

# **RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF REDEMPTION CAMP, OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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## **Abstract**

*Researchers had generally observed that inappropriate tourism development often leads to increased stress on destinations' physical and sociocultural characteristics. The Redemption Camp being a world renowned religion tourist destination has been susceptible to physical environment degradation over the years. This paper therefore aims to assess Redemption Camp residents' perception of positive and negative impact of tourism on the physical environment of the redemption camp. The data for this study were obtained through a questionnaire survey of 146 households' heads or their representatives. The sample was selected through a random sampling technique. Descriptive statistical analysis and chi-square analysis were employed to analyse the results. From the results it can be concluded that many natural resources in the redemption are endangered as a result of religion tourism. It is therefore recommended that town and land-use planning authorities should be involved in safe-guarding the natural areas, water bodies, and sustainable conversion of wild land to tourist sites.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, Environment, Sustainable, Natural Resources, Redemption Camp.*

## **Introduction**

Tourism is a global industry of great economic importance, driven by our human desire to experience new environments, be it natural environment of a tropical beach or built environment of an old city. But uncontrolled development and business operations can lead to some negative consequences like pollution, loss of biodiversity, economic inequality and unsuitable cultural heritage (Madras Tourist and Travel Agency, 2013). According to (Aref *et al*, 2009), tourism provides a reason to preserve the natural scenery and man-made historic sites, traditional towns and neighbourhood. Amuquandoh (2009) explained that the environment is one of the main domain on which residents should assess the potential effects before they decide to embrace or reject it, while Vehbi and Doratli (2010) asserted that the environment, whether natural or built is the most fundamental ingredients of tourism development. Keller (2000) stated that all factors (living and non-living) that actually affect an individual organism or population at any point in the life cycle is the environment. Destination planners and tourism companies must supply the needed tourism development and infrastructure to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists. As tourists arrival increases, the cumulative impact of tourists on the environment and demand for resources also increase (Gossling, 2002).

## **Environmental Impact of Tourism**

Natural areas form the basis of many tourist attractions, with their scenic value or the opportunity to see exceptional fauna and/ or flora (Vehbi and Doratli, 2010). They stated that tourism activities affect natural environment in various ways, and some forms of tourism can have an extremely detrimental effect on ecologically sensitive areas, resulting in habitat degeneration or destruction. Natural resource transformation for tourism development can directly threaten and destroy ecological habitats (Amuquandoh, 2009). Ecosystems and natural habitat can be damaged by tourists' infrastructure, tourists' activities, recreational boating and the cruise industry; and despite its many adverse impacts, tourism can have positive impacts on both the natural and artificially constructed environment as well as destination communities (Davis and Cahill, 2000). According to Sunlu (2003), negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than environment' ability to cope with its use within acceptable limits of change. He explained that uncontrolled convectional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. Sunlu (2003) further stated that this can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires.

Tourists' transportation, accommodation and activities at a destination alter the environment and consumer resources Assante *et al* (2010). While tourism has some positive environmental impacts such as raising environmental awareness, lack of good planning causes many more environmental costs. Cohen (1978) explained that tourism development transforms its destination, usually with many negative outcomes. He asserted that environment is also sometimes used to denote a certain sets of circumstances surrounding a particular occurrence. Most conservationists such as Cellallos-Lascurain (1996) have argued that tourism is relatively environmental benign activity and an economically viable alternative to extractive industries, such as mining and logging. Mason (2003) explained that the negative environmental impacts which are frequently highlighted include littering, overcrowding, traffic congestion as well as pollution of water, soil along with deterioration of natural resources as a result of the construction of tourism services.

## **Residents' Perception of Environmental Impact of Tourism**

Residents' relationships with local environment become decontextualized (Gossling, 2002). Residents in mass tourism destination face congestion, noise, neighbourhood, environmental dereliction and higher prices resulting from competition with tourists for scarce resources consequently resulting in decreased community satisfaction (Cavus & Tanrisevdi, 2003). The environmental impacts of tourism on residents can take the form of both the quality of the physical environment and access to these resources in which positive environmental impacts on a community (Mason, 2003).

