

Full Length Research Paper

Assessing community participation in selected ecotourism projects in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana

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The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of community participation in selected Community-Based Ecotourism Projects in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The sample for the study was 281 respondents including 14 opinion leaders. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that residents were involved in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the Community-Based Ecotourism Projects. In general, socio-demographic characteristics of residents in the projects did not significantly have impact on community participation. Barriers to community participation in the projects were religious beliefs, lack of government support, funds, appropriate knowledge of tourism and lack of co-operation by some residents. 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. Additionally, the government should support the local communities by improving infrastructure and provide enough security to the projects in the region.

Key words: Community participation, tourism development, residents, Brong-Ahafo Region.

INTRODUCTION

Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) describes community as a group of persons having the same or similar interests. For some time now, an essential part of ecotourism development that has been emphasised is the community involvement in the planning process and decision-making. This emphasis is based on the view that planning should include the residents of an area, and they should be given the chance to participate in the planning of the area's future development and express their opinions related to the kind of future community they would like to live in (Inskeep, 1991).

There are wide varieties of interpretations associated with the concept of community participation in the field of tourism. Drake (1991), however, refers to local participation as the ability of local communities to influence the outcomes of development projects that have an impact on them.

Ecotourism development may initiate conflicts when

governments impose it on a community without consulting the local people (Scheyvens, 2009). Thus, the opportunity for control of tourism should be in the hands of the community members living close to the tourism facility; that is, tourism should be community driven (Snyman, 2012). It is however necessary that there must be some input of policies and legislation from governments to enable the local community to actively get involved in the tourism development process. Ecotourism development is a local issue because it is at the local level that action takes place. Hence, Murphy (1985) recognizes 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 every individual in the local community is given the chance to participate in

tourism development at an early stage, there is sufficient consensus of opinion to permit broad based planning objectives. Given the chance, the community can provide 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 (Fennel, 2008).

The rationale for community participation in tourism as suggested by Swarbrooke (1999) includes the following: it is part of the democratic process; it provides a voice for those directly affected by tourism; it utilizes local knowledge to ensure that decisions are well-informed; it can reduce potential conflict between tourists and members of the local community. Additionally, as most tourism infrastructures are funded with taxpayers' money, communities are already participating in its development through funding. Pearce et al. (1996) insisted that the purpose of participation for many individuals is to exercise power or at least some influence over the outcomes of tourism development in the community.

In Ghana, community-based ecotourism development encroaches on common property. As a result, the authorities involved in ecotourism development recognise the benefits of involving the local people in the development of ecotourism projects. The land tenure system in Ghana, includes the traditional Ghanaian concepts of self-help projects ("nnoboa" and "ye ma yen nkye"), which are all community oriented (Dei, 2000), and makes room for community participation; thus protecting the local community or individual from exploitation.

Tourism attractions in Ghana and in particular in the Brong-Ahafo Region include national parks, nature reserves, waterfalls, cultural and historical attractions and tropical flora and fauna. Community involvement may offer the necessary solution for sustainability in the development of these tourist attractions in the region (GTB, 2008). Local people should, therefore, be involved in tourism development activities in such a way that they can see the benefits of tourism and thus support its development.

Community-based ecotourism projects (CBEPs) in the Brong-Ahafo Region

CBEPs in Ghana started in 1995 as collaboration between 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 CBEP 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-tourist to see flora and fauna in their natural habitat. The sites also provide opportunities for scientific research and outdoor recreational activity such as hiking. They also provide camping sites and tourist accommodation to improve the local economy.

METHODOLOGY

The study area

Brong-Ahafo Region was created on April 4, 1959. It is the second largest region of 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 (GSS, 2009). Geographically, it is located at the centre of Ghana.

It has a tropical climate with high temperatures of between 23 and 39°C, enjoying maximum rainfall of 450 mm in the northern parts up to 650 mm in the south of the region (GTB, 2008). There are two main types of vegetation; the moist semi deciduous forest and the guinea savannah woodland.

The moist semi deciduous forest is found mostly in the southern and southeastern parts of the region, whilst the guinea savannah woodland is found predominantly in the northeastern portion of the region. 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 a traditional system of farming, relying mostly on rainfall for plant cultivation.

