

# Involvement of Local People in Conservation and Management of Kainji Lake National Park, Niger State

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## ABSTRACT

The control of forest reserves was under local communities before the creation of national park and game reserve in Nigeria. The interest of local people seems not to be well taken of in the planning, decision making and sharing of forest benefit after the federal government began to control the park in the country. Consequently poaching, encroaching and other illegal activities like hunting, farming, fishing etc are increasing at an alarming rate in conservation area. This research work therefore examined the concept of national park and the role that local people can play in its conservation and management. The study was carried out in Kainji Lake National Park. Data collected include Religion, marital status, family size, sex, level of education, occupation, feeling about the park, medium of information about the park, agreement with conservation, level of sensitization, benefits derived from conservation, willingness to participate, benefit of project to the community, community involvement in park management, relationship between park and community and inter-communal clashes. Results revealed many do not understand the importance of national park in their locality. Many of them are also ignorant of the laws and regulations that guide the Park.

**Keywords:** Local people, conservation, management, national park, wildlife

## I. INTRODUCTION

Wildlife like forestry is a rural based industry which was employed by earlymen as a source of food like bushmeat, medicine, rituals, shelter, clothing, weapon, etc (Idowun et al., 2011). To them, wildlife is indispensable. As a result of this, hunting was a legitimate occupation of rural dwellers in the past (Aremu et al., 2012; Ajayi, 2003). Till today, most rural people hunt to survive. For example, community near forests in Nigeria

obtain 84% of their annual protein from bushmeat. Wildlife conservation in Nigeria started formally in 1916 when the Eastern Nigeria Government Game Law was enacted (Falade and Adebajo, 2008). The theme of this and subsequent game laws enacted by the Western and Northern Regional Government in 1928 and 1963 respectively, was the preservation of the abundance wild animals for posterity. Suddenly, traditional ancient hunting grounds were turned into domestic reserves with permissible hunting rights for domestic purposes. As a consequence 36 former forest reserves were converted into wildlife conservation areas, without mutual agreement with the rural people neither was adequate provision for alternative means of survival for the rural people made (Idowu et al., 2011). By denying the local people access to resources essential for traditional livelihood, normal rural existence becomes impossible without breaking the law (Dow;ing and David, 2003). Hunters and farmers quite literally overnight become poachers and encroachers and as such social protected area. The conservationist are now beginning to realize that national park management that continues to ignore the needs, aspiration, right and involvement of local people cannot hope to survive and this involves the effective participation of local people in decision making, project design and implementation, project monitoring and project evaluation. Therefore a token involvement of local people or community as passive beneficiaries or participation in the plan conceived by the outsider is sufficient guarantee for long term security of the park (Ogunjimi et al., 2012).

Presently, there several national parks in Nigeria namely Kainji Lake National Park (534,084km<sup>2</sup>) Niger State, Gashaka Cumti National Park, Taraba State (630,300km<sup>2</sup>), Chad Basin National Park (228,000km<sup>2</sup>) Cross River National Park (446,225km<sup>2</sup>) Cross River State, Old Oyo National Park (251,200km<sup>2</sup>) Kamuku National Park

(120,000km<sup>2</sup>) Kaduna State, Okomu National Park (11,200km<sup>2</sup>) Edo State (Ajayi, 2003).

The concept of community participation in National Park is considered along the line of natural resources for the common benefit of individuals who live within and around the park. The nature of magnitude of benefits derivable from park may very most time align with the ecological variation that exists, sustainability of such accruing benefit depend much on an effective legislation for its management. For instance, most people living around Kainji Lake National Park are cattle rearers, farmers, hunters, fishermen; who to a large extent engage in act which have negative impact on park resources conservation, with their insensitivity to park development programme probably due to ignorance they engage in poaching and park encroachment thus diminishing the conservation status of the park (Osemeobo, 1978). However these rural people could still be properly informed through integration, increasing awareness on conservation, benefit of conservation and conservation laws (Ogunjimi and Onadeko, 2009; Meduna and Onadeko, 2002).

