington, 2014). It has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry, growing annually by 10–15% worldwide (Miller, 2001). Although no precise figures exist, it has been estimated that probably around 15 or 20% of all international tourism is ecotourism (Miller, 2001). The rate of growth of ecotourism and other nature-based tourism activities seems to be the highest of all tourism segments, maybe around 15% per year (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2001). For many countries,

ecotourism is not simply a marginal activity to finance protection of the environment, but is a major industry of the national economy (TNC, 2015; Roche and Wallington, 2014). Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) describes community as a group of persons having the same or similar interests. For some time now, an essential part of eco-tourism development that has been emphasised is the community involvement in the planning process and decision-making. This emphasis is based on the view that planning should include the residents of an area, and they should be given the chance to participate in the planning of the area's future development and express their opinions related

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to the kind of future community they would like to live in (Inskip, 1991).

There are wide varieties of interpretations associated with the concept of community involvement in the field of tourism. Drake (1991), however, refers to community involvement as the ability of local communities to influence the outcomes of development projects that have an impact on them. Ecotourism development may initiate conflicts when governments impose it on a community without consulting the local people (Scheyvens, 2009). Thus, the opportunity for control of tourism should be in the hands of the community members living close to the tourism facility; that is, tourism should be community driven (Snyman, 2012). It is however necessary that there must be some input of policies and legislation from governments to enable the local community to actively get involved in the tourism development process. Ecotourism development is a local issue because it is at the local level that action takes place. Hence, Murphy (1995) recognizes that more actors should become involved, those who are experts and those who are affected. Such an interaction may lessen the frustrating delays of past confrontations and lead to more harmonious development. Tourism was an integral part of the objectives that led to the establishment of the National Park (Reynolds and Braithwaite, 2001). The involvement of surrounding communities in the development of National Park has been a growing area of concern as it has become

widely recognized that planners and entrepreneurs within the tourism industry should take the views of host communities into account if the industry is to be sustainable in the long term and promote meaningful tourism development (Rasoolimanesh, 2017). There are numerous studies on community involvement in ecotourism management. Community is very much emphasized and encouraged with many researchers agreeing that it is a critical component for ecotourism success. Therefore the success of ecotourism depends largely on community involvement. Hence, the objective of this study is the assessment of tourist influx and community participation in management of ecotourism site in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study Area:** Kainji Lake National Park is located in the North West central part of the country between latitude 9°45'N and 10°23'N and longitude 3°40'E and 5°47'E. It is made up of two sectors (Borgu and Zugerma) situated in Borgu and Kaima/Baruten Local Government Areas of Niger and Kwara State respectively. It covers a total land area of 5,340.82Sqm<sup>2</sup> (Ayeni, 2007). Kainji Lake National Park was established in 1979 by the amalgamation of two formal game reserves Borgu and Zugerma under decree 46 of 29<sup>th</sup> July 1979, thereby making Kainji Lake National Park the premier National Park in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2007).

