

The Impact of Tourism Leakages on Local Economies: A Case Study of Nyanga District, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the impact of tourism leakages on the local economies. It draws results from a survey done in Nyanga District in Zimbabwe. Data were collected using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The quantitative analyses were employed to evaluate the level of leakages and its impact on local economies using monetary values. Content analysis was used to summarize community perception of tourism contribution to local economies. Results revealed that the most dominant type of leakage noted in the study area was internal/import leakage followed by external leakage and pre-leakage. Out of USD \$187 that is spent by each tourist in Nyanga per day, the locals only get USD \$24 which is 12.83% and the rest, 87.17% goes to the service providers which are not owned by the local people. The leakage of money out of the country was however relatively low. The paper concludes that the low leakage out of the country is a result of limited number of international tourists. Reduction of leakages can only be achieved through the creation of strong and sustainable linkages of ecotourism with the other livelihood options, training local communities and strong local community participation in ecotourism activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental objective of this paper is to examine the impact of leakages on local communities in tourist resorts. Tourism can be a feasible option for cushioning the local communities through the creation of direct and indirect employment or encouraging environmental protection and conservation in areas where local communities have low incomes (Hill 2005; Scheyvens and Russell 2012; Synman 2012). However, as noted by Fennel (2003), when evaluating the impact of money on the economy, researchers must consider the multiplier effect and the associated concept of leakage. Leakages in tourism result when revenues obtained from tourism economic activities in host countries are not available for circulation or consumption of goods and services in the same countries (Rahman 2012). There is growing evidence that most of tourism receipts in developing countries have no impact on local economies because they are spent on imports or earned by foreign workers or businesses, resulting in high leakages (Blake et al. 2008). Diaz Benevides (2001) in Meyer (2007) argues that higher rates of leakages ranging be-

tween 40–50% occur in most developing countries while lower rates of between 10–20% occur in most advanced and diversified developing countries. Tourism leakages tend to be highest when the local community economy is weak and fails to produce the quantity and quality of goods and services demanded by the tourism industry and thus it is particularly high in small developing countries (Meyer 2007). If proposed tourism development is not empathic to local community's needs, it will inevitably fail to sustain the resource base that it markets to its tourists (Loon and Polakow 2001). This study focuses on leakages in the tourism industry in Zimbabwe with specific reference to Nyanga district in Manicaland province. Local regions that can minimise the amount of money leaving their economy will have more of the initial expenditures remaining to circulate in their economies (Fennel 2003). In agreement Lindberg (1996) and Lacher and Sanjay (2010) state that through identifying the leakages, or conversely the linkages within the economy, the indirect and induced impacts of tourism can be estimated. This is imperative for effective economic development of marginalised regions in developing countries. It

has been widely argued that high levels of revenue leakage make tourism an inappropriate tool for economic development in poor, rural areas of developing economies (Sandbrook 2010; Ashraf and Chowdhury 2012). The foreign domination nature-based tourism in Southern Africa often leads to externalization of large proportions of tourism generated revenues to market source areas and foreign investor origins (Hachileka 2005). In spite of this, most developing countries have no data available on leakages in the tourism industry (Pleumarom 2012). Most leakage studies to date have focused on the national scale, but this does not reflect the recent trend in development to focus on poverty alleviation at the local level. This study therefore sought to fill this knowledge gap through a critical exploration of the impact of tourism leakages in Nyanga. Claims about the negative consequences of leakage have been central to criticism of tourism as a useful tool for economic development in rural areas of developing countries but there is a distinct lack of empirical data to back up claims about leakage and its impacts (Sandbrook 2010; Pleumarom 2012). However, leakages in tourism are not easy to measure (Supradist 2004; Rahman 2012; Scheyvens and Russell 2012). On the other hand, Mitchell and Ashley (2007) and Sandbrook (2010) argue that the issue of leakages in tourism has been over-emphasised. There is a need for research on the impact of tourism leakages on local communities in developing countries. This paper is an attempt to contribute to this knowledge gap.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Description of Study Area

