

## **Personalizing Common Property Resources in Cameroon: Casting the Lessons from a Privately-Owned Beach**

**Clarkson Mvo Wanie, PhD**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography  
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences  
University of Maroua  
Cameroon

### **Abstract**

*The Cameroon political and economic systems for the most part operate in a paradigm of the free market economic structures where there is free intercourse between the factors of production and market trends. The situation of leisure and most resolutely tourism, has gained increasing government attention. The Cameroon maritime regulation provides that sea resources and anything found 50m from the sea is owned by the government but this falls under the custody of the indigenes. Among the abounding opportunities and avenues that attract tourists in Cameroon, sea resort areas like beaches constitute the main trust. This study is an attempt to examine the efforts made by individuals to personalize beaches using Hotel Semme Beach in Limbe as a case in point. From the analysis of collected data, this paper reveals that Hotel Semme Beach has expanded the tourist circumference in Cameroon through the provision of urgent tourists' facilities, payment of royalties to the state in the form of taxes, generate employment and revenue to many and maintaining high environmental standards. Adversely, the welfare of the indigenes is not being taken into consideration as money paid as taxes is not used to improve upon the local economy and protect the environment. The indigenes are also employed only at the lower level and so earn pea nut salaries. The imposition of payment before usage has restricted the poor from consuming the beach. This study examines the situation and proposes recommendations for better outcomes.*

**Keywords:** personalization, common property resources, tourism, beach, Semme, Southwest Region, Cameroon

### **1. Introduction**

Beaches are diverse, productive and unique ecosystems rich in biodiversity (Maguire et al., 2011). They are multidimensional systems where human and biophysical subsystems are in a continuous, dynamic and complex relationship (Roca and Villaris, 2007). Yepes and Medina (2005) defined beaches as natural fragile resources that contribute greatly to a country's economic productivity while Beardsley et al., (1994) considered a beach as a non-market coastal resource.

Worldwide, beaches are the leading attractions as far as coastal recreational activities are concerned. Coastal recreational tourism in beaches takes place on the natural environment on which tourism depends. This ushers in the need for a high level of environmental standards to be maintained in the beach environment based on sound environmental management for a better visitor experience.

In terms of US tourism for instance, beaches have become one of the largest vacation destinations in America, with 180 million people visiting the coast every year (Cunningham and Walker, 1996 in Oltman-Shay et al., 1999). Over 90% of foreign tourism spending in the US is concentrated in coastal states where beaches are the leading tourism destination (Houston, 1996). Miami Beach for example reports more tourist visits (21 million) than were made to any National Park Service property (Houston, 1995). In seven other states in the country, beach goers spend \$74 billion in coastal areas with the most popular recreational activities being swimming, sunbathing and walking (EPA, 1996).

In Cameroon, many coastal communities like Kribi, Douala, Tiko, Bakingili, Idenau, Debundscha and Limbe hold beaches as Common Property Resources (a resource that is owned by the state but under the custody of the community). As is the case in many other countries like the US, Spain, Australia, South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana, beaches here are a major source of tourist attraction for recreation and leisure and they provide important services, income and employment to both the local population and visitors. The Cameroonian government promotes tourism as a core development strategy to achieve an emerging economy by the year 2035. The official personalization and developing Hotel Semme Beach (HSB) for tourism is contributing towards the fulfillment of this government's goal. The study investigates this scenario and makes recommendations for better outcomes in the beach area in particular and Limbe as a whole. Limbe is situated in Fako Division in the South West Region along the Atlantic coast of Cameroon (Fig. 1).

## **2. The Problem**

Amongst the problems associated with the personalization of HSB is benefit sharing to the local community. There is no clearly worked out benefit sharing mechanism or scheme between the beach owner, the government and the indigenes on how certain percentage of proceedings realized from the beach should be re-invested into the local economy or environmental protection. As such, the community continues to remain poor while profits realized are put into private pockets and the government treasury.

Also, limited numbers of local people are employed to work and even those who manage to get employed only enter at the lowest level. The indigenes who are gainfully employed by HSB management complain of finding themselves unable to live in the beach area with their meager salaries because it is too expensive.

