

Local Community Perspective on the Benefits of Hospitality Industry in the Mara Triangle, Kenya

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J. agric. pure appl. sci. technol. 4, 44 – 54 (2009); received September 10/December 20, 2009

A survey was carried out to establish the perspectives on the benefits of hospitality industry to the local community in the Mara Triangle, Kenya. The target population consisted of the local community members, local leaders and managers of the hospitality establishments. Questionnaires and oral interviews were used to gather the data. Preliminary results indicate that majority of the locals (86%) have not benefited from the hospitality industry. (14%) had benefited. The main benefits seen were in employment and trading with the tourists visiting the hospitality establishments. The local community does not support the growth of the industry in this region, reasons given included the perception that the industry occupied critical pieces of land that the community would use for cattle ranching and agriculture, mismanagement of funds obtained through hospitality activities that did not benefit the community, this scenario therefore created a situation where locals felt that they did not own what is in their land. The study therefore recommended that there should be proper management of revenue from the industry especially in direct development of the community either socially or economically, the local community should also be involved in the decision making process especially when projects related to the industry are being initiated. Priority should also be given to the locals during employment as long as they are qualified especially in senior positions. And lastly the industry should give back to the community by initiating and supporting projects that benefit the community such as schools, hospitals, clinics and environmental conservation. This would encourage local community to support conservation of the eighth wonder of the world on which the hospitality industry in the area thrives.

Key words: Local community, Hospitality industry, Kenya, Mara Triangle

Introduction

Like any other global industry, hospitality business activities can have considerable impacts on local development trade. The national park ordinance of 1959 drove indigenous people out of their lands in order to make way for protected areas. According to Honey, 1999 (Honey), the birth of Kenya's protected areas did not go well with communities who were immediately faced with challenges of

displacement and human-wildlife conflict. This conflict was as a result of animals in protected areas migrate out of the parks due to incomplete ecosystem, thereby struggles with the surrounding people and cattle for resources. In the late 1980s, the term ecotourism emerged as a direct result of the world acknowledgement and reaction to sustainable and globe ecological practices. Bruntland, 1987, argued that sustainable development means; development which meets our needs today without compromising the ability of the people in the future to meet their needs. In this instance, the natural-based element activities together with the increase awareness to minimize the antagonistic of tourism on the environment (which is boundless consumption of environmental resources) contributed to demand for sustainable holidays. Sustainable development is establishing ecological limits and more equitable standards that enhance promotion of values that encourage consumption measures which are within the bounds of ecologies. It is a positive social-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and society are dependent. Its successful implementation requires integrated policy; planning and social learning processes (Newsome et al., 2001).

Tourism industry is rapidly growing phenomenon and has become one of the world largest industries that is growing up with a faster pace than world economy and has become one of the main generators of employment and accounts 10% of the world economic activities (WTO, 1998). Kenya is an important international tourism destination accounting for 6% of overseas visitors to Africa (Sindiga, 1996). Kenya was the main destination in the sub-Saharan region with 977 000 arrivals (WTO, 2004). Tourism according to Sindiga, (1996), provides 17000 direct employment and 34000-indirect employment in 1994 accounting to 11% in the sector. To achieve this, the Maasai people must participate in development of tourism to realize maximum benefits from it, hence their involvement in formulation policy and planning of tourism projects. However, critical observation has been that, despite such a lucrative tourist activities in these areas, the indigenous people are kept away from participating in an 'atmosphere' of economic imbalance since the onsets of tourism activities in the area. It is also evidence that tourism brings immense amount of revenue to Kenya, Dieke, (1995). In 2006 tourism was the leading foreign earner by Kshs 55 billions yet the revenue is rarely felt at the local levels. For example it is estimated that over $\frac{2}{3}$ of revenue from Maasai Mara National Reserve remains in the country but less than 10% reaches the local community, (Kantai, 2007).

The Masai Mara Game Reserve is named after the Maasai inhabitants of the area, who are tall and adorn themselves with red robes, plus the Mara River that winds through the park. Masai Mara National Park is world-renowned for the Great Migration of wildebeest and zebra from the Serengeti during July and August. Masai Mara Game Reserve is also famous for being home to more than 20 lion prides.

