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Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Community-Based Conservation Programs in Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on effectiveness of community-based conservation programs on communities in Old Oyo National Park. The specific objectives of the study were to Identify community-based conservation programmes carried out in Old Oyo National Park and assess the impacts of community-based conservation programmes.Two (2) ranges (Tede and Marguba range) were selected from Old Oyo National Park. Three communities were purposively selected from each of the selected ranges based on their proximity to the Park, making a total of six communities. Simple random technique was used to administer twenty (20) questionnaires to twenty respondents in each of the selected communities making a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents of which one hundred and two (102) questionnaires were retrieved. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings showed that the community-based conservation programmes are empowerment of stakeholders, community are involved in conservation projects, community involved in decision making etc. The effectiveness of community-based conservation programmes indicated that highly effective recorded the highest with 40.2%, followed by moderately effective and effective with 31.4% and 23.5% respectively while not at all effective recorded the least mean of 4.9%. Impacts of community-based conservation programmes indicated that job opportunities and CBC has contributed to protecting and preserving natural resources recorded the highest mean value of 4.36 and 4.35 each, followed by it provides opportunity for the community to interact with different people with a mean of 4.34. The major challenges confronting the implementation of community-based conservation programmes were inadequate funding and lack of attention from local administrations. It can be conclude for the findings of this study that community-based conservation programmes are highly effective.

Introduction

Community-based conservation (CBC) is based on the idea that if conservation and development can be simultaneously achieved, the interests of both are served (Berkes, 2004). In the African context, community conservation has been defined as those principles and practices that stress that conservation goals are pursued by strategies emphasizing the role of local residents in decision-making for natural resources (Adams and Hulme 2001). Community-based conservation has been practiced in many forms, but in the broadest sense includes natural resources or biodiversity conservation by, for, and with the local community. The co-existence of people and nature, as distinct from protectionism and the segregation of people and nature, is its central characteristic (Western and Wright 2014). The meaning of community can vary with the context, just as perceptions of nature vary around the world (Western and Wright 2014). Rights, responsibilities and capabilities which were once internalized within traditional communities or imposed by resource limitations may be blurred or broken down once communities enter the constellation of other communities and nation states. The institutionalization of conservation as a discrete set of concerns and actions is a product of governments, interest groups and scholarship. However, community perspectives on conservation are usually more holistic and integrative and more likely to view conservation as a means rather than an end (Murphree, 1994). Community-based conservation can be viable if communities themselves set the priorities. Communities can use external institutional actors for their own integrated conservation and community economic development ends, rather than as means for an external institution's ends (Murphree 1994). Community-based

conservation is employed here as an overarching concept, inclusive of and interchangeable with community-based natural resource management (CBNRM). The focus is on wildlife conservation, given the central place and role of wildlife in African community life and national parks management.such as the restriction of access to traditionally used resources (Mishra, 2002), the disruption of local cultures and economies by tourists (Hough 1988), increased depredation of crops and livestock by wild animals (Mishra,2002) and displacement of people from their traditional lands, leading to social and cultural disruption and enforced poverty (Hough, 2008).

The management of protected areas has become one of the main instruments for the conservation of biodiversity and now constitutes a principal element of development planning in many countries (Pimbert and Pretty, 1997). However, many protected areas were originally established by either displacing local communities or without giving sufficient consideration to their livelihoods (Ghimire and Pimbert1997). Designation of protected areas can result in a variety of negative and positive consequences for rural communities. Therefore this studies tends to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based conservation programmes on some selected communities around Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria.

The significance of this study was to contribute to the existing literature on impact of community-based conservation programs on communities. Community-based conservation has been practiced in many forms, but in the broadest sense includes natural resources or biodiversity conservation by, for, and with the local community.

Materials and Methods

Study Location

Old Oyo National Park is one of the Oldest conservation area in Nigeria and indeed the West African sub region having been designated upper Ogun Forest Reserve in 1936, converted to Oyo-Ile Forest Reserve in 1941 and designated Game Reserve in 1952. The sources potentials and the rich cultural and biological diversities informed the Federal Government, decision to elevate the reserve to the status of a National Park by decree No 36 of 1991. It is based on the ruins of the Old capital of Oyo Empire located in the Northern part of present day Oyo state. The park is situated in the heart land of commerce industry and culture and is in close proximity to

Ibadan, Lagos, Akure and other cities. It has a total land area of about 2,512km² and average rainfall of 1,100mm/year. The park lies between latitudes 8°15'N and 9°00'N of the Equator and between longitudes 3° 35'E and 4° 42' E of the Prime Meridian. The vast guinea savannah ecotype with luxuriant grass, browse plants species and water supports grazing of ungulates. Unfortunately, this very attributes in vegetation also attracts herdsmen who encroacheon to the park annually; illegal grazing of livestock has therefore become the greatest problem confronting the management of Old Oyo National Park, an act that was prohibited by section 30 of Decree 36 of 1991.

