



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE GAMBIA: CASE STUDY OF PIRANG FOREST PARK

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ABSTRACT: *Ecotourism is a major source of revenue in The Gambia. This study investigates Community Participation in Ecotourism Development in the Gambia; A Case Study of Pirang Forest Park. Examining the level of community participation, benefits and threats to ecotourism are the objectives of the study. Group discussion, interviews and fieldworks are the data sources, and it was analyzed with frequencies and percentages. Results showed that the community has knowledge of the ecotourism project and they are involved as stakeholders on planning and managing the forest park. Birdwatching is the major reason for visits to the park and ecotourism has contributed to community development; it has increased source of livelihood and it has created more employment opportunities. The forest park is under threats of wild fruit and firewood collections, hunting, tree felling, biodiversity loss, coastal erosion, and finance. There is a need for introduction of flagship species and provision of basic amenities.*

KEYWORDS: Ecotourism, forest, community participation, park, culture, environment, resources.



INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism has led to a decline in agribusiness from 98% to 18% and rural populace have given up farming and hunting to involve in ecotourism business like tour guides, family hotels, bars, sex, souvenir shops, and so on. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that deals with the natural environment and the participation of the community for benefit. The “four S’s of tourism which are Sun, Sea, Sand and Sex” are the main reason for the Gambia being a tourism destination and one out of every nine Gambians is a tourist, but little is known about those who are ecotourists. Tourism has contributed enormously to the global economy. The advent of ecotourism has led to an increase in income of members of the community who participate in tourism. Ecotourism is concerned with travelling responsibly to a conserved natural area which is meant for the improvement of the local community. It can be described as travelling to destinations to learn, experience and enjoy the natural resources and environment (fauna and flora) and to embrace the culture and socioeconomic needs of the communities. Ecotourism has three important aims which are: protection of nature and environment for a period of time, increase in the economy of local communities, and social benefits like relaxing and better life for local communities. Protection and maintenance of nature and having the knowledge of the ecosystem is very important in ecotourism.

Ecotourism is the form of tourism which is concerned with the wise use of nature and the environmental component for observation, appreciation, entertainment and to foster a sound empowerment for local and national conservation strategies, and promotion of local culture. It involves the creation and preservation of new and existing natural areas with the main aim of attracting tourists to physical and social settings. Most ecotourism activities involve camping, hiking, cultural exhibition, excursions and wildlife viewing of plants and animals. Ecotourism is not a new concept in the world; it has been in practice well before the term itself. Ecotourism provides a wide range of benefits to local peoples economically through income generation, socially through empowering cultural preservation, and environmentally through conservation and rehabilitation empowerment.

Ecotourism has recently been dubbed as the main driving force for preserving the cultures of the indigenous peoples. It is a discourse concerned with all forms and nature of tourism where the overarching idea of tourism is observing and appreciating nature’s flora and fauna while also empowering local cultures of the concerned areas. Ideally, ecotourism is the safe practice of tourism where the negative impacts of the environment and ecosystem is significantly reduced. The main forms of ecotourism range from wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, and cultural acquisition through cultural interchange. The ecotourism sector focuses on using indigenous cultures to attract foreign visitors; this has resulted in the display and maintenance of cultures in the indigenous natural areas. Generally, environmental sustainability has a strong relationship with the capacity of ecotourism centers and tourists’ desire. Ecotourism has always served as a means of encouraging many conservation projects, while preserving the remaining natural areas for wildlife. This is done through reducing waste generation from tourists and hotels and it is focused on relying on the natural environment which seriously aids the environments’ rehabilitation and conservation. Ecotourism has also taken the lead role in providing support for local conservation efforts. Mostly, ecotourists are very interested and sensitive to appreciating and learning from local cultures and biodiversity. The rate of cultural survival seems to increase when it involves generating income for the local peoples. Through organizing cultural festivals, many cultures that are on the verge of extinction tend to be rejuvenated in a bid to entertain the tourists. Ecotourism plays an important role in protecting



endangered species of the world through initiating conservation and rehabilitation projects. Ecotourists empower the existence and maintenance of rehabilitation centers through their paid visits where they help to support these projects. Since ecotourism is concerned with the wise use of the physical and natural environment, it contributes immensely to the fight against climate change and its related global concerns. The concept of ecotourism has also been a driving force to educating tourists and the indigenous peoples concerning conservation and the sustainability of natural spaces. It is a conservation mechanism which has taken a center stage in the economic development of protected ecological environments. Ecotourism is a good source of economic inducements for conserving the world's natural ecosystem. Significantly, one of the vital roles of ecotourism is its ability to combat poverty by providing job opportunities for local residents who engage in the hospitality business. People are employed as guards, drivers, cleaners, tour guides, and bartenders in various ecotourism centers who earn a living from it. It also provides empowerment for local indigenous business in the communities. Craft workers and many cottage industries are dependent on the ecotourism sector to thrive. Locals are provided with a sustainable source of income. The extent of community participation in ecotourism in the study area is not known. This paper seeks to find out community participation in ecotourism in the Gambia.

