

Eco-ethno Tourism in the District of Integrated Rancheria River Delta, La Guajira: An Option for Sustainable Environmental Management

Miriam Rosiris Munoz Estrada ^{1*}, Iris A. Jimenez-Pitre² and Geomar Molina-Bolivar²

¹Territorios Semiaridos Research Group. University of La Guajira; mmonzo@uniguajira.edu.co

²BIEMARC Research Group, University of La Guajira; gmolina@uniguajira.edu.co, iajimenez@uniguajira.edu.co

Abstract

Objective: This research was conducted in the district of Integrated Management (DMI) Rancheria River delta in the city of Riohacha; the purpose was to analyse the contribution of eco-etnoturistica activity for the preservation and/or recovery of this important ecosystem and the Wayuu indigenous culture settled in this area. **Materials and Methods:** Taking into account the above facts were analyzed within the community of the delta of the River Rancheria, with the designing of an array FODA, where participants identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, strengths and threats to the community to organize and undertake new challenges to improve their quality of life and improve environmental quality, preserve the ecosystem of the DMI and their ancestral culture. **Finding:** The result is a tool of the management and planning of similar projects, promoting to strengthen the actions of conservation, use and sustainable management of biodiversity, mangroves, and the adaptive capacity of coastal communities settled in the area. We conducted a participatory diagnosis that examined the environmental and cultural features of the area, to define sustainability indicators and establish the true potential. **Applications:** described the tourism potential in the Rancheria River delta with all its potential through planning tools, socio-cultural organization, articulation-district government and community management of tourist space for the development and better management of resources provided by this ecosystem.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Environmental Sustainability, Ethno-Tourism, Rancheria River Delta

1. Introduction

Ecotourism and ethnotourism is a duality of specialized tourism that is shared and lived in the same environment as in the case of La Guajira (Colombia), being a multi-ethnic and biologically diverse department will enjoy the eco and ethno in their ecosystems. The present study is focused on the development of the eco-etnoturistica activity in the delta of the River Rancheria, aimed at the environmental management for the conservation of this ecosystem, which stabilize and protect coastal landscapes, are the main habitat and reproduction for many species with commercial importance, such as mammals, birds, reptiles and fish affected by anthropogenic activities¹. In addition, the lack of clarity of the interinstitucionalidad to articulate environmental concerns in the plans and

projects management and handling. This may be affecting the conservation of this important ecosystem²

The communities that are seated in the Rancheria River delta is directly related to the biotic environment and constitute the means of livelihood for these communities; with a relevant importance, socio-cultural and ecotourism ecosystem; keeping a close relationship in the socio-economic aspect of communities in this area which represents an opportunity for the generation of income for villagers, through the hunting of some minor species, fisheries and the use of the faunistic³.

Environmental sustainability is essential for the inhabitants of the areas adjacent to the area of study and it becomes necessary to constantly maintain ecosystems a continuous improvement process, flexible of collective construction and active involvement of the various

*Author for correspondence

factors involved in order to enjoy the environmental goods of the present, conserving resources for the enjoyment of future generations, for what is considered to be the eco-ethnotourism an economic activity is closely related to the sustainable development of peoples and the conservation and preservation of natural resources, biodiversity, the quality of the environmental services, the cultural and ethnic identity. The Sustainability comes together in a variety of actors, interests and points of view for the exploitation of natural resources, the enjoyment of environmental goods; you must enable man to the development of their potential, its heritage, cultural and biophysical guarantee its permanence of these in time^{4,5}.

It is proposed that the eco-ethnotourism sustainable development in the district of Integrated Management (DIM) of the Rancheria River delta as an environmental management tool that contributes to preserve and protect environmental and cultural aspects of the protected area and improving the living conditions of local populations³. To this end, proposed to carry out a participatory diagnosis that considers the environmental and socio-cultural aspects in the area. That led to propose indicators of sustainability eco-etnoturistica that can be used as strategies and applicable in the conservation of biodiversity; finally this result will constitute a tool of the management and planning of similar projects, that will help strengthen the actions of conservation, use and sustainable management of mangroves and adaptive capacity of coastal communities⁶. Clear case in the study population of the delta of the River Rancheria, since little has been written and researched, but we must recognize the investigations, studies and research conducted by the University of La Guajira, to go deep into the population of the delta of the River Rancheria, collecting data about the villagers, the ecosystem, the problems and characteristics, evidence taken in the bibliographic review of its publications, in the visits and interviews conducted in the study population³.

