

EVALUATION OF IKOGOSI WARM SPRING; A POTENTIAL GEOTOURIST SITE IN EKITI STATE, SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT: *The success of joint management adopted by Ekiti State Government for Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort was investigated vis-à-vis its current status, operation and its contribution to the adjoining community. A number of Sampling techniques were employed to select sample for this study. Purposive sampling method was used to select 100 residents of the Ikogosi community who are 18 years and above. Accidental and Availability Sampling methods were also used to select 100 tourists from the site where the investigation was carried out. Random sampling method was then employed to select 25 respondents each from the staff of Ekiti State Tourism Board, Ekiti State Board of Internal Revenue, Ekiti State Ministry of Finance and Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort Limited. This same method was used to select 100 respondents from stake holders such as: Hoteliers, Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Restaurants and Car Hire Services Operators within Ekiti State. In all a total of 400 respondents were selected for the study. The questionnaire forms were validated by the expert in the field of tourism before their administration, Chi Square statistics was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study established that joint management approach adopted by the management is a better approach for the management of the site as. The study also found that it has provided jobs for the youth and generates revenue for the government of Ekiti State. The researchers also found that most of the community residents agreed that the gain of the site outweighs the losses. The study concludes that the emergence of joint management approach employed by Ekiti State Government for Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort Limited yielded enormous social and economic benefits to the immediate local community in terms of employment, infrastructure, and income generation. The researchers recommend that, both public and private investors should invest more capital in it for better performance.*

KEYWORDS: Analysis, Approach, Geo-tourist, Management, Warm Spring,

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an act of people's travel to and stays in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (World Tourism Organization, 2004). Tourism is the world largest export earner and is considered by many to be the world's largest industry; this is because of the complexity and dynamic nature of the industry. A well developed Tourism site has a lot of benefit to be accrued for the economy of state, region or nation. This will be in forms of turning the economy of such area around for good; it has the potential of creating jobs and generating income at international, national, regional and local level.

However, Tourism and the Environment are inextricably linked. This is because the sustainability of tourism depends on attractive environmental factors. Environment in this case (which may either be natural or manmade) denotes the physical setting within which tourist activities take place. Examples are coastal resort, tracts or stretch of country side, historic cities, mountain ranges, lakes, land setting, picturesque villages, parks, museums and galleries, that provide the stimulus for so much tourist travel. Natural and cultural environment no doubt form an integral part of economic survival and human identity. While natural environments are scene and resources of nature, including Mountains, Valleys, Rivers, Forestlands, Grasslands, Wilderness, Wildlife, Minerals, Marine resources e.t.c Cultural environment are creation of man often expressed in the physical landscape including Parks, Gardens, Settlements. Transportation networks, Farmlands, Technology etc.

The harnessing of such environment for tourism is not new, nature and artifacts has from the beginning formed the bedrock of human economy sustenance and living. Apart from some business related motives as well as reasons of aesthetic appreciation and pleasure, touristic visit and recreation to exotic and familiar environment are undertaken, fundamentally for social and health reasons. Tourism promotion and development is one of the eight point agenda of the current Administration in Ekiti State of Nigeria. In recent time the majority of the tourism potentials in Ekiti state have received the State Government attention. The prominent ones: Ikogosi Warm Spring and Resort, Arinta Water Falls, Kosegbe Stone, Orole Hill, Olosunta Hills, Fajuyi Memorial Park, Erin Ayonigba River, Efon Alaaye Hills, Okemesi Hills, Olota, Ajo, Age, Ayoba, Uta Epe Hills, Ooni River, Osun River, Egbigbu Lake, Esa Cave, Oroke Ewo War Site and Ero Dam. Ikogosi Warm Spring is standing out among them because of its uniqueness and features that cannot be found in any other similar site in the area. Ikogosi warm Spring is not only warm spring, but it is also cold as well. Another unique feature of the site is the ability to retain its thermal identity. This uniqueness also makes it the first of such occurrence in Nigeria. This uniqueness accounts for the potentials of the Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort to be a destination of choice for tourist from far and near. Moreover, Ikogosi Warm and Cold Spring as a geo-touristic site has attracted investors from abroad in recent time. The question now is whether the joint management approach employed by Ekiti State Government succeeded or not. This is the gap that the present study wishes to fill.