The region 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 some of the district capitals. Some tourist's attractions in the region include Digya National Park, Bui National Park, Buoyem Caves and Bats Colony, Tanoboase Sacred Grove, Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, Hani Archaeological Site, Bono Manso Slave Market, Kintampo and Fuller Waterfalls (GTB, 2008).

The study was however, conducted at Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema which form part of the communities selected for the implementation of the community based ecotourism projects in Ghana.

Fieldwork

The study was conducted between 25th May, 2009 and 11th June, 2009. Four field assistants (two tour guides and two senior high

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

school leavers) from Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema were given one day training in English and Twi 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. Though a total of 281 questionnaires were administered, 268 responses were obtained. This indicated a total response rate of 95.4%. The returned questionnaires were made up of 122 (43.4%), 50 (17.8%) and 96 (34.2%) respondents from Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema, respectively.

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 was targeted because people in this group were among the economically active population in the study area (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 TMC 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 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 (Chandam et al., 2004).

The calculated sample size indicated that at least 255 respondents had to be selected from Tanoboase, Boabeng and Fiema to get a representative population. 10% was however, added to make room for non-response. In total, 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 people in each house and also give identification marks to each of the household heads. Household in this study 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 instead of the household list. With this approach, the community with more people had more household heads participating in the study than its counterpart with less people. Therefore, using the list of household heads as a sampling frame, these sample sizes: 51, 103 and 127 were allocated to Boabeng, Fiema and Tanoboase, respectively.

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 household head was selected from the sampling frame to complete a questionnaire.

Additionally, fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted with the opinion leaders or the key informants in the study area using an interview guide. Ten representatives of TMC members (including assembly men and unit committee members), two elders representing traditional authorities and two service providers were purposively selected. It was the researcher's hope that the individuals selected would have knowledge, experience or information that would be useful to know about.

Research instruments

An interview schedule was the main instrument used in this study. The questionnaires were verbally administered in Twi. This approach was adopted because of the low literacy rate in the study area. The GSS (2005), reports that the effective literacy level for the study area is 48%, which is lower than the national average of 54.5%. Additionally, Twi was used because it is the lingua franca of the people involved in the study. Respondents were asked to respond to a series of close-ended and open-ended questions.

Data processing and analyses

The completed questionnaires were edited, coded and entered into a computer. The data were analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. The quantitative responses were categorised, analysed and examined based on various respondent groups such as gender, marital status, education, age, income and place of residence.

Two statistical methods namely one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent samples t-test were employed to test the hypotheses in the study. T-test was used to compare the mean responses of two sample groups (gender and marital status), whilst one-way ANOVA was used in comparing the mean scores of more than two sample groups (educational attainment, age, income and place of residence). Percentages and frequencies were also used in the analyses.

The dependent variables employed in testing the hypotheses in this study were areas of community participation (decision-making,

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Individual characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Level of education		
None	32	11.9
Basic	148	55.2
Secondary	88	32.9
Total	268	100.0
Gender		
Male	171	63.8
Female	97	36.2
Total	268	100.0
Residential status		
Resident	254	94.8
Non-resident	14	5.2
Total	268	100.0
Age		
30 – 39	109	40.7
40 – 49	118	44.0
50 and above	41	15.3
Total	268	100.0
Monthly income		
< GH¢100	187	69.8
GH¢100 – GH¢240	56	20.9
> GH¢240	25	9.3
Total	268	100.0
Marital status		
Single	101	37.7
Married	167	62.3
Total	268	100.0

GH¢ = Ghana cedi.

implementation and evaluation and monitoring) and barriers to community participation (operational, cultural and structural) in ecotourism projects. The independent variables were the individual characteristics or the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, marital status, educational attainment, income and place of residence.

Qualitative data arising from open-ended questions that respondents answered using their own words, were coded into a set of categories developed from identified commonalities, that is, repeated themes were recorded together and categories of themes identified as they emerged.

All the qualitative data were paraphrased while remaining faithful to the original meaning as it was given by the respondents during the in-depth interviews. It is also important to note that all the qualitative data had to be translated from Twi to English.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

were level of education, gender, place of residence, age, income and marital status. As shown in Table 2, educational attainments of respondents were none (11.9%), basic education (55.2%) and secondary education (32.9%). Literacy rate within the study area can generally be described as low since only about 32.9% of the respondents could be associated with secondary education. From Table 2, the sampling distribution for people residing in the study area was 94.8% and non-residents were 5.2%.

