Enquiry 3: Village footfall patterns

Aim: To investigate footfall patterns within a village community and their impact on that community.

Research questions

1. What facilities and tourist attractions are likely to influence footfall patterns in the chosen community?
2. Which, if any, of these attractions might be described as 'honey-pot' sites?
3. What is/are the volume and direction of footfall patterns within the community?
4. How do footfall patterns appear to have affected the community – for better, and for worse?

Geographical context

Footfall patterns are a reliable indicator of socio-economic activity within a community. Tourism is currently one of the main generators of pedestrian movement with many villages and towns that would otherwise experience stagnation and possibly de-population. Many places welcome visitors, because of their potential to increase income and employment; others believe it has an overall negative effect – due to its environmental and social impact.

Location identification techniques

- A map to locate the chosen village, nearby major tourist attractions and key transport links within its regional context.
- Plan of the village to locate its main facilities and attractions.

Main health and safety issues

- Walk around the study area in pairs or groups – never alone.
- Know where your teachers and their transport are located.
- Always carry a reliable mobile phone in case of emergencies.
- Be tactful and don't crowd pavements when collecting data.
- Be aware of road traffic on busy, narrow, winding roads.

Data collection activities

- Completing an outline plan of the village by recording its attractions and facilities.
- Undertaking pedestrian footfall counts at selected places within the community.
- Recording any visual evidence of the likely positive and negative effects of high visitor numbers, e.g. crowded shops.
- Obtaining oblique-aerial and Streetview images of the village.

Data collection resources required

- Questionnaire for interviewing local residents, e.g. shopkeepers and people tending their gardens.
- Clipboard and pencil, with wet-weather protection for clipboard.
- Camera, for recording attractions, facilities, evidence of litter etc.

Suggested sources of secondary data

- Census data, to obtain recent community population trends.
- Estate agents, for local house prices and recent price trends.
- Holiday and tourist brochures and advertising fliers.

Recommended data presentation and analysis

- Plan of the village identifying different types of attractions and facilities, and incorporating footfall patterns.
- Annotated sketches and photographs.
- Range of graph types to display questionnaire and footfall data.