Finally, in an attempt to follow the HSB example, other unscrupulous individuals in Limbe have illegally carved out certain portions of the shoreline and develop them as private beaches to be eternalized forever. This is a bad example not only because the method used is not sustainable but equally because this may set the stage for mass personalization of CPRs in Cameroon which breeds conflict. It is also a classic case of misallocation of resources because the yields go to a single individual or family who do not pay taxes to the state nor create employment. It is in the light of the above problems that this study seeks to examine the personalization of HSB; identifying the ways that it has expanded the tourist circumference in Cameroon as well as the manner in which it adversely affects the community and tourists and proposes recommendations to address the problems.

This study has been motivated because no such studies have ever been carried out in Cameroon in general and the urban coastal destination of Limbe in particular. Existing works on CPRs so far has focused mainly on pasture, grazing land, oceans, hunting games, irrigation systems, the atmosphere, forests and community forests (Hardin, 1968; Ensminger, 1990; Gossling, 1999 and Healy, 2007). None, in the literature, has ever dealt with beaches. Mine is the first in this regard. This study therefore stands to fill in this information gap as far as beaches are concerned. Also, the study is significant in that the concerned actors: local population, visitors or tourists, tourism NGOs, the government and international tourism institutions like the WTO could make use of this study in the formation of policy pertaining to beach administration for sustainable tourism development to occur in the area. It is therefore important to analyse the situation and make recommendations for better outcomes.

## **2. Scientific Context of The Study**

Anning et al., (2013) earmarked that many of Australia's iconic sandy beaches are already under pressure due to coastal development and the impacts of severe storm or flood events. They also stated that beaches provide important recreation services for both residents and tourists but few studies in Australia have attempted to place economic values on this service. Thus, coastal authorities that are forced to make investment decisions relating to beach protection and restoration have insufficient data to conduct cost-benefit evaluations of projects where recreation values are significant. In Cameroon in general and Limbe in particular, no study has been conducted on the cost-benefit effects of personalized beaches which my study intends to address.

Chi-Ok et al., (2010) revealed that as coastal destinations continue to grow due to tourism and recreational expansion, the demand for public beach access and related amenities will also increase. The issue confronting management agencies responsible for providing and maintaining public beach access and related amenities is the varying needs and preferences of both residents and tourists of coastal destinations. The on-going study will add to this by examining the situation of HSB.

Blackwell (2008) noted that beaches and foreshores worldwide offer a broad range of goods and services to coastal communities and economies. One service, beach recreation, provides considerable benefits to most Australians. He presented the first Australian attempt to value a recreational visit to surf beaches within the local urban setting of Mooloolaba beach, Sunshine Coast, Queensland using a truncated negative binomial individual travel cost model. Income, on-site and off-site travel expenditure and time, party size and employment status helped to explain his observed visits. He discovered that most beaches in Australia are managed and maintained by local government councils, unlike their sister beaches in the United States which are managed by local, state and federal governments.

Houston (2008) analysed the economic value of America's beaches and noted that the travel and tourism industry is becoming increasingly dominant in economies throughout the world. However, few realize that travel and tourism is already America's largest industry, employer, and earner of foreign exchange; and beaches are its leading tourist destination. However, beach erosion is the number one concern that beach tourists have about beaches. There are 33,000 kilometers of eroding shoreline and 4,300 kilometers of critically eroding shoreline in the U.S (Hall and Staimer 1995 in Houston, 2008). Beach erosion is a serious threat to the nation's beach tourism and, therefore, a threat to the national economy (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1994 in Houston, 2008). This is a similar situation with HSB.

The author further noted that restoring beaches through beach nourishment can greatly increase their attractiveness to tourists. He cited, as a good example of the economic benefits of beach restoration, the beach nourishment at Miami Beach. Miami Beach had virtually no beach by mid-1970. As a result, facilities were run down, and Miami Beach was not the place to visit. Beach nourishment in the late 1970's rejuvenated Miami Beach and opened its beaches to the public. Beach attendance, based on lifeguard counts and aerial surveys, increased from eight million in 1978 to 21 million in 1983 (Wiegel 1992 in Houston 2008). Tourists now contribute \$11 billion annually to the economy. Almost 45% of these tourists are international tourists, and they contribute almost \$5 billion to the economy (City of Miami Beach 2007, in Houston 2008). This example should be followed in HSB in order to attain similar results.