According to Bryd (2007), sustainable tourism development can be achieved normally when all stakeholders are involved in tourism development process. Sustainable tourism believes that the community is the focal point of tourism and planning process (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). The investigation of residents' perception towards tourism is important because it influences their behaviour towards tourism (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003). Sustainable tourism development largely depends on the host's acceptability of tourists and tourism-related programs, offerings and activities by locals (Musa, Hall and Higham, 2004). They further stated that the active support of local population is required for tourism development to occur in a community. Lepp (2007) asserted that one indicator that affects tourism development in a destination is the host attitude. In a destination area, the attitudes of

the tourists and residents are taken into account. According to Kuvan and Akan (2005), residents are more sensitive and concerned for problems related to the environment than the other negative impacts of tourism. They further explained that there is a lack of information on residents' perceived environmental impacts of tourism in developing countries.

The greatest challenges in the transport sector are establishing the right policy framework, legal and regulatory aspects, infrastructure and services to manage the growing demand for mobility, while reducing negative impacts locally and globally. According to UNEP (2011), in the case of India, interventions such as enhancing public transport and non-motorised transport systems require surmounting institutional, financial and social barriers. The project will help improve the understanding and enhance institutional capacity for charting a sustainable low-carbon transport development and provide a framework for similar interventions in other countries.

Population increase is one of the most serious environmental problems. As the population increases, it puts greater demands on our land and resources, the need for planning to minimise losses from natural hazards and processes also increases.

### **Christian Religion and Environment**

Religion especially Christianity has influenced the economic development of many countries, though has been cast as an enemy of environmental responsibility (Jenkins and Chappel, 2011). Studies of Christianity and environment include analyses of the environmental practices of particular Christian communities, evaluations of the ecological significance of Christian beliefs, research on relations of environmental sciences to Christian views of creation, "green" renditions of faith, and constructive proposals for ecologically reforming the tradition (Jenkins and Chapple, 2011). They explained that research in this area is generally informed by a sense that contemporary environmental problems pose a serious challenge to the major moral tradition.

Jenkins (2009) describes three different strategies of Christian response to environmental problems, each shaped by a different background tradition with its logic of nature and grace. Rather than look for a common Christian worldview assessed against an ecological worldview, Jenkins examines how different accounts of the experience of God produce different interpretations of the human experience of earth. Those various ecologies give rise to different ethical strategies for confronting environmental problems.

Renewed research into the environmental dimensions of theological traditions reflects wide interest from Christian communities for ways to support environmental protection with the distinctive reasons and rhetoric of their own style of faith (Jenkins and Chapple, 2011). The significance of that interest and those reasons for a particular community, they explained, depend on how environmental relations matter for the lived experience of particular communities.

### **Methodology and Data Collection**

The Redemption Camp in Nigeria is the international headquarter of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, with Pastor E.A. Adeboye as the General Overseer. The Redemption is situated on 46 Lagos/Ibadan Express way, Ogun State in the South West of Nigeria. Before the year 1983 when development started on the ground, the place was a thick forest occupied by variety of wild animals and natural features. Development started on the ground in the year 1983, with the emergence of auditoria for meetings and few dormitories for accommodation. The redemption camp has being a prominent site for religion tourism over

the years. Religion tourists visit the camp from all the globe especially during the yearly convection normally held every August and Holy Ghost Congress held every December.

