

Full Length Research Paper

Ecotourism development in Ghana: A case of selected communities in the Brong-Ahafo Region

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The purpose of this study is to examine the extent of community participation in the Community-Based Ecotourism Projects in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The sample of the study was 281 respondents and these were randomly selected. Also, opinions of 14 leaders were purposively selected for the in-depth interview. Data were collected using both questionnaires and interviews. The study utilized a multi-stage sampling procedure to select respondents. The findings showed that effects of community participation on tourism development involved environmental protection, conflict resolution, employment and time consuming. Barriers to community participation in the projects were religious beliefs, lack of government support, funds, appropriate knowledge in tourism and lack of co-operation by some residents. In general, there was no significant difference in barriers to community participation among the socio-demographic characteristics of residents in the projects. It was recommended that the government through the rural banks in the area should initiate a special tourism related micro-finance scheme for the communities. Finally, the government should support the local communities by improving infrastructure and providing enough security to the projects in the region.

Key words: Barriers, community participation, tourism development, residents.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development may initiate conflicts when governments impose it on a community without consulting the local people (Dei, 2000). Thus, the opportunity for control of tourism must be in the hands of the community members living close to the tourism facility; that is, tourism should be community driven. It is however necessary that there must be some input of policies and legislation from governments to enable the local community actively gets involved in tourism development process. Tourism development is a local issue because it is at the local level that action takes place (Easdale Holiday Village, 1981). Hence, there are now some recognition that more actors should become involved, those who are experts and those who are affected. Such an interaction may lessen the frustrating delays of past confrontations and lead to more harmonious

development.

Murphy (1980) observes that if the public and private groups are given the chance to participate in tourism development at an early stage, there is sufficient consensus of opinion to permit broadly based planning objectives. Murphy was baffled by the willingness of the residents to participate and their ability to develop rational and practical options. Given the chance, the community can provide a valuable input into the decision-making process. According to Fridgen (1996), residents have both the right and obligation to participate in the tourism development processes that will shape the future of their community and their lives. This is because local people will have to live each day with the effects of tourism development including increased numbers of people, increased use of roads and various economic and

employment-based effects.

In Ghana, tourism development encroaches on common property. As a result, community involvement has been identified as essential component in tourism development which can spread tourism's benefits, such as improvement in the local economy and conservation of the environment, to all parts of the country (GTB, 2008). Based on these realizations, a number of community-based ecotourism projects (CBEPs) were established throughout the country with Boabeng, Fiema and Tanoboase in the Brong-Ahafo region being some of the beneficiary communities (Zeppel, 2006). Therefore, there is the need to carry out research into the extent of residents' participation in these tourism projects and see the challenges faced by the projects in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effects of community participation in tourism development

Adu-Yeboah and Obiri-Yeboah (2008) reporting on Mafi-Dekpoe Water Project in the Volta Region in Ghana, observe that community participation allows the local people to bring the necessary changes to community projects by expressing their views either individually or through groups. It also helps members of a community to learn how to settle conflicting interests for the general welfare of the community. Community participation results in better decisions, since decisions that involve the whole community members are likely to be acceptable to them. It promotes dignity and taps the knowledge and resources of individual citizens within the community. This may contribute to a better solution to problems confronting the community. Community participation reduces the cost of human resources needed to carry out much of the work associated with community development. Without the support of residents, lots of good projects would never be achieved in many communities.

Nevertheless, substantial problems exist in implementing public participation programmes at community level (Timothy, 1999). Murphy (1985) indicates that it is relatively easy for a community to unite in opposition to a tourism development. However, it is not easy for a community to conceptualise, agree and then achieve its own long-run tourism future (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998). Among the key difficulties in implementing community tourism development is the political nature of the planning process (Hall, 2000).

Community participation in development indicates a high degree of public participation in the planning process (Haywood, 1988). Community participation in tourism development therefore means that, the local community will have a degree of control over the tourism planning and decision making process (Arnstein, 1969). Thus, community approach to tourism implies that there will be

the need for partnership in, or control of tourism development process. But for many government officials, community control can be interpreted as a loss of their power and control over the development process. Generally, such a community approach has not been adopted by those government authorities. This may also be due to complaints from business interests of the economic impact of decision-making delays, which arise out of any legal requirement for participation (Hall, 2000).

Similarly, the cost of community participation relates to time as participatory methods of project design and implementation require more time than standard procedures (Clayton et al., 1997; Institute of Development Studies, 1998). McGee and Norton (2000) notice that the production time spent on participation is something that often affects the rural poor. Particularly, in the farming communities like those found in the Brong-Ahafo Region in Ghana, free time to engage in meetings and other participatory processes is difficult to come by. People would rather want to use their free time, if any, to engage in other productive activities than to attend community meetings.

