

Tourism in rural communities and implications for sustainable rural development

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Abstract

The development of tourism in rural areas has, in recent times, taken centre stage in academic circles. This study analysed the impact of tourism on the development of the community of Nqileni village in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The analysis took the form of identifying the views of members of the community on tourism's contribution to the development of the village and the area at large. Data was solicited from 22 respondents in the form of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The results revealed that the community generally viewed tourism development as bringing about positive change. In contrast, the visitors expressed concerns regarding the sustainability of tourism in the area, citing lack of infrastructure and skills as the main limitations to the village's objective of sustainability. The study recommends that government, businesses and the community engage with one another so as to provide for the shortcomings of the village, enhance the sustainable livelihood assets in order to help alleviate poverty and reduce vulnerability within the community.

Keywords: Community, Impact, Nqileni village, South Africa, Sustainable rural development

Introduction and background

Rural tourism has been earmarked as a new phenomenon that has been identified as advancing rural development in a manner that can provide opportunities and facilities for income generation and the effective modernisation of rural areas (Reza-Maleki, Moradi & Parsa, 2014). Over the last three decades, many rural economies have experienced a severe turndown, with falling employment and income levels in traditional agrarian industries contributing to a vicious circle of economic decline and socio-economic problems (Anderson, 2002; Batyk, 2011; Sharpley, 2002). Rural economies have recently had to look into alternative development strategies for economic and social regeneration, due to such factors as a decline in economic activity, the restructuring of the agricultural sector, deteriorating rural industrialisation, and the out-migration of higher educated youth. This has led many western countries to adopt tourism as a vehicle for addressing the problems concerned (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). As a result, tourism has not only become a potential vehicle for redressing such a decline (Sharpley, 2002), but it has also led to an accentuation of the intimate relationship between the socio-economic health of rural areas in general and the prosperity of the farming community in particular, which has brought about benefits making it a vital element of rural development policy (Nygaard, 2009; Sango, 2014; Sharpley, 2002).

The extent to which the above-mentioned benefits are realised remains the subject of debate. Even with the evidence available that shows tourism to be a vehicle of growth and diversification, the notion that tourism represents a remedy to the problems facing rural areas must be treated with caution (Batyk, 2011; Sharpley, 2002). The desperate circumstances in which some destinations find themselves often leave the governments of developing countries in danger of pursuing such development without due regard to the economic and cultural well-being of rural communities, the conservation of the environment, and the inclusion of the host community in decision-making (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). This has given rise to tourism stakeholders looking for more sustainable approaches than they have adopted in the past, so as to ensure the protection, conservation and preservation of the environment at large. Keyser (2002) sheds light on a contentious definition of sustainable tourism development as being development that is intended to reduce the tension and friction created by the interaction between the tourism industry, the visitors, the environment, and the host communities. The above definition continues to be plagued by a challenge to cultivate economically viable enterprises that are capable of providing livelihood benefits to local communities, while protecting indigenous cultures and environments (Simpson, 2009; Spenceley, 2004). This challenge is further entrenched by tourism's inability to occur in isolation, as it requires the use of scarce resources, including land, water, labour, energy, and waste assimilation (Tao & Wall, 2008a).

Rural tourism development

On the upside of rural tourism development, the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (South Africa, 1996) has an objective to develop tourism in a manner that contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of South Africans (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002). This has over time led to rural tourism being given the status of catalyst to attain economic and social development and regeneration of rural areas (Binns & Nel, 2002; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). More specifically, tourism development has provided evidence of success as a source of income and employment, particularly in peripheral areas where the contribution of farming has declined (Sharpley, 2002). Bishop (2014), alluding to the world's attempt to reconcile the effects of an unsustainable industry (mass tourism), views rural tourism as providing an alternative to the negative effects often associated with mass tourism in developing countries. Tourism has been comprehended to be one of the strategies to achieve better living conditions for communities, with the main idea being the creation of a sustainable project that will further promote symbiotic relationship between the locals, the tourists and physical environment (Ghapar, Othman, Jamal & Amir, 2014; Amir, Ghapar, Jamal, & Ahmad, 2015). Furthermore, Snieska, Barkauskiene and Barkauskas (2014) indicate the importance of rural tourism by citing the work of Alisauskas and Jankauskiene (2008):

- Rural tourism creates economic and social benefits that are especially attractive to the youth and also provides employment and income for the host community, while diversifying the service provision and can create a market for local agricultural produce.
- It is an effective means of saving the natural and cultural environment and traditional values in the form of proving protection to landscapes, revival of historic assets and restoring communities and their cultures.