Since 1983, the redemption camp has developed in leaps and bounds. The development is widely spread ranging from provision of all basic amenities such as water, electricity, tarred roads, guest houses, presidential guest house, resorts, prayer auditoria pastors' quarters, restaurants, financial institutions, beauty salons, supermarkets and one open market. Acquisition of more lands on daily basis leads to the spatial expansion of the camp which has led to emergence of a huge worship centre which is capable of housing over 1.5 million people for religion programmes. Also over 10 RCCG parishes are now located in the redemption camp Many members of the church are given lands and encouraged to build personal residential houses in the camp. The redemption camp also houses academic institutions owned by the church from primary to tertiary. The Redeemer's university was established in 2005 and has its main campus in the camp. The world class Bible College was established to train pastors from all over the globe.



Fig. 1. Base Map of Redemption Camp  
Source: The Administrative Office, Redemption Camp (2012)

The purpose of this study was to explore Redemption Camp residents' perception of impacts of tourism to the physical environment. The population of interest were residents of Redemption Camp. The data for this study was obtained through a questionnaire survey of 200 households' heads or their representative older than 18 years old, out of which only 146 (73 %) were retrieved. The outstanding 54 questionnaires were either as a result respondents not completing the filling of questionnaires or questionnaires not properly filled. The survey took place among residents of camp by May, 2013. To get an even distribution of respondents through the redemption camp, it was divided into four zones. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the subjects. The first stage involved the use of simple random techniques to select 50 households from each zone. The second stage involves purposive selection of the head of each household involved in this study. From Zone A, 36

questionnaires were retrieved, 38 from Zone B, 38 from Zone C, and 34 from Zone D, making a total of 146 (sample size).

The data were collected through a questionnaire which consisted three sections: The demographic characteristics of respondents were considered, positive and negative impact of tourism on the environment and residents' environmental awareness were also examined. The first section sought the socio-demographic characteristics of Redemption Camp residents such as age, sex, marital status, nationality, tribe, occupation, income per month, educational attainment, religion and length of residency. The second section through questions of agreement or disagreement sought the opinion of residents on the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the environment of redemption camp. The third section sought information on residency awareness of some environmental hazards in the through Yes and No answers, and how unsustainable tourism practices could cause global warming through a 5 point Likert scale.

The questionnaires were administered using four trained research assistants (one for each zone). Each of the research assistants was very fluent in Yoruba, one of the prominent cultural languages in Nigeria and English language. This approach was successful as most of the respondents were literates.

The major objectives of this study were therefore to determine the demographic characteristics of Redemption Camp; investigate residents' perception of the environmental impacts of tourism in the camp; and determine the extent to which residents are involved in sustaining the environment. The study also evaluates two hypotheses:

H1: Residents' perception of global and climate change and its relationship to education of respondents

H2: Residents' perception of the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the physical environment of Redemption Camp and its relationship to the education of respondents.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Demographic profile of respondents**

A detailed description of the demographic characteristics of respondents was imperative for the understanding of residents' perception of impact of tourism on the physical environment of redemption camp. The redemption camp is a cosmopolitan city and so being an international headquarters for redeemed Christian church of God had some non-Nigerians (about 1%) as the respondents. Majority of the Nigerian respondents (84.6%) were expectedly of Yoruba tribe as Redemption Camp is located in Yoruba dominated area. Residents' length of stay ranges from 1 to 20 years and respondent's age ranged from 25 to 64 years. Majority of the respondents (47.6%) are between the age ranges of 35-44 years. More than two-thirds of the respondents are married and most of the respondents (69%) were males indicating most heads of households available at the point of questionnaires administration were males. It should be noted that customarily in Nigeria, heads of households are males, and that a female becomes head of household only if the husband dies or she is not married. With regards to educational achievement of respondents, about two-thirds of the respondents had either a university or polytechnic degree. This has helped in respondents' interpretation and consequent response to the questionnaires. The redemption camp has its residents with varied occupation ranging from civil servant, industry worker, private business, university staff, mission staff, pastors, and artisans. About one third (27.6%) of the respondents earn between N100, 000-200,000 in a month while few (9.0%) earn below N50, 000 and 1.3% earn above 1 million Naira monthly. Expectedly all the respondents are Christians as redemption camp is a solely a Christian religion centre.