Nyanga forms the northern most extent of the Eastern Highlands in Zimbabwe. It is found between latitudes 18.9° and 18.6° S and longitudes 32.6° and 32.9° E. It is a rural administrative district in Zimbabwe which has its centre in Nyanga, a growth point. Nyanga district is in Manicaland province. It has a total population of 128 467 of which 81 904 are females (Population Census 2002). It has a population density of 22 per square kilometre. Land use is largely commercial land with patches of communal land. Nyanga is endowed with several natural attractions such as Mtaraizi falls which is the fourth tallest waterfall in the world, the highest moun-

tain in Zimbabwe, a National park and several heritage sites. Nyanga National Park (440 km²) forms the core of the attractions. Nyanga is surrounded by communal lands with villages such as, Nyakomba, Nyatate, Nyakomba, Nyautore Nyatsanga, Sanyanga and Sedze. Agriculture is the major economic activity in the rural areas with the production of potatoes, maize and fruits for sell in the large cities. Nyanga also has commercially owned wattle and pine forests which cover a large area of the district.

2.2 Data Collection

The study area selected for this research comprised of three villages and which are closest to Nyanga National Park. The villages were selected due to their close proximity to the park and tourism activities. The close proximity to the National Park means local communities residing in these villages are more likely to experience direct impact of tourism activities done at the park thereby making these villages ideal for this study.

Until recently the focus of those engaged in tourism development has not been on measuring and demonstrating its specific impacts on poverty reduction and alleviation but rather on macro-economic impact and its potential to bring economic growth to poor and marginalized individuals (OECD 2001; Sandbrook 2010). In agreement Goodwill (2008) states that the contribution of tourism has been measured in terms of its input to a country's Gross National Product and employment created in tourism's overall impact on the economy and is estimated by looking at the effect of tourism expenditures through direct, indirect and induced spending using a multiplier effect approach. Researches at such levels normally employ indirect macro-economic methods such as input-output analysis to estimate impacts, but for a small study area such as Nyanga, leakage impact can be best assessed using primary data collection and cross-checking with secondary sources (Sandbrook 2010). The data employed in this study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources to assess leakage in Nyanga.

Primary data comprised of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was essentially collected to establish the actual numbers of people involved in tourism as in relation to other activities. Quantitative data was used

to explore annual household incomes obtained from tourism and from other sources of income to establish the contribution of ecotourism. These were essential to establish total revenue obtained by the locals and how much revenue leaves the study area. Qualitative data was imperative to establish the factors that depict the importance or potential of tourism in improving local economies in Nyanga. Qualitative data was obtained primarily through interviews, observation and from some sections of the questionnaires. Quantitative data was obtained primarily from the questionnaire and partly from the interviews with key informants.

Secondary data collection was done through a comprehensive review of literature using publications from scientific articles, books, papers and reports. The literature was selected and reviewed in accordance to the objectives of the current study. The study also made use of information collected from Zimbabwe Surveyor General's Office, The Ministry of Tourism and the Central Statistics Office. These were necessary to gain an overall picture of what was on the ground in terms of tourism and other local economic activities in the study area. A tourist questionnaire was administered to gather information about tourists booking and spending patterns, their choices of accommodation, transportation and activities. The tourist questionnaire gave a picture of the total revenue in US dollars tourists were spending for different activities in Nyanga. A systematic breakdown of the total revenue of the tourists revealed how much was spent directly to local economies such as curios and fruits and vegetables and indirectly through hotels buying products from the local community. A household questionnaire was employed to gather information about total revenue households obtained from all economic activities. From this an assessment of the contribution of tourism to household expenses could be made. The interviews were used to gather expert information about the tourism industry such as the number of tourists visiting the area and local communities' economic activities in the study area to cross check the tourist and household questionnaires.

