Socio-Economics Impacts Of Erin-Ijesha Water Fall, Erin-Ijesha, Osun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract
The study examines the socio – economic impact of Erin Ijesha waterfall, Erin Ijesha in Osun State in Nigeria. Another name for the waterfall is Olumirin Waterfall which is situated within the enclave of Erin Garden. Structured questionnaires were used to elicit information from respondents on the impacts of the waterfall within the community and the State in general. Direct benefits derived from the waterfall include: drinking water, irrigation for agricultural land, tourism activities, fishing and it has contributed significantly to the overall well -being of the people of the area. It was discovered that the full potentials of the waterfall are yet to be harnessed due to lack of commitment from stakeholders especially the Government to invest in the development of the waterfall. Developing the waterfall will not only be a source of revenue to the government, it will equally generate substantial employment, thus reducing the burden of unemployment in the State and the Country at large.
KEYWORDS: Waterfall, Socio-economic, Impact, Potential, Harness

INTRODUCTION

A waterfall is a place where water flows over a vertical drop in the course of a stream or river. Waterfalls also occur where melt water drops over the edge of a tabular iceberg or ice shelf. Waterfalls are commonly formed when a river is young. At these times the channel is often narrow and deep (Pelekelo, 2007).

Erin Ijesa Waterfall, also known as Olumirin Waterfall is not only a site to behold; it is also one of the wonders of the world. The waterfall is situated within latitude $7^0$30' and $8^0$45' North and longitude $4^0$31' and 5^0 East. Erin Garden is a thick forest, which houses Erin Ijesa waterfalls, which lies some kilometers east of the Ilesa – Akure Road. According to the custodian of the waterfall, it is said to have been founded by a woman called Akinla, a grand-daughter of Oduduwa, in the year 1140 AD, during the migration of the Ife people to Erin Ijesa (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The water flows among rocks and splashes down with great force to the evergreen vegetation around. The area can also serve as a mountaineering exercise. The breeze at the waterfalls is cool and refreshing. The whole scenery is fascinating and idyllic. The waterfall is used for drinking and as medicine by indigenes and other tourists alike (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

Erin Ijesha as part of South Western Nigeria falls within the tropical belt with alternating hot dry and warm humid seasons. The atmospheric temperature ranges from 30 – 34^0C while the annual rainfall averages 1500 cm. the access road to Olumirin Waterfall has been improved and graded while recreational facilities are being provided in the interest of tourists (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

Erin Ijesa Waterfall is a cascading fall surrounded by towering mountains that gives you that sense of wildlife mixed with serenity as you behold the beauty nature has to offer. The falls has seven levels you have to ascend. The view at all the levels is wonderful and the freshness of the water is energizing if you have to mettle to get to the last and seventh level, the view is most intriguing. The final and seventh level lies at the peak of the falls; it

also hosts a settlement where many of its inhabitants have lived for several years (Tourism Magazine, 2009). Apart from the beautiful site, present at the Erin Ijesha Waterfall are also fresh water prawns (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The walls of a massive rock cleft is rugged in verdant colours; and although the day is as the night, and gracious vegetal canopies roof the rift, yet, forest, man and rock stand in sharp contrast, all floodlit by the vestal showers of Olumirin Waterfalls. The awe-inspiring falls, also known as Erin Ijesha Waterfalls is an assemblage of seven distinct cascades located on the south western slopes of the lush Efon Ridge, in Erin Ijesha town, Osun State. The gigantic ridge constitutes a conspicuous eye-catcher for every traveler along Ilesa- Akure expressway, as it towers into the distant skyline, forming a spectacular backrest for the sleepy towns of Erin- Oke, Erin Ijesha and Erinmo (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The people of Erin Ijesha believe that the waterfalls exude from a big pot located at the top of the ridge. Often times, first time tourist at the waterfalls unconsciously starts to number the waterfalls from the last drop, (the base of the ridge) as it is the first of all the falls to be encountered when visiting; whereas the numbering is supposed to be from the top. Nevertheless, going by layman's standard, the seventh drop of the waterfalls is the first waterfall (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The first cascade plummets through a narrow opening in a cluster of luxuriant tree trunks blanketed in dark green leafage, down a steeply folded rock face of about ten meters in height. Like a rain of a million limpid pins, the showers descend and inundate huge boulder reposed at its plunge pool below. Fallen logs of wood laid dank in the pool and out-flowing stream channel. The air hung muggy with a heavy smoke of splashed water droplets. The sight sparks the first fire of excitement that pervades the veins of any visitor at the falls. The refreshing ambience is further thickened when one ascends the steep rocks to explore the other stages of the waterfalls (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

