



Rural Tourism as a Mechanism for Poverty Alleviation in Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province of South Africa: Case of Bergville

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Abstract

The case of rural tourism and community development has been made in general terms with less focus on poverty alleviation and more emphasis on economic modernisation. Recently, a link between rural tourism and poverty alleviation has been emphasised in the contemporary tourism and poverty alleviation literature. The study employed a quantitative method in which a combination of two types of research data that includes secondary data from literature study and the fieldwork as primary data from questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 330 participants. The findings of the study showed that Bergville has a potential of using tourism development as a viable formula for poverty alleviation. In addition, the study revealed that Bergville has the existing tourism management practices that can contribute towards the improvement of the quality of lives of local people ultimately alleviating poverty. However, on the ground, the Bergville community face abject poverty, which could be alleviated through tourism. Thus, the study recommended that for tourism to contribute towards job opportunities, entrepreneurial skills and income generation, there is need for the local municipality to strengthen partnerships with the local business sector stakeholders and policy makers to ensure a faster tourism development process. Mindful of the fact that Kwa-Zulu Natal province is predominantly rural but rich in tourism the study recommends the need for investing in rural development aligned to the principles of sustainability and responsible tourism as a mechanism to fight the War on Poverty. This proposal may not be panacea to the overall rural tourism development constraints but concerted efforts to curtail challenges of meaningful and output related partnerships between the government, industry and communities. The inadequate articulation of the opportunities and policy imperatives including incentives and regulations presents a short changed approach within the means of improving the lives of the people in the tourism value chain.

Keywords: Tourism, Rural Tourism, Rural Areas, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation, Bergville

Introduction

Large parts of South Africa are stuck in a poverty trap in which poverty is so extreme that it is difficult to solve the crippling problems of hunger, diseases and lack of infrastructure. These crises in turn hamper economic growth and promote rural depopulation (Lakener, Kiss, Merlet, Olah, Mate, Grabara & Popp, 2018). Ironically, South Africa is a tourism paradise, which offers a variety of attractions including scenic beauty, diverse wildlife, a kaleidoscope of cultures, traditions and



many opportunities to explore the outdoors through sporting and adventure activities. Little is known, however, about its socio-economic impact on the livelihoods of poor people in the rural areas (Bennet & George, 2004:4).

Poverty is still the biggest challenge facing humans today and most of the poor people live in rural areas (Farrington & Mitchell 2006:2). According to the estimates of the World Bank (2008:1), about 1.4 billion people in the world live in poverty, and while significant gains have undoubtedly been made in combating poverty, rates of poverty remain high in rural areas where agriculture is still an economic jugular vein (Saboor, Hussain & Mushtaq, 2006:26). Migration towards urban areas is one of the coping strategies used by rural dwellers to escape poverty. Large cities adjacent to rural areas still exercise a powerful pull on the rural poor especially those who are unemployed (Hwang & Stewart, 2017)

Tourism is seen as a possible strategy of growth for developing economies and an agent of development because of its potential to be a source of income for local economies (Isaac & Van der Sterren, 2017:2). One cannot ignore the necessity of development and innovation in the agricultural sector. Tourism development planners focus on the enclave development of resorts characterised by exclusion of linkages to the local economies, especially in poor rural areas (Brown, 2010; Meyer, 2016). Where this exclusion occurs, the role of tourism in poverty alleviation is undermined, especially in rural communities like Bergville. Currently, poverty alleviation is a major concern for many developing countries, including South Africa. Unfortunately, efforts by professionals to save the rural poor through approaches to soil fertility improvement, land reform and advanced agricultural technology have not achieved what might have been hoped for (Shen, Hughey & Simmons, 2016). More economic involvement of the poor is a prerequisite for the process of poverty alleviation in South Africa. With its possible socio-economic advantages, such as the creation of employment, tourism is indicated by development policies as an important industry for poverty alleviation. It can create jobs, develop skills and grow the economy by boosting the sales of various goods and services such as agricultural products and handicrafts (Isaac & van der Sterren, 2017).

This study investigates rural tourism as a mechanism for poverty alleviation in Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province of South Africa with reference to Bergville area. Bergville is a predominately rural area surrounded by large pockets of tourism yet it remains one of the poorest communities in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Research objectives

- To establish the extent to which rural tourism development can contribute positively to job opportunities and entrepreneurial skills development in the Bergville area.
- To make recommendations to the department of tourism and economic development on how to grow tourism in the Bergville area.

