



Examining funeral tourism development at Abono in the Ashanti Region, Ghana

Thomas Yeboah*, Ahmed Kulega, Constance Asana Saaka, Alexander Baidoo
and Charles Afram Snr.

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management,
School of Applied Science and Technology,
Sunyani Technical University,
P. O. Box 206, Sunyani, Ghana.
Email: tommyeboah@yahoo.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The celebration of funerals has brought tremendous growth to the local economy in Ghana, by utilizing the services of the tourism and the hospitality industry ranging from transportation, accommodation, food and beverages as well as other services related to the tourism and the hospitality industry. The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which funeral tourism affects the welfare of households in the study area. The sample was made up of 120 household heads including six key informants drawn from the study area. Data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The study found that there was an increase in the revenue generated by funeral tourism to the district assembly in the study area in question. The study also found that cost of items in the community become very expensive during funeral celebration because of the influx of mourners in the study area. Finally the study recommends that the management of the various tourism and hospitality establishments in the study area, must undoubtedly have an adequate knowledge in all the methods of services so that they transfer the skills they will acquire to their respective employees so as to enable the service operators in the community to enjoy benefits which accrue from funeral tourism.

Key Words: funeral, tourism, Lake Bosomtwe, hospitality, Abono.

Introduction

Currently, Africa is struggling under widespread economic stagnation that has led to severe continental poverty, mounting international debt burdens, fiscal deficits, rising inflation levels and declining economic growth (Okech, 2010). As a way of alleviating Africa's precarious circumstances, some observers have prescribed the promotion of the tourism and the hospitality sectors as a promising strategy to compel broad-based development (Dieke, 2000). The promotion of the funeral tourism industry, nevertheless, generates foreign exchange earnings, creates jobs, develops socio-economic infrastructure, and expands government revenues for the destination country (Okech, 2010).

In relation to this, there are many cases where the hospitality and tourism industry perhaps constitute the principal foreign exchange earner. Examples are Kenya, Morocco, Egypt, Costa Rica, and the city state of Monaco (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012). The growth of the



hospitality sector for instance has been dependent on innovations and the development of the major component that makes the industry. Development pathways in Sub-Sahara Africa seem to include promoting tourism because of the existence of an overseas demand for it (Dieke, 2000).

Two decades ago, the tourism industry in Ghana, was mainly restricted to recreational centres, historical places and the development of community-owned and operated ecotourism activities at major environmental sites in rural areas of Ghana (Zeppel, 2006), and perhaps well-known places of interest like the beaches, public parks and waterfalls. The promotion of these historical places, beaches and eco-sites among others made the industry lose its facilitative purposes as these places had little to inform the culture of people (Asante, et al., 2013). These developments have prompted the significance of introducing funerals into the tourism industry to enhance the communication and experience of culture to facilitate the growth of the tourism and the hospitality sector. This could also be enhanced then by 'dark' tourism and '*thanatoturism*' which falls beyond the scope of this article. The essence of funeral tourism is to create opportunities for the mourners to spend the night and therefore put tourism and the hospitality facility operators in business at the intended destinations. It is in anticipation of this occurrence that all such tourism and hospitality operators work tirelessly to ensure the comfort of mourners in their towns.

During funeral celebrations, tourism and hospitality operators are put into business at the source markets and the destination (Abdulai, 2014). It is very gratifying to note that during funeral celebrations transport operators, hoteliers and other accommodation facility operators of guest houses, motels and inns located at the funeral destinations see such moments as their peak periods especially in a situation where funeral celebrations are rural-based, not to mention bar operators who ensure that their stock levels are at their highest. Restaurant operators and traditional caterers, who are locally, referred to as 'chop bar' operators also prepare themselves for massive service delivery to satisfy their numerous customers on such occasions (GTA, 2011).