More specifically, the development of rural tourism offers potential solutions to the many challenges facing rural areas. Sharpley (2002) and Batyk (2011) summarise the works of English Tourism Board (ETB) (1988), Thibal (1988), Kieselbach and Long (1990), Gannon (1994), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1994) to portray rural tourism as an enabler of economic growth, diversification and stabilisation of economies; socio-cultural development; and protection and improvement of the natural and

built environment and infrastructure to further the goals of sustainable development (McMahon & Benedict, 2006;Lo, Mohamad, Songan, & Yeo, 2011).

On the downside of rural tourism development, Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt (2005) argue that tourism is often considered to be a clean industry, yet in reality it is not always the case. Park, Lee, Choi and Yoon (2012) further indicate the real probability of tourism development to harm environment, which can result in loss of resources and conflict of interest between various interests. This is exemplified in a study conducted by Ghaderi and Henderson (2012) revealing the development of tourism in rural areas often brought a negative relationship characterised by resentment, antagonism, dishonesty and alienation between the community, tourists and tourism businesses.

Andereck *et al.* (2005) further cite Lui, Sheldon and Var (1987) and Dogan (1989) that tourism development is often assumed to improve the quality of life of residents, but also has an opposite effect on the sociocultural characteristics of residents such as habits, daily routines, social lives, beliefs, and values. Ghaderi and Henderson (2012) further indicate unprecedented alterations to society and ways of life that often see young people pay little or no attention to their ancestral culture in pursuit of an urban lifestyle. This can be attributed to the weakness of rural areas due to a perceived absence of opportunities for rural populations compared to urban areas (Fons, Fierro and Patino, 2011).

Sustainable development

“Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

According to Telfer and Sharpley (2008), despite the general acceptance of sustainable development, there remains a lack of agreement over the concrete meaning of the term. Although it is relatively easy to define what sustainability is not, saying what it is has proved to be more problematic (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Irrespective of the difficulties in defining sustainable development, Mowforth and Munt (2009) have attempted to shed a light on what led to calls for development that is not negative. Sustainable development is understood to be a new type of economic development opposed to the paradigm of the 19th and 20th century development (profit above society and environment) and is consistent with the protection and preservation of the environment for future generations (Carley & Christie, 2000). Mowforth and Munt (2009) further indicate that the term gained greater attention following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, popularly referred to as the Earth Summit (World Summit, 2002). The summit concluded with the design of a programme for promoting sustainable development throughout the world, known as Agenda 21.

Agenda 21 is an action plan laying out the basic principles required to progress towards sustainability (Mason, 2010; Evans, Joas, Sundback & Theobald, 2013). It envisages national sustainable strategies, involving local communities and people in a ‘bottom-up’ approach to development, rather than the ‘top-down’ approach which has typically characterised national development plans (Magee, Scerri, James, Thom, Padgham, Hickmott, Deng, & Cahill, 2013). Furthermore, Telfer and Sharpley (2008) indicate that sustainable development is to be undertaken with principles and objectives that attempt to bring to fruition Agenda 21. The principles are as follows:

- Holistic perspective as development and sustainability are global challenges to be addressed in a manner inclusive of all spheres of the environment;
- Futurity as the emphasis should be on the long-term future;

- Equity as development should be fair and equitable both within and between generations (World Summit, 2002; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008).

The overall objectives of sustainable development, then, may be seen as a strife for:

- Environmental sustainability, which is concerned with the conservation and effective management of resources;
- Economic sustainability, with an objective to achieve longer term prosperity as a foundation for continuing development;
- Social sustainability, with a focus on alleviating poverty, the promotion of human rights, equal opportunity, political freedom and self-determination (World Summit, 2002).