Aims of the study

The aim of the study is investigate the extent to which Rural Tourism can be used as a mechanism to alleviate poverty in the Bergville area located in the Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province of South Africa. The Bergville area as abject poverty and yet the area has is inundated projects which could be used as a poverty alleviation tool through the creation of jobs as well as sharpening the entrepreneurial skills of the Bergville communities.



Statement of problem

Bergville has a problem of poverty. About 73% of the population has no formal income and a large percentage of the remainder earning low income. About 3.5% of those who have formal income earn between R100.00 and R400.00 per month, 8.7% earns between R401 and R800.00 per month, 1.8% earns between R801 and R1 600, 2.4% earns between R1601 and R12 800 and 0.6% earns R12 801 and more. This means that the other sources of income in the area support the non-income group (Okhahlamba Local Municipality, 2017:18). The local people must find means and ways of participating in the economy of the area, and tourism development is one of the mechanisms that can be used. Poverty alleviation is at the heart of the tourism agenda to such an extent that tourism is already affecting the livelihoods of millions of poor people positively and negatively (Ashley, Dilys & Goodwin, 2006: 4).

Literature Review

Poverty in rural areas

In South Africa and other developing countries poverty is a two-sided issue. There is rural poverty and urban poverty. Unlike hunger, which is absolute, poverty is a relative concept. Most people, when they think about poverty in Third World countries such as South Africa, have a picture of overcrowded cities surrounded by shanty towns. This picture only reflects urban poverty. Urban poverty, unlike rural poverty, poses problems of housing, shelter, water, sanitation, health, education, social security et cetera. (Vashsishta, 2009:875). Rural poverty is another side of the phenomenon. It is evident where people cannot fulfill their most basic needs and cannot attain their dreams and desires (Noble, Ratcliffe & Wright, 2004:6). Further, it is characterised by the absence of resources whereas urban poverty is characterised by the presence of resources and an intense competition and scramble to obtain them. Poverty, whether rural or urban, is equally unacceptable. One of the mechanisms that can be used to alleviate poverty in rural areas is to take advantage of their rich natural heritage and develop a tourism industry that can benefit the poor.

The trend and the pace of urbanisation in South Africa is a result of a combination of the push and pull forces. Rural urban migration, infrastructure development, national policies, private sector forces, and other aggressive socio-economic and political processes, including globalisation, drive urbanisation across the developing world (United Nations, 2007:7). The main push factor in the process of rural urban migration is the lack of employment opportunities and the main pull factor to urban areas is anticipated job availability. Tourism development has the potential of creating employment in rural areas and bringing about population stability.

Holland, Burian and Dixey (2003:3) argue that as many as 75% of the world's poor people live in rural areas. Various models have been used to alleviate poverty in rural areas, such as Nepal's Rural Tourism Development Model (Dhakal, Khadka, Sharma, & Choegyal, 2007:3) and the Malaysian Development Model (Shamsudin 1997). Most of the top tourism destinations in developing countries, such as the national parks, the wilderness areas, the mountains, the lakes and the cultural sites, are rural. This means that tourism is an important feature of the rural economy. Its development can contribute to job creation, skills development, entrepreneurial development and economic growth. Mader (2003:1) argues that tourism is a major service. Rural areas and cities alike can depend heavily on tourism to fuel the economy and generate employment. Most of the travelers who are interested in visiting rural villages contribute indirectly to the growth of the economy. The same view about the importance of tourism in rural areas is



echoed by Viljoen & Tlabela (2006:1) in their argument that rural tourism consists of leisure activities which are carried out in rural areas. This includes various types of tourism such as community based tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, guest farms, backpacking, riding and agritourism.

Poverty is a multidimensional problem and there is more than one approach in dealing with it. McCaston and Rewald (2005:10) argue that the causes of poverty fall into three categories: immediate causes, intermediate causes and underlying causes. Turner (2005:3) shares the same view in his argument that the immediate causes of poverty are factors which are directly related to life and death situations: urgent crises in livelihoods, the shocks which affect the poor more than they afflict the affluent.

The intermediate causes of poverty are those factors which the poor commonly lack, their basic needs: absence of basic services, lack of skills, lack of employment opportunities and low productivity, et cetera. People who lack employment opportunities then decide to migrate from their countries or regions of origin to areas of perceived opportunities. Tourism development in rural areas can play a pivotal role in minimising the impact of poverty through job creation, skills development and economic growth. McCaston and Reward's (2005) last category of the causes of poverty is the underlying causes of poverty. Under this category they consider why people end up being victims of immediate and intermediate forces of poverty. They claim that the underlying causes of poverty relate to issues of rights, empowerment and identified status. The underlying causes can be indirectly addressed through community participation in rural economic activities such as tourism.

