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The Effects of Sustainable Tourism on Pygmies of Cameroon

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The Cameroon Pygmies like many indigenous groups of the World are facing threats and marginalization or discrimination on the land they first possessed by their neighboring farmer's group known as, the Bantus and the Cameroon Government policies as a result of tourism development. This study examines The Effects of Sustainable Tourism on the Pygmies of Cameroon as the government pushes its policy to invest more in tourism, hoping to make Cameroon a tourist destination by 2035. The tourism growth will undoubtedly bring revenue to the Cameroon government but may result to further threats to the culture of the Pygmies whose territory is today being reduced in the creation of national parks and lumbering industry's activities by the government or foreign investors.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that music has been and remains an important aspect of the Pygmy culture. Some tourists have helped to push the Pygmy cultural music into the market and so, this is reducing the poverty level of the area, ranked as high. Two musical bands available today in the Baka Pygmy communities are the BakaGbine and the Baka beyond, whose music have gone round the nation and around the world.

The research method involved in this work is qualitative analysis. The data collection for this study involves primary and secondary data collections in the form of theme interview, structural observation, documentary by camera, literature and article review. Some organizations or stakeholders of the tourism industry in Cameroon and Finland were interviewed via representatives from whom the data was collected, composed and segmented to get the results. The findings reveal that the Pygmies who are original indigenous people of the Congo Basin and traditionally hunters-gatherers are abandoning their culture because their land has been taken away by the government in national parks creation and lumbering industry's activities. As a result of the pressure, the people are now practicing semi-sedentary settlement and going gathering or hunting only for short periods of the year. At the roadside settlements, they have turned to practice agriculture like the neighboring Bantus but are not good at farming and so, this increases the poverty level.

Key words: Cameroon, Cultural Heritage (tangible and intangible), Indigenous people, Pygmies, Sustainable tourism.

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1 Introduction

This research aims to find out the effects of sustainable tourism on the Pygmies of Cameroon. The Pygmies are the original settlers of the Congo Basin and are traditionally hunters-gatherers. According to Pyhälä(2012, 14), " The Baka of this region are facing an increasingly uncertain future as their traditional lands have almost entirely been taken away from them, mainly as allocations to international logging and mining companies, as parts of Protected areas, and the remainder as agricultural or agro forestry plots primarily for Bantu farmers." The creation of national parks or protected areas in the Pygmy community without consulting the locals for tourism purpose are some of the problems resulting from tourism development in Cameroon that poses threats to the culture of the Pygmies.

However, in this research, the interviewees have to answer six questions as follows; who are the Pygmies of Cameroon? how is their lifestyle affected by tourism? what has the Cameroon government done to improve tourism in the Pygmy area? how do tourism stakeholders protect the Pygmies from the negative impacts of tourism? when and how will tourism be beneficial to both the Pygmies and the tourists? and how they see the future of Pygmies in the changing world?.

The data collection for this study involves primary and secondary data collections in the form of a theme interview, structural observation, documentary by camera, literature and article review. Theme interview is used to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The work is a continuation of a previous research done by former students of Laurea University of applied sciences in Finland. The authors, Akuri&Ndingi(2013), both Cameroonians researched on how to market Cameroon as a cultural destination to Finnish tourists or market. However, the authors did not focus on the indigenous people of Cameroon, with very attractive cultures covered in this work. Being a Cameroonian and a Tourism student, this work intends to expose the rich culture of the Pygmy indigenous groups of Cameroon and why their culture may disappear in the nearest future.

In fact, I have chosen the Pygmies, also known as “indigenous forest people of Cameroon” to develop my thesis research work because they are marginalized or discriminated groups of Cameroonians. My aim is to examine deeply the effects of sustainable tourism on these people.

It is an additional credit to Cameroon with a sophisticated cultural diversity as a tourist destination at the moment which the country is hoping to become an international tourist destination by 2035 with several events to be hosted in the future. Such events include the African female football championship in 2016 and the African cup of nation’s football championship in 2019 to be hosted by Cameroon.

1.2 Research Method

Generally, there are four methods of data collection that are fully accepted in academic research observed under two main headings as primary or secondary sources. Primary sources are; interviews, questionnaires and personal observations meanwhile, secondary or written sources involve interrogation of literature databases.

Interview can be seen as significant consideration or discussion among two or more individuals. In fact, the use of interviews helps researchers to gather effective and of course, accurate data that is significant to their research goal and questions. Also, according to Saunders, Lewis, &Thornhill(2007, 310), where the researcher hasn’t explained yet in a precise manner such as research goal and questions, could be well explained by interviews. There are several types of interviews; Group interviews, Systematic observation and Letters.

Group interview is any conversation among group of people. The researcher ensures that, all participants are given the chance to express their thoughts and answer the questions which will enhance data collection. To support this, Saunders, Lewis, &Thornhill(2007, 338-339)

writes that, this type of interview can range from being structured to unstructured and adequately free flowing in terms of both width and depth of the discussion.

Systematic observation is a technique in which data is collected according to thoroughly characterized rules and beforehand process. Well, the researcher needs to concentrate on those components of the situation being observed that are significant to a specific aim of the research or study. (Lewis-Beck, Byman, & Liao 2004,1098).

As a research method, letters permit respondents to be aware of researcher's projects and what role will be performed in it. However the letter must be written in detail so that a participant is well informed regarding the nature of the project. Additionally, the letter should list how the participant will contribute to the researcher's project and aim. Finally, the researcher must make sure that participants can easily follow the questions by providing them excellent information. (Hesse-Biber&Leavy 2011,64).

The data collection for this work involves primary and secondary data collections in the form of theme interview, structural observation, documentary by camera, literature and article review. Primary data collection in the form of questionnaires would have been another good method for the work because it is relatively cheap and easy to obtain data. But due to time needed to complete the work, interview has been viewed as the best option.

1.3 Cameroon as miniature Africa

Cameroon lies in Central Africa at the junction of the Gulf of Guinea. The country's official languages are French and English. Travelling through Cameroon is like discovering the entire African continent. It's neighbors are: Chad in the North, Central Africa Republic in the East, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea in the South and finally Nigeria which is also the largest neighbor in the North, North West and South west. Cameroon's capital is Yaounde inhabited by over 2 million people. The economic capital of Cameroon is Douala having the largest sea port and a population of over 2 million.