Within the selected areas, random sampling was employed to select the household sample for the questionnaires. A total of 110 household questionnaires were administered across the selected villages and 30 questionnaires to tourists. The sample was derived from dividing the total number of people in a village by the aver-

age household size for Zimbabwe. 5% of the number of households in each village constituted the sample. Respondents were chosen from each and every other 20 households in the village register but this rule was not always followed as the settlement pattern of the communities did not necessarily tally with the register. The register was also about ten years old and some people had shifted or new people had moved in. Because of this, the research team ended up selecting 1 house in every ten in the area. Questionnaires were handed out to any member of the household who had achieved legal working age which is 18 in Zimbabwe. No particular preference was given to heads of households because the study was focusing on the characteristics of all individuals in the area. The research applied convenience sampling for the tourists' questionnaire. 30 tourists were selected: 12 from 3 hotels; 2 from 1 Inn; 8 from 2 lodges; 6 from 2 guest houses; 2 campers. Nyanga has 4 hotels, 3 inns, 2 lodges, 12 operational guest houses, 4 camp sites, and 2 heritage sites. Convenience sampling was adopted since tourists always come and go and as such are always changing, as such the study had to make use of the opinion of the tourists who were available at the time of study.

Purposive sampling method was employed to select 20 key informants who included 4 hotel managers, 4 hotel employees, 1 guest house manager, 1 guest house employee, the park warden, 1 lodge manager, 1 inn manager, 2 tourism officers and 6 village key informants. Selection was done using expertise, knowledge, year of residence in Nyanga to gain necessary information for this study.

2.3 Assessing Leakages

To assess tourism leakages in the study three steps were taken in the research. The first step was to establish the total revenue individual tourists spend in Nyanga. Using the tourist questionnaires, interviews with tourism service providers this information was collected and collated. The second step was to assess the tourism revenue that remains in Nyanga in relation to the revenue that leaves the area. In this study this was done by obtaining different leakage points and establishing how much of the total tourist revenue goes to these leakage points. For the study types of leakage were identified as internal/import leakage; external leakage; pre-leakage as proposed by Supradist (2004). The

leakage points were; ownership of the hospitality sector, bookings and purchases, tourist spending, and employment patterns (Goodwill 2008; Sandbrook 2010). The third step was to establish the contribution of tourism to the income of the local community. This was done through collecting information on the total revenue obtained by households, using questionnaires, and establishing how much of the total revenue is obtained from tourism activities.

2.4 Data Analysis

In this study, questionnaire responses from the household respondents' tourists and interviewees were analysed using mixed methods research techniques. Both qualitative data analytic techniques and quantitative data analytic techniques were utilized, commencing with quantitative analyses, and then followed by qualitative analyses. The quantitative analyses were employed to evaluate the contribution of tourism to local economies using monetary values given by the respondents. Quantitative analysis was also imperative to assess the amounts of money that was spent by tourists which is not retained in the study area. Qualitative analysis was employed to assess the community perception of tourism and the value they place in preserving the environment. Qualitative analysis was also important to assess the perception of the tourist on the value of the tourism product in Nyanga. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were carried out to analyse the quantitative data. The descriptive statistical analysis using percentages and frequency counts was used to explain about the socio economic characteristics of the communities studied. Inferential data analysis was carried out by using chi-square. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the main tool for quantitative data analysis. Formal data analyses were preceded by cleaning up of the data and coding that facilitated further analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Ownership of the Hospitality Sector in Nyanga

The study revealed that international leakage is very minimal in Nyanga at the present moment. Majority of the hospitality establish-

