

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COASTAL RESORT TOURISM
ON TOURISM PARTICIPATION AMONG THE LOCALS IN
HOPKINS VILLAGE, BELIZE**

By

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to provide an understanding of the impact of coastal resort tourism on tourism participation amongst the local people of Hopkins Village – and the potential benefits they derive from these resorts. The research also partly focused on the impact of resort tourism on the Garifuna culture. A qualitative research approach was adopted which utilized a case study as a strategy of enquiry, semi-structured interviews and participant observation as data collection techniques. The research was conducted from January to February 2015.

The results that emerged from the study indicated that the community of Hopkins depends heavily on the resorts for their livelihood. In fact, the resorts employ majority of the local people with very few owning their own businesses. However, resentments towards the big resorts were expressed – from marginalization, exclusion and very little to no benefits accrued and invested into the community – which is regarded as being crucial to the development of the community as a whole. Recommendations based on the results of the study were also outlined.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Tourism is considered one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (UNWTO, 2013). The tourism industry is characterized “by a large and intricate interaction between people, who demand a wide range of services and provisions, and inputs” (Price et al., 1997 p. 251). It has also been regarded as a vehicle for economic growth especially in developing countries (UNWTO, 2013). However, according to Spencer and Meyer (2012), the evidence required to support this highly-held belief is not significant enough. In fact, many papers present a rather gloomy picture of tourism as a prospective driver for poverty alleviation (Spenceley, 2008). Despite the potential benefits tourism presents, it has been met with a number of different challenges, resistance and complexities mainly due to its potential negative impact on the environment, culture and economy of local communities (Berno & Bricker, 2001).

The concept of sustainable tourism growth and development has gained much support because it seeks to promote sustainable tourism practices that can potentially mitigate the impact of tourism development on local communities (Neto, 2003). The tourism industry is multidisciplinary comprising of different stakeholders. This indicates that, for tourism to be sustainable, a holistic approach to planning should be adopted where the different stakeholders play a critical role in the decision-making process. This type of approach facilitates relevant public participation (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005).

1.2 Tourism and Public Participation

1.2.1 What is public participation?

Public participation is an approach that promotes the commitment and contribution of the public in the decision-making process of a development project. It gives community members the platform to make decisions on political, economic and social issues (Fisher, 2006). Therefore, the adoption of a public participation approach in decision making ensures that, decisions made about development projects align with the interests and values of the community. As a result, the top-down approach of governance identified with conventional tourism has been deemed to be ineffective since it may alienate local people from the decision-making process and it is also not dynamic enough to handle the complex world (Fisher, 2006).

1.3 Potential Benefits of Public Participation in Sustainable Tourism

Public participation in the decision-making process of tourism development is imperative in the conservation and management of a community's cultural resources and environment (Sinclair & Diduck, 2009). However, the multi-stakeholder participation in decision making, that is necessary for sustainable tourism, makes this objective achievable. This is because, it promotes the acceptability of policies among stakeholders which is necessary for trust building, transparency, probity and accountability (Sinclair & Diduck, 2009). Also, public participation encourages the integration of economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors in development project planning (Sinclair & Diduck, 2009). Furthermore, social and individual learning, which is also an important feature in sustainable tourism development is enhanced by public participation. This promotes collective action of the community which could lead to sustainability of the environment and natural resources (Sinclair et al., 2008). Given the potential benefits of public

engagement in tourism development, it is of no wonder that it has received wide support from a variety of scholars hence its recommendation in many literatures (Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003).

1.4 Research Context

Hopkins village, which is a Garifuna community is found along the coast of Stann Creek in Belize. The village is separated into the Northside and Southside (Tourism Master Plan Hopkins, Belize, 2010). Partially surrounding the village are the Maya mountains, the Caribbean Sea found on its shore and the Cocksomb Range inland. With a population of 1500, artisanal farming, fishing and recently tourism, serves as the principle source of income for the local people (Tourism Master Plan Hopkins, Belize, 2010).

Hopkins has seen considerable tourism growth and development such as the establishment of expensive resorts, hotels and condos. Despite all these construction works being undertaken in the village, some of the local people remain impoverished. There is little evidence of investment in basic village infrastructure and services. If the quality of life in Hopkins does not improve, there is the likelihood that the community might become marginalized in the near future (Tourism Master Plan Hopkins, Belize, 2010).

1.5 Research Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of my research was to investigate the impact of coastal resort tourism on tourism participation among the locals in Hopkins Village, Belize

1.5.1 Objectives

- To examine the degree of local participation in local tourism and coastal resort tourism
- To identify the potential benefits of coastal resort tourism on the local community

- To describe the cultural evolution of tourism in Hopkins since the introduction of resort tourism in the community and also explore the impact of tourism on the Garifuna culture.

Research Design

I adopted a qualitative approach in my research through a pragmatic paradigm since my research was an exploratory case study. I also employed a case study as the strategy of enquiry in my research. The data collection methods I used included semi-structured interviews and participant observation. My study population consisted of community members and resort representatives. Also, semi-structured interviews and participant observations were digitally recorded with consent from participants and if otherwise, hand written notes were taken. Coding of interviews were done manually.

1.7 Significance of Study

Community-based tourism has received much support from scholars and communities because of its potential benefits to local communities (Liu, 2003; Kent, 2005). Community-based tourism is designed to meet the needs of the local community, tourists and that of developers whilst protecting the environment and culture of the community. In as much as it is imperative to promote community-based tourism, mass tourism should also be planned and managed in a sustainable way (Liu, 2003). This is of paramount importance especially in a developing country such as Belize where mass tourism is expanding rapidly.

Active public participation is regarded as one of the main distinctive features of community-based tourism, yet it is practiced passively in most communities where community members serve as the center of a tourism project but not as partners with developers (Liu, 2003). Public engagement of community members in the decision-making process helps to promote positive

attitudes towards tourism. It also ensures trust building, transparency, and profit sharing among community members (Tosun, 2001).

In this regard, revelations from my research about the role of public participation in community-based tourism projects in Hopkins Village, with a focus on the impact of coastal resort tourism, may help reveal ways that local residents may benefit considerably from tourism. Additionally, findings from my research may help uncover ways through which residents could adopt other forms of tourism approaches such as social-economy enterprises, which has the capacity to effectively engage residents in tourism.

1.8 Thesis Organization

The thesis was structured into six chapters. The introductory chapter and then a review of literature relevant to the study. The third chapter touched on the methodology including the strategy of inquiry and techniques used in the data collection. The fourth chapter detailed the results of the study with the fifth chapter covering the discussions of the study. Finally, the final chapter touched on the conclusions and recommendations – specific to each of the objectives set.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism and Sustainable development

According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism refers to the traveling of persons outside of their comfort zone and environment – not exceeding one consecutive year – where they engage in activities which is characterized in the form of leisure, business and other purposes (WTO, 2000, p.1). In 2013 alone, tourism activities around the world has generated about US \$ 1.4 trillion (UNWTO, 2014). Tourism is characterized by multi-sectorial activities which makes it a capable vehicle for development. Activities such as trading, shopping, transport, art, crafts etc., can serve as an effective avenue for economic development through the generation of employment for people (Kent, 2005, Rishi & Giridhar, 2007).

2.2 The Role of Tourism in Sustainability

The tourism industry has the potential to bring about infrastructural development, economic development while simultaneously supporting environmental and cultural conservation in the host community (Androitis, 2001). However, despite its immense contribution to the development of a community, tourism is associated with a lot of challenges. If not well managed, it can be very detrimental to the general well-being of a community. Social and environmental stress such as environmental degradation, resource exploitation, conflicts, overcrowding, and waste management issues are examples of such challenges (Pradhan, 2008). These negative impacts have resulted in a growing concern among many tourism managers and scholars and has spurred the understanding of the need for the conservation of natural resources, culture and economic well-being in many tourist destinations (Pradhan, 2008).

Singh (2008) highlighted the adverse effect of tourism related development projects in the region of Manali, India. He suggested that, in order to ensure sustainability, environmental and social development projects that have the potential to affect the stability and well-being of a tourist destination should not be encouraged. Butler (1991) argues that tourism in many parts of the world poses a major threat to environmental conservation which causes management problems in tourist destination areas. The recognition of this phenomenon has led to the creation of the concept of 'sustainability' in tourism development, which seeks to alleviate the environmental and social impact of tourism activities (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005).

The steep growth rate witnessed in the tourism industry as compared to other industries in the economy has made sustainable development in the area of tourism development critical in recent years. Indeed, in many ways' tourism leads the way in adopting sustainability practices. With it being an industry that relies heavily on resources, it is considered imperative that tourism developers including governments, recognize the need to conserve and protect the environment in an effort to keep the tourism industry operational in the long run (Horobin & Long, 1996). According to Prosser (1994), there are numerous social factors that facilitates the push for sustainable development. These factors include: cultural sensitivity, increasing environmental concerns, displeasure with existing tourism products, recognition of the susceptibility of resources to exploitation by host communities and the changing attitude of tourism developers.

2.3 Brief History on Sustainable Development

In a report entitled "Our Common Future (WCED, 1987)" – the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), defines sustainable development as "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 8). Since the publication of the report, sustainable

development has become internationally accepted by a variety of scholars as a potential solution to resource and environmental degradation (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). Subsequently, the concept of sustainable development has been adopted by the tourism industry to help resolve issues pertaining to the environmental and social intricacies in the industry (Kent, 2005). This is because it provides considerable benefits to the host community by connecting the environment, economy and society without compromising their environmental and cultural integrity (Neto, 2003). According to McCool (1996), the sustainable development concept has given rise to the development of a sustainable tourism framework specifically designed to effectively utilize the resources of a host community, thereby ensuring increased economic growth, environmental conservation and an operational and resilient community. As a result, many small- scale tourism ventures have received considerable support worldwide.

2.4 Community-Based Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

2.4.1 What is community-based tourism?

Community-based tourism has been identified as a means through which local people in a community can improve their standard of living. Community-based tourism development involves the establishment of an extensive plan which uses tourism as a tool, directed at improving the economic, social and cultural components of rural communities (Johnson, 2010). It is often characterized by increased community participation in the management of tourism development projects which could lead to the continual and viable use of natural and cultural products (Johnson, 2010).

2.5 Critique of Community-based Tourism

Though community-based tourism has been considered as a tool that can provide immense economic, cultural and social benefits to a community (Hall, 2000; Hiwasaki, 2006), the realization of this objective has proven difficult (Becker & Bradbury, 1994; Briassoulis, 2002; Laverack & Thangphet, 2009; Johnson, 2010). According to Blackstock (2005), community-based tourism is impractical because it does not fulfill the objectives of a community-based system. He outlined reasons to buttress his submission by claiming community-based tourism (a) is too concentrated on industry development rather than community empowerment (b) does not consider the internal dynamics of the community (c) does not acknowledge the existence of external forces such as power differences between developers and the local people which affects the decision-making process. Bahaire & Elliot-White (1999) shed more light on this critique by stating that, most external private investors consults community members before the commencement of big projects such as the establishment of hotels or resorts in the community. He emphasized that, most private investors undergo the normal routine of seeking the local people's approval by asking for their input on the size, scale, intensity and design of the tourism project. By so doing, the community bears the responsibility for the outcome of the project although they are not equal partners with the private investors in the management of the tourism projects.

2.6 Challenges to Community-Based Tourism

Community-based tourism has been endorsed by many scholars as possessing the potential to unlocking economic possibilities in a community (Murphy and Halstead, 2003; Barnes et al, 2001; Dixey, 2005; Epler Wood and Jones, 2008). However, many research and donor communities have criticized community-based tourism as an effective tool for enhancing the

quality of life at the local level because of its failings in fulfilling its objectives. A critical paper by Mitchell and Muckosy (2008) on community-based tourism highlights the lack of financial viability, ineffective governance and poor market access as some of its shortcomings. They emphasized that, for community-based tourism to be successful, there should be effective collaboration between stakeholders, an operational market and commercial viability. Access to adequate funds is imperative for smooth running of community-based tourism projects especially in communities where accommodation is being offered (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008).

Most local communities fail to run community-based tourism as a business. This is because they lack the expertise, knowledge and skill on how to market their products and services. Also, the inability of most communities to cooperate with tourism enterprises who have the capacity to train them on the business-side of tourism also affects the management of tourism projects (Epler Wood & Jones, 2008, Scheyvens, 2007, Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008). Poor governance of tourism projects affects the success of community-based tourism profoundly. This is because, most community-based tourism approaches wrongly assume that communities are alike and thus share a common interest when in reality, they consist of people with different social status and interests (Saxena, 2008). Efforts to impose a democratic system in such communities has proved futile because of the traditional system of governance already operational in such communities where most decisions pertaining to tourism projects are undertaken by traditional heads and rulers (Scheyvens, 2007). However, despite all the factors outlined that impact the effectiveness of community-based tourism development, studies have revealed that, in the presence of favorable conditions such as a sound financial viability, an ideal business model, an efficient technical support and a viable market access, considerable results can be realized (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010).

2.7 Social-Economy Enterprises within Community-Based Tourism

2.7.1 What is social-economy enterprises?

Until recently, socio-economy enterprises have been identified as a means through which the objectives of community-based tourism in rural areas could be achieved. In this type of development, tourism development is championed by the community. This involves the use of community resources without the support of an external public or private capital (Johnson, 2010).

Socio-economy enterprises hinges on neoliberal policies that promotes the transfer of responsibilities pertaining to tourism development from the state to the community members (Amin, 2005; Mair, 2006). The absence of government influence and provision of services has created an opportunity for the development of socio-economy enterprises which provides diverse forms of products and services such as health care, employment, job training, small-scale production, cultural enrichment and preservation (Amin, Cameron & Hudson 2002).

Social economy, which is commonly referred to as the 'third sector' (Mertens, 1999 p.2), is a new kind of economic organization which has gained much support and popularity over recent years. It has served as an effective tool for community economic development because of its ability to alleviate the impact of neoliberal government policies (Amin, 2005). Unlike traditional tourism where services and products are controlled by private investors and governments, social economy comprises of local enterprises which are managed by the local people where benefits accrued are returned back into the community (Lukharinen, 2005; Mertens, 1999). Some typical examples of social-economy enterprises comprises of credit unions, community-based training organizations, volunteer-run projects and worker-owned cooperatives (Johnson, 2010).

