

# The Impact of Ebola on the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Sierra Leone

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**Abstract-** Over the past years the tourism industry has experienced a steady increase in tourist's arrivals in Sierra Leone which has also contributed to an increase in visitor expenditure, employment and revenue generation. This has made a significant improvement in facilities within the country to meet the expectations of guests and economic growth. The outbreak of Ebola in May 2014 has caused a negative impact on the tourism industry in Sierra Leone such as the closure of many hotels, restaurants, guesthouses and airlines right across the country, dropped in revenue and profits and unemployment. The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which the Ebola outbreak has had negative impact on the tourism industry in the country. A survey was conducted in four regions namely, Western, Southern, Northern and Eastern. A random sample of 200 respondents was selected from the four regions out of a population of 400. Questionnaires, interviews, discussions and document analysis were used for data collection. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. It is recommended that disaster recovery plan and budget be developed by all active businesses within the tourism sector.

**Index Terms-** Accommodation, tourism, arrivals, unemployment, revenue and investment.

## I. HISTORY OF EBOLA

An outbreak of hemorrhagic fever due to EVD in Guinea and Liberia, West Africa, with onset in early February 2014 is ongoing. The first cases were reported from the forested region of south-eastern Guinea in Guéckédou prefecture near the border with Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Ebola viral aetiology was confirmed on 22 March 2014 by the National Reference Centre for Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (Institute Pasteur INSERM BSL4 laboratory, Lyon, France). Sequencing of part of the outbreak virus has shown that it is 98% homologous with an EBOV last reported in 2009 in Kasai - Occidental Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This Ebola virus species has been associated with a high case-fatality during previous outbreaks. As of 7 April 2014, the Ministry of Health of Guinea has reported 151 clinically compatible cases of EVD, including 95 deaths. Cases have been reported from Conakry, Guéckédou, Macenta, Kissidougou and from Dabola and Djingaraye prefecture. Fifty-four cases have tested positive for Ebola virus by PCR. At least 14 of the cases in Guinea have been healthcare workers and eight of them have died, which indicates the need to further strengthen health facility-based infection prevention and control.

On 31 March 2014, the Liberian Ministry of Health announced an outbreak of EVD. As of 7 April, five confirmed and 16 suspected cases have been reported from Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Montserrado and Margibi counties in Liberia, of which ten have been fatal. Three cases have occurred in healthcare workers, all of whom have died. The date of onset of the most recent confirmed case is 6 April, with six patients hospitalised. At present 28 contacts remain under medical observation.

Sierra Leone has reported two suspected fatal cases of viral hemorrhagic fever both were subsequently laboratory confirmed as Lassa fever, an endemic disease in Sierra Leone.

Active surveillance activities have identified no new cases. However due to the proximity of the affected district to Guinea, a similar environment and cross-border movement of people, additional. Suspected cases compatible with EVD may be detected. Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have activated their national emergency committees, prepared response plans and carried out needs assessments. The origin of this outbreak is currently unknown. However, exposure to bush meat has been suspected for the primary cases, as well as transmission through close contact with blood, secretions, organs or other biological fluids of infected animals. Most of the secondary cases participated in funeral ceremonies and most were in direct contact with infected or deceased patients or had handled these corpses. This led local health authorities to consider human to human transmission as the main mode of transmission.

Beyond the death toll of the current outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), the disease has notable impacts on the three affected countries—Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone through two channels. First, the health and humanitarian response requires human and financial resources that were unplanned, as well as reallocation of resources slated for other development efforts. Second—perhaps worse—is the alarmism surrounding the outbreak of a communicable disease with no known cure or vaccine? This second channel can have a tremendous impact on socio-economic conditions not only in the three countries but also in their neighbours, West Africa, the continent—and even the world at large. Earlier studies of this outbreak which were first officially acknowledged in March of this year have three drawbacks: they offer little insight into effects on West Africa and virtually nothing continent-wide; their projections can draw only on very few and spotty data; and (in view of when they were written) they make the strong assumption that the epidemic is likely to spread, heavily underestimating responses from governments and development partners, and the wave of remittances sent by the diasporas to their families back home.