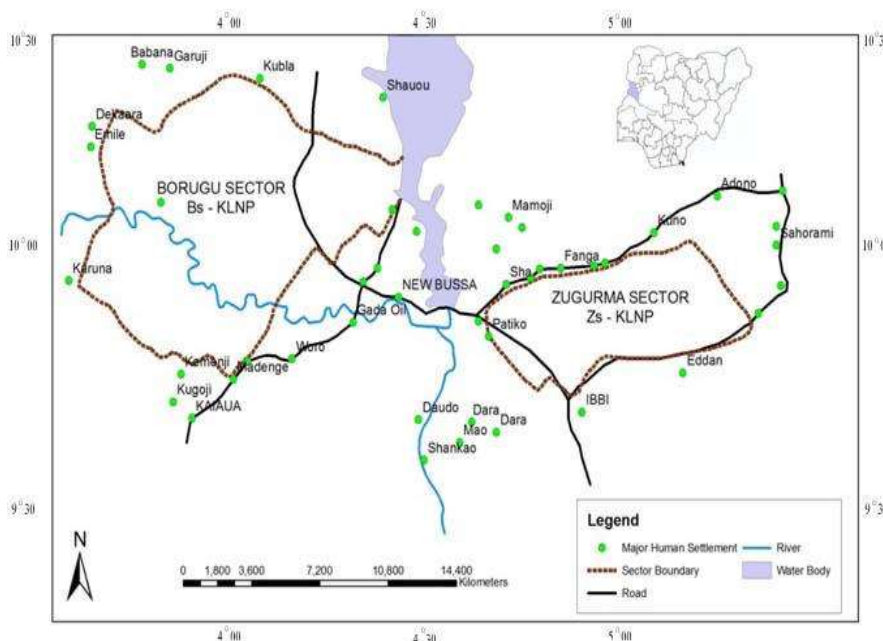


Fig 1: Map of the Study Area Source: Ayeni, (2007)

**Data Collection:** This involved the use of both primary and secondary data, the primary data involved questionnaire administration and secondary data on

tourist influx to the Park from 2010-2020 was collected from the administrative record of Kainji Lake National Park.

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*Study Population:* For the purpose of this research, the target populations were the staff of Kainji Lake National Park and residents of surrounding communities of Kainji Lake National Park, New-Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria.

*Sampling Techniques and Sample Size:* Purposive sampling technique was used to administer one hundred (100) questionnaire to five (5) surrounding communities (Wawa, Malale, Leshegbe, Ibbi and Pelegi) while simple random technique was used to administered twenty (20) questionnaires to the staff of Kainji Lake National Park. This puts the sample size to one hundred and twenty (120) respondents.

*Data Analysis:* Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics (Frequencies, percentages and tables).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table 1 revealed the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, majority of the respondents were male with 65.8% and female recorded 34.2%. Furthermore, age group 31-40 years had the highest with 36.7% while 51 years and above were the least (13.3%). Majority of the respondents are married (57.5%). Respondents with secondary school certificate recorded the highest with 35.8% while tertiary certificate had 27.5% and no formal education were the least (13.3%). The table also showed that most of the respondents were Muslim with 62.5% and traditional religion was the least (4.2%). The table further revealed the major occupation of the respondents in which majority of the respondents are farmers (39.2%), followed by craftsmans/business with 24.2% while student were the least with 7.5%.

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents

Demographic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	79	65.8
	Female	41	34.2
Age Group (Years)	21-30	31	25.8
	31-40	44	36.7
	41-50	29	24.2
	51 and Above	16	13.3
Marital status	Married	69	57.5
	Single	38	31.7
	Divorce/separated	13	10.8
Level of education	No formal education	16	13.3
	Primary	28	23.3
	Secondary	43	35.8
	Tertiary	33	27.5
Religion	Christianity	43	35.8
	Muslim	75	62.5
	Traditional	5	4.2
Major Occupation	Farmer	47	39.2
	Craftsman/business	29	24.2
	Student	9	7.5
	Civil servant	35	29.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source (Field survey, 2022).

**Table2:** Tourists Influx of Kainji Lake National Park for the Period 2010-2020

Year	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Total
2010	6,054	49	6103
2011	4,677	16	4693
2012	3,422	07	3,429
2013	7,725	05	7,730
2014	929	-	929
2015	3,065	11	3,076
2016	3002	3	3005
2017	1,252	-	1252
2018	2,969	3	2,972
2019	252	2	254
2020	464	-	464
<b>Total</b>	<b>33811</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>33907</b>

Source: Administrative Records, 2022.

The tourist influx of Kainji lake National Park for a period of 2010-2020 was revealed in table 2, the total tourist for the period was 33907 in which year 2013 recorded the highest number of tourist with 7,730, followed by year 2011 with 6,103 and 2019 was the least with 254. Also year 2013 recorded the highest

number of domestic tourist with 7725 and year 2019 also recorded the least with 252. Year 2010 recorded the highest number of foreign tourist with 49 individual, followed by 2011 with 16 individuals and year 2014, 2017 and 2020 recorded no foreign tourist.