Throughout funeral celebrations especially with the traditional full-service funeral, businesses in the tourism and the hospitality sector will have to provide their services in all of its segments. The purpose of this article was to examine the effects of funeral celebrations on the local people at Abono which is found at Lake Bosomtwe basin in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The Bosomtwe District is one of the 30 districts in the Ashanti Region, having been created out of the former Ejisu-Juaben-Bosomtwe District. Bosomtwe District is located at the central portion of the Ashanti Region in Ghana.

Study Area

The study was thus conducted at Abono, a town within the Bosomtwe district in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The Bosomtwe District, is located in the central part of the Ashanti Region and lies within Latitudes 6° 24' South and 6° 43' North and Longitudes 1° 15' East and 1° 46' West. The District has an area of 422.5 km² with a population density of 222.3 persons per km². The District has its capital at Kuntanase (GSS, 2010). Apart from farming, Abono also is a fishing community that has tourism potential such as Lake Bosomtwe which attracts visitors into the community. The road linking Abono from Kumasi, which is about 30-minute drive, is in good shape. There is also the availability of electricity, lake transport, telecommunication and other facilities. Moreover, hotel accommodation, restaurant, summer huts, and open terraces are also springing up throughout the District and especially around the lake (GSS, 2014). The district has



three main forms of religion including the Christian, Islamic and Traditional Religions. With the exception of Jachie, Pramso and Dida and a few other communities that have greater numbers of Moslems, all the others are mostly Christian in religious orientation. Traditional religion is also practiced in some of the smaller communities such as for example Adum Afrancho. There is also a renowned traditional religion situated at Kuntanase which is popularly known as Nana Oboanipa.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study was based on a descriptive design. Ali (1996) posits descriptive surveys as events that are without manipulation of what is being observed. A self-completing questionnaire was the main instrument used for the study. This was however, supplemented by an interview guide. The questionnaires were written in English, which is the official language used in Ghana, but were asked in Asante Twi, the language spoken by the people in the community (GSS, 2010). This was to enable the respondents have proper understanding of the questions asked by the researcher and his assistants. With the help of the instruments, the study was carried out by the researcher and his assistants at Abono. Abono was chosen for the study because of the manner in which funeral celebrations are cherished and held in high esteem by the people in that community. In addition, the community is noted for its warm hosting of travelers that visit the lake area.

The data for this study was collected from a sampled population of heads of households drawn from the Abono area. Employing a multi-stage sampling technique, 120 heads of households were selected from households. Hair et al., (1987), suggest that in a statistical analysis, a sample size of hundred respondents would be enough for such analysis to be deemed suitable. However, the sample size of 120 was arrived at to ensure fair representation of different categories of people living within the community. In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select Abono where respondents were drawn from, based on accessibility to the lake as well as availability of tourism and hospitality facilities in the area.

The second phase centred on the listing of household heads in the community. As part of this exercise, field assistants were tasked to list and identify the number of households in each house and also give identification marks to each of the household heads. The second phase dealt with the proportional allocation of the sample size of 120 among the households in the community, numbering about 340. In the third phase, simple random sampling (without replacement) was used in selecting the individuals from the list of heads of households. Using simple random sampling, one adult household head was selected from the sampling frame to complete a questionnaire. With regards to the descriptive analyses, percentages were used to describe the individual characteristics of the respondents as well as the scores of the various scale items. Meanwhile, one Bosomtwe District Assembly (BDA) member, two hospitality facility operators and three mourners were purposively selected for the in-depth interviewing aspects.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents considered in this study were age, sex, highest educational level, marital status, occupation and income. Table 1, shows that 56.7% of the respondents were males while 42.5% were females. In terms of age, it was found that majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 40-59 years representing 53.3% whilst only few of the respondents were below 39 years. More specifically, there were 29.2% of respondents who were between the ages of 30 to 39; whilst 16.7% were above 59 years.



Table 1 also shows that 34.2% of the respondents had secondary education whilst 28.3% had tertiary education, 20% had basic education and the remaining 15.8% had no formal education. With regard to marriage, 53.3% of the respondents were married whilst 33.3% were never married with, 13.3% ever married. That is, 33.3% percent of the respondents were either divorced or widowed.

