



Assessing the Impact of Ecotourism on School Enrollments in Obudu Cattle Ranch, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study assesses the impact of ecotourism on school enrolment in primary and secondary schools in the study area. Six settlements of Apah-ajili, Kegol, Kejioku, Okwamu, Okpazenge and Old Ikwette, in the Cattle Ranch community, constitute the study population. Three hundred adult respondents, out of the total population of 5,048, were drawn from the six settlements. The multi-stage random sampling technique was adopted in which a purposive sampling of two footpaths in each of the settlement was done. In the second stage, numbers were assigned to all the households in each of the settlements. Average of four households in each of the settlements was selected using the table of random sampling to get a total of about 24 households. About 13 respondents were again randomly selected and administered with the research instrument. Descriptive analysis was employed to assess the impact of ecotourism development on school enrolment. The study showed a weak relationship between ecotourism operations and improvement in school enrollment among the indigenes of the area. The study showed that the provision of basic educational facilities by the government is grossly inadequate. It is recommended that Government should step up efforts to expand the provisions of basic educational facilities and expand enrolment in both schools.

Keywords: School Enrolment, Amenities, Ecotourism & Cattle Ranch.

Introduction

The UN (2016), Millennium Development “Goal 4”, aims to ensure that all people have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. This Goal focuses on the acquisition of foundational and higher-order skills at all stages of education and development; greater and more

equitable access to quality education at all levels, as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET); and the knowledge, skills and values needed to function well and contribute to society.”

Ogunlana (2020), emphasized the importance of education which he argued,

connect everything, but blamed our leaders for not seeing the connection. UNESCO (2018), recommended that developing countries like Nigeria should dedicate at least 15 to 20% of their spending to education; unfortunately, not more than 12% has been budgeted to education. By 2016, only about 25.6 million got enrolled in primary school while only 6million were enrolled in junior secondary. School enrollments in both public and private schools (primary and secondary), in Nigeria has been declining over the years. For instance, primary pupils' enrollments fluctuated between 70.31% in 2008, 64.13% in 2010 to 42% 2016; while, in the secondary section, 56.2% of the students were enrolled in 2014 but felled to 42% in 2016.

Tourism is a major sector which has gained global attention because of its quick intervention and contribution to poverty reduction. Since this service industry is largely rural based and peripheral (Boniface and Cooper, 1987), its contribution to rural development is expected to be monumental.

Most tourism host communities in Nigeria are confronted with problems such as, high illiteracy rate, lack of educational facilities, poverty, hunger, high infant and maternal mortality and diseases. Other problems include lack of access to safe water and sanitation, high rate of unemployment and out-migration of able-bodied men and women, lack of income, lack of health facilities, lack of voice, lack of empowerment and lack of good governance.

The potential for tourism to be a primary vehicle for job creation, economic regeneration and sustainable development is a well-traversed argument. However,

tourism's potential to advance education and to enhance human capital amongst local populations remains largely underestimated by governments, politicians, policymakers and international development agencies. Its development is often left to the initiative of the private sector resulting in a naïve race towards building accommodation establishments. Tourism development master plans usually focus on property development rather than enhancement of human capital that is required to make the sector sustainable.

In Cross River State, the potential for ecotourism development is high, given its natural settings that are attractive and relatively pristine. Already, ecotourism centers of note can be found in almost all the Local Government Areas where poverty is more endemic. Consequently, the government has seen the developments of these centers as a catalyst for the enhancement of the development of the state's rural environments and cultural heritage. One of such sites that have attracted much attention and are internationally acclaimed is the Obudu Ranch Resort, located in a unique ecosystem on the Obudu plateau, in Obanliku LGA.

Ecotourism development on the Obudu Plateau is very unique due to its numerous natural facilities which make the area more attractive. The attractions here include: canopy walkway, waterfalls, temperate climate, springs, cloudy mountain ranges, natural forest, variety of birds for watching and large game reserves. With the presence of these and the development of other attractions to facilitate tourism, such as recreation facilities, good roads, restaurants, accommodation and conference centers,

and so on, it is expected that the socioeconomic benefits inherent in eco-tourism will accrue to the host communities.

However, in spite of this development, the rural people especially in the study area, have left much to be desired. Pupils' enrollments value of 6%, in the two public schools is still below average value for Nigeria which was 42% in 2016, (www.theglobaleconomy.com).