The study is necessary since the previous study on geo-touristic site in Nigeria [i.e Jimoh (2011); Ojelabi (2013)] among others focus on site that are entirely managed and funded by government. In fact, it is the failure of government in management of touristic site that has informed Ekiti State government to privatize Ikogosi Warm Spring. The finding of this study will be significant to Ekiti State government and prospective investors in tourism business.

Study Area

In the heart of Ikogosi, Warm Spring flows side by side the warm spring, is another spring, a cold one. The warm and cold springs of Ikogosi originate from a close proximity, come to a meeting point, and flow onward together with each spring retaining its thermal identity. It represents uniqueness and is the first of such occurrence in the world. The warm spring has a temperature of up to 70⁰C at the source and 37⁰C after meeting the cold spring. The meeting point of the warm and cold springs is a unique attraction to tourists. The springs sprout out and

as the shaded area on the map.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: - Eco-System Management Theory

The rapid expansion of the tourism industry has provided many economic benefits and affected every facet of contemporary societies including employment, government revenue and cultural manifestations. However, tourism can also be considered a problematic phenomenon, promoting dependency, underdevelopment and adverse socio-cultural effects, especially for developing countries. For the purpose of this research work, the “social exchange theory” is considered. Social Exchange Theory is a social psychological and sociological perspective that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. Social Exchange Theory posits that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. The theory has roots in economics, psychology and sociology. Social Exchange Theory features many of the main assumptions found in rational choice theory and structuralism.

Costs are the elements of relational life that have negative value to a person, such as the effort put into a relationship and the negatives of a partner. (Costs can be time, money, effort etc.)

Rewards are the elements of a relationship that have positive value. (Rewards can be sense of acceptance, support, and companionship etc.). The Social Exchange perspective argues that people calculate the overall worth of a particular relationship by subtracting its costs from the rewards it provides.

Worth = Rewards – Costs

If worth is a positive number, it is positive relationship. On the contrary, negative number indicates a negative relationship. The worth of a relationship influences its outcome, or whether people will continue with a relationship or terminate it. Positive relationships are expected to endure, whereas negative relationships will probably terminate.

The Social Exchange Theory explains social exchange and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. Social Exchange Theory explores the nature of exchanges between parties. As with everything dealing with the Social Exchange Theory it has its outcome satisfaction and dependence of relationships. Both parties in a social exchange take responsibility for one another and depend on each other. According to Laura Stafford (2008), economic exchanges and social exchanges have some differences: Social exchanges involve a connection with another person; social exchanges involve trust, not legal obligations; social exchanges are more flexible; and social exchanges rarely involve explicit bargaining.

"The guiding force of interpersonal relationships is the advancement of both parties' self-interest" Michael Roloff (1981) Interpersonal exchanges are thought to be analogous to economic exchanges where people are satisfied when they receive a fair return for their expenditures. Fulfilling self-interest is often common within the economic realm of the Social Exchange Theory where competition and greed can be common.

At the core of the Social Exchange Theory is the outcome derived of subtracting the costs from the rewards. Rewards can be material (economic) or symbolic (attention, advice or status) and typically bring satisfaction to the individual. For example in a relationship, a boyfriend/girlfriend could provide their significant other with security and trust which could be considered rewards within the relationship. Diminished Marginal Utility can occur within an exchange if the reward in question has been received repeatedly, the other party will lose interest in the reward. Costs can be viewed as punishments or discomfort such as physical or emotional pain. In a relationship, if conflict arises often, it could be viewed as a cost. Since individuals have different values, costs and rewards can vary depending on the individual's values and beliefs.

Outcome = Rewards - Costs

George Homan developed five key propositions that assist in structuring individual's behaviors based on rewards and costs. The first proposition, the Success Proposition states that behavior that creates positive outcomes is likely to be repeated. The second proposition, the Stimulus Proposition believes that behavior if an individual's behavior is rewarded in the past, the individual will continue the previous behavior. The third proposition, the Value proposition believes that if the result of a behavioral action is considered valuable to the individual, it is more likely for that behavior to occur. The fourth proposition, the Deprivation-satiation proposition believes that if an individual has received the same reward several times, the value of that reward will diminish. Lastly the fifth proposition, discusses when emotions occur due to different reward situations.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used to collect data for this study because it involves the collection of data in their natural state. This method was adopted because the researcher wants to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed therefore, people's opinions are needed for the study.