Yepes and Medina (2005) reported that tourism is a fundamental sector of the Spanish economy. The "sun and beach" tourist product, the most important product for the economy of the Valencia Region, is based on a fragile natural resource; beaches. They described the generalized erosion problem of the Valencia coastline and examined its three fundamental causes: damming, port breakwaters and urban development. "Beach sand" and "littoral space" are identified as critical natural resources limiting future economic development of the coastal areas. Restoration of the natural fluvial coarse sediment drift together with reservoir dredging and sediment bypassing in dams, they considered, are essential for the sustainability of beaches. After restoring natural coastal sediments, it will be necessary to install sand bypasses in ports along the coast. Beach nourishment projects based on marine and fluvial deposits may contribute to solving local, specific erosion problems in the short-term.

Eagles (1998) noted that the beach "owner" is often a local government or state government, but sometimes federal or private; and that the responsibility for meeting at least three sets of concerns related to management of coastal recreational activities; environmental/resource concerns, amenity concerns, and safety concerns is divided between the beach "owner" and resort and/or recreation facility operators, and state environmental or health departments. He did not examine the effects of privately owned beaches on the local population and visitors which this study seeks to exploit in-depth.

### ***Conceptual and Theoretical Framework***

This study focuses on sustainable tourism which includes ecotourism, nature-based tourism, urban tourism, cruise tourism, and coastal tourism (Fig. 2). These are concepts that have been used and misused in different ways and in different areas since their conception in the late 1970s and early 1880s. Ecotourism for example is viewed as a potential strategy to protect natural ecosystems while, at the same time, to promote sustainable local development. It is a growing niche market within the larger travel industry, with the potential of being an important sustainable development tool (Postica and Cardoso, 2014). Sustainable tourism is tourism involving the application of the principles and good practices of sustainable development sectors (Honey and Krantz (2007) and any form of nature tourism, which is planned, implemented and managed in a sustainable way.

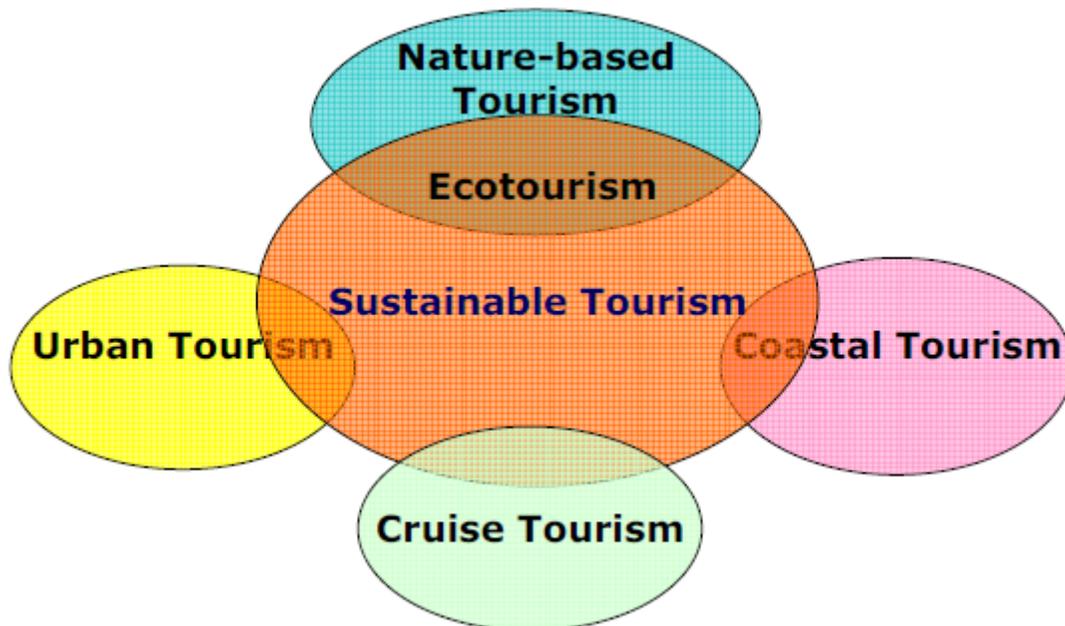


Fig. 2: Different types of sustainable tourism  
 Source: Bien and Jose (2005) in Honey and Krantz (2007)

Sustainable tourism is linked to the concept of sustainable development (Fig. 3), as articulated in the 1987 Bruntland Report, *Our Common Future*, which says sustainable development is that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs” (Report of the Bundtland Commission, 1987).