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Individual characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	68	56.7
Female	51	42.5
Age		
20 - 39 years	35	29.2
40 - 59 years	64	53.3
>59 years	20	16.7
Level of education		
Basic	24	20.0
Secondary	41	34.2
Tertiary	34	28.3
no formal education	19	15.8
Occupation		
Related to tourism	35	29.2
Not related to tourism	85	70.8
Marital status		
Never married	40	33.3
Married	64	53.3
Ever married	16	13.3
Income		
< ₵100	20	16.7
₵100 - ₵199	33	27.5
₵200 - ₵299	32	26.7
₵300 - ₵399	14	11.7
₵400 - ₵499	10	8.3
>₵499	11	9.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field data (2016)

Note: \$1.00 = ₵3.9

With respect to occupation, 29.2% of the respondents had jobs which were related to tourism. These included operators of the hotels, restaurants, chop bars as well as those working as tour guides at the Lake Bosomtwe. Meanwhile 70.8% of respondents had jobs which were not related to tourism. These jobs included trading, fishing, farming, teaching, nursing and work as artisans. Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that 16.7% of respondents were receiving less than hundred Ghana Cedis (₵100) as their average monthly income, 27.5% received between ₵100 - ₵199, 26.7% had average monthly incomes between ₵200-₵299, 11.7% had ₵300 - ₵399 and a small set of respondents representing 8.3% had an income of ₵400 - ₵499 while the remaining 9.2% received an average monthly income of above ₵499.

Perceived economic benefits of funeral tourism to the local households

Funeral tourism can become a major contributor to economic development in local areas if it is strongly linked with the other sectors of the domestic economy in an efficient manner. Thus,



funeral tourism can be a major instrument for compelling national and regional development, generating employment, earning foreign exchange, improving balance of payments and bringing about infrastructural development that will benefit households in the local community (Glasson et al, 1995).

In the Lake Bosomtwe basin, funerals were perceived to have some economic development value as well as costs. The aim of the study was to assess the effects of funeral celebration on the local people at Abono in the Lake Bosomtwe basin. Specifically, the paper investigated funeral celebrations in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin and their contribution to the improvement of household livelihoods in general, as illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2: Perceived economic benefits of funeral tourism to households

Economic benefits	Frequency	Percent
Revenue	34	28.3
Mourners expenditure	20	16.7
Improvement in standard of living	29	24.2
Market	26	21.6
Job opportunity	11	9.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field data (2016)

Revenue

The contribution of funerals to the promotion and marketing of tourism at Abono cannot be over-emphasized. Table 2 shows that 28.3% of respondents were of the view that the Bosomtwe District Assembly (BDA) obtains revenue from funeral tourism as mourners attending funerals in the community pay for access or an entrance fee. The local government under whose jurisdictions the funeral tourism is organized, thus obtain revenue from the mourners who attend funerals at Abono. The Bosomtwe District Assembly levies entry or access fees on visitors to the community including mourners at the gateway to the lake basin at Abono. Visitors are charged a maximum of GH¢5.0 on entry into the study area. When asked to indicate the amount of revenue received from mourners as entry fees to the community, the BDA could not tell exactly what the case was due to poor record keeping. However, they indicated that revenue that accrued to the BDA when funerals were being celebrated, goes up during that day. Abdulai (2014) indicates that on holidays, an average of 1200 holiday makers are welcomed in the locality. This implies that when some events (including funerals) are being organised at Abono, the BDA can make up to a tune of GH¢7,200 per day.