Consequently, this study is necessary in order to determine the extent to which this new industry has contributed to the improvements in school's enrolment over the year.

The Research Problem

The complex and multi-disciplinary nature of tourism, as well as the multi-dimensional barriers that prevent its sustainable growth remain strongly linked to inconsistent levels of knowledge, skills and capacity of those that are directly or indirectly involved in the sector.

In spite of high level of tourism development in the Obudu Plateau, there are still problems of lack of awareness and high rate of illiteracy among the residents. It appears the government and other stakeholders in tourism development in the area have not done much to involve and sensitize the residents.

For instance, out of over 500 households in the area, with no fewer than 46% of its population aged 0-14 years, only one ill-equipped, poorly staffed primary school, one community secondary school and one private primary school exist. The area cannot boast of 30 University graduates, in fact, adult literacy is only about 48%, which is below the Cross River State figure of

69.6% for rural and 75.5% for urban communities.

Also, due to the high level of illiteracy and poverty, there is high prevalence of HIV/AIDs and deaths in the area. Records at the Ranch clinic revealed that in the last three years over 20 persons (Aged between 19 and 35) have died of AIDs. Other side effects of illiteracy and poverty include the child sex tourism (CST), otherwise known as commercial sexual exploitation of children and vulnerable women, which has devastating consequences on the victims.

The presence of these problems in the area make this study necessary so as to find out how and why eco-tourism has/has not contributed to improvement in schools' enrolments in the study area.

Objective of Study

The objective of the study is to assess the impact of tourism industry on primary and secondary school's enrolment in the Obudu Cattle Ranch.

Study Area

The study area is the Obudu Cattle Ranch, in Obanliku Local Government Area (formerly Obudu) of Cross River State. The ranch is bordered in the north by Umaji village (in Boki LGA), east by Ogbakoko and south by Magbe (Republic of Cameroon). It has an estimated population of 5,815.7 (based on 1991 population census), made up of resident indigenes and non-indigenes. This means that the available infrastructural amenities need to be rehabilitated and expanded to meet expected high demands.

The traditional economy of the indigenes is subsistence cultivation of cocoa yam, cattle rearing, bee extraction, plantain and banana

planting. Due to the mild temperate climate, crops like cabbage, Irish potatoes and onion can be successively grown in the ranch; but the cost of importing these exotic crops has made the farmers resort to their traditional economy. However, with the development of ecotourism industry, most of these traditional crops are fading out; especially as the indigenes make more money from casual work in the new industry than from their farms (Anake & Itam, 2016). This has consequently forced a rise in the cost of feeding for local residents.

The Resort's main ecotourism attractions include; cold temperature, which ranges between 26°C to 32°C in November to January and the lowest temperature range of 4°C to 10°C recorded between June and September. Interlocking mountain ranges of 26 (in number) which are characterized by landscapes of rolling grassland bands, winding roads and cloudy mountains. Others include montane forest, two waterfalls, Birds watching, the cable car, the Holy Mountain and the unique culture of the host communities.

Study Hypothesis

The hypothesis below was formulated for testing:

There is a significant change in school enrolment in the study area under the period of study.

Scope of the study

This study is concerned only with analysis of impact of ecotourism development on school enrolments of the residents. In addition, it examines changes in school enrolments as a result of ecotourism development over the years. The emphasis is on the Ranch settlement's communities, within an average distance of 7.4 km. which comprises Apah-Ajili, Kigol, Keji-Oku,

Okwa-Amu, Okpazenge and Old Ikwetete; which are off-shoot settlements of the four major clans of Belegette, Ikwetete, Kotele and Bogos.

Literature Survey

A number of empirical works have been done by experts in both Tourism and educational development, especially the way they relate the impact of tourism to school's enrolment in the destination areas.

Education is the basis upon which sustainable development is anchored. Therefore, the expansion and development of educational institution, such as primary, secondary and tertiary, in response to increased population becomes necessary. Education is the pivot on which the development of any community and individual revolves. It plays a significant role in fighting poverty and creates jobs for its citizenry. Ebong and Animashaun (2002), pointed out that in order to reduce friction in the rural setting, there should be improvement in communication system, an increase in the level of awareness of the rural people through programmes of mass education. The advantages of this according to Anyauwu (1992), include the mobilization of rural people for mass participation in development programmes, such as ecotourism, active involvement in community development programmes, reduction of rural-urban migration, etc.