Pirang Bonto Forest Park is in the west coast region of the Gambia. It is located between the villages of Pirang and Bonto, as the name of the park implies. It is also referred to as Pirang Forest Park. The forest contains many types of species of animals and trees as well. The forest started in the early 1980s when some individuals near the village wanted to destroy the forest and changed it into an orchard. The residents at the time deemed it necessary that the forest needs to be preserved and protected from further encroachment. With the help of the Village Chief and other elders, a committee was created that comprised people from the two villages whose sole responsibility was protecting the forest. A fence was constructed with the help of the Germans in 2003. The forest is jointly owned by the government and the two villages of Pirang and Bonto, but the level and types of community participation in ecotourism projects in the park is not known. The reasons for establishing the ecotourism project in Pirang Forest and what it wants to show to ecotourists is unknown. Also, the attraction sites in Pirang Forest Park are unknown.

This research seeks to examine the level of community participation in ecotourism in Pirang Forest Park, The Gambia? Other objectives are to identify factors responsible for ecotourism visits in Pirang Forest Park, identify the extent and types of community participation, and offer solutions to challenges faced by the Pirang Forest.

Community Participation in Ecotourism Development

Community participation has to do with the process where development, management and execution of projects are influenced by beneficiaries rather than considering the project benefits. This is a responsible trip to visit a natural area in order to appreciate nature, study, relax, enjoy and promote conservation with the involvement of the host or local people. Ecotourism supports the protection of natural areas since it generates income for the local population, it has reduced negative impacts on the environment, and it contains educational and recreational features. It is often mistaken as adventure travel, nature-based travel, sustainable tourism and cultural travel. This ecotourism project helps community participants to acquire skills in improving ecotourism. It creates a link between the local population, ecosystem and the environmental area. The local community are empowered with knowledge



of their resources, and they control these resources for their own development. Community involvement is very vital in the sustenance of ecotourism since it involves interactive participation, creation of jobs and generation of income. The various groups involved in ecotourism development are known as stakeholders. These stakeholders participate in planning, development, management and sustainability of ecotourism in planning and development processes. Stakeholders are major players in achieving ecotourism development and they include: tourists, tourism agencies, non-governmental organizations, ecological groups, local communities, local governments, suppliers, accommodation, planners, facilitators, customers, implementers, tourism sites, academic researchers, private sector, public sector and victims. Stakeholders are considered as the most important part of ecotourism since they are involved in development, planning and management. Ecotourism involves planning, management and conservation of natural resources by the local community. The community participating plans its activities in such a way that conserving the natural resources is compatible with the economic development of the locals and their environment. It is designed in such a way that the local populace takes decisions, manages and plans resources around the environment.

Ecotourism Development in the Gambia

The Gambia has one of the best climates in the world with numerous beaches which attract tourists into the country. Tourism development can be traced back to the mid-1960s when the Scandinavian tourists discovered numerous beaches in the Gambia. In 1965, Swedish tourists visited the country with the first tourist flight⁴. Ecotourism developed with the word, 'Makasutu' which means 'sacred forest' in one of the Gambian local languages. Makasutu is an ecotourism reserve. The Swedish discovered many beaches for relaxation and The Gambia government focused their target on the European market and a change of policy led to creation of ecotourism development units as its new initiatives for both public and private sectors. Ecotourism development units were protected areas meant to attract ecotourists. Abuko and Kiang West were amongst the first ecotourism development units to be established. The Gambia has eight protected areas which are being supervised by the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management. The protected areas in the Gambia have not been tapped but there are attractions to ecotourists and they are managed by the public sector. Abuko Nature Reserve attracts 30,000 tourists per year while other protected areas have figures less than this. Abuko Nature Reserve was Gambia's first protected area which was established in 1978 for the purpose of natural resources conservation. Abuko Nature Reserve is 259 acres in size and has over 50 tropical trees, 6 hyenas, 290 bird species, chimpanzees, red colobus and vervet monkeys, bush babies and red patas. Baboon Islands was established in 1979 after wild chimpanzees disappeared in the 1900s but it is home for over 100 chimpanzees now. Tourism centers alongside these protected areas brought in investments like hotels, shops, travel agencies and charter flights into the country. In the mid-late 1990s, ecotourism started with the government focusing on its inland natural resources and these new destinations attracted huge numbers of ecotourists from Europe. Ecotourism centers were owned and managed by the government, but very few were owned and managed by the locals and individuals. The environment, its history and community culture have been the purpose for ecotourism. Ecotourism centers in the Gambia include: Abuko Nature Reserve, Ballabu Conservation, Bama Kuno Forest, Bao Bolong Wetland, Bijilo Forest Park, Bolong Fenyo, Kiang West National Park, Kunkilling Forest Park, Makasutu Cultural Forest, Niimi National Park, River Gambia Park, Tanbi Wetlands, Tanji Bird Reserve and Tumani Tenda Eco-Reserve. These



ecotourism centers are home for over 600 bird species, crocodiles, monkeys, hippopotamus, manatees, chimpanzees, hyena and snakes. Birdwatching, river tours, beaches and wildlife excursions are activities of ecotourism in the area. The activities in local communities during visits to some ecotourism centers are as follows: building the ecotourism centers, advertising the ecotourism centers, boat tour guards, teaching fishing lessons, arranging cultural events, bat watching, beekeeping, tree planting and many more.