## 1.1. TOURISM IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone has strong potentials for tourism development. It has excellent beaches, Islands, mountains and rich biodiversity, interesting wildlife, friendliness of the people and rich socio-cultural heritage. It occupies a special place in the world history of anti-slavery movement as “the land of freedom” – hence the name Freetown as its Capital City.

Since the 1980s, the country has been developing a small but thriving tourism industry. The end of the civil conflict in 2002 led to renewed arrivals by business travellers as well as members of the Diaspora visiting friends and relatives, this in turn has stimulated some investment in the hotel and guesthouse infrastructure in Freetown. For example, the Chinese investment in Bintumani Hotel; the NASSIT investment in Tourism infrastructure and the construction of new hotels such as Hotel Bamoi, Hotel Kimbima and Brookfields Hotel etc by other domestic investors all form part of increased investment in the tourism sector in the country; and very recently the country has attracted the Hilton Group of Companies, a group with vast experience in hotel management, and they are developing the former Mammy Yoko Hotel into a five-star hotel. After 2007 general election which saw democracy at work encouraged a lot of foreign investors in areas like mining, agriculture, communication and business corrupt free environment policy coupled with the benefits of tourism experienced by Sierra Leoneans while seeking refuge in other countries. The above factors have given rise to the high demand for accommodation, restaurants and bars services right across the country. Today, there are more of these facilities in the country as compared before the rebel war. The country’s ‘touristic’ advantages particularly its proximity to Europe, tourism in Sierra Leone has developed relatively slowly, partly as a result of the relatively unstable political environment that has existed in much of the post independence era.

Over the past four years, Sierra Leone have experienced a steady increase in tourist arrivals – 38,615 arrivals in 2010, 52,442 arrivals in 2011, 59,730 arrivals in 2012 and 81,250 arrivals in 2013 (Tourist Board Statistics, 2014). This increase in visitor arrivals contributed to an increase in visitor expenditures from US\$38 million in 2002 to \$58 million in 2004 (Tourist Board Statistics, 2014). According to the World Travel and Tourism Commission (WTTC) Statistics Reports (2011), the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in Sierra Leone is expected to be Le 351.9bn (3.6% of total GDP) in 2011, rising by 6.1% pa to Le 634.9bn (4.0%) in 2021 (in constant 2011 prices). With a steady increase in hotel, motel and guesthouse related facilities; there was an increase in room occupancy rates, which has continued to date.

In first three months of this year, there were conflicting news of Ebola outbreak in neighbouring Guinea and Liberia. In May 2014, it was officially announced by the Ministry of Health that the Ebola virus has reached a village around Koindu in the Kailahun district. Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is considered one of the most aggressive viruses known to date in part because of its rapidity to quickly kill, which can be within one week from exposure or three to four days from the first symptoms become apparent. This leaves very little time for any treatment to act and save any infected individual.

Within a couple of two months after the announcement, the tourism industry started to experience the negative impact of the

Ebola virus. Cancellations of flights, hotel bookings, some hotels closing down, while others are operating on a small scale. A good number of foreign airlines have stopped flying into the country with the exception of SN Brussels and Air Moro operating on high risk. Both international and local tourists movement have been restricted or subjected to high screening process at the gate ways. This has increased the unemployment rate in the country especially among youth who happen to be among the most effective work force. Foreign exchange and revenue has also dropped, interrelated businesses like fishing, vegetable growing, poultry and other infrastructural development also have been affected. The weak health sector within the country in terms of facilities, equipment and human resources has made the country unable to tackle the Ebola virus easily. Despite the negative impact of Ebola, the country would become a popular destination for international tourists who will be interested to hear and see Ebola survivors.

## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the outbreak of the Ebola Virus in May 2014 in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the tourism and hospitality industry of Sierra Leone has been negatively affected. If greater efforts is not put place to eradicate the disease, 75% of employees of this industry will be out of job, dropped in revenue, arrivals, domestic tourism, occupancy rate and Museum visitation by the end of 2015. This has been as the result of the closure of many of these businesses, cancellation of flights, state of health emergency regulation imposed by government and restrictions put on travelers to the country.