Mara Triangle

The 197-square-mile Mara Triangle was gazetted as a Game Reserve in 1940. In 1968 the Narok County Council added 386 square miles to the east of the Mara River, forming the Masai Mara National Game Reserve. From 1968 to 1994, Narok County Council managed the entire area. In 1994, Narok District was divided to create the additional Trans Mara District. The Trans Mara District managed the Mara Triangle. Only one-third of the Mara Triangle was secure, with the remainder subject to poaching and illegal grazing; thousands of animals were being killed every year. Hence, concerned local leaders formed the Mara Conservancy in January 2001, a non-profit management company. The Mara triangle falls on Mara-Serengeti ecosystem therefore this contributes to social-economic growth, (Berger, 1993). There are four

large group ranches owned by the Maasai people which border the Masai Mara National Reserve. In the west is Kerinkani, Oloirien, Kimintet, to the north is Koiyaki, Lemek, Ol Choro Oiroua and Ol Kinyei. To the east of the Masai Mara are Siana, Maji Moto, Naikara and Ol Derkesi. Within these group ranches there are several privately managed conservancies. Mara Triangle is managed by The Mara Conservancy, a private Non Profit Organisation. A percentage of revenue earned through park fees by the Mara Conservancy is paid direct to the communities that live on the border of the reserve.0 Western tip of the reserve, bordering Kerinkani, Olorien and Kimintet Group ranches. Hospitality establishments in this triangle include AFEX Maasai Mara Camp, Governors Camp, Governors II Moran Camp, Governors Private Camp, Mara Bush Camp, Mara Explorer, Mara Intrepids, recero camp: Entim Camp, Keekorok Lodge, Naibor Camp, Sala's Camp, Sarova Mara Game Camp, Siringet Mara Camp.

Local community benefits from protected areas are a vital component of hospitality industry and sustainable development. In developing nations, this local community benefit has been considered more difficult to achieve than in developed nations. Ecotourism has been named an alternative to mass tourism in that it seeks to remedy the destructive problems associated with mass tourism. Newsome, et al. (2002) states that, "the primary goals of Ecotourism are to foster sustainable use through resource conservation, cultural revival and economic development and diversification". Ecotourism exists to sustain the development of the world without destroying the environment or the livelihood of the people who live in it. Newsome, et al (2002) declare five principles of Ecotourism, and say, "Ecotourism is nature based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educative, and locally beneficial and generates tourist satisfaction". This study focuses on the importance of local community benefits in Ecotourism. Local community benefits are not a separate issue from ecological sustainability. Without these benefits, long-term conservation and sustainability are impossible, "Sustainable tourism development is unlikely to occur unless the people of rural tourism communities work together to make it happen." (Fennell, 1999).

Kenya's protected areas fall under two major categories – national parks and national reserves – and the government manages each type differently. National parks are owned, funded, and managed by the central government through the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), a semiautonomous institution. Local governments, called county councils, run the reserves (Dieke (1995). The central government partially manages and funds these parks, and the reserves are trust lands. The county council is a group of elected leaders in each of Kenya's counties. These groups of local authorities set aside the land to conserve wildlife, but also are expected to benefit local communities with the protected Lands.

Local Community Ecotourism Projects and Socio-Cultural Impacts

In many triangles, the people who live in or around the parks in Kenya have formed local community Ecotourism projects, which are cultural centers where tourists are allowed into a tribe's village by paying an admission fee (Honey, 1999). These villages are at the heart of Ecotourism because their inhabitants are directly impacted by tourists who enjoy protected areas.

Group ranches

They arose due move for degazetement of the area was for the benefit of the neighboring community to have more grazing area and to have access to watering points along the Mara River. Unfortunately, these groups have emerged to be powerfull, each claiming ancestral rights to the land to the exclusion of all others. The group ranches control all tourism activities within their boundary

Politics

The politicians in the triangle created the reserve without the consent or even the knowledge of the local community, the Tugen tribe (Colagiovanni, 2002). The people still live on the land and use its resources, but illegally according to Kenyan law, even though they were never compensated for their loss of property. The allowance of subsistence activities is due only to the lack of government resources for law enforcement (Colagiovanni, 2002).

Indirect Impacts

The indirect impacts of Ecotourism on local communities mostly affect tourism revenues and tourism to Kenya. In general, these impacts are less poignant for the local people because they do not deal with these large-scale trends every day of their lives. Economic leakage, international tourism marketing, and political unrest and terrorism, however, all affect local community benefits in Kenyan tourism. Economic leakage occurs in a country when a business is run by a foreign operator, and the money that goes into the business leaves the host country. When economic leakage occurs, the indigenous people of the host country do not see many of the benefits of that business (Lindberg, 1998).