Between 1994 and 1999, the Gambia derived 30 percent increase from tourism which formed 18 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. Beaches were constructed and developed by the government while most hotels, restaurants and clubs were owned and operated by Europeans and Indians. Fajara Golf Club has attracted Golfers and ecotourists from around the world due to its massive landmass, mixed vegetation (forest, swam and grassland). Revenue from the tourism industry declined due to the Coup d'état in 1994 when most European countries advised and warned on travel ban to the Gambia.

Several programmes and projects have been introduced in the Gambia. In 1977, the Banjul Declaration was passed to prevent biodiversity loss in the country. In 2013, Biodiversity Wildlife Act which established the Biodiversity Trust Fund was used to support and finance protected areas. Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project under the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management supported ecotourism projects in Tanji and Kartong areas. These projects include: Kartong Reptile/Snake farm, Tanji Bird Reserve, Tanji Bird Reserve Ecotourism Camp and Tanji Village Museum. All stakeholders worked to generate revenue, and promote culture and community participation. Another project is the Ballabu Conservation Project in Makasutu. River Gambia National Park houses crocodiles, hippos, monkeys, chimpanzee, manatees and about 600 bird species. An eco-camp has been established in this ecotourism project which has the Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Project.

Ecotourism has led to rapid environmental, economic and social development in the Gambia. The environment is faced with issues of coastal erosion, deforestation, flooding, over harvesting of fishes and loss of flora and fauna. Lack of funds to address environmental issues is a key problem. Foreign companies have assisted the local economy through providing grants, initiatives and technical aids to communities involved in ecotourism. Many companies have migrated to another country due to heavy taxation and other issues. Revenue from ecotourism is still growing but lies more with the government while the locals get piecemeal. Prostitution and 'bumsterism' has a huge negative impact in the Gambia. Bumsters are unemployed youths who leave their families and roam the beaches, clubs and streets to attract and meet wealthy tourists as teachers, drivers, sex workers and guides. The impact has led to the migration of prostitutes from other West African countries like Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia into the Gambia. Young men and women sell their bodies and, in most cases, get married to a tourist who takes them to Europe or other parts of the world for the purpose of sex.

Despite its friendly environment, the Gambia's ecotourism is faced with numerous challenges. The transport system is poor with narrow roads which cause traffic jams, few airlines linked to connecting flights which delay passengers in most countries, and low patronage of seaport. The all-inclusive tour package on tourism has affected ecotourism since the local communities do not benefit rather private travel and government agencies benefit.



Benefits of Community Participation in Ecotourism Development

Ecotourism is a major revenue source for many countries. The community sells their traditional knowledge, artifacts, skills and culture. Most countries have established national parks, game reserves and forest reserves which are visited by tourists. These tourists pay huge money for their lodging, transportation, feeding and purchasing valuable items. Countries like Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Botswana have established luxury tent camps and lodges which are rented and which generate income. Also, special private operators in national parks and game reserves have been established. Community participation has been used in developing countries to solve problems in ecotourism. The local communities are involved in decision making, planning and managing of the ecotourism with their appointments from the local government agencies. Since ecotourism is a source of livelihood, the communities ensure that the resources are protected, shared and used properly.

Employment and business opportunities are created when communities participate in ecotourism. These could be termed as economic alternatives provided to local people. Hotels, restaurants, shops, markets, travel agencies, financial institutions and clubs are established which in turn employ the locals. The locals are employed as tour guards, interpreters, cleaners, sex workers and so on. Employment is generated in a range of jobs and can be divided into direct, indirect and induced employment. Direct employment involves local people involved in clubs, taxis, hotels, bars, cleaners, maids, cooks, guides and guards while indirect employment involves mechanics. In most cases, ecotourism provides support to traditional jobs in craft shops like establishment of craft shops and markets. Ecotourism is one of the best sources of employment since it deals directly with the community.

Poverty is eradicated through ecotourism in most developing countries. Wealth is created as the communities participate in sales of goods and services and create more channels to make income for their families. In the Gambia, most ecotourists visit to get married and move their partners to Europe and other continents. This phenomenon has pulled many families out of poverty. Most countries depend on ecotourism as its major source of revenue.

Ecotourism has promoted community development through grants and support from organizations. International support is provided to the communities for their ecotourism projects which improves the environment and the economy of the locals. Non-governmental organizations provide support for ecotourism projects through initiatives like tree planting, fencing, research and conservation of the ecotourism centers. Various grants have been provided by America, Europe, Canada, and Australia to help communities involved in ecotourism, thereby encouraging afforestation, conservation and harvesting of sustainable native products. Conservation programmes and financing have been achieved through ecotourist visits. Ecotourist centers with high visits produce sufficient revenue which can be used to aid the running of parks. International organizations and government agencies support the conservation of biodiversity with finance and programmes with the government employing numerous methods to direct the revenue into conservation. These revenues from ecotourism visits are generated from fees charged on people using facilities, fees charged on service providers, sales of goods and services, royalties, donations and taxation.