The second cascade is the most gigantic of all, with the waters diving down a 40m high cliff. The copious plunge is most spectacular in the rainy season when the stream channel is at its flooding levels. Its plunge pool forms a shallow swimming pool for visitors at the site who are lucky and brave enough to get to the second fall. The climb up the waterfalls is quite intimidating and arduous, as there are no steps constructed or clear paths made up the ridge slopes, except depressions and projections on the surface, as well as roots and branches of huge trees, forest climbers and shrubs along the paths, which serves as hand and foot holds for the adventurous tourist. Nevertheless, the ascent of the enormous ridge is most rewarding, as one is treated to dazzling and panoramic vistas of the surrounding landscape, depicting the true natural beauty of the Nigerian landmass (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

Another great attraction at the waterfalls is the Abake village, a rustic enclave located at the top of the colossal ridge. The name "Abake" is a Yoruba word which is a combination of two other Yoruba Words: "Aba", "Oke". Meaning "the village on the top", suggesting the location of the small village. A tourist ascending the ridge from the waterfalls will have to climb for about one hour before getting to Abake settlement. The village is said to be in Efon Alaaye Local Government, hence the villagers refer to their settlement as Efon Alaaye (Ekiti State). The village basically consists of mud houses and the main occupations are farming, gari processing, cocoa cultivation and 'moi moi' leaf cultivation as they are found in great numbers on the ridge. The enclave suffers from inaccessibility of good roads, lack of electrical supply, poor water supply, and lack of hospitals, clinics or health centres. Despite the indigence of the people, they are ever convivial and ecstatic to see people beat the heights of the enormous ridge in order to visit their remote enclave (Tourism Magazine, 2009).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to among others:

- Examine the socio-economic impacts of Erin Ijesha waterfall on the people of Erin Ijesha and Osun State,
- Identify the potentials of the waterfall,
- Examine the challenges to developmental efforts on the waterfall.

ROLE OF WATER IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE.

Water is the most common substance on earth. It covers more than $70^0/_0$ of the earth's surface. It fills the oceans, rivers and lakes, and is in the ground and in the air we breathe. Water is everywhere. Regardless of language or culture, all humans share this basic need that is essential for survival. We drink water, cook with it, bathe in it, sprinkle our lawns with it, fill our backyard swimming pools with it – even create theme parks based on it. We, however, take its abundance for granted when much of the world, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, access to clean water is a luxury. More than half of Africa's villages lack access to a clean water supply. In many of these villages, women and children must walk up to ten miles every day carrying heavy buckets and containers to fetch the day's supply of potable water for their households (Pelekelo, 2007).

Ever since the world began, water has been shaping the earth. Rain hammers at the land and washes soil into rivers. The oceans pound against the shores, chiseling cliffs and carrying away land. Rivers knife through rock, carve canyons, and build up land where they empty into the sea. Glaciers plow valleys and cut down mountains. Water helps keep the earth's climate from getting too hot or too cold. Land absorbs and releases heat from the sun quickly. But the oceans absorb and release the sun's heat slowly. So breezes from the oceans bring warmth to the land in winter and coolness in summer (Pelekelo, 2007).

Our demand for water is constantly increasing. Every year, there are more people in the world. Factories turn out more and more products, and need more and more water. We live in a world of water. But almost all of it, about $97^0/_0$ is in the oceans. This water is too salty to be used for drinking, farming, and manufacturing. Only about $3^0/_0$ of the world's water is fresh. Although the world as a whole has plenty of fresh water, some regions have a water shortage. Rain does not fall evenly over the earth. Some regions are always too dry, others too wet. A region that usually gets enough rain may suddenly have a serious dry spell, and another region may be flooded with too much rain. Some regions have a water shortage because the people have managed their supply poorly. People settle where water is plentiful, near lakes and rivers. Cities grow, and factories spring up. The cities and factories dump their waste into the lakes and rivers, polluting them. Then the people look for new sources of water. Shortages also occur because some cities do not make full use of their supply. They have plenty of water but not enough storage tanks, treatment plants, and distribution pipes to meet the people's needs. As our demand for water grows and grows, we will have to make better and better use of our supply (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER IN OUR DAILY LIVES

Every plant, animal and human being needs water to stay alive. This is because all the life processes, from taking in food to getting rid of wastes, require water. But people depend on water for more than just to stay alive. We also need it for our way of life (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER IN LIVING THINGS

All living things need a lot of water to carry out their life processes. Plant, animals and human beings must take in nutrients (food substances). Watery solutions help dissolve nutrients and carry them to all parts of an organism. Through chemical reactions, the organism turns nutrients into energy, or onto materials it needs to grow or to repair itself. These chemical reactions can take place only in a watery solution. Finally, the organism needs water to carry away waste products (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER FOR IRRIGATION/AGRICULTURE

It is estimated that $70^0/_0$ of world-wide water use is for irrigation. In some areas of the world, irrigation is

necessary to grow any crop at all, in other areas it permits more profitable crops to be grown or enhances crop yield. Various irrigation methods involve different trade-offs between crop yield, water consumption and capital cost of equipment and structures (Pelekelo, 2007).