According to (UNWTO, 2015), “a well-trained and skillful workforce is crucial for tourism to prosper. The sector can provide incentives to invest in education and vocational training and assist labour mobility through cross-border agreements on qualifications, standards and certifications. In particular youth, women, senior citizens, indigenous peoples and those with special needs should benefit

through educational means, where tourism has the potential to promote inclusiveness, the values of a culture of tolerance, peace and non-violence, and all aspects of global exchange and citizenship”.

Importance of Education

Educating children and young learners about tourism is increasingly important for numerous reasons. It provides the opportunity to expose them to both positive (i.e. income generated through tourism enables their parents to pay their school fees, feed them adequately, buy them toys or nice clothes) and negative effects (i.e. cultural commodification, loss of traditions, child/youth sex exploitation) of tourism. This is important not only to enable them distinguish bad from good at an early stage of their education, but also to recognize the direct impact tourism has on their lives.

This should ideally adopt a partnership approach in creating competitive clusters to ensure that the necessary skills are developed to meet current job requirements and respond to possible future changes in the tourism market place. Importantly, they ‘should be considered as an investment, not simply as a cost’. Dosswell, (2000) and Christie (2013), linked the importance of training at every level of the tourism value chain, from community-based projects to large chain-operated enterprises; to the ‘concept of community capacity building which is regarded as the ability of people and communities to do works associated with the determinant factors and indicators of the circumstances of socio-economic and environmental contexts’. Building the capacity of communities to effectively address problematic issues and planning for tourism development is a necessary ingredient for success. Capacity building

programmes help to improve local ability to participate in the tourism decision-making processes and deliver better and locally grounded results.

A successful workforce development strategy should target the entire system of stakeholders and holistically address human resource issues, which go beyond technical and vocational education and training. To achieve the aspiration of an economically productive, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible tourism sector it should span across both the public and private sectors. While entrepreneurial skills and capacity building in tourism are crucial aspects of the sector's functionality and traction, effective governance and leadership are also fundamental to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, inform the thinking of political and business players and ensure sound policy and strategy-making in the future.

Creating new cohorts of experts, teachers and trainers able to transfer their knowledge to future generations of sector specialists on issues such as business management, entrepreneurship, conservation, energy and environment would ensure that tourism works in beneficial partnership with nature, local stakeholders and contributes to a more sustainable future. Quality education and training will shape and enable a better business environment grounded in local business, management and finance skills whereby public and private sectors' employees will become capable of learning from the past, reflecting on the present, building resilience and managing change for the future, without the need of constant external technical assistance and/or funding (Novelli, 2016).

It is not just those involved in the legislation, supply and management of tourism at destination level who have a part to play in education. Tourists themselves benefit from being aware of their responsibilities and the opportunities of being change agents whilst they are on holiday. Tour operators, airlines and others involved in the supply chain have an opportunity, and many do, to informally educate tourists and community members through information in their brochures and web sites, videos on the flight, training camps, interaction with their employees and younger generations in the communities affected by tourism, before during and after the visit. Such programmes, often part of a Corporate Social Responsibility agenda, may also be initiated to have a positive impact on the brand image of the organization, play a role in alerting tourists and host communities to inherent potentials, the part they can play and the benefits to be gained. In recognition of the State as an educationally disadvantaged State and its importance to development, the Cross-River State government in 2000 organized an education summit, where the state of education in the State was discussed and policies formulated so as to achieve set targets (CR. SEEDS, 2005).

Role of Tourism in Educational Development

Tourism is believed to be the biggest growth industry, employer and source of revenue in both developed and developing countries. This realization has made many developing nations to believe that through boosting of their tourism potentials it will be a quicker way to buy into the developed countries' affluence (Asiedu, 2004).

Tourism offers significant opportunities for several destinations around the world to move up the value chain. Sustainable development can be achieved through fostering growth and development based upon many advantages including price competitiveness, and strong and rich natural and cultural resources. However, evidence shows that a number of obstacles remain to improving their competitiveness, notably improving safety and security, upgrading health and hygiene levels, developing various forms of infrastructure, and importantly fostering the human capital (Novelli, 2016).

Tourism can also be a vehicle to enhance children and youth awareness about the natural environment within which they live. Appreciating indigenous wildlife, children and youth may become better equipped to grasp the importance of conserving certain species. Initiatives aimed at preserving the environment could become a vector and a catalyst to engage children in issues such as climate change and practicing sustainable living. In a similar vein education on heritage and understanding the cultural components of tourism can be used as a stimulus for their appreciation and engagement of their heritage and culture and provide opportunities for its celebration and preservation.