Although sustainable development was initially considered a solution for the ecological crisis generated by heavy industrial exploitation of resources and by the continuous degradation of the environment (Gherasim & Tanase, 2012), its foundation was the pursuit of the preservation of environmental quality, which further extended over to the quality of life in its complexity including economic and social aspects (Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause, 1995). The object of sustainable development is now represented also by the preoccupation for justice and equity between states in both the developing and the developed world, not only between generations (Gherasim & Tanase, 2012).

Sustainable development is a major conceptual framework for community and social development, and it typically incorporates a long term perspective on resource exploitation. A general definition of sustainable development that is widely used for tourism-based communities is the so-called “triple-bottom-line”, in which policies and actions attempt to balance social, economic and environmental costs and benefits (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal & Ahmad, 2015; Hall & Lew, 2009). This is because tourism is often viewed as an economic activity first, although it can also be conflicted with the environmental and cultural conservation goals of community sustainability. Sustainable development is also one of the most common prescriptions for making a community resilient (Edwards, 2009). This term describes ‘the capacity of people or “systems” to cope with stresses and shocks by anticipating them, preparing for them, responding to them and recovering from them’ (Adam & Simon, 2012: 5), which brings to the fore Simpson’s (2009) assertion of the key challenge of sustainable tourism being the development of enterprises that are economically feasible for the provision of livelihood benefits to local communities without compromising indigenous cultures and the environment.

Sustainable livelihood

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) recently became central to the discourse on poverty alleviation, rural development and environmental management (Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998). According to the Department of International Development (2003), a livelihood approach constitutes choices and activities that people make regarding the different ways of combining their livelihood assets or strategy to meet their livelihood goals which can vary across geographic areas, economic sectors and even within households over time. Chambers and Conway (1992) provide a description of livelihood as the composition of assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities required to enable a living for the community. According to Scoones (1998: 5):

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resources base.

Furthermore, livelihood encompasses assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), activities and access to these assets (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or households (Whelan, 2005; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). Tao and Wall (2009) further state the usefulness of the sustainable livelihood approach in acknowledging that people in poor communities often improve their livelihoods through numerous activities rather than one activity, while new initiatives such as tourism, cannot occur in isolation and must be incorporated into existing systems.

Another virtue of the sustainable livelihoods framework/approach is that it endeavours to build on the strength of endogenous assets, strategies and objectives, rather than importing development models that often disregard and undermine positive indigenous features that point to remedy local vulnerability (Temam, 2010). The livelihood approach is concerned first and foremost with people. So, an accurate and realistic understanding of people's strengths (assets or capital) is crucial to analyse how they endeavour to convert their assets into positive livelihoods outcomes (Kollmair & Juli, 2002). Ideally, the use of tourism as an activity for a sustainable livelihood approach should be explored and incorporated into the existing mix of livelihood strategies so that it augments rather than replace the means that are already employed (Tao and Wall, 2009). If a community decides to incorporate tourism as one of their livelihood strategies in order to achieve Sustainable Living (SL), tourism will be a form of livelihood diversification (Tao & Wall, 2008).

Statement of the problem

The sustainability of development in rural areas has in recent times taken centre stage in academic discourse. Rural areas around the world have seen a sharp decline in traditional rural industry and opportunity, resulting in mass exodus of critical human resources towards urban and more affluent areas in search of better livelihood prospects. This led to governments and development agencies earmarking industries (such as tourism) with low entry requirements, sustainable practices and high employment retention (Tefler & Sharpley, 2007). This has led to the blind pursuit of these industries without adequate consideration to possible negative effects that can be accrued by the local communities. The current study focused on implications of the development of tourism in rural areas with the intention of establishing sustainable rural development in Nqileni village.

