

**TOURISM AND WILDLIFE AT
CROSSROADS**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

➤ Major Global Challenges

- Deforestation and Biodiversity destruction
- Unemployment and Poverty (World economic Forum,2016)
- Threatening of indigenous cultures (UNESCO,2015)
- Rural – urban migration (Ambode, 2018)
- Insecurity and Terrorism (Ijeomah, 2017)

➤ Wildlife – The Roles of Wildlife

- Tourism: The inter relatedness of tourism types: sex tourism, beach tourism, educational tourism, culinary tourism, religious tourism, sport tourism. Conference tourism, ecotourism, coastal tourism, urban tourism, rural tourism etc

WHY ARE WE HERE?

- To know why special decisions should be taken concerning tourism and Wildlife

RELEVANCE OF TOURISM

➤ **Why Ecotourism?**

- Less impact on the environment (Mela Khum mela/Mountain Gorilla in Rwanda)
- Biodiversity conservation
- Environmental education of tourists
- Respect for indigenous cultures
- Economic empowerment of host community
- Participatory management approach
- Gears towards sustainable development
- Satisfaction of tourists

➤ **Ecotourism as the fastest growing aspect of tourism**

- Increasing awareness of the health benefits
- Scarcity of pristine areas
- Threatening of Indigenous culture

SOME ECOTOURISM RESOURCES IN NIGERIA

- Wild Animals
- Waterfalls
- Scenic sites
- Abundant but Varied vegetation with different canopy levels
- Interesting indigenous cultures
- Traditional dances
- Water bodies of different sizes and forms
- Local food of indigenous people
- Temperate environment in a tropical country
- Hills
- Protected Areas

ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

Table 1: Some attractions and activities in eco-destinations

S/N	Attractions/Activities	Example of destinations where the activities are present
1	Game viewing	Yankari wildlife park, Kainji Lake national park, Gashaka Gumti national park, Maasai Mara national park, Ngorongoro crater
2	Mountain climbing	Shere hills, Idanre hill, Olumo rock
3	Swimming	Oguta lake, Elegbusi royal beach, Yankari wildlife park
4	Trekking	Annapurna region in Nepal, tropical rainforest of Borneo, Kenya
5	Nature trailing	Finima nature park, Lekki Conservation Center (LCC), Pandam wildlife park
6	Bird watching	Pandam lake, Gashaka gumti national park
7	Enjoyment of cool breeze	Elegbusi Royal Beach; Finima nature park
8	Sport Fishing	Oguta lake; coastal areas in Lagos state, Rivers state, Bayelsa state and Delta states; Gashaka Gumti national park; River Niger.
9	Canoeing/ cruising	Oguta lake, Pandam wildlife park, Rayfield resort

ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

Table 1 cont'd: Some attractions and activities in eco-destinations

S/N	Attractions/Activities	Example of destinations where the activities are present
10	Climbing of tree house	Okomu national park, Lekki conservation center
11	Canopy walkway	Costa Rica's Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve, Lekki Conservation Center, Kakum forest in Ghana
12	Biking/Bicycling	Cycling destinations in Portugal and Wales
13	Enjoying sunlight	Elegbusi beach
14	Serene environment	Pandam play ground, Lekki conservation center
15	Playing on the sand or beach	Elegbusi royal beach, Oguta lake etc
16	Picnicking	Oguta lake, Elegbusi royal beach, LCC,
17	Watching waterfall	Farin Ruwa water fall, Erin Ijesha waterfall, Urashi Dikenafai
18	Kayaking	The Norwegian Fjords, Greece's Peloponnese Peninsula
19	Sand bathing	Beaches, dunes in Morocco and China



Plate 1: Some wildlife species in Nairobi National Park.
Source: Badore (2015)



Plate 2: Waves of the Atlantic Ocean at Elegushi Royal Beach.
Source: Ijeomah *et al.* (2019)



Plate 3: Tourists playing in the water at Elegushi Royal Beach.
Source: Ijeomah *et al.* (2019)



Plate 4: A tourist enjoying the breeze and view of the ocean at Elegushi Royal Beach
Source: Ijeomah and Ayodele (2022)



Plate 5: The Kalabari beach in Oguta lake destination
Source: Alarape and Ijeomah (2023)



Plate 6. Ogbagada waterfall, the main attraction in Ezeagu tourist complex

Source: Field survey (2016)



Plate 7: Picnicking, one of the main tourism activities in Ezeagu tourist complex
Source: Ijeomah and Ugwu (2016)