Ecotourism has numerous negative impacts from ecotourism visits despite being a good revenue source, aiding in conservation and creation of business opportunities and jobs. Human overcrowding can result in environmental stress. Animals tend to show changes in behaviour.



They move far away from humans for fear of being attacked and some can be seen only at nights with night vision cameras since humans are not available at nights. Erosion and the coastal environment are major threats to ecotourism projects. The landmass of Pirang Forest Park has been reduced due to coastal erosion from River Gambia. Pollution is another negative impact of ecotourism. Noise pollution during resource extraction scares away animals, causing them to relocate to another place and, in some cases, making them homeless. There is harm to the natural environment and cultural heritage. The environment is affected by erosion, bush burning, fuelwood harvesting, fishing and hunting. The culture and beliefs of the people are abandoned due to the influx of foreigners like the introduction of dressings, movies, foods, drinks, drugs and worship. There are cases of theft of artifacts and cultural history from most African heritage sites. The ecotourism industry is faced with threats like lack of understanding, training and awareness of ecotourism projects in communities; lack of ecotourism development policies; and lack of support, grants and incentives toward the ecotourism projects. Lack of cooperation with stakeholders and lack of basic ecotourism facilities are threats of ecotourism. Basic facilities like electricity, health centers, roads and schools are problems of ecotourism. Other threats to ecotourism include “anthropogenic activities” which include climate change, invasive species, logging, deforestation, fossil fuel burning increasing the greenhouse gas emission, wildfire and pollution.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

Pirang Forest National Park is in The Gambia at 13⁰15'38" N, 16⁰32'8" W between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. It is situated in Pirang village with a population of 2,500 people. Pirang Forest National Park is a small forest with an area of 64 hectares which is surrounded by *Avicennia* mangroves, salt flats and *Phragmites parkia* to the north, gardens and agricultural lands to the west, east and south. It is the second largest forest in the Gambia Pirang Bonto Forest as it is also known to be very vital in preserving the wildlife and trees within the area. The forest is very thick with a lot of trees for both consumable and non-consumable. The water table is close to the forest surface and the park contains reptiles, amphibians, baboons, monkeys, bush bugs, birds and many other types of animals. Hunting is strictly prohibited around the park areas. Coastal erosion is a threat to the area close to the water body and the saline nature makes agricultural activities difficult for farmers.

