

Full Length Research Paper

Wildlife based tourism activities and income generation in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria

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The study examined ecotourism activities and income generation in the Park. Information were obtained from the Park Research and Information Units, Park Annual Reports and Ecotourism Department of the Park. Questionnaires were also distributed to the Park staff including the Director. Records for sixteen years were provided on the arrival of tourists, income generation and the major sources of revenue in the Park. A total of 39,158 tourists visited the Park, while total revenue of N36,096.80 was generated for the past sixteen years. The five major sources of revenue in the Park include accommodation, park entry, catering service, hire assets and others. The highest income of N6,033,276.27 was generated from accommodation for the past five years (2002 - 2006). This was followed by other sources which recorded N4,171,663.44, catering service with N2,846,604.47; park entry with N2,129,553.60 and lastly hire assets with N1,720,764.50. This study revealed that ecotourism activities and income generation in the park have shown a continuous trend in development and much greater hope for future.

Key words: Ecotourism, income, annual report, accommodation, catering, park entry, hire assets, tourists.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been defined by various authors. McIntosh and Geoldner (1986), have defined tourism as the some of the phenomenon and relationships, arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host government and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourist9s) and other visitors. Ayodele and Falade (1989, 1993) also defined tourism as the science, art and business of attracting and transporting visitors, accommodating them and graciously catering for their needs and wants. According to Smith (1977) tourism can be classified into five categories such as ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism (ecotourism) and recreational tourism. Ecotourism activities in Kainji Lake National Park belong to the last two categories.

Boo (1991) has defined Wildlife based tourism or ecotourism as a type of tourism that involves traveling to

relatively undisrupted natural areas with the objective of admiring studying and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any cultural features found there. The idea of wildlife – based tourised is closely related or associated with conservation on one hand and travel or the other hand. Wildlife is the undomesticated and untamed wild animals and uncultivated wild plant in an area (Ayodele, 2002).

Although tourism occupies an important position in the economy of some African countries, it is still at its infancy in Nigeria (Adeyemo, 1995). According to high, one of the major reasons for the economic crisis in Nigeria is the sole dependence on petroleum, and tourism is one of the viable options for bailing the country out of his ailing economy.

Kainji Lake National Park, formerly known as Borgu Game Reserve was upgraded to its present status in

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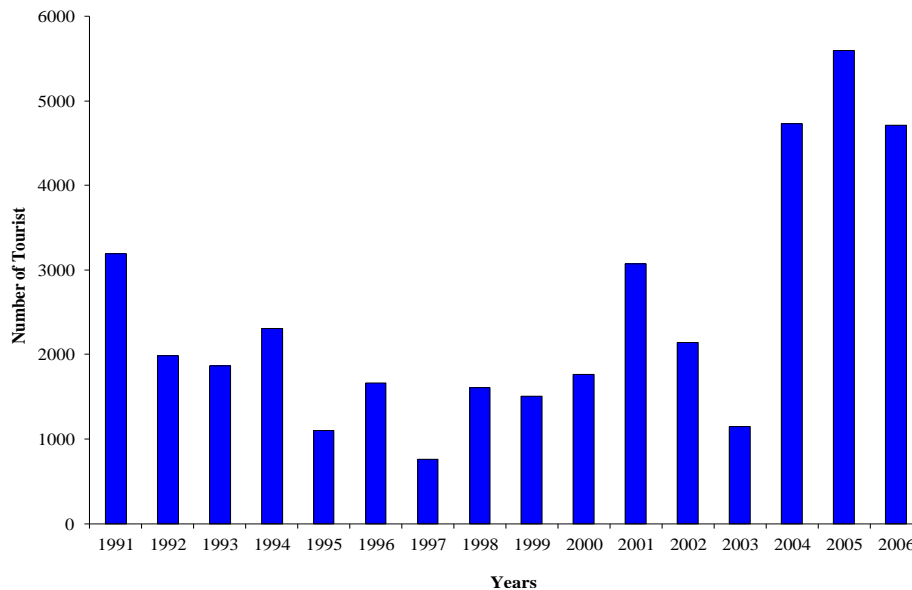


Figure 1. Tourist Inflow in Kaiji Lake National Park, 1991 – 2006.

1979. It is made up of Borgu Sector (3,970 km²) in Borgu Local Government Area and Zugurma Sector (18600 km²) in Mairiga Local Government respectively, in Niger State of Nigeria. The services provided by the Ecotourism Department of the Park include:

1. Wilderness experience
2. Park viewing
3. Lake cruising /culture site viewing
4. Game fishing and
5. Leisure recreation.