It has also been observed that popular participation tends to be local cost-intensive rather than foreign cost-intensive and takes a long time to be designed and implemented (Rudqvist, 1992). Participatory processes also require training at all levels, from residents to the leadership of the project. People need to be trained in using participatory methods, all of which require time.

Barriers to community participation in tourism development

In theory, tourism can create better opportunities for achieving community development. But there are barriers to community participation, which are barriers to the effectiveness of using tourism for community development (Fariborz and Ma'of, 2008). Barriers to community participation towards tourism development have hardly been debated by scholars of tourism (Moscardo, 2008). Tosun (2000) observes that in many developing countries, there are three major barriers to community participation in tourism development process which include operational, structural and cultural barriers.

Operational barriers are obstacles which include the centralization of public administration of tourism development. They also include lack of coordination between involved parties and lack of information made available to the local people of the tourist destination during the implementation of tourism projects (Murray, 2004).

Structural barriers are usually associated with institutional power structures, legislative, and economic systems. These involve attitudes of professionals, lack of expertise, lack of appropriate legal system and lack of financial resources (Murray, 2004; Steven and Jennifer, 2002; Tosun, 2000).

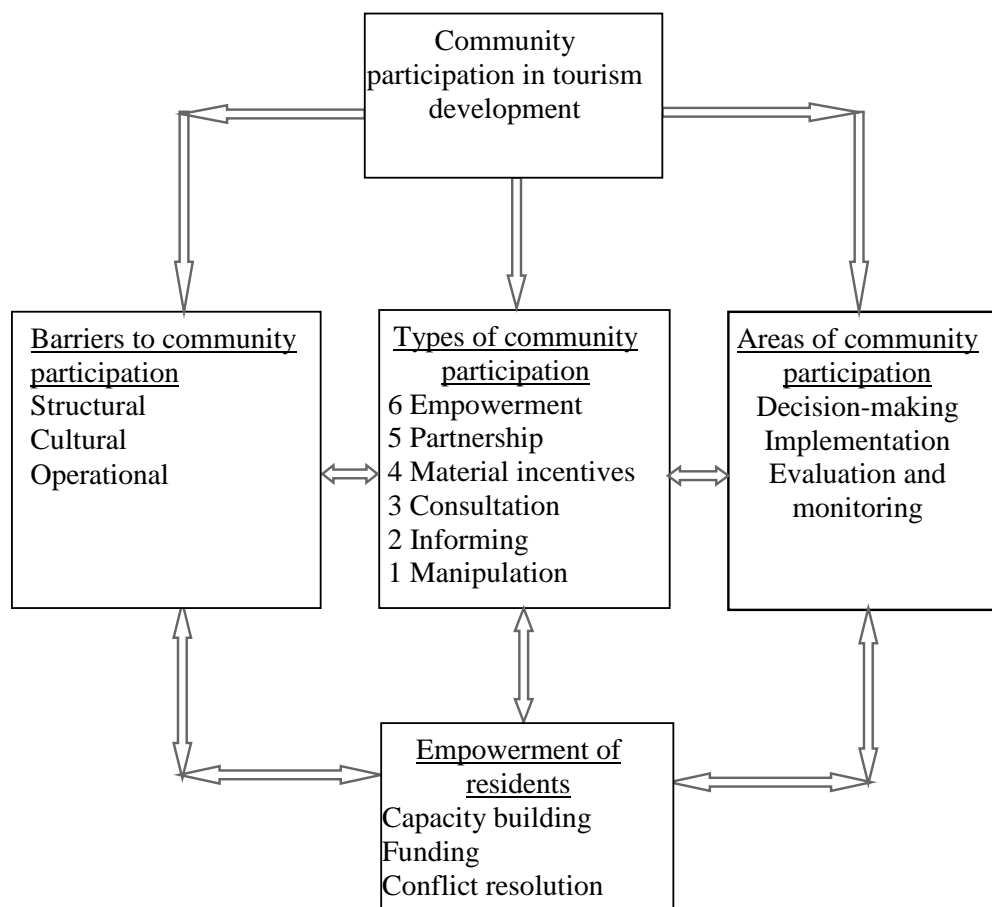


Figure 1. Model for Assessing Community Participation in Tourism Development. Source: Based upon Arnstein (1969), Fariborz and Ma'of (2008), Pretty (1995) and Tosun (2000).

Cultural barriers are factors which function as obstacles to tourism development in the destination communities. These include limited capacity of poor people to handle development effectively, religious beliefs and low level of tourism awareness in the local community (Moscardo, 2008; Tosun, 2000). Although there is no special reason beyond this classification, it is supposed that it will facilitate understanding of barriers to community participation in tourism development, at least, at a theoretical level (Fariborz and Ma'of, 2008).