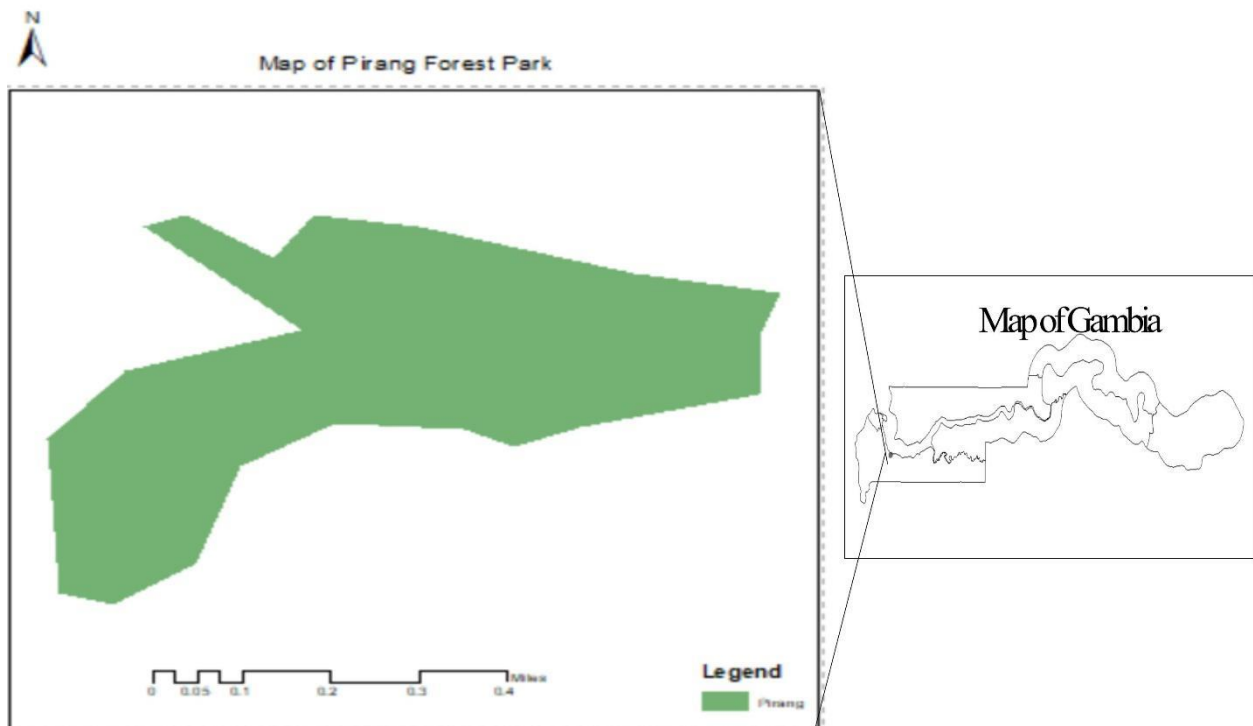


Figure 1: Map of Pirang Forest Park

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews, group discussion and fieldwork were the methods of data collection employed. Interviews with key informants who included: 8 Pirang Forest Management committee members and 2 Forest workers. Interview was conducted on 20 community members made up of ten elders, five women and five youth. Interview, group discussion and fieldwork took place on May 13, 2023. The total number of respondents was 30. Interviews were followed by group discussion. Group discussion involved a combined section with Pirang forest management committee members and forestry workers. Forest documents were provided by the committee members. Group discussion was followed by field observation and survey. Field observation was carried from the buffer zone through the entrance of the park, forest area, swampy area, salty region to the coastal area. Binoculars, laser pointers and cameras were used during the fieldwork to watch, identify, and classify the birds. Most of the birds are listed in Appendix 1. Cameras were used to obtain pictures of animals from photo height developed inside the forest. Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) was used for data analysis.



RESULTS/DISCUSSION

Community Involvement in Ecotourism in Pirang Forest Park

This study discovered that Pirang forest started in the early 1980s when it was classified as a forest park by the Department of Forestry. During that time, the forest was managed by the Department of Forestry in collaboration with the Gambian-German Forestry Project (GGFP). Community involvement in ecotourism in Pirang forest started in 2003 with the Department of Forestry incorporating the communities of Pirang and Bonto to the management of the park to form the Pirang Forest Management Committee. The Pirang forest management committee comprised the representatives of the two villages, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Forestry. The committee was tasked with duties of protection of the park from intruders by enforcing the forest acts and laws and daily management of the forest. They conducted routine patrols in and around the forest to spot out areas of intervention and to monitor intrusion. Forest and financial benefits were shared on agreed proportions amongst the stakeholders, the two committees, the Departments of Parks and wildlife and the Department of Forestry. The Department of Parks and Wildlife with the Department of Forestry provides the legal and technical support for the committee. The two villages through their Village Development Committees (VDCs) also provided additional support for all the activities and development of the forest. Most of the workers at the forest park are not on salary earners. They depend heavily on the birdwatching activities to provide some form of income for them. They act as tour guides to the forest during visits of tourists and researchers. C4RC and Gambia Bird Watchers Association are partnering with the forest management committee to initiate some important projects in the forest.

There is a high knowledge of community participation in ecotourism in Pirang Forest Park, which is shown in Table 1. One hundred percent of the respondents have knowledge of ecotourism project in Pirang forest, 80 percent agreed that the local community participates in management of Pirang forest, 67 percent agreed that the local people participate as stakeholders in the ecotourism project, 40 percent agreed that the community is satisfied with the level of community participation in the ecotourism project in Pirang forest, while 27 percent agreed that the community participates in revenue sharing in the ecotourism project in Pirang forest park.

This study showed that 100 percent of Pirang and Bonto community members have more knowledge of the ecotourism project in the Pirang Forest Park as compared to the findings of that Bobiri Forest Reserve and Butterfly Sanctuary in Ashanti Region of Ghana had only 70 percent who had knowledge of the ecotourism project in their community. In a study of Huhuhuwe-Umfolzi Park, South Africa, 65.7 percent of respondents agreed that the community had knowledge of ecotourism and conservation projects. The communities' representatives in the Pirang Forest management committee are involved in revenue sharing, bird guards, tour guards, make decisions and allow their host communities to fetch fruits and dead woods. Revenue sharing from the ecotourism project in Pirang forest park is 27 percent and it is low compared to the moderate level of community participation from the ecotourism project in National Park, Pahang, Malaysia of which benefits from sharing include improve standard of living, job opportunities, side income increase, conservation, good health and green environment.

Reasons for Ecotourism Visits to Pirang Forest

Table 2 shows responses on the reasons for ecotourism visits to Pirang Forest Park. Tourists visit to watch birds (bats and owls), butterflies, mammals, reptiles, trees and amphibians. All respondents agreed that visits were for birdwatching, which is followed by mammals and trees watching with 27 respondents. Nineteen (19) respondents agreed that visits were for butterflies watching while 5 respondents agreed that visits were for reptiles and amphibians watching. Figure 2 shows a chart of the reasons for ecotourism visits to Pirang Forest Park. A list of birds, butterflies, mammals, reptiles, trees and amphibians found in Pirang Forest Park are shown in appendices.