Irrigation methods such as most furrow and overhead sprinkler irrigation are usually less expensive but also less efficient, because much of the water evaporates or runs off. More efficient irrigation methods include drip or trickle irrigation, surge irrigation, and some types of sprinkler systems where the sprinklers are operated near ground level. These types of systems, while more expensive, can minimize run off and evaporation. Any system that is improperly managed can be wasteful (Pelekelo, 2007).

In most countries, people have had a rich heritage of managing and living with their environment including water since time immemorial and they have demonstrated to be effective custodians of water for agricultural purposes. Rainfall and water has been central to their lifestyles, and influencing their farming activities (Pelekelo, 2007).

Most of the plants that people raise need great quantities of water. For example, it takes 115 gallons (453 litres) of water to grow enough wheat to bake a loaf of bread. People raise most of their crops in areas that have plenty of rain. But to raise enough food for their needs, people must also irrigate dry areas. The rainfall that crops use to grow is not considered a water use, because the water does not come from a country's supply. Irrigation, on the other hand, is a water use because the water is drawn from a nation's lakes or wells. The water a nation uses for irrigation is important to its water supply because none of the water remains for reuse. Plants take in water through their roots. They then pass it out through their leaves into the air as a gas called water vapour. Winds carry away the vapour, and the liquid water is gone. On the other hand, nearly all the water used in our homes is returned to the water supply. Sewer pipes to treatment plants, which return the water to rivers so it can be used again, carry the water (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER POWER OR HYDROPOWER

Water power or hydropower, furnishes about $7^0/_0$ of the world's commercial energy. Where water flows from a high place to a lower one, the gravitational energy of the falling water can be captured and used to produce other forms of energy. Most waterpower is used to generate electric power. Waterpower supplies energy without pollution and without using up the water in the process. But costly dams and other structures are required to harness waterpower.

People also use water to produce electric power to light homes and run factories. Electric power stations burn coal or other fuel to turn water into steam. The steam supplies the energy to run machines that produce electricity. Hydroelectric power stations use the energy of falling water from waterfalls and dams to produce electricity (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER FOR INDUSTRY

It is estimated that $15^0/_0$ of world-wide water use is industrial. Major industrial users include power plants, which use water for cooling or as a power source (i.e hydroelectric plants), ore and oil refineries, which use water in chemical processes, and manufacturing plants, which use water as a solvent.

The industry in turn uses water in many ways. It uses water for cleaning fruits and vegetables before canning and freezing them. It uses water as a raw material in soft drinks, canned foods, and many other products. It uses water to air-condition and clean factories. But most of the water used by industry is for cooling. For example, water cools the steam used in producing electric power from fuel. It cools the hot gases produced in refining oil, and the hot steel made by steel mills.

Although industry uses a lot of water, only $6^0/_0$ of it is consumed. Most of the water used for cooling is piped back to the rivers or lakes from which it is taken. The water consumed by industry is the water added to soft drinks and other products, and the small amount of water that turns to vapour in the cooling processes (Pelekelo,

2007).

WATER FOR TRANSPORTATION/RECREATION

After people learned to build crude small boats, they began using rivers and lakes to carry themselves and their goods. Later, they built larger boats and sailed the ocean in search of new lands and new trade routes. Today, people still depend on water transportation to carry such heavy and bulky products as machinery, coal, grain and oil. People build most of their recreation areas along lakes, rivers and seas. They enjoy water sports, such as swimming, fishing and sailing. Many people also enjoy the beauty of a quiet lake, a thundering waterfall or roaring surf (Pelekelo, 2007).

ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Explicit environment water use is also a very small but growing percentage of total water use. Environmental water usage includes artificial wetlands, artificial lakes intended to create wildlife habitat, fish ladders around dams and water releases from reservoirs timed to help fish spawn. Like recreational usage, environmental usage is non-consumptive but may reduce the availability of water for other uses at specific times and places. For example, water release from reservoir to help fish spawn may not be available to farms upstream (olaniyi, 2012).