There are a lot of tourist attractions in the Park. These includes the Oli camp, the Hypo pools, Wild animals, the Lake Kainji, the Kainji Lake Hydro Electric Dam Complex, the Game fishing and the historic sites.

The study looked into wildlife-based ecotourism activities and income generation in the Park for future development in the country's tourist industry.

METHODS

The study area is Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria. The Park is made up of two sectors namely, Borgu (3970 km²) and Zugurma (1.860 km²). Structured questionnaires were designed and distributed among Park staff according the ranks. Twenty questionnaires were distributed in each of the two sectors randomly within each rank. Secondary data were collected from the Park Research and Annual Reports on tourist turnout, annual income and type of tourists. Bar Charts were used for the illustrations.

RESULTS

The results were shown on Figures 1 to 3. Figure 1

shows the tourists inflow in Kainji Lake National Park, between 1991 and 2006. The minimum N756 inflow was recorded in 1997 while the highest N5,593 was recorded in 2005. Figure 2 shows the income generated in the Park for the period of sixteen years. The minimum N1,705,524 was recorded in 1999 while the maximum N4,712,384.11 was recorded in 2002.

Figure 3 shows the major sources of the income in the Park. The highest income of N6,033,276.27 was generated from accommodation while the west income of N1,720,764.50 was generated from Hiring of assets.

DISCUSSION

The Park started with good turnout of 3187 tourists in 1991 with an income of N696,238.00. Income generation increases gradually between 1991 and 1996. The highest number of tourists, 5,593 visited the Prk in 2005 while the lowest 756 was recorded in 1995. The Park recorded good patronage persistently from 2004 to 2006. Poor inflow was recorded in the years 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2003. The reason(s) for the poor turnouts in those years have been attributed to the infancy of the tourism activities in the country (Adeyemo, 1995). There was a drop in income generation in 1997 which recorded N1,272,997. Income generation was very years 1998, 2002, and 2006, which recorded N4,099,739.00, N4,712,384.11 and N4,042,487.46 respectively.

Also, income generation was only fair in the years 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2005 which recorded N2,867,557.65, N2,745,659.93 and N2,867,357.23. Income generation from tourism activities have been