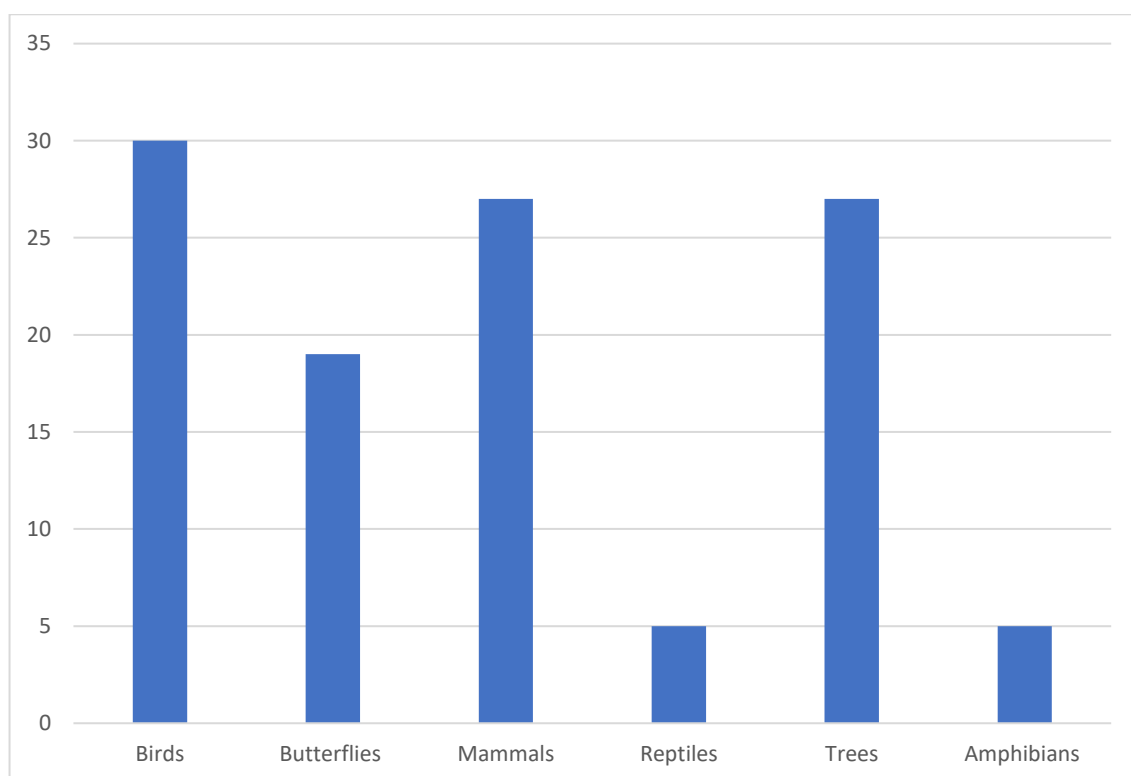


Figure 2: Reasons for Ecotourism Visits to Pirang Forest Park

Benefits of Pirang Forest Park to the Communities

Pirang Forest Park has contributed enormously to the development of stakeholders and the two host communities through community development. It is a source of livelihood and employment opportunities have been created. Though ecotourism encourages conservation, illegal activities in the forest have reduced and forestry products are harvested and consumed. Locals have benefitted so much from ecotourism. Table 3 shows the benefits of ecotourism to the communities. All the respondents agreed that ecotourism has contributed to community development. Ninety-three percent of the respondents agreed that ecotourism has contributed to conservation to the benefit of the community. Eight-seven percent of the respondents agreed that forestry products are utilized as food, sources of energy, medicine and shelter.

Threats on Pirang Forest Park

Pirang forest park is faced with threats of extinction, hunting, tree felling, animal migration, wild fruit harvesting and coastal erosion. Table 4 and Figure 3 show the threat on Pirang Forest Park. Results from the interview suggest that wild fruit collection, firewood collection and finance formed the highest threats to the park, and this is causing a great hindrance to ecotourism development in the forest. Wood collection and wild fruit collection are legal activities for community members but the process of collection causes noise which scares away the animals. This has a drastic effect on the visibility of several shy birds and mammals. Tree felling at the forest has also been reported from the interview and the total responses received on the impact of tree felling is 16. Recently, invaders engaged in illegal tree felling left those areas open and several animals lost their habitats. An average number of respondents agreed that hunting and animal migration are threats to ecotourism development in the forest. The least threats to Pirang Forest Park are salty soil and coastal erosion. Salt mining activities occur between the coast and the forest and as coastal erosion continues to dig into the forest, the salty nature would destroy the ecosystem.



Figure 3: Threats to Pirang Forest Park

Implication to Research and Practice

This study on Community Participation in Ecotourism Development in the Gambia: A Case Study of Pirang Forest Park seeks to know if the community is involved in ecotourism and how they participate in it. This study will provide awareness and new developments into ecotourism in Pirang forest park. Environmental managers may consider providing more social amenities to increase and attract more tourist visits. This study will provide land planners and the Gambian government with useful information for future research purposes.