2. Materials and Methods

The techniques of obtaining data that were used, they focused on inquire about the environmental situation and cultural communities settled in the area of influence of the DIM of the delta of the River Rancheria, which focused on environmental and socio-cultural factors, that frame the ecotourism and etnoturistico system in the area. To 200 randomly selected families and this was taken as the

population sample for the study of the universal group, to perform the reasoning through the application of the surveys where they discussed several subjects⁷. How are the constitution family, the level of study, the socioeconomic information of the family nucleus, the characteristics of their homes, public services such as water, sewerage, and solid waste management⁸. Information was obtained on the clans settled in the delta of the River Rancheria, environmental issues and his vision of the eco and ethnotourism.

The techniques applied were the direct observation to the neighborhood of Villa Fatima and indigenous communities the Pasito and Cangrejito, visits to the different ranches, the community population and specific sites of the delta, surveys in randomly to 200 families in the community, interviews applied to the Wayuu leaders and external experts, talks to targeted groups of young people and adults, the document review, the stories of life and the copses made in concert with the community. Used different data collection instruments when applied in the first instance observation, such as recording, the record anecdotal, the journal of field, the notebook, the photographic record, the schedule of activities and the worklog.

In the research conducted on the eco-ethnotourism in the district of integrated Rancheria River delta, La Guajira: an option for sustainable environmental management, was obtained important information on the whole issue raised, so that to develop the report of the research was conducted the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained, under the following aspects:

- Collection of Information: This is a great achievement to collect information provided by the inhabitants of the delta of the river Rancheria in the visits, meetings and interviews conducted under the harbour observed significant aspects and of great value of culture, compiled the information of all the techniques and instruments used throughout the investigation.
- The visits were first concerted action with some leaders to explain the importance of research. There were previous visits, explorative which recorded the environmental characteristics, natural and population found at first view of the start the experiential inquiry. In addition to finding the first contacts with the authority of tradition and the leaders for the endorsement and thus be able to enter the territory and to initiate the investigation, it being established dates and times for the meetings and workshops with the community.

After you have the endorsement by the traditional authority and the Wayuu leaders, exploratory visits where the different situations were observed on the environmental and social aspects such as: the poor vegetation, unpaved streets in the neighborhood of Villa Fatima, furrows of accumulated waters after the rains that become in a state of decomposition of organic matter, flood in patios and open spaces taken as a soccer field, houses in various materials, wood blocks, bricks, mud or clay, garbage, particularly plastic bags around, patios, gaps and full of weeds, bridle paths, and mountains of debris that are left as waste of buildings in the town of Riohacha. After it began the five (5) visits to carry out participatory observation, consequently, workshops were conversational and worked on the problem tree with the participation of young people and adults to determine from the perspective of the community, the problem lived and raised by the population⁹.

3. Results and Discussion

Taking as a statistical support for the data obtained from the 45 interviews with internal, external experts and 200 surveys to the inhabitants of the area, it was used descriptive statistics, which according to eyssautier is dedicated to methods of harvesting, description, display and summarize data originated from the phenomena under study. The data can be summarized graphically or numerically¹⁰. The descriptive analysis is appropriate for the qualitative approach and the ethnographic method, used in this research, the data obtained were tabulated, relying on the tables in Excel to perform the quantification becoming quantities and figures in manageable information for easy interpretation. To analyze the information and methods in the use of statistics, we used the application of mathematical techniques that facilitate the interpretation of numerical data obtained from the groups of respondents and interviewees¹¹. Thus, the use of percentages or percent is a quantitative measure and a special class ratio that has a database of 100 (%), the results of the surveys were applied for each response percentages of the questionnaire and by the totals of responses.