## Respondents' perceived negative and positive impacts of tourism on the environment

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the respondent's perceived negative impact of tourism on the environment

S/N	Negative impact of tourism	Disagree		Agree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Deterioration of green fields	51	35.2	94	64.8	145	100.0
2	Loss of the natural landscape and agricultural lands	41	28.1	105	71.9	146	100.0
3	Loss of open space	55	37.9	90	62.1	145	100.0
4	Deforestation	17	11.7	128	88.3	145	100.0
5	Disappearance of water bodies	42	29.0	103	71.0	145	100.0
6	Soil erosion	60	41.4	85	58.6	145	100.0
7	Migration of Big animals	17	12.2	122	87.8	139	100.0
8	Diminished vegetation	27	19.3	113	80.7	140	100.0
9	Pedestrian and Vehicular negative impact on vegetation	30	20.5	116	79.5	146	100.0
10	Air, Water and noise pollution	36	24.7	110	75.3	146	100.0
11	Increased sewage	59	41.3	84	58.7	143	100.0
12	Traffic problems	35	24.0	111	76.0	146	100.0
13	Increased population and overcrowding	39	26.7	107	73.3	146	100.0
14	Natural habitat destruction	38	26.6	105	73.4	143	100.0
15	Increased crime rate	93	63.7	53	36.3	146	100.0
16	Overcrowding during religious programme	26	17.9	119	82.1	145	100.0
17	Insufficient town planning	34	23.6	110	76.4	144	100.0
18	More emission of gases through heavy traffic	20	13.9	124	86.1	144	100.0

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the respondent's perception of the positive impact of tourism on the environment

S/N	Positive impact of tourism	Agree		Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Conservation of natural resources	98	69.5	43	30.5	141	100
2	Improvement of infrastructure prompted tourist's demand	127	88.8	16	11.2	143	100
3	Regeneration and Modernization of the built environment	136	95.1	7	4.9	143	100
4	Cleaning programmes to protect the attractiveness of location to tourists	138	96.5	5	3.5	143	100
5	Physical expansion of built-up area	130	90.9	13	9.1	143	100
6	Improvement of the physical aesthetics of the environment	120	83.9	23	16.1	143	100
7	Increased environmental awareness among residents	116	81.1	27	18.9	143	100

Tables 1 and 2 present the frequency of the responses to the negative impact statements and positive impact statements respectively. Over three quarters of the respondents agreed tourism in Redemption Camp has negative impact on the environment in respect of

deforestation, migration of big animals, diminished vegetation, pedestrian and vehicular negative impact on vegetation, air, water and noise pollution, traffic problems, overcrowding during religious programmes, insufficient town planning and more emission of gases through heavy traffic. Also about 65 per cent of the respondents agreed that there is deterioration of green fields in the camp as a result of tourism. However not too many of the respondents (58.7%) agreed that sewage is increased in the camp as a result of tourism. This might be as a result of the effective and regular environmental cleaning exercises put in place in the camp. Few of the respondents (36.3%) agreed that crime rate has increased in the camp. This also might be as a result of the spiritual programmes that are consistently in place in the camp which must have impacted fear of God and good morality on both the tourists and residents.

It is generally believed that tourism is capable of enhancing development of the environment in a bid to meet tourists' needs. Over three quarters (75%) of the respondents agreed that positive impacts of tourism on the Redemption Camp environment include improvement of infrastructure prompted by tourists' demand, regeneration and modernisation of the built environment, cleaning programmes to protect the attractiveness of location to tourists, physical expansion of built-up area, improvement of physical aesthetics of the environment, increased environmental awareness among residents and generation of revenue for camp development.