Hawkins et al, (2010), argued that addressing knowledge gaps and training needs through adequate primary, secondary and tertiary education, knowledge exchange, capacity building and workforce development actions are therefore key. The aim is to increase core technical and vocational education and training, and lifelong learning and development of skills which will help to achieve the full social,

economic and cultural potential of the tourism sector. In addition, this will set tourism on the right path to ensure its maximum contribution through more equitable access to natural resources, economic growth, national progress and a destinations' global competitiveness all under the umbrella of sustainable development.

Conceptual Framework

There are several concepts upon which investigations into the impact of tourism to schools' enrolment in the destination areas can be anchored. However, for the purpose of this study, the concepts of Basic Needs are applied.

The basic needs approach to development was the outcome of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) studies in 1976, which defined development objectives in terms of people and what they need as expressed by the people themselves rather than turn to secondary objectives such as growth, industrialization, increased trade, etc. (Hopkins, and Hoeven, 1983). The development of this concept became necessary as an anti-poverty strategy and emphasizes on measures to increase the production of small holders supplemented with public empowerment schemes for landless labourers. It also gives due attention to basic education, vocational training, and redistribution of income with growth in order to combat poverty directly, thereby increasing the productivity and living standards of the poor in rural areas.

This concept will help the administrators in learning how to plan their spatial environment with the motive of finding lasting solutions to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and poor health conditions in their domains.

Research Methodology

The population of this study comprises of all the indigenes of the study area, from 18 years and above, and other operators in tourism industry in the area. Consequently, the six settlements of Apah-ajili, Kegol, Kejioku, Okwamu, Okpazenge and Old Ikwette, constitute the study population's residential area. The study is conducted with an estimated adult population of 5,048 respondents. There are about 88 households in the area: Apah-ajili (18), Kegol (14), Kejioku (17), Okwamu (11), Okpazenge (13) and Old Ikwette (15).

Three hundred respondents out of the total adult population of 5,048 were drawn from six surrounding settlements of the hotel area. The following number of respondents in Table 3.1 was randomly selected from each settlement proportional to the size of the settlement.

The sampling procedure adopted for this study is the multi-stage random technique in which a purposive sampling of two footpaths in each of the settlement was done. In the second stage, numbers were assigned to all the households in each of the settlement. Average of four households in each of the settlement was selected using the table of random sampling: giving a total of about 24 households. About 13 respondents were again randomly selected and administered with the questionnaire.

This study utilizes the questionnaire, semi-structured oral interview and participant observation methods to collect data. Out of the 300 Copies of questionnaire administered to 300 sampled respondents, 265 copies were retrieved, representing 88.3%; while, 35 (11.7%) were not recovered.

Table 1. Distribution of Questionnaire

Community	Copies of Quest. Given Out	Number of Copies Retrieved	% Retrieved
ApahAjili	55	50	91
Kigoi	50	40	80
Keji Oku	60	55	92
Okwa Amu	40	35	88
Okpazenge	55	50	91
Old Ikwette	40	35	81
Total	300	265	88.3

Source: Author's fieldwork, November 2019-November 2020

Data Presentation and Description

Table 2. Availability of educational services

Community	Tertiary	%	Secondary	%	Primary	%	Nursery	%	None	%	Total
Apah-Ajili	-	-	15	16.7	25	20.8	5	33.3	5	12.5	50
Kegol	-	-	7	7.8	10	8.3	8	53.3	15	37.5	40
Keji Oku	-	-	30	33.3	23	19.2	2	13.3	-	-	55
Akwa Amu	-	-	35	38.9	35	29.2	-	-	-	-	35
Okpazenge	-	-	5	5.6	40	25	-	-	15	37.5	50
Old Ikwette	-	-	5	5.6	25	20.8	-	-	5	12.5	35
Total	-	-	90	100	120	100	15	100	40	100	265

Source: Author's fieldwork, November 2019-November 2020

Data on the various types of educational services available in the study area are presented in Table 2. The table shows that 45.3% of the indigenes' respondent agreed they have access to only primary educational services, followed by secondary 34%, and Nursery 5.7%.

