

Ecotourism: A Mechanism for Sustainable Tourism Development

Maxwell-Borjor Achuk Eba

Department of Social Work,
University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Email: ebamaxwell@unical.edu.ng

Dorn Ckaiamz Enamhe

Lecturer, Department of Social Work,
University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Email: dorncklaimzenamhe@unical.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

An increasing number of studies around the world have stressed that "ecotourism" is an appropriate form of tourism development that meets several indicators of sustainable tourism development. In order to analyse the aptness of ecotourism, which brings a balance between tourism and sustainable tourism development, an attempt is made to answer the following research question through this work: Does ecotourism, an ideal form of tourism development, satisfy sustainable tourism indicator areas? The research question is answered through comparative case studies. Furthermore, in order to understand to what extent or degree the ecotourism attributes agree with the sustainable tourism indicators, a total of 10 case studies were chosen for this purpose. Some random papers were selected between 2003 and 2015, which made up the case studies from different geographical region of the world. Thus, this paper made use of the method of textual analysis to carry out this research. The results of the case studies indicate that ecotourism meets the sustainable tourism indicators. The three areas used to ascertain the foregoing are: (1) sustainable tourism indicator areas; (2) ecotourism attributes; and (3) ecotourism case studies.

Keywords: Ecotourism; sustainable tourism development; ecotourism case studies; environmental awareness.

INTRODUCTION: SELECTION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDICATOR AREAS

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the mountains. It is an increasingly important source of income, employment, and wealth in many countries (Manzoor, et al., 2019). These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress. For local mountain people in Nigeria, tourism means valuable economic and business opportunities and jobs, and for state governments and private entrepreneurs, it brings revenues and profits. Its rapid expansion has, however, had detrimental environmental (and socio-cultural) impacts in many mountain regions of the country. Sustainable indicators were chosen from World Tourism Organization's research based on sustainable development indicators for tourist destinations (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019). Selection of these indicators are on the grounds that underlines vital parameters among tourism development, local wellbeing, tourist safety and

environmental protection and management. The total number of indicators those were considered for the study are 13, and are stated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sustainable tourism indicator areas

Sl. no.	Indicators
1	Wellbeing of host communities
2	Sustaining cultural assets
3	Community participation in tourism
4	Tourist satisfaction
5	Health and safety
6	Capturing economic benefits from tourism
7	Protection of valuable natural assets
8	Managing scarce natural resources
9	Limiting impacts of tourism activities
10	Controlling tourist activities and levels
11	Destination planning and control
12	Designing products and services
13	Sustainability of tourism operations and services

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004)

Indicators explained

1. *Wellbeing of host communities* - this indicator points to areas such as effects of tourism on communities, access by local residents to keys assets, gender equity andsex tourism (Tovar & Lockwood, 2008).
2. *Sustaining cultural assets* - it highlights conservation of built heritages through different initiatives like maintenance, preservation, funding and legislation (Zeayter & Mansour, 2018).
3. *Community participation in tourism* - this connotes to community involvement and awareness through information, empowerment, participation and community action (Viola, 2022).
4. *Tourist satisfaction* - it suggests to sustaining tourist satisfaction by addressing base line issues such as expectations, complaints, problems and perceptions and other issues like accessibility of tourist to destinations (Eba, 2020).
5. *Health and safety* - this imply to public health, community health, food safety, worker health and safety, coping with epidemics and international transmission disease, tourist security and local public safety by dealing issues such as crime, riskharassment, public security and tourist anxiety (Furedi, 2006).

6. *Capturing economic benefits from tourism* - this indicator highlights tourism seasonality, leakages, employment, poverty alleviation through equity, micro enterprise development and income opportunities and competitiveness of tourism businesses.
7. *Protection of valuable natural assets* - this indicator underlines the protection of critical ecosystems by emphasizing fragile sites and maintaining water quality from contamination.
8. *Managing scarce natural resources* - it marks areas such as energy management, climate change and tourism, water availability and conservation and purity in drinking water quality.
9. *Limiting impacts of tourism activities* - these addresses areas such as sewage treatment, solid waste management, air pollution, controlling noise levels, managing visual impacts of tourism facilities and infrastructure.
10. *Controlling tourist activities and levels* - it indicates controlling use intensity, and managing events (sports events, fairs, festivities and crowd control).
11. *Destination planning and control* - it highlights integration of tourism into local/regional planning, development control (control procedures, land use, property management and enforcement), tourism-related transport (mobility transport, safety, transport systems, efficiency, in destination transport and transport to/from destination), and air transport (environmental impacts, planning and security).
12. *Designing products and services* - this indicator points to creating trip circuits and routes (corridors, links and cooperation), providing variety of experiences (product diversification and range services) to the tourists, marketing for sustainable tourism (green marketing, products and experiences emphasizing sustainability, market penetration, tourist response and marketing effectiveness) and protection of the image of a destination (branding, vision and strategic marketing) (Timothy & Boyd, 2015).
13. *Sustainability of tourism operations and services* - this stress upon sustainability and environmental management policies and practices at tourism businesses (environmental management and social responsibility).