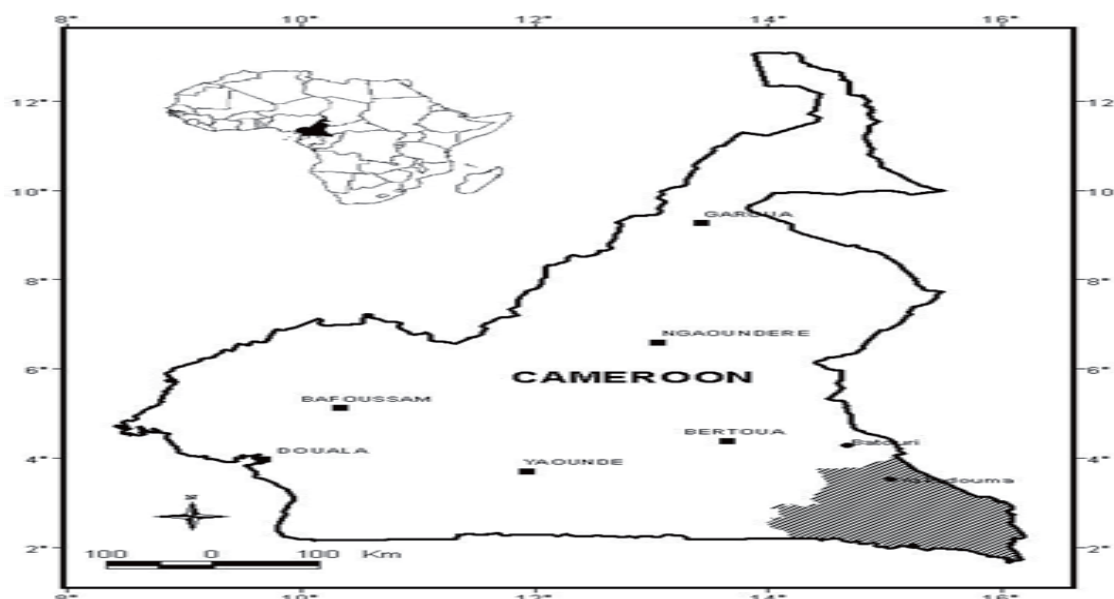


Figure 1 Map of Cameroon showing research area in southeast (African Study Monographs 2014).

There are over 240 tribes in Cameroon with each tribe having a unique culture and language hence, the tribal languages spoken is more than 240. The most notable tribes are: Bantus, Semi-Bantus, and the Sudanese (Cameroon embassy Washington 2010). This is one of the reasons that Cameroon is often called "Africa in miniature" because it has a combination of most African cultures.

There are two main indigenous groups in Cameroon known as, the Mbororos and the Pygmies. The geographical area shaded on figure 1 above in the Southeast of Cameroon is approximately 23,000km of tropical wet forest. "A part of the Congo Basin, the area harbors high densities of forest wildlife with more than 40 species of large mammals, 120 fish species, and 305 bird species. The area is inhabited by about 110,000 people, comprising Bantu- an ubangian-speaking agriculturalists, Baka Pygmy hunters-gatherers, and immigrants from various parts of Cameroon and neighboring countries. The Bantu and other agricultural groups, the Baka, and migrants constitute 60%, 25% and 15% of the total population, respectively". (Tegomo & al 2012, 46). Considering the content of this region as you can observe, there is no doubt about why the Cameroon government decided to create a protected area called the Boumba-Bek National park in the region to enhance the protection of wildlife in the area. This may sound as a great idea but it is a risk to the culture of the Baka Pygmies whose dependency on the forest is very high as they are hunters-gatherers.

Research has been carried out by Akuri & Ndingi (2013), on the marketing of Cameroon as a cultural destination for Finnish tourists. Looking at the report, a gap is realized as the researchers did not look deeply into the indigenous people of Cameroon. However, they did

mention that "The country has a very rich cultural diversity that is reflected in its 200 ethnic groups with varied cultures. The writers add that, most African cultures can be experienced by just visiting Cameroon alone thus, the country has long been dubbed 'The African in miniature', meaning all cultures of Africa found in a one country." (Akuri & Ndingi 2013, 36). Looking at the fact that, the indigenous people are very important in the tourism scene today, it is important to find out the effects of tourism activities on the people and the role of the Cameroon government and other stakeholders of the tourism industry in protecting these people from the negative impacts of tourism. In this report, we will be focusing on the Cameroon Pygmies as a case study.



Image 1. Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon (Visitcapital city.com, no date).

However, there are two indigenous groups of people in Cameroon that have qualified to be called the indigenous people. This classification is based on the definition of the World Bank and the international labour organization.



Image 2. Pygmy girls dancing. (Trip Down Memory Lane, 2013).

These two groups of people are " the Mbororo communities, nomadic cattle herders scattered throughout the country, and the groups of hunters, gatherers and collectors commonly known as "Pygmies" or indigenous forest people ".(Nguiffo, Kenfack&Mballa 2009, 2). These people are being discriminated by the majority of the Cameroon society as they are regarded to be primitive.

1.4 The Mbororo Fulani pastoralists

The Mbororo Fulani pastoralist people mostly live in the North-West, East and Adamaoua regions of Cameroon even though they are found in all the ten regions. Bouba(2012,1) reports that, the group of people "represent almost 10% "1.5 - 2 million" of the population of Cameroon, a country made up of more than 250 ethnic groups. The Mbororo Fulani pastoralists live mainly on top of hills with their cattle in search for green pastures, and count on cattle rearing as their main economic activity or source of income."



Image 3

The Mbororo cattle herders in Santa in North West of Cameroon. (The Cameroon indigenous women forum 2011).

The report further explains that, the illiteracy rate of women of this group is about 98% based on the data collected in 2011 by the Cameroon Indigenous Women Forum, a nongovernmental organization for the rights of indigenous women in Cameroon. This is partly because the children have to travel for long distances to go to the nearest school. Also, illiteracy alongside marginalization and discrimination makes these women even more vulnerable. To support this, Bouba(2012,1), who is a Mbororo Fulani pastoralist mentions that," Illiteracy contributes to the vulnerability of these women, who already suffer from discrimination, marginalization and who face difficulties in accessing social facilities such as schools or hospitals.



Image 4.

An indigenous Mbororo Fulani hut in Belo, North West Region- Cameroon. (Njenji 2014)

Forced and early marriages "12-13-year-old girls" contribute to the illiteracy rate as well: girls are often taken out of school by their parents to get married to older men, often having to face polygamy, and depend on their husbands as they do not work. This is a drastic situation that can partly be solved if the children are educated. With education, as they become parents tomorrow, they will understand their children's basic human rights like the right to be educated.

However, this report looks on the effects of tourism on the culture of the Pygmies as the government hopes to further invest in tourism with a policy of becoming an international tourist destination by 2035. What therefore will be the future of hunters-gatherers?

1.5 The Pygmy hunters-gatherers

The pygmies or the indigenous forest people of Cameroon have three ethnic groups namely; the Baka, Bagyeli and the Bedzang. They are all situated in the eastern region of the country as can be observed on the shaded area on figure 1 above with a population of about 40,000 people. The Baka is the largest group followed by Bagyeli and lastly Bedzang with the least population (Centre for Environment and Development 2008, 1).

The pygmies like the Mbororos, faces discrimination and threats on the land they first called their own and had freedom. According to Pyhälä(2012, 14), " The Baka of this region are facing an increasingly uncertain future as their traditional lands have almost entirely been taken away from them, mainly as allocations to international logging and mining companies, as parts of Protected areas, and the remainder as agricultural or agro forestry plots primarily for

Bantu farmers." The report further examines that, because of these actions, the Baka communities have been pushed to leave their land. Very few are living the real traditional nomadic life style of migrating throughout the forest within a year. Instead, "almost the entire Baka population in Cameroon are today following semi- sedentary settlement, meaning that they spend at least part of the year in their roadside settlements but continue to go for short- and long-term hunting and gathering expeditions deep into the forest" (Pyhälä 2012, 14). Adding to this, (Stone 2006) writes that, "The Baka, knows the variety of forest foods, animals and the specific seasons when these products can easily be found."