Meanwhile (15%) of the respondents said they do not have any access to educational services. On individual basis, Okwa Amu respondents have the greatest responses in respect of both secondary schools (38.9%) and primary schools (29.2%), followed by Keji Oku 33.3% for secondary school and

19.2% for primary school. The only nursery school in the area has respondents from Kigol (53.3%) ApahAjili (33.3%) and Keji Oku (13.3%). The primary school is poorly staffed, while the secondary school is still on its temporary site and is yet to be provided with qualified staff and adequate residential accommodation for the staff. This, coupled with long distances, the children have to trek to school, has discouraged many youths from going to school.

Table 3: Enrolment trend for Ranch Community Secondary School (2013- 2017)

Year	JSS1		JSS2		JSS3		SS1		SS2		SS3		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2016	10	20	15	16	16	13	12	18	20	10	19	15	184
2017	19	15	20	10	11	12	13	14	12	15	20	10	162
2018	10	15	12	13	16	12	13	6	10	4	17	19	147
2019	103	75	16	14	18	17	19	10	18	8	9	3	312
2020	12	25	22	11	17	18	15	9	14	6	-	-	146

Key: JSS1-3=Junior sec. school, SS1-3=Senior sec. school.

Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2020).

Table. 3, show that enrolments into the only secondary school in the area fluctuate. In the junior category (JSS), there is an encouraging number of pupils who are enrolled, but the number depreciate as they move to higher grade.

For instance, about 10 males and 20 females were enrolled in JSS in 2016 but only about 19 males and 10 females made it up to SS1. 10 females dropped out while about 9 pupils may have repeated SS1. The high number of females dropped out may be attributed to high incidence of unwanted pregnancies among the secondary school girls; which is as a result of child sex tourism.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected, sorted out in score sheets and tabulated were analyzed based on the stated objective. The analyses start with the examination of the inherent development potentials in ecotourism; followed by the determination of ecotourism's contributions to educational enrollments.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Data on the availability of educational services and manpower development programmes are presented on tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Availability of Educational Service

Community	Tertiary	%	Secondary	%	Primary	%	Nursery	%	None	%	Total
Apah-Ajili			15	16.7	25	20.8	5	33.3	5	12.5	50
Kegol			7	7.8	10	8.3	8	53.3	15	37.5	40
Keji Oku			30	33.3	23	19.2	2	13.3			55
Akwa Amu			35	38.9	35	29.2					35
Okpazenge			5	5.6	40	25			15	37.5	50
Old Ikwette			5	5.6	25	20.8			5	12.5	35
TOTAL			90	100	120	100	15	100	40	100	265

Source: Author's Fieldwork, November 2020

Data on the various types of educational services available in the study area are presented in Table 4.1. The table shows that 45.3% of the indigenes' respondent agreed they have access to only primary educational services, followed by secondary 34%, and Nursery 5.7%.

Meanwhile (15%) of the respondents said they do not have any access to educational services. On individual basis, Okwa Amu respondents have the greatest responses in respect of both secondary schools (38.9%) and primary schools due to proximity (29.2%), followed by Keji Oku 33.3% for secondary school and 19.2% for primary school. The only nursery school in the area has respondents from Kigol (53.3%) ApahAjili (33.3%), and Keji Oku (13.3%).

The primary school is poorly staffed, while the secondary school is still on it temporary site and is yet to be provided with qualified staff and adequate residential accommodation for the staff. This, coupled with long distances, the children have to trek to school, has discouraged many youths from going to school.

Table 5: Manpower Development Programmes

Community	Skills Acquisition	%	Not available	%
Apah-Ajili	40	20	10	15.4
Kegol	32	16	8	12.3
Keji Oku	48	24	7	10.8
Akwa Amu	20	10	15	23
Okpazenge	40	20	10	15.4
Old Ikwette	20	10	15	23
TOTAL	200	100	65	100

Source: Author's fieldwork, November 2019 November 2020

Data on the various types of manpower development programmes available in the study area are presented in Table 5, as it shows that 75.5% of the indigenous respondents agreed that the communities have benefited from skills acquisition programmes organized jointly by the Cross River State government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 24.5% of the respondents denied ever having knowledge of it. 24% of those who agreed they have benefited from skills acquisition are from Keji Oku, 20% each from ApahAjili and Okpazenge, while Okwa Amu and Old Ikwette have the lowest of 10% each.