CONCLUSION

Pirang Forest Park is a major ecotourism center in the Gambia which has not been properly explored, and the park is known for activities like birdwatching, excursions, tree climbing and boating. Pirang Forest is managed by Pirang and Bonto communities alongside the Department of Forestry, Gambia. The communities established the Pirang Forest Management Committee which comprises members from the two communities and two forestry staff with duties of protecting, managing and making decisions on the forest park. The communities are aware of the ecotourism project and participate as stakeholders. The communities protect, manage and make decisions on the forest park. There are various opportunities created due to this ecotourism project, like tour guards, forestry staff and business opportunities. Ecotourists visit the Pirang Forest Park for birdwatching (bats and owls), butterflies, mammals, reptiles, trees and amphibians. Numerous benefits of community participation in ecotourism in Pirang Forest Park have been identified to include: contribution to community development, source of livelihood, reduction in illegal activities, employment, utilization of forestry products, conservation, and benefits to individuals. Pirang Forest Park is faced with the following threats: wild fruit collection, firewood collection, hunting, tree felling, animals' migration, coastal erosion, salty soil, and finance.

For effective management and patronage of the Pirang Forest Park, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Introduction of flagship animals like lion, elephant, etc. This will attract more tourists, students, and visitors to the forest.
- ii. Provision of basic and social amenities into the Pirang Forest Park like: accessible roads, water, electricity, hotels, lodges or camps, restaurants, shops, office space, phot hides and transport facilities.
- iii. Advertising the Pirang Forest Park and other ecotourism centers in the Gambia.
- iv. Financial aid from National and International organizations would aid in conservation and providing more facilities and species.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Community involvement in ecotourism in Pirang forest

Issues	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge of ecotourism project in Pirang forest	30	100
Local people participate in management of Pirang forest	24	80
Local people participate as stakeholders in ecotourism project	20	67
Community satisfaction in participation in ecotourism project	12	40
Community participation in revenue sharing in ecotourism project	8	27

Table 2: Reasons for ecotourism visits to Pirang Forest Park

Reasons for visits	Respondents			TOTAL
	Community members	Forest Management Committee	Forest officers	
Birds	20	8	2	30
Butterflies	17	1	1	19
Mammals	19	7	1	27
Reptiles	2	2	1	5
Trees	20	5	2	27
Amphibians	3	1	1	5

Table 3: Benefits of ecotourism to the communities

Benefits of ecotourism	Frequency	Percentage
Ecotourism has contributed to development of communities	30	100
Community has benefited from ecotourism	28	93
Ecotourism is a source of livelihood	19	63
Illegal activities have reduced due to ecotourism	20	67
Ecotourism has created employment	12	40
Forestry products are utilized during ecotourism	26	87
Ecotourism has contributed to conservation	28	93
Individuals have benefited from ecotourism	24	80

**Table 4: Threats on Pirang Forest Park**

Threats	Responses			Total
	Community members	Forest management committee	Forest officer	
Wild fruit collection	16	3	2	21
Firewood collection	19	6	2	27
Hunting	12	1	2	15
Tree felling	13	1	2	16
Animal migration	8	3	2	13
Coastal Erosion	2	2	1	5
Salty soil	5			5
Finance	10	8	2	20

APPENDIX 2**List of Birds in Pirang Forest Park**

Abyssinian Roller	Greater Blue-Eared Sterling	Glossy	Scarlet-Chested Sunbird
African Golden Oriole	Green Hylia		Senegal Batis
African Green Pegeon	Green Turaco		Senegal Coucal
African Grey Hornbill	Green Wood Hoopoe		Senegal Parrot
African Harrier-Hawk	Green-Backed Eremomela		Shikra
African Hobby	Green-Headed Sunbird		Singing Cisticola
African Mourning Dove	Grey Kestrel		Snowy-Crowned Robin Chat
African Palm Swift	Grey Woodpecker		Speckled Pegeon
African Paradise Flycatcher	Grey-Backed Camaroptera		Splendid Sunbird
African Pied Hornbill	Grey-Headed Bush Shrike		Stiffling Cisticola
African Silverbill	Heuglin's Masked Weaver		Stone Partridge
African Thrust	Jacobite Cuckoo		Sulphur-Breastfed Bush Shrike
African Wood Owl	Laughing Dove		Swallow-Tailed Bee-Eater
Ahanta Francolin	Lavender Waxbill		Swamp Palm Greenbull
Beaudouin's Snake Eagle	Lead-Coloured Flycatcher		Tawny Eagle
Beautiful Sunbird	Levaillant's Cuckoo		Tawny-Flanked Prinia
Black-Billed Wood Dove	Little Bee-Eater		Variable Sunbird
Blackcap Babbler	Little Greenbull		Verreaux's Eagle Owl
Black-Crowned Tchagra	Little Weaver		Vieillot's Barbet
Black-Necked Weaver	Long-Crested Eagle		Vieillot's Black Weaver
Blue-Bellied Roller	Long-Tailed Glossy Sterling		Village Indigobird
Blue-Spotted Wood Dove	Melodious Warbler		Village Weaver
Booted Eagle	Mottled Spinetail		Violet Turaco
Broad-Billed Roller	Namaqua Dove		Violet-Backed Starling
Bronze Mannikin	Northern Black Flycatcher		Vitelline Masked Weaver