In South Africa, identifying mechanisms for dealing with rural poverty is not a straightforward task and should be informed by a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that have shaped and are shaping the South African rural areas (Delius & Schirmer, 2001:3). Turner (2005:3) makes a distinction between interventions of poverty reduction and poverty alleviation. Poverty reduction aims at the ending of the existence of poverty for a certain percentage of people and has been the goal of many development objectives around the world. It employs strategies and policies that reduce the number or percentage of people living in poverty.

Poverty alleviation aims at reducing the negative impact of poverty on the lives of the poor people but in a more sustained and permanent way than poverty reduction interventions. Rural areas need tourism development because it is a suitable mechanism for poor rural communities to achieve a sustainable reduction of the impact of poverty through entrepreneurial development, creation of employment and income generation. Mader (2010:1) maintains that poverty alleviation begins with the creation of employment. Tourism can be a useful tool to provide a major source of foreign exchange thereby contributing to the improvement of the livelihoods of poor people by fostering entrepreneurial activity in the informal sector especially in rural areas (Brown, 2010:57).

A link between tourism and poverty alleviation has been emphasised in contemporary tourism and poverty alleviation literature. Notably, some of the authors that emphasise this contention are Ashley (2002), Chachage (2003), Luvanga and Shitundu (2003), Roe, Ashley, Page and Meyer (2016), Udovc and Perpar (2007) and Bowel & Weinz (2008). This emphasis is presented in various forms. Some scholars use the term 'pro poor' tourism to mean tourism that supports poverty alleviation initiatives, allegedly targeting the poor. Mader (2010:1) argues that the "term pro poor tourism is problematic because it is unclear whether it refers to the tourism that exploits the poor or tourism that works towards the alleviation of poverty. She prefers the term 'poverty alleviation tourism' over 'pro poor' tourism. Kendle (2008:1) uses the term 'poverty tourism' or 'poorism' to mean the small tours taken when tourists arrive in a city and walk or drive through areas of extreme poverty (Townships tours in South Africa, Dharavi tours in India and Favela



tours in Brazil). The significance of this interchange of terms is that they all confirm that there is a relationship between tourism development and poverty alleviation.

The critical question is what more can be done to develop tourism in rural areas as a way of dispersing its benefits and discouraging rural exodus triggered by poverty? To this effect, Brown (2010:57) argues that tourism development in declining rural areas may halt a drift to the cities and provide new growth innovations in these areas. Rural producers must reduce their overreliance on agriculture and engage in new economic opportunities such as those that are more competitive in more globalised markets. Nevertheless, the positive impacts of tourism can reduce rural poverty and socio-economic problems associated with urbanisation. Viljoen and Tlabela (2006) share this view by arguing that rural tourism has the potential to contribute significantly towards the goals of sustainable development in the poorest regions. There is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to dealing with poverty but tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation and population stability through the creation of employment, economic growth and skills development.

The role of rural tourism in poverty alleviation can be more meaningful if the local communities participate in its development and management. Communities in rural areas like Bergville should be given the opportunity to participate and decide what kind of development they want. Where tourism development depends upon the involvement of the local people as part of the tourism product, it can be a real tool to solve major problems in rural areas. Specifically, through participation in the tourism industry, the rural communities can improve their livelihoods by sharing the benefits from the tourism industry. This, in turn, can discourage rural depopulation and encourage people to capitalise on rural assets for livelihoods (Isaac & van der Sterren, 2017:2).

Richards (2005:10) declares that cultural tourism is growing fast all over the world and tourists are beginning to forsake the vibrant holidays along the urban destination in search of knowledge about the diverse cultures in rural areas. This shift of focus provides an opportunity for rural communities to use their local assets to be involved in the industry. Community involvement would mean that the local people are part of the planning processes and beneficiaries when it comes to profits. Moreover, the involvement of local communities would make tourism an environmentally sustainable industry that involves people in conservation programmes. Community participation in rural tourism can work as a mechanism to help the rural people to cope with the impact of poverty.

Relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation

The vision set in the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa was to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner so that it would make a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of every South African. In this policy, it is clearly stated that tourism should be used to aid rural development (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2006:6).