Though some of the operational methods of social-economy is similar to that of private businesses, the aims and objectives are different. Social-economy is aimed at giving community members the opportunity to design and develop their own economic, social and cultural targets, which has mutual respect, communal benefits, and common interests of the people over profits, as its main foundation (Lukkarinen, 2005; Quarter, 2000).

2.8 The Role of Social-Economy Enterprises within Community-Based Tourism

Conventional community-based tourism is characterized by the existence of some level of cooperation between private developers and government planners. This means that, community members are considered as active participants but not just the focus of tourism development in their communities (Simmons, 1994). However, the extent of participation differs from passive contribution to complete community control (Tosun, 2006). Adopting a social-economy approach to community-based tourism facilitates a change of role of community members from that of a participant that interfaces with private developers and government planners to that of an entrepreneurial architect (Johnson, 2010). This approach to tourism development gives the community complete discretion to develop tourism products and services that meets the interests of the community.

According to Quarter, Mook and Richmond (2003) social-economy can be categorized into three broad enterprises. These include: public-sector nonprofits, market-based associations, and civil-society groups. With an effective linkage to traditional markets, these three kinds of social-economy enterprises vary in the services they provide and the sources of their revenue (Quarter, Mook and Richmond, 2003). However, these three different enterprises share a common objective, which is to provide services to community members rather than prioritizing profits and also to encourage volunteer participation which is propelled by social objectives. For instance,

public-sector non-profits who are connected to government agencies, derive their revenue such as grants and private donations from different sources (Quarter, Mook and Richmond, 2003). Hospitals and universities are a typical example of development projects that falls into this category. Furthermore, market-based social groups comprising of credit unions, and general service providers such as the YMCA, falls into the second category. These groups draw their revenue from the market, and excess funds are reinvested into the organization or returned to the community members (Quarter, Mook and Richmond, 2003). Also, the third category is made up of civil-society organizations such as religious groups, membership-based services and unions. These organizations derive their revenue from membership fees and donations to fulfill a particular purpose. However, apart from the provision of capital for tourism development, social-economy also plays a pivotal role in business capacity building and product and service delivery. These extensive supporting structures of social-economy enterprise makes it a defining feature that cannot be ignored hence its crucial role in the realization of community-based tourism objectives (Quarter, Mook and Richmond, 2003).

2.9 Coastal Resort Tourism

International tourism has witnessed considerable growth in the past 50 years which is now characterized by a profound transition from the occasional leisure and relaxation of the wealthy and daring, to a major source of employment, outside capital and cultural exchange (Bruner et al., 2000). However, this accelerated growth was also accompanied by large number of people, increased pressure on resources as a result of increasing demand, land deterioration, pollution and poor waste management that affected the environment of host communities (Bruner et al., 2000). According to the Ecotourism Society (1998), tourism development in natural areas in the tropics has seen significant growth that outweighs that of the tourism industry as a whole. Such

growth has been concentrated along coastal areas. For instance, tourism development projects were usually situated within 800 meters of the high-water mark with most of these projects taking place in the Caribbean (Jackson, 1984). It was discovered that, two thirds of all environmental impacts that occurred was as a result of tourist activities that took place between the back bays and fronting reefs (Potter, 1996). As a result, coral reefs, which serves as a habitat for many organisms are often destroyed through tourist activities (Potter, 1996).

2.9.1 Impact of Coastal Resort Tourism on Local Communities

It is ironic that academic interest in the area of coastal resort tourism is relatively low despite the fact that it serves as a major tourist destination for many holiday-makers. Indeed, within the tourism literature, less focus has been given to tourism development along coastal areas (Agarwal, 1999, 2002; Smith, 2004) partly because they have been ignored or contained within analyses of coastal tourism regions (Coccosis & Parpairis, 1996; Govtia Prat, 1996; Jordan, 2001) or considered to having limited economic and historical context (Beatty & Fothergill, 2004; Clegg & Essex, 2000).

Though coastal resort tourism has witnessed a major boost in recent years, local people in host communities have received few benefits from these tourism development projects even though their way of life is significantly impacted (Bruner et al., 2000). The environment which serves as a source of livelihood for the local people is greatly impacted. For example, Lead international (2004) reports that, the rapid expansion of coastal resorts in Mexico, coupled with a huge influx of people converging on the fragile coastal ecosystem have contributed to the degradation of the environment. Prior to the establishment of tourism development projects, Cancun served as an important habitat for seabirds and sea turtles. Moreover, the government's initiative to connect the two ends of the Cancun Island to the mainland via a causeway, has caused a restriction in the

run of freshwater to the lagoon, causing a permanent alteration of the landscape (Wiese, 2000). Additionally, Wiese (2000) identified waste management as a major problem in tourism development along the coast. He notes that, the high number of tourists visiting the resorts leads to the accumulation of waste as a result of increased consumption. In explaining his argument, Wiese (2000 p. 4) states that, “any time you gather 300,000 permanent residents and the occupants of 20,000 hotel rooms in one area, there are going to be accumulation of mountains of garbage and Cancun was no exception.”

Furthermore, coastal resort tourism impacts greatly the social life of local people. Citing coastal resource development projects in Cancun as an example, Neto (2002) notes that, projects undertaken contributed to the segregation of ethnic groups as a result of social pressures. Although these projects served as a source of employment for the locals, income generated contributed little to their livelihood. This is because in comparison to others in other social occupation, they earned less. Moreover, prices of basic commodities such as food, accommodation, energy and raw materials increased as a result of increased tourism development activities.

Reports from Lead International (2004) also indicates that, resort tourism development impacts are greatest in respect to local culture. They drew this conclusion by analyzing the impact of tourism on the Yucatan Peninsula which is frequented by tourists who converge to enjoy the white sand beaches, deep blue Caribbean waters and the tropical climate. The tourists also delight in experiencing the rich Mayan culture which has gone through a lot of struggles in the face of modern civilization. However, the influence of the wealth and glamour of mega-resorts has impacted greatly the culture of the people. This has led to the marginalization of the Mayan people, both economically and socially (Lead International, 2004).

Coastal resort tourism has the potential to improve the quality of life in the community if it is done in a sustainable manner. To ensure sustainability, the environmental and social impact of tourism development should be considered otherwise the same resources that serve as a tourist attraction would deteriorate over time. In essence, adopting good environmental and social practices would help enhance the business model component of tourism development (Lead International, 2004).

Additionally, the outlined negative impact of coastal resort tourism development can be effectively addressed if developers form a partnership with the local community groups and enterprises, where they would provide services such as hiring and training of local people, and also promote local developmental projects (Bruner et al., 2000). For example, a partnership established between the local people in Punta Cana Beach Resort, in the Dominican Republic is already yielding positive results through the development of a training program that provides training on sustainable fishing methods to fishermen in the local community (The Ecotravel Center, 1998).

Consequently, looking at the impact of coastal resort tourism outlined here, I was interested in studying a particular case in Hopkins Village, a Garifuna community which is located along the coast of Belize. Due to the presence of coastal resort tourism in the community, I sought to investigate its impact on tourism in the community. In finding answers to my question, I examined the degree of public participation in community tourism, identified potential linkages between the community and the resorts, and assessed the evolution of tourism in the community and its associated effect on the culture of the local people.

2.9.2 Public Participation and Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is an interdisciplinary concept that cuts across the environmental, economic, social and political spheres of a community and as a result, has the ability to touch on a wide range of issues (Tosun, 2001). Often times, stakeholders in the tourism industry are diverse, with each one possessing different perceptions and interests which may be conflicting (Tosun, 2001). However, Lin (2003) argues that, having diversity in stakeholders is imperative for the implementation of a sustainable tourism framework which in turn makes a tourism project successful. Examples of stakeholders in tourism industry includes: tourists, tourism investors and developers, host community and governments etc. (Tosun, 2001).

2.9.3 Tourism Planning

In recent years, there has been a growing support for the integration of public engagement in sustainable tourism planning and development. Additionally, a well-planned tourism development project does not only enhance the quality of life of the host community but also improves the attitudes of the people towards tourism development (Brohman, 1996).

According to Choi & Sirakaya (2005), effective tourism planning is necessary for sustainable tourism. The authors drew this conclusion after studying sustainability indicators which proved to be critical in sustainable tourism development. Choi & Sirakaya (2005) further emphasized that, community members should be actively involved in the planning and management of a tourism project by equipping them with the relevant information and training to enable them to make informed decisions. Notwithstanding the support for public participation in tourism planning and development – and the role of government in tourism should not be understated. This is because government facilitates an effective coordination between the public and private

sectors, and different stakeholders, which ensures responsible tourism development is being undertaken (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry, the desires, opinions and aspirations of community residents should be taken into consideration in tourism planning. Brohman (1996) notes that, the attitudes, inputs and ideas of community members is crucial for tourism development. Because the resident members are the ones that enjoys or bears the consequences of tourism, it is imperative that they are actively engaged in the decision-making process (Tosun, 2000).

2.9.4 Public Engagement in Sustainable Tourism in Developing Countries

2.9.4.1 Challenges and potential solutions to public participation in developing countries

Unlike developed countries where tourism planning and development is more interactive, comprehensive, integrated and environmentally receptive, tourism in developing countries is facing a difficult task to attain these standards of sustainability (Tosun, 2000). It is evident that, achieving these standards of sustainability in developing countries requires a significant amount of effort, huge financial commitment and expertise (Tosun, 2000). In many developing countries, decision-making in tourism planning that involves the local residents of the community has not been fully recognized (Tosun, 2001). However, Tosun (2001) notes that, in places where it is accepted, participation of local people in decision-making is only passive but not active. He further stressed that, decision-making in most communities is normally undertaken by a few educated and elite group of people which leads to the exclusion of a large group of uneducated local people. To address this challenge, Timothy (1999) suggested that, tourism planners should fully understand the governance, resource and cultural limitations of a traditional society before planning development projects in order to prevent forcing foreign ideologies on them. Also,

Saxena (2008) notes that, tourism development in developing countries should include the establishment of plans and programs that involves the development of diverse forms of infrastructure. Furthermore, he stressed that, the term ‘development’ is interpreted differently by various social groups based on their interests and positions they hold in their communities (Saxena, 2008). However, often times than not, in most developing countries, development projects are usually tilted towards the interests of the most dominant social group in the community. Consequently, this situation requires the need for an all-inclusive engagement in decision-making process (Saxens, 2008).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the paper provides a brief description of the research site – which is Hopkins Village Belize. It touches on the location of the study site, the history and culture of the Garifuna people. In addressing that, I have explained the location of Hopkins village in Belize, a brief history of the Garifuna – describing their origin, their culture – including their language, means of livelihood which is mostly fishing and farming and recently tourism. Additionally, this section also addresses the research methodology – explaining why I adopted a particular research study technique and strategy, data collection techniques, analysis and how I derived my themes.

3.1 Site description

The research project concentrated on Hopkins Village, Belize.

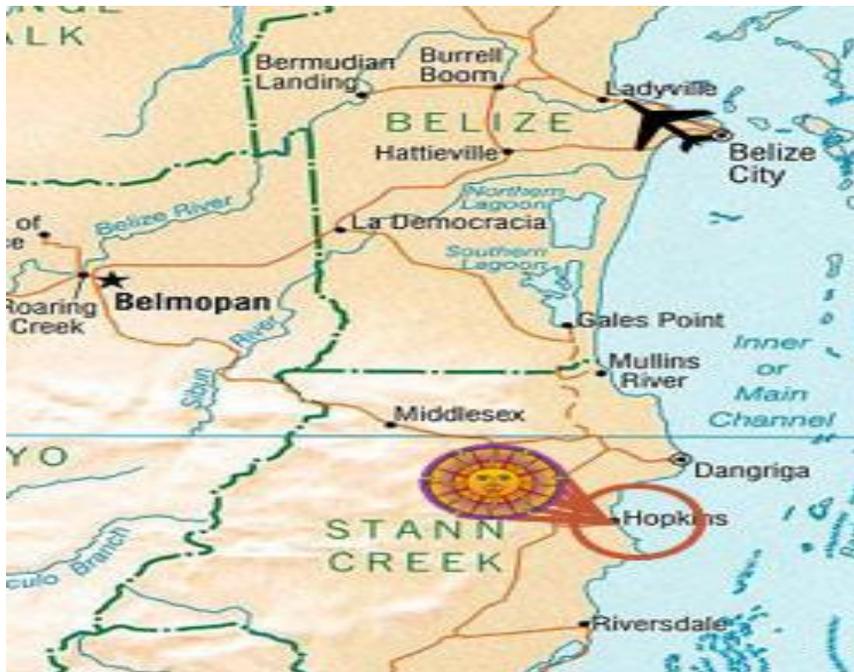


Figure 1 – The location of Hopkins Village on the map of Belize
(<https://www.sanpedrocoop.com/map-with-hopkins>)

Hopkins village is a Garifuna community located along the coast of Stann Creek in Belize. The village is separated into the Northside and Southside (Tourism Master Plan Hopkins, Belize, 2010). Partially surrounding the village are the Maya mountains, the Caribbean Sea found on its shore and the Cocksomb Range inland.

With a population of 1000, artisanal farming, fishing and recently tourism, serves as the principle source of income for the local people (Campbell and Penados, 2013). Land in Hopkins Village is owned by individuals and the kind of tourism operational in the community is the sand-sun-and-sea variety (Campbell and Penados, 2013). Also, due to its location, Hopkins Village have been earmarked as a possible stop for cruise ships. However, in the neighboring community are upscale, largely owned foreign resorts that serves as a source of employment for the locals (Campbell and Penados, 2013).