As such, in the rainy season- September-November, when Irvingia nuts and other forest fruits are ready, the Baka usually travel in small groups and spend some days or even weeks in the in the forest to trap animals and collect nuts whereas in the dry season-December to March, when wild yams are available, they set out in larger groups to remote parts of the forest on long-term foraging and hunting expeditions called "molongo", which often last for few months. (Pyhälä 2012, 14).

2 Definition of the indigenous People

The issue of the definition of the indigenous people has been complicated at the United Nations over the years. There has been no clear definition of the "indigenous people" within the United Nations. In fact, in more than forty years history of the indigenous issue at the united nation, there have been several debates in order to understand these groups of people. However, none of such definition has been fully accepted by anybody of the United Nations. According to United Nations(2009, 4) "One of the most cited descriptions of the concept of "indigenous people" was outlined in the MartínezCobo's study on the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations. After long consideration of the issues involved, MartínezCobo offered a working definition of "indigenous communities, people and nations". In doing so, MartínezCobo expressed a number of basic ideas forming the intellectual framework for this effort, including the right of indigenous peoples themselves to define what and who indigenous people are. MartínezCobo's report points out very important characteristic of the indigenous people that best define who they are as follows;

"Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them, Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands, Culture in general, or in specific manifestations- such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, Language- whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual,

general or normal language, Residence in certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world" (United Nations 2009,4-5)

Looking at this UN brief description of the indigenous peoples, we can then say that, they are any ethnic group of people who inhabit a geographic region with which they have the earliest known historical connection, alongside migrants who have populated the region and are greater in number. These people have a huge contribution to tourism development in our society today. The factors that motivate traveling varies from individuals, ethnic groups, countries or regions. For those tourists who travel to experience different cultures, the indigenous people of that particular destination, constitute the core of their trip. According to United Nations (2009, v), "Indigenous peoples are custodians of some of the most biologically diverse territories in the world. They are also responsible for a great deal of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, and their traditional knowledge has been and continues to be an invaluable resource that benefits all of mankind". This shows the importance of these groups of people to us.

There are several indigenous people living in different continents of the globe. In Europe and in Finland, the Sami people is the most identified indigenous group. They are seen as the last indigenous people in Europe. Cal(2013, 18) reports that, "Far above the Arctic Circle, at the northern limits of Scandinavia, live one of Europe's last indigenous peoples, the Sami. They are, or for the most part were, a semi-nomadic group, migrating with their reindeer from the forests to the northern coast for the short Arctic summer". They are similar to the Mbororo indigenous group of Cameroon who are as well nomadic cattle herders scattered throughout Cameroon. (Nguiffo, Kenfack&Mballa 2009, 2).

Many people and governments around the World sometimes undervalue these people, making them vulnerable to discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict (United Nation 2009, v). The most embarrassing fact is that, some of these people are being driven from their traditional lands thereby distorting their livelihoods. In addition, they face threats on their belief, culture and language.

Understanding of these people and their respective cultures makes the World a better place. No culture is totally useless. Every day, we learn from each other coming from different cultural background. The pressure facing the indigenous people because of discrimination and maybe a government policy to develop part of their land is a big threat to their right and it is interesting that, most governments of that World have realized the need to protect or work alongside with the indigenous people.

3 Human rights and the Pygmies

During the colonial period, the British crown signed a treaty with the Aboriginal people in Canada in 1701 to enable them settle peacefully with the non- Aboriginal people. According to the Government of Canada (2010), after the treaty in 1701, "Over the next several centuries, treaties were signed to define, among other things, the respective rights of Aboriginal people and governments to use and enjoy lands that Aboriginal people traditionally occupied". It shows how important the government valued the people's right over their land and indicates how important the indigenous people's right has always been considered in decision making by the authorities. This has partly been so because of the fear of revolution by the indigenous people if there were no agreements.

However, it can be seen that, during the colonial period, the indigenous people showed great resistance or cooperation with the colonial powers there by portraying their conviction and determination to survive with their distinct sovereign identities. It is clear that, the people were often regarded as a sovereign people by states as witnessed by the many treaties concluded between the indigenous people and their colonial powers.

In Africa and in Cameroon, before colonization, a number of treaties were signed between the Western countries- Germany, Britain that allowed the territory to be annexed. The famous of those treaties were the Germano-Douala treaty signed between the Germans and the Douala chiefs that paved the way for German annexation of Cameroon on the 14th July 1884 by Dr. Eugene Nachtigal. The colonial masters often met the coastal chiefs because they reached Cameroon and most African countries like Ghana by sea. (Apoth&Lundt 2013, 95).

Interestingly, the United Nations examines the rights of the Indigenous people which embodies the rights of the Pygmies, recognizes and encourages governments to allow the land rights of the indigenous people. A UN reports in 2009 outlines that, " In 1997, the UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination, in its general recommendation No. 23 on indigenous people, called on states-parties to "recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples to own, develop, control and use their communal lands, territories and resources and, where they have been deprived of their lands and territories traditionally owned or otherwise inhabited or used without their free and informed consent, to take steps to return these lands and territories." The Committee further called "upon state-parties with indigenous peoples in their territories to include in their periodic reports full information on the situation of such peoples, taking into account all relevant provisions of the Convention"."

However, there are several indigenous people living on the African continent with different cultures and traditions. According to African commission on human and Peoples' rights(2006, 9), the African indigenous people " in their efforts to address their particular human rights situation cut across various economic systems and embrace hunter-gatherers, pastoralists as well as some small-scale farmers". The people's cultures are different from each other with different social institutions and with varying systems of religious observation.

The indigenous African people includes: " The Pygmies of the great lakes region, the San of southern Africa, the Hadzabe of Tanzania and the Ogiek, Sengwer and Yakuu of Kenya can all be seen as examples of hunter-gatherer communities who identify themselves as indigenous peoples. Similarly, pastoralist communities such as the Pokot of Kenya and Uganda, the Barabaig of Tanzania, the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, the Samburu, Turkana, Rendille, Endorois and Borana of Kenya, the Karamojong of Uganda, the Himba of Namibia and the Tuareg, Fulani and Toubou of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger can all be observed as examples of pastoralists who identify as indigenous peoples. "(African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights 2006, 10).

These people are generally identified as indigenous people because their culture and their ways of life differ from the vast majority of the society. In addition, these people's cultures are under threats from the government and in some cases, they are about to disappear. Usually, these groups of people are being marginalized because people view them to be less developed or advanced as the rest of the society in which they live. Many consider them to be primitive and so they are subjected to discrimination. You can bear with me that; discrimination kills the moral of all human being. The fact that, the people suffer from discrimination, marginalization and domination by others violates their basic human rights and can kill their culture and the way they live their lives thereby restricting them from taking part in decisions concerning their future and other forms of development.