The essence of this work is to make an attempt to answer the following question: 'Does ecotourism, an ideal form of tourism development, satisfy sustainable tourism indicator areas?' In order to assess if ecotourism development fulfils the sustainable tourism indicators, comparative case studies from various regions of the world are used in this study to provide a response to the aforementioned issue. Therefore, three important factors are considered for this purpose: sustainable tourism indicator areas, ecotourism attributes, and ecotourism case studies.

SELECTION OF ECOTOURISM ATTRIBUTES

A total of nine attributes of ecotourism were selected from the research done by Boyd, Butler and Haider (1994) and the Australian Commonwealth Department of Tourism (Deng et al., 2002). These nine attributes cover almost every aspect of ecotourism planning, implementation and development. These

attributes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Ecotourism attributes

Sl. no.	Attributes
1	Environmentally and socially responsible
2	Educative to tourists and locals
3	Focused on elements of natural environment
4	Contribution to conservation and preservation
5	Minimal environmental and social impacts
6	Non-consumptive
7	Capable of providing desired economic benefits for local development
8	Compatible with other resource use in the area and
9	Appropriate in scale for conditions and environment

Source: Boyd, Butler & Haider (1994) and Deng et al. (2002)

Attributes explained

14. *Environmentally and socially responsible* - it stresses that tourism development in a destination must be environmentally responsive and respectful to local society.

15. *Educative to tourists and locals* - ecotourism development and promotion must provide environmental awareness to both the tourists and locals in order to educate them on conservation and preservation through information, training and practices.

16. *Focused on elements of natural environment* - the primary attraction of ecotourism should focus on natural environment so as to reduce human activity to a greater or lesser extent.

17. *Contribution to conservation and preservation* - ecotourism development in the destination scale must contribute to conservation of natural and cultural assets through visitor fees, taxes and sustainable and green practices.

18. *Minimal environmental and social impacts* - ecotourism activities and development both at the destination and site scale must have minimal environmental and social impacts through conservation and community awareness.

19. *Non-consumptive* - ecotourism activities must protect the environment from consumptive uses such as hunting and poaching.

20. *Capable of providing desired economic benefits for local development* - ecotourism development must ensure sufficient economic incentives and development opportunities.

21. *Compatible with other resource use in the area* – ecotourism should be compatible with the degree of other resource use in any area and must also compliment other resource users.

22. *Appropriate in scale for conditions and environment* - ecotourism development must keep the appropriateness in relation to the local environmental, social, political and economic environment in view.

SELECTION OF ECOTOURISM CASE STUDIES

In order to understand up to what extent or degree the ecotourism attributes agree with the sustainable tourism indicators, a total of 10 case studies were chosen for the purpose. The year 2002 was considered as a base year to select these case studies as it was designated as 'International Year of Ecotourism' by UNWTO. Further, countries with progressive environmental policies were also taken into account while selecting these cases. Another important criteria to select these cases were - each case must highlight one of the impact areas of environment, economy and society. The ecotourism case studies that were taken for this study are presented in Table 3 and Figure 1 below.