Plate 8: Tourists walking along the canopy walkway at Lekki Conservation Centre.
Source: Ijeomah *et al.* (2019)



Plate 9: Tourists queuing up for the nature park walk at Lekki Conservation Centre.
Source: Ijeomah *et al.* (2019)



Plate 10: Tourists enjoying natural environment at Finima Nature Park
Source: Ijeomah and Duke (2016)



Plate 11: A ranger taking some notes at the Beach in Finima Nature Park
Source: Field Survey (2016)



Plate 12: Relics of the Whale at the Whale bone shelter in Finima Nature Park
Source: Field Survey (2016)



Plate 13: Tree house in Okomu National Park
Source: Ijeomah, Nwanegbo and Umokoro (2015)



Plate 14: Farin Ruwa Waterfall
Source: Ijeomah (2022)



Plate 15: Adventure Conference tourists resting under a rock on top of Idanre Hill
Source: Field Survey (2022)



Plate 16: Members of Forestry Association of Nigeria at Idanre hill - 680 steps
Source: Field Survey (2022)



Plate 17. Narrow Iron Bridge, a tourism facility in Ezeagu tourist complex
Source: Field survey (2016)



Plate 18. Hanging Bamboo Bridge, a tourism facility in Ezeagu tourist complex
Source: Field survey, 2016



Plate 19. Entrance to the Ihu-ogba cave
Source: Field Survey (2016)