3.2 History of the Garifunas

3.3 Origin

The Garifunas are also known as Black Caribs and they number about 200,000 – with many migrating to the U.S cities (Palacio 1998). They are located in Central America in Belize, Honduras and Guatemala – and mostly found on the northeast coast. In 1635, as a result of a ship wreck, West African slaves predominantly Nigerians – who were on a journey to the New World mines and plantations ended up at the shores of the Caribbean island of St. Vincent (Global Sherpa, 2015). “They are indigenous not to Central America rather to the Eastern Caribbean where their two sets of ancestors, Arawaks/Caribs and maroon African slaves intermixed. The root population numbering 2,026 were shipped by the British in 1797 from the island of St. Vincent in the Eastern Caribbean to Central America.” (Palacio 1998:2; Gonzalez 1988:21). The mystery that identifies the Garifuna is that, they are a people that possesses an identity in one

body with its distinct language, food, religion rituals and worldview. This is as a result of an integration of two distinct traditions, Amerindian and African (Palacio 1998).

In the 17th century, French settlers arrived in St. Vincent where they lived peacefully with the Garifunas. In 1796, the peaceful interaction was later disrupted when British troops who arrived at the island forced the Garifunas off the island where they were later transported to Roatan, a Honduras Bay Islands located in the Caribbean Sea. The Garifunas upon settling there, successfully cultivated cassava which later became the centerpiece of the customary Garifuna diet, then eventually migrated to the Caribbean mainland to institute fishing villages in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Currently, there are about 300,000 Garifunas scattered all over the world particularly in towns located on the coast such as Belize, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua (Global Sherpa, 2015).

3.3 Garifuna culture in Hopkins Village

Garifuna culture and social characteristics are manifested in a combination of Caribbean fishing and farming traditions, which is mingled with African and South American music, spirituality and dance. In 2001, “UNESCO declared Garifuna language, dance and music in Belize to be a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.” (Global Sherpa, 2015). Over the years, these cultural and social structures have experienced very little to no changes (Garifuna.com). For instance, the Garifuna language, the circular dance, folklores, religious sacrifices, plantation farming and fishing are still practiced.

Garifuna culture is mostly known for its music and dancing. The music incorporates the utilization of percussion instruments and peculiar drumming, which is a pleasant blend of primero (tenor) and Segundo (bass) drums. Hardwoods such as mahogany or mayflower - which are resident trees to Central America are used for the construction of the drums. In order to

produce the desired sounds, these hardwoods are hollowed-out. The most popular form of customary music is known as Punta. Punta music are normally composed by the Garifuna women and mostly addresses one gender or the other (Global Sherpa, 2015).

3.5 Case Study Strategy

I adopted a case study as a strategy of enquiry because it enabled me narrow down the scope of the research by studying and focusing on how community-based tourism is impacted by coastal resort tourism in Hopkins Village, Belize. The study emerged from a LACREG (Canada-Latin America and the Caribbean Research Exchange Grant) program which constituted a case study approach to tourism in the community. Consequently, adopting this strategy of enquiry provided me with insight into the ‘how and why’ certain things occur as a result of actions taken, thus facilitating an in-depth exploration of the issue. Furthermore, case study enabled me to understand the knowledge and experiences people have accumulated over the years as a result of their interaction with a phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Based on these reasons, adopting a case study as a strategy of inquiry was necessary because it gave me a thorough understanding of the tourism situation in Hopkins Village within a real-life context (Noor 2008, Yin 2003).

3.6 Qualitative Research

I adopted a qualitative research approach because I wanted to understand the impact of coastal resort tourism on community-based tourism and the best way I could achieve this was through qualitative research. This is because I did not have access to a representative sample for statistical analysis and the use of fixed questionnaire have been proven to be ineffective in traditional societies and places where English is not their first language. With a pragmatist

paradigm which also employs a case study strategy, the application of this research design became pivotal to the success of my research (Creswell 2003, 2007). Given the nature of my research - which took place in a natural setting, qualitative research qualified as the most suitable research design by providing a platform on which I was able to explore and understand the events that took place during my study (Creswell, 2009). Also, the flexibility of using a qualitative approach enabled me to respond to changes in the field especially situations that changed the focus of my study.

The adoption of a qualitative research design provided me with the opportunity to utilize one or more strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2003, 2009). Typically, the use of participatory data collection procedures, with a particular focus on participants' perceptions and experience - allowed me to collect adequate data that I utilized in explaining complex situations (Creswell, 2003, 2007). Therefore, my obligation as a researcher, was to rely heavily on the views of participants which served as a source of information for my study (Creswell, 2003). As a result, qualitative research served as the most suitable way to approach my research.

3.7 Data collection procedures

I utilized semi-structured interviews and participant observation as my data collection procedures. In doing this, the respondents were questioned for approximately 35 minutes on the impact of resort tourism on their lives and community as a whole. In conforming to the ethics of the research, the participants were notified that their responses were confidential and associated potential risks and benefits communicated. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The files (.wav) were encrypted and then stored in a password protected laptop computer. In other to potentially avoid losing the files and also protecting the confidential data collected, the backup files were encrypted, stored on a locked portable hard drive – and stored in

a suitcase. All the data were put together for examination and the raw data will be destroyed in 2 years after the completion of the research.

3.8 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews served as an avenue for me to gather data for my research by documenting the experiences and knowledge of participants who were involved in the tourism process. I adopted this data collection technique because of its flexibility which allowed me to steer a guided conversation and also provided room for participants to elaborate on their responses (Yin, 2003). Because of this flexibility, I was able to probe and ask questions based on the responses of the participants (Yin, 2003).

Questions asked sought to address all three objectives of my study. My interviews were focused on community members, whether they were involved in tourism or not - in order to address the issue of “inclusion and exclusion.”

I conducted my interviews over a four-week period in January and February of 2015. Utilizing a semi-structured interview strategy enabled me to probe further which led to more elaborate responses from the participants. As a result, the respondents were able to tell their stories and experiences of tourism in the community.

Content analysis was utilized to identify emerging themes which formed my primary method of data analysis.

Sample interview questions

- (a) Do you participate in tourism, and how?*
- (b) What good or service do you provide? How is it performing in the market?*
- (c) Have you made efforts to improve your product or service?*

(d) How does people in the community benefit from the resorts in the community?

(e) Why aren't you participating in tourism?

3.9 Participant observation

According to Bernard (1998), participant observation facilitates good communication between a researcher and the participants. Thus, adopting participant observation as a data collection tool enhanced my relationship with community members by promoting rapport building that allowed me to settle easily into the community. Consequently, this provided the opportunity to collect data through observation as I interacted with the participants (Bernard, 1998).

Through participant observation, I was able to engage myself in tourism activities such as meetings with the women's group, resort managers, restaurant owners – and also observed trade interactions at restaurants and craft shops. Furthermore, I acquired knowledge on how the tourism products are made, their evolution over time and how they are marketed to tourists.

Participant observation served as the basis on which I was able to ask valid and appropriate questions that fed into the objectives of my study. This gave me the opportunity to ask questions and corroborate what participants communicated to me (Yin, 2003). I sought further clarification on issues I observed whilst I was engaged in tourism activities in the community. My observation was focused on community tourism participation, tourism management, cultural products available and challenges to tourism participation faced by community members in the tourism process. To ensure accuracy, I recorded all the information gathered for each day and reviewed them at the end of the day.

I only conducted my observations in places where the tourism experience was recognized but not in the participants' homes.

3.9.1 Data accuracy

Validity of data in qualitative research is imperative to ensure accuracy of research findings (Creswell, 2003, 2007). The adoption of different data collection procedures such as semi-structured interviews and participant observation coupled with the careful selection of participants played a critical role in validating my data for accuracy (Creswell, 2003, 2007). Responses from participants who participated actively in tourism and those who did not participate in tourism but had an in-depth knowledge of tourism in the community were used in the data analysis.

3.9.2 Data Analysis

Content analysis served as the principle means of analysis. Emergent themes were identified by adopting a manual long table content analysis where common subjects and key words were identified – which served as the basis on which to develop a picture of tourism in Hopkins village. Furthermore, data transcription was done manually.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this research was to provide an understanding of the effects of coastal resort tourism on tourism participation among the local people of Hopkins Village – and the potential benefits they derive from these establishments. Furthermore, I wanted to comprehend how the operations and activities of the resorts have impacted the culture of the local people.

In my study, three research questions were addressed.

1. What is the degree of local participation in coastal resort tourism?
2. What are the potential benefits of coastal resort tourism?
3. What was the nature of tourism prior to the introduction of the resorts and how it affected the culture of the community?

This section of my paper explains the description of the study participants – which is then organized based on the findings from the data collected.

4.2 Participants

My research process involved conducting 26 interviews. 18 interviews covered local community members – interviewed individually or as a group (26 males and 3 females), 2 tourists and 5 resort managers who were expatriates. The participants involved in the research were carefully selected. For instance, local residents interviewed included those who were active participants in tourism and others who were not. Active local participants comprised of restaurant owners, two resort owners, tour guides, bartenders, servers, housekeepers etc. Those who were not active in the tourism business included construction workers, a retired fisherman and an elderly man who

has returned home after spending years in the United States. This provided good triangulation for data analysis. Participants interviewed was based on availability and willingness of the individual to be interviewed. In verifying certain vital information from locals – especially pertaining to resorts shirking their social responsibilities to the community, resort managers of the big resorts were targeted as a means to corroborate the stories of the respondents.

4.3 Interview themes

Interviews conducted with local community members brought to light their experiences, perceptions, and the role of tourism in their lives and how it plays a key role in their livelihood. They also expressed how tourism has shaped their culture – either for good or bad, their hopes for the present and future – and how they wished tourism is run differently in the community with respect to being key participants in its development. The locals expressed how they want to be involved in running tourism and hope Hopkins will be different from other villages where tourism is practiced. John, who is a restaurant owner explained that;

“I want us, the locals, to be actively involved in managing our own affairs. I do not want Hopkins to become like Placencia – where expats have taken over the land.”

In relation to playing an active role in tourism development, they communicated their frustrations about the ineffectiveness of the Village Council – the body tasked with running the affairs of the community.

“The village council does nothing for the people. We have lost confidence in them.” This is a comment from Robert, a housekeeper at the resorts – expressing his frustrations about the village council and its running of the community.

4.4 Themes tree

The key themes that emerged from the interviews comprised of employment tensions, social responsibility issues, cultural changes and the lack of local business ownership in the community. The key themes and subsequent sub-themes were identified through content analysis which served as the main means of analysis. By adopting a manual long table content analysis, emergent themes were identified based on common subjects and key words from the interview transcription. Similar words and subjects were grouped together, and the emergent sub-themes identified. This provided a picturesque view of the tourism situation in Hopkins.

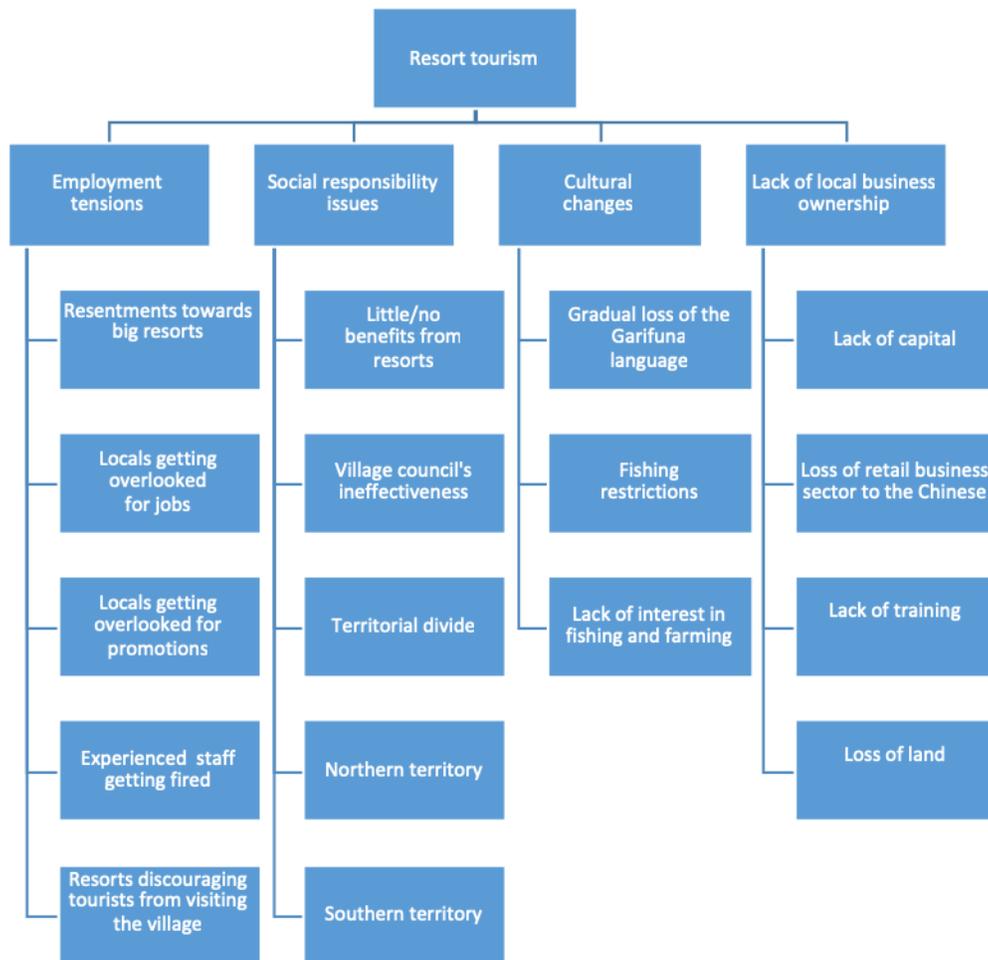


Figure 2. Tree chart showing the main and sub themes

4.5 Employment tensions

Resorts in Hopkins provides the most employment opportunities for the local people. In fact, it serves as the main source of income – with community members working as bartenders, cooks, tour guides, cleaners, housekeeping staff, servers and others taking up managerial positions. Peter, a bartender explained that;

“The life of this community has changed for the better and the worst because of tourism. Every household in Hopkins have been affected by tourism in terms of economic activities. Tourism is much better than government jobs. You can make more in 2 weeks than doing a government job.”