Purpose of the study

The study sought to identify the implications of tourism in rural communities on sustainable development of one village in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Research Methodology

Research design: The study was an in-depth exploratory examination of the implications of tourism on the livelihood of residents of one village. Burr, Neidig and Zeitlin (2007) quote True's (1983: 53) suggestion that "the objective of exploratory research is discovery and investigation of unique and unusual things, with the study not including formalised hypothesis or rigorous statistical tests". Jennings (2002) further asserts that the exploratory research is able to draw on opinions of respondents, experts and observations. The employment of semi-structured individual and focus group interviews gives credence to the chosen approach as these methods can provide a broader range of information and allow the interviewer to probe further and seek clarity.

Sample and sampling: The study employed two sampling techniques, namely, a purposive sampling technique and a snowball sampling technique. The two techniques allowed the researchers to solicit data in a credible manner consistent with Jennings' (2002) prescriptions of both techniques. The purposive sampling technique was utilised to obtain the views of four individuals from structures that were tasked with the economic and development health of the community and the area, while the snowball sampling technique was employed to solicit the opinions of three focus group respondents with each comprising six members. Respondents for the study were thus 22.

Research instrument: The study relied on semi-structured interview schedules and focus group interview schedules for the collection of data. These were utilised under the prescript of Jennings (2002), Rabiee (2004), Matthews and Ross (2010), and Kumar (2014) where both instruments were undertaken under the guidance of an interviewer soliciting experiences, understanding and feeling that respondents had about the development of tourism in the village.

Reliability and validity: The findings of the study were submitted to a colleague with expertise in the field of research and tourism for peer debriefing and recommendations thereof were instituted to the study.

Data analysis: The study adopted thematic analysis as a method for giving credence to the collected data. Qualitative data analysis requires a researcher to organise the data into categories on the basis of themes, concepts, or similar features (Neuman, 2000). The collection of data was followed by a transcription of the conversations that transpired during both the individual and focus group interviews.

Ethical considerations: Permission was obtained from the village leadership (headman and ward council committee member) to conduct the study, while verbal consent was obtained from respondents before the commencement of data collection. The employees of the Lodge and the tourists concerned were invited by the researcher, with the permission of the manager, and the non-employee respondents were invited by the headman, at the request of the researcher, to participate in the study.

Results and discussion

Presentation of the results for the study took the form of first presenting demographic characteristics of the respondents followed by respondents' views of the implications of tourism on the community.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Semi-structured individual interview respondents were four community leaders within the village serving as the local headman; the Acting Director of Bulungula Incubator; a Ward Council member and representative of the United Democratic Movement (which was the governing political party in the village); and the Manager of the Bulungula Lodge. Data were also collected using focus group interviews with respondents who worked for the Lodge, those who did not work for the Lodge as well as tourists who were visiting the lodge during the time of the data collection. Each group consisted of six respondents. Of the tourist respondents, it was revealed that one tourist was from Holland, one from Belgium and four were South Africans from Johannesburg (three) and Durban (one). Refer to Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Biographic information of respondents			
	Semi-structured individual interview (N=4)	Employees of the lodge (N=6)	Non-employers of the lodge (N=6)	Tourists visiting the lodge (N=6)
Age				
Range	28 to 65 years old	21 to 43 years old	28 to 41 years old	30 to 66 years old
Average age of participants	41.8 years old	33.8 years old	33.2 years old	43.2 years old
Male average age	41.8 years old	33 years old	35 years old	45 years old
Female average age	Not applicable	34.3 years old	32.8 years old	41.3 years old
Marital status				
Married	2 respondents	4 respondents	5 respondents	2 respondents
Single	2	2	1	4
Gender				
Male	4	2	1	3
Female	0	4	5	3
Educational level				
Primary education	1	4	5	0
Secondary education	2	2	1	0
Undergraduate	1	0	0	2
Postgraduate	0	0	0	4
Employment status				
Full-time	4	2	0	4
Part-time	0	2	0	0
Self-employed	0	2	2	0
Unemployed	0	0	4	0
Student	0	0	0	0
Pensioner	0	0	0	2

Respondents' views of the implications of tourism on the community

The themes of the study were derived from the adoption of a theoretically driven approach to the coding of data. Ruggunan (2013) attributes such coding to the influence of the relevant literature. The codes suited the debates on sustainable livelihood conducted in the literature, which identifies tourism as a mechanism for sustainable rural development. The data collected from the residents of Nqileni village produced the following themes:

- employment creation and an improvement in the local standard of living;
- infrastructure development;
- community development and capacity building;
- social cohesion and community pride;
- entrepreneurship; and
- environmental protection.