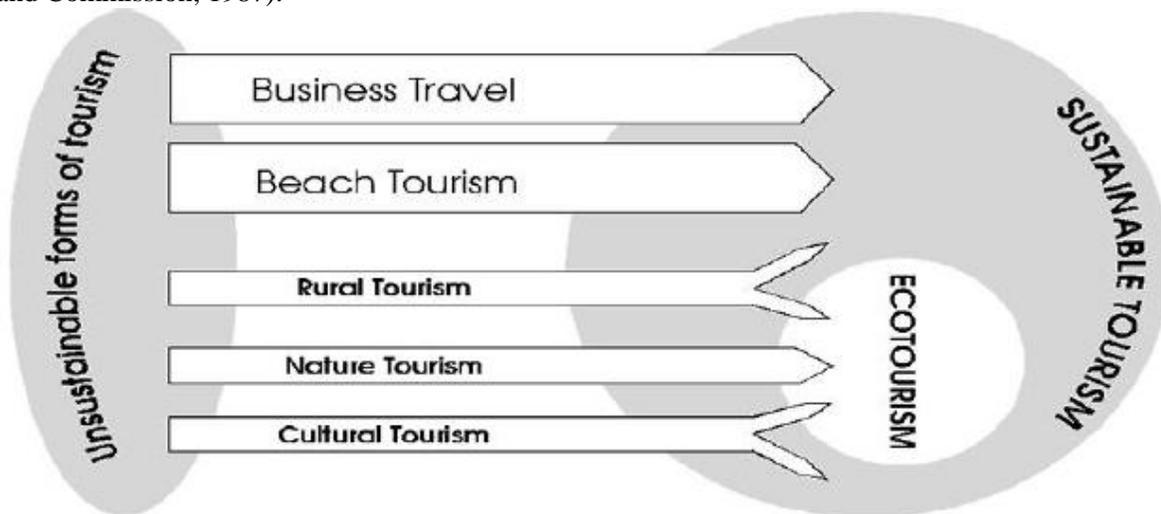


Fig. 3: Sustainable tourism as a sustainable development concept  
 Source: Strasdas (2001), Wood (2002), all in Postica and Cardoso, 2014

Therefore, a strong relationship between sustainable tourism and sustainable development results according to Wood (2002) in Postica and Cardoso (2014) because it: (1) Contributes to conservation of biodiversity; (2) Sustains the well being of local people; (3) Includes an interpretation/learning experience; (4) Involves responsible action on the part of tourists and the tourism industry; (5) Is delivered primarily to small groups by small-scale businesses. (6) Requires lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources; (7) Stresses local participation, ownership and business opportunities, particularly for rural people.

Honey and Krantz (2007) opines that sustainable tourism emerged in the 1970s as an environmental conservation tool containing the principles and good practices that, ideally, should be used for coastal and marine tourism and sustainable development to sectors of the mass tourism market.

There are today a number of mass tourism players, including hotel chains, golf courses, ski resorts, airlines, car rental companies, and beaches that are trying in a variety of ways to “green” their operations. Sustainable tourism can be said to have a more modest goal; its aim is to do no harm, to be a net neutral on the environment and the community where it operates. Sustainable tourism is especially important along coasts (like Limbe) where, largely because of the price of land, mass tourism development is typically the norm. While there are some fine examples of coastal ecolodges in many regions, much coastal tourism is on a larger scale and caters to more of a mass tourism market.

Sustainable tourism has the aim of protecting natural, social and cultural resources to ensure these resources can meet the needs of current and future residents and tourists (World Tourism Organization at [www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame\\_sustainable.html](http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html)). Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry defines sustainable tourism as tourism that “meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.” It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes and biological diversity and life support systems’ (WTO, 2004) in Rajan et al (2013).

At present, sustainable tourism includes parts of the urban, coastal and cruise tourism sectors (Fig. 2). Other parts of the nature-based, urban, coastal, and cruise tourism are not sustainable. Ideally, the entire tourism industry would eventually become sustainable. That is, it would incorporate vigorous environmental, social and economic standards to ensure that it, as the Bruntland Report states above, which meets the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Currently, some aspects of sustainable tourism are on-going at HSB such as greater environmental awareness. However, other sustainable tourism aspects like community development from proceeds realized should be adopted by HSB as it is one of the tenets of the concept if sustainable development is to be achieved and maintained in the area for a better destination competitiveness.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The method used by this study is a case study one, focusing on HSB in Limbe. Comparatively, HSB is the most visited touristic attraction in Limbe and so the effects of its personalization warrant investigation for future tourism planning by stakeholders and policy makers in the area. Basically, the research design is a descriptive type. Methods of data collection include secondary or documented materials from textbooks and journal articles in order to review existing works on the subject as well as the comparison of results. The statistics forms from HSB management for the months of May and July 2014 deposited at the Regional Delegation of Tourism and Leisure for the Southwest Region situated in Buea generated pertinent information on the subject. This was complemented by field surveys through observations, the granting of interviews and the administration of 300 open and close-ended questionnaires to three categories of actors (Table 1) for a period of 19 months (December 2012 to July 2014).