## 1.3. OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research work is to assess the extent to which the outbreak of Ebola Virus has impacted on the tourism and hospitality in Sierra Leone. Below are the specific objectives:

- To identify the strategies in eradicating the Ebola virus
- To sensitize employees of disease prevention
- To design a disaster recovery plan charter for guests
- To constantly educating guests about disease prevention

The outcome of these objectives will lead to confidence building in visitors to visit the country which will in turn provide employment, increase revenue, more visitor etc.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE BEFORE EBOLA

The Government of Sierra Leone in the 1960s recognizing the importance of tourism development established the Hotels and Tourist Board in 1964. In these early years, the growth and development of the tourism industry in the country was relatively slow and lacked a specific direction. There was no Act or policy to guide tourism development in the country. Key industry actors were left wholly unregulated. This state of affairs continued for almost decade. In 1973, however, the government decided to establish the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (MoTCA) in order to harness the immense tourism potential in Sierra Leone, ensuring further socio-economic growth in a regulated

framework. The Hotels and Tourist Board became an integral part of the ministry in 1975.

After the hosting of the Organisation of Africa Unity in 1980, the government saw the need for a concise Tourism Plan. A survey was carried out and it was recommended that the tourism industry was a heavy capital investment which at that time, government found difficult to provide. It was against this background that in 1985, government adopted a policy of privatisation, which saw the leasing out of hotels to private companies as a result of heavy operational losses incurred by government-owned hotels. The privatisation policy also had the aim of encouraging private sector participation and investment in the industry.

The French responded positively to government's call for private sector support and by private arrangements with the indigenes and support received from government; they made substantial investment in the development of tourist facilities within the country. They also on their own financed promotional activities in the French market on behalf of the Sierra Leone government. The industry started booming and was short-lived when the rebel war broke out which saw all the facilities ravaged beyond human expectations and once a booming industry collapsed. Some investors both local and international were killed, fled for their lives and the industry development came to zero.

After the 11 year rebel war was declared over, both foreign and local investors turned their attention to the tourism industry and its slow development began. The influx of mining companies, rapid response from the agricultural sector, political stability in terms of two successful democratic elections, mobile companies, experience gained by Sierra Leoneans who were refugees in neighbouring countries all contributed greatly to the development of the tourism industry. The table in the appendices shows the steady growth in number of these facilities over time indicates that there are currently more of these facilities present in the country compared to before the rebel war. It is agreeable that this industry has contributed greatly towards the economic development of the country in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment, generation of revenue, contributing to GDP, stimulating infrastructural developments etc. Sierra Leone enjoys several advantages, which augur for the development of a leisure, adventure and cultural heritage tourism segments. Some of these advantages are:

- a. Proximity to Northern Europe – a 5-6 hour flight, which puts it closer than the Caribbean, the Maldives and Mauritius;
- b. Warm and fairly dry weather during the European winter,
- c. Interesting heritage and tribal history, which can be built into an attractive 'story' for Europeans, African-Americans and the Diaspora;
- d. Diamonds, which offer a special 'attraction' as well as a potential buying opportunity.
- e. Its outstanding crystal white and golden beaches with dramatic tropical and mountainous backdrop;
- f. Tropical environment and scenery (mountains, forests, rivers, coastline, islands) and nature (birds, flora and fauna). Sierra Leone has interesting wildlife, and could

tap into the rapidly growing bird-watching niche tourism market;

## **2.2. Impact on Accommodation**

The private sector in recognizing the tourism potential in Sierra Leone, has demonstrated keen interest in the sector by establishing hotels, guesthouses, tourism facilitating agencies etc. Given the urgent need for employment creation and the limited capacity of the country's mining and manufacturing sectors to generate enough jobs. Accommodation simply means places people stay when they visit the country. Tremendous efforts have been made by both public and private sectors to increase and improve the accommodation sectors in terms of room occupancy level, facilities, quality service delivery and equipment to meet the demand of local and international standards. Huge invested into this sector has been done by both the public and private investors. Sierra Leone was now classified as one of the countries along the West African Coast to have rapidly development its accommodation sector .As a result of such, every district headquarter town can now boast of more than two standard lodging place. The Ebola outbreak has not decreased the sector's number but decreased it occupancy rate. A good number of these places are now without guests both from within and outside. Some have temporarily scale down their operations with a skeleton staff due to dropped in revenue and the high cost of running them on a full scale.