Fariborz and Ma'of (2008), while investigating barriers to community leadership towards tourism development in Shiraz, Iran, found that there were operational, structural and cultural barriers to community leadership for tourism development. Even though these barriers did not equally exist in every community, they showed higher intensity and greater persistence in the new district of Shiraz. One major barrier identified by the study was that leaders had restricted access to financial resources alongside other resources. The implication is that community leaders did not have the right to use tourism resources and also, lacked a sense of ownership to tourism resources.

Conceptual framework for the study

The research conceptual framework was developed based on the model for assessing community participation in tourism development by Arnstein (1969), Fariborz and Ma'of's (2008), Pretty's (1995) and Tosun's (2000) models of community participation as shown in Figure 1. The framework outlines patterns of the analysis and at the same time, acts as a foundation for understanding the relationships between various issues the study seeks to address.

Figure 1 indicates that community participation in tourism development has effect on levels of residents' participation in tourism development. These levels are manipulation and informing (non-participation), consultation and material incentives (tokenism), and partnership and empowerment (residents' power) (Arnstein, 1969; Fariborz and Ma'of, 2008; Pretty, 1995).

Again, community participation has effect on areas of residents' participation, which include decision-making, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring of tourism projects, and also has a bearing on barriers such as

operational, cultural and structural limitations that prevent effective participation of residents in tourism development. This in turn influences residents' participation in the projects and eventually, their empowerment in tourism development as shown in Figure 1.

Nonetheless, one approach to ensure that local communities can overcome barriers to participation and ultimately participate actively in tourism development is to empower them (Tosun, 2000). In particular, empowerment involves getting rid of the barriers that work against the local communities by building their capacity, and also providing them with funds and conflict resolution skills to engage effectively in tourism development (Zhao and Ritchie, 2007). The concept of empowerment validates the view that there are powerless people in society and that most of them are poor. Community participation in tourism development is anchored in the belief of local people using tourism to improve their standards of living.

The model is premised on the assumption that local people should have constant access to decision-making and power. It implies that development of a tourism project in a community is about the process of em-powering the local people (Bahaire and Elliot-White, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

The study area

The study was conducted in communities Boabeng, Fiema and Tanoboase in the Brong-Ahafo Region, which were among the sites being developed under the CBEPs in Ghana. Brong-Ahafo Region is the second largest region in Ghana in terms of landmass with a territorial size of about 39,557 sq. km. Its projected population in 2009 was about 2,284,369 (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2009).

Geographically, it is located at the centre of Ghana, sharing boundaries with the Northern Region on the north, Ashanti and Western Regions on the south, Eastern and Volta Regions on the southeast and east respectively. The region shares a common border with the Republic of La Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the west. Due to the vast area of agricultural lands in the region, about two-thirds of the people are farmers cultivating food crops, vegetables and cash crops (GSS, 2005). Generally, farmers in the region practise traditional system of farming, relying mostly on rainfall for plant cultivation.

The region also has tourism facilities such as hotels, which are made up of budget, star-rated hotels and luxury guesthouses. There are a couple of restaurants and fast food outlets found mainly in Sunyani and a few district capitals. Some tourist's attractions in the region include: Digya National Park, Bui National Park, Buoyem Caves and Bats Colony, Tanoboase Sacred Grove, Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, Hani Archaeological Site, Bono Manso Slave Market, Kintampo and Fuller Waterfalls (GTB, 2008).

Rationale for selecting communities in the study area

The communities (Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema) selected for the study were purposively selected because, they were among the sites being developed under the Community Based Ecotourism Projects (CBEPs) in Ghana. Furthermore, these sites were the earliest to be established in the region as CBEP sites (Zeppel, 2006) and as a result, were due for evaluation.

Community-based ecotourism projects in the Brong-Ahafo Region

Community-based ecotourism may be referred to as tourism in which a large number of local people are involved in providing services to tourists and the tourism industry, and in which local people have meaningful ownership, power and participation in the various tourism and related enterprises (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority, 1998).

In Ghana, community-based ecotourism projects (CBEPs) started in 1995 as collaboration among the Nature Conservation and Research Centre (NCRC), Ghana Tourist Board (GTB), and 14 local communities including Boabeng, Fiema, and Tanoboase in the Brong-Ahafo region (Zeppel, 2006). NCRC is a Ghanaian conservation Non Governmental Organization (NGO), which at the regional level, worked with GTB to supervise the ecotourism projects. The destination communities set up tourism management committees (TMCs) with local stakeholders to coordinate CBEPs activities at each of the project sites. NCRC coordinated and implemented the ecotourism projects while GTB marketed the ecotourism destinations.