Those who were trained lamented how they depended on the governments' failed promise to empower them. This according to them has resulted to frustration and depression among the teeming unemployed, skilled indigenes. Basically, development begins when there is local capacity to manage it and take full charge for formulating policies, programmes and strategies to implement them. To make ecotourism development in the study area a pro-poor strategy, there is urgent need to encourage capacity building programmes in the host community.

Table 6. Enrolment trend for Ranch Community Secondary School

Year	JSS1		JSS2		JSS3		SS1		SS2		SS3		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2016	10	20	15	16	16	13	12	18	20	10	19	15	184
2017	19	15	20	10	11	12	13	14	12	15	20	10	162
2018	10	15	12	13	16	12	13	6	10	4	17	19	147
2019	103	75	16	14	18	17	19	10	18	8	9	3	312
2020	12	25	22	11	17	18	15	9	14	6	-	-	146

Key: JSS1-3=Junior sec. school, SS1-3=Senior sec. school.

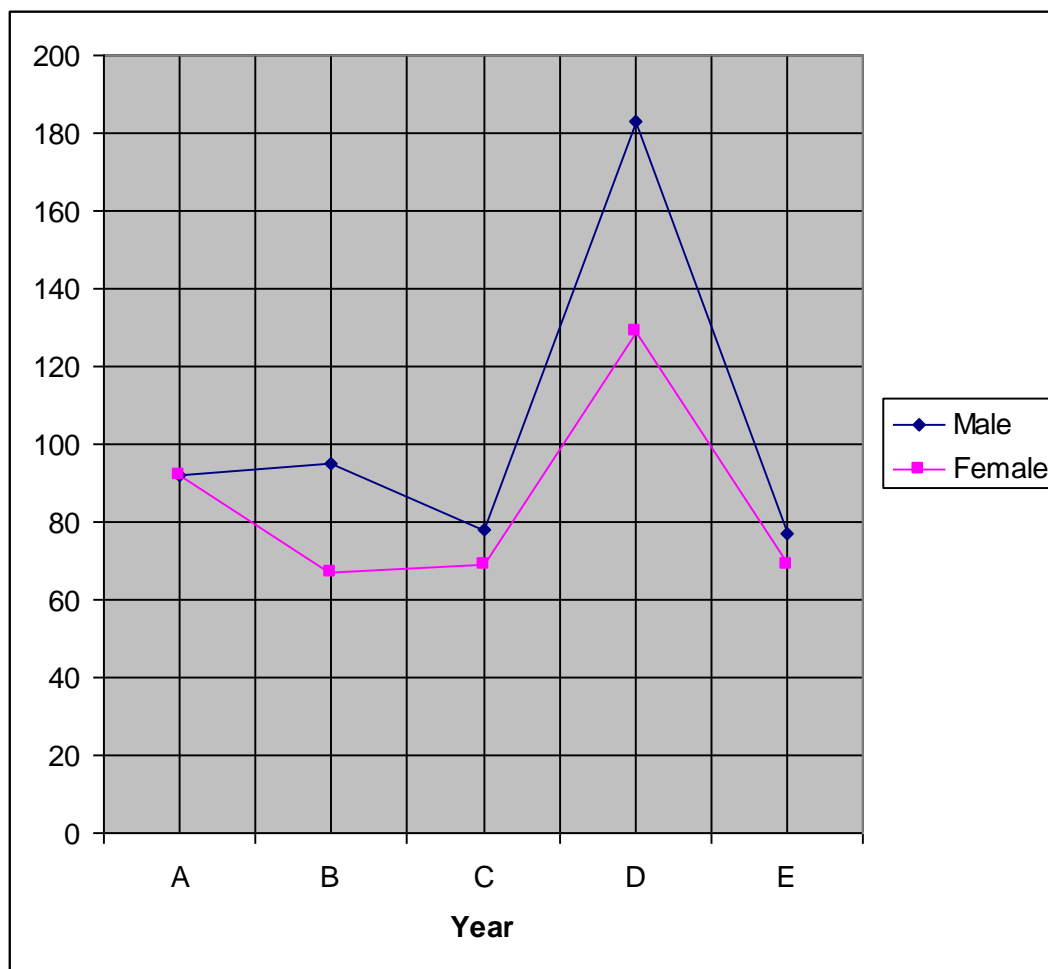
Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2020).

Table. 6, show that enrolments into the only secondary school in the area fluctuate. In the junior category (JSS), there is an encouraging number of pupils who are enrolled, but the number depreciate as they move to higher grade.

