

Examining how Frequent Tourists Visit to Coastal Beaches can Impact Local Economic Development - A Case Study of Limbe Black Sand Beaches, Fako Division, South West Region - Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Over the decades, tourism has seen continuous growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest ever growing economic sectors in the world and modern tourism is intimately correlated to development and encompasses a growing number of new destinations and these dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress. Travel and Tourism has the potential to make the world a better place by bringing economic benefits to poorer destination, through cultural exchange and Understanding through self growth. If coastal tourism in particular as well as tourism in general is to be sustainable then the impacts on the local people, the economy and the environment need to be balanced and sustainable coastal tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders while introducing the required corrective method whenever appropriate. The extraordinary and unique black sand of Limbe stretch of beaches (beauty), the cultural wealth and the great diversity of Limbe coastal areas have made them the preferred destination for many holiday makers from near and abroad thus making coastal or beach tourism an **important tourism sector both economically and socially** in the South West Region in particular and Cameroon in general.

Keywords: coastal areas, coastal tourism, tourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Coastal areas of most nations are often cooler than places inland areas and so on hot days people go to the beach to cool off and swim in the sea and so many people enjoy relaxing on a beach. Nevertheless in the past sunbathing was very popular and although today tourists are more aware of the dangers of too much sun and coastal tourism is based on a unique resource combination at the border of land and sea environments. Being an expression of lifestyle which is easily identified either through voluntary travel or a voluntary temporary short-term change of residence, the motives of such travel are increasingly wide ranging, including among others education, business, health and leisure (Hall, 2008).

On the other hand other researcher for example Cooper et al (2008) reveal that the hub elements of tourism arise out of the movement of people to preferred destinations and equally their stay in these destinations outside from their usual environments or comfort zones and places of work.

BACKGROUND OF LIMBE MUNICIPALITY

Limbe is situated at the foot of Mount Cameroon and along the coastal area of Fako Division it is also a gate way of the South West Region to the rest of the world through the Atlantic Ocean. The indigenous people include the Bakweri, Isubu, and Creoles; it has beautiful coastal beaches with black sand, historic monuments, a botanic garden, and a wildlife centre. The city name Limbe is generally held to originate from a mispronunciation of the name of a German engineer called Limburgh. Oral narratives hold that this engineer is responsible for constructing a bridge across one of the rivers in the city. It was formerly known as Victoria and through a presidential decree of 1980, it was renamed Limbe. Limbe is a sub-division and capital of Fako Division within which is located Buea—the regional capital of South West Region. Limbe made up of Limbe 1, 2 and 3 rivals Kumba as the economic capital of the South West Region. It has a surface area of 185 km² and opens out from Man O War Bay across

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to Amba Bay to the West, then to the Gulf of Guinea. Limbe was recently acknowledged by the Cameroonian government for its role played in the trade of slaves and the current site (Bimbia) is being restored for tourists, who would like to understand how slaves made their way from far distances to the coastal city (Abam, 2019 and Tande, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourists are attracted towards coastal areas and islands because of the natural atmosphere, the clean and green environment that tourist destinations provide and the possibility of relaxation they do get which are quite far away from their hectic schedule. The rapid and uncontrolled tourism development in the coastal zones has exposed their fragile ecosystems to an ever-increasing risk of environmental degradation hence tourism also has a great impact on global warming through excessive energy use, transportation, water consumption, waste generation, etc (www. Coastlearn.org).

Because coastal tourism is based on a unique resource combination at the border of land and sea, various profitable services have been developed in many coastal destinations such as well-maintained beaches, diving, boat-trips, bird watching tours, restaurants or medical facilities leading to three main pillars of sustainable tourism development namely: economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability (www.tourism4development2017.org).

It should be noted that the coastal zones in

general and Limbe coastal area or zone are still of vital importance for coastal states or cities today as they are noted to be the home to the bulk of the population of the South West Region and account for a considerable share of the country's economic activities, being highly valued by the society for the non-marketable goods and services they provide (Abam, 2017).