In 2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the CBEPs for two years while the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) together with GTB, provided technical advice to the projects. The aim was to develop community-owned and operated ecotourism activities at major environmental sites in rural areas of Ghana (Zeppel, 2006).

In the Brong-Ahafo Region, community tourism sites provide opportunities for eco-tourism activities such as fauna and flora viewing, scientific research and outdoor recreational activity like hiking. They also provide camping sites and tourists' accommodation to improve the local economy. These sites include Tanoboase Sacred Grove, Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, Buoyam Caves and Bats' Colony, Bono Manso Slave Market and Kintampo Waterfalls (GTB, 2008).

Research design

The study used cross-sectional design. It entails the collection of data through the use of questionnaires and interviews. This data collection method was chosen for the study because it allowed the data to be collected in a short period of time. Although, the time it takes to collect all the necessary data may take a day to a few weeks or more (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000).

Cross-sectional design was also chosen as a data collection method for this study because; the questionnaires used in the survey could be administered to all the members of the community at the same time. Again, the researcher was interested in the opinion of the local people about their participation in tourism development. The purpose however, was to generalize from a sample to population in order that inferences could be made about the involvement of the communities in tourism development (Babbie, 1990).

Data and sources

Data relating to benefits and costs of community participation as well as barriers to community participation in tourism development were needed to achieve the study objectives. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from survey; that is using questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the key informants or opinion leaders in the communities.

On the other hand, secondary data relating to projected census reports for the year 2009 were obtained from GSS (2009), since the last actual census was conducted in the year 2000, which would

Table 1. Sampling distribution of respondents by community.

Communities	Population	Houses	Household	Sample size
Boabeng	984	140	162	51
Fiema	1999	229	395	103
Tanoboase	2474	374	437	127
Total	5,457	743	994	281

have been too old for the study. Maps and lists of attractions in the Brong-Ahafo region were collected from the GTB.

Target population and sample size

The target population for the study was household heads or their representatives aged 18 years and above in the selected communities. This age group of people (18 years and above) was targeted because people in the group were among the economically active population in the study area (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2005). A list of household heads was compiled and used as a sampling frame for the selection of the respondents. The unit of data collection was individual household heads in the communities.

Those selected for the in-depth interview were the key informants or the opinion leaders in the study area. They were made up of fourteen representatives of the local people including Tourism management committee members, traditional authorities, service providers, assemblymen and unit committee members from Tanoboase and Boabeng-Fiema project sites.

Because it was not practically possible to observe all the elements in the target population, a sample was selected for the survey. The size of the sample required for the study depended on the nature of the population in the study area, the purpose of the study and the availability of resources. In order to determine the sample size for the study, it was estimated that about 79% (0.79) of the economically active population in the study area were aware of visitors' interest in the communities' tourism projects (GSS, 2005). This is because the region abounds in a wide range of tourist attractions. The sample size was therefore determined using Fisher's formula of determining samples (as cited in Chandam et al., 2004). The determination of the sample size is illustrated below:

$$n = \frac{z^2pq}{d^2}$$

Where;

n = the desired sample size;

z = standard normal deviation set at 1.96 to 95% confidence level;

p = proportion of the target population that are aware of visitors interest in the community's tourism project;

q= proportion of the target population that are not aware of visitors interest in the community's tourism project; and

d= degree of accuracy required normally set at 0.05.

Let; Z=1.96, P=0.79, q=1.00 - 0.79=0.21 and d=0.05.

The sample size 'n' was therefore calculated as:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.79) (0.21)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 255$$

Hence the calculated value of 'n' indicated that at least 255 respondents had to be selected from Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema to get a representative population. However 10% was added to make room for non-response. In all, 281 members of the communities took part in the study.

Sampling procedure

The study utilized a multi-stage sampling procedure to select respondents. The first phase centred on the listing of household heads in each of the communities. As part of this exercise, field assistants were tasked to list and identify the number of households in each house and also give identification marks to each of the household heads. Household refers to a person or group of persons related or unrelated who live together in the same house or compound, share the same housekeeping arrangement and are catered for as one unit (GSS, 2005).

The second phase dealt with the proportional allocation of the sample size of 281 among the three selected communities as shown in Table 1. To ensure fair representation, this exercise was based on the population of the communities. With this approach, community with more people had more household heads participating in the study than its counterpart. Therefore, using the list of household heads as sampling frame, these sample sizes; 51, 103 and 127 were obtained from Boabeng, Fiema and Tanoboase as shown in Table 1. At the third phase, simple random sampling (without replacement) was used in selecting the individuals from the list of heads of households. Using simple random sampling, one adult household head was selected from the sampling frame to complete a questionnaire.