SANITATION

Sanitation is a field of public health. It involves various efforts to control the environment to prevent and control disease. Sanitation also includes personal cleanliness, which helps protect against disease and the presence of water is critical. In most countries various government agencies work together to protect the health of communities. Sanitary engineers work in designing and administering water treatment plants and sewage treatment plants. Government agencies establish and enforce laws that help promote a healthful environment. Sanitation activities include food processing and distribution, sewage treatment, solid waste disposal, water treatment and numerous other measures, such as control of air pollution and rodents.

SEWAGE TREATMENT

Sewage is water containing waste matter produced by people. It contains about a tenth of 1 $^{0}/_{0}$ solid waste. It comes from sinks and toilets in homes, farms, restaurants, factories, and office buildings. Much industrial sewage contains harmful chemicals and other waste materials. Sewage must be treated before it flows from sewerage systems into lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water. Untreated sewage contaminates the water and, in time, can kill fish and aquatic plants. The sewage makes the water unsafe to drink and can also prevent use of the water for swimming, fishing and other recreation (Pelekelo, 2007).

WATER TREATMENT

Most water must be treated before it is used for drinking, cooking, bathing, or laundering. Almost all untreated water contains bacteria viruses and other tiny organisms. It also may have an unpleasant odour and taste and contain minerals that make the water less useful as a cleaning agent (Pelekelo, 2007).

NATURE'S WATER CYCLE

The water of the earth move continuously from the oceans, to the air, to the land and back to the oceans again. The sun's heat evaporates from the oceans. The water rises as invisible vapour, and falls back to the earth as rain, snow, or some other form of moisture. This moisture is called precipitation. Most precipitation drops back directly into the oceans. The remainder falls on the rest of the earth. In time, this water also returns to the sea, and the cycle starts again. This unending circulation of the earth's waters is called the water cycle or hydrological cycle (olaniyan etal, 2003).

WORLD DISTRIBUTION OF WATER

The earth has an enormous amount of water, about 326 million cubic miles (1.4 billion cubic kilometers) of it. In a cubic mile, there are more than a million million gallons, or 3.8 million million litres. However, $97^{0}/_{0}$ of this

water is in the salty oceans, and more than $2^0/_0$ is in glaciers and icecaps. The rest totals less than $1^0/_0$. Most of this water is underground, and the remainder includes the water in lakes, rivers, springs, pools and ponds. It also includes rain and snow and the vapour in the air.

A country's water supply is determined by its precipitation. In regions with plenty of precipitation year after year, there is plenty of water in lakes, rivers and underground reservoirs.

The earth as a whole receives plentiful rain. If this rain fell evenly, all the land would receive 34 inches (84 cm) a year. But the rain is distributed unevenly. Generally, the world's most heavily populated areas receive enough rain for their needs. These areas include most of Europe, Southeast Asia, the Eastern United States, India and much of China. But about half the earth's land does not get enough rain. These dry areas include most of Asia, central Australia, most of northern Africa and the Middle East (Pelekelo, 2007).

EXPECTED IMPACT OF THE WATERFALL

The people living in the communities around the waterfall are expected to have the following benefits from the Government.

- Industrial development which is accompanied by good roads, supply of electricity, regular water supply, availability of good houses, hotels etc.
- Employment opportunity which encompasses local industry, farming, education and employment for medical purposes.
- Revenue generation which involves tax.
- International, national and regional relations.
- Improved living standard encompassing improved living, higher income, improved caloric intake, improved overall social well being.
- Regional development (Tourism Magazine, 2009)

METHODOLOGY

AREA OF STUDY

This study was undertaken in Erin Ijesha, Osun State, in South Western Nigeria. Osun State is an inland State with the headquarters at Osogbo. The State was created in 1991 from old Oyo State. The State's name was coined out from the River Osun, the venerated natural spring which is the manifestation of the Yoruba goddess of the same name.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Respondents were randomly selected from Erin Ijesha and neighbouring towns and communities. Structured questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistical tools of mean, percentages and frequencies were used to analyze data received.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
Below 30	15	30
30 – 49	25	50
Above 50	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Work 2012

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by age. Respondents below 30 years accounted for 30 %, those between 30 – 49 accounted for 50%, while age group above 50 years were 20%. This shows that majority of the people interviewed were within the active population.

TABLE 2: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	35	70
Female	15	30
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: field work, 2012

Table 2 presents the distribution of the respondents according to their gender. 70% of the respondents are male while the rest 30% are female.