The impact of poverty does not end at the individual level. It may have serious consequences for communities; Marshall (2005:2) cites the example of Trinidad and Tobago, which experienced a rebellion in 1970. The factors responsible for the rebellion were high unemployment and racial discrimination in the workplace. In 1990, the country faced similar threats, where a group of religious believers protested against high prices of foodstuffs, the unavailability of drugs and lack of assistance from the government. Socio-economic problems such as unemployment in developing countries are amongst the main causes of poverty, which threatens to erode the social fabric and bring governance into question. There is no 'one size fits' all when it comes to dealing



with poverty, but tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation, population stability and socio-economic progress.

People link the concept of poverty alleviation to peasants and rural dwellers, since 75% of the world's poor are rural populations, and mostly in developing countries. Previously, primary industries such as agriculture and fishing were the chief economic activities directed towards poverty reduction, but today technological advancement has minimised their role in poverty alleviation. The unfortunate truth is that the efforts of professionals to save the rural poor through approaches to soil fertility improvement, land reform and advanced technology have not achieved to a maximum level (Shen, Hughey & Simmons 2016:1). Rural tourism is one of the remaining options, especially because it is the second largest industry in the world after the oil industry (Chachage, 2003:3).

Poverty alleviation aims at reducing the negative impact of poverty on the lives of the poor people but in a more sustained and permanent way than poverty relief interventions (Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute, 2007:14). These kinds of interventions seek to turn things around. Development programmes in rural areas, for example, can be used as mechanisms for poverty alleviation. The main problem in most of the developing countries is unemployment in rural areas, leading to rural depopulation and transfer of poverty from rural to urban areas. Unemployment in rural areas results from the fact that the countryside is no longer dominated by self-sufficient and primarily agricultural households which produce enough of what the community needs and send the surplus to markets and make profits. In other words, farming alone as an economic activity can no longer provide livelihood for the rural communities (Hagblade, Hazel & Readon, 2002:4).

There is enormous scope for the tourism industry to make a bigger contribution to poverty alleviation in the world's poor countries. Poverty alleviation involves growth with substantial re-orientation in favour of the poor. It includes changes in institutions, laws, regulations and practices that help create and perpetuate poverty. It includes targeted interventions to enable the poor people to better integrate economic processes. It means ending harassment of the poor and eliminating restrictions on how they make their livelihoods (Bowell & Weinz, 2008:1). South Africa is an example of a country that used its Poverty Alleviation Fund (through the National Department of Environmental Affairs) to provide support to the Khoi-San village tourism project in the Eastern Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal the Hotsprings Project, Isithumba Adventure Tourism Project, and Siyabonga Craft Centre were also provided with the support of the Department of Environmental Affairs (Viljoen & Tlabela, 2006:8). There is a need for collaboration between the tourism industry and local governments as Rogerson (2006:2) argues that local governments must understand the value of tourism before they think of using it for local economic development.

Although poverty alleviation is not usually at the heart of the tourism agenda it is significant in many countries and is already having a positive effect on the livelihoods of millions of the poor people. Tourism is a possible strategy for poverty alleviation since its development must explicitly take into account the concerns and needs of the poor. Tourism which supports sustainable livelihoods and aims to minimise the negative effects for local people has been referred to as complying the principles of 'fair trade' in tourism (Ashley in Scheyvens, 2001: 18). Tourism has been increasingly used for rural poverty alleviation in many developing countries.

There is evidence that tourism is a sector strong enough to help the poor in the developing world to reduce the impact of poverty through the injection of foreign currency that it provides. In 2008, 924 million tourists travelled to other countries. This is a very large number of people, amounting to over 50 000 people every half hour. It is remarkable that about 40% of these journeys ended in developing country destinations. In 2007, tourists spent US\$ 295 billion in developing countries. It is for this reason that tourism has been described as the world's largest voluntary transfer of



resources from the rich to the poor. In spite of the fact that up to 85% of the supposed benefits of tourism leak out of the developing countries due to the power of international tour operators, foreign ownership, and high import propensity, tourism still contributes to poverty alleviation (Mitchell & Ashley, 2009: 6). It already accounts for 9% of all exports on the African continent, which is more than all agricultural products. Furthermore, recent calculations have shown that every twentieth employee in the world has a job that is related to the tourism industry (Grossiertsch & Scheller, 2005:3).