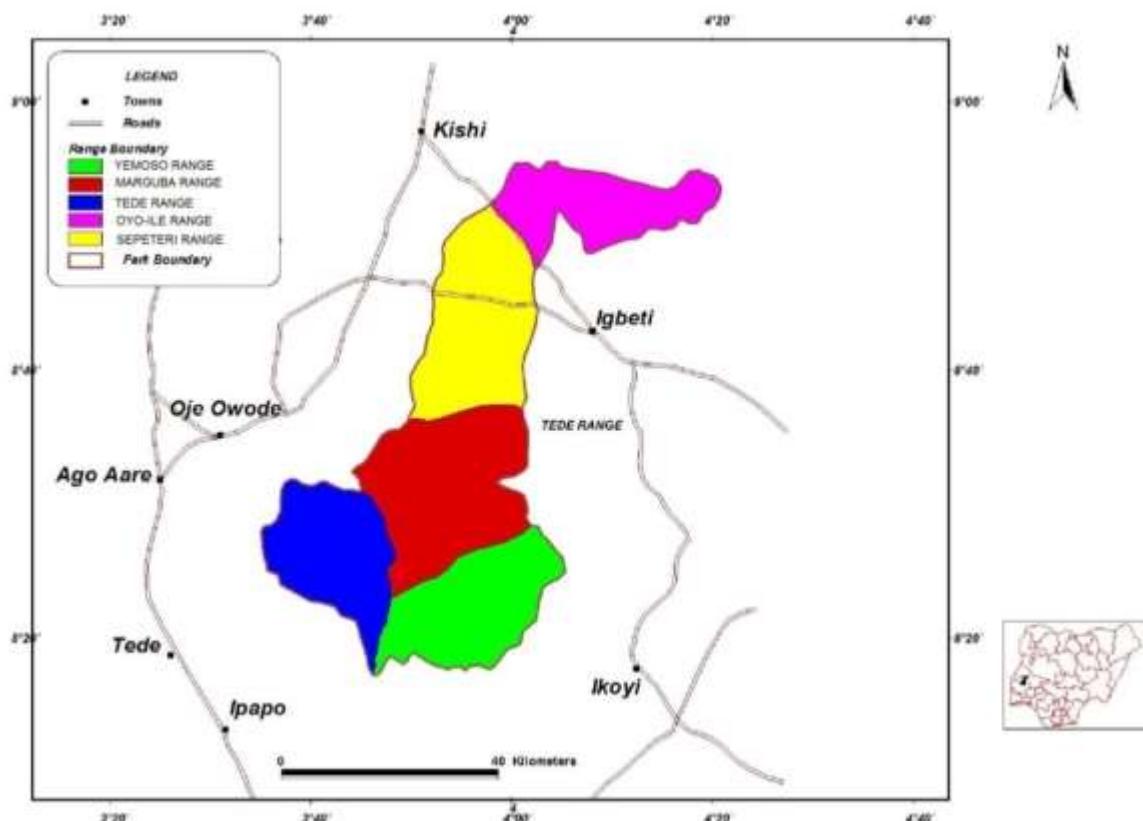


Figure 1: The Study Area

Source: Ogunjimi *et al.*, (2016)

Study Population and Sample Size

Data was collected from six supporting zone community. The sample size was put at one hundred and twenty respondents of which one hundred and two (102) questionnaires were retrieved.

Sampling Technique

Two (2) ranges (Tede and Marguba range) were selected from the study area. Three communities were purposively selected from each of the selected ranges based on their proximity to the Park, making a total of six communities. Simple random technique was used to administered twenty (20) questionnaire to twenty respondents in each of the selected communities making a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents.

Method of Data Collection

One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher and interpreted to local languages of the respondents. The questionnaire contains a series of structure question which were related to the research work and directed to respondents with the aim of gaining firsthand information. The questionnaires consist of closed ended questions.

Data Analysis

Data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics where results were expressed in tables, frequency and percentage.