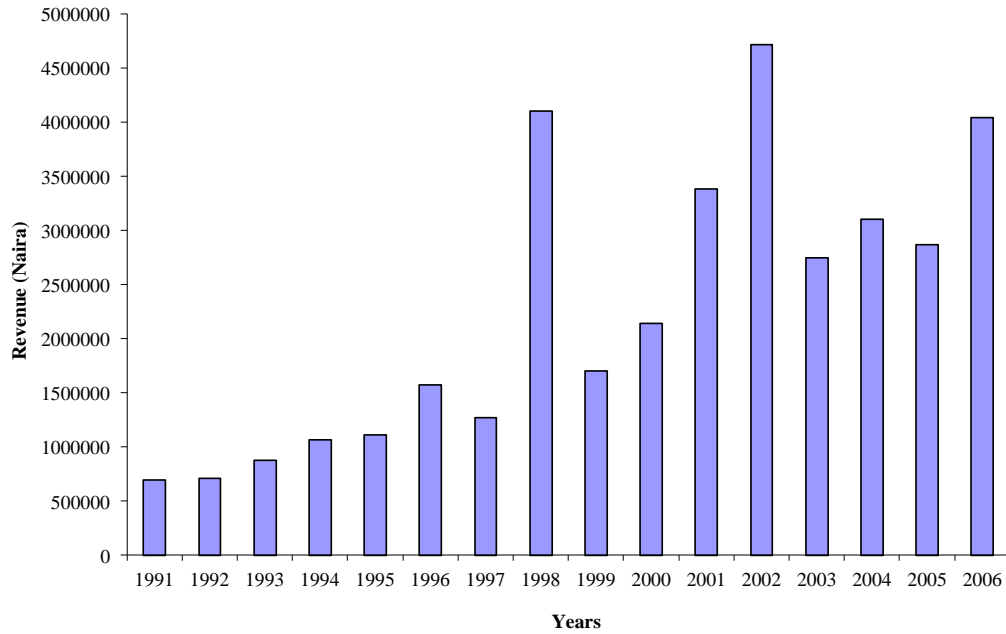


Figure 2. Internally generated revenue in Kainji Lake National Park 1991 – 2006

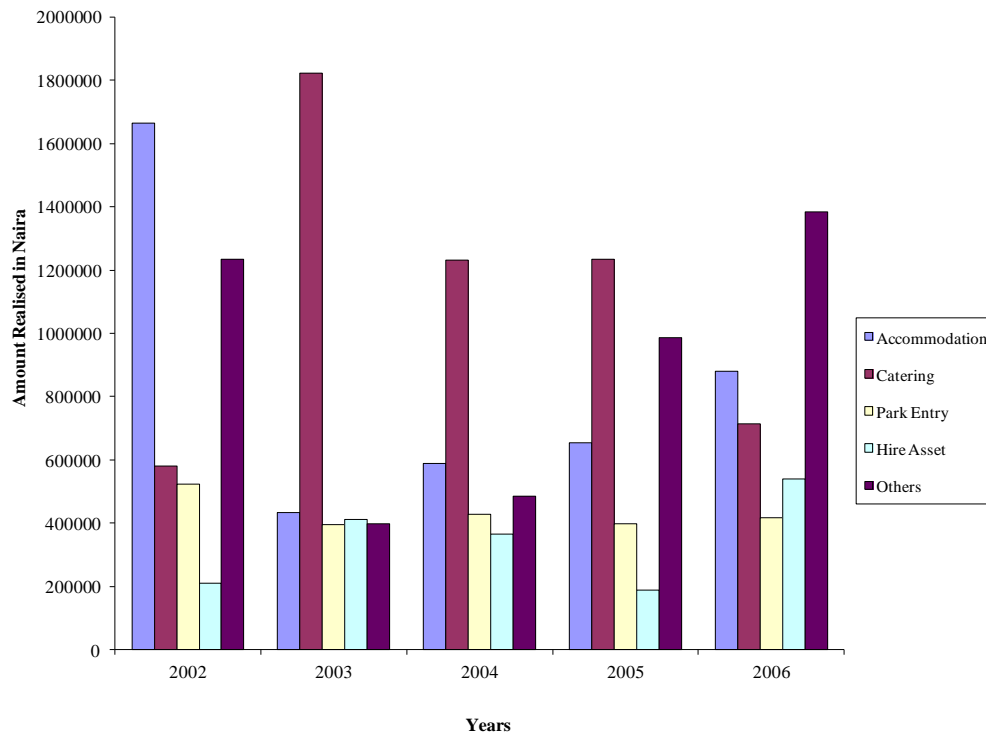


Figure 3. Sources of income generation in Kainji Lake National Park 2002 – 2006.

discussed. according to World Tourism Organisation (WHO) as quoted by Ayodele (2002) Nigeria is rated seventh among the twelve West African countries in revenue earnings from international tourism, trailing

behind Senegal, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin Republic, Mali and Gambia.

Analysis of the tourist inflow and income generated revealed that the number of tourists in a particular year

does not determine the income generated but the type of tourists and the purpose. researchers and Students on excursion bring little among of money to the Park unlike workshops, seminars, conferences etc.

The major sources of Income generation in the Park were shown in Figure 3. These include accommodation, catering services, hiring of assets, park entries and others. The highest income, was generated from accommodation (N6,033,276.29), followed by other sources (N4,171,663.44), catering services (N2,846,604.47), park entry (N2,129,553.60) and hiring of assets which recorded the lowest. According to Ayodele (2002), the park provides good grounds for sport fishing all year round – River Oli in Borgu sector and Manyera in Zukurma sector. The park also operates in all year round cruise on Lake Kainji, which offers unique opportunities of viewing local and migratory birdlife and reptiles on the lake. There are also good accommodation and catering facilities, and a number of historical sites.

Ayodele (2002) reported that “African National Parks are among the best known in the world. Wildlife based tourism has contributed to sustain the economy of East African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania. The National Parks of East and South Africa are well developed and earn millions in vital foreign exchange. For example, wildlife based tourism rank first in Kenya and second in Tanzania as source of foreign exchange earning. He quoted Ajayi (1972). According to him this achievement was as a result of the abundance of wild animal population and cultural materials protected in a number of national parks and game reserves in the two countries, Kenya and Tanzania.

Adeyemo (1995) discussed the need to improve the nature conservation as a tool for the development of the tourist industry in Nigeria. He emphasized the need to boost our tourist industry in through the development of the National Parks. Also, the role of Government and Non-governmental Organizations in biodiversity conservation in Nigeria National Park have been discussed (Ajibade, 2008).

Conclusion

The study revealed that ecotourism activities and income generation in the Park have shown a continuous trend in development and much greater hope for the future. The establishment of the Nigeria National Parks' Board and Ministry of Commerce and tourism will surely benefit the country in area of tourism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Federal Government should pay more attention to ecotourism activities and income generation through the development of our protected areas by the Federal Ministry of Environment, Federal Ministry of Commerce and Tourism and Tourism Board. More efforts should be put into conservation education to solve the problems of biodiversity conservation in the country.

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