Mourners' expenditure

The value of funeral tourism to a local economy is reflected in mourners' expenditure at the funeral destination. Table 2 shows that 16.7% of respondents perceived economic benefits of funeral tourism to emanate from mourners' expenditure in the community. This commonly covers all expenditure from the mourners in a community including donations to the bereaved family and mourners spending on transportation, accommodation, food and drinks among others. While global estimates of tourist expenditure provide general indications of the value of tourism to an economy, visit and daily averages provide general indications of the type and quality of the traffic to a destination (Burkart and Medlick, 1981). During an in-depth interview,



accommodation facility operators indicate that some mourners, especially during the wake-keeping, stay an average of two days, meaning that earnings on accommodation are much higher during funeral celebration times.

Mourners also indicated that they bought souvenirs including beads, drums, flutes, baskets, bangles and bracelets, amongst other items, from the local people. This shows that the souvenir industry has a lot of potential for raking in substantial revenues to the local economy during funeral celebrations. However, respondents revealed that there was keen competition from non-residents of Abono that brings in the souvenirs at much reduced prices from other parts of the Ashanti Region. This threatens to debase its economic contribution to the livelihoods of the local households as such.

Improvement in the standard of living

Poverty reduction has become an essential condition for peace, environmental conservation and sustainable development. Table 2 indicates that 24.2% of respondents were of the view that, funeral tourism in the study area improves the standard of living of households. This also confirms the study by Yeboah (2003) at Abesim in the Brong-Ahafo region in which he found that part of the funeral dues collected from residents in the area (¢1.0 per head at every funeral organized by the funeral committee in the area) was used in supplementing development projects in the community.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of funeral tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation depends on the management strategy of maximizing positive impacts, and eliminating or minimizing negative impacts on households and communities (Ijeomah, 2012). Respondents were of the view that taxes levied on mourners as access or entry levy and taxes paid by the tourism and the hospitality industry were ploughed back into the community to provide social amenities or infrastructure for low income earners to improve their standard of living. However, in an interview with a forty-five year old man at Abono, asserted that:

I am skeptical about the way the district assembly use the money collected from people who enter the community. I can say those who collect the access fee consume it, since we don't see what they use it for in this community.

Respondents also indicated that donations from mourners to the deceased's family members, their patronage on tourism and hospitality facilities and the buying of fish (Tilapia) and farm produce from local farmers had also led to the improvement of some households' wellbeing at Abono. Respondents also revealed that funeral celebrations in the community had led to the proliferation of rental business such as the hiring of canopies and chairs, which are related to the celebrations of funerals, thus, putting money into the pockets of households who were engaged in these commercial activities in the study area.

Market

Table 2 shows that 21.6% of respondents were of the view that the celebration of funerals at Abono in the Lake Bosomtwe basin has brought about a large market to the households in the area. Unlike international tourism where many inputs needed by the tourism industry must be imported, many of the mourners who attended funerals were local people, and therefore an appreciable proportion of the inputs were produced internally in Ghana. For example,



opportunity has been afforded for the production of traditional foodstuffs and fish by the local farmers and fishermen in the lake basin. Other economic activities that had been stimulated by the mourners to the community included roadside shops, hotel business, eating and drinking bars, tour guiding as well as art and craft works.

When some facility operators such as tour guides, hoteliers and 'chop bar' operators were asked about their gains during funeral celebrations, they said their businesses were good during such occasions. They revealed that they made a lot of income even though they could not tell how much were contributed specifically by mourners during funeral celebration periods. The craft industry also benefited from funeral celebrations at Abono in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin as mourners bought items from these traders.

In an interview a thirty-five year old woman from Abono revealed that:

Even though funerals are mainly celebrated to show last respect to the dead person, the celebration of funerals also creates a market for the local people who conduct petty trading during such occasions.

The products that most of the households in this community sell include baskets, paintings, sculptures, pottery and beads among others. The finding of this nature confirms Healey's (1992) suggestion that income accruing from souvenir production promises a new source of earnings to households. He argues that local tourist resorts are not likely to find advantages in manufacturing as such, instead, they are more likely to find advantages in constant innovation of articles bought by mourners, and the promotion and marketing of them. However, without strong linkages between the funeral tourist trade and the other sectors of the local economy, the multiplier effects cannot be created to urge both the growth of the funeral tourism trade and the local economy.