The indigenous people are very valuable to our society and have the right to human rights. Their voices have to be heard in any decision making concerning their environment. There are many instances that, the government collects land from the indigenous people for tourism development without any compensation. More so, the people are often forced to leave their land to other locations without any housing provision from the government. Sometimes, even if the houses are provided, they may be too small or not in their taste. The Masai people of Kenya are practical examples.

The Pygmies of Cameroon live and feed from the food they get from the surrounding forest. Many today do farming and hunting for food because they are being displaced in the forest settings. This displacement from their land without any dialogue violates their basic human

right and can have a huge negative impact on their lives as their main source of income is broken. Also, when the forests were cleared in the construction of the Tchad-Cameroon oil pipeline in the Pygmy region, many of the animal species were forced to go to extinction and as a result, hunting becomes difficult.

For tourism to be sustainable, we must respect the culture of the local people. This culture of respects should apply to the governments around the World, tourism practitioners and to tourist themselves. As a tourist, people should always bear in mind that, even though they are on holiday, the host community is home for some people and so their rights as a human should be respected.

4 The Pygmies of Cameroon

History holds that, the pygmies were the first inhabitants of the Congo basin. They are found in the Eastern, Central and Southern regions of Cameroon. The groups share a common attachment to their ancestral territories and all what is found in the forest that they know and see is regarded as common property, forming the foundation of their existence. The forest generally is the source of their food, health and medicines, and the setting for their recreation, cultural and spiritual celebration. They are different from the dominant population in that, they hold property communally and share forest resources, consuming forest products such as yams, wild fruit, honey, and various types of leaves and bark. (Centre for Environment and Development 2010, 9).

But being subjected to encroachment into the forest by its neighbours, creation of protected areas by the government, lumbering industry's activities in the forest by the government or foreign companies, the people's land have greatly been reduced. Centre for Environment and Development (2008, 1) investigated that, "While Pygmies are traditionally hunters-gatherers; their lifestyle is undergoing changes because of the various forms of pressure exerted on them and their milieu. Agriculture is becoming a more and more important activity." According to the report, some sources rank agriculture second among the activities performed by the pygmies or the indigenous forest people after hunting. These changes in their local economies are some of the clear facts of the distance to which they have been pushed. They have no choice than to turn to agriculture as an alternative means of subsistence.

5 Cultural heritage of the Pygmies

Besides being traditional hunters-gatherers, the pygmies possess interesting cultures. Cultural heritage are things we consider to be very important to preserve for our future generations. UNESCO (2014) examines that, " heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage is both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration." They may be significant as a result of their current economic value, but also because they ignite a certain anxiety or emotions, making us have a spirit of belonging to something - a country, a tradition, a way of life. Heritage include objects that can be held and buildings that can be explored, or songs that can be sung and stories that can be told. No matter the shape of these items, they must be safeguarded because they form part of our cultural heritage.



Image 5

A Pygmy woman waving a local basket in the forest (Trip Down Memory Lane, 2013)

Understanding of cultural heritage has broadened over the years to engulf and does not limit at monuments and objects collection. Now it includes traditions acquired from our ancestors and transferred to our descendants like oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills. (UNESCO no date, 3).

Cultural heritage is what can be seen as physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a community and are inherited from generation to generations. It can be observed as tangible like landscapes, monuments, works and books because it can be touched. The intangible are; languages, traditions and knowledge which cannot be physically seen or touched. Cultural heritage is irreplaceable and of course unique which poses the need to be preserved or conserved for future generations.

5.1 Intangible Culture of the Pygmies

As mentioned earlier, the intangible culture is that aspect of our culture that cannot be touched or felt. "While fragile, intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life."(UNESCO 2012)

5.1.1 Music culture

Music is an important aspect of the Baka indigenous group. They have a keen sense of rhythm from an early stage in their life. As soon as a baby knows how to clap, they are encouraged to take part in the entire communal music making. According to Stone (2006), "There is music for ritualistic purposes, music for passing on knowledge, stories and the history of the Baka people, and music for pure enjoyment." This communal frequent music gives a strong sense of belonging to each member of the group thereby, strengthening the bonds between them. "Baka music is perhaps best described as bursts of harmonic yodeling, intertwining in a dynamic, rhythmic fashion. It is quite hypnotizing and the environmental forest setting makes the overall effect fascinating". (Stone 2006).



Image 6

Baka Pygmy dancers (Trip down memory lane,2013).

The article further explains the inspiration two British musicians Martin Cradick and Su Hart, got by visiting the group and listening to their music. They later founded Baka Beyond in 1993 at the end of their visit. Their first album under the name Baka Beyond and titled "spirit of the forest" push them to be recognised worldwide and so, have performed in several countries of the World.

To support this work, Poole(2003, 8) reports that, "They believe that the forest is the source of all abundance, and this is maintained by proper sharing between people or between people and forest spirits, and by singing and dancing rituals which ensure the support of spirits to help them satisfy all their needs ". All these indicate how natural the pygmies are strongly connected to music.

However, the most important lesson to learn from this story is that, as people travel, they learn and share with other communities and somehow take part in building a community. The work of the two Britons can be highly appreciated as it has changed the lives of some Baka community people through direct involvement in the musical band called Baka beyond.

5.1.2 The Pygmy Nomadic Culture

The pygmies or the indigenous forest people live their lives comfortably around the forest and the forest resources. With their nomadic lifestyle, they migrate from one place to the other within the forest to get the essential products needed for their subsistence. As such, the forest can be regarded as a "bread basket" for them. They gather food in the forest like honey, fruits, wild yams, caterpillars, snails and so on. "The wellbeing of Pygmies is fundamentally dependent on life in the forest. Not only does it provide the means of livelihood, but it is also a source of peace and security for them".(Centre for Environment and Development 2008, 2). The great dependency of these people on the forest means that, any attempt to destroy the forest render them exposed to poverty and hunger. The poverty will break out as a result of their main source of income being sealed. Some common harvest of the pygmies are "mbalaka, moibi, gimba, kokoo, wild honey, mushrooms, to name but a few".(Pyhala 2012, 33). Some of the seed harvests are used as food in both Nigeria and Cameroon.

Hunting is also another typical culture of the indigenous forest people. But the people are gradually facing threats in the creation of national parks by the government and intruders from the neighbouring communities. However, hunting remains an important aspect of the culture despite the threats they are facing. But over hunting by them is leading to the disappearance of some animal species. Pyhala(2012, 33), reports that, while asking the Pygmies to stop hunting is not ethical and against their rights, there is urgent demand to do so to prevent over hunting of the larger mammals especially. It should be understood that, each animal in the forest have an important role in keeping the ecosystem balanced.

It is great that many have started keeping animals at home. The dominant advantage of keeping animals is to reduce their dependency on the forest for hunting meat, and the animal's

waste can be used as organic fertilizer to improve crops yield. But this poses a threat on the hunting culture of the people as it will gradually disappear.