Table 1 show that 300 questionnaires were administered to 3 categories of actors (HSB management, indigenes and visitors) in order to know the annual number of visitors recorded, ownership/management regime, personalization procedure, annual revenue, tourists/lodging amenities, taxes paid, number of arrivals, employment status, etc. Observation examined the environmental condition of the beach as well as the type of visitors or tourists. Interviews conducted with some of HSB employees obtained information on monthly salary, problems faced, safety precautions, waste management strategy and the way forward. Collected data was analysed using descriptive tools - table, percentages and a line graph.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

HSB is a privately-owned beach which falls within Latitude 4°0035’N and Longitude 9°11’37E, covering a surface area of about 3 hectares. It is affiliated to MINOTEL Group of hotels worldwide (<http://www.travelweekly.com/Hotels/Companies/Minotel-Intl>). The ownership procedure reveals that the land was acquired by purchase from the state some 25 years ago through application to the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Fako Division which was approved and a Land Certificate issued by the then Ministry of State Property and Land Tenure.

The construction of the hotel was authorized by the Ministry of Tourism, and its officially opening for public use was still by the same Ministry of Tourism. Through this way, the beach has been purchased, developed, is owned/managed and converted into a saleable income generation commodity by ensuring payment before usage by an individual from an area which was initially a swampy milieu occupied by mangrove vegetation. This legal ownership procedure gives it the statusquo of a private property, and at the same time losing its community-based or national statusquo. This acquisition method (purchase) is what Jafari (2000) describes as a service delivery system in the Tourism and Hospitality industry which involves identifying the best sources of supply, making suitable arrangements with supplies, drawing up specifications, placing orders and ensuring payments. Today, the beach has been developed into a tourism paradise by its owner who pays royalties annually in the form of money paid as taxes to the state, which is different from other public or state-owned beaches in the region like Mile 6 Beach and Down Beach. Section 1(1) of Degree No. 76/165 of 7<sup>th</sup> April 1976 states that the Land Certificate issued by the state is the only official document recognizing land ownership in Cameroon even though it, alongside other land statutes failed to explain how land is acquired in the first place before seeking registration (Fonjong et al, 2013). Since its personalization, Semme beach has created environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts as follows:

#### **4.1 Environmental Effects**

Environmentally, the personalization of HSB has resulted to a clean, safe and pollution-free environment suitable for tourism as a result of environmental awareness. Cleaning of the beach is ensured on a daily basis by employed lifeguards. This makes the beach cleaner as compared to the other state-run beaches like Mile 6 and Down Beach, even though the latter are also being taken care of by Hygiene et Salubrité du Cameroun (HYSACAM) which is a private waste collection and disposal company operating in Limbe. Furthermore, HYSACAM's contract to permanently clean Mile 6 Beach expired long ago and so the beach continues to suffer from pollution, being littered with floatable cans, tins and plastic paper waste clearly visible with the naked eyes which is the exact opposite of what sustainable tourism represents. The consequence is serious environmental degradation resulting to health hazards due to diseases and illnesses (mild and sever) once swimmers get in contact with the polluted beach water. This is as a result of a high level of microorganisms or microbes from untreated bacteria, viruses and parasites which cause a variety of diseases and illnesses. Potential diseases or illnesses to Seme beach users include headache, fever, cholera, gastroenteritis, dysentery, typhoid fever, hepatitis A, ear, eye, nose and throat infections, diarrhea, vomiting, conjunctivitis and encephalitis (Field Survey, 2013).

Again, safety measures for swimmers are constantly available in HSB with the presence of at least 3 permanent lifeguards when swimming is on-going. It also possesses first aid treatment in case of injury while swimming before been rushed to the hospital. There is safely precautions and emergency signs could be read almost everywhere along the beach as well as rescue boats and other facilities like whistles to signal in case a swimmer is in danger. Constant surveillance during swimming is also ensured by the lifeguards. This explains why injuries and deaths are lower in this beach compared to the Mile 6 beach.