Therefore, the objectives of this study are: To know the level of awareness of local people about conservation of natural resources; to appraise local people's perception of conservation of natural resources; to assess benefit derived by the local people from conservation; and to assess the willingness of the local people to participate in the conservation and management of the park.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Kainji Lake National Park (KLNP). In Nigeria the role of national park in conserving wildlife for various purposes is widely recognized. The fauna constitute only due element of the complex ecosystem which they belong and are not in stable state. The principal purpose of the plan is to provide all available information relevant to the management of the park. It also makes provisions for it regular revision and updating and incorporate timetable for these purposes.

### 2.2 Location

Kainji Lake National Park extends 80km in an east-west direction and about 60km north-

south. It consists of two sectors, the sectors, the Borgu and the Zaguruma sector. It lies between 9<sup>o</sup>4<sup>1</sup> to 10<sup>o</sup>3<sup>1</sup>N and 3<sup>o</sup>30<sup>1</sup> to 5<sup>o</sup>50<sup>1</sup>E, covering a total area of 5,340.82(sqkm) Tuna (1983). The Borgu sector covers an area of 3,970.02 (sqkm), covering 10<sup>o</sup>5<sup>1</sup>N latitude and 4<sup>o</sup>19<sup>1</sup>E longitude. The Borgu has the Kainji lake on the East while the West is by the republic of Benin. The vegetation of Nigeria consists of forest savannah and montane. The forest zone comprises mangrove forest, rainforest and dry forest southern and northern guinea savannah

### 2.3 Data collected

The following data were collected from the participants: Religion, marital status, family size, sex, level of education, occupation, feeling about the park, medium of information about the park, agreement with conservation, level of sensitization, benefits derived from conservation, willingness to participate, benefit of project to the community, community involvement in park management, relationship between park and community and inter-communal clashes.

Data were also collected from the staff on department, role, status, education level of participants, sex, age, religion, marital status, state, tribe, nationality and sustainable management. All data were analyzed using SPSS.

## TYPE 1: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR VILLAGERS

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management  
Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry  
University of Ibadan

You are kindly requested to give answers to the following questions. This questionnaire is a study instrument. I shall be grateful for your cooperation. All information produced will be treated confidentially for the purpose of this study. Thank you.

Topic: Involvement of local people in conservation and management of Kainji Lake National Park

(A) Demographic information

- (1) Village/Town:
- (2) District/Sub-Division:
- (3) Religion (a) Christian



i. Do you derive any benefits for staying close to the park? Yes ( ) No ( ).  
If Yes, mention some of the benefits: ....., ....., ....., .....

TYPE II: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PARK OFFICIAL  
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management.  
Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan

You are kindly requested to give answers to the following questions. This questionnaire is a study instrument. I shall be grateful for your cooperation. All information produced will be treated confidentially for the purpose of this study. Thank you

1. What is your department? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your function in this department? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your statue in the park management? (a) Temporary staff ( ) (b) Permanent staff ( )
4. What is your level of education? (a) primary school certificate ( ) (b) 'O' level ( ) (c) 'A' level ( ) (d) first degree ( ) (e) masters ( ) (f) PhD ( )
5. Sex : (a) Male ( ) (b) Female ( )
6. Age : (a) 15-25 years ( ) (b) 26-30 years ( ) (c) 31-40 years ( ) (d) 41-50 years ( ) (e) 51 years and above ( )
7. What is your Religion? (a) Christianity ( ) (b) Islam ( ) (c) Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Marital status (a) single ( ) (b) married ( ) (c) widow/ widower ( ) (d) divorced ( )
9. What is your State of Origin? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What are your tribe and your traditional language? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What National language are you most familiar with? (a) French ( ) (b) English ( ) (c) others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Kanji Lake National park is divided into ranges, which of the ranges are you familiar with? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you think communities should be involved in conservation and management? Yes ( ) No ( )
14. If yes, please give reasons \_\_\_\_\_
15. If no, please give reason \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you consider the park as being sustainably managed? Yes ( ) No ( )
18. Are the local people involved in the management of the park? Yes ( ) No ( )
19. If yes, when did you start introducing the idea of local people participation in conservation of natural resources of the park? \_\_\_\_\_
20. What type of participation has been carried out in the village where you work? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What is the major problem faced by establishment (a) poaching ( ) (b) infrastructural ( ) (c) government ( ) (d) finance ( ) (e) others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
22. What measure do you recommend for the government for proper conservation and management of wildlife resources? \_\_\_\_\_
23. What step do you think government should take to involve local people in management of the park? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What are necessary materials park will need for effective involvement of local people in management and conservation of the park? \_\_\_\_\_