As shown in Table 2, the ages of the respondents were categorized into 30 to 39 years, 40 to 49 years and 50 years and above (≥ 50 years) to make it easier for analyses. The age distributions for the total sample of respondents (268) were 30 to 39 years group (40.7%) and 40 to 49 years group (44.0%), which constituted the largest group. Others were those found within 50 years and above age brackets constituting 15.3%.

The income distributions of respondents were monthly incomes less than GH¢100 (69.8%) and incomes between GH¢100 and GH¢240 (20.9%). However, people with monthly incomes of more than GH¢ 240 formed about 9.3% of respondents. Of the 268 respondents, about 37.7% were single whilst 62.3% were married as illustrated in Table 2.

Areas of participation of residents in ecotourism development

The areas of community participation examined in this study include decision-making, project implementation and evaluation and monitoring as shown in Table 3. The results indicate that seventy-two percent of the respondents were in agreement that members of their community participated in decision-making about the project's goals and objectives, prioritization of needs, problem identification and problem solution.

From Table 3, about 80.2% of respondents indicated that residents were involved in project implementation whilst about 10.8% were not sure. In exploring the participation of residents in project evaluation and monitoring, it was observed that residents had focused more on the volume of visitation in the area, monitoring of tourism receipts and sanitation. Table 3 shows that 74.3% of respondents were of the view that residents were involved in project monitoring and evaluation. This finding is consistent with an observation made by Ostrom (1996) in Nepal. She reported on the active participation of community members (farmers) in the monitoring and evaluation of activities relating to an irrigation project in Nepal. Respondents confirmed during the in-depth interview that local people were involved in decision-making, implementation and evaluation and monitoring of the tourism projects. Respondents confirmed during the in-depth interview that local people were involved in decision-making, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the tourism projects. The following were said by some of the

Table 3. Areas of participation of residents in ecotourism projects.

Area of participation	Percentage in agreement	Percentage not sure	Percentage in disagreement
Decision-making	72.0	9.3	18.6
Implementation	80.2	10.8	9.0
Evaluation and monitoring	74.3	16.4	9.4

interviewees:

“Yes, we take our own decisions regarding the development of the project without the help of the government. We attend communal labour and we are sometimes asked to answer questionnaires, grant interviews to people like you (researcher) or to some of the NGOs. We supply inputs of the project to the GTB. We also monitor the activities of encroachers by the help of voluntary hunters called rangers” (70 years old farmer at Tanoboase).

“Because I am a citizen, it is my right to be part of the decision-making. We help to plant trees to serve as food for the animals and also provide security to the project. We are all involved in taking decisions for the development of the project. We have representatives for the Chiefs, unit committees and the communities when we attend meetings” (54 years old revenue collector and a caretaker of the tourists’ accommodation at Boabeng-Fiema).

“Representatives of community members attend quarterly meetings. Executives meet once every month. At the meeting, we are presented with the agenda and we all deliberate on the agenda. Decisions are taken through voting or balloting” (43 year old female farmer and a member of Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary TMC).

It is clear from the in-depth interviews that local people were involved in decision-making, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of tourism projects.

Areas of participation in tourism projects according to socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

T-test and the one-way ANOVA were employed in order to examine whether the residents’ areas of participation differ with respect to their socio-demographic characteristics such as marital status, educational level, location and income. The t-test statistical analysis was employed on the socio-demographic variable that was measured along a dichotomous scale like marital status (1 = single, 2 = married), whilst ANOVA was used to measure the socio-demographic variables that compared the mean score of more than two groups like educational level, income and location of respondents as shown in Table 4.

The existence of significant differences was determined

by comparing the p-values with the level of significance set (0.05). The p-value less than 0.05 indicate that a significant difference exists in the areas of participation across the socio-demographic groupings such as educational level, marital status, income and community of residence. It was hypothesized that: There is no significant difference in areas of community participation according to socio-demographic characteristics (marital status, education, income, community) of residents in the tourism projects.