He further stated that;

“Because of tourism, there are lots of jobs in the community. Whatever you do, you can make a buck or two. If you want to sell coconut, you know at the end of the day you can make some money.”

However, there’s been some employment tensions in the community especially amongst the locals which is mainly expressed in the form of resentments towards the big resorts in the community.

4.6 Resentments towards big resorts

Despite the heavy dependence on resort tourism for their livelihood, most of the local people harbor resentments towards the resorts. The different explanations given by the respondents for these disgruntlements was dependent on whether the individual was employed at the resort or not (self-employed) even though there was some overlap. Those employed at the resorts explained how their jobs are being taken over by outsiders who are willing to take lower wages. They also touched on how they are overlooked for promotions and how the resorts try to save money by

firing experienced staff. On the other hand, respondents who were either self-employed or did not work at the resorts described how the resorts at Sittee River discouraged the tourists from visiting the village – as this affects their business. Moses, a construction worker intimated that: “The resorts at Sittee do not want the tourists to come to the village. They try as much as possible to keep them inside the resorts.”

Upon probing further about the reasons for the resentments towards the resorts, the participants outlined certain factors:

1. The locals getting replaced by outsiders
2. The locals getting overlooked for promotions
3. Experienced staff getting fired
4. Resorts discouraging tourists from visiting the village

4.7 The locals getting replaced by outsiders

Losing jobs to foreigners was one of the major complaints of the respondents. Since working at the resorts serves as the main source of income for the locals, the people feel threatened because they feel their livelihood might be taken away. Michael a farmer opined that;

“When the locals are denied jobs because they are demanding higher wages and benefits, the resorts are importing other people who would take lower wages and do whatever jobs given them. And that is the breaking point as the locals may feel threatened and may well attack these new comers who are taking their jobs as they come to live in the village. The leaders of the community should be mindful of these things.”

He further stressed that, the leaders “should sit down with the resorts and tell them you know what, you can bring problems on yourself if you continue doing what you are doing. But again,

our people, most of them have an attitude problem. They are not trained but they want higher wages. We have to make sure they are trained and have the wherewithal to provide what the resorts need. It is a two-way street and we have to blame ourselves too.”

Upon questioning the resort managers as to why the locals are getting replaced by outsiders, one of the managers, Mary indicated that, “some of the locals are lazy and unreliable. They call in sick to work a lot and they have to find a replacement at the very last minute and this affects our business.” This comment by the resort manager explains the comment above by Michael who indicated that some of the locals have an attitudinal problem.

4.8 The locals getting overlooked for promotions

One of the topics that emerged as a result of the employment tensions in the community is the fact that some of the locals working at the resorts feel they get overlooked for promotions. Limited opportunities for advancement to managerial positions or the lack thereof is one of the reasons outlined by the respondents. Expounding on this, they expressed their disappointment on how experienced people from the outside are brought in to take up these positions. Gloria, a respondent working at one of the big resorts explained that;

“I have been working here for 6 years and I am still doing domestic chores even though I am well trained. When a position opens up for promotion, someone is brought in from the outside to take up the position and these are mostly people from Cayo.”

Another interviewee Joe stated that;

“I don’t see a future here if I cannot make it to the top. I work hard and instead of getting promoted, someone comes in to take up the position. This is very frustrating.”

4.9 Experienced staff getting fired

Another issue that was touched on by the respondents was the fact that experienced staff at the big resorts get fired when promotion is due them. They explained that, the resorts engage in this practice as a means to avoid paying higher wages to the locals. Gloria, a respondent who works at one of the resorts explained that;

“The resorts fired someone because she was an experienced staff – and had to pay her more money. She had been working there for 10 years... and she got replaced by the Mayans who are willing to take less money.”

Another interviewee called George explained that, the resort managers are reluctant to promote the locals to managerial positions for fear they might become influential. He stressed that;

“These foreigners when they come here, and they see a conscious black man, they’ll keep you far away as possible. They’ll try to avoid you as much as possible. They’ll deal with you when they have no choice and as a result, they don’t like to promote us because we’ll get influential and resist them.”

4.9.1 Resorts discouraging tourists from visiting the village

The interviewees expressed their resentments towards the resorts by describing how the resorts discourages the tourists from visiting the village by providing a package deal which comprises of tours to interesting places in Belize, food and accommodation, gift shops, miniature golf courses and Garifuna cultural exhibition – where the drummers, singers and dancers are sent to the resorts to perform for the tourists. John, who is a restaurant and bar owner stated that:

“The resorts provide the tourists with a package deal to stop them from coming to the village. They put them in a bus in the morning, send them on tours and return in the afternoon or evening. They even send the singers and drummers to perform for them at the resorts.”

Also, they further explained that the resorts adopt the tactic of instilling fear into the tourists by citing unfounded cases of robbery – as a means to discourage the tourists from touring the village. John noted further that:

“They (resorts) tell the tourists not to visit the village because we’re going to rob them. You (referring to me) – have been here for over a week. Has anybody robbed you?”

In an effort to corroborate these stories, I asked some resort managers about whether they discourage tourists from visiting the village. Unanimously, they vehemently denied these allegations. Nonetheless, upon further probe, Claude, who is one of the resort managers admitted hearing rumors of certain resorts engaging in this practice. He said, “we do not discourage our tourists from going to the village. We even provide them with bicycles that they can ride to the village. All I can say is that I have heard some resorts engage in this practice.”

I will admit that through my observations, I witnessed some tourists from Sittee River going to the village, either on bicycles or gulf buggies.

4.9.2 Social responsibility issues

Issues arising from perceived lack of support or investment into community development by the resorts are some of the major topics raised by the respondents. Bartholomew, who is an herbalist stated that;

“The resorts do not care about the people. All they care about is making money even though they are using our resources.... they don’t give back.”

Some of the sub-themes that emerged from the social responsibility theme includes;

1. Little to no benefit from the resorts
2. The village council’s ineffectiveness

4.9.3 Little to no benefit from the resorts

Upon inquiring from the respondents on the benefits the community derives from the resorts, as far as community development is concerned, majority of them said “nothing.” Some of them indicated that the community benefits from them but their contributions are very little. Bartholomew, a respondent stated that:

“Some of the resorts make donations but no major donations.”

He further explained that, “there are people who set up green team where they’d set up garbage cans around the community. But I think we need bigger things than that. It’ll be good if the resorts will say we will sponsor 10 high school students for the course at the high school education or college. There is nothing like that. There is a lot that is drawn from the community and few is coming back. Apart from the salary that workers get, nothing is coming back.”

4.9.4 The village council’s ineffectiveness

The village council of Hopkins is the leadership body of the community and the locals expect them to drive development and also manage the affairs of the community. However, all the respondents intimated that the village council is “ineffective.” Factors such as politics and time constraints etc. were cited as the reasons for their ineffectiveness. Michael, an interviewee indicated that the village has authority but does not know how to exercise it. He said, “the village council has authority and have to understand that they do.”

On the issue of politics – which have been identified as a factor for the village council’s ineffectiveness, he stressed that, “as black people, we’ve divided ourselves and foreigners and government have taken advantage of us. These are natural human tendencies. We can’t get the type of leadership because of politics, we don’t get the right people in leadership positions. The leaders have to make a concerted effort to ensure that the partnership between the community

and business reaches a level of mutual respect. We have to elect the right leaders in the community.”

Upon probing further to ascertain if there is any sort of interaction between the village council and the business owners, Michael responded saying;

“I can’t say but I believe that if there is any sort of interaction between the private business owners and the village council, it is very minimal. I say this because most of the business owners are foreigners, Canadians, Germans, Americans etc. The managers who manage these places are people who live in the real estate, have their own organization, meeting, where they get together in their own meeting, so they can segregate themselves. I think they don’t have any interest in the community, it’s all about money.”

4.9.5 Territorial divide

Segregation and disputes as to where the boundary lies between Hopkins Village and Sittee River has created some tensions between the local people and the resort owners. Hopkins residents indicated that the resort owners located at the northern part of the village have expediently segregated themselves by naming their area of operations as Sittee River. They believe that the resorts segregated themselves in an effort to avoid contributing to community development and also control their own affairs without being accountable to anyone. Sub-themes that emerged from this issue include;

1. Northern territory
2. Southern territory

4.9.6 Northern territory

In times past, Hopkins covered the entire ends of the village, to the north and the south. This changed when the big resorts established themselves in the northern part of the village, thereby segregating themselves. According to an interviewee called Bob – who is a bartender, he explained that;

“When we came here, Hopkins extended all the way to the other side of the village. Now they developed the place quicker and separated themselves from Hopkins so now they call themselves Sittee and we are Hopkins.”

Gerd, a small resort owner who is also a local argued that, the territorial divide in the village might not be a bad thing since the northern part of the village – Hopkins – still encompasses the Garifuna culture – which serves as the main attraction for tourists – an element that could be taken advantage of. He stated that, “from a cultural standpoint that’s not a bad thing because it gives the locals an opportunity to promote their culture because there is no culture over there (Sittee River) to promote. It’s like going to Cancun or Hawaii...there’s nothing. I think they’re making a big mistake not investing in the Garifuna people cos if we can jump on this thing.... Right now, some of the musicians are starting to put things in place.”

This notion held by the respondents that the culture of the Garifuna people serves as the main attraction for tourists was supported when I interviewed some tourists who indicated that, “we decided to come here because of the culture of the Garifuna. We could have gone to Cancun or any other place, but we chose Hopkins. We are very surprised by the hospitality of the people. The locals are very nice.”

I also observed the dancers and drummers performing in one of the big resorts in Sittee River. Upon interviewing Luke, who is one of the drummers, he explained that, “the resorts pay us to perform for the tourists. They take us through the back door, perform and they pay us. We don’t

have any interaction with the tourists. We only go there, perform and leave.” This quote strengthens the argument that Sittee River lacks the cultural element Hopkins Village possesses – something which could be harnessed to create an advantage for the locals.

4.9.7 Southern territory

Sittee River is located at the southern part of the village. It contains 3 of the 4 major resorts in the entire village – namely Hamanassi, Belizean Dreams and Jaguar Reef – with Hopkins Bay situated in the northern part of the village. Apart from the 3 major resorts in its territory, Sittee River also contains other smaller resorts and restaurants. Sittee River came about when the resorts established their businesses in the southern part of the village. They later “separated themselves by calling that area Sittee River” – opined Bob. The respondents indicated that the locals are not happy with this situation since the businesses in Sittee River are not accountable to anyone. Glen, a craft shop owner stated that;

“It seems that what is taking place in this village is that, the foreign owners that come in to do business, it’s almost like they have their own forum where they get together to decide and figure out who they deal with, who to be friends with, the type of people to hire and things like that. I think they are well versed just because of things that have happened in this village and so it gives the villagers no opportunity.”

He argued further that by identifying themselves as Sittee River residents, the resort owners have established a convenient excuse to shirk their social responsibilities to Hopkins Village. They further insisted that by declaring themselves as inhabitants of Sittee River, the resorts have no right to market or use the Garifuna culture or the village of Hopkins as a means to attract tourists. Glen insisted that;

“They have come together and used Sittee river as an excuse to not contribute anything to the village. They pay all their taxes and duties – including liquor taxes – to Sittee River. This they accomplished by setting up a single organization where they pay all their taxes to – which is further distributed amongst themselves at the end of the year. They say their resorts are not in the village yet use the name and culture of Hopkins to market their business.”

4.9.8 Cultural changes

The major impact of resort tourism on the Garifuna culture is the gradual transition of their economy from a barter trade system to a cash-based system. Since tourism happened spontaneously, the local people were not trained on how to handle and relate with the new change. As a result, they were unable to take advantage of the opportunities tourism presented. George, a respondent who is a small resort owner indicated that:

“I think this tourism thing hit them when they were not prepared for them. They had engines and boats not equipment for tourism and that they’d need help with these things.”

He explained further that:

“The leadership was fine for when it was a small village...and suddenly you have to care about how fast things come and go, care about making all this money.”

Many participants also touched on the slow deterioration of the identity of the Garifuna people. Over time, the language is being spoken less especially amongst the youths. The food has also been impacted. For instance, cassava bread which was once recognized as a cultural and staple food for the local people is no longer patronized. Bartholomew revealed this by stating that;

“Some of the youth cannot speak the Garifuna language.” He also added that, “they do not know how to make cassava bread... nobody eats that anymore.”

According to the respondents, tourism also impacted fishing activities in the community due to certain restrictions imposed on the fishermen by the government. Additionally, fishing and farming which used to be the principal economic activity is no longer practiced on a larger scale especially among the youth. They prefer to engage in tourism activities instead.

The sub-themes that were identified includes:

1. Gradual loss of the Garifuna language
2. Fishing restrictions
3. Lack of interest in fishing and farming

4.9.9 Gradual loss of the Garifuna language

One of the major impacts of tourism on the Garifuna culture is the gradual deterioration of the indigenous language. The language is spoken less especially amongst the youth. Throughout my stay in Hopkins, I never observed the locals communicate in their Garifuna language. All communication was done in English. The only time I heard the language spoken was when the drummers, singers and dancers performed for the tourists. Bartholomew noted that:

“The youth do not speak Garifuna anymore and I think tourism has a role to play in that.”

He further explained that:

“We mostly communicate in English with the tourists.... everybody is doing tourism so English is spoken more instead of Garifuna. We don’t engage in communal activities anymore, so we don’t get to speak our language. Everybody is on their own. There are songs we used to sing during fishing and farming and since nobody likes to do them anymore, we don’t get to sing it.”

4.9.9.1 Fishing restrictions

Fishing, which served as the main source of livelihood for the locals have been impacted by tourism and as a result is no longer practiced on a larger scale. Compounding this situation are fishing restrictions imposed by the government – which has brought about some positive and negative impacts.