However, just like is the case with other public beaches in Limbe, congestion in the beach is not being controlled and so the beach suffers from an abnormal accumulation of persons (in terms of numbers) during certain periods of the year compared to other beaches such as Miami Beach in the US where visitor numbers at any point in time is strictly checked. Currently, there is no limit or check to the number of persons visiting the beach because as many as the number of people soliciting entrance and use of the beach is granted at any point in time. During peak tourism periods (October-February) and days (Christmas, New Year, 11<sup>th</sup> February, etc), the number of persons visiting and effectively using the beach stands at between 251-500 persons at a time. They perform various activities such as swimming, sun bathing, boating, beach soccer, excursion, horse rides and trekking simultaneously which exert pressure (Anning et al., 2013) and stress on marine life forms such as worms and crabs whose natural habitat is the beach. The effect is the destruction of these organisms as well as their mating patterns and the putting to extinction of others thereby destroying biodiversity. Congestion has further increased the risk of environmental problems like erosion in the beach (Houston, 2008; Yepes and Medina, 2005).

Finally, in an effort to copy the HSB example, other unscrupulous individuals in Limbe have illegally and unsustainably carved out and converted parts of the shore line as their private property which contradicts the Land Law of Cameroon, which states that all lands belong to the government following the 1974 Land Ordinance which regulates land ownership and registration in the country after the colonialists (Germans, French and British) following Section 14(1) and 15 Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6<sup>th</sup> July 1974 to establish rules governing national lands. This is a bad example to emulate because unlike HSB, their ownership is not official because they operate on a clandestine basis.

#### **4.2 Economic Effects**

Economically, the personalization and subsequent development of HSB has increased the tourist circumference in Limbe in particular and Cameroon at large as a tourist destination. Since its development 25 years ago, HSB has become a major touristic site with several attractive potentials to enjoy. Thanks to it, the number of tourists visiting Limbe and Cameroon has increased. Based on information from MINTOUR Regional Delegation for the South West – Buea (2014), the average number of HSB arrivals stands at between 800-1000 visitors and those who spent overnight between 2000-2050. Regarding the origin of the visitors, domestic visitors (Cameroonians) outnumber all others (foreigners) with about 500-600 arrivals which contrast the situation in the US (Houston, 2008). Concerning the source region of the foreign visitors, France supplies the majority.

Also, HSB management generates employment to 100 different categories of workers (55 men and 45 women) which is compared to no other beach in Limbe. These include lifeguards, cleaners, cooks, hotel and bar attendants, guards, drivers, carpenters, secretaries, managers, etc who perform different duties on a “shift” basis. That is, some of the workers work during the day and others relieve them for the same duty at night. These employees are on a monthly pay roll of about 10 million FCFA. This has helped to improve their standards of living and that of their dependents.

Furthermore, HSB pays royalties to the government following money paid as taxes to the Divisional Service of Taxation – Limbe to the tune of about 7 million FCFA annually which helps to swell up the budget of the country and aid advancement in all spheres deemed necessary by the government. This money accrues from the 45-50 million FCFA annual revenue that HSB makes on a monthly basis.

Adversely, an overwhelming majority of workers employed are not from the local community where the beach is based. Most of the workers are francophones and the few of them who are employed complain of language barrier as a constraint because they are anglophones. They are also employed to perform mostly unskilled jobs and so earn meager salaries of 40,000FCFA (\$78.8) which cannot sustain themselves and their families.

Also, the HSB pays royalties (taxes) to the state but the money is not re-invested into the local economy to cater for their needs and so the welfare of the local population is not taken into consideration despite the presence of such a site in their municipality. Instead, the income accruing from the beach goes into private pockets and government treasury with no accountability rendered to the community members who complain of not enjoying the tax money.

Finally, the personalization of the HSB has resulted to the imposition of payment upon visitors before usage. The beach administration charges an entry fare of 1,500FCFA (\$2.92) from Monday to Friday and 2,500FCFA (\$4.9) on Saturdays, Sundays and feast days. This is expensive compared to Mile 6 beach which charges 500FCFA (\$0.98) and Down Beach which is free of charge.