Population of this study comprise of adult indigenes of Ikogosi-Ekiti Community who are 18years old and above, Workers of the Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort, Management and Staff of the Ekiti State Tourism Board, the Management and staff of Ekiti State Board of Internal Revenue, Staff in the Ekiti State Ministry of Finance and other selected tourism stakeholders in Ekiti State. The researcher believes that they would be able to give detailed and valid information on the topic under research.

The researcher administered not less than 100 questionnaires to the selected respondents from each category of the respondents; this gives a total of 400 questionnaires that was administered.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data for this research work was analyzed using tables, charts, percentage frequency and chi-square. The table was used for presentation of data on the distribution of questionnaires used, the percentage frequency was used in the presentation of the socio-demographic data of the respondents, the charts were used to present the level of awareness of the respondents about the

case study while the opinion of the respondents on the three hypotheses were analyzed using chi square.

RESULTS

Success of Joint Management Approach of Ikogosi Warm Spring as Promotion of Recreation and Tourism and Improvement on Standard of Living in Ekiti State

TABLE 1

	SA	A	N S	D	SD	TOTAL
CMP	400 (255.4)	70 (160.6)	30 (52.6)	10 (32.9)	10 (8.9)	520
HC	620 (731.8)	540 (460.2)	170 (150.9)	120 (94.3)	40 (52.8)	1490
VT	920 (952.8)	610 (599.2)	200(196.5)	120 (122.8)	90 (68.8)	1940
TOTAL	1940	1220	400	250	140	2950

The factors considered for promotion of recreation and tourism and improved standard of living included good roads, hotels and restaurants, electricity, portable water, school, market, health center, police post, jobs and housing, however there was provision for more options.

Table 1 indicates that from the responses obtained on the success of joint management approach of Ikogosi Warm Spring towards promotion of recreation and tourism and improvement on standard of living, the greatest response (1940) ‘strongly agree’ followed by (1220) ‘agree’ that Ikogosi Warm Spring has made the community benefit a lot. Corroborating the findings, and elder in the community Chief Ojo Ogunmodede in an interview with the researcher, said the road leading to the community was reconstructed because of the existence of the warm spring. More so, residents in the community always benefits from most of the social amenities put in place for the tourist. He further said that the Ikogosi Warm Spring is a source of glory for the community, *“this warm and cold spring meeting here attracted Late Reverend John McGee to this community and he built a camp here, it attracted United African Company here and they built Gossy Water Factory, it attracted the Governments and they developed the site, it attracted wealthy indigenes of the community and they are investing in the village, and the community is benefiting from all these investments, it has also been attracting different kinds of visitors to the community and the community is also benefitting from their spending. I am very sure that there is more to come”*.

HYPOTHESIS 1.

H₀: Joint Management Approach of Ikogosi Warm Spring is not promoting recreation and tourism and improving standard of living in Ekiti State

H₁: Joint Management Approach of Ikogosi Warm Spring is promoting recreation and tourism and improving standard of living in Ekiti State

Using chi square to determine the discrepancy between the observed value and the expected value

Mathematically;

$$X^2_{cal} = \sum_{l=1}^{n=3} (\text{Observed Frequency} - \text{Expected Frequency} / \text{Expected frequency})$$

$$\text{Therefore, } X^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

$$X^2_{0.958} = 2.73 \text{ (table value)}$$

Decision: since $X^2_{cal} = 203.34 > X^2_{0.95}(8) = 2.73$, the null hypothesis is rejected hence, we conclude that Ikogosi Warm Spring is promoting recreation and tourism and improving standard of living in Ekiti State.