## **2.3. Impact on Accessibility**

No destination can function well unless there is a means of getting there, such as airline, bus service, railway line or port. Before the Ebola outbreak, there were many international flights from Europe and Africa making visitations easier, making the main airport busy, generating revenue for the airport and it associates, government through the National Revenue Authority, employment etc.Immediately,Ebola was officially declared by the World Health Organisation, operators of these airlines suspended their flights in and out of Sierra Leone for the fear of transporting Ebola infected persons into the home countries of these airlines. This has cause a huge embarrassment for Sierra Leoneans and foreigners travelling out of the country to be subjected to heavy health screening at the airports. Many tourists have cancelled their travel bookings to the country. Cruise operators too have done the same. The country is presently considered as disease risk country and travelling ban on many nationals outside the country. Lack of adequate accessibility is frequently cited as one of the major obstacles to tourism development and investment in a destination.

## **2.4. Impact on Activities**

It is widely agreeable that when visitors arrive in a destination, the next thing that comes into their mind is what to do such as river cruise, game of golf, jungle trek, etc.In the past few years much attention have been paid in this direction to meet the wants of the visitors in the area of providing standard facilities to enhance visitors to take part in these activities and working harder than ever to widen its range of activities in order to get visitors to stay longer and spend more time and money in the country. Huge investment has been made by private people to provide the necessary equipment including training of their staff

on tourists guiding. All of these activities have come to a halt as visitors are now afraid of coming into the country. Operators have closed down their businesses, staff laid off with no provision for monthly wages. Rent and maintenance of these places and equipment continues to be a huge cost on operators. Local tourists' guides and coordinators of these activities are now out of job.

### **2.5. Impact on Amenities**

Local cuisine is often one of the top attractions of Sierra Leone. Restaurants, designer bars and shopping plazas always attract the fair share of visitors. The country had an active nightlife which has added to the appeal. For fear of not being infected with the Ebola virus, all of these places are hardly been visited even by the host coupled with the declaration of the state of emergency where entertainment seekers are now afraid of gathering for fear of arrest by the police and possible prosecution in court. A good number of these places have closed down operation while some are operating on a low scale with few staff.

### **2.6. Impact on Attractions**

Sierra Leone has strong potentials for tourism development, excellent beaches, Islands, mountains and rich biodiversity, interesting wildlife, friendliness of the people and rich socio-cultural heritage. Most visitors in the past prefer the thrill of the Outamba Kilimi National Park in the Northern part of Sierra Leone, Tiwai island in the South, Bunce island 15 nautical miles from Freetown, Tacugama sanctuary 30 minutes drive from the city center, Golla Forest in the Eastern part of the country and many other historical sites within the capital city were receiving hundreds of visitors every week from the months of October to April. Cruise passengers from Saga Ruby, Corinthian 11, and National Geographic to name the few were mainly concerned with one day off shore excursion to places within the capital and around the Peninsula. Admissions in the past have been used to develop the local communities around these places, tour operators, travel agents, tourist handling agents, Port authority, immigration and tourist guides were all fully engaged in coordinating the visitations. The demand for local transport such as taxi, bus and coach were on the increase and many travel agents and tour operators offices increased considerably as the business was a viable one. Art and craft, local food stuff owners also shared the visitors' expenditure. The slow increase in demand for attractions visitation in Sierra Leone stimulated government infrastructural development investment to meet the needs of the visitors. The outbreak of Ebola has scared away these visitors and management of these places are now faced financial problem to pay their staff as in their case there is every reason to retain staff for the upkeep of the places.