Kenya's hospitality industry is notorious for its past and present economic leakage. Sindiga (1999). states, "the international distribution of Kenya's tourism benefits is skewed to the advantage of multinational corporations. Kenya's tourism leakages are very high"). Sindiga (1999). States that economic leakage is a negative impact that should be mitigate so that locals can enjoy more benefits from tourism. Due to the extremely high percentage of international tourists to Kenya, tourism marketing around the world is vital to Kenya's economy. Kenya ranks as number six in tourism earnings behind South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritius, and Tanzania (Dieke, 1995).

Table 1: Visitors Arrivals By Purpose of Visit, 2003-2007 ('000s)

Purpose	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
Holiday	684	885.6	1,063.10	1,087.40	1,278.50	936.10
Business	182.1	246.4	206.1	226.2	242.2	109.40
Transit	219.1	162.2	79.8	137.1	130.9	62.00
Other	61	66.5	129.9	149.9	165.2	95.80
TOTAL	1,146.2	1,360.7	1,478.9	1,600.6	1,816.8	1,203.3

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

The fundamental aspects of the local communities and their capacities to handle tourism development remain major challenge for the developing world. Introduction of Hospitality activities on community protected lands was a strategy to wildlife

conservation and local community poverty reduction, and poverty reduction is the key objective for developing nations of the world to accomplish as stipulated in the United Nations Development Goals. The hospitality business activities can have considerable impacts on the local community's development trends and is considered panacea to economic development and poverty reduction across the developing world (Wishitemi and Masila, 2008). Dieke, (1995). argued that there a lot of revenue from the industry and the large amount of that revenue normally remains in the country although the local communities only receive less than 10% according to (Kantai, 2007). The industry's guiding framework policy in the Mara-Triangle is geared at supporting multi-national corporations with expectation of employing and reducing poverty through trickle-down effects to the local community which may not always be the same. Most of the hospitality projects are initiated without considering surrounding communities' benefits and this case makes them feel neglected and develop a negative attitude towards the industry. It is on this basis that the study is carried out to establish the views of local communities on the benefits of hospitality industry.

Methodology

Target Population of the Study

The study mainly covered local community's households between ages 20 – 70 years within Mara Triangle. The target population constitutes of mainly adults who were directly affect by hospitality industry. Random sampling technique was used to sample out response of ages 20-70 years. The Group Ranches residents, local leaders and hospitality establishments formed the sample. The respondents were issued with questionnaires after establishing that they had the attributes that the study sampling was looking for.

Table 2: The Group Ranch and hospitality establishments, target population and the Sample population of the study

Respondent area	Approx. population	Target population	Sample population
Oloirien	4,200	420	60
Kimintet	4,600	460	66
Kerinkani	3,500	350	50
Hospitality establishments	20	10	10
TOTALS	13,300	1240	186

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents

Respondents categories	Questionnaires administered	Returned questionnaires	Percentage (%)
Local Community	186	125	67
Local Leaders	18	16	89
Managers of Hosp. establishment	7	5	71
TOTALS	211	146	76

The local community had the bigger representation by the number of administered questionnaires i.e. 125 with returned percentages being 67%. Local leaders and managers took 89% and 71% respectively. Managers questionnaire address the issues on what the government had done to ensure that Hospitality industry benefits the Local Community.

The local leaders on their part addressed issues on how the industry is relating to locals.

Results and Discussion

As indicated in Table 4, those with primary level education and illiterate were the majority comprising of 62% of the respondents. This shows that the community has not put efforts on education which is a major consideration to job security in any sector of development. 28% of the respondents have secondary education, 9% attained college education and only 1% has university education.

Table 4: Education level of the Local Community Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	39	31
Secondary	35	28
College	10	9
University	2	1
Not educated	39	31
TOTAL	125	100

Table 5: Locals with/without family members employed in the hospitality establishments

Response respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Locals Without family members employed in hospitality establishments	64	51
Locals With family members employed in hospitality establishments	61	49
TOTALS	125	100

The study as shown in Table 5, established that 51% locals are employed or have their relatives in the hospitality establishments. 49% had no relatives employed in the establishments. From this analysis, we can say that hospitality industry is a source of livelihood for a majority of local community. Among the tasks performed by the relatives were more of white color and included Safari and tour guiding, driving the tourists, Room, food and beverage managing. Those with basic Education also worked as security guards. Those without relatives working in the hospitality establishments gave reasons such as having no relevant skills, establishments having negative attitude on the locals, and tribalism where top management hired people of their own tribe. The respondents also cited lack of political leadership to ensure that the locals are employed and take part in the running of the Hospitality industry.