Table 3: Ecotourism case studies

Case study no.	Name of the case study	Author(s)	Year of publication	Country/region
1	How 'Eco' is Ecotourism? A Comparative Case Study of Ecotourism in Costa Rica	Caroline J. S, James P. L, David R. L. & David J. D	2003	Costa Rica
2	Ecotourism and Community Development: Case Studies from Hainan, China	Stone, M. & Wall, G.	2004	China
3	Ecotourism as a mechanism for sustainable development: the case of Bhutan	Chhewang, R., Walter, J. V. V. & Pieter, G.	2007	Bhutan
4	Ecotourism and economic growth in the Galapagos: an island economy-wide analysis	Taylor, J.E, Hardner, J & Stewart, M.	2009	Galapagos
5	Socio-economic value and community benefits from shark-diving tourism in Palau: A sustainable use of reef shark populations	Vianna, G.M.S., Meekan, M.G., Pannell, D.J. Marsh, S.P. & Meeuwig, J.J.	2011	Palau
6	How do you know it when you see it? Community-based ecotourism in the Cardamom Mountains of southwestern Cambodia	J.K. Reimer & Walter, P.	2012	Cambodia
7	Ecotourism, Poverty Ranomafana, Madagascar	Sarrasin, B.	2013	Madagascar

8	Partnership between a private sector ecotourism operator and a local community in the Okavango Delta, Botswana: the case of the Okavango Community Trust and Wilderness Safaris	Snyman, S.	2014	Botswana
9	Role of ecotourism in environmental conservation and socioeconomic development in Annapurna conservation area, Nepal	Anup, K. C., Rijal, K. & Sapkota, R.P.	2015	Nepal
10	Ecotourism and Empowerment: A Case Analysis of Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, Odisha, India	Das, M. & Chatterjee, B.	2015	India

Figure 1: Location map of ecotourism case study countries



These ten case studies were further reviewed by creating a metadata base. It was formed to extract maximum information from each case, and to gather other details like environmental settings, communities considered for the study (name), ecotourism impact indicators (economic, social and environmental), level/scale/stage of tourism development, ecotourism attributes, sustainable tourism indicator areas, key outcomes and research gaps.

CASE ANALYSIS - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDICATOR AREAS

The metadata (Annexure-1) provides significant information from the 10 case studies. It has given information on which are the cases that rightly contribute or meet sustainable tourism development indicators. Tables 4 and 5 clearly show detail case matchup between ecotourism case studies and sustainable tourism indicator areas. From Tables 4 and 5 it is evident that each ecotourism case study meets at least one sustainable tourism indicator area. Sustainable tourism indicator - 1 (wellbeing of host communities) and indicator - 6 (capturing economic benefits from tourism) have the highest frequencies among all other indicators. Each one of them are being addressed by 9 cases out of 10. Hence, it proves that ecotourism has highest level of impact on meeting sustainable tourism development areas such as wellbeing of host communities, and in capturing economic benefits from tourism.

Table 4: Case matchup between sustainable tourism indicator areas and ecotourism case studies

Indicator-1	S-1	S-2	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-8	S-9	S-10
Indicator-6	S-1	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-7	S-8	S-9	S-10
Indicator-3	S-1	S-3	S-4	S-5	S-6	S-8	S-9	S-10	
Indicator-7	S-1	S-3	S-6	S-8	S-9	S-10			
Indicator-8	S-1	S-3	S-6	S-9	S-10				
Indicator-5	S-3	S-6	S-8	S-9					
Indicator-9	S-3	S-5	S-6	S-9					
Indicator-11	S-3	S-5	S-6	S-9					
Indicator-12	S-3	S-5	S-6	S-9					
Indicator-13	S-3	S-6	S-8	S-9					
Indicator									

tor-2	S-3	S-6	S-9
Indica			
tor-4	S-5	S-6	S-9
Indica			
tor-10	S-3	S-6	S-9

*CS-Case study

Community participation in tourism (indicator - 3) is considered the second highest impact area that is addressed by 8 cases. It also signifies that community participation is vital in ecotourism development to meet sustainable tourism development indicators. The protection and management of natural assets and resources (indicators - 7 and 8) are highlighted by 6 and 5 cases respectively. This confirms that ecotourism developments focus significantly on the protection and management of valuable natural resources. Further, health and safety (indicator - 5), limiting impacts of tourism activities (indicator - 9), destination planning and control (indicator - 11), designing product and services (indicator - 12) and sustainability of tourism operations and services (indicator - 13) are well-grounded by 4 cases each. Lastly, indicator - 2 (sustaining cultural assets), indicator - 4 (tourist satisfaction) and indicator - 10 (controlling tourist activities and level) are addressed by 3 cases each.