ments that were surveyed, 4 hotels; 6 guest houses, 2 Lodges were owned by local companies. Of the hotels only 1 was owned by a regional consortium; 4 of the guest houses were locally owned, all lodges surveyed were owned by the government. This trend only emerged in 1999, before this year the reverse was the norm. This means that in terms of ownership there is limited leakage (Supradist 2004). Goodwill (2008) and Perez-Ducy de Cuello (2001), found that foreign ownership reduces the capacity of tourism to reduce poverty. Tourism business in Okavango, Botswana is foreign owned which has left the local communities in poverty (Mbaiwa 2003). Local ownership of tourism services has led to a reduction in poverty in Mexico (Foucat 2002); in Kenya (Ogutu 2002); in Uganda (Sandbrook 2010); and Indonesia (Walpole and Goodwin 2000). However, it should be noted that the local ownership in this case refers to a national level and in all cases no local people owned shares in the hospitality service providers and as such had benefits limited to employment and selling products to the providers and tourists at local markets. This means that tourism profits are remaining in Zimbabwe but not in Nyanga itself. Such a scenario consequently exacerbates intra-national inequalities which may lead to the creation of local elites who are as much exploitative as the multinational players in the tourism industry. This is an area which is ideal for further research.

3.2 Bookings and Purchases

The study revealed that very few bookings are done through travel agencies or tour operators. Most conferences are booked by conference organisers themselves and not through travel agencies. However, international conferences were shown to use travel agencies but these were very few in the area. Results showed that the major purchases for operation of hospitality providers was food and beverages which accounted for 70% of regular costs; salaries were the second from purchases at 21%, maintenance equipment, cleaning chemicals 4%; serviettes, replacing broken cups, plates and building material 3%. Results showed that 80% of purchases of goods used to provide services to customers were Zimbabwean products. Thus for each USD \$ 1 spend on food purchases, 0, 80 cents remained in Zimbabwe. Hoteliers and other food

service providers in Nyanga noted that most of their food supplies save for potatoes, apples, tomatoes and a few varieties of vegetables were purchased from the big cities, especially Mutare. Similar findings were obtained in Are in Sweden (Supradist 2004). Similar findings were obtained by Scheyvens and Russell (2012) who found that in Fiji 80% of the food was purchased from outside the local economies due to issues of quality, quantity and consistency. In beverages purchased there were lots of imports especially wine which was imported mostly from South Africa and European sources. Forks, spoons, were imported mainly from South Africa, television sets in guest rooms were imported mainly from South Africa.

3.3 Tourist Spending Traits

The study established that a single tourist would spend at least USD \$ 110 per day on accommodation food, drinks, entertainment and making phone calls. Expenditure of visiting sites was estimated at USD \$ 25 for fuel expenses, USD \$ 12 inclusive of entrance fees and hiring a guide. Tourists spent an average of \$ 40 purchasing souvenirs, crafts, fruits, vegetables from the locals. Some of the souvenirs like cups, golf t-shirts, hats, flags and crafts (sculptures, reed hats, and wood carvings) were sold at souvenir shops found within hotel establishments; these accounted for 40% of the \$40 on souvenirs. This then translates that from an estimated average spending of USD \$ 187 the local shops and markets get USD \$ 24 which is 12, 83% of the tourist spending with 87% going directly to the service providers. In terms of income, out of USD \$187 that is spend by each tourist in Nyanga per day, the locals only get USD \$24 which is 12. 83%; and the rest, 87.17 goes to the service providers which are not owned by the local people. These results agree with the findings of Sandbrook (2010) in Uganda were 76 % of revenue leaked from the local economy. It must be stated, however, that most studies dealing with leakages in tourism concentrated on revenue leaving the country and virtually ignored the importance of leakage within the country and its potential impact and implication on livelihoods and poverty alleviation strategies (Sandbrook 2010). International tourists spend more money in purchasing crafts, souvenirs and paying entrance fees into heritage sites and protected areas. Local

tourists spend more money buying fruits, vegetables and potatoes from the local markets.