Series of in-depth interviews were conducted with the opinion leaders or the key informants in the study area using interview guide. Fourteen (14) respondents for the in-depth interview were purposively selected. Those selected included 10 representatives of tourism planning and management committee members (including assemblymen and unit committee members), 2 elders representing traditional authorities and 2 service providers. It was the researcher's hope that, the individuals selected would have a kind of knowledge, experience or information that he wanted to know about.

Study Instruments

Questionnaires were the main instruments used for the study. These were however, supplemented by interview guide. The questionnaires were verbally administered in Twi and English. This method was used because of the low literacy rate in the study area. The GSS (2005) reports that effective literacy level for the study area is 48% which is lower than the national average of 54.5%. Respondents were asked to respond to series of close-ended and open-ended questions.

The questionnaires were designed to identify the benefits and costs of community participation and also to find out challenges faced by residents in their attempt to participate in tourism development. Some aspects of the questionnaires were designed using a 5-point likert (1932) scale format. Responses ranged from, strongly agree (1), agree (2), not sure (3), disagree (4) to strongly disagree (5). However, in order to give respondents the opportunity to express their views, some open-ended questions were included in the questionnaires. The questionnaire, as its advantage, could be administered to a large number of respondents even though it did

Table 2. Effects of community participation on tourism development.

Effects	Frequency	Percent
Benefits		
Environmental protection	83	31.0
Communal labour	58	22.0
Conflict resolution	58	22.0
Revenue generation	35	13.0
Results in better decisions	20	7.0
Employment	5	2.0
Cost		
Time consuming	9	3.0
Total	268	100.0

not allow probing, prompting and clarification of questions (Ritchie and Lyons, 1987).

A semi-structured interview guide was used for the in-depth interview to find out the extent to which the communities participate in tourism issues. Both the questionnaire and interview guide were designed to collect demographic data such as level of education, sex, age and place of residency of the respondents. The interview had the advantage of permitting greater depth and probing, though it was prone to interviewer's personal bias.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted between 25th May, 2009 and 11th June, 2009. Four field assistants (two tour guides and two senior high school leavers) from Tanoboase and Boabeng-Fiema were given one day's training in English and Twi languages to assist the researcher in the distribution and administration of the questionnaires.

All the in-depth interviews were conducted at places of choice by the interviewees in the various communities. The interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. Though a total of 281 questionnaires were administered, 268 responses were obtained. This indicated a total response rate of 95.4 percent. The returned questionnaires were made up of 122 (43.4%), 50 (17.8%) and 96 (34.2%) respondents from Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH

Effects of community participation on tourism development

Simmons (1994) suggests that planners use greater community participation in tourism planning. This is because the impacts of tourism are felt most keenly at the local destination area and also, community members are being recognised as an essential ingredient in the hospitality atmosphere of a destination. The involvement of local people is very important in reducing practices such as poaching and indiscriminate felling of trees in conservation areas. Residents offer security and inexpensive

labour to tourism projects. Their involvement also helps reduce unemployment in destination areas.

Gunn (1972) observes that the benefits of community development will increase the wellbeing of residents. The frequencies of benefits or otherwise, derived from community participation were determined in the research. Respondents were asked to indicate the effects of residents' participation on the tourism projects as shown in Table 2.

About 31.0 percent of respondents confirmed that community participation helped in environmental protection (Table 2). According to the people interviewed, it has led to the protection of plants and animals in the forest reserves as well as keeping the surroundings clean. Reasons respondents gave were that the authorities made the local people aware of the benefits of tourism and as a result, most residents stopped littering the communities with rubbish. They also desisted from practices such as cutting down trees and killing animals in the forest reserves.

Almost 22.0 percent of respondents indicated that community participation enabled residents to offer communal labour to support the projects (Table 2). This helped to reduce the cost of human resources needed to carry out much of the work associated with the projects. Without communal labour, many good projects would not have been achieved in many communities. It was revealed that the local people helped in the construction of green fire belt to prevent bushfires from destroying the forest reserves. They also helped to construct tourist accommodation and trails in their various communities through communal labour.

Results of this study revealed the main conflicts in the reserve as encroachment for cultivation and settlement, poaching and crop raiding by animals such as monkeys in the reserves. Some of the people in the communities have negative attitudes towards the ecotourism projects. They believe that the reserve is a liability to the communities. The communities want to be left to freely access the resources such as games, land for cultivation of crops, settlement and firewood from the reserves. By restricting access to these reserve resources, they feel deprived hence the occurrence of conflicts. However, about 22.0 percent of respondents were in agreement that residents, especially the community leaders, were taught how to resolve conflicts relating to tourism projects in the communities. This was confirmed during the in-depth interview as one interviewee said:

"Yes, the religious leaders, unit committee members or the Chiefs resolve the conflicts amicably. The Chiefs sometimes settle conflicts through re-allocation of land to people whose lands have been taken by the projects".