Table 5: Sequential matchup between sustainable tourism indicator areas and ecotourism case studies

l.	Sustainable tourism indicators	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Wellbeing of host communities										
	Sustaining cultural assets										
	Community participation in tourism										
	Tourist satisfaction										
	Health and safety										
	Capturing economic benefits from tourism										
	Protection of valuable natural assets										
	Managing scarce natural resources										
	Limiting impacts of tourism activities										

0	Controlling tourist activities and levels										
1	Destination planning and control										
2	Designing products and services										
3	Sustainability of tourism operations and services										

*CS-Case study

Case analysis - ecotourism attributes

Of the 10 ecotourism case studies, the Meta data (Annexure-1) strikes most vital evidences in respect to matching the ecotourism attributes. The comparative case matchup between the ecotourism case studies and ecotourism attributes are presented in Tables 6 and 7 below.

Table 6: Case matchup between ecotourism attributes and case studies

l. o.	Ecotourism attributes	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Environmentally and socially responsible										
	Educative to tourist and locals										
	Focused on elements of natural environment										
	Contribution to conservation and preservation										
	Minimal environmental and social impacts										
	Non-consumptive										
	Capable of providing desired economic benefits for local development										
	Compatible with other resource use in the area and										
	Appropriate in scale for conditions and environment										

*CS-Case study

The data highlights ecotourism attribute - 3 (focused on elements of natural environment) as being addressed by all the 10 cases. It emphasizes that ecotourism development must be a significant part of natural environmental settings. The attribute capable of providing desired economic benefits for local development (attribute - 7) is agreed by 9 out of 10 cases. This proves ecotourism development cannot take place in isolation. It must contribute to the local economy in terms of employment creation and local development. Attribute - 1 (environmentally and socially responsible) is marked by 8 cases. This demonstrates ecotourism development and activities should duly care for the natural environment and local society on which the development is taking place. This gives an important message that all the actors of ecotourism must be equally sensitive towards the local environment and people where the ecotourism is an essential part of the local environment and society. Ecotourism attributes such as contribution to conservation and preservation and non-consumptive (attributes - 4 and 6) are reinforced by seven cases each. This suggests that ecotourism development must contribute towards the conservation and preservation of natural and heritage resources in the destination and site scale. Further, attribute - 6 (non-consumptive) highlights that the ecotourism development must not consume the scarce local resources, but it should revive and protect them through the synergic approach of ecotourism.

Table 7: Sequential matchup between ecotourism attributes and ecotourism case studies

3	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
7	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
1	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
4	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
6	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
2	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
9	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
5	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-
8	Attribute-	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-	CS-

*CS-Case study

Ecotourism development in both the destination and local scale should provide environmental education to both locals and tourists, which is being

stressed by 6 cases in meeting attribute - 2. The attributes - 9 and 5 (appropriate in scale for conditions and environment and minimal environmental and social impacts) are being stressed by 9 cases altogether, 5 in earlier (attribute - 9) and 4 in latter (attribute - 5). In general, this gives a significant information for all key stakeholders of ecotourism development to be careful in site selection and to carry out ecotourism activities to avoid any sort of negative environmental impact. Although attribute - 8 (compatible with other resource use in the area) is addressed by only 3 cases out of 10, it still provides potential evidence to protect the other essential supplementary resources which are vital for ecotourism development at local scale.

KEY OUTCOMES AND CASE COMMUNALITIES

The analysis revealed that all the 10 ecotourism cases satisfy at least one indicator and attribute of sustainable tourism and ecotourism. From the comparative analysis, the key outcomes of each case are ranked below:

Table 8: Key outcomes of ecotourism case studies

Case studies	Key outcomes	Sustainable tourism indicators	Ecotourism attributes
CS - 1	Mix conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1, 3, 6, 7, 8	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
CS - 2	Less conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1	1, 3, 6, 9
CS - 3	Pro conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
CS - 4	Pro community economic wellbeing and mix conservation oriented	1, 3, 6	3, 7
CS - 5	Pro community wellbeing and mix conservation oriented	1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
CS - 6	Pro community wellbeing and conservation oriented	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
CS - 7	Less conservation and community wellbeing oriented	6	3, 7
CS - 8	Less conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1,3,5,6,7,13	1,2,3,4,7
CS - 9	Pro conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, 12,13	1,2,3,4,5,6, 7,8,9