3.3 Tourism Employment Patterns

Though the area of tourism employment patterns has been thoroughly researched such as Mbaiwa (2005) in Botswana, Sandbrook and Williams (2012) in Uganda, Scheyvens and Russell (2012) in Fiji, Hummel et al. (2012) in Vietnam, studies have focused on the employment patterns. The current research explored whether the employment trends led to leakage of tourism revenue from the local economy. The tourism industry was shown to provide direct employment to about 800 as full time and temporary workers. Majority of the managers, supervisors, accountants, chefs and other senior employees were not locals (n=8) out of the 9 interviewed from Nyanga though they were Zimbabwean. All of the managers surveyed were from the big cities especially Harare and none were local. Of the full time employees, there was an equal spread between the local population and non-locals. All of the seasonal/part-time employees surveyed were local. Full time employees salaries ranged from USD \$ 960.00 to USD \$ 3,000.00 per year. The study could not get salary scales for the managers. Part-time employees received between USD \$ 30.00 to USD \$ 80 per month depending on the duration and type of labour provided. There was therefore a case of internal leakage where income benefits are not kept in Nyanga when it relates to employment in the hospitality industry.

3.4 Employee Spending

The research identified tourism employee spending as an important component to evaluate leakage from local economies. While Synman (2012) looks at tourism employee spending, the focus was on poverty alleviation and not how the spending contributes to leakage of tourism revenue. This crucial component has widely been ignored in existing literature. Majority of the lower level employees spend most of their incomes on food and other basic household expenses. Most of the food stuffs were purchased locally in shops around Nyamhuka growth point. The study revealed that lower income employees purchased some clothes from the local flea market at Nyamhuka growth point. Managers

and senior level managers purchased food either locally at Nyamhuka or chose to shop in bigger cities especially Mutare which is 90 km away. For clothes, managers shop in the big cities especially Harare which is 220 km from Nyanga. All employees purchase appliances like televisions and radios in the big cities as such are still limited in the local shops and as such have higher price ranges. The lack of training and education in tourism and hospitality is a major cause of leakages as skilled labour is acquired from cities outside Nyanga. The lack of local shops to provide some necessary items to the hospitality sector and individual employees also contributed to leakages in Botswana and Uganda (Mbaiwa 2005; Sandbrook 2010).

3.4 Leakage Levels in Nyanga

Leakage levels are not high in Nyanga. Using the classification by Supradist (2004), the most dominant type of leakage noted in the study area was import leakage as most hotels purchase foodstuff which is not locally produced (Fig. 1). This can be understood from the viewpoint of the prevailing economic climate in Zimbabwe where most industries have closed down causing imports to rise. The import of goods is therefore not exclusive to the tourism industry alone. The

low external leakage is due to the fact that most foreign businesses do not feel confident to invest in Zimbabwe because of the current political climate. The low pre-leakage is a result of the small number of international tourists visiting the study area. The tourism industry does not employ many locals in high paying jobs and this is a form of leakage. The spending patterns of the tourism employees are also sources of leakage of tourism revenue from Nyanga. These two leakage perspectives were not noted by Supradist (2004).

3.5 Computers, Televisions, Slot Machines Service Vehicles

It was established that most materials, equipment, spare parts and energy products in the tourism industry in Nyanga is obtained outside the region and country. This was common in most other studies such as Sandbrook (2010), and accepted as a necessary leakage as most local communities did not have the capacity to produce these. However, these added in an extra leakage when there is need for repair and maintenance which is normally very expensive and used experts who are always non-local (Mbaiwa 2003, 2005). Service providers in Nyanga chose to take their vehicles for servicing in