Marriage is one of the family characteristics influencing host interactions, perceptions and attitudes towards tourists and tourism development. According to Mason (2003: 120), a survey conducted on residents’ attitude to tourism development in the Pohangina Valley in New Zealand revealed that whilst some married men supported the establishment of a café or bar, some married women opposed it because it would lead to increase in drunkenness. The results in the present study (Table 4) indicate that there was no significant difference in decision-making (p-value 0.467), project implementation (p-value 0.067) and evaluation and monitoring (p-value 0.202) of tourism projects with respect to the marital status of respondents.

Respondents were grouped according to their marital status as unmarried (single) and married. Both married and unmarried respondents indicated that residents were involved in all the areas of participation. The unmarried respondents were of the view that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 1.99), implementation (mean = 1.90) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 2.03) of tourism projects in the communities. This was confirmed by their married counterparts as they also indicated that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 2.11), implementation (mean = 2.05) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 2.16) of tourism projects. Both married and unmarried people had knowledge of what tourism entailed in the destination communities. The reason given is that they were in the communities and took part in most of the activities organised by the authorities to help develop the projects.

Level of educational attainment plays a vital role in determining people’s participation in tourism development. Better educated individuals have higher awareness of tourism opportunities and are more susceptible to information, media advertising and sales promotion (Cooper et al., 1998). As shown in Table 4, the educational

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

Socio-demographic	Decision-making				Implementation			Evaluation and monitoring		
	N	Mean	Test Stats.	P-value	Mean	Test Stats.	P-value	Mean	Test Stats.	P-value
Marital status										
Single	101	2.00	t-test	0.467	1.90	t-test	0.067	2.03	t-test	0.202
Married	167	2.11	0.530		2.05	3.393		2.16	1.636	
Educational level										
None	32	1.63 ^a	Anova 3.540	0.004*	1.66 ^a	Anova 2.851	0.023*	1.81 ^a	Anova 5.786	0.003*
Basic	148	2.38 ^{ab}			2.02 ^{ab}			2.30 ^{ab}		
Secondary	88	2.00 ^b			1.79 ^b			1.91 ^b		
Income										
< GH¢ 100	187	2.32 ^a	Anova 5.113	0.000*	2.07	Anova 1.971	0.083	2.29 ^a	Anova 10.626	0.000*
GH¢ 100- GH¢ 240	56	1.38 ^a			1.88			1.70 ^{ab}		
> GH¢ 240	25	1.57			1.68			1.68 ^a		
Community										
Tanoboase	122	1.26 ^a	Anova 58.037	0.000*	1.65 ^a	Anova 16.387	0.000*	1.58 ^a	Anova 39.436	0.000*
Boabeng	50	3.04 ^{ab}			2.40 ^{ab}			2.64 ^{ab}		
Fiema	96	2.58 ^a			2.22 ^a			2.51 ^a		

Total number of respondents (N) = 268; *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level; a and b indicate the difference in mean scores of the dependent variables across the individual characteristics.

attainments of respondents were categorized into none, basic and secondary. The Table indicates that there is a significant difference in decision-making (F (a, b), p = 0.004), implementation (F (a, b), p = 0.023), evaluation and monitoring (F (a, b), p = 0.003) of tourism projects with respect to the educational levels of respondents in the development of tourism in the communities.

Respondents who had no education (none), however, agreed that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 1.63), implementation (mean = 1.66) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 1.81) of tourism projects in the communities. This was confirmed by respondents with a higher level of education (secondary) as they also indicated that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 2.00), implementation (mean = 1.79) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 1.91) of tourism projects. This finding is contrary to Cooper et al. (1998) conclusion that residents with high education tend to be more supportive of tourism development in their communities than their counterparts with low education. The contradiction may be due to the fact that the projects were community-based and therefore, most of the community members with different educational qualifications might have been involved in decision-making, implementation as well as evaluation and monitoring of the projects.

Furthermore, income exerts important influence upon the nature and extent of tourism demanded by an individual. Tourism development is an expensive activity that

requires a high amount of income before participation becomes possible (Cooper et al., 1998). However, Healey et al. (1988) agree that those in a low income position are more likely to support tourism development in their community. The one-way analysis of variance revealed that there was a significant difference in decision-making (F (a, b), p = 0.000), evaluation and monitoring (F (a, b), p = 0.000) of tourism projects and respondents' income. On the contrary, there was no significant difference between project implementation (p-value 0.083) and income of respondents.

Table 4 shows that respondents with monthly incomes of less than GH¢100 agreed that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 2.32), implementation (mean = 2.07) and monitoring (mean = 2.29) of tourism projects in their communities.