Results

Table 1 revealed the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, in which male recorded the highest percentage of 53.9% while female recorded 46.1%. Furthermore, age group 36-45 years had the highest with 38.2% while age group 56 years and above is the least (8.8%). Majority of the respondents are married (62.7%) while single are 37.3%. Respondents with tertiary certificate recorded the highest with 61.8% follows by secondary school with 27.5% and no formal education recorded the least with 2.9%. The table also showed that most of the respondents are Muslim (55.9%) while Christianity recorded 33.3% and traditional religion is the least with 10.8%. The table also revealed that 33.3% of the respondents are farmers, followed by craftsman/business with 30.4% and the least are hunters with 8.8%. 46.1% of the respondents have a household size of 1-3 which is the highest while house size of 10and above is the least with 15.7%.

The community-based conservation programmes are revealed in table 2, Empowerment of stakeholders and community are involved in conservation projects recorded the highest mean of 4.42 and 4.24 respectively, followed by community involved in decision making with a mean of 4.12 while translocation recorded the least with a mean of 3.71.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents

Demographic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	55	53.9
	Female	47	46.1
Age Group	18-25	11	10.8
	26-35	27	26.5
	36-45	39	38.2
	46-55	16	15.7
	56 and Above	9	8.8
Marital status	Married	64	62.7
	Single	38	37.3
Level of education	No formal education	3	2.9
	Primary	8	7.8
	Secondary	28	27.5
	Tertiary	63	61.8
Religion	Christianity	34	33.3
	Islam	57	55.9
	Traditional	11	10.8
Occupation	Farmers	34	33.3
	Craftsman/Business	31	30.4
	Hunter	9	8.8
	Civil Servant	17	16.7
	Student	11	10.8
Size of Household	1-3	47	46.1
	4-6	17	16.7
	6-9	22	21.6
	10 and Above	16	15.7
	Total	102	100

Source (Field survey, 2025).

Table 2: Community-Based Conservation Programmes

Variables	Mean±S.D	Rank
Community involved in decision making	4.12±0.99	3 rd
Empowerment of stakeholders	4.42±0.68	1 st
Sustainable land-use practices	4.12±1.09	6 th
Reforestation	3.83±1.15	7 th
Community Education/awareness	4.14±0.97	4 th
Translocation	3.85±1.14	8 th
Community are involved in conservation projects	4.24±0.83	2 nd
Community have a voice in development issues	4.17±1.04	5 th

Source (Field survey, 2025).

Table 3 shows the effectiveness of community-based conservation programmes, in which highly effective recorded the highest with 40.2%, and followed by moderately effective and

effective with 31.4% and 23.5% respectively while not at all effective recorded the least mean of 4.9%.

Table 3: Effectiveness of Community-Based Conservation Programmes

Variables	Frequency	%
Highly Effective	41	40.2
Moderately Effective	32	31.4
Effective	24	23.5
Not at all Effective	5	4.9
Total	102	100.0

Source (Field survey, 2025).

Table 4 revealed the impacts of community-based conservation programmes, in which job opportunities and CBC has contributed to protecting and preserving natural resources recorded the highest mean value of 4.36 and 4.35

each, followed by it provides opportunity for the community to interact with different people with a mean of 4.34 while reduces loss of natural landscape recorded the least mean of 3.98.

Table 4: Impacts of Community-Based Conservation Programmes

Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Job opportunities	0(0.0)	3(2.9)	11(10.8)	35(34.3)	53(52.0)	4.36	1 st
Infrastructural development	1(1.0)	5(4.9)	14(13.7)	28(27.5)	54(52.9)	4.26	5 th
Community improvement	2(2.0)	5(4.9)	9(8.8)	35(34.3)	51(50.0)	4.25	7 th
Increased standard of living	1(1.0)	5(4.9)	9(8.8)	33(32.4)	54(52.9)	4.31	4 th
It is potential to strengthen and rejuvenate local values	0(0.0)	5(4.9)	16(15.7)	29(28.4)	52(51.0)	4.25	6 th
Reduced level of ignorance	1(1.0)	6(5.9)	5(4.9)	45(44.1)	45(44.1)	4.24	8 th
Reduces loss of natural landscape	2(2.0)	7(6.9)	9(8.8)	57(55.9)	27(26.5)	3.98	9 th
CBC has contributed to protecting and preserving natural resources	1(1.0)	2(2.0)	8(7.8)	41(40.2)	50(49.0)	4.35	2 nd
It provides opportunity for the community to interact with different people	0(0.0)	6(5.9)	5(4.9)	39(38.2)	52(51.0)	4.34	3 rd

The challenges confronting the implementation of community-based conservation programmes was revealed in table 5, in which inadequate funding and lack of attention from local administrations scores the highest mean value of

4.47 and 4.43 each, followed by problem of accessibility and inadequate government support with a mean value of 4.37 and 4.29 respectively while inadequate branding is the least with a mean of 4.20.