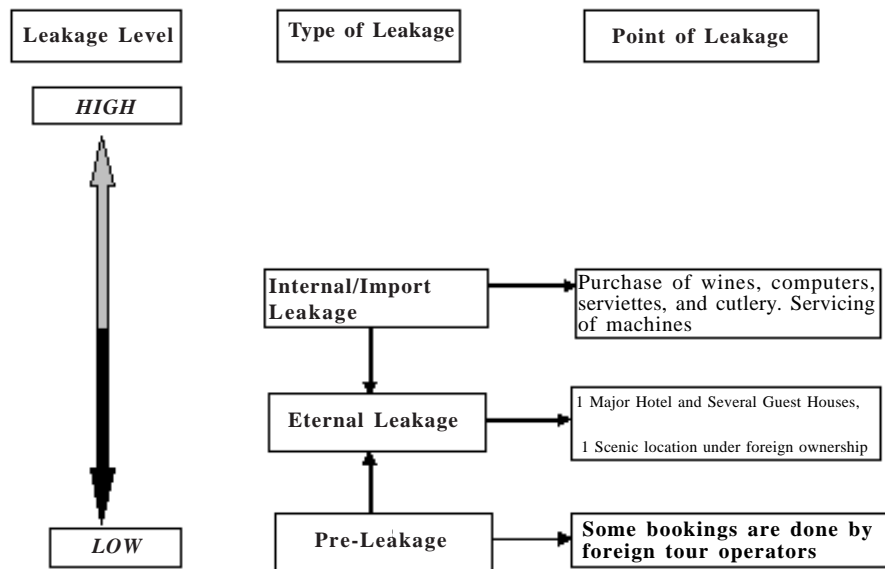


Fig. 1. Leakage levels in Nyanga

established garages in Harare while local mechanics operate in Nyanga. Potential revenue for the locals is thus lost this way. There is a need to establish a working link between tourism and these local services (Ogut 2002).

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that leakage is a prevalent economic phenomenon in the tourism industry. In as much as leakage levels are relatively low in Nyanga, the contribution of tourism to communities was lower than other local economic activities. Leakage is acceptable as long as the income to the local economy is higher than the loss from all kinds of leakage. Low leakage in Nyanga's tourism is a result of limited number of visitors' especially international tourists and this has result in lower levels of income flowing into the area which limits the possibilities of expansion and development by other sectors of the local economy. Management of leakages, however, is essential if local communities are to reap the full benefits of tourism.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Managing and Reducing Leakage Levels

This study shows that leakages are an integral part of tourism for which there is no simple panacea due to the nature and operation of the industry. There is, however, a need to bring down leakage percentages so as to maximise on revenue generated from tourism in the areas where the product is produced and largely consumed. Reduction of leakages can only be achieved through the creation of strong and sustainable linkages of ecotourism with the other livelihood options, training local communities, the expansion of local assets and strong local community participation in ecotourism activities.

5.2 Creation of Strong Sustainable Linkages

What is important is not just creating more employment for the locals in tourism but rather creating opportunities for locals to offer their products and services to the tourism industry using the skills and systems that are already established in Nyanga. Locals can be trained to be tour guides and earn extra income from that activity. Hoteliers can be encouraged to pur-

chase foodstuffs such as potatoes, apples and other fruits which are produced locally. Such business gaps can lead to other small business opportunities where some of the locals can provide packaging for the products, others transportation from the farms. This will in the end create a network of business through a stable and sustainable source of income.

5.3 Training and Capacity Building

Admittedly like in any other industry, some elements of leakage cannot be controlled and indeed are essential for the whole operation of the tourism sector. In the case of tourism in Nyanga, the importation of computers, motor car parts and experts to service them are a necessary leakage because Nyanga and Zimbabwe at large has not yet developed the capacity to produce these. It is the prerogative of government to actively encourage skills training in technology so that the country can have its own experts to at least deal with servicing machines when they break down. This step will help reduce the leakage. As for international wines and foodstuffs, the key is to encourage the visitors to try local dishes, this is only possible through years of advertising and campaigns but it pays off in the end.

5.4 Local Community Participation

The effectiveness of ecotourism as a means of boosting local community livelihoods and enhancing conservation was seen to be attainable only through the active participation of local communities. The active involvement of the local communities is needed to retain much of the revenue from tourism activities and for them to help in the sustainable use of natural resources especially forestry and wildlife. Government can pass policy to assist local community members to access loans from local banks and financial institutions. Locals can also participate through the provision of services such as tour guiding, nanny services. Local community participation would lead to the establishment of a strong individual and shared asset base for the local communities as well as improving the share of profits they gain from having tourists in their areas. This would in turn work to motivate conservation and protection of the environment as they would have tangible rewards for doing so.

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