#### **4.3 Socio-Cultural Effects**

In HSB, there is the development of resort amenities for the enjoyment of tourists. One of these amenities include a 3 star hotel with 308 rooms. The lodging capacity of the hotel is as follows; 85 standard air conditioned rooms; 14 family apartments; 17 high standing suits and 2 VIP suits costing between 25,000-100,000 per night. Other amenities are three restaurant, 6 shops, 3 conference rooms, saloon, night club, etc. Leisure and tour amenities include lawn tennis court, beach volley, basket ball, ping-pong, beach soccer and swimming pool.

In addition, HSB has made at the disposal of workers (who live out of the beach area and commute to work) and customers buses for their transportation in order to ease their means and reduce cost of transport to and from the beach.

More so, there is a natural spring whose water is treated, bottled and consumed in the hotel and some of it commercialized, namely, SEMME Mineral Water.

Conversely, the personalization of and imposition of entrance fee into HSB has excluded the poor from consuming the beach as they would love to do because they do not have money to pay as entrance fee. An overwhelming majority of the indigenes are poor people who live below the poverty line (\$1 income/expenditure per day) as of the 1995 prices.

Also, some unscrupulous individuals who have carved out and developed certain portions of the coast illegally as their private beaches has disposed both the government and the indigenes or bonafide landlords and their unborn generations from their birth rights over possession of the land. The original settlers or indigenes have been deprived of their birth right and that of their children who are supposed to be the caretakers of the land, and to the government no yield is earned because they are exploiting the land on a clandestine basis. This state of affairs contradicts what obtains in other coastal towns in the country such as Kribi. In Kribi, beaches have not been owned by individuals and so are held collectively by the community as CPRs and the benefits accruing from the beach use is enjoyed by all community members in one way or the other. One can visit beaches free of charge at any time of the day and only pay when a service is requested from the residents like catering services, caretaking for vehicles, demand for food, drinks and craft works and canoe rides where the locals earn income in the process enhancing community development.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the above results, we observe that the personalization of HSB ushers opportunities for sustainable tourism but also brings problems. At this point, the way forward lies in the fact that while exploiting the opportunities to achieve an emerging Cameroon by 2035, all the stakeholders concerned should arrive at a sustainable solution to the problems created through the following posited recommendations:

Beach nourishment is strongly recommended as a strategy to maintain a high level of environmental integrity and increase visitor satisfaction. Beach nourishment would rejuvenate HSB as was the case with Miami Beach in the 1970s (Houston, 2008). One simple means of nourishing the best is via the installation of sand bypasses which will solve the current erosion problem (Yepes and Medina, 2005) as well as increase the surface area of the beach (Houston, 2008). Also, sustainable tourism development here should take into consideration environmental management tools such as carrying capacity assessment by regulating the number of visitors utilizing it at any point in time.

When a Common Property Resource is personalized officially, the welfare of the indigenes should be taken into consideration. There should be a well defined benefit sharing mechanism or scheme based on worked out percentages between the HSB, the government and the local population on how royalties paid should be shared which should take into consideration all groups of people in the community (men, women, children, physically challenged, etc). This will improve their welfare and motivate them to participate in maintaining a high environmental standard for more visitors to come. In addition, more of the local population should be employed and as top cadre too (even after offering them special training programmes) in order to make them belong because as of now, their opinion is that they have been relegated to the background and their preference is for more people from the local community to be employed so that they can have a greater say.

Finally, all beaches not officially or legally personalized following the legal procedure like HSB should be shut down. Such beaches should not be swept under the carpet of development such that individuals are forced to eternalize ownership and allow it to be commercialized for the years to come or forever. Is either they are officially personalized and pay royalties to the state in the form of tax money which would be used to improve the welfare of the poor masses, or other management arrangements such as community ownership or a government department like the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUR) should take responsibility in the management of such beaches for the benefit of all. This will breed an environmentally safe, economically viable and socially just society that is free from indignation and hatred or violence for sustainable development to occur.

### **References**

Anning, D., Ware, D., Raybould, M., and Lazarow, N. (2013): Valuing beach and surf tourism and recreation in Australian sea change communities, 4th Queensland Coastal Conference, Townsville, October 2013, 6p.

Beardsley, R.C., Church, T., Freilich, M.H., Friehe, C., Giblin, A., Haddad, K.D., Haidvogel, D.B., Houde, E.D., Josselyn, M.N., Kitchell, J.F., Mcdowell, J., and Mooney, JR., J.B. (1994): A Review of the Accomplishments and Plans of the NOAA Coastal Ocean Program, Washington DC, National Academy Press, 125 p.