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Single	5	10
Married	35	70
Widowed	8	16
Divorced	2	4
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Field Work 2012

From Table 3, 70% of the respondents are married, 16% are widowed, and 10% are single while the rest 4% are divorced. This indicates that most of the respondents are married.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
No formal education	3	6
Primary	28	56
Secondary	13	26
Tertiary	6	12
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Field Work 2012

From Table 4, 6% of the respondents have no formal education, 56% attained the primary school level, and 26% had secondary school education while the rest 12% of the respondents had tertiary education. The literacy distribution pattern is an indication that the area is largely a rural setting.

TABLE 5: HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF RESPONDENTS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1 – 5	16	32
6 – 10	28	56
11 and above	6	12
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Field Work 2012

From table 5, 32% of the respondents have family size of between 1 – 5 members, 56% have family size of between 6 – 10 members, and 12% of the respondents have family size above 11 members. It has been established in a number of research (Olaniyan et al, 2003; Oluwatayo, 2008) that large household size is usually associated with greater incidence of poverty, as measured by low household consumption or income per capita.

TABLE 6: OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

PRIMARY OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Farming	28	56
Trading	12	24
Artisans	7	14
Civil service	3	6
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Field Work 2012

Table 6 shows the primary occupation of the respondents. 56% of the respondents are farmers, 24% are engaged in trading and 14% are artisans. Only 6% of the respondents are civil servants. This shows that the area is an agrarian community.

TABLE 7: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THE WATERFALL.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Drinking water	100
Irrigation	50
Fishing	35
Tourism	100
Source of power	-
Indirect source of income	100

Source: Field Work 2012

From Table 7, 100% of the respondents depend on the waterfall as a source of drinking water. 50% of the respondents who are farmers use the water from the fall to irrigate their farm land. 35% of the respondents are engaged in fishing activities especially prawn. The benefit derived from the fall as a source of tourism cut across the entire respondents as well as an indirect source of income. None of the respondents depend on the waterfall to generate power.

TABLE 8: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON RESPONSE TO UTILIZATION OF POTENTIALS OF THE WATERFALL.

POTENTIALS	SA	A	U	D	SD
Irrigation	-	30	-	70	-
Source of power	-	-	-	-	100
Tourism	-	40	-	40	20
Commercial value	-	20	10	50	20
Fisheries	-	5	15	45	35
Employment creation	-	5	30	25	40

Source: Field Work 2012

Key: **SA** – Strongly Agree**; A** – Agree; **U** – Undecided; **D** – Disagree;

SD – Strongly Disagree.

From Table 8, the response of the respondents on the utilization of the vast potential of the waterfall is highlighted. On irrigation potential, 30% agreed that it is utilized while 70% disagree. 100% strongly disagree on its utilization as a source of power. 40%, 40% and 20% agree ,undecided , disagree and strongly disagree respectively on utilization of the tourism potential of the waterfall. 20%, 10%, 50% and 20% of the respondents agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively on the commercial value of the fall. Fisheries potential had 5% agree, 15% undecided, 45% disagree while 35% strongly disagree. Employment creation had 5% agree, 30% undecided, 25% disagree and 40% strongly disagree.

TABLE 9: STATUS OF INFRASTRUCTURES

INFRASTRUCTURES	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
ROAD	-	20	80
POWER SUPPLY	-	10	90
MEDICAL FACILITIES	-	25	75
EDUCATION	-	30	70
TELECOMMUNICATION	-	60	40

Source: Field Work 2012

From Table 9, it could be seen that the state of infrastructures as attested to by the respondents falls between fair and poor. On road, 20% responded fairness while 80% affirmed that it is poor. 10% affirmed that power supply is fair while 90% responded that it is poor. On the status of the medical facilities, 25% agreed that it was fair while 75% responded that it was poor. Education had 30% reported the fair status while 70% affirmed that the status was poor. Telecommunication had 60% affirming a fair status as 40% affirmed its poor status. It could be seen that much needed to still be done to alleviate the socio-economic status of the inhabitants of this area.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are therefore made based on the finding of this work.

- Government should invest substantially in the development of Erin Ijesha waterfall so as to harness its vast potential for sustainable socio-economic development.
- Reputable private concerns could be partnered with to ensure profitability since attitude to government owned tourism agencies is mismanagement and official corruption.
- Enabling law should equally be enacted to protect the investment of prospective investors due to inconsistent policy characterized by change in government.
- Adequate economic and social infrastructures should be provided for the communities around the waterfall to give them a face lift befitting the status of a tourism community.

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