With regard to the question, what key elements of the District of Integrated Management of the delta of the River Rancheria you consider important as ecotourism potential? (Figure 1) describes the results of the 100% of the interviewees, on that key element of the District of

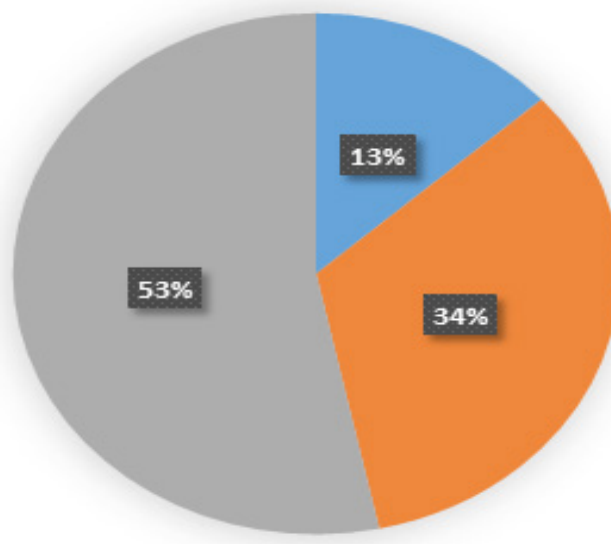


Figure 1. Key elements of eco-etnoturistico potential in the district of integrated management of the Rancheria River delta. A: Floristic and faunal aspects, B: The geographical location and C: The Wayuu culture.

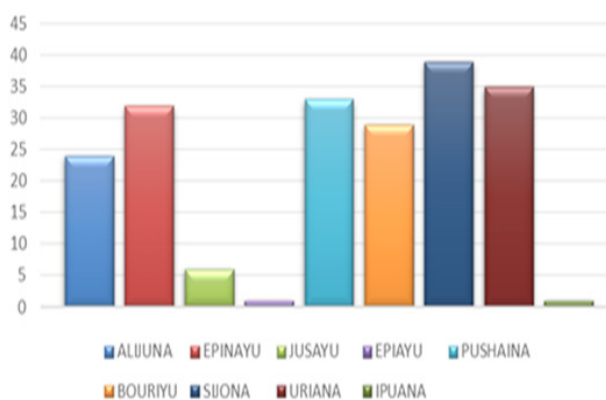


Figure 2. Distribution of clans or families. Own elaboration.

Integrated Management of the Rancheria River delta as an important ecotourism potential, 53% responded that the Wayuu culture, the 34% the geographic location, and only 13% considered the faunal aspects and floristic similarities. The 78% of the population surveyed fully agreed that the activities developed in the district of Integrated Management of the delta of the River Rancheria, affects the conservation of mangrove system in the area, the 18% agreed and 4% disagree.

Of the families surveyed it was found, a population of 24 families do not Wayuu or as they call it in the neighbourhood alijunas Villa Fatima, some displaced by the

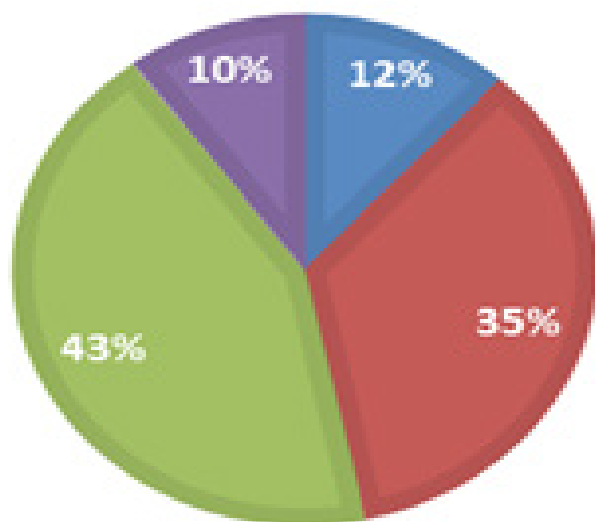


Figure 3. Economic Activity. Employment, artisan, fishing and Informal trade.