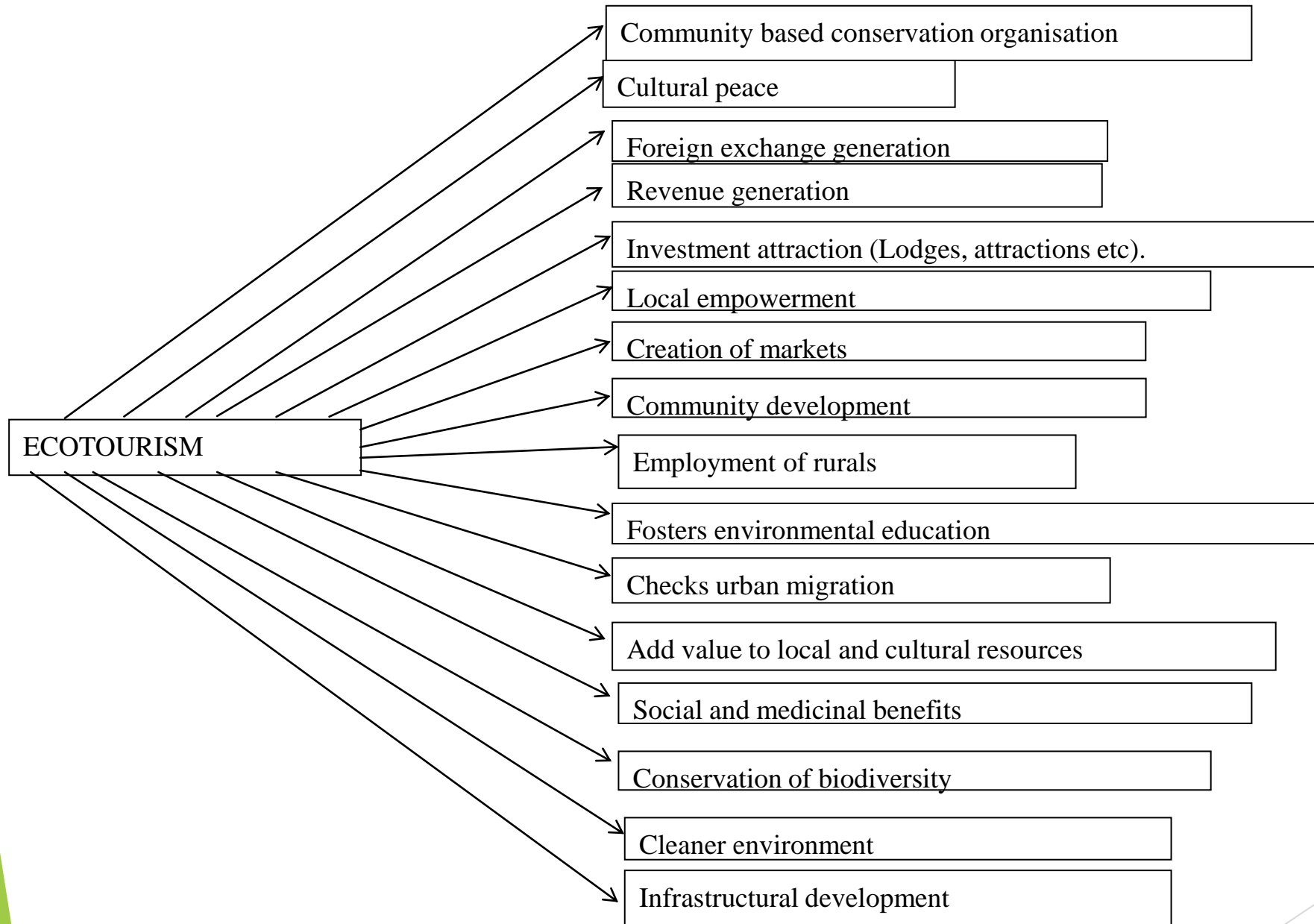


Figure. 1. Values of ecotourism for economic empowerment and sustainable development (Ijeomah, 2022)

ECOTOURISM AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

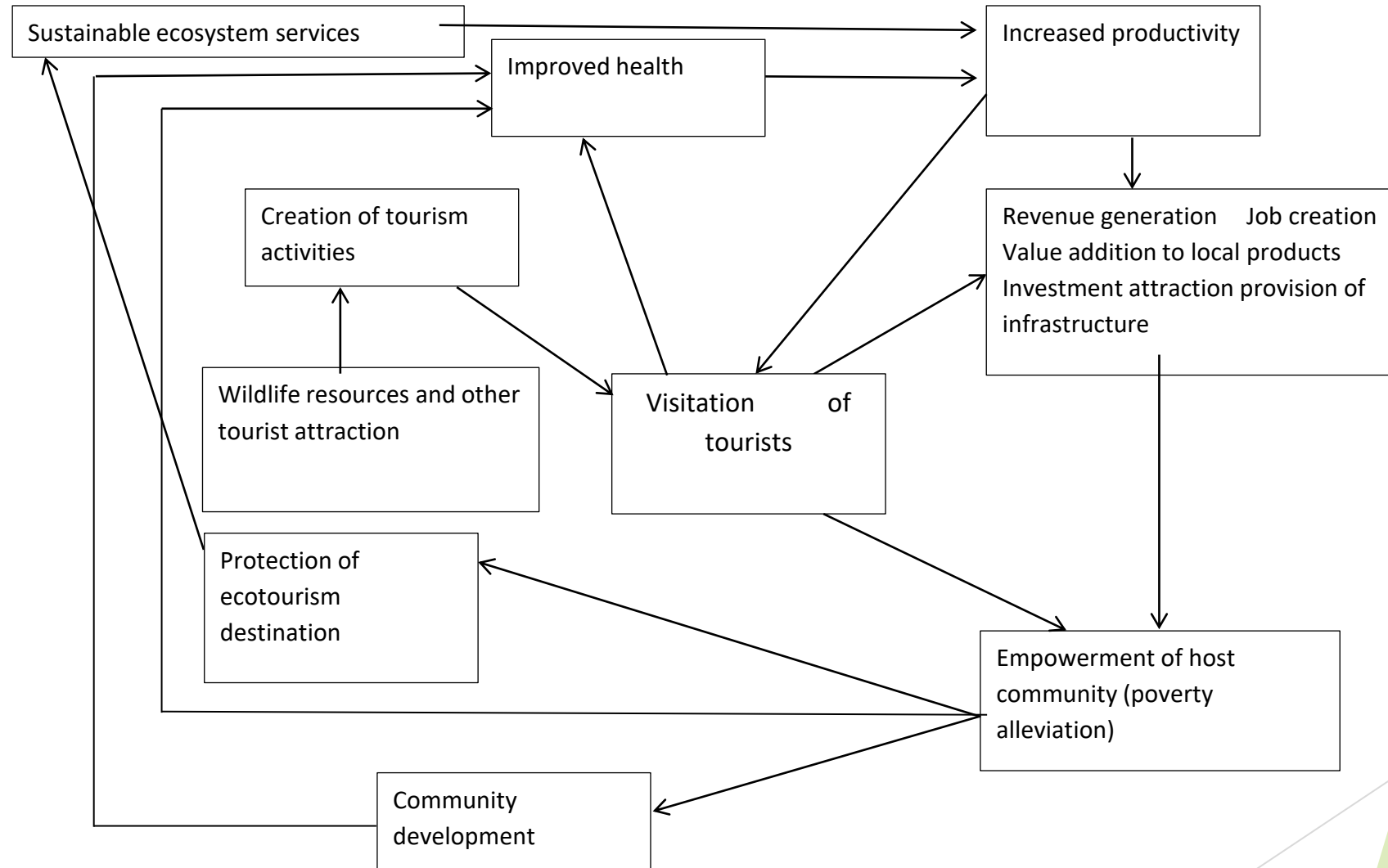


Figure 2. Ecotourism framework for sustainable biodiversity conservation for empowerment of destination host communities (Ijeomah, 2022)