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relationship between religion and local people involvement in park conservation and management is significant ( $X^2_{cal.} > X^2_{tab.}$ ;  $P < 0.05$ )

is showed in table 1. Results revealed that involvement of local people in conservation and management of the park depends on their religions.

Table 1: The relationship between religion and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
$X^2$	25.805	3.841	Reject $H_0$
DF		1	

$P < 0.05$

The relationship between marital status and local people involvement in park management is significant ( $X^2_{cal.} > X^2_{tab.}$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) is shown in

table 2. This implies that the involvement of local people in park conservation and management depends on their marital status.

Table 2: The relationship between marital status and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
$X^2$	20.000	3.841	Reject $H_0$
DF		1	

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the relationship between Family size and local people involvement in park conservation and management is significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). This

implies that the involvement of local people in park conservation and management depends on their family size.

Table 3: Relationship between family size and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
$X^2$	32.375	5.991	Reject $H_0$
DF		2	

$P < 0.05$

The relationship between gender and involvement of local people in park conservation and management is shown in table 4. This implies that the involvement of people is gender dependent.

Table 4: The relationship between Gender and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	58.963	3.841	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		1	

P<0.05

Table 5 showed the relationship between level of education and involvement of local people in park conservation and management. This

revealed that involvement of local people in park conservation and management depends on their level of education.

Table 5: The relationship between level of Education and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	73.854	11.070	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		5	

P<0.05

Table 6 shows the relationship between occupation and involvement of local people in park conservation and management is statistically

significant. Result revealed that that involvement of local people in park management and conservation depends on their occupation.

Table 6: The relationship between Occupation and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	59.805	11.070	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		5	

P<0.05

The relationship between perception of local people and their involvement in the conservation and management of the park is shown

in table 7. Result revealed that involvement depends on their feelings about the park conservation and management.

Table 7: The relationship between Perception and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	78.049	3.841	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		1	

P<0.05

Table 8 shows the relationship between agreement of people with conservation idea and their involvement . This implies that local people

involvement in conservation and management of the park depends on their agreement with conservation principles.

Table 8: The relationship between Agreement with idea of conservation and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	152.220	5.991	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		2	

P<0.05

The relationship between benefit derived from conservation and Local people involvement in park conservation and management is shown in

table 9. This implies that local people involvement in park conservation and management depends on the benefit derived from it.

Table 9: The relationship between Benefit from conservation and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	73.198	3.841	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		1	

P<0.05

Table 10 shows the relationship between willingness to participate in the management of the park and local people involvement in conservation and management of the park. This implies that the

involvement of the people in park conservation and management depends on their willingness to participate in the management of the park.

Table 10: The relationship between Willingness to participate and Local people involvement in park conservation and management

	Calculated	Tabulated	Decision
X <sup>2</sup>	53.122	3.841	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
DF		1	

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This research revealed many villagers thought establishment of the park is for the visitors and do not understand the importance of national park in their locality. Many of them are also ignorant of the laws and regulations that guide the Park.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

- (1) There is need to update wildlife policies and legislation in Kainji Lake National Park
- (2) Since it is the culture of the people in the community to hunt game, efforts should be made to integrate small holder game farming into agricultural system to reduce poaching activities within the project area.



- (3) I recommend that workshops, seminar, talk shows, should be organized regularly to the people in the community for the awareness of conservation and conservation laws.
- (4) Also there should be formation of schools conservation clubs at primary to the tertiary level.
- (5) Federal government should ensure fair and equitable financing conservation activities.

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