During my time in Hopkins, I lived at a resort at the beach front and I hardly witnessed people fishing on the sea. This observation supports the highly-held notion by the locals that fishing activities has decreased. When I quizzed a Bismarck, who happens to be a former fisherman about why he doesn't fish anymore, he replied that:

“They (government) stopped us from fishing. They (government) just did their own thing...they (government) just do their own thing.”

He further explained that:

“Hopkins is a fishing town and because of tourism they've turned fishing into a money-making campaign, so the locals can't afford that, so you need license to go to certain places, you can't go to certain places to fish...its seasonal fishing.”

Fishing restrictions imposed by the government on the fishermen included fly fishing – where fishes are caught and later released into the sea; the designation of certain areas as national parks and a limitation placed on the quantity of fish caught for consumption and commercial purposes. These restrictions discouraged many experienced fishermen especially the elderly from fishing. Bismarck indicated that:

“The restrictions from the government discouraged the experienced fishermen from fishing. This is because even though sustainable fishing is good, the fishermen were too old to change their way of thinking. They are used to the old way of doing things.”

4.9.9.2 Lack of interest in fishing and farming

The participants highlighted that one of the major impacts of tourism on the Garifuna culture is the gradual loss of interest in fishing and farming – especially amongst the youth. An interviewee called Michael outlined a reason for that. He explained that:

“The youth don’t like to fish and farm because they make a lot of money from tourism.... either working as a tour guide or at the resort.”

Another participant named George added that:

“Nobody wants to go to the farm anymore. If people have money, they go to the Chinese because the Chinese sells everything. Money changed everything. When they didn’t have money, they went to the farm.”

4.9.9.3 Lack of local business ownership

One of the major things I observed during my stay in Hopkins is the lack of locally-owned businesses in the community. Most restaurants, small resorts, bars, gift shops are owned by foreigners. In fact, I recorded 44 different businesses on the main road that runs through Hopkins. 31 of them are foreign-owned whilst 12 are locally owned. Out of the 12 locally owned businesses, 3 of them operated fully with regular operating hours. The rest did not have regular operating hours – and also had their stores in deplorable states.

According to the participants, there were quite a significant number of locally-owned businesses before the rapid influx of tourists into the community. George intimated that:

“When we first came to Hopkins 10 years ago, there were a lot more Garifuna businesses. When we came here, almost everything was owned by the locals. People used to live here and live off the land, local trading...everybody owned everything.”

Now with foreigners owning majority of the businesses in the community, the participants outlined certain factors for that. These includes:

1. Lack of capital
2. Lack of training
3. Loss of land

4.9.9.4 Lack of capital

Majority of the respondents attributed the lack of locally-owned businesses in the community to the lack of capital. Some of the participants admitted that they'd love to start their own business, but they do not have the necessary capital. One participant called Dennis intimated that:

“I would love to own my business, but I don't have the money for it. The bank does not want to give us loans.”

George supported this notion by stating that:

“The people that need restaurants, they'd need funds to start a restaurant. The problem contributing to unavailability of businesses for locals is cash flow. To start a business, you probably need \$5000 dollars and most people don't have that. That is the reason why most foreigners come into the village and start a business so easily.”

When I mentioned the option of acquiring a loan from a bank, most of the respondents shared their concerns about that. They explained that they do not have the collateral for a loan and are also afraid of losing everything should they default payments to the bank. Michael, a participant summed up these concerns in a statement – that even though some individuals are not risk averse and would like to embrace the opportunity to access funding from the bank, the difficulty involved in getting the loan discourages people. He emphasized that acquiring a loan as a group is much easier than applying as an individual. Additionally, he noted that, the locals do not

understand what it takes to run a business since they weren't brought up that way. In his explanation he said:

“It is difficult to access funding for individuals unless it is a group. They have funding for women, but they have to be trained to be able to access it. YWCA provides training for women. They provide them with training and then give them a loan. If you grew up and your mother had a business, you grew up in the business, so you won't be afraid of business. Running our business is something new to us and we can't understand. Tourism came to Hopkins 20 years ago and business is not our forte. It is something new to us. Our problem is we are too slow to catch up. We have a social problem. Parenting is lacking. It is a country-wide phenomenon. We don't have counselors; the country is not geared towards developing the human resource to the maximum and it cuts across all cultures.”

A sub-theme that emerged as a result of my interaction with the participants on this subject of capital for business, is the loss of the retail business sector to foreigners particularly the Chinese.

4.9.9.5 Loss of the retail business sector to the Chinese

One of the first observations I made during my stay in the village was the dominance of foreigners – particularly the Chinese, in the retail business. Since I had to stock up on basic toiletries, water and drink etc. noticing such control was inevitable. As a result, I inquired from the participants why this was the case. A respondent called Victor – who is a tour guide stated that:

“Country-wide the Chinese have taken over the retail store business. They have been able to corner that sector in the country. It is a country-wide phenomenon. They come as established business people, they understand that game. They can undercut everybody and control it. I can

appreciate what they are doing, you can see it, but you can't stop it. It is difficult to compete with the Chinese. We have been brainwashed with this supermarket thing that you go to the supermarket now not the grocery store. We used to call them grocery stores but not anymore. People now have been cultured into the supermarket thing with tv and all of that, so it is difficult for local businesses to build these elaborate stores and compete with the Chinese because the Chinese are importers and are able to buy from the importers and to compete with them, there is no way you can undercut them so, it is a natural phenomenon invading the country. We used to have our own local stores, but they cannot compete.”

In fact, there is only one locally-owned retail store in the entire village. In comparison to the foreign-owned retail stores, the locally-owned retail store is much smaller in size and also in a deplorable state – mainly because it is in a kiosk and lacks proper signage.

4.9.9.6 Lack of training

Another contributing factor to the small number of locally-owned businesses in the community is the lack of training required to either start up a new business or manage an existing one. The participants argued that, Hopkins Village was a fishing and farming village and the locals had no training in the area of marketing and also running a successful business enterprise. As a result, the spontaneous eruption of tourism in the community left them at a disadvantage because they were unprepared. Victor intimated that:

“Unfortunately, what the government did was that they started advertising Hopkins as a tourist spot, but they didn't put the support systems in place for the people that were here because they should have put some training in...like this is what you need to do...simple things. Now if you have a restaurant, put a sign on it that is attractive, paint your place. There never was anything

that had to be considered. Now if you want to attract a tourist and charge a tourist rate, these are things you have to do, and the people were never taught that.”

4.9.9.7 Loss of land

Throughout my stay in Hopkins, I noticed that the beach front and areas along the main road in the community were mostly occupied by foreigners – either utilized for business or domestic purposes. When I quizzed the participants about that observation, they explained that this is one of major reasons why they’re not dominating the business sector in the community. Mary explained that:

“People come in and offer you \$50000 dollars for a beach front which is unheard of cos you can’t buy a beach front for \$50000 dollars anywhere in the world. So, \$50000 dollars for a people that haven’t been in a capitalist system.... \$50000 dollars sound like a lot of money so a lot of people sold their rights to the property. So, a lot of the businesses are not here anymore because of that.”

She further explained that because the locals had no training and education before the introduction of tourism in the community, a lot of people did not understand the value of their land and as a result, “some of them took advantage of the quick sale which I taught was a lot of money but you can see in Hopkins, its expensive here, it’s not cheap. And \$50000 dollars is like you have a family, that’s gone! A lot of people are getting displaced. Not everybody is cut out for tourism and people were living off the land through fishing and farming and now it’s kind of displaced now. I think right now, people are getting to understand how capitalism works in what you can do and invest, now it’s too late because they’ve sold their wealth which is basically their land.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Objective 1

My first objective is to examine the degree of local participation in local tourism and coastal resort tourism

With tourism being the major service industry in Belize, it has served as one of the major forms of employment for the local people (Garifuna) in Hopkins Village. A vast majority of inhabitants of Hopkins are being employed in the resorts, which is the mainstay of the tourism industry. Only a few locals (the Garifuna people) have their own businesses – including but not limited to fishing, farming, craftsmanship, food vendors, petty trading etc. These businesses in some ways benefit from the local tourist attractions.

Like many of her Central American and Caribbean counterparts, Hopkins welcomes tourists all year around due to its pristine environment, picturesque beaches, biological diversity, tropical weather and the rich cultural heritage. Tourists from around the world (mostly north Americans) visits Hopkins for a variety of reasons including nature and conservation research, vacations, wedding events, photography, or to escape the busy life in the city and cold winter climate or to learn new things about nature. During their stay, tourists engage in activities such as canoeing, sailing, hiking, fishing, diving, snorkeling and ship cruising etc.

As the concept of ecotourism began to gain momentum in tourism, a need to preserve the natural environment of Hopkins while improving social and economic conditions of the local people who serve as environmental stewards are developed. Many stakeholders in the tourism sector have devoted resources to ensure tourism in Hopkins meet the criteria for ecotourism which

takes financial support for conservation, people empowerment and environmental stewardship into cognizance.

5.2 Participation of the local people in tourism

Tourism in Hopkins serves as the main source of employment for the locals. There is active participation among men and women. According to the majority of the respondents, more women are actively involved in tourism than men. They mostly work as cooks, house keepers and cleaners in these big resorts. Some women are also involved in the baking of bread. They then sell the bread to the resorts and other businesses. The men on the other hand are mostly involved in bar tending, tour guiding, diving etc. Some of the locals who do not work at the resorts own their own businesses such as restaurants, tour guiding businesses etc.

Active participation by the locals in tourism development is of paramount importance if sustainable development is to be attained. Sebele (2010) explains that, tourism as an industry, demands the active participation of the locals in the community as it does not only ensure the preservation of the tourism product and local resources, but promotes sustainable development as well as improving the attitudes of the locals. Sebele (2010) stressed that, the contribution of the local people is critical to tourism development not just because of the diverse experiences they present due to their differences in class and skills, but without their active participation, tourism development cannot be objectively defined as sustainable.

5.3 Experiences of the local people on coastal resort tourism and how it affects their participation

Coastal resort tourism serves as the main source of employment for the locals. According to one participant, “60 to 65% of people depend on tourism.” An interviewee (John) summed up how dependent the locals are on the resorts for employment by stating that, “majority of people go to

school and find themselves in the resorts for which they don't need education for." Despite this over-dependence on tourism as the main driver of the economy, some locals were not happy about the presence of these resorts in the community. Most of the interviewees expressed their displeasure at having limited access to the resources in the community because of the influx of tourists. John expressed this by saying;

"You cannot walk on the beach anymore. They've taken over the land"

To a larger degree, people's experience about a community initiative such as tourism affects the level of participation of the residents. This is evident in how some of the locals view tourism. Some of the community members regard tourists as invaders with reason being that "they've taken over lands and businesses." One respondent admitted that he doesn't like tourism and as a result refused to grant me an interview. He explained that the locals have become marginalized in the community ever since tourists started visiting the village. Because of their experience with tourism and their dislike for it, they've decided not to partake in it. He simply stated:

"I don't like tourism! People been living off the land and now it's a lot tougher for people cos you can't just walk next door and fish anymore, you can't just walk next door and pick something up.... a tree."

For instance, the retail business in the community is dominated by the Chinese who have inadvertently driven the locals out of that business venture. Victor summed this up by stating that;

"The Chinese have taken over the retail business."

He further explained that: "we used to have grocery stores all over the village but now they are closed down because they don't have the money to compete with the Chinese people."

However, majority of the respondents noted that, tourism in the community has its good and bad. Some participants in particular were not happy about the resort’s establishment and operation and the data collected indicates that, those that benefit directly from the resorts through employment are the happy ones even though they had some reservations. Jean, a bartender stated that: “most of the locals consider the positives of tourism...a lot of people feed on the positives of tourism and should be made aware of the good and bad of tourism” He opined that:

“There should be the need for some organization to implement a long-term approach to tourism management that seeks to enlighten the people about the negatives of tourism hence creating an enabling environment for more tourism participation. This awareness creation initiative could potentially improve the community’s decision-making on the use and management of their natural resources.”

5.4 Positive and negative impact of coastal resort tourism in the community

Community members shared their experiences and thoughts about tourism in their community. They talked about both what they deem to be the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the community. Although they agreed that tourism has had a huge impact in the community, they also did not lose sight on how it has impacted them negatively.

Positive impact of resort tourism	Negative impact of resort tourism
Job creation	Tourists visit to village discouragement
Infrastructural development	Alteration of the cultural atmosphere
	Lack of land for posterity
	Locals getting overlooked for jobs

Table 1 showing positive and negative impact of tourism

5.5 Positive impact of coastal tourism in the community

5.5.1 Job creation

The respondents outlined some of the positive impacts of tourism in the community but one positive they all touched on is the fact that tourism creates job opportunities in the community. A respondent called Jardim, who is a construction worker explained this by indicating that:

“Development in Hopkins is happening rapidly so more jobs are created. Development is happening all over and because of good financial flow, the locals are able to provide, live a better life, they afford a house – good life. People live a pretty much a middle-class kind of life. People in Hopkins do not have that poverty level, in comparison to people from other places like Belize city.”

Tourism in Hopkins is growing at a very fast rate due to its beautiful beaches and rich culture. People are traveling from all over the world for the Garifuna experience. This has brought about the establishment of new resorts or the expansion of already existing ones. This in turn has created job opportunities in the community. With the growth of resort tourism in the community comes the influx of tourists. As a result, some of the locals have taken advantage of this opportunity to start their own businesses. Some of them own restaurants where they serve local Garifuna dishes. Others are selling crafts and offering services as tour guides to the tourists. Despite this opportunity for the locals, some of them seem to have failed to capitalize on this opportunity.

5.5.2 Infrastructural development

Tourism development in the community have brought about considerable infrastructural development in the community hence improving the lives of the locals. Jardim explained this nicely by saying;

“I don’t know anybody who lives here without electricity, water or phone. Even the poorest people in Hopkins are not worse off than those in Belize City”

In a bid to make Hopkins Village a desirable tourism destination, it is imperative that social amenities and other relevant structures are developed. This helps to improve the tourism experience in the community. One of the most significant infrastructural impact of tourism in the community is the construction of the roads. Victor responded to that by saying;

“The community did not have proper roads and it was full of bushes and shrubs. But since tourism came into the community, the roads have been constructed and this helps in easy commuting and transport of foods from one village to the other. The availability of roads has made it possible for our kids to either take the public transport or bike to school”

Through infrastructural development, more tourism businesses have been developed hence creating employment for the locals.

