

Potentials of Ecotourism to Nature Conservation and Improvement of Livelihood of People around Ayikunnugba Waterfalls, Oke-Ila Orangun, Nigeria

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Abstract : Tourism has direct, indirect and induced impacts on economic development and the industry is one of the most crucial tradable sectors in the world. The study was therefore carried out to assess the potentials of ecotourism to nature conservation and its contributions to the improvement of the livelihood of Oke- Ila Orangun community. One hundred and fifty residents were chosen by stratified random sampling as respondents. Respondents awareness of ecotourism was assessed using an 8-point scale while respondents acceptance of ecotourism was assessed using a 14-point scale. Contributions to improvement of livelihood of residents and perceived constraints identified by residents to the development of the water fall and socio-economic variables among others were also obtained. Also, in-depth interview was conducted with the king of Ayikunnugba. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean and percentages. Correlation analysis was used to determine whether or not a relationship exists between two variables at 0.05 level of significance. Perception of respondents based on the awareness of ecotourism and contributions to livelihood development was high (78.3%). A significant relationship exists between acceptance of ecotourism and its contributions to peoples' livelihood. Also, relationship between constraints encountered by respondents and its contributions to peoples livelihood is highly significant($r = 0.546$; $P = 0.00$). Majority (71.3%) of the respondents believed that the development of the area will not lead to environmental pollution. Public- Private- Partnership (PPP) is therefore recommended so as to enable the recreation site to meet international standard in terms of development and management.

Keywords : Ayikunnugba water fall, ecotourism constraints, nature conservation, awareness

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