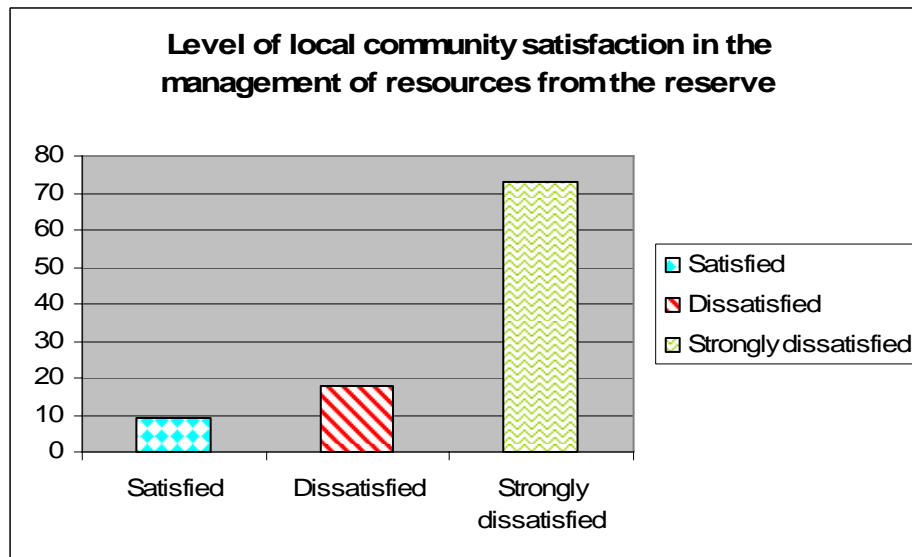


Fig 1: Level of local community satisfaction in the Management of resources from the reserve

According to the opinions given by the respondents concerning the level of satisfaction on funds from the reserves, 9% of the respondents were satisfied, 18% dissatisfied, 73% strongly dissatisfied. Therefore most of the respondents are strongly dissatisfied with the opinion. The reason given was that politically connected people fraudulently got the money and used it for wrong purposes. The locals said that the 19% revenue that was meant for them has no clear stipulation on how it should be used. The local leaders said that they are usually not involved in the decision making process in case of joint initiatives. This scenario therefore created a situation of locals feeling that they do not own what is in their land. Funds from the reserve are meant for projects and activities that benefit the locals, but if the money goes to benefit few individuals the community feels shortchanged.

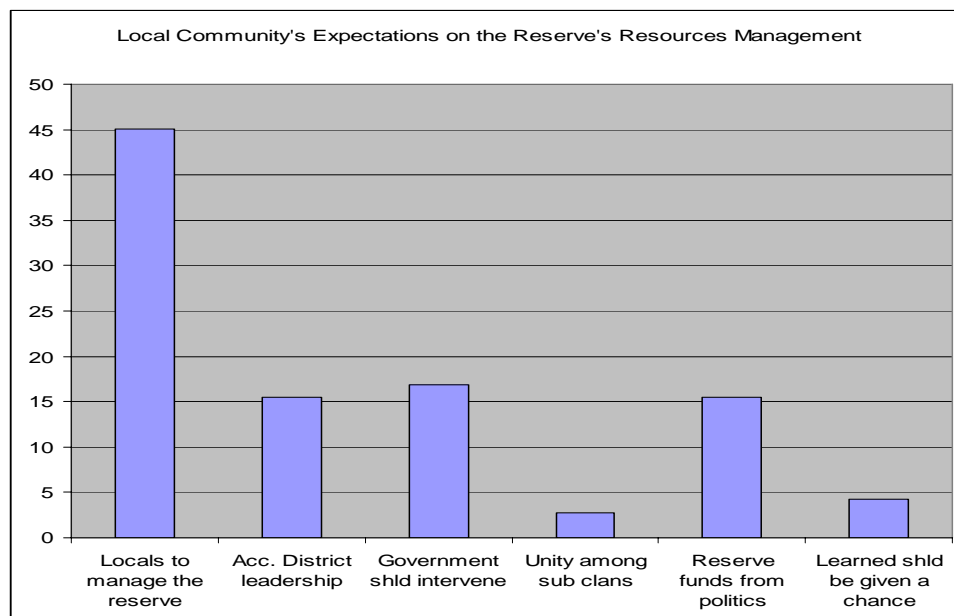


Fig 2: Expectations on the Reserves Resources Management

According to the opinions given by the respondents concerning the measures to be taken to improve industries' image, the following suggestions were given. 45% said

that locals should be given an opportunity to manage the reserve, 16% wanted an accountable district leadership, 17% wanted the government to intervene, 3% wanted unity among sub-clans, 16% wanted reserve funds to be free from politics and 4% wanted to be given a chance for the management of the funds since the reserve was within their community.