5.6 Negative impact of coastal resort tourism in the community

Tourism in Hopkins serves as the main source of employment in the community. However, a majority of the locals expressed their dislike for tourism in the community. They indicated that, “the community does not derive any major benefit from the resorts” hence their dissatisfaction with their presence. They claim that, tourism which is supposed to improve their lives have rather impacted them negatively. Some of the negative perceptions about tourism includes:

1. The discouragement of tourists from visiting the village by resort managers
2. Alteration in the cultural atmosphere of the community
3. Loss of land

4. Locals getting overlooked for jobs, denied promotions and also fired when wage increase in due them

5.6.1 The discouragement of tourists from visiting the village by resort managers

There is this strongly-held perception by the local people that, the resort managers discourage tourists from visiting the village. They further explained that, the resort managers achieve this by “giving the tourists a package deal” which includes food, accommodation and entertainment – where the drummers and singers are sent through the “backdoor” of the resort to perform for the tourist. They also provide transportation from the resorts to the tourist sites. They also intimated that, the resort managers also “discourage the tourists from going to the village by telling them they would get robbed” if they do. And as a result, “the tourists that visits the villages are those that live in the village.”

I found this perception highly intriguing and as a researcher, I decided to probe further. I interviewed two Canadian middle-aged couples to confirm this notion held by the local people. I was only able to interview just this couple because of time limitations. The results were not too conclusive. Upon asking them about this perception held by the local people, the male indicated that, they weren't told categorically not to visit the village, but he could “feel” it in the resorts manager's briefings. This is something the wife also confirmed. He explained they were asked to “exercise caution” when visiting the village.

To support this notion, another respondent Gerd explained that:

“There was one point at the village where the big resorts at the other side (South side) were telling people not to come to this side (North side) of the village. So now there is a divide which is another issue.”

5.6.2 Alteration in the cultural atmosphere of the community

Alteration of the cultural atmosphere as a result of the influx of tourists in the community serves as a major problem. This has affected the way of life of the locals. Because the local community is exposed to different cultures and way of life from tourists from different countries, this has caused a conflict between the local culture and the foreign ones. This might result in the perversion and ultimately the loss of certain local cultural features such as the Garifuna language for which the local people intimated is being lost. Victor gave a typical example of how tourism has affected their way of life by stating that:

“If there is too much traffic, it can damage the ecosystem. It might change the cultural atmosphere of the community. Nowadays, Belizeans, we are Caribbean people, Black people - we like to make noise, enjoy ourselves. Play your music like this (loud music playing in the background). These people they move next to you, and they tell you, you can't play your music because your music is disturbing them when it is actually, they who moved into your community”

5.6.3 Loss of land

“Life will be far above what the locals can afford. So, when the first and second generation comes, they won't have any land to live. The children - children won't have any land to live which means they'll have to move out which is what the tourists and expatriates who move here would like as it'll make more room for them to take over.”

The above statement is from a respondent (Joseph) who is expressing his displeasure at the rate at which lands in the community are being sold to foreigners. He further explained that:

“We cannot walk on the beach anymore because they (expatriates) have taken over the land.” According to them, the loss of land especially along the coast and main road of the village is very alarming. Since it serves as a strategic location for business owners to establish their businesses, it’s become an easy target for rich expatriates. In the same vein, local businesses located along the beaches or the main road that runs through the village are more likely to participate actively in tourism because of its strategic location. For example, a local restaurant called Innies, located along the main road that runs through the village participates actively in tourism because of its strategic location coupled with the fact that it serves local dishes for tourists who are looking to experience the Garifuna culture. In other words, a tourist can easily locate the restaurant if they are looking for the Garifuna food experience.

5.6.4 Locals getting overlooked for jobs

One of the concerns expressed by the locals with respect to resort tourism is the fact that, jobs in the resorts are being taken over by outsiders who are willing to take lower wages. Most of the resorts are unwilling to invest in the locals through training and are rather employing foreigners who already have experience in the tourism sector. George intimated that:

“The main form of employment for the locals is tourism. As it increases, more outsiders are taking over the position of the locals. Status and education mean those with experience are employed ahead of the locals. The resorts prefer to import workers.”

This is a situation I witnessed when I visited one resort in particular called Jaguar Reef. About 80% of the workers I encountered were Mayans. Majority of them worked as the front desk persons, waiters and waitresses. The few locals I encountered were cleaning the beaches. Gerd explained that:

“There are jobs, but the big resorts are not hiring local people but rather bring in people from the Cayo area that are more brown skin I guess to speak...with curly hair instead of those dark in complexion. We’ve seen more of that in the resorts. You see more of the locals working the domestic...not upfront people. They don’t have the local people upfront.”

He further explained that:

“Those of the people from Cayo have done tourism longer and instead of training from the village, it is easier for them to hire someone from Cayo.”

By contrast, Hamanassi – which is also one of the major resorts in the village, is highly-regarded by the locals as a resort that employs more local people. I confirmed this notion when I visited and interviewed one of the managers of Hamanassi, who happened to be a local resident of the village.

5.7 Tourism participation by the local community members

In spite of the growth of the tourism industry in Belize, local people’s participation in the industry is quite abysmal. Even though the resorts serve as the major source of employment in the community, the local people are not benefitting much because of the lower wages they accrue from working lower skill labor jobs in the resorts. They don’t feel they are playing any critical role because of this. In other words, they consider the quality of participation not necessarily the quantity. An interviewee explained that by saying that “majority (of people) goes to school and find themselves in the resorts for which they don’t need education for.” He made this statement because of the type of jobs majority of the locals take up at the resorts – jobs such as housekeeping, bartending, tour guiding, cooking, waitressing – jobs that do not require formal education.

5.8 Challenges to tourism participation

Some of the respondents who participated in this study attributed the challenges to tourism participation to:

1. Lack of tourism training
2. The lack of capital
3. The educational system which prioritizes labor work other than entrepreneurship
4. Lack of land in strategic areas

5.8.1 Lack of tourism training

As with many other emerging sectors of the local and global economy, tourism requires a combination of traditional knowledge and western education and, of course, a great understanding of the market and investment potentials. According to Wood (2008), the failure of community members – especially in developing countries – to recognize and operate tourism as a business venture mainly due to the lack of training and expertise, impacts success. Many of the local people in Hopkins village lack the necessary experience, training and/or educational qualification to run a successful tourism business. This could be attributed to their lack of preparedness before tourism was introduced into the community.

Hopkins had always been a community where their major form of trade was based on the barter system. All this changed when tourism entered the community. They quickly moved from a society that was based on social interactions to a society based on cash. One of the respondents called Jeffrey noted that, “there wasn’t enough training for us to say okay, change is going to come, so we now trying to survive.” As a result, the local people were unable to take full advantage of the various opportunities that comes with tourism. To this day, the local people’s

grip and control of their own tourism business is limited even though they've had all the necessary training. He further explained that:

“People don't understand how to run their business. The thing is you can teach them, try to work with them, they only go this far and that's it. For instance, the beach was the first local hotel, business catering to tourism. But these people have done all the training that you can give them, but they just can't take it to the next level. And the thing is you cannot force them. You can give them the training they need, and the thing is they do not feel comfortable taking it to the next level as they do not want to relinquish ownership, or authority, they fear they are going to lose it, or someone will take it away from them. That is the nature of these people. You can get a lawyer to draw a partnership agreement and they're still afraid because they feel foreigners will chase them off their own property. So, there is lack of understanding, ignorance and no matter what you do, it is difficult. So, when it comes to business, our people are just no ready for it.”

5.8.2 Lack of capital

Community members in Hopkins fully recognizes lack of capital as one of the major hindrances to participation in the local tourism industry:

“The main challenge is access to capital, lack of access to proper training. So, if people don't have training, they don't have access to capital and the community is not promoting entrepreneurship, it is difficult to start a business, create a business”

The power to control a resource in the community lies in the hand of the wealthy. Considering the relatively poor socioeconomic conditions among Hopkins locals, not many of them could afford the ownership of a coastal resort. Thus, as tourism development upsurges over the last

decade, more foreigners from across the globe, who are deemed to have more experience in the tourism business, began to take over the tourism industry in Hopkins.

In order to maximize their profits, most of these foreign businesses are more willing to hire cheap labor at the expense of employing the locals – who expect to be paid more than what is given to outsiders such as the Belizeans and Mayans. As a result, the outsiders (from neighboring villages) who are more than likely to accept relatively low hourly wages of 3 or 4 Belizean dollars, were preferred by these foreign businesses. In turn, the Garifunas in the community continue to experience a decline in livelihood. Only a few Garifunas in Hopkins own their own tourism-related business. In fact, a mapping exercise conducted on the main streets of Hopkins indicated that, majority of businesses operating in the community are foreign-owned. Out of 44 surveyed businesses, 72.7% of these businesses were foreign-owned whilst only 27.3% of them were locally-owned. Most of the Garifuna-owned tourism businesses can barely compete with foreign owned businesses due to low capital investments.

Majority of the local people have tried to access capital from the bank and have been denied. John stated that “the bank refuses to give us loans, so we cannot start or expand our businesses.” This creates a defeatist attitude thus deterring people from trying to come up with business ideas since there is no capital available for the actualization of those ideas. Additionally, the consequences that are associated with one’s inability to pay back a loan acquired from the bank due to high interest payment have made the people risk-averse. John recounted a sad story with one of the community members whose business was shut down because he owed money to the bank. He explained that “...do you see the building over there (pointing to an abandoned building) – this restaurant was closed down by the bank because the owner could not pay the high interest rates from the bank.”

To address this issue, the establishment of social-economy enterprises that are managed by the local people will ensure money accrued is re-injected back into the enterprises. This ensures control of tourism activities in the community where the locals have the capital resources to diversify their tourism products.

5.8.3 The Belizean educational system which prioritizes labor work rather than entrepreneurship

Garifuna people of Hopkins hold their own special beliefs when it comes to culture, businesses and relationships with people. When it comes to businesses and establishments, it is noteworthy that the Garifuna hold the belief that doesn't support the ideals of modern entrepreneurship, rather, labor is highly encouraged. A typical Hopkins village community member will rather work for people to earn money rather than establish their own business. Victor stated that:

“The people prefer to work at the resorts instead of starting their own business.”

It is not clear if this sense of belief stems from their history of colonialism, weak government policies or the risk of setting up businesses in such a low populated area. Glen intimated that most locals cannot start their own business because of the lack of capital. He further explained that, majority of people are afraid to take up loans from the banks.

To change the thinking and beliefs of people starts with education especially among the youth. Three of the respondents opined that, their educational system including its syllabus needs a revision. They suggested that:

“The educational system should emphasize the importance of entrepreneurship as this would shape the mentality and thinking of the youth, encouraging them to create their own businesses instead of working for others.” They stressed that:

“The educational system teaches them to work for others and not to create for themselves. As development increases, the more we become disadvantaged.”

5.8.4 Loss of land

The availability of land especially along the coast and main road has become scarce in the community. Most of the locals have sold their lands in these strategic locations to foreigners who have established their businesses in these strategic business areas. This situation accounts for the limited presence of locally-owned businesses in the community hence affecting the ability and capacity of the locals to dictate and drive tourism in the community. It also accounts for the over-dependence of the locals on the resorts for their livelihood. This over-reliance puts them at a disadvantage as they are not motivated to start their own businesses and it also contributes to the negative experiences from the resorts. A community member who operates a small restaurant along the beach revealed that, he’s been approached by rich foreigners on countless occasions to sell his property for \$100,000 dollars to which he’s declined. He further disclosed that:

“The people sell their lands for \$100,000 dollars and move to the back. They spend the money on cars, drinks and parties or build their own building, do whatever makes them happy....travel to the US and never come back.”

5.9 Objective 2

This section focuses on the second objective on my study which is – to describe the potential benefits of coastal tourism on the local community. I will address particularly the potential benefits of tourism and the social responsibilities required of the coastal resorts which is paramount to the improvement of lives of the local people and the community in which they conduct their business. Additionally, I will be reporting on how the community’s village council

operates and how they've harnessed the opportunity tourism presents to develop the village. Since they serve as the representative of the village and custodians of the people's interests, a lot of responsibility rests on their shoulders to ensure the community prospers. In achieving this goal, it is imperative the resorts give back to the society through certain social programs or developmental projects. Enforcing this is key and the village council is the group to make this possible. Hence, communication between the resorts and the village council becomes critical. However, the respondents intimated that, the village council which is supposed to be the representative of the local people – advocating for their interests seems to be ineffective.

Tourism has played a critical role in the development of the community – and yet, more could be done to ensure the local people and community benefits significantly. Hopkins village attracts tourist all year round which indicates that there is a lot of money circulating within a year – from tourists to the resorts, small business owners and finally to the locals. Nonetheless, majority of the local people feel the resorts are not doing enough to improve their lives and community. One respondent called Luke explained that, “the resorts sells the Garifuna culture – the food, drumming, dancing but the local people benefit little from these resorts.” I verified this notion by interviewing a tourist who was resident in Hopkins bay resort – who intimated that, the culture of the Garifuna people was the main attraction for visiting the village. Despite this, very little is being done in the community by the resorts in terms of development of its infrastructure. They have not been held accountable and this where the people think the village council has failed. Moreover, the village council has failed to bring the people together and as a result, many have stopped caring. Luke stressed that:

“It is difficult to bring people together in order to get people organized. The people only come together to have a party not to address their issues.”