Tourism is a very complex and multidimensional phenomenon that produces numerous positive economic and non-economic effects in the respective tourist destinations. The positive effects of tourism can be appropriately regarded as a means of alleviating poverty because they heighten positive social and economic forces within the society. Some scholars have even referred to tourism as a North/South industry in that tourists are predominantly rich northern hemisphere citizens visiting poor southern hemisphere countries in an unequal exchange (Peak, 2008:2). This makes tourism more beneficial for the economy of the developing countries. Global tourist arrivals in poor countries create a flow of foreign currency into an economy and therefore indirectly contribute to business development, household incomes and employment. There are also hidden benefits from tourists known as multiplier effects.

With most prime tourist attractions being located in the countryside, tourism allows rural people to share the benefits of tourism development, providing them with an alternative to rural-urban migration and enfranchising rural human resources by enabling people to maintain their rural households and families. In many countries with high levels of poverty, receipts from tourism are a considerable proportion of the GDP and export earnings. The significance of tourism receipts is that they maximise the potential of the industry to contribute to poverty alleviation through rural development programmes (Blake, Arbache, Sinclair & Teles, 2006:2).

A shift from one source of employment to multiple sources is necessary if rural people are to emerge from the poverty trap. In addition to creation of jobs and revenue, rural tourism often increases occupational opportunities in the community, one of which is pluriactivity. Pluriactivity is a term used to mean that an individual or family does more than one type of job as a source of income. Tourism enables farmers to offer bed and breakfast accommodation, change some of the farm buildings into a wedding venue facility, start small craft businesses on the premises or open a small shopping outlet for visitors and community to buy perishables and daily needs such as bread and milk. All these activities can contribute to development of the rural area (Organisation of Economic Co-operation & Development, 1994:25).

Sometimes the influx of tourists results in new recreational opportunities and improvements for rural communities. It can stimulate new development demands in the rural areas. Perhaps the most attractive thing about developing tourism in a rural community is that the leaders and residents of the community can foster pride and establish responsibility for the process of rural development (Lewis, 1998:2). Since most of the rural tourists come from large cities and developed countries, their frequent visits to rural destinations can result in rural development and environmental improvements such as village paving, traffic regulation and sewage and litter disposal funded by tourism revenues. All these can assist in rural development and creation of ownership of place, retention of the existing rural population and sustenance of the existing local economic activities. Rural tourism can create new jobs, slow down rural-urban migration and help to maintain the local level of services (Komppula, 2007:124).

There is a strong concern that some of the expenditure by tourists is spent on imports or is earned by foreign workers and businesses. Blake et al. (2006:2) estimate that between 55% and 75% of tourism spending leaks back to the developed world. Tourism can change this situation so that



poor households derive a better economic benefit from participating in the industry. Tourism can have favourable economic effects in rural communities. This can include large-scale retention of revenue within the host community and inclusion of the local inhabitants and products. In this way the host community can gain more income which can be used for poverty alleviation. Sometimes it is difficult to totally avoid the transfer of funds because most of the tourist industry is highly dependent on goods from large cities and foreign countries. It is, however, possible to avoid a gross transfer of revenue from rural destinations to foreign countries by ensuring that most of the tourist industries in the country are dependent on goods from both local and outside sources in a balanced manner. It is possible for the rural poor to receive more direct economic benefits from tourism while bearing lower costs.

Since poverty alleviation is one of the main challenges for rural areas, tourism remains an advantageous activity for the development of rural economies. There are two critical areas of tourism which are directly linked to rural poverty. Firstly, tourism comes with labour-intensive and small-scale opportunities. In this way it can employ a higher proportion of people compared to other sectors. It also values natural resources and cultural heritage, which are assets that normally belong to the poor (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003: 9). They represent assets for local communities in that they provide an intellectual springboard for development of goods and services, crafts, local foods, music, dance, storytelling and guiding services which are sought by holidaymakers. This wealth of resources can provide additional supplementary livelihoods and help the vulnerable poor populations to avoid dangers related to dependency (Goodwin 2008:60).

Luvanga and Shitundu (2003: 12) argue that tourism offers higher employment than other sectors and that tourism wages compare well with those in agriculture, especially when compared to subsistence farming. The ability of tourism to provide immediate employment and to diversify the rural business makes it a more effective solution to the problem of poverty. Tourism offers an important opportunity to diversify the rural economy. It is a tree that grows and flowers anywhere as long as there are unique natural or cultural attractions. Marshall (2005: 1) holds that one way of fighting poverty is through the creation of micro-entrepreneurs because it allows individuals to learn to manage resources and acquaint themselves with the necessary skills to develop and explore other business opportunities. Tourism can develop in poor and marginalised localities with fewer or no options for export and diversification. Remote rural areas can attract visitors because of their originality, cultural uniqueness, flora and fauna as well as their extraordinary landscapes (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003: 9). In this way tourism can introduce the rural poor to micro-business opportunities.