Table 6: Projects supported by the industry

Projects supported	Respondent Frequency (125)	Percentage (%)
Culture and Tradition	94	75
Security	73	58
Employment	66	53
Ready Market	64	51
Education	45	36
Health	36	29
Water Supply	31	25
Environmental Conservation	31	25
Infrastructure	29	23

As shown in the table 6, culture and security are rated highly by the local community. The respondents also acknowledge the role of the industry in promotion of the local culture though they say it was because various entertainment programs were beneficial to them. 53% of the respondents indicated that the industry is providing employment to the youths. Seemingly the effort being played by the funds from the reserve in education of the locals are not visible to many, it can be fitting to say that the funds are a success to the community but because many community members have got no students in the higher learning institutions, at least they could not see the importance as indicated by 36% of the respondents on the issue of education.

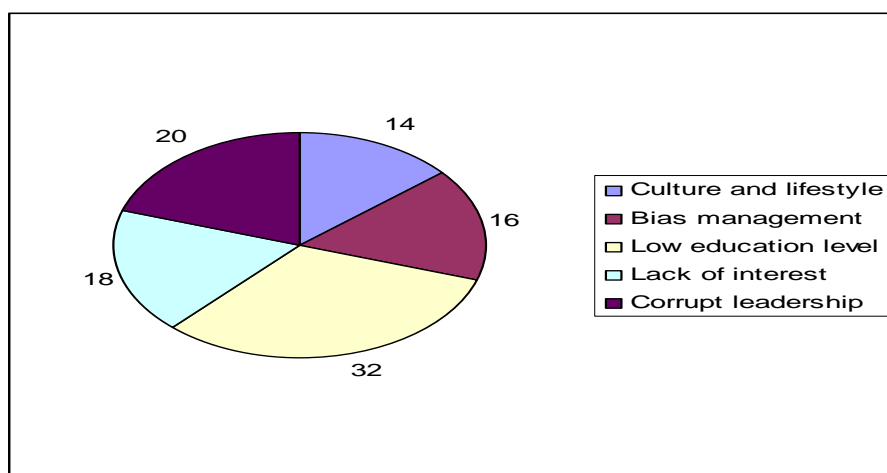


Chart 2. Causes to communities hindrances' to employment

Although the local community members are crying fault of neglect in employment opportunities, they still could give reasons as to why the majority of the family members are not employed. 32% of the respondents admitted that the industry required highly qualified personnel to serve in the industry but lack of education

becomes a major hindrance to the local employment. 20% said it is the corrupt system of the local leadership, 18% argued it was the lack of interest from the members as many residents are at least owning enough piece of land as well as a good number of livestock hence feel comfortable with their possession . Biased management of the facilities was also blamed by 16% of the respondents while 14% of the respondents pointed culture as the greatest detriment to job seeking because of the community’s social structure where they don’t believe in employment

Table 7: Responses of the local community on the level of perceived benefits from Hospitality industry

Response	Frequency	Percentage response (%)
Strongly agree	14	11
Agree	38	31
Disagree	30	24
Strongly Disagree	43	34
TOTAL	125	100%

Majority of the local felt that, the industry does not benefit them. The study established that 34% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the concept of hospitality helping the locals. Only 11% of the respondents see the positive side of the industry.