Employment creation and an improvement in the standards of living

A common thread through the various narratives of the respondents was their implicit and explicit reference to tourism's contribution to the creation of employment and to the overall increase in the locals' standards of living. Their narratives demonstrated the respondents' belief that the development of tourism in Nqileni village brought with it employment opportunities, and a subsequent improvement in the standard of living for the local community. According to focus group respondent (employee 1):

The establishment of Bulungula Lodge has seen a lot of us being able to provide for our families and not [have to] wait for our family members, who work in Johannesburg, to send us money.

Furthermore, the respondents alluded to tourism enabling them to find employment closer to home, and to it also providing every member of the community with an income, through the Bulungula Trust. According to focus group respondent (non-employee 1):

Bulungula has given us a better life. Everyone in the village receives dividends at the end of each financial year, irrespective of whether you are employed by the Lodge or not. The Bulungula Trust is for every person born in the village.

Individual interview respondent (Acting Director of Bulungula Incubator) provided the following insights in this regard:

The village's major source of income is the Lodge, which is 100% owned by the Nqileni community. Natives of the village have equity in the Lodge and receive dividends at the end of every financial year, irrespective of their involvement with the Lodge.

The narratives quoted above concurred with Sharpley's (2002) assertion that tourism can become a source of income and employment, particularly in those peripheral areas where the contribution of farming has declined. Latkova and Vogt (2012) further advance Liu (2006), and Briedenhann and Wickens' (2004), assertions of tourism being a vehicle of economic development, with governments and communities promoting it as an effective source of employment and income in rural areas, and with it being targeted at tourists searching for authentic natural and cultural resources. The development path taken by those in the study area had already brought about such significant positive economic impacts as economic growth and diversification, and even the creation of new markets for agricultural products, thus broadening the area's economic base (Batyk, 2011).

Infrastructure development

The respondents in the current study attributed the development of the infrastructure in Nqileni village to the establishment of Bulungula Lodge, and to the development of tourism in the area. The narratives indicate the respondents' conviction that tourism had contributed to making the requisite infrastructure and facilities available that the village had lacked prior to the establishment of the Lodge. According to focus group respondent (non-employee 3):

The creation of Bulungula Lodge has afforded us proper roads, solar energy and clean water. We do not have to cook outside using wood and coal fire any more. We now have solar panels that enable us to cook inside our houses. We do not have to fetch unsafe water from the wells any more.

The individual interview respondent (Ward Council member) further indicated that:

The development of tourism in the area has raised the village's status on the local government's economic development priority list. This has led to the provision of a road that connects the village with nearby towns, such as Mqanduli and Elliotdale.

The respondents further indicated the establishment of the Bulungula Incubator, a community development initiative that was a by-product of the Bulungula Lodge. The Incubator was credited with the establishment and provision of such services and facilities as health points, an increase in the number of classrooms in the area, and a vehicle that transported people in the case of an emergency. According to focus group respondent (non-employee 5):

People used to walk many kilometres in order to access primary health care. Now, we have a health point that is serviced by trained professionals right here in the village.

In terms of focus group respondents' (employee 3) thinking:

Our children used to attend classes out in the open, and now we have a school built with bricks and mortar and the Lodge affords people in the village the use of its vehicles in times of emergency, whereas [in the past] people were carried across the river on a mattress, in order to receive medical attention at a nearby hospital many kilometres away.

The above narratives concur with Harun, Hassan, Razzaq, Rasid and Mustafa's (2012) assertions that tourism stimulates an enormous amount of investment in the infrastructure. Most such investment also assists with improving the living conditions of the local people, affording the rural tourism sector a chance at sustainability (Dimitrovski, Todorović & Valjarević, 2012).