Job opportunities

One of the main motivations for developing funeral tourism at Abono is its potential to create employment for the households. The extent to which employment is generated is a function of the degree of linkages between funeral tourism and other sectors of the local economy. During funeral celebrations at Abono, tourist facilities such as, lodges and hotels as well as transport and retail businesses put themselves together to deliver service to many mourners. These have provided employment for about 9.0% of respondents as cleaners, cooks, watchmen, waitresses and security men, with a few in self-created positions as tour guides and interpreters as illustrated in Table 2.

Other funeral tourism related employment was found in the entertainment industry as well as the retail trade. Indirectly, funeral tourism creates employment in agriculture including fishing for the culinary requirements of the mourners. Also, infrastructure development such as road and hotel construction, provides many short-term job opportunities. The linkages through employment tend to spread the benefits of funeral tourism in the lake basin.

However, respondents indicated that these linkages were weak due to the fact that most of the local employees are unskilled and lowly paid; hospitality businesses such as the hotels in the study area are wholly owned by non-locals and they reap disproportionately large chunks of the benefits from the trade; and there are leakages out of the local economy due to imports from other parts of Ghana or outside of Abono. For example, even though all the five hotels



surrounding Abono are owned by Ghanaians none of them is a native of Abono. The literature often highlights the inequitable distribution of tourism benefits as the chunk of these profits accrue to non-locals at the expense of local households (Gossling 2003). Thus, if funeral tourism development is to be sustainable it must also address intra-citizen distributional inequity at the destinations.

Challenges confronting funeral tourism development in the local community

Even though funeral tourism has been identified as part of domestic tourism that contributes a lot to the development of local communities, all is not well with people living in the funeral destination areas. Among the challenges that comes along with it identified by respondents were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Challenges confronting the promotion of funeral tourism in the community

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Overcrowding	24	35.3
Shortage of foodstuffs	21	30.9
Inflation	11	16.2
Dilution of traditional culture	12	17.6
Total	68	100

Source: Field data (2016)

Overcrowding

Table 3 illustrates that 35.3% of respondents perceived overcrowding of people and vehicles at Abono during funeral celebrations of very important personalities such as chiefs and rich men in the community as a challenge. Respondents explained that during such occasions the community becomes congested with mourners and vehicles in the local area leading to higher noise levels as well as greater pollution and road accidents in the area. Households were of the view that the congestion of vehicles on the roads in the area led to more accidents since most of the drivers of the mourners may not necessarily have been familiar with the road leading to the community. Again, the mourners compete with the local people for food, water, toilet facilities, bathrooms among others causing abnormal queuing for such facilities not to even mention littering of the place with rubbish, leading to social, economic, psychological and environmental ramification in the study community.

In an interview, a member of the Bosomtwe District Assembly said:

Noise pollution is also caused by increased number of vehicles which travel to and from Abono on especially at weekends when funerals of very popular persons in the community were being celebrated. Noise pollution also arises from sound systems and music bands that are organized to grace such funeral celebrations. Noise also generates from the roaring of engine boats on the lake which are being used as commercial cruise boats that carry some of the mourners who take time off to visit the lake.



Some of the respondents were of the opinion that they probably have much reduced hearing abilities since they now have to listen to their friends and relatives only when they shout on top of their voices before they can hear them in a normal conversation.

Shortage of foodstuffs

According to Okpoko (2005:241) sustainable tourism development and its products “meets the needs of present tourists and the host region while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future”. However, at Abono, 30.9% of respondents were of the opinion that developing funeral tourism in the area could lead to a shortage of foodstuffs. Traditionally, Asante’s funeral days are Mondays and Thursdays if they happen not to be bad days (*nnabone*). These are days especially reserved for the deities to descend and assist in the affairs of people living in the Akan communities, especially in the study area. This situation has changed over the years and nowadays, most funeral ceremonies in the area are held on Saturdays when government and other workers are free to attend.