For instance, about 10 males and 20 females were enrolled in JSS in 2013 but only about 19 males and 10 females made it up to SS1. 10 females dropped out while about 9 pupils may have repeated SS1. The high number of females dropped out may be attributed to high incidence of unwanted

pregnancies among the secondary school girls; which is as a result of child sex

tourism.



Key: A= 2016, B= 2017, C= 2018, D= 2019, E= 2020

FIG. 1: Enrolment of males and females into the Ranch Secondary School.

Discussion of findings

In assessing the impacts of ecotourism industry in educational improvement in the only secondary school in the area, the data in table 6, shows that enrolment into JSS1 is always encouraging but only about half of those enrolled reach JSS2 and JSS3, and only few will actually reach SS3. Generally, enrolments into the school decreased steadily over the years, except in 2019 when there was improvement in enrolments. For instance, in 2016, about 184 pupils got enrolled into SS3; this decrease to 162 in 2017 and 147 in 2018. The increased enrolments in 2019 were due to improvement in social activities in the area especially in terms of employment

generation resulting from private partnership in hospitality industry.

The rapid increased in dropped out of school is due first to the inability of parents to pay their pupils' school fees and their other educational needs. This is a serious problem as the idea of building local capacity to maintain the industries is defeated. Unfortunately, many of the females (aged from 13-18) have to engage themselves in prostitution, resulting to increased incidences of unwanted pregnancies. This corroborates Cater's (1993) assertion when he enumerated prostitution and child sex tourism as some of the negative impacts of tourism.

On the impact of ecotourism industry on educational enrolments, the objective was to assess the impact of ecotourism industry on educational improvement of the indigenous people. The analysis used here is based on Fig.1 and is purely descriptive.

The figure shows that the overall enrolments followed steady downward trend from 2013 with a mark increase and decrease in 2018 and 2019 respectively. On the other hand it shows the relationship between enrolment and sex. Generally, enrolment for both males and females follow the same pattern, though male's enrolment was higher than their female's counterpart.

Summary

The study has demonstrated that there is weak relationship between ecotourism operations and educational enrolments in primary and secondary in the study area. In line with UNESCO's (2018), recommendations that developing countries like Nigeria should dedicate at least 15 to 20% of their spending to education; more percentage of their budgets should be dedicated to education sector. In some cases, this is simply a matter of increasing awareness so that the residents can embrace education to justify government's investment in education.

In any event, there is a strong case for considering ecotourism as an important sector in poverty reduction in our rural areas. To this end, the following recommendations have been prepared for the consideration of the state Government.

Conclusion

The focus of this research has been to determine the extent to which ecotourism

development in the Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort has so far contributed to the improvements in the educational enrolments of the indigenes spread over six villages of the study area. The study showed that comparatively, the operations of ecotourism industry has contributed to the upliftment of the living conditions of the residents in the area. Furthermore, it showed that the basic social amenities, especially educational facilities presently provided by the authority in the area are grossly inadequate, considering the level tourism activities have attained, and the importance of these services to tourism growth and rural development.

The non-availability of these educational facilities can undermine government intention to reduce the rate of illiteracy and develop local contents and manpower development.

This study has been able to show that ecotourism development is truly a rural-based industry which when properly planned could stimulate the development of the rural communities. The study addressed the contributions of ecotourism development to the improvements on school enrolments in the area. It therefore wished that the authorities concerned should as a matter of urgency plan how tourism can be used as a catalyst to rural development in the state.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made based on the findings of this study:

Government should consider stepping up their efforts to expand the provisions of social and infrastructural amenities in the area, especially as these constitute the basic requirements for successful tourism operations. For instance, one public

primary and secondary schools in the study area is grossly inadequate. Quality availability of these services will, apart from improving the living conditions of the host people, will also create more employment opportunities and improve their income levels.

There is need for a tourism master plan to be prepared which should include: Comprehensive strategies, implementation plans and priorities to enhance the role of tourism in rural development and poverty reduction. Similarly, since most of the communities' lands have been taken over for the expansion of ecotourism industry,

government should as a matter of urgency produce a land use map of the area to enable the people know where to farm (Anake&Ukam, 2016).

Adequate institutional frameworks should be put in place to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the master plan, especially the provisions of basic social amenities, the roles to be played by the Village Chiefs, the Private Partnership Participation and the provisions for the shareholders to be among the owners of the resort.

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