However, visitors to the Lodge had a dissimilar outlook with regard to the infrastructure in the area. While the residents of Nqileni expressed their content with the pace of infrastructural development in the area, the visitors noted their belief that the infrastructure alluded to was non-existent. Focus group respondent (tourist 2) stated:

"Coming to this place was a mission, especially the condition of the [gravel] road and the non-existent signage."

Focus group respondent (tourist 1) noted:

“The facilities [example, showers] in this place are somewhat tricky and difficult to understand at first, but as time goes [by], one gets to acclimatise.”

Focus group respondent (tourist 5) admitted:

“As beautiful and tranquil [as] this place is, the lack of facilities such as Wi-Fi, cell phone reception and newspapers is a major let-down for me.”

Skills development and capacity building

Respondents viewed tourism as bringing development to the Nqileni village community. Their narratives exhibited an agreement that tourism had afforded some form of development, and that it had also increased the community's capacity to sustain themselves and their families through entrepreneurial ventures established by members of the community to serve the tourists. According to focus group respondent (employee 4):

The number of people who cannot read and write has decreased drastically since the establishment of the Lodge and the development of tourism. The Incubator has introduced programmes that equip members of the community with skills such as carpentry, sewing, massaging and tour guiding, which enable members of the community to be self-reliant and self-sustainable.

In addition, individual interview respondent (Acting Director of Bulungula Incubator) noted:

Development in the area has focused mainly on education and health. The establishment of Bulungula Incubator has afforded the community to acquire skills that enable people to escape the poverty trap, and [it has] also provide[d] children [with] a chance at [of] a decent education.

The respondents' accounts served to affirm that the local development had a positive impact on the local community. Batyk (2011) and Feng and Lee (2013) give credence to the respondents' affirmations, in their stating that the development of tourism in rural areas can give rise to sociocultural development, including the repopulation of rural areas; the maintenance and improvement of public services; the revitalisation of local crafts, customs and cultural identities; and the provision of increased opportunities for social contact and exchange.

While the residents gave a positive account of tourism's contribution to community development and capacity building, the visitors voiced their concerns regarding the local capacity to run and operate the Lodge, and tourism in the area, sustainably. Furthermore, a shared view in the visitors' apprehensions was that of concerns regarding the Lodge employees' disregard for the timely provision of services and punctuality. Focus group respondent (tourist 4) mused:

“One can't help but wonder if the staff of the Lodge have the [required] education skills for sustaining the Lodge.” In addition, focus group tourist 6 moaned: *“We are told that meals will be served at a particular time [example, breakfast is at 08:00], only for the food to get to us more than 2 hours later.”*

Social cohesion and community pride

The respondents provided a common record with regard to the development of tourism's role in building social cohesion and instilling a sense of pride in the community of Nqileni village. This demonstrated the residents' confidence in the ability of tourism development to bring people together, and to revive local customs and traditions.

According to individual interview respondent (Headman):

The development of tourism has brought dignity to a community that was once poor. The members of the community are aware of the consequences of not working together. For example, the only report of crime against a tourist was reported in 2005, and the community came together, apprehended the culprits, and handed them over to the police.

In addition, focus group respondent (employee 3) noted:

“The development of tourism in the area has brought with it sustainable employment for women, which does not include ploughing the fields.”

Nair and Hussain (2013) give credibility to residents' accounts of the promotion of social cohesion through tourism development. The authors state that development embedded in the community not only serves to increase its income, but it also serves to solidify and strengthen the sense of social cohesion and, inevitably, to increase community support. Furthermore, Kastenholz and Figueiredo (2014) report that such development can advance a sense of local identity and pride, while preserving traditions and creating new (or renewing) economic activities.

Entrepreneurship and the positive multiplier effect

The residents provided an account of entrepreneurial opportunities, with a general positive multiplier effect coming to the fore as both the direct and the indirect result of tourism development in the area. This confirms the residents' belief in tourism's ability to create a demand for goods and services requiring entrepreneurs to provide supplies to meet the demand. According to individual interview respondent (Manager of Bulungula Lodge):

A lot of people in the village created businesses in order to serve tourists. All services rendered to tourists are businesses owned and operated by the person that is rendering that particular service. Even the food served in the Lodge, the ladies that cook and prepare the food operate separate from the Lodge.