**Table 3:** Expectation of Surrounding Communities From Ecotourism Management

Variables	No Expectation	Minor Expectation	Neutral	Moderately Expectation	Major Expectation	Mean	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Business opportunities	0(0.0)	2(1.6)	6(5.0)	55(45.8)	57(47.5)	4.39	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Infrastructural development	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(6.7)	51(42.5)	61(50.8)	4.44	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Urbanization	4(3.3)	27(22.5)	51(42.5)	37(30.8)	1(0.8)	3.03	9 <sup>th</sup>
Improve in standard of living	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	32(32.0)	88(73.3)	4.73	1 <sup>st</sup>
Preservation of cultural value	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	31(25.8)	48(40.0)	41(34.2)	4.08	4 <sup>th</sup>
Sensitization and training of community members	0(0.0)	7(5.8)	42(35.0)	51(42.5)	20(16.7)	3.71	5 <sup>th</sup>
Youth empowerment	0(0.0)	18(15.0)	36(30.0)	29(24.2)	37(30.8)	3.28	7 <sup>th</sup>
Scholarship awards to students	0(0.0)	19(15.8)	53(44.2)	44(36.7)	4(3.0)	3.21	8 <sup>th</sup>
Provision of social amenities	0(0.0)	28(23.3)	56(46.7)	19(15.8)	17(14.2)	3.62	6 <sup>th</sup>

Source (Field survey, 2022).

Table 3 shows the expectation of surrounding communities from ecotourism management, it was revealed that improvement in standard of living and infrastructure development are the major expectation with a mean of 4.73 and 4.44, follows by business opportunity with a mean of 4.39 while urbanization is the least expectation with a mean of 3.03. This suggests that the communities are expecting their

standard of living should be improved and they should be giving employment opportunities/priority. This study support Vargas-S´anchez *et al.*, (2009) that ascertain that positive economic impacts include more investment, income tax revenues, job opportunities, increased infrastructure and tourism facilities in destination areas, and a rise in residents’ living standard.

**Table 4:** Communities Participation in Ecotourism Resources Management

Variables	Would not involved	Might or Might not involved	Definitely involved	Mean	Rank
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)		
Decision Making	0(0)	19(15.8)	101(84.2)	2.84	1 <sup>st</sup>
Protection of the ecotourism site	21(17.5)	41(34.2)	58(48.3)	2.31	5 <sup>th</sup>
Tour guide	46(38.3)	53(44.2)	21(17.5)	1.79	7 <sup>th</sup>
Preservation of Natural resources	12(10.0)	37(30.8)	71(59.2)	2.49	4 <sup>th</sup>
My community are consulted in ecotourism development	0(0)	32(26.7)	88(73.3)	2.73	2 <sup>nd</sup>
My community are involved in conservation activities	9(7.5)	30(25.0)	81(67.5)	2.60	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Not involving in poaching activities	69(57.5)	42(35.0)	9(7.5)	1.00	8 <sup>th</sup>
Shares in revenue	6(5.0)	63(52.5)	51(42.5)	1.85	6 <sup>th</sup>

Source (Field survey, 2022).

Table 4 revealed communities participation in ecotourism resources management, in which community involved in decision making recorded the highest mean of 2.84, followed by community are consulted in ecotourism development and involvement in conservation activities with a mean value of 2.73 and 2.60 each while not involving in poaching activities recorded the least mean of 1.00. This suggests that the communities are involved in decision making which can be done when representatives of the community are invited to a meeting by the Park management. The implication is that the representatives took decisions concerning the

development of the projects on behalf of the community members. According to Lim, (1998) Local people are important and core to the development of tourism since they ensure proper conservation where they are the stewards of their own local environment and are also placed to anticipate and regulate the negative impacts of tourism development. Local people provide a structure for more effective planning, implementing and monitoring tourism initiatives and for determining the most appropriate scale of economic activity (Lim, 1998). *Conclusion:* The study concludes that community participated in ecotourism site management through involvement in decision

making, community are consulted in ecotourism development and involvement in conservation activities. The major expectations of the surrounding communities in the management of the ecotourism site are improvement in standard of living and infrastructure development. The study recommends that there should be provision of stable government strategies and policy to improve ecotourism site in the study area.

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