CS - 10	Mix conservation and community wellbeing oriented	1,3,6,7,8	1,2,3,4,6,7
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- a. Pro conservation and community wellbeing oriented
- b. Pro community wellbeing and conservation oriented
- c. Pro community economic wellbeing and mix conservation oriented
- d. Mix conservation and community wellbeing oriented
- e. Less conservation and community wellbeing oriented

***PRO CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING ORIENTED
(CASE STUDIES- 3 AND 9)***

Case studies 3 and 9 are ranked as pro conservation and community wellbeing oriented. Both these ecotourism development cases are satisfying almost all indicators of sustainable tourism, and are keeping all ecotourism attributes in view during the development process. Case study - 3 has been taken from Bhutan, where the government is pushing tourism on a ‘high value low impact’ principle. Ecotourism development amid the forest and alpine ecosystem has increased employment opportunities with equitable income distribution in the Bhutanese society. It is also increasing new entry points for tourists to avoid congestion and maintain the destination carrying capacity. In the same time, it allows the benefit from tourism to reach every corner of the country. From the social and cultural aspect, this form of tourism development has been creating awareness on Bhutan’s rich cultural, spiritual and ecological heritages.

Tour operators of the country are also helping to revive the traditional Bhutanese arts and crafts. Similarly, they have developed rules to access ‘Dzongs’ (fortress architecture), monasteries, and local festivals keeping in mind the sensitivity of the local community. Ecotourism development and promotion in the landscape through the ‘high value low impact’ tourism principles highlight environmental concerns such as erosion of delicate vegetation, use of energy for cooking, waste disposal, loss of biodiversity by grazing of transport animals and camping, strong guidelines and regulations for tour operators to operate, control of tourism flow, and monitoring the use of wood as fuel through tight regulations. Bhutan is an ideal example of ecotourism development that satisfies all indicator areas of sustainable tourism development. It also highlights that the county has greater concern for resource conservation and community wellbeing.

Case study - 9 highlights ecotourism conservation in the Annapurna Conservation Area of Nepal. This research is part of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and the community associated with the project are *Ghandruk*. The project has achieved several recognitions for its success. The major contribution of ecotourism promotion at ACAP are the community members have to buy timber at a subsidized rate in a controlled quantity from the ACAP office in Ghandruk, if there is necessity for the building of houses and buildings. Ecotourism development in the area has also supported locals to use natural resources for their economic betterment. Ecotourism promotion at

Ghandruk has encouraged people to establish hotels, restaurants, bakeries, cafes, tea shops, grocery and gift shops. The major sources of revenue being generated in the area are accommodation, restaurants, souvenir shops, guiding services and entrance fees. Tourism promotion has brought economic benefits for the local villagers. Infrastructures for tourism has provided assistance to local residents. These activities have helped people earn money and improve their livelihood. From a social perspective, the movement of visitors in the village and participation of local people in ecotourism activities has helped in controlling antisocial activities. There are many traditional museums which work towards preserving the Gurung culture in Ghandruk. Cultural songs and dances are performed for attracting and entertaining tourists in the community. Local people are encouraged to conserve cultural heritage as part of ecotourism promotion. Ecotourism promotion has certainly improved the living standards of local community through skill development initiatives of ACAP.

Cooperation among people has increased and they have been helping each other in the enhancement of religious beliefs and tolerance. The key environmental components enhanced by ecotourism and ACAP establishment are growth in forest cover, conservation of flora and fauna, an increase in vegetation, and practice of alternative energy sources. The income generated from ecotourism has helped in environmental conservation in Ghandruk at large. ACAP had permitted local people to collect dry wood and fallen parts of trees free of charge to use as fuel for cooking and heating purposes. Floral diversity has increased in Ghandruk as observed by local people. Local people are restricted to cut trees from their private land without taking prior approval from the ACAP office in Ghandruk. Due to the increment of the forest area and forest cover, faunal diversity has also increased. Promotion of ecotourism has instigated the installation of micro hydro projects and solar water heaters in Ghandruk, lessening the usage of firewood and greenhouse gas emission. The ecotourism promotion at Annapurna Conservation Area of Nepal is a true example of an appropriate scale and form of ecotourism promotion. It satisfies all the indicators of sustainable tourism and also meets all attributes of ecotourism.