Similarly, their counterparts whose monthly incomes were above GH¢ 240 also indicated that residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 1.57), implementation (mean = 1.68) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 1.68) of tourism projects.

The finding of this nature confirms the concept that people with high or low incomes support tourism development in their communities (Groom and Harris, 2008; Healey et al., 1998). Lindberg et al. study (as cited in Amuquandoh, 2009) noted that respondents in high income groups were more supportive to the expansion of skiing project in Sweden and attributed this position to the

Table 5. Barriers to community participation in tourism development.

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

possibility of them benefiting more in the form of income and access to the facilities.

The one-way analysis of variance suggested that there was a significant difference (p-value 0.000) in areas of participation among the communities involved in tourism development projects as illustrated in Table 4. Respondents at Tanoboase were in agreement that, residents were involved in decision-making (mean = 1.26), project implementation (mean = 1.65) and evaluation and monitoring (mean = 1.58) of tourism projects.

Meanwhile, both people at Boabeng and Fiema were in doubt as to whether they were involved in the decision-making (Boabeng: mean = 3.04, Fiema: mean = 2.58) or evaluation and monitoring (Boabeng: mean = 2.64, Fiema: mean = 2.51) of the projects. A revelation of this nature is not surprising because, at Boabeng-Fiema project site, there were officers from the GWD who offered technical advice and security to the project. This situation was absent at Tanoboase at the time of the study.

Consequently, respondents at Boabeng and Fiema were in doubt as to whether they were in absolute control of decision-making or evaluation and monitoring of the project in their communities.

Barriers to community participation in tourism development

The challenges in tourism development identified by residents relate to structural (51%), cultural (26%) and operational (23%) as shown in Table 5.

The majority of respondents (51%) identified that the leading challenge to residents' participation in the pro-

jects was structural. Among the structural barriers 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%). Table 5 shows that 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, that is, the way they eat, drink, greet, and even put up their buildings. The cultural barriers identified by respondents included religious beliefs (43.0%), lack of confidence in the leadership (34.0%) and low level of tourism awareness in the communities (23.0%).

Apart from structural and cultural barriers, some respondents (23%) acknowledged barriers to community participation as operational. Reasons given by respondents to support this claim included 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%).

In this respect, 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 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"

Table 6. Barriers to participation in tourism projects by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Socio-demographic characteristics	N	Operational barriers	Structural barriers	Cultural barriers
Gender				
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				
30 - 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

Total number of respondents (N) = 268; *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

(26-year old tour guide at Tanoboase).

“There is lack of community support concerning seizure of land and removal of some animals like dogs from the communities by the authorities. Others are lack of funds and government’s support in providing good roads, health and educational facilities in the communities” (47 years old farmer and a member of Boabeng-Fiema monkey sanctuary, TMC).

“The forest is being encroached and the animals are being killed by some people. The project has also taken our (residents) arable land” (54 years old revenue collector and a caretaker of the tourists’ accommodation at Boabeng-Fiema).

The in-depth interview confirmed that the communities, in their attempt to participate in the tourism projects, were faced with some difficulties.

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

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents explored in this analysis were gender, 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 based on socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age, education, community) of residents in the projects.

The t-test results shown in Table 6 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 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 and able to listen to authorities about

matters concerning the projects via 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 6. The mean responses indicated that people aged between 30 and 39 years disagreed (mean = 3.52) whilst those aged between 40 and 49 years (mean = 3.36) and ≥ 50 years (mean = 3.34) were not certain whether barriers to community participation were operational. Respondents aged between 30 and 39 years disagreed because there had been an increase in tourism facilities and visitors to the communities, which implied ecotourism development.

Table 6 shows that respondents aged between 30 and 39 years (mean = 3.07), 40 and 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.

From Table 6, 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 some of the residents were not involved in the implementation of the projects.

As shown in Table 6, 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 that their involvement in the ecotourism project is being affected by operational barriers. 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 6, 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. However, 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. 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.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that some members of the community participated in decision-making on the project's goals and objectives, prioritization of needs, problem identification and problem solution. This was done when representatives of the residents attended quarterly meetings. The implication is that the representatives took decisions concerning the development of the projects on behalf of the community members. It was revealed that community members facilitated the problem identification, identified solutions and took action when they attended open fora. This process motivated residents to creatively tackle the problems which they themselves had detected.