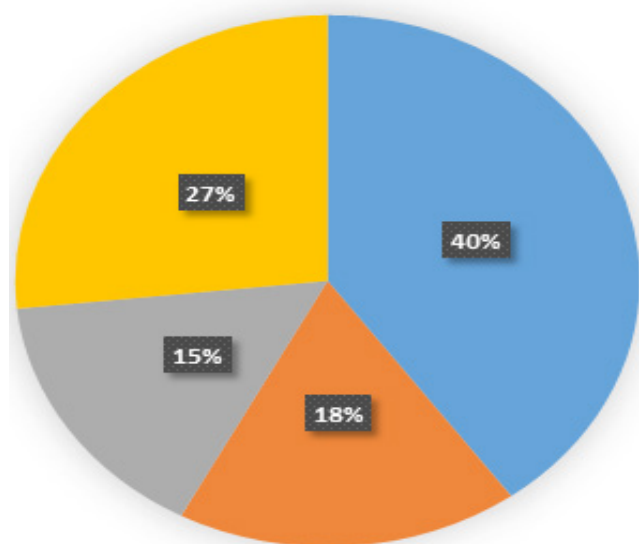


Figure 4. Relevant aspects of the Wayuu culture. A: Crafts, B: Gastronomy, C: Rites, mites and legends and D: the customs.

violence of other departments and has a population of 176 families distributed in the Wayuu clans: Epinayu, Epiayu Uriana, Bouriya Sijona, Pushaina, Jusayu and Ipuana. Wanting to have clear information on the ancestral community of La Guajira which is the Wayuu, which is divided into clans and as Ojeda “retains a proprietary system to conceive the relationship in their way of life”, “where the lineage of the mother defines the continuity of the

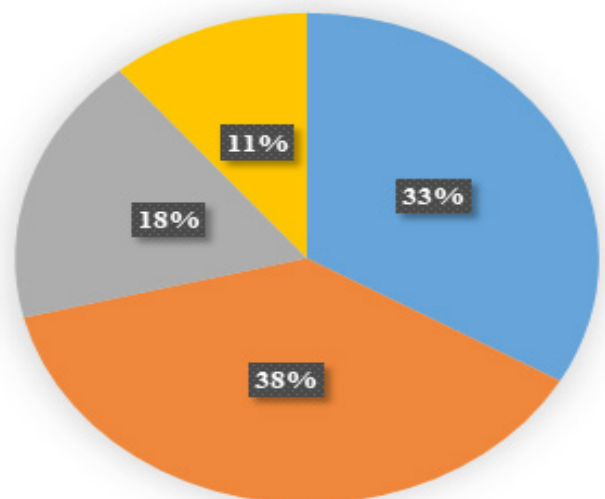


Figure 5. Benefits of eco-ethnotourism. A: generation of employment, B: conservation of culture, C: sustainable productive activities and D: word with communities.

family group called *Eirukuu*, which literally means, which are interpreted as clans”, according to the mythical origin, each one of these clans, is particularly associated to a species of animal of the ancestral nature, which is considered to be a common ancestor or totemic ancestor, which is registered in a given space of the ancestral territory where each clan or community has a person that represents and leads.

The data obtained from the sample population, are important because they gave me a prototype of the population characteristics: it is as well, that the number of families are distributed as follows: 24 alijunas (Western or displaced by the violence that come from the department of Cordoba, Antioquia and Bolivar); 32 of the clan Epinayu, 6 the clan Jusayu, one the clan Epiayu, 33 of the clan Pushaina, 20 of the clan Bouriya, 39 of the clan Sijona, 35 The clan Uriana and one the clan Ipuana, in Figure 2 shows the distribution of clans in the Rancheria River delta.

Demonstrate that economic activity is determined by fisheries and craftsmanship that is their main source of income, in (Figure 3) describes the economic activity with the highest population is fishing, since it is bordered by the river and on the shores of the Caribbean Sea, where the activity of fishing with a 43% of the population and the next with a 35% is the crafts in a very special way the fabric of backpacks and hammocks, which in the community of the Pasito is an organization of weavers, Wayuu conformed by 40 women, as he says the young Lord Cotes who is a member of these indigenous communities.

The 91% of the population interviewed expressed the view that it is relevant to the participation of the Wayuu population settled in the Rancheria River delta, in the development of eco-ethnotourism activity in the area, the 9% said it was relevant, none responded that it was not relevant (Figure 4).

Within the population surveyed were asked what would be the benefits that ethno eco- for the Wayuu indigenous peoples, 38% responded to the preservation of culture, the 33% employment generation, 18% sustainable productive activities and 11% the work with communities (Figure 5).