5.1.3 Semi-sedentary lifestyle

Based on the pressure these people have faced on their land as a result of government's action in creating protected areas, lumbering company's operation, and large agricultural plantations, the pygmies are forced to look for other means of survival. The Baka for example being traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers still finds agricultural activities new with some areas or communities lacking the basic skills, knowledge and materials to grow enough food. Despite the lack of skills in the agricultural sector, the people are gradually farming in small scale food crops produced in their locality by their neighbours, the Bantus often called the farmers group.

5.1.4 Language

More than any group of their kind all over the World, the hunters-gatherers or the indigenous forest people are best characterised by their mode of relations with the societies around them. There is a great degree of economic cooperation between these people and their neighbouring group called the farmers. The pygmies are different from their neighbours in that, they show great differences in their body size and culture such as habitat, clothing, tools, techniques, and music.

Linguistically, there is no « Pygmy language family » and all Pygmy languages are related to languages spoken by non-Pygmy populations; thus there are as many languages as groups and an important linguistic diversity (Bahuchet 2006, 1). The languages of the indigenous forest people are closely related to that of its neighbours like the Bantus, indicating that, there had been some shifting in the original language. Words have been borrowed from the language of the neighbouring farmers group over the years to include in their language.

It is amazing that, even though the languages have undergone some great changes or transformation over the years, the pygmies maintains their culture. A kind of language changing and leaving the culture such as dressing mode, dwelling places, local music and so on intact.

5.2 Tangible Culture of the Pygmies

Talking of tangible heritage, we look at objects such as buildings, monuments, historic places and artifacts of which we value and must preserve for the coming years or the future. These objects are either important to archaeologists, architecture, science or technology of a particular culture.

In the human history studies, objects are important for the fact that, they lay the bases for ideas and can validate them. According to UNESCO (2014), "their preservation demonstrates recognition of the necessity of the past and of the things that tell its story. Preserved objects also validate memories; and the actuality of the object, as opposed to a reproduction or surrogate, draws people in and gives them a literal way of touching the past." Tangible cultures are different from the intangible cultures in that, you can touch, feel or see them. The pygmies possess different types of tangible cultures but we are going to examine just a few of them due to limited time needed to complete this report.

5.2.1 The Pygmy Huts

As mentioned earlier, on the opposite of intangible are tangible cultures, which are visible aspects of the culture that can be touched. The tangible culture of the Pygmies includes but is not limited to huts, musical instruments and sacred places. All these valuable cultures are under threats or we risk losing them in the nearest future. Devin(2014) examines that, "Traditional Baka huts are called môngulu. They are typically shaped one-family houses made of branches and leaves and predominantly built by women. After a hemispheric framework of flexible, thin branches is prepared, big recently-gathered leaves of Marantaceae plants fit in the structure. Once the work is done, other vegetable material is sometimes added to the dome in order to make the structure more compact and waterproof".



Image 7. A Baka pygmy hut in Cameroon. (Trip Down Memory Lane,2013).

5.2.2 Musical Instruments

The Pygmies have incredible talents as music is concerned. The people's musical instruments are made locally. According to Global Music Exchange (no date), "The music and dance of the Baka comes from thousands of years of unbroken forest tradition. The women have always sung yelli, strange and beautiful wordless yodelling, unaccompanied at night as a vital part of hunting large animals. It is also sung accompanied by drums and dance during ceremonies, parties and when the spirit takes them." The report further reveals that, The Baka makes their own instruments such as the ngombi and the ieta and that, 20 Baka community members travelled in 2010 to perform at a festival called under the volcano in Limbe- Cameroon, competing with 7 other dancers and musicians from other regions of the country. This trip acts as a turning point for the Baka because, since then, the group called BakaGbine have performed in many occasions in Cameroon including a dance for the British high commissioner and a show on Cameroons national television network on a program called tam tam weekend. This has been a large extend to promote the music culture of the Baka community and increase their income level.



Image 8.

A Baka Pygmy with local musical instruments (Richard Harp 2014).

5.2.3 Sacred Places

The Baka Pygmy and other Pygmy groups possess interesting cultures in the form of sacred places and these places are found deep in the forest. In Cameroon, people believe that, the Pygmies have powers to transform into animals and can also disappear and appear. Devin (2014) carries out a 16 years report on the Pygmies of Cameroon, Gabon and Congo and is ini-

tiated during his stay with the Pygmies in the forest. The researcher writes that, "Here in the belly of the forest, where the elders have brought us to make us into men, we no longer have names, we have no purpose. We are disappearing, but at the same time we can take on any form. We are like water. We are clay just scooped out of a hole with hands and machete. We are molten metal waiting to be poured into a mould". The researcher makes it clear that, the sacred places are not allowed to be visited even by members of other Cameroon communities



Image 9 Baka Pygmy's hut initiation right (Devin 2014).

However, the researcher is lucky to win the trust of the people to give him a chance to be part of the ritual occasion. He also mentions that, because he must respect the rights of the Baka people, certain details have not been published but interesting pictures of the ceremony are published and can be viewed on the website.

The decision of the researcher not to publish what is not allowed is appreciable so as to sustain the culture of the people and to respect their rights.

6 Research methods and conduction

In academic research, four methods of data collection are accepted as primary or secondary sources. Refer to chapter 1.2 above for more details.

6.1 Research design

The study has been designed to investigate The Effects of Sustainable Tourism on the Pygmies of Cameroon base on the perception, opinions and experiences of four interviewee stakeholders of the tourism industry. It involves two tour operators in Cameroon offering tour packages

to the Pygmy area, a regional delegate for tourism North West of Cameroon and University of Helsinki, represented by a Postdoc Researcher at Global Change and Conservation Group who have been to the Pygmy area several times and have written about the future of Baka Pygmies. However, in this research, the interviewees have to answer six questions as follows; who are the Pygmies of Cameroon? how is their lifestyle affected by tourism? what has the Cameroon government done to improve tourism in the Pygmy area? how do tourism stakeholders protect the Pygmies from the negative impacts of tourism? when and how will tourism be beneficial to both the Pygmies and the tourists? and how they see the future of Pygmies in the changing world?.

6.2 Method of data collection

The data collection for this study involves primary and secondary data collections in the form of theme interview, structural observation, documentary by camera, literature and article review. The theme interview is to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. Interview can be seen as significant consideration or discussion among two or more individuals. In fact, we use interviews to gather effective and of course, accurate data that is significant to this research goal and questions. The study is successful by the use of information technology in the form of skype interview. Only one of the interview has been realized through research assistance in Cameroon. A total of four interviewees have been interviewed with same questions and they participated from Cameroon and Spain. Two tour operators in Cameroon, a regional delegate for tourism North West region of Cameroon and the University of Helsinki, via a Postdoc Researcher at Global Change and Conservation Group. A total of seven emails are sent to organizations linked to tourism, asking for interview opportunity from them. Four responses are positively and no response is gotten from three that can be considered as negative. Therefore, the percentage of the email response is 57.14%.