### **Residents' involvement in sustainability of the environment**

Table 3. Frequency distribution of the respondent's awareness and involvement in sustainable environment

S/N	Resident environmental awareness variables	Yes		No		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Have you heard of global warming	140	98.6	2	1.4	142	100
2	Am aware that unsustainable tourism activities could lead to global warming and climate change	125	89.3	15	10.7	140	100.0
3	Do you save energy in your home by putting off unused appliances	139	98.6	2	1.4	141	100
4	Energy put off to save cost	96	87.3	14	12.7	110	100
5	Energy put off to protect environment	14	12.7	96	87.3	110	100
6	Do you use less fuel for transport by trekking distances when necessary	110	79.7	28	20.3	138	100
7	Would you pick up litters from your immediate environment	127	90.7	13	9.3	140	100
8	Do you belong to any environmental movement	30	21.3	111	78.7	141	100.0
9	Are you always involved in the redemption Camp's monthly environmental cleaning exercise	93	66.0	48	34.0	141	100

Table 3 shows that almost all the respondents (98.6%) have heard of global warming and climate. This might be as a result of high level of literacy in the Redemption Camp, and also the presence of various institutions (primary to tertiary). In the same vein many of the respondents (89.3%) were aware that unsustainable tourism activities could lead to global warming and climate change. Almost all the respondents (98.6%) agreed that they put off

appliances when not in use at home to save energy. It is interesting to note that majority of them (87.3%) were doing this to save electricity cost (which is quite high in Nigeria now) and not to protect the environment. Many of the respondents (79.7%) agreed that they trek distances to reduce the use of fuel. The reason for this might also be as a result of high fuel cost in Nigeria. Many of the respondents can be said to be pro-sustainable environment as about 90% agreed they would always pick up litter from their immediate environment. Tourism is said to be capable of creating positive environmental awareness among residents and tourists. However, majority of the respondents (78.7%) did not belong to any environmental association. About two-thirds of the respondents regularly get themselves involved in the redemption camp's monthly environmental cleaning exercise.

### Association between the awareness status and educational level of the respondents

Table 4. Chi-square measure of association between the awareness status and educational level of the respondents

	Residents Perception of the positive impact of tourism on the physical environment	Chi-square Value	Df	P-value	Remarks
1	Have you heard of global warming	25.883	4	.000	S
2	Perception of the respondents about seriousness of the global warming as a problem to future in tourism development	27.125	8	.001	S
3	Am aware that unsustainable tourism activities could lead to global warming and climate change	17.217	4	.002	S

In measuring the level of association between the awareness status of respondents about global warming and their education, a chi-square test was performed as shown in Table 4. The result reveals a value of 0.000 which is less than the significant level (0.05), indicating there is a significant relationship between the level of education and awareness of global warming. High literacy among respondents could have led to high awareness on global warming and climate. There is a significant relationship between the perception about seriousness of the global warming as a problem to future tourism development and education of respondents, and also a significant relationship between awareness that unsustainable tourism practices could lead to global warming and education of respondents. As many of the respondents are educated, they perceived that environmental problems could affect the future of religion tourism in the Redemption Camp, while unsustainable tourism practices lead to environmental problems such as global warming and climate.

### Chi-square measure of association between the residents' perception of the negative impact of tourism and education of the respondents

Table 5: Chi-square measure of association between the residents' perception of the negative impact of tourism and education of the respondents

	Residents' perception of the negative impact of tourism on the physical environment	Chi-square Value	Df	P-value	Remarks
1	Deterioration of green fields	11.591	12	.479	NS
2	Loss of the natural landscape and agricultural lands	9.823	12	.631	NS
3	Loss of open space	27.408	12	.007	S
4	Deforestation	9.033	12	.700	NS
5	Disappearance of water bodies	23.713	12	.022	S
6	Soil erosion	42.449	12	.000	S
7	Migration of Big animals	51.292	12	.000	S
8	Diminished vegetation	29.148	16	.023	S
9	Pedestrian and Vehicular negative impact on vegetation	28.650	12	.004	S
10	Air, Water and noise pollution	15.457	12	.217	NS