Households explained that labour was normally drawn from farms to take part in funeral celebrations on Saturdays which were the days that most public-sector workers were free to attend funerals. Saturdays were also mostly used by farmers and fishermen in the study area for their farming and fishing activities as these were the days that their children of school going age were also free to help them on the farm. But because funeral attendance by both residents and non-residents were a form of social obligation, these farmers had no alternative but to sacrifice their livelihood activities (farming and fishing) for funeral celebration. This therefore affects employment in agriculture and subsequent shortage of food leading to increasing dependency on imported food. This confirms a study by (Abdulai, 2014) in which he reported that hoteliers at Abono in the Lake Bosomtwe basin import food items like long grain rice, liquor, apples and grapes as well as soft drinks.

Inflation

Table 3 shows that 16.2% of respondents were of the view that funeral tourism had led to inflation in the study area. Respondents explained that normally, food and meat and fish prices were cheaper in the ‘normal’ days at Abono. But the sheer number of mourners coupled with their tendency to engage in conspicuous forms of purchases or consumption, exert pressure on the farm produce, fish and other goods and services in the study area, thus, causing abnormal increases in prices of goods and services especially during occasions such as funeral celebrations.

Dilution of traditional culture

Table 3 indicates that 17.6% of respondents were of the view that funeral tourism had led to dilution of traditional cultures and demonstration effect. The interaction between guests coming from different cultural background and the hosts had led to the acculturation of culture. No wonder a lot of people interviewed wanted the abolishing of wake-keeping since according to them, it encourages drunkenness and promiscuity which could lead to the spread of HIV and AIDS and other social vices which were not part of their culture.

Respondents also explained that the promotion of funeral tourism had also led to a demonstration effect where, especially the youth in the local community aspire to achieve the status of the mourners who travel to the study area. This may of course be equally advantageous or



disadvantageous to the people of Abono. More commonly, it is detrimental; causing discontent and resentment (Mathieson and Wall, 1982) because the degree of wealth and freedom of behaviour displayed by mourners from urban areas imposes an impossible goal for locals to attain. Local people turn to illegal means to obtain that level of wealth they desire, and thus crime rates increase in the area as a result of funeral tourism. The demonstration effect has the greatest influence on the young people and may create generation gaps and class differences between those who desire change and those who wish to retain traditional ways of life. The young and especially the educated tend to migrate. That is not all - the funeral tourism industry may also run the risk of cultural exploitation of the local population when funeral celebrations are commercialized to the extent that they become staged authenticity, and thus losing its solemnity.

Measures to reduce the challenges of funeral tourism

While a number of challenges can be expected in the course of funeral tourism development in the study area, many of these can be eliminated as suggested by respondents during the in-depth interview. In an in-depth interview, respondents suggested that the food shortage problems in the destination can be alleviated by effectively tapping supplies in those places in the Ashanti region where food glut exists. In some interior areas of the region, food lies to rot in the bush because of low demand in those areas and unavailability of vehicles to convey it to where it is most needed. It is obviously necessary for the BDA to provide adequate feeder roads to these rural areas which could link them to the major trunk roads.

Overcrowding and its effects on the social, economic and environmental condition of the destination area could be lessened by avoiding over-promotion of the area. Another possibility here is to diversify the range of attractions available by developing the attractions in other communities within the lake basin like historical and ecological heritages so that demand from mourners can be dispersed rather than concentrated at Abono. After all, they can take time off to visit other areas of tourist attractions within the immediate vicinity of the lake Bosomtwe basin. Finally respondents were of the view that management of the various tourism and hospitality establishments in the study area must have adequate knowledge in all the methods of services so that they can transfer the skills they will acquire to their respective employees so as to enable them provide better services to mourners.