The measures aimed at protecting the coast against coastline retreat, thus protecting housing, infrastructure, the coast and the hinterland from erosion often at the expense of losing the beach and the dynamic coastal landscape thus coastal protection often consists of hard structures such as revetments (www.coastlearn.org).

Human interference has a great impact on the pollution levels of our coastal zones, marine life, erosion rates and other human activities have also disrupted marine life affecting both small and large animals not leaving out the numerous human constructions that increase the erosion rates and shape of each beach. Therefore there must be a state of parity where human activities must co-exist in broad harmony with their cultural, social and natural environment (Abam, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work uses the primary research method and questionnaires were used by the researcher to gather data, Jary and Jary (1991) suggest that qualitative techniques rely on the skills of the researcher in gathering data while quantitative methods place reliance upon the research instruments in use to gather data and analyse.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1. Examining how frequent tourists visit to coastal beaches can impact local economic development - a case study of Limbe black sand beaches, Fako division, south west region - Cameroon

VARIABLE	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not sure (%)
Creation of more jobs in the community	85	10	5
Bringing in more income into the community	80	15	5
More investment in the community	65	25	10
An increase in the value of land and property	75	20	5
More support for small businesses	45	50	5
More tax paid to the government	65	20	15

Source: field work 2019

In order to examine how frequent tourists visit to coastal beaches can impact local economic development and looking at a case study of Limbe black sand beaches, Fako division, South West Region - Cameroon, the researcher gave two hundred (200) questionnaires to some indigenes and beach lovers found at the Limbe beaches.

Looking at the Creation of More Jobs in the Community

From table 1 above, 85% of the respondents reveal that frequent visits of tourists to the beaches in Limbe will lead to the creation of more jobs in the community, 10% say that they

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do not believe that the frequent visits of tourists to the Limbe beaches can lead to the creation of more jobs in the community and finally 5% of the respondents say they are not sure of more jobs to be created in the Limbe community area as a result of frequent visits of tourists to the beaches in Limbe.

As Concern Bringing in More Income into the Community

From table 1 above, 80% of the respondents agree that there will be an increase income of some people in the community as a result of more or frequent visits of tourists to the beaches in Limbe, 15% of the respondents disagree with the above statement finally 5% of the respondents reveal that they are not sure if the frequent visits of tourists to the beaches in Limbe bringing in more income into the community.

With regards to more Investment in the Community

From table 1 above, 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that the frequent visits of tourists to the Limbe beaches would bring in more investment in the community, 25% of the respondents disagree with the above statement and finally 10% of the respondents say they are not sure of the above

Looking at the Increase in the Value of Land and Property

From table 1 above, 75% of the respondents suggest that with the frequent visit of tourists to the Limbe beaches, the value of land and the property will surely have a correspondent increase, while 20% of the respondents does not believe or disagree with the above statement and finally 5% of the respondents say that they are not sure that with the frequent visit of tourists to the Limbe beaches, the value of land and the property will surely have a correspondent increase.

As Concern more Support for Small Businesses

From table 1 above, 45% of the respondents think that there will be more support for small businesses as a result of frequent visit of tourists to the Limbe beaches, while 50% of the respondents disagree with the above statement and finally 5% of the respondents are not sure of any increase for small businesses as a result of frequent visit of tourists to the Limbe beaches.

With Regards to More Tax Paid to the Government

From table 1 above, 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that as a result of frequent visit of

tourists to the Limbe beaches more tax is paid to the government. Mean while 20% of the respondents disagree with the above statement and finally 15% of the respondents say they are not sure of the above statement.

CONCLUSION

Limbe coastal area or beach is unique in that it is the only area in the country that has black sand and this natural tourism potential must be sustainably managed not with standing its socio-economic impact. Coastal or beach tourism like any type of tourism should be sustainably manage and this can only be done if it does involve the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure a wider participation of all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The state should therefore collaborate with the private sector to ensure that coastal or beach tourism is better developed and sustained in Limbe in particular and Cameroon in general.

More campaigns on sustainability and especially sustainably managing our coastal beaches should be organized and they should involve all stakeholders.

A sustainable tourism development policy for the management of our tourism potentials should be drawn by the government in collaboration with all other stakeholders in tourism and tourism related activities.

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