During the interview, some questions are focused on some background information of the interviewee; their knowledge and experiences on who the Pygmies of Cameroon are, how the Pygmy's' lifestyle is affected by tourism; looking at fishing, sacred places, culture with special focus on why they do small degree of agriculture today being traditionally hunters gatherers. Also, the questions contain what the Cameroon government has done to improve tourism in the Pygmy area and how the tourism stakeholders protect the Pygmies from the negative impacts of tourism; focusing on political, economic and socio-cultural point of view. The last two questions on the list looked at when tourism will be beneficial to both the Pygmies and the tourists and the future of the Pygmies in the changing World.

The question list contains questions in the form of theme interview so that, enough information can be gathered from the interviewees who have a good knowledge of the Pygmy people for this work. Due to time, costs and distance between Finland and Cameroon, it is difficult to travel to Cameroon to run the interviews. For this reason online skype interview and the use of research assistance in Cameroon were chosen. The target participants are considered to be a representation of the tour operators in Cameroon, the Cameroon government and the University of Helsinki.

Tourism stakeholder	Email sent	Response
Cameroon Safari Agency	Yes	No
Cameroon Association for Sustainable tourism	Yes	Yes
Global Bush Travel & Tourism Agency	Yes	Yes
Zwinkels Tours Cameroon	Yes	No
Regional Delegation for Tourism, North West Region, Cameroon	Yes	Yes
Randonnées Bantu	Yes	No
University of Helsinki (Aili Pyhäla)	Yes	Yes

Table 1. Email responses of the interviewees. (Njenji 2014).

As seen on the table above, some of the tour operators reached by email for the interview schedule did not respond while others responded. Overall percentage participation for the interview is 57.14%.

The challenges in contacting these interviewees were enormous. Emails were sent and follow up phone calls made to make sure that, the emails have been received. The emails sent also included a brief about the main objective and purpose of the study to keep them abreast with the study before the online video interview. This work would not have been possible without the help of internet connection. Thanks to globalization as the world is becoming a small village.'

The company's emails were gotten from their websites and the University of Helsinki represented by a postdoc researcher by searching on google after reading a report the researcher had published before on a related topic. This first step was necessary to keep the interviewees informed of the need for their helping hand to complete this thesis successfully. Some of the tour operators did not respond to the emails sent to them. Their phone numbers were searched on their websites in an attempt to reach them by phone but most of the calls did not go through and others were not answered.

Within two weeks, all the interviewees who agreed to be interviewed to make this work a success quickly scheduled an interview date. Three of the four interviews went online and just one realized in Bamenda at the regional delegation for tourism North West Region by research assistance, NguFerdinardAkum. One of the travel agents, global bush travel and tourism agency participated from Douala Cameroon, Cameroon Association for Sustainable Tourism from Belo, Regional delegate for tourism North West from Bamenda and AiliPyhälä, a Postdoc Researcher at Global Change and Conservation Group - University of Helsinki, from Spain in Europe.

These questions were intended to be administered via top managers who are decision makers, whose experiences are large as tourism industry is concern like tour operators, ministry of tourism Cameroon and a university through a researcher in the tourism industry. This has been successful as the tour company's interviewees were top managers, the regional delegate of tourism North West representing the ministry of tourism and the University of Helsinki represented by a researcher from the university. These people are considered to be rich in knowledge and will be able to give the right information needed for this work.

6.3 Data Analysis Method

The data of this research are analyzed by composing and segmenting the data collected from the interviews and comparing them with the purpose of transforming the data into discovery. The findings of this research are presented theoretically after a careful review of the recorded interviews with permissions from the interviewees.

7 Results

The study results are based on the perspectives of tour operators in Cameroon, a regional delegate for tourism North West of Cameroon and the University of Helsinki via a Postdoc Researcher at Global Change and Conservation Group. The selection is focused on their experiences of working with the Pygmy people or having a good knowledge of them that can be very useful for this work. It is presented in the form of political, economic and the socio-cultural aspects of sustainable tourism.

7.1 Socio-demographic background of respondents

Undoubtedly, most of the interviewees are Cameroonians with 3 out of 4 from Cameroon. One interviewee is a Finn or Finnish. This is so because, most of the emails looking for participants

in this research process have been sent to tour operators in Cameroon offering tours to the Pygmy region because they have a good knowledge of the area and people. And so, it is seen that, their information will be accurate and useful for this work. The Finn has written about the Pygmies of the Congo Basin via her work: "What future for Baka? ", who are groups of Cameroon Pygmies in the Congo basin. For this reason, the Finnish interviewee is seen as a "knowledge bank" for this work as well. The four interviewees in this study are between 25-35 years suggesting that, more youths in Cameroon or World are getting involve in tourism related activities and the push for sustainable tourism development. Three of them are holders of a University degree or higher in tourism related studies, suggesting that, tourism experts are more concern about tourism related environmental issues and sustainable tourism development as they are quite excited about the topic. The last interviewee is a holder of a diploma in tourism related studies but have gain lots of experiences by working in the tourism industry.

However, it is interesting to find a researcher in Finland who have traveled to Cameroon several times and is working on the indigenous people's right and protection. All the interviewees have given useful information that is fully analyze in a report form.

7.2 Cameroon Pygmy identity and tourism effects on the lifestyle of the people

The Pygmies are groups of indigenous people in the Eastern, Central and Southern regions of Cameroon. The groups share a common attachment to their ancestral land and consider what is available in the forest that can be seen a common property, building a base of their life. "The Pygmies are the original forest dwellers of Central Africa region, the Congo basin and who traditionally lived in nomadic hunter gatherer livelihood and these days have been to some extend forced and to some extend pushed to live in a sedentary lifestyle, living into the edges of the forest than deep into the forest" (Interviewed, Pyhala 2014).

Economically, these actions have very huge negative impacts on the economy of the people and region. The four interviewees agrees with the fact that, the Pygmies are the original inhabitants of the Congo Basin and that their traditional land is gradually being taken away and pushing them out of the forest. This can be seen as a difficult situation in a community where they depend on the forest for their daily needs. The forest is often referred to as the "bread basket" because; they depend on it for everything to keep them living.

The interviewees also points out that, the Pygmy people are abandoning their fishing lifestyle and sacred places because of the government's action that is somehow putting them out of the forest. The creation of protected areas for example prevents them from reaching rivers for fishing and their sacred places for worshipping. "Even though the creation of national

parks are important to protect most importantly the larger animals in the forest, it is great to involve the Pygmies in decision making in order not to undermine their rights and take decisions that affects their existence" (Interviewed, Chiamba 2014).

Agriculturally, the people are today practicing semi-sedentary lifestyle so that, they go to the forest for shorter duration and do small form of agriculture. But this has never been their culture and so they face lot of challenges in doing farming (Interviewed, Pyhala 2014). They do this because their economic power in the form of hunting, gathering and others have been broken by too much pressure on their culture by the government and other parties leading to increase poverty in the area.

7.3 The actions of Cameroon government to improve tourism in the Pygmy area

It is good to understand that, tourism has become a tool for development in many countries of the World today. Each destination struggles to be the best in order to attract many visitors because it raises some income for the economy. It makes villagers to become decision makers and to continue their lives in sustainable ways. According to one of the interviewee, the government has started to involve the Pygmies on decision making such as, drawing up the boundary in the national parks. This is a giant step to recognise the right of the people. The interviewee also sees a lot being done in recent years to improve sustainable development in the area.