EMPLOYMENT AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY ECOTOURISM

Table 2: Some kinds of jobs provided by nature- based tourism enterprises

S/N	Kinds of jobs
1	Interpreter
2	Restaurant
3	Security
4	Transportation
5	Tour operation
6	Accommodation/Lodges
7	Cleaners
8	Park management
9	Life guards
10	Site management
11	Tour guide
12	Souvenir production and marketing
13	Tourism management
14	Personnel management
15	Accounts management
16	Conservation based Non-governmental organizations
17	Community based organizations
18	Transportation
19	Canoe operation
20	Janitors (cleaning services)

Source: Adapted from Alarape and Ijeomah (2024)

POTENTIAL DOOMS OF ECOTOURISM

- Leakages of resources
- Overcrowding of park facilities
- Development of facilities such as hotels and lodges on the park land leading to clearing of parts of the park land
- Development of recreational amenities thereby clearing large area of forests around water bodies where there will be frequent activities.
- Allowing many vehicles to park in limited paces thus leading to destruction of the park vegetation
- Influx of tourist will lead to inflation, pushing the host communities back to forest resources exploitation for survival
- Development of infrastructure projects attracts non indigenous casual labour which can give rise to the development of rural slumps.
- Short-term tourism development plan can doom forests or ecotourism sites as easily as unsustainable logging (Butler, 2012).

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

- Insecurity
- Habitat destruction
- Poaching
- Inadequate staffing of protected areas/ineffective law enforcement
- Indigenous conservation practices are failing
- Wildlife trafficking (Chinese are finishing our Pangolins; A man was arrested in London With many Pythons from Nigeria)
- Mismanagement (Cases of Yankari Wildlife Park, ONP)
- Corruption and sabotage among park officials

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER CONT'

- Pollution caused by oil exploration (Many aquatic organisms are killed due to oil spills)
- Human – wildlife conflicts (Oruh, Ijeomah and Nchor, 2023)
- None involvement of park host communities in conservation projects
- Increasing rate of Flooding in coastal areas and Drought in the North
- Poor conservation culture
- Poor attitude towards recreation and tours
- Government insensitive to conservation issues (only 7 functioning parks – 10 newly gazzeted are not functioning).
- Lack of awareness about the importance of conservation

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER CONT'

- Poverty
- Urbanization
- Deaths in eco-destinations.
- Poor motivation of staff
- Low Tourist facilities in most destinations
- Infrastructure has really degenerated in most parks
- Tours are not scheduled and efficiently carried out.
- Frequent harassment by the security personnel

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER CONT'

- The 'matching ground' syndrome of Nigeria where every visitor seen in an area will be exploited
- Signages in Nigeria are grossly absent; where they exist they are misleading.
- Road signs and billboards that should give visitors information are misused
- Inconsistencies in policies
- Over exploitation of wildlife in none protected areas (Onuchukwu, Ijeomah and Odunlami, 2023)



Plate 20: A manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) killed in Itu of Akwa Ibom State in 2013

Source: Ijeomah *et al.* (2018)

WAY FORWARD - ECOTOURISM

To ensure sustainability, ecotourism requires:

- Careful planning for long-term development
- Implementation of ecotourism project and the growth should be well monitored
- Appropriate pricing strategy
- Proper landuse management planning and wildlife conservation plans to stipulate the carrying capacity of the site
- There should be active participation of tourists and other tourism stakeholders in sustainable management of the site
- The host communities should also be involved in creating conservation awareness concerning biodiversity conservation
- There should be proper monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism by the government to ensure proper management
- Every management activity in the park should be geared towards ecological, economic and social sustainability, to achieve long-term conservation goals
- Use experts

WAY FORWARD - TOURISM

- More commitment from the government
- Proper organization and packaging of resources
- Clean up the environment
- Develop durable infrastructure and provide quality amenities
- Strengthen security
- Amend national image
- Create awareness
- Encourage locals to
- Continue to monitor for sustainability

CONCLUSION

- ▶ Ecotourism can be an effective tool for sustainable conservation of biodiversity only when there is proper long term development plan (with the carrying capacity of the site stipulated), well implementation of the long term development plan, and proper monitoring to ensure strict adherence to the provisions in the plan and principles of ecotourism.