A total of 13.0 percent of respondents were of the view that community participation in tourism development has brought about increase in revenue generated from the projects. Reasons respondents gave were that the local

Table 3. Barriers to community participation in tourism development.

General barriers	Specific barriers	%	Total	Ranking
	Lack of government support	33.0		
	Lack of funds	29.0		
Structural	Lack of knowledge in tourism	20.0	51.0	1
	Inconsistent community organization	18.0		
	Sub-total	100.0		
	Religious beliefs	43.0		
Cultural	Lack of confidence in the leadership	34.0	26.0	2
	Low level of awareness	23.0		
	Sub-total	100.0		
	Lack of coordination	39.0		
Operational	Lack of information	35.0	23.0	3
	Centralization of administration	26.0		
	Sub-total	100.0		
	Total		100.0	
	N		268.0	

people had contributed through taxes and fines. They also kept 'eagle eyes' on the revenue received from the projects, in order to check embezzlement of funds by some of the leaders of the projects.

Out of the 268 respondents, 20 (7.0%) of them agreed that community participation resulted in better decisions such as refraining from killing the animals in the forest reserves, as well as planting more trees to create forest cover for the ecotourism projects. Thus, community decisions which involved residents were acceptable to the local people. This confirms Adu-Yeboah and Obiri-Yeboah's (2008) study of Mafi-Dekpoe Water Project in Ghana, where it was observed that, the NGO (Water for All) was successful because, it involved all the community members in decision making.

Employment in the tourism project as a benefit to the communities was minimal with 2.0% saying the project offered them employment (Table 2). The study revealed that unemployment was a major problem within these farming communities. This was due to the fact that a large portion of their land, instead of using it for farming; as most of the community members are farmers, has been demarcated for the ecotourism projects.

About 3.0 percent of respondents revealed that community participation in tourism development projects consumed time as shown in Table 2. The reason is that, precious time which the people in the study area, where majority of them were struggling to subsist, could have used in their farms or engaged in other economic activities, was spent on attending meetings, open fora and communal labour.

As observed by Institute of Development Studies (IDS, 1998), participation requires opportunity costs for all

stakeholders. These costs may be particularly high for the residents, especially marginal groups and women, and may add to their work burden or decrease in their leisure time. Potential costs could also imply that participation may not yield expected results and benefits, or even that it may accidentally cause harm to the community or specific groups within the community (McAllister, 1999). There may also be a hidden cost to the local people as the central government tries to shift the burden onto the poor of its responsibility to promote development with equity (Clayton et al. 1997).

Barriers to community participation in tourism development

Community participation in tourism development has been identified as essential to successful tourism development. However, most communities in the Brong-Ahafo Region face a number of obstacles in their attempt to participate in tourism development. The challenges identified by residents relate to structural (51%), cultural (26%) and operational (23%) as shown in Table 3.

The majority of respondents (51%) identified the leading challenge to residents' participation in the projects as structural. Structural barriers refer to barriers associated with institutional power structures, legislative and economic systems in the study area (Murray, 2004; Steven and Jennifer, 2002; Tosun, 2000). Among the structural barriers identified by the respondents were lack of government support (33.0%), lack of funds (29.0%), lack of tourism knowledge (20.0%) and inconsistent community organisation policies (18.0%). During the in-

depth interview a member of Boabeng-Fiema monkey sanctuary confirmed:

“There is lack of funds and government’s support in providing good roads, health and educational facilities in the communities”.

About twenty-six percent of respondents identified barriers to community participation as cultural. Cultural barriers refer to the limited capacity of local people to handle development that affects their total way of life effectively. Among the cultural barriers identified by respondents were religious beliefs (43.0%), lack of confidence in the leadership (34.0%) and low level of tourism awareness in the communities (23.0%). In this aspect, the survey results were congruent with some interviewees who agreed that community participation in the tourism projects in the study area had some challenges.

“The challenges facing the project in this community are lack of government support and funds to develop the project. Others are illegal hunting, lack of tour guides, backbiting and lack of co-operation by some residents. Some members of the community are of the view that, leadership of the project is corrupt and therefore are not prepared to co-operate”.

Apart from structural and cultural barriers, some respondents (23%) acknowledged barriers to community participation as operational. Operational barriers are factors that function as obstacles during the implementation of participatory development approach (Murray, 2004). Reasons respondents gave to support this claim were that there was lack of coordination between the authorities and communities involved in tourism projects (39.0%), lack of information made available to the residents of the destination communities (35.0%), as well as centralization of public administration of tourism development issues (26.0%). At the in-depth interview, a resident and worker at Boabeng-Fiema Mokey Sanctuary said:

“The forest is being encroached and the animals are being killed by some people. The project has also taken our (residents) arable lands.”