Table 2: POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF JOINT MANAGEMENT APPROACH OF IKOGOSI WARM SPRING

	A	SA	N	D	SD	TOTAL
PECI	180 (195.9)	330 (282.9)	20 (39.9)	40 (46.9)	9 (12.9)	579
PSCI	270 (222.3)	260 (321.1)	50 (45.3)	70 (53.5)	7 (14.8)	657
PENI	90 (121.8)	190 (321.1)	40 (24.8)	20 (29.3)	20 (8.1)	360
	540	780	110	130	36	1596

Table 2 shows that the respondents massively 'agree' and 'strongly agree' that Ikogosi Warm Spring have a positive impact on the economic, social and environmental status of their community. The data presented in table 2 is further evaluated mathematically using chi square as shown below to test hypothesis II.

$$X^2_{cal} = \sum_{l=1}^{n=3} (\text{Observed Frequency} - \text{Expected Frequency} / \text{Expected frequency})$$

$$\text{Therefore, } X^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

$$X^2_{0.95} = 2.73 \text{ (table value)}$$

Decision: since $X^2_{cal} = 144.94 > X^2_{0.95}(8) = 2.73$, the null hypothesis is rejected hence, we conclude that Ikogosi Warm Spring has a positive impact on the socio-economic development of Ekiti State.

This can also be buttressed with the information gathered in an exclusive interview with the General Manager of the Ekiti State Tourism Board, who informed that over 500 people were engaged during the re-construction work on daily basis. The General Manager also informed that the recent upgrading of the Ikogosi warm Spring Resort has raised Ekiti State status in the committee of tourist friendly states in Nigeria.

Table 4: PERCEPTION OF THE TOURISTS ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF JOINT MANAGEMENT APPROACH FOR IKOGOSI WARM SPRING RESORT, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA.

	A	SA	N	D	SD	TOTAL
Percentage Response	22.4	10.3	10.4	34.6	22.3	100

Source: Field Work 2013.

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents 34.6% 'disagree' and 22.3% 'strongly disagree' with the factors considered. This means that 56.9% of the respondents had a satisfactory experience with the facilities provided, the service delivery, value for money spent and the attitude of the residents in the local community. This findings is corroborated with information gathered in an exclusive interview with one of the visiting tourist who lodge at the resort, Mr. Sulaiman Adewale, he said he got to know about the place when he was a final-year university undergraduate at the Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and his Department organized an

excursion to the site during their Departmental week in the year 2010. *‘When I visited this site prior the reconstruction project in the year 2010, I felt so bad looking at a goldmine wasting away in a poor state like Ekiti, and the government is not doing anything to tap it. You need to see bushes everywhere, structures abandoned, dilapidated buildings with filth and spirogyra growth around the swimming pool area, broken seats for tourist to relax around the pool, and there were just two workers there with very poor service delivery, one of them couldn’t even speak good english. Aside from the warm and cold spring and the confluence they formed at the site, there was just nothing attractive about the site, the pool that could have been appealing to me looks so un-kept, I can’t just imagine myself swimming in that kind of pool. I was disappointed in the departmental executives for organizing such a dulling trip for the department. But when I saw the new face of Ikogosi Warm Spring in a magazine in January this year, I was surprised, I Couldn’t believe what I saw, not much later I watched another documentary on the new Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort on Channels Television in Lagos, then I was convinced and I said to myself, I must re-visit this site, and here I am. My experience this time around is a reverse of what I experienced the last time I came here and its really amazing, I never believed this place could be this lovely, is it the lodging facilities or the prompt response room services rendered, the serene environment, the car park, or the ultra modern newly constructed chalets, internet facilities and the new facilities at pool side. This visit has completely changed my orientation about tourism in Nigeria, I’m just happy that I came here.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the above findings, it is very evident that Ikogosi Warm Spring is a potential geotourist site capable of promoting recreation and tourism and improving the standard of living in Ikogosi-Ekiti, Ekiti State. Also Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort operates with little negative impact on the host community but has a lot of positive impact on the environment, social and economic status of the host community and Ekiti State at large. The study also concludes that the emergence of Ikogosi Warm Spring Resort Limited provided enormous social and economic benefits to the immediate local community in terms of employment, infrastructure, and income generation hence, both public and private investors should invest more capital in Tourism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following suggestions and recommendations are hereby made.

1. The management of the company should encourage community participation in further development of the place in order to continue to enjoy the cooperation and support of the local people.
2. Major attractions in the state should also be earmarked for joint management for better result.
3. The management of Ikogosi Warm Spring and Resort should always put the concept of carrying capacity into consideration so that tourists’ satisfaction at the site is not jeopardized and facilities at the site are not over-burdened in order to ensure their longevity for sustainable use.

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