Bronze-Tailed Glossy Sterling	Northern Crombec	Vivacious Dove
Brown Babbler	Northern Puffback	Western Bluebill
Brown Snake Eagle	Northern White-Faced Owl	Western Grey Plantain Eater
Brown-Necked Parrot	Olivaceous Warbler	Western Little Sparrow Hawk
Buff-Spotted Woodpecker	Olive-Green Camaroptera	Western Violet-Backed Sunbird
Cardinal Woodpecker	Orange-Cheeked Waxbill	White-Crested Helmet Shrike
Chestnut-Breasted Negrofinch	Oriole Warbler	White-Crowned Robin Chat
Chiffchaff	Pale Flycatcher	White-Rumped Seedeater
Collared Sunbird	Palm-Nut Vulture	White-Spotted Flufftail
Common Bulbul	Pied Crow	Willow Warbler
Common Red Start	Pin-Tailed Whydah	Winding Cisticola
Common Wattle-Eye	Purple Glossy Sterling	Woodland Kingfisher
Common White Throat	Puvel's Illadopsis	Yellow White-Eye
Copper Sunbird	Pygmy Sunbird	Yellow-Backed Weaver
Crimson Seed-Cracker	Red-Bellied Paradise Flycatcher	Yellowbill
Dark Chanting Goshawk	Red-Billed Firefinch	Yellow-Billed Black Kite
Diederik Cuckoo	Red-Billed Hornbill	Yellow-Billed Hyliota
Double-Spurred Francolin	Red-Cheeked Cordon-Blue	Yellow-Billed Shrike
Eurasian Mash Harrier	Red-Chested Cuckoo	Yellow-Breasted Apalis
Fantastic Saw-Wing	Red-Eyed Dove	Yellow-Crowned Gonolek
Fine-Spotted Woodpecker	Red-Necked Falcon	Yellow-Fronted Tinkerbird
Fork-Tailed Drongo	Red-Shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike	Yellow-Rumped Tinkerbird
Gabar Goshawk	Rose-Ringed Parakeet	
Great Sparrow Hawk	Rufous-Crowned Roller	

APPENDIX 3

List of Butterflies in Pirang Forest Park

African Albatross	Common Grass Yellow	Pearl Charaxes
African Caper White	Common Grizzled Skipper	Pink Acraea
African Cupid	Common Hairstreak	Pointed Caper White
African Emigrant	Common Leopard Fritillary	Purple Tip
African Grass Blue	Common Savannahs Bush Brown	River Sailor
African Joker	Common Scarlet	Round-Winged Orange Tip
African Line Blue	Common Zebra Blue	Savannahs Demon Charaxes
African Pierrot	Crawshay's Ciliate Blue	Savannahs Pied Pierrot
African Tigar	Creamy Small White	Scarlet Tip
African Wood White	Crwam-Bordered Charaxes	Sky-Blue Cupid
Baault's Zebra Blue	Dark Blue Pansy	Small Grass Yellow
Banded Hopper	Darker Commodore	Small Orange Acraea
Black Hopper	Diadem	Smoky Bean Cupid
Black-Bordered Babul Blue	Dromus Grizzled Skipper	Soldier Pansy



Boston Blue	Elegant Acraea	Striped Policeman
Bush Charaxes	Falcate Dart	Swamp Ringlet
Calypso Caper White	Golden Pansy	Tiny Orange Tip
Caper White	Grey Elfin	Twin Swift
Citrus Swallowtail	Guineafowl	Untailed Blue Giant Cupid
Clouded Flat	Large Orange Tip	Variable Eggfly
Coffee Playboy	Large Spotted Acraea	Veined Swallowtail
Common Albatross	Leaden Ciliate Blue	Vulgar Bush Brown
Common Ciliate	Lesser Millet Skipper	Wandering Donkey
Common Dotted Border	Little Commodore	Western Virgin
Common Evening Brown	Mediterranean Pierrot	White Lady
Common Fig Blue	Narrow-Banded Swallowtail	White-Tipped Cupid
Common Glass Acraea	Painted Lady	Yellow Pansy
		Zebra White

APPENDIX 4

List of Reptiles in Pirang Forest Park

African Rock Python	Brown-Flanked Shrink	Nice Monitor
Agama	Forest Cobra	Puff Adder
Beauty Or Sand Snake	Gecko	Senegal Chameleon
Bosc's Monitor	Green Mamba	

APPENDIX 5

List of Mammals in Pirang Forest Park

Callithrix Monkey	Patas Monkey	Two-Spotted Palm Mongoose
Cape Clawless Otter	Sand Fox	Western Red Colobus Monkey
Egyptian Mongoose	Serval	White-Tailed Mongoose
Gambian Mongoose	Side-Striped Jackal	Yellow-Winged Bat



APPENDIX 6

List of Amphibians in Pirang Forest Park

Common African Toad
Groove-Crowned Bullfrog
Rocket Frog Species

APPENDIX 7

List of trees in Pirang Forest Park

African Mahogany	Jujube	Oil Palm
African Rosewood	Mandingo Cold	Silk Cotton Tree
Flame Tree	Mesquite	Strangular Fig
Gmelina	Monkey Cutlass	White Mangroves
Hog Plum		