11	Increased sewage	16.156	12	.184	NS
12	Traffic problems	18.787	12	.094	NS
13	Increased population and overcrowding	16.533	12	.168	NS
14	Natural habitat destruction	23.738	12	.022	S
15	Increased crime rate	12.712	12	.390	NS
16	Overcrowding during religious programme	12.700	12	.391	NS
17	Insufficient town planning	22.131	12	.036	S
18	More emission of gases through heavy traffic	17.682	12	.126	NS

Chi-square test was performed to measure the association between each of the perceived negative impact of tourism and the education of respondents. The result in Table 5 reveals that there is significant relationship between residents' perception in respect of loss of open space, disappearance of water bodies, soil erosion, migration of big animals, diminished vegetation, pedestrian and vehicular impact on vegetation, natural habitat destruction, insufficient town planning and the education of respondents. High level of education among respondents had led to perception of the stated negative impacts on the environment of Redemption Camp. However there is no significant relationship between residents' perceived negative impact of tourism in respect of deterioration of green fields, loss of natural landscape and agricultural lands, deforestation, increased sewage, traffic problems, increased population and overcrowding, more emissions of gases through heavy traffic and education of respondents.

#### **Chi-square measure of association between the residents' perception of the positive impact of tourism and level of education**

Table 6. Chi-square measure of association between the residents' perception of the positive impact of tourism and education

	<b>Residents Perception of the positive impact of tourism on the physical environment</b>	<b>Chi-square Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Conservation of natural resources	22.581	4	.000	S
2	Improvement of infrastructure prompted by tourist's demand	28.690	4	.000	S
3	Regeneration and Modernization of the of built environment	7.922	4	.094	NS
4	Cleaning programmes to protect the attractiveness of location to tourists	6.673	4	.154	NS
5	Physical expansion of built-up area	10.608	4	.031	S
6	Improvement of the physical aesthetics of the environment	6.461	4	.167	NS
7	Increase in environmental awareness among residents	21.718	4	.000	S
8	Religion tourism brings revenue for camp development	17.077	4	.002	S

The chi-square measurement of association between residents' perception of the positive impact of tourism and education of respondents is presented in Table 6.

Respondents' perceived positive impact of tourism was significantly related in respect of conservation of natural resources improvement of infrastructure prompted by tourists' demand, physical expansion of built-up area, and increase in environmental awareness among residents, religion tourism bringing revenue for camp development to education of respondents.

However, respondents' perceived positive impact of tourism was not significantly related in respect of regeneration and modernisation of the built environment, cleaning programmes protecting the attractiveness of location to tourists, improvement of physical aesthetics of the environment to the education of respondents.

## Conclusions

From this study it can be concluded that almost everyone who lives in the Redemption Camp is a Christian. Although the Camp is a strictly spiritual- based destination, many of the residents have varied occupation outside the mission work. As majority of the residents in the Camp are literates, many of them are strongly aware of environmental impact of tourism despite their religious affiliation.

While tourism has led in many ways to Redemption Camp development in terms of improved infrastructure and built environment, traffic problem, overcrowding and pollution are among the major negative impacts. Although the level of awareness of global warming is relatively, not many of the residents take any step to prevent it.

The chi-square statistical measurement of association revealed a significant relationship between residents' perception of seriousness of global warming and education of residents. Also a significant relationship was recorded between residents' perception in respect of loss of open space, disappearance of water bodies, soil erosion, migration of big animals, diminished vegetation, pedestrian and vehicular impact on vegetation, natural habitat destruction, insufficient town planning and the education of respondents.

The study recommends that a positive footprint should be encouraged by tourists such as trekking rather than using their vehicles during religious programmes. There must be a viable partnership among transport providers, town planning authorities, academic institutions, environmental organisations and the spiritual leadership of Redemption Camp to provide sustainable tourism.

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