Table 3 shows that all the operational barriers were obstacles to tourism development in the destination communities. Structural barriers resulted from the introduction of the CBEPs in the local communities. There were noticeable lack of government support and lack of financial resources to support tourism development in the communities as indicated by the in-depth interview. The other barriers such as religious beliefs and lack of knowledge were factors that could be important obstacles for community participation in tourism development.

The in-depth interview confirmed that the communities,

in their attempt to participate in the tourism projects, were faced with some difficulties. However, one method to ensure that local communities overcome barriers to participation and ultimately participate actively in tourism development is to empower those communities (Zhao and Ritchie, 2007).

Barriers to participation in tourism development projects by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents explored in this analysis were sex, age, educational status and community of residence. The t-test statistics and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to determine whether significant differences existed in barriers associated with community participation in terms of respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics at a significant level of 0.05. ANOVA was used to ascertain the significance of the differences between the variables concerned whilst t-test was used on socio-demographic variables that were measured along a dichotomous scale such as sex. It was hypothesized that:

There is no significant difference in barriers to community participation among the socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age, education, community) of residents in the projects.

The t-test results shown in Table 4 indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in operational barriers ($p = 0.027$) with respect to males and females in the study area. However, there was no significant difference in structural ($p = 0.418$) and cultural ($p = 0.304$) barriers with regard to males and females in tourism development.

On the average, female respondents disagreed (mean = 3.65) whilst their male counterparts were in doubt (mean = 3.29) as to whether barriers to community participation were operational. The reason respondents gave was that women usually engaged in off-farm activities which kept them in the house to listen to authorities about matters concerning the projects through radio and open forum. Both male (mean = 2.76) and female (mean = 2.89) respondents were not sure whether barriers to community participation in the projects were structural.

The one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in operational ($p = 0.425$), structural ($p = 0.694$) and cultural ($p = 0.254$) barriers with respect to age of respondents as illustrated in Table 4. The mean responses indicated that people aged ≤ 39 years disagreed (mean = 3.52) whilst those aged between 40 – 49 years (mean = 3.36) and ≥ 50 years (mean = 3.34) were not certain whether barriers to community participation were operational. Respondents aged ≤ 39 years disagreed because there had been increase in tourism facilities and visitors to the communities, which implied tourism development (Gartner,

Table 4. Barriers to participation in tourism projects by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Socio-demographic characteristics	N	Operational barriers	Structural barriers	Cultural barriers
Sex				
Male	171	3.29	2.76	3.04
Female	97	3.65	2.89	3.11
T-test		P = 0.027*	P = 0.418	P = 0.304
Age				
≤ 39	109	3.52	2.86	3.07
40 – 49	118	3.36	2.77	3.11
50 and above	41	3.34	2.74	2.92
ANOVA		P = 0.425	P = 0.694	P = 0.254
Education				
None	32	3.46	2.95	3.14
Basic	148	3.46	2.81	3.09
Secondary	88	3.34	2.75	3.00
ANOVA		P = 0.477	P = 0.444	P = 0.684
Community				
Tanoboase	122	3.43	2.83	3.11
Boabeng	50	3.59	2.75	2.94
Fiema	96	3.32	2.82	3.07
ANOVA		P = 0.374	P = 0.548	P = 0.610

Note: *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. N = 268.

1996).

Table 4 shows that respondents ≤ 39 years (mean = 3.07), 40 – 49 years (mean = 3.11), and ≥ 50 years (mean = 2.92) were in doubt as to whether obstacles to effective community participation in tourism development were cultural. It was revealed that residents' participation in tourism development in the area was affected by religious beliefs, which resulted in court cases. At Tanoboase, the project was named after a god (Tano) in the area. As a result, whilst the traditional authorities saw the project as economic boom and a blessing to the community, some Christians regarded the project as 'unholy' and therefore a curse for the people and were not prepared to support its development.

At Boabeng and Fiema, the law courts had to intervene in order to stop some members of a church from killing the monkeys in the early parts of 1970s. However, it was revealed that some residents (traditionalists) at Boabeng and the surrounding communities supported the projects for fear of bad omen befalling them should they kill the monkeys which were regarded as descendants of the gods in the communities.