Some respondents feel nothing could be done to salvage the situation. I enquired as to why the people have not been able to come together to demand a change in the way resources in the community are being exploited. They outlined a number of reasons with one being that, “the people do not care anymore because they feel nothing could be done” to salvage the situation. Additionally, they also feel religion has played a role in dividing the people. The explained that, in times past, the only church in the community was the Catholic Church and that served as a place where the locals could converge and address issues in the community. With the introduction of different church denominations, that togetherness has deteriorated coupled with the village council’s inability to come up with alternative ways to bring the people together. In addressing this lack of cohesion and fellowship among the locals, a group called the Hopkins Organization for Environmental and Sustainable Economic Development (HOESSED) – comprising of 8 members – have taken upon themselves to unite the people. They are responsible for the cleaning of the part of the beaches uninhabited by the resorts. They also use these meetings as a means to socialize and also address community issues.

5.9.1 Village Council

The remnants of the indirect British Colonial rule in Belize engendered the appointment of alcaldes (headmen) in native villages. The alcalde system which was a reserve of the Spanish-Maya communities was later adopted as a form of governance by the Garifuna (Black Carib) communities in the nineteenth century (Mark Moberg, 1992). According to ethnohistorical facts, the Garifuna alcaldes grew in strength and unity as they gained significant legitimacy thus modifying the alcalde system to reflect the indigenous antecedents of the community. As a result, the introduction of an elected village council replaced the alcaldes hence giving rise to partisan politics (Mark Moberg, 1992). Most colonial historians agree that, although indirect rule allowed

the progression of native cultural practices with limited intrusion, it also contained an element of pragmatism rather than humanitarian solution to the complexity of addressing diverse ethnic subjects (Moberg 1992).

The village council of Hopkins serves as the representative of the people. It is the mouthpiece, driver, enforcer of community rules and regulations. It is also the governing body responsible for fostering togetherness among the people – in turn promoting growth and development (Mark Moberg, 1992). The village council plays the role of ensuring there is effective interaction between the different stakeholders in the tourism development strategy. This is critical because having a functional organizational structure comprising of interdependent and multiple stakeholders determines the kind of experience, service and hospitality offered by a tourist destination (Waligo, Clark & Hawkins, 2013). As a result, the success of tourism development is contingent on the nature and degree of engagement of each stakeholder (Simpson, 2008). Simpson further explained that, for a tourism development strategy to be successful, there is the need for an effective and constant interaction between the local community and the private sector which constitutes of investors, developers, managers etc., public sector including the national, governmental or regional tourism organizations, NGOs.

The Village Council is made up of 7 members, with the chairman being the head with 6 other counselors. This form of governance was first introduced in the 1960s as a replacement for the traditional form of governance – which shares similarities with the Alkade system of the Mayans.

However, the Village Council, with such an important mandate to protect the bio-cultural diversity of the community have been inadequate to the task. And this is an opinion shared by about 90% of the respondents. Upon further inquisition, the interviewees revealed that the

Village Council has no grip over the tourism industry in the village – and that there are no regulations or rules that business owners must adhere to – and if they were, they aren't properly enforced. Moreover, there is also the lack of constant and effective communication between the Village Council and particularly the resort managers and other business owners. This has resulted in a situation where most businesses are being established without necessarily consulting the local people. Upon questioning, the participants outlined certain contributing factors to the ineffectiveness of the Village Council.

1. Time limitation
2. Politics
3. The issue of bad counsel

5.9.9.1 Time limitation

Most of the leaders on the Village Council have failed to realize how critical their role is, hence combining it with a career that is time consuming will affect their efficacy and their commitment to the community. Bismarck explained that:

“Many of the leaders fail to recognize they won't have time to run the affairs of Hopkins.”

This situation is compounded by the fact that most of the village council members are teachers – and since a teacher works 5 days a week, leaving only the weekend to themselves, this means that they do not have a lot of time to run the affairs of the community

5.9.9.2 Politics

Politics among the Village Council members has disrupted their activities, created disharmony and also brought about a loss of focus as far as their commitment to community progress is concerned. According to Michael:

“Hopkins was first governed using the Alkade system. It changed in the 1960s when the politician came into play causing a massive polarization of the system.”

He argued that the politicians brought a division by infiltrating the village council and driving a wedge between the people. As a result, members of the council either belongs to the blue or red political party and whosoever’s party is in power, tends to dictate the affairs of the group. This has created mistrust amongst the group and the local people. Michael explained that:

“Party politics is the major challenge of the village council. Political parties.... politicians... that’s the business their involved in...competing for power. We have a village council here which is a PUP- oriented council. They’re more aligned with the PUPs and the national government is a UDP and the representative is a PUP, so there is no way that you will get the respect and the support because you are seen as an opposing force. Our people fail to understand that you can play the game and respect an opposing party but for the good of the community you humble yourself and try and work as much as possible and see what you can get. So, it’s not that the village council cannot function. If they were of the same party, probably.”

He also commended the incumbent village council for their work by explaining that:

“They take some trade monies from businesses and they do a good job of accounting for the monies collected by presenting documentation. They’re putting some effort into the work. This council does not get the support they need because they’re aligned with the opposing party.”

5.9.9.3 The issue of bad counsel

Most participants hold the notion that many of the expatriates particularly the business owners “have come together to harvest as much money as they can.” An interviewee called Godfred expressed that:

“Many that first moved to the village were enthusiastic about helping the villagers but later pulled away after encountering other expats that’s been in the village longer.”

In essence, the newer business owners who came into the village with thoughts of contributing to the development of the community have now abandoned such thoughts and ideas after associating themselves with the older expatriates who are reluctant to contribute anything meaningful to the village. This has created a situation that makes the work of the Village Council difficult because these new expatriates would rather listen to the counsel of the older ones hence disregarding that of the village council. Typically, if the older expatriates are not making any contributions to community development, why should they?

5.9.2 Social responsibility of the resorts to the local people and community

As it is in most developing countries over the world, foreign investors have a social responsibility to improve the lives of the inhabitants of the community and the development of the community as a whole. Since the resorts in Hopkins Village are using the Garifuna culture and natural resources to market their business, the locals feel it is imperative the resorts give back to the community. And this sentiment was expressed by majority of the respondents. They feel very little is being done for the people and the community. When I asked an interviewee (John) about the benefit they derive from the resorts, he replied “nothing.”

Development in the community is regulated and dictated by the central government. The government is obligated to consult the local people regarding any developmental projects. One respondent Glen, touched on this by explaining that: “because the Garifunas are considered indigenous people, they have internationally recognized rights and one of those is free and informed consent before any major development can take place in the community – and so far, that has not been the case.”

Before these resorts were established, they had an agreement with the village council to spearhead growth and development in the community by making social contributions to the society. Unfortunately, as indicated by a respondent, “there is no legally binding agreement that holds them accountable for their actions.” As a result, the resorts and other business owners do not feel the need to foster the growth of the village. The village council, which is supposed to be the voice, the enforcer and driver of sustainable development in the community and also serve as the link between the government and the locals have been ineffective. According to the respondents, they are “divided” and do not work as a collective unit. Glen accused the government of deliberately “driving a wedge between them” hence rendering them ineffective.

5.9.3 Social responsibility from resorts and businesses in Hopkins Village (current state)

The local people of Hopkins have an expectation as far as resorts giving back to the community is concerned – either through infrastructural developments or providing employment opportunities to the locals. Many of them feel these expectations have not been met and if it has, it is minimal. Victor expressed this notion by explaining that:

“The resorts are obligated to employ the local people. Jaguar Reef fired most of the locals but at the same time employs outsiders. They care less about the villagers.”

He further explained that:

“They say most of the resorts are not within the boundary of Hopkins and yet use the name of Hopkins to draw tourists in. The village council has made attempts to have meetings with the resort managers to help address issues pertaining to their responsibilities to the community.”

In this section, I will explain the impacts the resorts have made in the community. I will look at their economic, social and environmental impacts.

5.9.3.1 Economic benefits

Tourism has the potential to not only provide direct revenue but also considerable indirect revenue – through a causal sequence where different local economies such as agriculture, seeks to meet the dictates of tourism for varied products and services (Jafari, 1989). An equivalent effect is evident in how tourism provides a significant number of immediate and indirect jobs – particularly the unskilled labor force – which is mostly a consequence of underemployment or unemployment (Jafari, 1989). Tourism in effect serves as a stimulus for local economic development in local economies where the primary sector required to provide economic stability through large-scale industrialization is lacking (Jafari, 1989).

In Hopkins for instance, coastal resort tourism is basically the driver of Hopkin’s economy. According to an interviewee, “about 60% of the local people are employed at the resorts.” But there is a shifting trend in this respect. Many community members feel they are being replaced by the Mayans and other Belizeans who are willing to take less for their services. One particular resort in the community is guilty of this. Upon visiting the resort to interview the resort manger, I observed that majority of workers in the resort were Mayans – very few were Garifunas. In other words, their jobs have been replaced. I pointed this out to the manager in our interview and she explained that most of the locals call in sick to work all the time hence are not reliable as the outsiders.

Also, the locals complained about the fact that most of them get fired because of the mere fact that they’d have to be compensated more because they’ve been working longer. They further explained “that the resorts are looking to maximize their profits hence firing them and employing new people with little experience would save them a lot of money.” But this accusation is something all the resort managers vehemently denied upon interviewing them.

Additionally, the locals also feel the resorts discourages the tourists from going into the village by telling them they'd get robbed. An interviewee explained that their objective is to "keep the tourists in the resorts and they do this by offering them exclusive packages that covers their accommodation, tours and even entertainment where they invite the drummers and dancers into the resorts instead of allowing the tourists to explore the Garifuna culture in the village." However, all the resort managers denied this accusation with only one hinting that some other resorts engage in this practice.

5.9.3.2 Social benefits

In an effort to give back to the community, some of the resorts have social programs that promotes growth and development. They achieve this through scholarships and donations to the locals. Hamanassi for instance, provides 3 months internship programs where they train people as house keepers, inland guides and divers. Their goal is to certify 3 people from the community by the end of each year. The resort covers the cost of the training except for the study materials. If the students match their requirements, they offer them a job and if they don't, the resort relishes the fact that they've equipped these students with the necessary experience and exposure they need to work on their own or somewhere else.

Hamanassi also sponsors the children of their employees up to the high school level. They also encourage their tourists traveling to Hopkins to bring along school supplies like books, pencils, pens and back packs. They engage in these donations about 3 or 4 times a year. Additionally, they are also involved in making contributions to the Humane Society.

According to the respondents, Hamanassi and Hopkins Bay are the only resorts that are actively involved in social and developmental programs. Hopkins Bay, being one of the biggest resorts have contributed to the establishment of a pre-school for kids.

5.9.3.3 Environmental benefits

Before tourism was introduced into the community, Hopkins Village lacked a well-defined road that linked all the major parts of the community. In order to boost the economy through providing better experiences for tourists, the construction of roads that will serve as a link to all parts of the community became imperative. It has served as the means upon which restaurants have been established and also made easily accessible. This construction of the road has been critical to the economic growth the village is enjoying so far. Nevertheless, maintenance of these roads remains a challenge. Certain parts of the roads are untarred and plagued with potholes. George, a respondent, accused the resorts for the poor condition of the roads. He said, “they don’t want to fix the roads.”

Moreover, as far as attracting tourists to the village is concerned, environmental cleanliness becomes critical hence the provision of garbage cans in vantage locations in the community by some of the resorts. This helps in keeping the community clean and tidy as the tourists and locals have a place to dispose of their waste.

Hopkins village is growing at a very fast pace and as a result, the environment has been impacted negatively. Michael recounted on how the rapid growth and high demand for tourism is affecting the environment. He explained that, “heavy machinery was used to level off the beach front during the construction of Hopkins Bay Resort” which is located in the southern part of the village. And this project was undertaken about 7 years ago. This piece of construction engineering has increased erosion in the area which has led to rapid movement of the water line to the steps of the beach. Furthermore, he explained that developers at the south end of the village popularly known as Sittee River are “cutting down mangroves, and those buying up properties are filling the area up. Consequently, the watershed has risen – and has no place to go

and as result found its place into the village. So, when it rains, the village gets flooded because everything from the ocean washes down there (village).” He further admonished the government to ensure development projects in the village is sustainable. Additionally, he touched on how the sea is getting polluted. He expressed that “cruise ships wash up their waste into the water.”

5.9.4 Objective 3

This section of my research describes the evolution of tourism in Hopkins since the introduction of resort tourism in the community. I will also explore the impact of coastal resort tourism on the Garifuna culture.

5.9.5 Cultural evolution of tourism since the introduction of resort tourism in the community

According to a respondent called Jonas, who is a bar owner, tourism in Hopkins Village is about 10 years old - and as a result, the local people are still trying to learn how to harness the economic potential that tourism presents. Despite tourism being the major source of employment for the local people – and though that has brought about infrastructural development in the community, it has also impacted them negatively, especially culturally. According to researchers, tourism, in a growth phase is often confronted with societal problems such as begging, prostitution, gambling etc., as well as causing a collapse in the traditional culture of the local people (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy 2013). Many researchers argue that, tourism is a “culture exploiter” mainly because of its negative impact on traditional cultures and its potential to alter historically formed behavioral patterns (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy 2013).

Majority of the locals interviewed expressed how tourism has caused a deterioration of the culture of the local people. This is because, the culture inadvertently got exposed when tourists

started visiting the village. One respondent stated that “the local people were forced to reveal their culture” which served as the main attraction of the tourists.

The early tourists that visited Hopkins were travelers – mostly because tourism hadn’t been introduced yet and as a result no resorts were established – hence the lack of comfort and pleasure for the conventional tourist. In comparing the conventional tourist to the traveler, Teas (1975 p.4) stated that, “the conventional tourist spends money conspicuously for personal comforts and pleasures; the traveler, in contrast, travels on the cheap. Indeed, while conspicuous, consumption endows the conventional tourist with status among travelers, "the cheaper one can live, the more status one acquires.” According to Cohen (1987), the traveler, while engaging in this type of tourism, have the potential to impact the community they visit because of the problems they present. These problems manifest due to the traveler’s attitude and experience of the place they visit. This reasoning ties in to the argument raised by the respondents about how tourists altered their trade system from a barter system to a cash dependent system. George explained that:

“The Garifunas have been self-sufficient. When money came into the picture, the people lost the value of land.” For instance, “farmers would trade their produce with the fishermen and they’d eventually have a full meal at the end of the day.” This form of trade and social interaction strengthened relationships and built bonds between the community members. Furthermore, it ensured there was an equal distribution of wealth because of the interdependency nature of the barter trade system.”