Table 5: Challenges Confronting the Implementation of Community-Based Conservation Programmes

Variables	Not a Challenge	Minor Challenge	Neutral	Moderate Challenge	Serious Challenge	Mean	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Inadequate funding	0(0.0)	4(3.9)	12(11.8)	46(45.1)	40(39.8)	4.47	1 st
Inadequate government support	1(1.0)	3(2.9)	13(12.7)	33(32.4)	52(51.0)	4.29	4 th
Problem of accessibility	0(0.0)	1(1.0)	12(11.8)	37(36.3)	52(51.0)	4.37	3 rd
Inadequate Awareness	1(1.0)	4(3.9)	13(12.7)	37(36.3)	47(46.1)	4.23	5 th
Lack of attention from local administrations	0(0.0)	1(1.0)	9(8.8)	37(36.3)	55(53.9)	4.43	2 nd
Inadequate branding	1(1.0)	3(2.9)	12(11.8)	45(44.1)	41(40.2)	4.20	6 th

Source (Field survey, 2025).

Discussion

It is generally believed that local communities are more likely to support conservation initiatives if they receive direct benefits from them (McNeely, 2015). The cost-benefit ratio of conserving a protected area must ultimately be positive for the local communities if conservation is to be effective in the long term (McNeely, 2015). It is in this light that the effectiveness of community-based conservation programs on communities in Old Oyo National Park is been appraised to serve as basis for sustainable management of the Park resources. Majority of the respondents are still in their active and productive state of life which make them to show more willingness to participate in conservation activities. Age has significant influence on attitude and perception of local communities towards conservation area (Kmeh, 1996). Older respondent are less likely to support conservation because they would have been living in their communities before the establishment of the park. Consequently the establishment of the park would bring about some restriction in the utilization of some natural resources which they would count as deprivation of what had initially belong to them.

Most of the respondents had tertiary education, however there are more than to be done on the aspect of the Park management and the government to support and create an enabling environment for education of the rural populace because the more the people are enlightened especially on conservation education, the more the cooperation and support expected from such individuals. Majority of the respondents are farmers which is the occupation associated with those living in the rural communities. Adetoro *et al.*, (2011) equally reported that farming is the cultural of people living around Kainji Lake National Park. The community-based conservation programmes revealed that empowerment of stakeholders and community are involved in conservation projects recorded the highest. This implies that the community members are involved in decision making and also they are being empowered. The results agrees with Bajracharya *et al.* (2005) indicate that as a result of introduction of community-based conservation approaches in ACA, fuelwood harvesting has declined, which can be attributed to measures such as the community involvement in decision making, introduction of alternative forms of energy, conservation education and the development of fuel wood in

private woodlots. Improvements in basic social services such as sanitation and drinking water, primary healthcare and basic education, improve human development outcomes and also help to reduce poverty by raising human capability levels (UNDP 2002).

The impacts of community-based conservation programmes includes; job opportunities, CBC has contributed to protecting and preserving natural resources, it provides opportunity for the community to interact with different people etc. This results supports Adams and Hulme, (2001) which reported that CBC can be attributed to greater opportunities to gain benefits from protected areas especially through employment and provision of social amenities. Majority of the respondent agrees that they are given priority in recruitment into National parks. This could go a long way in committing their support for conservation. Benefit accrued and personal returns from wildlife related enterprises positively affect attitude and perception of respondents. Restricted use of resources and boundary dispute has significant affect the perception of local communities. The findings of Deboar and Baquate (1998) was that respondents regarded establishment of park as foreign concept which impose greater restrictions on resources used by local communities to which they have formal right of tenure. The lost of land by local communities may have consequences for those who depends on it for resources such as fuel wood, key grazing areas during draught and source of water.

Conclusion

It can be conclude for the findings of this study that community-based conservation programmes are highly effective. The major impacts of community-based conservation

programmes are job opportunities, CBC has contributed to protecting and preserving natural resources and it provides opportunity for the community to interact with different people. The challenges confronting the implementation of community-based conservation programmes are inadequate funding, lack of attention from local administrations, problem of accessibility, inadequate government support etc

Recommendations

- More awareness should be created for the important of community-based conservation programme in the study area
- Government should provide fund to aid community development
- Increase the resources base, financial and human to manage the Park resources.
- Authorities should visit its policy making process in order to allow for greater acceptance of its policies among the communities.

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