PRO COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND CONSERVATION ORIENTED (CASE STUDY - 6)

Case study - 6 is part of the ecotourism development in the Chiphat commune of Cambodia rainforest. It is one of the award-winning community based ecotourism projects in the world. From the perspective of local economic wellbeing, it provides a diverse range of economic benefits for the locals through varied services, i.e. as homestay host, boat driver, cook, guide, etc. The direct cultural impact of ecotourism tourists in the commune are minimal. After setting up the community based ecotourism project, there was 70% reduction in hunting and cutting of the forest. Hunters turned into tourist guides, and the Chiphat Reforestation Project serves as an attraction for many Eco tours. The project has developed a reforestation nursery with some 50 native tropical trees. The project has instituted a garbage collection service to keep the village cleaner than before. Tourists in the homestays are made to learn about the contemporary Khmer

culture and also how to grow rice, jack fruit, bananas and other seasonal crops. In visits to a village family, tourist have the opportunity to learn about the fermentation and production process of local rice wine. The example of Chiphat community based ecotourism has certainly been a true example of an ideal form of ecotourism development that satisfy all indicators of sustainable tourism.

PRO COMMUNITY ECONOMIC WELLBEING AND MIX CONSERVATION ORIENTED (CASE STUDIES - 4 AND 5)

Case study - 4 is the ecotourism promotion case of Galapagos Island and National Park. The promotion of ecotourism on the Island has resulted in two sides of development. At the higher side, it has resulted in benefiting the Island community economically, and at the lesser side, it has contributed towards conservation at large. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the Galapagos Island has increased by an estimated 78% between 1999 and 2005, making the Galapagos economy among the fastest growing in the world. Government services are manifolds, including education, public works, water and sanitation, public security and the management of the Galapagos National Park. Like tourism and fishing, disbursements on conservation and research have a multiplier effect on Galapagos incomes. In 1991, special laws were enacted for Galapagos to create local autonomy, manage economic development and conservation. On the conservation side, population growth via new migration to the islands nearly wiped out the effect of economic growth on per-capita household income. In the same time the Island faced demographic pressure due to new immigration. Increased in migration on the island saw doubling of fishing vessels and fishermen. It created an increased risk of exotic species introduction and pressure on the islands' infrastructure for potable water, sewage, and waste disposal. Construction of newer and more luxurious hotels on the island have also added pressure to the destination carrying capacity. Fishing has been a key activity on the island. Risk to conserve fish and sea cucumber have doubled. Scientists and conservation agencies are working with devotion to protect the Galapagos environment. Hence, it underlines ecotourism development at the Galapagos Island is more inclined towards community economic wellbeing than conservation. Therefore, it satisfies sustainable tourism indicators such as 1, 3 and 6 and ecotourism attributes 3 and 7.

Case study - 5 is taken from the ecotourism development at Islands of Palau and Shark Sanctuary. The local economy of Palau relies largely on tourism, which invites approximately 80,000 overseas visitors per year. It generates more than US\$1.5 million in taxes from accommodation and restaurant units annually, and is one of the key sectors of employment in the country. The shark-diving industry contributes at least 8% to the country's GDP. The industry spends approximately US\$1.2 million on wages and salaries to employees. A percentage of salaries paid to staff is used to purchase supplementary goods and services. The Palauan economy generates the third highest gross tax revenue - from taxes paid by the shark divers. These taxes are approximately 24 times higher than the taxes collected from the fishing industry. The shark diving industry has a

multiplier effect, creating more jobs and further dispersing the revenues. The industry is labor-intensive, which requires guide-to-diver and also needs employment of staff for maintenance, boat operation, catering and office work. Therefore, the industry results in distribution of revenues and makes an impact to the economy by generating jobs and income to the community and taxes to the government. Socio-cultural instabilities to resident populations due to tourism are often produced by local people lacking the necessary qualifications to supply the essential services by the tourism industry. From the environmental aspect, the shark diving industry has a greater impact on the loss and damage to coral reef ecosystems. It makes rapid decline in reef shark populations at the Palau marine ecosystem. The infrastructure needed to support the tourism industry has already created pressure on limited natural resources. In the year 2009, Palau created a nation-wide shark sanctuary in the waters of their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The ecotourism development in Palau is more inclined towards economic benefits from tourism. Therefore, the conservation of the marine ecosystem is under great threat. Although the shark dive tourism satisfies many sustainable tourism indicators (1, 3,4, 6, 9, 11-12) and ecotourism attributes (1-7, 9), the conservation aspect is of mixed response.