Typically, the exchange of money also brought about social changes in the community. Jonas summed up the changes by stating that:

“And then there was more and more stores... and people wanted to take their kids to school, and suddenly everything was about money because with tourism comes entrepreneurs and investors with money – and that changed the dynamics of the community. We moved quickly from a society that was based on social interaction, to one that is based on cash. Because it was quite sudden, the local people were not prepared for the associated changes and impact of tourism – especially on their culture.”

5.9.6 Evolution of tourism in Hopkins Village

The development of tourism in Hopkins was spontaneous, to the extent the local people were not ready to embrace its benefits and associated negative impacts. Jonas intimated that:

“There wasn’t enough training for us to say okay, change is going to come, so we’re trying to survive.”

As a result, all the participants were not able to provide an accurate account of how it evolved over time. One participant explained that, because other places such as Placencia were already practicing tourism at a much larger scale – and because it was a successful project, the first few investors that came into the village looked to establish resorts and restaurants. Consequently, the local people were not able to experience the slow and gradual growth of tourism – from a few tourists looking to enjoy the sea and sand experience to the rapid influx of tourists visiting the resorts in search of the Garifuna experience. However, the cultural products that were available from the beginning of tourism in the community have not changed much. The sand and sea experience, the Garifuna drumming, singing and dancing and the local food are still being offered – serving as the main tourism attraction for tourists.

5.9.7 Impact of tourism on the Garifuna culture

The main attraction of tourists to Hopkins Village is the rich Garifuna culture as expressed by most participants. For instance, the drumming, singing and dancing are cultural products unique to the community – and this has enabled them to present an exclusive experience to tourists. However, this exposure of their culture has brought about its own negative impacts. In the same way they look to share their culture with others, they've also adopted certain attitudes of tourists that has caused a polarization of their culture. Bartholomew expressed that:

“Tourism has exposed them and has brought about a deterioration of their culture.”

He further explained that:

“Materialism has taken over everything since tourism came in. When there was funeral back in the day, it was like a public holiday. We don't go to the farm, because everybody goes to the funeral, it was expected. When you work at the resorts, you cannot tell your manager that. It has to be your direct relative. People don't volunteer nowadays. We didn't pay taxes then so we we're forced to clean ourselves. This is a serious cultural shift.”

On the other hand, majority of participants also explained how tourism has also made a positive impact on their culture and way of life.

5.9.8 Cultural diversity

Tourism has opened the gates of Hopkins Village to cultural diversity. The community is currently made up of people from all over the world. It is predominantly made up of the local people (Garifunas), Belizeans and expatriates – mainly people from the USA, Canada, England and Germany. Such a mix of different culture and race has exposed the local people to other cultures of the world. For instance, in order for one to participate actively and benefit from

tourism, one has to speak the English language fluently. This has in turn made the need to educate the kids in English a priority since it provides them with the opportunity to secure a bright future either through tourism or a completely different avenue. With the need to learn the English language has also brought about the deterioration of the indigenous Garifuna language especially among the youth.

Victor also touched on the positives of tourism. He added that:

“Cultural diversity is good! The cultural experience from the Americans and other expats is good for us. Some foreigners come with their own musical instruments and you get to experience it.”

5.9.9 Sustainable fishing practices

Tourism has educated the local people about the importance of conservation and sustainable use of resources especially in the area of fishing. Fishing restrictions imposed by the Government of Belize – engineered to regulate fishing activities is a necessary initiative aimed at achieving this very goal of sustainability. This discourages over-exploitation by both fishermen and tourists – the latter – who normally engages in fishing activities when they visit the village. For instance, fly fishing is being encouraged as a sustainable fishing practice. One interviewee expressed that, “...for fly fishing, they can catch a fish, release it and still make money.” Other sustainable fishing methods include “the use of fish traps which has a less devastating effect on the coral reefs.” The use of dive tanks is also prohibited which seeks to restrict the amount of fishes caught. Additionally, the establishment of certain areas as national parks is also a major conservation strategy imposed by the government. It is worth noting that these restrictions were precipitated upon the hike in tourism activities in the community. With an increase in tourists came an increased demand for fish and consequently the need for sustainable fishing activities.

Be it as it may, this conservation initiative has brought about major cultural changes. Fishing, which was once recognized as one of the major sources of livelihood is no longer practiced by the youth as they do not recognize it as a viable source of income. Furthermore, the older fishermen who are now new to these restrictions have been discouraged from fishing because adapting to these new changes has proven to be a major challenge as they cannot harvest as much fish as they want. This is also one of the main reasons why the youth are not encouraged to take up fishing because a smaller catch indicates less money.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the research, my final thoughts and a description of the goals and objectives achieved. The research had some limitations that will be addressed here - as well as recommendations on how to adopt new tourism development strategies and also adjust the already existing ones in Hopkins Village.

In this study, I researched and analyzed the current state of tourism in Hopkins Village as a means to answer the following questions:

1. What is the degree of local participation in coastal resort tourism?
2. What are the potential benefits of coastal resort tourism?
3. What was the nature of tourism prior to the introduction of the resorts and how it affected the culture of the community?

In meeting my objectives, I evaluated the experiences of the local people with respect to coastal tourism, the benefits they derive from the resorts and how they affect their lives and the community.

6.2 Conclusions

The main purpose of my research was to collect data, analyze - to assess the nature of tourism in Hopkins Village with respect to participation, the benefits the locals derive from the resorts and the cultural impact of the tourism activities. Through interacting with the respondents, I was enlightened about their perceptions on tourism, their experiences as they participate in certain tourism activities and their hopes for the present and future. Tourism is the main driver of the

economy in Hopkins – and despite the opportunities it presents, majority of the locals do not think they benefit a lot. Publicly-held opinions about the resorts discouraging the tourists from visiting the village - coupled with their penchant for hiring outsiders – who are not Garifunas – have created a negative impression about the resorts and tourism as a whole. However, despite these negative perceptions, the locals still recognize tourism as a means to secure a bright future for themselves and the kids.

Tourism in Hopkins happened spontaneously - and as a result, the local people were unable to properly position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities tourism presents. Due to the lack of preparedness and planning, most of the locals lacked appropriate training necessary for survival in the industry. Those who were able to start small businesses in the wake of the tourism boom in the community were unable to sustain it. Many attributed the collapse of their businesses to the lack of requisite training and capital which was needed for the expansion of their businesses. For instance, most small retail shop businesses collapsed when bigger ones – owned and operated by the Chinese - were developed. As a result, many have lost hope in the only industry with the potential to provide financial security for the locals. Therefore, they have resigned to taking up jobs with meagre pay which is not substantial enough to properly support their families. Their situation is further compounded by the fact that most non-locals like the Belizeans and Mayans are satisfied with taking meagre pay from the resorts hence taking up the few jobs available - something the locals are not ready to accept. However, despite the negative perceptions many have about tourism, some of the locals are cognizant of the intangible's tourism brings – aside the provision of income. They also recognize that tourism is the future and only hope for a better life and future.

The lack of an official document detailing a vivid and feasible plan - and social responsibilities that the resorts have to adhere to for community development and growth, have excluded the local people from driving and participating actively in the development process. Such a document would have ensured the community members had a considerable voice in how tourism is run, thereby arresting significant benefits for the community as a whole. This is also one of the major reasons why the Village Council is not as effective as they could be. Without an official legally binding document - signed between the community and the resorts - outlining their commitments to the community, the village council cannot hold the resorts accountable. This undermines their authority – and explains their ineffectiveness as leaders of the community.

The third objective of my study was to collect data, analyze and understand the evolution of tourism development in the community and its associated effects on the culture of the people. I wanted to understand how tourism started, operated, prior to the establishment of the resorts – and the accompanying changes with respect to local participation, cultural products available for tourism and the type of benefits derived. However, I was able to collect very little data concerning my question since most of my respondents had little or no knowledge about the subject. As a result, I decided to target the elderly in the community who might have witnessed how tourism developed in the community. To my surprise, most of them were unwilling to be interviewed. As a matter of fact, only two gave me audience for an interview. They explained that tourism happened spontaneously – and that the early tourists were backpackers. Since their form of trade was through the barter system, they were confused as to how to take advantage of the opportunity of having tourists visit their village – who wanted to trade in cash. So eventually, as many tourists visited the community, the village had to transition from a subsistent barter trade system to a cash-based system. And with that came the establishment of resorts along the

beaches of the village which contributed to the sale of lands on the beaches. The data I collected on this subject was limited so as a result, the information gathered is not conclusive.

On the other hand, the respondents were able to explain the impact of tourism on their culture. The transition from a subsistence barter trade system that was dependent on fishing and farming to a cash-based system. Additionally, they touched on how the local dialect have been impacted through tourism. Farming and fishing, which was formally the main source of livelihood is no longer recognized by the youth as a profitable venture.

6.3 Recommendations

Providing recommendations for Hopkins Village proved a major challenge due to the nature of the issues the community is facing. Tourism in Hopkins Village is very dynamic - and as a result the issues the locals are facing with respect to active participation are issues beyond the scope of their abilities and capacity. Due to this, I am able to recognize that my recommendations may not necessarily change completely the current trend of tourism in the community. However, I do agree that if these recommendations are implemented, they might make an impact in the distant future.

6.3.1 Education and training

The lack of training, skills and capital necessary for active participation in tourism is the most common theme in my study. The community – led by the village council can set up an initiative to educate the local people about tourism and how they can take advantage of it without losing their cultural values. This starts with the locals understanding and recognizing the resources they possess and through that should be able to maximize it. Some resorts such as Hamanassi have taken upon itself to train people in the tourism business. Roles such as bar tending,

housekeeping, tour guiding are the most common training given to the locals. This creates a problem since the opportunities and skills required in the tourism business are not diversified enough. This causes saturation in the industry since you have many people trained but cannot get good opportunities at the resorts.

6.3.2 Border and land issues

The village council together with the government should resolve the territorial divide between Hopkins Village and Sittee River. They should also develop an official document detailing the help and improvements the community requires for development. This document should also include the social responsibilities of the resorts and they should be enforced through effective monitoring and regulation coupled with fines if they are not adhered to.

Unlike other communities in Belize, land ownership in Hopkins Village is not communal but individuals own their own land and hence decides what to do with it. One of the major concerns the respondents raised was the lack of land along the beach due to many local people selling off their lands to expatriates. This indicates that future generations might not inherit any valuable property in the future. This is a major issue which poses difficulty in arriving at a solution since lands are owned by individuals and it is difficult to instruct them on how to manage it. However, despite the dicey nature of the situation, local people could be educated on the need to keep these lands. For instance, instead of selling the property outright, they could lease them for a period of time to ensure they do not lose it completely. This will ensure constant cash flow and also future generations will have a valuable property to build their lives on.

6.4 Study limitations

The main limitations of my study were research time constraints. However, I was able to conduct sufficient number of interviews till I reached a point of saturation - and recorded all the emerging themes. Another limitation I encountered was the lack of adequate information needed to address my third research objective – which sought to ascertain the evolution of tourism in the community. The elderly in the community – for whom I thought would have sufficient information on this subject declined to an interview. Furthermore, bias on the part of the interviewees in relation to their work ethic at the resort, proved to be a limitation. The interviewees vehemently denied their lack of effort at work after the resort managers intimated that it is the major reason why some of the local people are not employed at the resorts. As a result, I was not able to draw any certain conclusion from that subject.

6.5 Final thoughts

Based on the findings of my research, it is abundantly clear that reversing the current tourism trend in Hopkins which has engendered many negative perceptions and experiences among the locals is almost impossible. Tourism intangibles such as infrastructural development, cultural mix which provides one the opportunity to experience other cultures, have almost become a curse due to the gradual loss of their culture. Currently, tourism in the community is unplanned hence unsustainable – and I do not see that changing anytime soon. The only alternative for the local people is to invest in themselves through training and skills acquisition to enable them to create a completely different market niche for themselves. They should also come together and work as a group, empower and support the village council to enable them carry out their duties.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Objective 1

To describe the current level of public participation in coastal resort tourism and local tourism in Hopkins Village, Belize

Questions

Community members

- How do you participate in tourism?
- Between coastal resort tourism and local community tourism, which one of these two do you participate in more, and why?
- Which one of these two do you think the community members participate in more, and why?
- How did you get involved in this type of tourism?
- What do you think are some of the challenges to public participation in tourism?
- If given the chance, what would you do to improve it?
- What do you think is the current level of interaction between the local community and the resort managers with respect to tourism projects?
- How does interaction take place and who is involved?
- Does the local community participate in decision-making pertaining to tourism projects?
- What are some of the challenges and how do you think they could be resolved?

Resort Managers

- What do you think is the current state of local tourism and resort tourism participation in the community?
- Which of these two types of tourism do the local people participate more and what are the reasons?
- What is the current level of interaction between you and the local community?
- How does the interaction take place and who is involved?
- What are some of the issues that requires cooperation with the local people and how often do they take place?
- Does the local community participate in decision-making pertaining to tourism projects?
- What are some of the challenges and how do you think they could be resolved?

Objective 2

To examine the potential benefits of coastal resort tourism on the local community

Questions

- In general, what are your thoughts on the establishment of resorts in the community?
- What do you think are some of the benefits the community have derived from the resorts?
- How has the resort affected your life – economically, socially, culturally and environmentally

Objective 3

To assess the nature of cultural products available for local community tourism since the introduction of coastal resort tourism

Questions

- What are some of the cultural products available for local tourism?
- How different are these cultural products from the ones from the past prior to the establishment of the resorts?
- How has these cultural products evolved over the years?
- What are some of the contributing factors to this evolution?
- How has this evolution affected local tourism in general – economically, socially, culturally and environmentally?