Education forms an important determinant of the challenges faced by residents in tourism development. From Table 4, the one-way analysis of variance revealed that, there was no significant difference in operational (p

= 0.477), structural (p = 0.444) and cultural (p = 0.684) barriers with respect to educational attainments of respondents. The mean responses indicated that, respondents who had no education (mean = 3.46), basic education (mean = 3.46) and secondary education (mean = 3.34) could not describe whether barriers to community participation in tourism development were operational. This is because residents were involved in the implementation of the projects.

As shown in Table 4, the one-way ANOVA confirmed that there was no significant difference in operational (p = 0.374), structural (p = 0.548) and cultural (p = 0.610) barriers with regard to the community of respondents. Respondents at Tanoboase (mean = 3.43) and Fiema (mean = 3.32) were not certain whether barriers to effective community participation were operational whilst those at Boabeng (mean = 3.59) disagreed. The reason is that some of the respondents at Boabeng were direct beneficiaries of the projects and did not see anything wrong with the implementation of the projects in the communities.

As illustrated in Table 4, the mean responses from the various communities; Tanoboase (mean = 2.83), Boabeng (mean = 2.75) and Fiema (mean = 2.82) revealed that respondents were not sure whether the major barriers to effective community participation were structural. How-

ever, most of the respondents interviewed believed that there was lack of government support for the communities in their attempt to participate in tourism development projects. They explained that government was not effectively using the law enforcement agencies to prevent people from destroying the forest reserves as some individuals kept on poaching in the reserved lands meant for the ecotourism projects. Respondents also indicated that government could assist in the development of the infrastructural facilities in the communities as the area was lagging behind in terms of good roads, educational facilities and proper health care facilities.

The study revealed that there was lack of adequate funds to support tourism projects in the communities. At Tanoboase, it was confirmed that the inhabitants wanted to develop the site to include canopy walkway to make it easier for tourists to get access to the top of the sandstone rocks, as well as hiring people to protect the sacred grove from encroachers (since there was no personnel from Ghana Wildlife Department stationed there to offer protection to the project) all of which needed funds. Also, there was lack of money to develop the water fall which the local people discovered within the Boabeng-Fiema game reserve. Again, money to compensate some of the affected land owners in the various communities in the study area was difficult to obtain. This finding is consistent with Fariborz and Ma'of's (2008) study of barriers to community leadership towards tourism development in Shiraz, where it was found out that the key element contributing to limited involvement of leaders in tourism development was lack of funds.

Respondents at Tanoboase (mean = 3.11), Boabeng (mean = 2.94) and Fiema (mean = 3.07) could not describe whether barriers to residents' participation in the projects were cultural. However, it was disclosed that whilst at Boabeng and Fiema, dog was a taboo for their shrines and was not reared in those communities (also for fear of dogs devouring or chasing away the monkeys which served as attractions to visitors) they were reared and used for hunting in other communities like Busunya, Bonte, Bomini, Akurodwa Number 1 and Akurodwa Number 2. It came out during the interview that dogs were used to prepare medicine for the sick by the fetish priest at Busunya. At Tanoboase, there was a cultural mistrust of the leadership of the project in the community by some residents and this was confirmed during the in-depth interview.

Table 4 shows that the p-values of most of the variables concerned are more than the significant level set (0.05). Therefore, null hypothesis is confirmed. The implication is that there is no significant difference in barriers to community participation among the socio-demographic characteristics of residents in the tourism projects. Tosun's (2000) research shows that in many developing countries, the key barriers to community participation in tourism development process include structural, cultural and operational, which are consistent with those found in the study area.

Conclusion

The findings of this study led to the conclusion that active community participation in the ecotourism projects is obstructed by lack of government support, lack of funds, lack of knowledge in tourism, religious beliefs and lack of cooperation by some community members. Much could be done to educate the local people on their moral obligation as residents towards the development of projects in their communities. When communities' awareness is raised, there is hope that all the people in the various communities will support the projects. The cordial relationship between the authorities and residents can motivate the latter to see themselves as part of the projects and feel committed to its improvement.

The study has also shown that communities in the study area lacked sufficient funds to support the projects. The implication is that, the local communities hardly solicit for internally generated funds. Such funds could help some of the communities to hire people to provide security to the projects and even put up tourist's accommodation where need be, thereby relying less on central government and other donor organisations for funds and support.

Most of the community members would like to contribute by, at least, selling food and drinks to the visitors. Unfortunately, they do not have the initial capital for such establishments. In order to address this challenge, government, through the rural banks in the area, should initiate a special tourism-related micro-finance scheme for the communities. The interest rate on the loan facility should be affordable to make it attractive to ordinary people in the communities.

It is an unhealthy situation that the communities do not get the full cooperation of government to provide resources for the projects. As seen from what takes place in the study area, the contribution of government in the provision of enough security, infrastructure and funds could help enrich the projects in the communities.

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