MIX CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING ORIENTED (CASE STUDIES 1 AND 10)

Case study - 1 is the ecotourism development at the Costa Rica rainforest, which is one of the world's leading ecotourism destination. This research was based on the ecotourism development at two National Parks of Costa Rica - Corcovado and Piedras Blancas. The community involved with ecotourism development are - LaGamba, Agujitas, Los Planes and Cerro de Oro. The entire economy of the area depends upon tourism. Tourism has benefited the locals with increased income, training opportunities and improved infrastructure. Additional disposable income of the communities is spent on family wellbeing, followed by savings, personal amenities and tourism development. Many of them also benefit by exchanging ideas with tourists. Local hotel operators have constructed high school and staffed clinic for the locals. Further, the locals have mixed responses - tourism development has declined deforestation and hunting rates, environmental awareness are important to hinder environmentally destructive practices, and legal restrictions were the most influential factors, and local radio and television stations contributed to knowledge on forests and wildlife to the community members.

On the negative note, communities complained on increased solid waste disposal problems, dumping of organic waste at sea, cultural loss, community and familial disintegration, increased access to alcohol and drugs, and increased local hostility towards park personnel for not allowing them to cut trees for household use. In addition, many felt that tourism had made their economy vulnerable and they had lost their independence. They felt frustrated while buying their food at the local stores at exorbitant prices. Therefore, the ecotourism development at the two National Parks of Costa Rica are of mixed conservation and community wellbeing oriented. Hence, it satisfies sustainable indicators such as; 1, 3, 6-8, and

ecotourism attributes 1, 3, 4, 6-7.

Case study - 10 is the ecotourism case of Bhitarkanika National Park of Odisha, India. Communities involved in ecotourism development are of the Rajanagar, Rajanika and Chandbali blocks. Ecotourism promotion in the park has received mixed responses. Introduction of ecotourism has undoubtedly opened up different avenues of employment opportunities for the villagers in such a remote area for example: (1) wages from employment in the park (patrolling staff, plantation worker, gatekeeper, boat drivers); (2) eco-development run enterprise (souvenir shop, canteen, eco-lodges); (3) professionals, like eco-guides; (4) temporary workers for park-related construction and other development activities; (5) self-run enterprises like lodges, restaurants, transport; (6) wages from employment in lodges, restaurants, transport; (7) wages from nursery development activities; and (8) wages from parking fees. Further, thirty Eco development committees (EDCs) have been formed to provide alternative livelihood trainings to people dependent on the biological resources of the protected area. Communities living adjacent to the park agree that their long involvement in ecotourism activities have developed certain affinity towards the conservation of natural resources.

On the other hand, lack of clear-cut definition of the roles of the members hinders the coordination for participatory tourism development approach. Moreover, in adequacy of infrastructure in the destination scale has been adding worries as the locals cannot sell their products in the markets. It often results in a large number of women getting involved in illegal practices of collecting forest resources such as fuelwood and timber from forests for the sustenance of their family. Prices of daily needs has been increasing as it is highly demanded by the tourists. An increase liquor consumption has added to the problems of the villagers. Even one can find garbage littered inside the park and dumping of liquor bottles in different corners of jetties. Hence, this ecotourism development study has ranked as mix conservation and community wellbeing oriented. Thus, the case match up satisfies sustainable indicators such as; 1, 3, 6-8, and ecotourism attributes 1-4, 6-7.

LESS CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING ORIENTED (CASE STUDIES 2, 7 AND 8)

Case study - 2 is the ecotourism development at Jianfengling National Forest Park (JNFP) and Diaoluoshan National Forest Park (DNFP) of China. Han Chinese and Li ethnic minority communities are part of this research. As per the case match up, it was ranked as less conservation and community wellbeing oriented. Some local communities perceive that ecotourism has a positive influence on the local economy and has improved infrastructure. The study found that tourism development had weakened the tourism-park- community relationships. Few tourists stopped in the community en-route to the park. There were few spending opportunities for the tourists in the area, and the park-operated hotels and travel companies generated little or no profit. The resident survey revealed that community socioeconomic benefits had been very limited, and the

park had no effect/negative effect on their lives mainly in terms of lost jobs and land. Ecotourism had denied access to local resources for the local community. On the positive aspect, the park officials hope that compensation for the locals will come in the form of increased job opportunities from the development of ecotourism. Although the park officials have made effort to educate the locals about the reason behind the establishment of the park and the significance of protecting the forests, the local residents have not had the opportunity to participate actively in the planning and decision-making processes.