### **2.7. Impact on Employment within the tourism industry**

The rapid expansion of international tourism has led to significant employment creation all over the world. For example, the hotel accommodation sector alone provided around 14, Million jobs worldwide in 2013 (World Tourism record, 2013). Tourism can generate jobs directly through hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, taxis, guest houses, casinos and souvenir sales, and indirectly through the supply of goods and services

needed by tourism-related businesses. Tourism supports some 7% of the world's workers (WTO-2013)

The growth in employment in the tourism industry in Sierra Leone over the period 2005 to 2013, a total number of persons directly employed in all tourist establishments was 23,657 persons (National Tourist Board 2013). On a year to year basis, total employment in the tourism industry decreased substantially from 2005 to 2007. However, the trend picked up again in 2010 and 2011, which depicts the recovery of the industry from the 2008/09 financial crisis. Among the eight sources of employment in the tourism sector in Sierra Leone, restaurant, guest houses and hotels are the leading sources of employment. What has happened now is that all of these sectors have scaled down operations leading to massive lay-off of employees as a result of no customers who used to provide the income.

### **2.8. Impact on Revenue**

Tourism is one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings for at least developed countries like Sierra Leone. Direct contributions are generated by taxes on incomes from tourism employment and tourism businesses, and by direct levies on tourists such as departure taxes. Indirect contributions come from taxes and duties levied on goods and services supplied to tourists. Over the eleven year period from 2000 to 2011, the total sum of Le 2,625 million was generated as tourism revenue in the form of levies and registration fees/licenses. Of this, about 81.7% amounting to Le 2,144 was generated as revenue from levies, while 18.3% amounting to Le 481 million was generated as revenue from registration fees/licenses (National Tourist Board 2013). The revenue rate has dropped considerably due to the fact that tourists are no longer flying into the country which has had a huge impact on the direct income earners.

### **2.9. Impact on Arrivals**

Between 2009 and 2012 a total number 1,312,934 arrivals were recorded by the National Tourist Board. Business was the main reason why visitors came to Sierra Leone; while 'holiday' and 'Other' were a popular reason over the period. However, 'other' as a reason comprises a whole range of hidden reasons, including missing information on purpose of visit. Visiting friends and relatives is also a popular reason for visitors. However, among the expressed reasons for visiting the country, 'conference' is the least for the period under review. This could be attributed to a combination of factors including the insecurity created by the war, lack of modern conference-related infrastructure, and location of the main international airport in Lungi across the sea that limit access to Freetown, the capital city where most conference facilities are located. Upon the declaration of Sierra Leone as Ebola infected country by World Health Organisation, many visitors were asked to cancel their travel trips for fear of the Ebola. The number of arrivals has drastically dropped for this reason which has a direct impact on revenue and employment within the tourism industry.

### **2.10. Impact on International tourism**

The National Tourist Board has just compiled and analyzed visitors/tourist arrivals statistics by Air. The results of the analysis indicate that the arrivals witnessed a 14% increase between 2011 and 2012. In 2012, 59,730 tourist or visitors

arrived at Lungi International Airport out of which 23,619 were on business, 14,074 for visiting friends and relatives (VFR) 9,464 for leisure purposes 6034 for conferences and 6539 for other reasons. A sharp decrease has been experienced from the time Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia were declared as Ebola affected countries by the World Health Organisation. International tourism has been affected as overseas tourists are now searching for safe and health hazard free destination to spend their holidays.

### **2.11. Impact on domestic tourism**

Domestic tourism simply means movement of national within the four corners of their country engaged in activities that can be termed as tourism. Sierra Leone is well known for her cultural parade, outing, visiting friends and relatives in the provinces during the Christmas and Easter festive seasons. The outbreak of the Ebola virus has seen restrictions on movement from district to district, state of emergency declared which prevent people from gathering if not for Ebola sensitization. Moreover; some districts like Kailahun and Kenema were quarantined for over five months which prevented people from going there.