The implementation component of the projects showed a high participation of residents in activities such as providing communal labour, keeping the communities clean, educating visitors on the dos and don'ts in the communities, and showing visitors way to attractions. It was not surprising when at Boabeng, a resident was seen educating tourists not to give banana to the monkeys as such practices could lead to the animals coming into conflict with human beings, especially children, for food.

Members of the communities were noted to have played an active role in the creation of green fire belt to prevent bush fires which could have otherwise, destroyed the projects. This finding is consistent with an observation made by Adu-Yeboah and Obiri-Yeboah (2008), at Mafi-Dekpoe, Ghana. They reported on the active participation of community members in decision-making and implementation of the pipe borne water project at Mafi-Dekpoe.

In exploring the participation of residents in project evaluation and monitoring, it was observed that residents had focused more on the volume of visitation to the area, monitoring of tourism receipts and sanitation. Some of the resident had monitored the project to such an extent that they sometimes accused the leaders of the project of misappropriation of project funds. With respect to sanitation, it was learnt that Tanoboase, one of the study areas, was adjudged the neatest community in the municipality by Techiman Municipal Assembly.

Most communities in the Brong-Ahafo Region, however, face a number of challenges which range from structural, operational to cultural. Structural barriers resulted from the introduction of the CBEPs in the local communities. There was an obvious lack of government support and lack of financial resources to support tourism development in the communities as indicated by the in-depth interview. As seen from the study, most of the residents are peasant farmers and thus, earn low incomes. This makes it difficult for individual residents to support the project financially.

The study confirmed that there was a 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 a canopy walkway to make it easier for tourists to gain 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 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' (2008) study of barriers to community leadership towards tourism development in Shiraz, Iran, where it was found out that the key element contributing to limited involvement of leaders in tourism development was lack of funds.

The local people 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 tourism 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.

Barriers such as religious beliefs and lack of knowledge were factors that could be important obstacles for community participation in ecotourism development.

It was revealed that residents' participation in ecotourism development in the area was affected by religious beliefs, which sometimes 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 an 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 courts had to intervene in order to stop some members of a Church from killing the monkeys in the early parts of the 1970s. However, it was revealed that some residents (traditionalists) at Boabeng and the surrounding communities supported the projects for fear of a bad omen befalling them should they kill the monkeys which were regarded as descendants of the gods in the communities.

It was disclosed that whilst at Boabeng and Fiema, the 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 the surrounding communities such as Busunya, Bonte, Bomini, Akurodwa Number 1 and Akurodwa Number 2. It was revealed during the interview that dogs were used to

prepare medicine for the sick by the fetish priest in charge of the shrine 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.

Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that residents were involved in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring of tourism projects. Effective management of the projects is important if the communities and indeed all stakeholders are given the necessary training to enable them participate fully in the CBEPs.

The results confirm the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in areas of participation relating to the socio-demographic characteristics of residents in tourism projects. As reported by Barel and Heinen (2007), involving the communities in these areas of project management gives them greater opportunity to identify development priorities. It also encourages local capital or entrepreneurial investment and allows the tourism product to reflect local identity.

Mason (2003) observed that the actual involvement of a community in tourism projects depended on factors such as the nature of the political system at national and local level, awareness of the tourism in the community and how the tourism issue was perceived by members of the community. Overall, the finding of this current study builds an impression that the local people participated in decision-making, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of tourism projects.

Active community participation in the 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. However, there is no significant difference in barriers to community participation in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of residents in the tourism projects.

Tosun (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 this study. However, one method to ensure that local communities overcome barriers to participation and ultimately participate actively in tourism development is to empower those communities.

In line with this, it is important for tourism authorities to build the capacity of the local communities to enable them develop the necessary skills for them to manage the resources, efficiently and effectively. Building the capacity of residents during the project development through training and facilitation support is necessary for sustainable implementation of development projects. Thus, an empowered community would have real influence, con-

trol over local resources, accountable local leadership, and decentralized and democratized services with a situation buttressed by the principle of fairness (Barr, 1995; Holland et al., 2003).

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, security and infrastructure to support the projects. It is an unhealthy situation that the communities do not get the full cooperation of government to provide resources for the projects. As evidenced 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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