The park (JNFP) has opened a new visitor center and provided training to small number of Chinese speaking guides. Research has also revealed that the dependence on natural resources has increased in the region, and some degree of illegal resource harvesting has arisen as a result at both parks. The study certainly proves that ecotourism promotion with the creation of both the Jianfengling and Diaoluoshan National Forest Park have not been effective to address the local concerns and conservation of natural resources at large. Therefore, it only satisfies the sustainable tourism indicator - and ecotourism attributes 1, 3, 6 and 9.

Case study - 7 is the case of ecotourism development at Madagascar Island. It is part of the Ranomafana National Park and the community involved with the ecotourism development is the Malagasy. Ecotourism promotion and development in the destination has not been a successful venture. Therefore, it satisfies only indicator-6 and ecotourism attributes 3 and 7. Madagascar is among the 10 hotspots of global biological diversity and ranks among the 12 ‘mega-diverse’ countries. It is home to 80% of the planet’s biological diversity (MEF & UNEP, 2010). The biological diversity of the country is under great threat as the forest cover is disappearing at an annual rate of 150,000–200,000 hectares (FAO, 2005). Historically, the forests of the region have been disturbed by human activities, which have principally had greater impacts on the forest composition. The slash-and-burn technique or *tavy* and the exploitation of tropical hardwood are the important reasons of forest cover degradation in the surrounding areas and within the National Park. During the last two decades, Madagascar has become increasingly associated with ecotourism. Ecotourism promotion has created few local employment opportunities, and these are opportunities mainly in the form of guides who speak other languages (generally French or English) and who have a level of education that allows them to understand the biodiversity features of the National Parks. The overall receipts generated by tourism in the Protected Areas are estimated representing 2.5% of total tourism receipts for Madagascar in 2008. The principal economic benefits largely depend on the occasional increase in the sale of local products. Few ecotourism operators provide ecotourism training to local communities. Ecotourism development in the region has great pressure on the local carrying capacity with an increase in number of tourists and infrastructures. Both economically and environmentally, tourism in general and ecotourism specifically, appear to have been highly exaggerated in region.

Case study - 8 is the ecotourism development in the Okavango Delta of Botswana. It is part of the Ngamiland Concession Area, and the communities

involved with are the Seronga, Gunotsoga, Eretsha, Beetsha and Gudigwa. The research through quantitative analysis revealed that the mean number of years that staff respondents from the community had been working for Okavango Wilderness Safaris (OWS) was 5.07 (minimum 1 year; maximum 19 years). Forty-nine percent of staff respondents said that they had a family member employed in tourism and/or conservation. The discussions with older respondents revealed that they were in favor of hunting as the community received meat from hunters while they themselves had, as yet, not received any direct benefits from ecotourism. The research highlighted the conflict of interest due to community-private sector partnership in ecotourism, equitable benefit distribution system, and transparency. Hence, the ecotourism development struggles to address the conservation aspect at large. Therefore, the ecotourism case study at the Okavango Delta only satisfies sustainable indicators 1, 3, 5-7 and 13 and ecotourism attributes 1-4 and 7.

CONCLUSION

The evidence from the case analysis above highlights that ecotourism promotion in any given destination can create both positive and negative effects for local communities. Therefore, the scale and level of ecotourism promotion must keep the local community at the core of such development. The central phenomenon of all 10 case studies provides strong evidence that ecotourism is an ideal form of tourism development when it satisfies all the indicators of sustainable tourism development. These case studies of ecotourism represent to what extent the ecotourism development at the selected sites is able to satisfy both the ecotourism attributes and the sustainable tourism indicators. The metadata of these cases firmly supports an ideal form of ecotourism development, one that satisfies all indicator areas of sustainable tourism development and ecotourism attributes. The key outcomes of all 10 cases have underlined two important constructs: (1) conservation and (2) community wellbeing. Hence, this leads to further queries such as: what sort of approach is required in the study area to promote ecotourism, where the local economy is sagging, the culture is aboriginal, community awareness and interest are to be ascertained, and the tourism supply chain is yet to be developed.

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Jurnal Ilmu Sosiologi Dialektika Kontemporer

Vol. 11, No. 1, Januari-Juni 2023

p-ISSN: 2303-2324

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