### **2.12 Impact on the National Museum**

Sierra Leone's National Museum is located at the centre of Freetown under the branches of the city's famous Cotton Tree. It is the hub of many cultural activities in Freetown and holds an important collection of Sierra Leonean artifacts and artworks.

The museum was opened in 1957 as the museum of the Sierra Leone Society, a 'learned society' whose members included colonial officials and prominent members of Freetown's Krio community. With the demise of the Sierra Leone Society in the mid-1960s, the museum came under the control of Sierra Leone's Monuments and Relics Commission and Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, and thus became the Sierra Leone National Museum. The Sierra Leone National Museum at the junction of Pademba Road and Siaka Stevens Street adjacent to the historic Cotton Tree is the repository of the country's relics and various items of its heritage. The original building was the Freetown terminus of the mountain Railway, and then it became successively a school, repository and exhibition hall for the artifacts, artforms, handicrafts, cultural items, relics and archaeological fossils of the country. Another two-storey building funded by the German Embassy in Freetown was erected in 1987 as an extension to commemorate the Bicentenary of the founding of the colony of Sierra Leone. The National Museum was established on December 10, 1957, ten years after a Parliamentary Act (1947) had created the Monuments and Relics Commission. According to their statistics, in 2010 it records 459,000 international visitors and 671,000 domestic visitors, 2011 recorded 553,000 international and 878,000 domestic, 2012 recorded 682,000 international and 1,132,000 domestics, 2013 recorded 715,000 international and 1,405,000 domestic and 2014 recorded 500 international and 10,000 domestic (SNM 2013 statistics). From 2010 to 2013 visitation to the National Museum has been on the increase due to the incoming of many cruise ship, mining companies and other businesses since the country was becoming one of the fastest growing economy country in Africa. At domestic level, more visitations were from pupils and

students as a result of the increased in primary and secondary schools and colleges in the capital city. Very few from among the general public. The outbreak of the Ebola virus in 2014 saw a drastic decreased in both international and domestic visitors as schools and colleges remain closed, incoming tour operators are out of business due to the cancellation of cruises to the country. All of the above factors have caused the decreased in museum visitors. The international visitors are from medical team working on the Ebola virus. In addition, donations from visitors both international and domestic are one of the sources of income to the museum for its upkeep. Today the administration of the museum is struggling to cope with such challenges.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1. Research Design:** A cross sectional descriptive research design was adopted for this study, and both qualitative and quantitative methods in nature were used. Questionnaire was structured and administered and focus group techniques were used. Detailed information was obtained to the useful conclusion. I considered this design appropriate for the study because it required a report on economic and social characteristics of the Ebola impacts on operators within the tourism industry.

### **3.2. Target population**

The population of this study consisted of 130 employees of the various sectors within the tourism sector from the four regions within Sierra Leone and 50 employees from among the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, National Tourist Board, National Museum, National Revenue Authority, who were charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the tourism industry activities are planned, managed and coordinated. This study also targeted 20 respondents such as suppliers, guests and local communities in the four regions.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Procedures**

In order to meet the objectives of this study, both secondary and primary data sources were used. Secondary sources included National Tourist Board data publications, journals, books, periodicals, newspapers and the internet. The primary data was obtained through interviews, questionnaires and observations. In addition there was approval from the various sectors to collect the data.

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a set of questions or statements that assesses attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and biographical information. In order to collect data that precisely meets the objectives of the study, a structured questionnaire was used for the public sector (Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and the National Tourist Board) and a semi-structured questionnaire was used for the private sector (Hotels, restaurants, and Transport Providers and local markets). Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire (Kombo and Tromp, 2006:89)

The questionnaires were presented and administered to the respondents in a flexible way. Flexibility in data collection was applied by allowing the respondents to choose either to discuss the questionnaire in the process of filling it in or when the

questionnaire was collected. This was preferred in order to reduce bias as well as allow room for probing to elicit more information.