4. Conclusions

The lower basin of the Rancher river is protected by the figure of protection of integrated management district (DMI), plays a protective vocation, which denotes the need to preserve the mangrove forest in order to ensure ecosystem services and do not produce a deterioration in the socio-environmental and socio-economic dimensions of the natives and settlers that underpin of the hydrobiological resources and forestry of the delta. The living conditions of the communities settled in the Rancheria River delta, are of attention by state institutions in order to decrease the pressure on the mangrove ecosystem and to raise strategic projects of inter-agency court that leads to the community to improve their quality of life and the preservation of this important ecosystem. In recent times, the growth of tourism in La Guajira has been important, especially on the Alta Guajira; Riohacha has a potential for ecotourism in the Rancheria River delta which can be exploited and used as environmental management strategy to contribute to the conservation of this protective area for the district and within the activities that generate greater pressure on natural areas and the mangrove forest protector of the river, you can enumerate the high demand for land for urban expansion, another activity is the illegal occupation of the area of mangrove forest, the cutting of vegetation and frequent burning in the delta.

The illegal occupation of the west bank of the river is a socio-environmental problems and security caused by displacement and drug addiction problems, to which the district administration must implement strategies for the recovery of the trail eco-etnoturistico. There is a lack of interagency and community, each entity has its projects and programs, there is no continuity of plans and programs of public institutions responsible for the management,

nor the preservation of species, along with the ancestral community settled in the Rancheria River delta and settled communities in the Rancheria River delta: Villa Fatima, Cangrejito and the Pasito are gotten of organization and articulation of programs and plans of government to carry out environmental and cultural processes conducive to improving the quality of life of the villagers.

5. References

1. Rangel-Buitrago N. Contribucion antropogenica a los cambios geomorfologicos y evolucion reciente de la costa Caribe colombiana. *Gestion y Ambiente*. 2009 Agosto de; 12(1):43-56.
2. Bayona Arenas RM. Dise-o de un esquema de compensacion en ecosistemas acuaticos con interrupcion transversal del cauce, estudio de caso Rio Rancheria. Trabajo De Tesis, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. 2015; p. 1-115.
3. Estrada MM, Estrada EM. Eco-Etnoturismo: Una Opcion De Gestion Ambiental Sostenible. *Memorias III Seminario Internacional de Ciencias Ambientales SUE-Caribe*. 2017; p. 1-4. PMCid:PMC5661992
4. Doria AC, Vivas Aguas LJ. Fuentes terrestres de contaminacion en la zona costera de La Guajira, Colombia. *Revista de Investigacion Agraria y Ambiental*. 2016; 7(1):123-38. <https://doi.org/10.22490/21456453.1539>.
5. Johnson-Madrigal H. Consideraciones conceptuales para la comprension de la gestion ambiental en el sector publico (Primera parte). *Revista Tecnologia en Marcha*. 2012; 25(4):3-14. <https://doi.org/10.18845/tm.v25i4.614>.
6. Casado MV, Correa PS, Cortes L. Gestion costera como respuesta al ascenso del nivel del mar: guia para administradores de la zona costera del Caribe. Departamento Administrativo de Ciencia, Tecnologia e Innovacion Colciencias, Republica de Colombia. 2012; p. 1-80. PMCid:PMC3389431
7. Garcia F. El Proyecto de Investigacion. Introduccion a la metodologia cientifica, 5th Edition. Fideas G. Arias Odon. 2012.
8. Mari-o Garcia A. Caracterizacion de servicios ecosistemicos para el dise-o de sistemas agroforestales en la Cuenca Alta del Rio Rancheria - Guajira Colombia Director Tesis: Cesar Augusto Ruiz Agudelo. 2016; p. 1-117.
9. Hernandez R, Fernandez C, Baptista P. Metodologia de la Investigacion, 4th Edition. Mexico: McGraw-Hill. 2006; p. 1-182.
10. Sanchez E, Inzunza S, Avila R. Probabilidad y estadística, 1st Edition. Mexico D.F: Grupo Editorial Patria. 2015.
11. Catalina M, Arturo G. Tecnicas e instrumentos de recogida y analisis de datos. 1ra. Madrid: UNED. 2014; p. 1-544.