Discussion

This study set out to assess funeral tourism development at Abono in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin in Ghana. One of the important factors making the development of Ghanaian domestic tourism attractive, is its low capital outlay requirement in comparison with those for international mass tourism. As a developing nation, Ghana finds it difficult to mobilize substantial resources, especially foreign exchange, for the development of tourism. It could be seen that an attempt to solve this problem often leads to undue reliance on external agencies and to undesirable negative outflows of foreign exchange.

Since the majority of mourners are Ghanaians of moderate means and modest tourism requirements, it may be relatively easy for the state and the local community to provide a tourism infrastructure which meets their needs. No doubt some high quality facilities have to be provided. An attempt to solve this problem often leads to undue reliance on external agencies and to a negative outflow of foreign exchange. Since the majority of mourners are Ghanaians of moderate means and modest tourism requirements, it may be relatively easy for the state and the local community to provide a tourism infrastructure which meets their needs. No doubt some high



quality facilities have to be provided for local elites so that at least some may be persuaded to take vacations or weekend holidays at funeral destinations rather than overseas. As noted by Serageldin (1993), economic efficiency seeks to maximize the use of funeral tourism resources to meet human needs and to optimize household livelihoods within the limits of existing capital. Evidence from the research indicates that funeral tourism in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin has made it possible for the area to enjoy economic benefits such as revenue from taxes and entry fees, mourners' expenditure in the form of donations and purchases of items in the community, improve standard of living, market and job opportunities.

Nevertheless, the funeral tourism industry has failed to reduce overcrowding, shortage of foodstuffs, inflation and dilution of traditional culture and demonstration effect. This has led to the bulk of the goods consumed by the funeral tourism industry either being sourced from outside Ghana or are brought into the basin from other parts of Ghana. The other finding from this research is that tourism in the lake basin has generated revenue although a disproportionately large part of the revenue accrues to private non-local hoteliers and to a limited extent, local governments like the BDA in the form of taxes and rent, rather than to the local households on whose soil the funerals take place. Unfortunately, there have been no attempts at addressing the inequity in the distribution of revenues accrued to the community through entrance fee charged by the BDA.

Conclusion

Domestic tourism and for that matter funeral tourism, has been virtually neglected by most developing countries. Like the other sectors of the third world, the tourism industry in Ghana is largely externally oriented. Few local people therefore derive appreciable benefits from its existence. From this perspective, the need to develop community oriented funeral tourism, a type which will bring tourism home to the households in the area is important. This is not to say that other forms of tourism like international tourism ought to be completely abandoned, for this would be like 'throwing the baby out with the bath water'. Selective forms of other tourism especially the alternative types, like ecotourism, should seriously be considered side by side with funeral tourism. This may help prepare the ground gradually and realistically for large scale international tourism increases.

This study has revealed that there were perceived benefits of funeral tourism development by households in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin. These include the creation of jobs, development of local infrastructure, funeral donations, market and earning of tax revenue by the district assembly among others. Notwithstanding these benefits, this study has shown that there were challenges in developing funeral tourism in the community. While these are laudable projects that should be replicated nation-wide, they face considerable challenges. For example, souvenirs shop owners in the community complain of keen competition arising from cheap synthetic replicas of their handiworks coming from abroad. The findings also revealed that funeral tourism development led to shortage of foodstuffs, dilution of traditional culture and demonstration effect, inflation and overcrowding. These together had exacerbated poverty in local community with the consequent dissatisfaction and upheavals among local households which may boil over into resentment and even conflict. Some of the ways of remedying the situation is to advertise funeral tourism in both print and electronic media in the local area.

Local households also need to be involved in the management and the development of funeral tourism. This can be achieved through the establishment of funeral committees to take care of



funeral tourism or funeral celebrations in the study area just like the community-based tourism programs that are under the care of local communities to ensure their sustainability. The study recommends that management of the various tourism and hospitality establishments in the study area must have adequate knowledge in all the methods of services so that they can effectively transfer the skills acquired to their respective employees to enable and empower them to provide more effective and realistically better services to mourners.

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