**3.3.2 Interview**

An interview is an oral administration of a questionnaire and it gives a general plan to follow for data collection (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:86). An interview guide was preferred because it encourages face to face interaction with the respondents so that issues can be clarified therefore gaining in-depth information on the subject. In addition, the interview guide was used to supplement and corroborate the information given in the questionnaires.

**3.3.3. Focus Group discussion**

A focus group between 8 – 10 respondents were organised in all the five regions comprising employees within the tourism and hospitality industry to ascertain their opinion on the impact of the Ebola on their employment status.

**3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The raw data collected was sorted and edited as the first step towards its analysis. The questionnaires were organized and classified according to the patterns given by the respondents and their homogeneity. The responses from the questionnaires were organized in line with the research questions and descriptive narratives were used to reflect the situation as it occurred at these sectors. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data. Inferential statistics included frequencies from which percentages were derived. The analyzed data was summarized and findings were reported as a description of the total population of the study. Data is presented in form of frequency tables and in percentages.

**3.4.1 Validity**

We did a Pilot Test of the Questionnaires to know the validity and reliability of the Tool.

Krishna’s wamyet *al.* (2009) contends that validity is the degree to which the sample of test items represents the content the test is designed to measure. To establish the validity of the research instrument, opinions of experts in the field of study, especially the research supervisor, were sought. This led to the

revision and modification of the research instrument thereby enhancing the overall validity of this study.

**3.4.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability with which instrument measures and supplies consistent results (Krishna’s wamy *et al.* 2009) Hence reliability is increased by including many similar items on a measure, by testing a diverse sample of individuals and by using uniform testing procedures. In an effort to test the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot group of five individuals from the target population was selected. The pilot study gave a chance for pre-testing of the research instrument so as to establish the clarity of the instrument’s items to the respondents and thereby enhance the instrument’s validity and reliability. For the purposes of reliability and validity of the data, the measures below were taken into consideration:

- 1) A pilot study that involved these sector managers was carried out.
- 2) The respondents were each given a letter explaining the nature of the research project. The letter also assured the respondents of the confidentiality of the information as well as guaranteeing their anonymity.
- 3) Purposive sampling was used in which the people who were directly linked with the tourism developing and implementing of policies in the country were targeted for data collection.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

**4.1 Introduction**

The data for this research has been collected using questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to a sample of employees, over 150 employees who were working in various sectors in the four regions, with different job responsibilities and organisation position.

**4.2 Data Analysis**

After collecting the filled questionnaire, they were analysed for presentation of research findings under the followings:

1. Sectors within the tourism industry

Sector	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hotels	30	15.0	15.0	15.0
Restaurants	50	25.0	25.0	40.0
Guesthouses	70	35.0	35.0	75.0
Night clubs and casinos	20	10.0	10.0	85.0
Airlines	15	7.5	7.5	92.5
Travel agencies and Tour Operator	10	5.0	5.0	97.5
Tourists Handling agents	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

From the table above, the survey indicated that highest sector within the tourism industry is guesthouse with 35%, followed by restaurants 25%, hotels 15%, night clubs and casinos 10%.airlines 7.5%,travel agencies and tour operators 5% and tourists handling agents 2.5%.It can be concluded that

guesthouses formed the highest sector within the tourism sector as compared to tourist handling agents with 2.5%.Reasons being that ,the demand for guesthouses right across the country is high since they are easy to establish, cheaper and can be managed by few staff.

2. Sex of the respondent

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	80	40.0	40.0	40.0
Female	120	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the sex of the respondents, 60% are female and 40% are male. The survey indicated that there more female employees within the tourism industry as compared to their counterpart male. Reasons being that most jobs such like

catering, housekeeping, waitress and front desk are perceived to be female job and as a result more of women are engaged in them.

3. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 - 30	80	40.0	40.0	40.0
31 - 42	60	30.0	30.0	70.0
43 - 55	45	22.5	22.5	92.5
56 - 68	10	5.0	5.0	97.5
69 - 81	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The survey indicated that, the age group between 18 – 30 with 40% is the highest, followed by 31- 42 with 30%, 43 – 55 with 22.5%, 56 – 68 with 5 % and 69 – 81 with 2.5% .Based on the survey, 40% being the youths made up of a strong working

force within the tourism industry as compared to 69-81 which is considered as retirement age in Sierra Leone. Those within this age group are mostly owners or managers

4. Educational background of respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below WASSCE/GCE	40	20.0	20.0	20.0
WASSCE/GCE	15	7.5	7.5	27.5
Diploma	70	35.0	35.0	62.5
First degree	50	25.0	25.0	87.5
Master	20	10.0	10.0	97.5
Ph.d	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

From the table above, 20% of the employees are below WASSCE/GCE, 7.5% are holders of WASSCE/GCE.35% are holders of diplomas, 25% are first degree holders, 10% are masters holders and 5% are Ph.d.It can be concluded that more of the employees are diploma holders as compared to Ph.d.Reasons

being there are more of these non entry requirements diploma that can be acquired cheaper and are found within the country where courses like catering, housekeeping and waiting are offered.

5. Causes of Ebola

Causes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
From bush meat	70	35.0	35.0	35.0
Chemical Reaction	10	5.0	5.0	40.0
National Epidemic	50	25.0	25.0	65.0
Demonic	40	20.0	20.0	85.0
No Idea	30	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

From the table above, 35% of the respondent are of the view that one of the causes of Ebola is from bush meat,5% indicated from chemical reaction,25% indicate from national epidemic,20% indicated from demonic activities and 15% indicated no idea. It can be concluded that, more of the

respondents are of the view that Ebola is from bush as compared to chemical reaction. The reason being that it is difficult to convince people about the right cause of Ebola due to the high level of illiteracy in the country

6. Perception of respondents about Ebola

Perception	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No cure for it	70	35.0	35.0	35.0
Killer Virus	110	55.0	55.0	90.0
Early treatment give chances of survival	20	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

From the table above, 35% of the respondents indicated that their perception about is no cure for it, 55% indicated is a killer virus and 10% indicated an early treatment give chances of

survival. It can be concluded that most of the respondents are of the view that Ebola is real and kills.

7. Negative impacts

Impact	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Closure of some sectors	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
Unemployment	40	20.0	20.0	70.0
Dropped in Revenue	10	5.0	5.0	75.0
Dropped in Arrival rate	30	15.0	15.0	90.0
Suspension of some flights	20	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	



From the table above, 50% indicated that Ebola has caused the closure of some businesses within the tourism sector such as hotels, night club and casinos, restaurant and guest houses, 20% indicated unemployment, 5% indicated dropped in revenue which used to be from tourism activities, 15% indicated dropped in arrival rate and 10% indicated the suspension of some flights either for safety or abide by the messages from the World Health Organisation.

## V. CONCLUSION

### 5.1. SUMMARY

The Ebola virus outbreak has had a negative impact on all the sectors within the tourism industry in Sierra Leone as indicated from the table above, 35% of the sectors within the tourism industry in Sierra Leone are guesthouses, 60% of the employees within the industry are female, strong and energetic working force is between the ages of 18 – 30 with 40%. 35% of the employees are holders of a diploma which indicated the highest population, 35% of the respondents are of the view that human beings are infected with the Ebola virus as a result of eating bush meat, 55% are of the view that Ebola has no cure and 50% of the sectors within the industry are temporally closed and employees laid off whilst some managers have left the country. Close to 80% of the industry employees are out of job and the virus is still of great concern.

### 5.2. CONCLUSION

From the data collected and analysed above, it is clearly evident that the tourism and hospitality industry in Sierra Leone is experiencing a negative impact of the Ebola Virus as good number of these establishments are now closed since the outbreak, flights have been cancelled, arrival rate, revenue and other activities that has to do with beaches has been suspended. Some staff within this has been laid off and some on half salary. Up to September 2015, Ebola is still a challenging issue facing the industry. This has also brought a multiplier effect on the living conditions of these staff and social problem for the government of Sierra Leone.

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