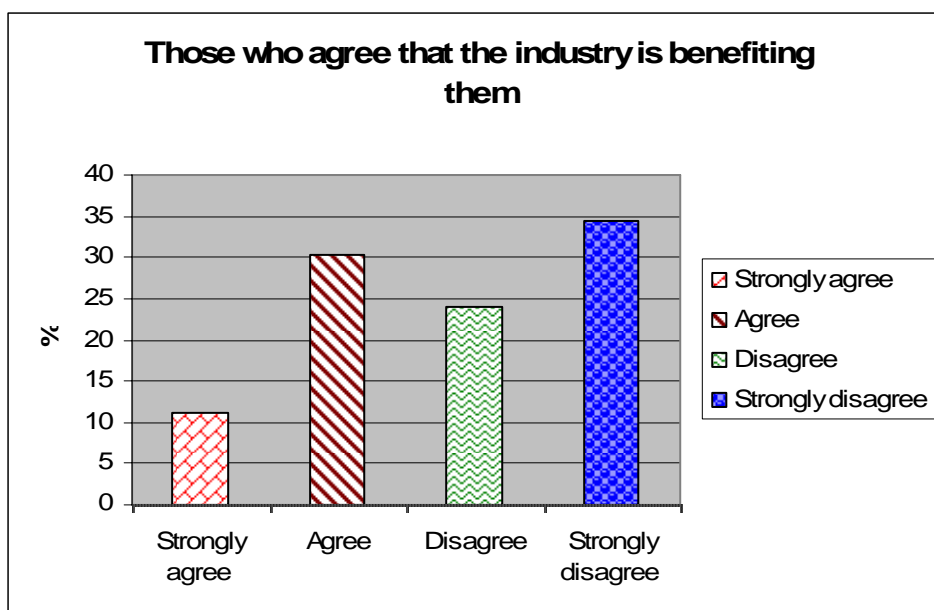


Fig 3. Level of perceived benefits from hospitality industry

Majority of the local felt that, the industry does not benefit them. The study established that 34% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the concept of hospitality helping the locals.

It is worth noting that only 11% of the respondents see the positive side of the industry since they strongly agree that is benefiting them. This is an alarming finding since it shows that the industry does not have the good will from the locals.

Expectations of local communities from the industry

It is the desire of the local community that they be involved in the decision making process of what should be done with the funds. This can only be realized if the three concerned ministries namely; Ministry of Gender, Tourism and Local Government work together. More locals with qualification are also expected to be employed by the industry. Currently the locals feel that outsiders are employed in senior positions while locals are just given junior positions. It is also the desire of the community that in future the industry will give back to the community. They should do this by building schools, hospitals/clinics and by taking care of the environment. The industry has however done some development activities which include building of schools, clinics and improvement of the roads apart from offering employment.

Challenges in resources effective management in the area

Community perceived hospitality establishments to occupy massive pieces of land that could be used for other productive purposes such as cattle ranching and other agricultural activities. This is therefore a great challenge since the industry has to work hard to convince the locals that Hospitality industry offers more benefits as compared to cattle farming. The locals however acknowledge that the presence of the right type of leadership would help in solving the problem of the Mara Triangle. The problems cited here are mainly found with the locals themselves since players on the industry are paying all that they are supposed to pay. The good will is there and what remains is the gap to be filled for the confidence of the locals to be won.

The county council was also blamed for allowing few individuals to access the fund and used it as they please. The locals said there was nothing evident that the fund had done to improve their livelihood. The industry is being challenged to pay locals well yet majority of them do not even possess post secondary qualifications. It is therefore upon the industry to challenge the locals to pursue higher education or even put learning institutions and sponsor bright students. By this, the industry will limit itself to the available local labour. Some reasons cited by those without relatives ranged from the lodges having negative attitude on the locals, locals having no relevant skills and tribalism. The respondents also cited lack of political leadership to ensure that the locals are employed and take part in running of the Hospitality industry. Some tasks performed by the relatives were more of white color such as Safari and tour guide, Drivers, Room Managers, Food and Beverage Managers and Range Managers. Those with basic Education also worked as Security Guards.

Exploitation of the people who sell curios and handcrafts, some local leaders wanted to market by acting as intermediaries between the producers and tourist. With a direct market, the people generate profits for themselves. However, locals used to stand outside and still do outside the gates of parks to sell beaded jewelry and small carvings for very cheap prices. With little buying power, the locals need more incentive to sell things to the tourists.

Conclusion

From the analysis carried out the study has made the following conclusions: It was established that Hospitality industry is a source of livelihood to many locals of the Mara Triangle, The hospitality industry has done well in employment. However, majority of the locals still feel that, the industry does not benefit them in many ways.

The tourism activities are huge in this area but it does not translate to improved lives of majority of the locals as expressed by 86 percent of the respondent's. More locals with qualification are also expected to be employed by the industry. Currently the locals feel that the industry employs people from outside the community in senior positions while locals are just employed in junior positions.

The managers of the establishment reported that county council of Trans-Mara receives some amount from the hospitality establishment which is then used to improve residence living standards.

Acknowledgement

The authors acknowledge the management of the hospitality establishment in the Mara Triangle and the local leaders.

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