Politically, there has been the award of land titles to some members of the Baka Pygmy community by the government. This can be seen as a huge step because, they can no longer be pushed out of the land they own a title as they have a legal ownership document. But this step will further destroy their communal culture of viewing everything in the forest as belonging to everyone. Owning a land title means that, everything on the land including the forest is under your control and so limits others from gathering or hunting on that particular piece of land under your power. But however, owning a forest and being able to sell their products will reduce the poverty rate of the community which is considered to be very high.

In addition, the government have been trying to reform the forest law to make it easier for forest communities to sell their products and to create a kind market chain of nurturing the forest products so that, they can easily reach the market (Interviewed, Pyhala 2014). Through the forestry law, the government is increasing reforestation to conserve the forest and recognizes that, the Pygmies with their nomadic lifestyle can migrate permanently to other regions of the area like Congo and Central African Republic if the forest is fully destroyed. So, protected areas have been created to conserve the forest with the Pygmies living at the periph-

eries of the parks so that, any small animal out of the park can be killed and consumed by the Pygmies than doing complete over hunting in the land. "Cameroon government is doing something, professionals are not there in Cameroon but we are struggling to put things today, especially in the Pygmy area". (Interviewed, Regional Delegate for Tourism NW, 2014). The government lacks many professionals in the tourism sector but is reluctant to employ because of limited resources. But with the government planning to be an international tourist destination in the next 21 years, further consideration will surely be thrown on this.

Furthermore, some pygmies have been recruited and trained to become tour guides through the ministry of tourism in Cameroon to enable them to take the tourists to their respective environment for exploration. There are three types of guides in Cameroon under the ministry of tourism; Local guides, regional guides and national guides.

The local guides, live in the tourist destinations and speak the local languages. So, they have a good knowledge of the locals and are able to pass on information to the tourists. Regional guide, in the case of the Pygmy region can live in Bertoua, the regional capital of Eastern region. The guide must not be a native and acts as a middle man by picking the tourist from the airport and handing to the local guide. National guides are found in the airports and help to provide information to the tourists on all the regions of Cameroon. (Interviewed, Regional delegate for tourism NW, 2014).

According to Ndi (Interviewed, 2014) " The Cameroonian government has attempted to "modernize" the Baka people by mandating that all Pygmy children go to school, but that hasn't had the desired outcome. They use to pick them up and take them to school, but it didn't work. They would still go back to the forest; that is their culture. There is an international organization in Cameroon that trains those who are willing to at least learn something to put in their minds and they go back there and teach their people. There are some enrolled in universities and when they come out, you have some who become directors and others working white collar jobs". This shows how hard the Cameroon government and other partner organizations have been making efforts to change their educational standards and improve lifestyles of the people.

To round it up, the Cameroon government has implemented laws governing the tourism sector hoping for a great change in the industry but there is much work still to be done by the government and the tourism stakeholders in Cameroon to have a better tourism system

7.4 Protecting the Pygmies from the Negative impacts of Tourism

The socio-cultural effects of tourism on the Pygmies of Cameroon are also important to be observed. Even though tourism is one of the largest business sectors in the World, it can be seen by some as a damaging factor to the indigenous culture and societies. There are huge negative impacts of tourism recorded in host location that have an effect on the indigenous people. These includes disrupted lifestyles and ecosystems, poorly distributed or inconsistent profits, the pressure to turn cultural traditions into products, green washing, and unequal participation in the planning of projects dominated by foreign or government interests. Many critics have pointed out that the tourist industry is dominated by outsider interests, which retain most of the benefits and leave the host destinations to suffer the costs. According to Akama & Kieti (2007, 743), this kind of practice is called enclave tourism.

The work describes enclave tourism, " as a form of internal colonialism where tourism resources in a destination mostly benefit outsiders while the majority of local people derive insignificant or no benefits" The report also sees increase poverty level among the host population in the developing country's destination where enclave tourism takes place as revenue are being repatriation to the developed countries by Western investors.

It is an established fact that tourism has brought long-term damaging effects on indigenous peoples even prior to globalization. We can all agree that, one individual community like the Pygmies that wasn't exploited by the traditional tourism activities are now targets for tourism initiatives and of course, ecotourism. Ecotourism is described as environment-friendly, sustainable and nature-based. Eager to cash in on this trend, the tourism industry promotes ecotourism as an alternative activity. This activity "involves visiting relatively undisturbed natural areas with the aim of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery, wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects'.

But some critic says that, tourism development as a result of globalization is a big threat to the indigenous people as they are paying a high price."Globalization and tourism have become a deadly mix for indigenous peoples. Tourism's impact on indigenous peoples' way of life and on their control of and access to their resources and environment has become more pronounced with globalization of the world economy" (Third World Network, 1999.).

In Africa, the negative impact of tourism on the indigenous people can be observed in a wide scale eviction from their lands, economic dislocation, breakdown of traditional values, and environmental degradation.

In many cultures like that of the Pygmies, there are some places reserved for sacrifices and is forbidden to visit. It includes places such as the water falls, lakes, sacred places and maybe some parts of a river. These customs have been broken by the tourists. The commercialization of their culture has led to undignified ways of seeking a livelihood such as allowing them to be photographed as souvenirs or to do their indigenous dance for a fee. These practices were never part of their culture.

In this research, one interviewee say that, there is little or no government and other stakeholder's effort as tourism is concern in the Pygmy area to reduce the negative consequences of tourism. But according to two other interviewees, as tour operators, they ask their clients or tourists to be sustainable when they visit the people by respecting their local culture and traditions like not to photograph anyone without permission and to respect their rights.

But the government represented by the ministry of tourism, North West regional office has a wider view. Stakeholders in the Cameroon tourism industry use "langue professionnel" in French and professional language in English to educates their clients. "Before you take your tourist out from a hotel as a stakeholder, you tell them where you are going and don't photograph this, don't drop dirt here.... you as professional are to help direct the tourists. No reason to tell the tourist I am hungry because you have been paid to do your duty and no extension should be made" (Interviewed, Regional delegate for tourism NW, 2014).

7.5 Tourism development and the future of the Pygmies

We all understand that, tourism represents a multi-billion dollar worldwide industry. According to a United Nations (2009, 72) report, "Tourism is undeniably an immensely important industry, with almost 900 million visitors generating US\$856 billion in 2007. Understandably, governments have recognized tourism as an important opportunity for income generation". As governments such as the Cameroon government strives to improve tourism infrastructures such as roads, the local communities like the Pygmy area benefit as well. But "for the moment, there is less development in the Pygmy environment as tourism is concerned. There are no hotels, motels; restaurants but there is a better road leading to the area with over 10 tourism camps at Campo. Even though lumbering activities makes the roads worse during the rainy season because they are unconstructed" (Interviewed, Chiamba 2014).

It can be seen that, innovations in the transport and technological industries in recent years have led to ease and travel availability. For example, there have been great improvements on the internet provisions worldwide. This has given rise to online market growth since people

finds it convenient to seat in their houses, on a bus or a train and book for packages. The development of internet mobile devices and mobile applications are just making the travel industry's packages readily available to consumers at any time. Mobile devices such as iPad, tablets, laptops and smart phones allows one to search and pay for services online even at jobsites.

