

SHOWCASING THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BEACH TOURISM INDUSTRY IN CAMEROON - A CASE STUDY OF SEME BEACH HOTEL

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ABSTRACT

Tourism, hospitality and leisure industry is located firmly within marketing, it depends on the delivery of quality service as its services are intangible and this is the only option that can easily provide a competitive advantage. Seme beach which is a three star hotel has a private beach, a swimming pool and a natural spa; it is one of the oldest beach resorts but still remains one of the most active in former Victoria with its rare sparkly dark sand beach and has continued to attract many visitors over the years. At Seme Beach, company is always assured due to its outstanding number of visitors especially during weekends and those who have a thing for swimming have the choice of either swimming in the sea with its dramatic waves or enjoying their pool of fresh water animated by lively music. Organized by Seme Hotel and Spa, Miss Beach is a yearly event aimed at empowering young ladies through the promotion of tourism and culture in Cameroon.

Keywords: Beach, Beach Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

People travel for a variety of reasons namely to escape, explore, understand and participate, but at the core of the experience lies the destination (the place that hands something to the traveller to keep forever and share with their friends and relations. The notion of a single Africa would seem as absurd a notion as Cameroon's branding campaign: "All Africa in one country." Yet in many ways, Cameroon does have it all: white-sand beaches, rare sparkly dark or black sand beach of Seme and tropical rain forests; savannahs overrun with game; spectacular waterfalls and West and Central Africa's tallest peak, the 1,400 foot Mount Cameroon; tea plantations spread over the hills like a lush, green carpet; sprawling stands of palm and forests of rubber trees (<http://www.travelweekly.com>).

BACKGROUND OF HOTEL SEME BEACH

Hotel Seme Beach is a resort on Seme Beach, also known as mile eleven beach, it is a three star hotel located 300 m from Limbe - Cameroon and this

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popular resort features a black sand beach due to its proximity to Mount Cameroon, an active volcano and the tallest mountain in West and Central Africa (<http://www.fischerfotos.com>). It is also a water paradise nestled on the edge of the ocean and a river; the complex considered as the most beautiful beach resort of Central Africa is situated at an hour's drive from Douala. Ocean and mountain view rooms with air-conditioner, satellite-televisions and minibar; a swimming pool with natural mineral water, a private beach, tennis and basket complex, lush garden full of flowers will make your stay a pleasant and relaxing one. The hotel features a business corner and meeting rooms while "Le corail" restaurant, facing the sea serve a varied and gastronomic food, both international and Cameroonian and the night birds who entertain themselves all the night on the music from the club (<http://www.cameroun-plus.com>).

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is just something about Cameroon's seaside getaways that seem to attract several groups of people, while love birds see them as romantic, nature devotees on the other hand are magnetized by their matchless psychological healing ability while for leisure enthusiast, it is the ideal spot to play under fringe palm beaches, go basking in the sun, having the delight of watching their footprints disappear as dramatic waves wash them away or unleashing their inner man by going wild and free. For some, it is the ultimate opportunity to savour tasty seafood, especially fish which is usually roasted in typical Cameroonian style. It is no secret that Cameroonians have mastered the arts of grilling as some visitors make return visits solely to have yet another plate and Seme is an example of a beach side resorts endowed with what it takes to engrave memories to last a lifetime (<http://www.irepcamer.com>).

Seme is a beach like any other beach which is a landform along a body of water and it consists of loose particles, which are often composed of rock, such as sand, gravel, shingle, pebbles, or cobblestones. Beaches typically occur in areas along the coast where wave or current action deposits and reworks sediments.

Beach Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes specifically on beaches and lovers of beach tourism love the sea breeze and salt water and they want a clear blue vision of the ocean. Beach tourism is one of the best types of tourism because it gives high income to the place and it attracts more tourists. The Best for beach tourism category seeks to demonstrate that all kinds of tourism can and should be run with communities and the environment in mind. This category will shine a light on beach holidays that conserve beach environments and respect local communities. The government and management of these beaches should come up with sustainable and responsible tourism policies and practices in a beach setting, positive integration and relationships with local communities, and proven achievements in maintaining and or conserving the beach environments. Beach tourism like other sectors of tourism generates both positive and negative impacts on the environment and the quality of the environment which is both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism notwithstanding its complexity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Veal (2006) indicated that an empirical approach is the collection and analysis of data; it could be quantitative or qualitative, primary or secondary. No research is purely empirical; it is usually informed by some sort of theory or conceptual frame work. Some researchers are of the opinion that a single research method may use both quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination as well as use primary and secondary data. The quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedure each have their own strength and weaknesses. For this research work, the researchers used only secondary data that was information collected from documents and websites.

ANALYSIS AND FINDING

Tourism increases revenue for the local government through taxes, it also provides jobs and revenue to the local people. With the money gotten from the tourism industry local governments can upgrade infrastructures for the local people like hospitals and schools. Beach tourism in particular is important for the same reasons as it increases local revenue and provides jobs for those in the area. Organized by Seme Hotel and Spa, Miss Beach is a yearly event aimed at empowering young ladies through the promotion of tourism and culture in Cameroon (<http://www.journalducameroun.com>).

From Table 1, the number of visitors to Seme beach on Friday has continue to witnessed an increased from 250 visitors in 2012 to 601 visitors in 2016, while for Saturday, there has continue to be an increase of the number of visitors (750) in 2012 to 3755 visitors in 2016. Finally Sunday visitors to Seme beach has also witnessed an increase from 1105 visitors in 2012 to 4850 visitors in 2016. This increase has come thanks to the constant advertisement of this beach on local television channels and especially the miss beach.

Table 1. Showing the number of visitors to Seme Beach for Friday, Saturday and Sunday for five consecutive years.

Year/day	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2012	250	750	1105
2013	360	1800	2700
2014	385	2600	3680
2015	510	3100	3750
2016	601	3755	4850

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The Limbe-based Seme Beach Hotel now boasts of new beauty ambassadors (miss beach), the most beautiful girl who won the yearly beach beauty pageant holding at the black sandy beach of the hotel resort, was selected among numerous contestants from the various or ten regions of the Country. Seme miss beach contest started in 2010 with Miss Joyce Mbassa emerging the winner of that

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year. In 2012, Sonia Minkoe Moutcheu was crowned Seme miss beach and she chose the vulgarisation of Seme Beach Hotel's natural landscape and the promotion of Cameroonian culture and tourism as her platform and though it started in 2010, miss Seme beach is now in the ninth edition (2017). Casting of the 9th edition (2017) of Miss Seme Beach took the caravan to Douala, Bamenda, Dschang, Buea, Yaounde, etc., and the finally took place on the 27/05/2017 with Cameroon's modeling agency Niki Heat Model Management announcing that on of its top models, Audrey Monkam is winner of the Miss Beach 2017 competition. She grabbed the crown of the 9th edition of the pageant competition on May 27 in Limbe after beating 25 finalists.

CONCLUSION

The private sector in Cameroon has been partnering in some aspect of tourism development and beach tourism is not left out. A US-based entrepreneurs, Niki Heat, a pioneer in professionalized advertising content for example skilled models, trend-setting fashion topped off with awe inspiring makeup artistry etc. and NHMM, Cameroon's premier model management agency that represents leading models in Douala, Yaoundé, Buea, and Bamenda in 2017 partner with the management of Seme beach hotel and this has greatly being showcasing or promoting the uniqueness of Cameroon beach tourism.

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