Blackwell, B (2007): The value of a recreational beach visit: an application to Mooloolaba beach and comparisons with other outdoor recreation sites, *Economic Analysis and Policy*, Vol.37 No.1, 77-98.

Chi-ok, O., Draper, J. and Dixon, A.W. (2010): Comparing residents and tourist preference for public beach access and related amenities, *Ocean and Coastal Management* (53), pp. 245-251.

Eagles, P.F (1998): *Coastal Tourism and Recreation*. [Online] Available: [http://www.yoto98.noaa.gov/yoto/meeting/tour\\_rec\\_316.html](http://www.yoto98.noaa.gov/yoto/meeting/tour_rec_316.html) (November 20, 2012).

Fonjong, L., Sama-Lang, I. and Fombe, L.F. (2013): Land tenure practices and women’s rights to land in Anglophone Cameroon, *International Development Research Centre (IDRC)*, 72p.

Hardin, G. (1968): The Tragedy of the Commons. In: *Science*, Vol. 126, No. 3859, 1243- 1248.

Honey, M. and Krantz, D. (2007): *Global trends in coastal tourism*, Centre for ecotourism and sustainable development (CESD), Washington DC, 140p.

Houston, J.R (2008): The economic value of beaches – A 2008 update, *Shore and Beach*, Vol. 76, No. 3, pp 22-26.

Jafari, J. (2000) (ed): *The encyclopedia of Geography*, Routledge, London, 715p.

Maguire, G.S., Miller, K.K., Weston, M.A., and Young, K. (2011): Being beside the seaside: Beach use and preferences among coastal residents of South Eastern Australia, *Ocean and Ocean Management*, Vol. 54(10), pp. 781-788.

Postica, D. and Cardoso, A. (2014): Current Development Level of Ecotourism and Eco-Touristic Products in Moldova, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 5, No. 7, pp 83-94.

Rajan, B.,Varghese, V.M. and Pradeepkumar, A.P (2013): Beach Carrying Capacity Analysis for Sustainable Tourism Development in the South West Coast of India, *Environmental Research, Engineering and Management*, No. 1(63), pp 67-73.

Report of the Bundtland Commission (1987): *Our Common Future*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

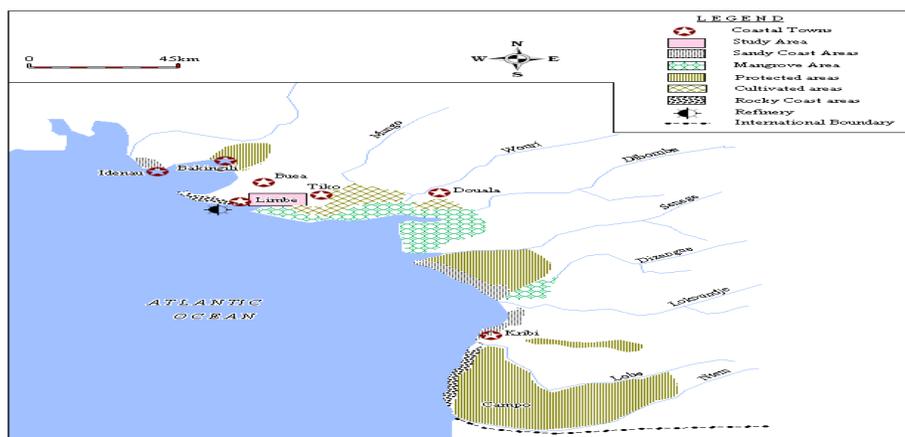
Roca, E. and Villaris, M. (2007): Public perceptions for evaluating beach quality in urban and semi-natural environments. *Ocean and Ocean Management*, Vol. 51(4), pp. 314-329.

Wanie, C.M. (2011): *The challenges of ecotourism along the coast of Cameroon*. PhD Thesis, University of Buea, 345p.

World Tourism Organization [online] [www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame\\_sustainable.html](http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html) (accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

Yepes, V. and Medina, J. R., (2005): Land Use Tourism Models in Spanish Coastal Areas: A Case Study of the Valencia Region, *Journal of Coastal Research*, Special Issue 49, pp 83-88.

**Fig. 1: Location of Limbe along the Atlantic Coast of Cameroon**



Source: Modified from Wanie (2011)

**Table 1: Actors and number of questionnaires administered**

S/N	Actor	No. of questionnaire administered	% of total
1	Seme beach management	02	0.7
2	Indigenes	140	46.7
3	Visitors	158	52.6
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>