It is therefore interesting that, technology has a great influence on consumer's behaviours. Many people chose a holiday destination today because of the influence of social networking sites like Facebook. A nice picture of a friend's holiday posted on Facebook can influence someone to take a trip to the same destination. These have all been the hand work of globalization as people try to bring the World together through technology.

What therefore is the benefit of tourism to the Pygmies and the tourists in the globalised World? According to interviewees, the Pygmies have little to gain from tourism at the moment." Tourists tend to learn about various cultures and traditions, meet various people and localities, consume local products-food, coffee, beer, cigarettes etc., stay in small guest houses, and use locally owned ground transport.(Interviewed, Ndi 2014)."The tourists have always been the beneficiary of tourism as they go back home with an experience of a different culture and tradition. Another limitation for the Pygmy people is that, they have less tourism infrastructure like hotels, restaurants, tour operators and so on to extract the money from the tourists and invest into the economy of the area even though they now have a tourism camp at Campo. Those who benefits from the tour packages sold to the area are the tour operators coming from other parts of Cameroon and the government as the visit of the tourist is able to raise revenue. Therefore, for the moment, the Pygmies have little benefit from tourism in the area. They may receive small gifts in the form of money for allowing themselves to be photograph from tourists and this only adds to the negative outcome of tourism.

8 Beneficial and harmful tourism

Tourism is an act of voluntarily leaving your home and traveling to another destination for less than a year. According to Becken& Hay (2007, 83), over 700 million people takes on international travel yearly with an expectation of over 1.6 billion in 2020. The book further explains that, "While traditional forms of beach-oriented mass tourism are still highly popular, in latter decades the tourism industry has become much more complex and diversified ". The emergence of the low-cost airlines has enabled affordable access for most areas in the World by stimulating new routes, opening up destinations like the Pygmy region in Cameroon. The increases in the number of travelers are bringing in some impacts of tourism on the people and so have increased the push for sustainable tourism initiatives by tourism stakeholders.

But what therefore is sustainable tourism development? Sustainable tourism is tourism development that avoids damage to the environment, economy and cultures of the locations where it takes place. The aim of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development is a positive experience for local people; tourism companies; and tourists themselves. This form of tourism push to solve today's tourism demands while preserving the environment for the future generations.

Achieving this is not very easy to come by. According to Sharpley&Telfer(2002, 320), sustainable tourism development can be seen as divisive. The concept evolved from mass tourism and polarises the debate between sustainable tourism which can be viewed as "good" form of tourism, and mass tourism seen as "bad" tourism practices. Further examination of their work reveals that, sustainable tourism development does not inject reasonable economic benefits to the economy of the destination as compared to mass tourism. "From a consumption point of view, recent years have witnessed little or no decrease in demand for the traditional, summer-sun package."(Sharpley&Telfer 2002, 320).

According to these findings, creation or expansion of national parks in the Pygmy forest region limits their hunting and gathering activities and push them gradually into agriculture in order to meet their daily need for food. Even though the parks are created to save forest lives, it blocks the forest people from exploiting the land as they are not allowed anymore to move into the area protected. As such, the hunting gathering skills disappear gradually leading to a breakdown of the peoples 'economy.

In addition, with Cameroon hoping to be an international tourist destination in the next 21 years (2035), the Pygmy culture could become a selling point for international tourist arrivals. This can change the economic situation of the area and improve the standard of living of the Pygmies as they engage in tourism business. But can lead to mass tourism as more and more tourists become interested in their culture and therefore unsustainable.

Despite the above setbacks to sustainable tourism, it remains the most environmental friendly form of tourism development that can have a positive future for the Pygmies. Our environment is changing very fast as a result of tourism activities and other development initiatives. This is a real threat to the whole World. By 2030, global tourism will be the World's largest industry with 1.9 billion international arrivals generating 2 trillion dollars a year. Yes, it looks like a very good business opportunity but can the World be able to cope with the carbon footprint as a result of tourism activities? According to Yeoman(2008, 307), a high percentage of opinion polls show that, consumers are very concern about the environment today than it was before but yet, few tourists are willing to change their plans to reduce carbon emissions.

9 Discussion and conclusion

The concept of sustainable tourism is widely accepted by many from service providers of the tourism industry to the consumers or tourists. But the idea is not being implemented by tourism practitioners during trip planning or the tourists during their trips. Sustainable tourism development does not inject reasonable economic benefits to the economy of the destination as compared to mass tourism. (Sharpley & Telfer 2002, 320).

However, despite the numerous setbacks resulting from the concept, this research proves that, sustainable tourism remains the most environmentally friendly form of tourism. In the Baka Pygmy region, the creation of the Boumba-Bek national park to conserve wild lives for tourism purpose reduces over hunting of the larger mammals like the elephants whose existence are already on high pressure but have limited the forest area to be explored by the Pygmies for gathering and hunting activities, which is their traditional lifestyle.

Furthermore, there have also been efforts by the tourists to promote the music culture of the Baka Pygmy people. This has given rise to improve life styles and a source of income thereby reducing poverty among the people. Their musical albums are also being marketed online with the help of the tourists and of course, this helps to generate more income for the people.

In addition, the findings reveal that, the Pygmies receive some direct gifts in the form of money from the tourists by allowing themselves to be filmed. This also helps to improve the income level of the people even though; this kind of action can have a long term negative feedback on the culture of the people.

The forest laws are gradually being improved so those forest communities can market their forest products easily within Cameroon and beyond. This will have a positive income generation within the society and improve lifestyles.

Politically, land titles are awarded to some members of the Pygmy communities by the government, allowing them to have full control of the land and the forest. Having a land and forest properties with a channel to market the products harvested from the forest to the market is a giant step to improve the lives of the people and promote development.

Local guides are being trained to lead tourists to the Pygmy communities. The guides must be residing in the community with good knowledge of the people's culture. And so, the tourists

are advised by the guides on what to do to respect the culture of the people while in the community.

The Cameroon government has tried to make the Pygmies modern by insisting that, all the children should go to school. The government also attempted to pick the children of these communities and take to school or force them to go to school but it all failed. Currently, the government trains some children willing to study and sends them back to the Pygmy community to teach others. Those who are willing to learn a bit are given better positions within the government as an encouragement to others in the community. All these actions have helped to improve the lifestyle of some of the Pygmy household and the community as a whole.

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10.4 Appendices

Interview questions:

1. Who are the Pygmies of Cameroon?
2. How is their life style affected by tourism?
 - Agriculture
 - Fishing
 - Sacred places
 - Culture in general (socio-cultural and tangible and intangible)
3. What has the Cameroon government done to improve tourism in the Pygmy area?
4. How do tourism stakeholders protect the Pygmies from the negative impacts of tourism? (ethical, socio-cultural ecologic, economic)
5. When and how will tourism be beneficial to both the tourists and the Pygmies?
6. How do you see the Pygmies' future in the changing world?