In addition, focus group respondent (non-employee 4) noted:

The development of tourism, the creation of employment, and the subsequent establishment of the Bulungula Incubator have improved people's standards of living, and [it has] even increased [the] demand for certain goods and services within the village. This [has] led to an increase in [the number of] small, medium and micro enterprises [in the area].

Latkova and Vogt (2012) emphasise studies by Madrigal (1993) and Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier and Van Es (2001) that assert the ability of tourism development to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship. Such an ability is seen in the potential for small-scale tourism to be less costly than are other development strategies, due to its aptitude to develop without necessarily being dependent on outside suppliers (Wilson *et al.*, 2001).

Environmental protection

A common account running through the respondents' responses provided a firm reference crediting the development of tourism with the protection of the environment in the area. The residents attributed their awareness and consciousness of the importance of the natural and

physical environment to the establishment of the Bulungula Lodge and to the development of tourism in the area. According to focus group respondent (non-employee 6):

The establishment of the Lodge opened our eyes to the importance of taking care of the forest. A joint programme of the Lodge and the Incubator is under way, with the objective to discourage members of the community . . . [from] . . . cutting down trees in the forest, as this will hamper efforts to sustain the resource.

In addition, focus group respondent (employee 2) noted:

We, as the community, are taught of the importance of keeping the beach and surrounding areas clean, as these are the main attractions offered by the village. The maintenance of these resources is paramount to the sustainability of our development.

The environmental undertakings in Nqileni village are given credibility by a study conducted by Ghaderi and Henderson (2012), in terms of which the residents of a village in Iran (example, Hawraman village) endeavoured to establish a local organisation dedicated to conservation as a result of the heightened environmental awareness and values associated with tourism. With the increase in awareness and appreciation of the environment due to the development of tourism, the need to preserve and capture the natural beauty of the environment for tourism purposes, and an increase in the amount of investment in the environmental infrastructure of the host area has become of paramount importance to the local community (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013).

Conclusion

The development of tourism in Nqileni has been viewed as having a positive impact on the livelihood of the community. There is a generally positive outlook with regard to the contribution made by tourism development to the general development of the area. The findings provide a clear indication of the community's feelings about the development of tourism in the area, highlighting the areas – employment, infrastructural and community development, social cohesion, entrepreneurship, and environmental protection – to have brought about positive impacts in the area since the establishment of Bulungula Lodge in 2004.

The findings also provide a contrast in terms of the gains made by the community in relation to the views afforded by the visitors stating the area's limitations in terms of their expectations of tourist destinations and service provision in such areas.

Finally, the development of tourism in Nqileni village has been seen to foster development beyond immediate economic benefits, as it has also provided the community with other benefits that have led to a reduction in vulnerability and to an enhancement of livelihood assets (human, social and natural) in the area.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations for practice.

- Given the potential of tourism to deliver the community of Nqileni village from the poverty trap, the education of the locals should be given priority. At the time of the study, the majority of those who were involved with tourism in the village lacked the skills required to provide visitors with the type of service that the latter are likely to deem adequate. The government should take a lead in building up the capacity of, and educating, the local people, as doing so will enable the village to obtain the skills to sustain tourism and any other development envisaged by the community.

- Investment in the transport infrastructure and signage should be prioritised. Tourism development in any area is highly dependent on the ease with which tourists can access the destination. It is imperative that the stakeholders ensure that the ability of tourists to reach the village is maximised.
- The amount of information and technical assistance that is available for marketing and promotion purposes should be increased, so as to enable tourism in the area to reach a wider audience than it had at the time of the study. This would then make the area less dependent on social networks than it has been in the past.
- A local tourism association should be established in the area to act as a central mediation point for all the stakeholders involved (example, the government, businesses and the community), as well as for tourism associations in other areas (on a local, regional and national scale).

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