The benefits of tourism in a rural area begin when a foreign tourist steps off the bus in the countryside. The moment the tourist has a meal, the destination concerned is exporting due to the use of foreign exchange to purchase the local currency needed for payment. This means that exporting becomes possible everywhere in a country, including remote rural areas with few economic opportunities. In this way the growing significance of tourism in rural areas is closely related to the role of job creation in promoting the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015 (Honeck, 2008:9).

Goodwin (2008:60) contends that main advantage of tourism in poor countries is that the holidaymaker pays the cost of their movement to the destination. The producer does not have to pay for sending goods to the market because the end consumer, the tourist, travels to the factory, the destination, to consume the product. In areas where there are already sufficient numbers of tourists to provide a viable market, the poor should insist that initiatives must benefit the local communities. Theoretically a bed and breakfast accommodation is more beneficial than a candle factory. Whilst both create employment, tourism is more labour intensive. The bed and breakfast accommodation attracts consumers who will stay in the accommodation and are available as



potential consumers to the local community if they can produce goods and services that can be purchased by the holidaymakers.

The role of tourism development for poverty alleviation can be stronger if possible constraints can be avoided prior to the commencement of the programme (Schellhorn, 2007:2). Tourism comes with demands on infrastructure to improve the access both of the service providers to goods and services and of visitors to destinations. In this way infrastructure is a means towards the reduction of poverty. Although the provision of infrastructure alone cannot alleviate poverty, it has a potential impact on it depending on how it is provided. If the resources or assets that rural communities have, such as physical capital, institutional assets and technical assets, are grouped together so as to give the community ownership of the facilities, the impact of infrastructure development on poverty alleviation will be maximised. Decentralisation of infrastructure development to local municipalities presents people with an excellent opportunity to rely on local resources in an effort to attack poverty.

Luvanga and Shitundu (2003:10) argue that tourism is an important industry in many developing nations because it provides foreign exchange, employment, incomes, and public revenue. It is a growing sector which is one of the top five sources of foreign currency for 83% of the developing countries. The involvement of people in local resource-based infrastructure projects promotes community works and creates a significant number of jobs, both short-term and long-term. It can ensure that public funds are invested within the rural communities rather than being spent on imported skills and assets. Tourism can help to create jobs and alleviate poverty while developing good quality infrastructure. The infrastructure implemented should be sustained, thus ensuring not only short-term employment benefits but also long-term potential for the improvement of access, sustainable employment opportunities, skills development, and hence poverty alleviation. Well designed tourism development programmes can generate positive advantages including the provision of additional employment and income through local facilities and services used to operate tour programmes (Rogerson, 2006:2).

Research design and methodology

The study used more than one approach for gathering data which Hales (2010:8) calls methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation was applied during the administration and the collection of the questionnaires. The fieldworkers used two methods for administering the questionnaires. For the general public and the business sector the field workers went to the residential areas, local public centres, business centres and educational institutions and administered the questionnaires. The fieldworkers collected the questionnaires on the spot after they were completed. The questionnaire for the local municipality employees was delivered to the respondents who then faxed the completed questionnaire to the researcher. The study used more than one group of respondents for collecting data which Hales (2010:8) refers to as data triangulation. The study applied the data triangulation method by identifying more than one group of the respondents. Although the data was generally collected from the respondents of Bergville, the study categorised the respondents into three groups for purposes of data collection which includes the general public, the local business owners and the local municipality employees. The identification of the three groups of respondents resulted in the construction of three questionnaires, that is, the questionnaire for the general public, the questionnaire for the local business owners and the questionnaire for the local municipality employees.



Sampling procedure

The first question by Finn & Elliot - White (2000) is on the size of the sample. It was impracticable to survey the whole population of Bergville because of budget and time constraints which prevented the study from surveying the entire population. To ensure that the collected data covered all the research questions, the study selected a sample size. This was a decision-making process in which the study had to choose a sampling method that allowed him to arrive at the sample size that suits the study at hand (Sontakki, 2006:13). The choice of the sample size was informed by two facts, namely, the confidence that the study wanted to have in the data collected and the importance of minimising the margin of error. The study used the following formula by Long (2007:37) to arrive at the sample size.

$$N_a = n \times 100$$

$$re\%$$

Where N_a is actual sample size required

n is the minimum sample size

$re\%$ is estimated response rate expressed as %

The sample size for the study was 330 but the study distributed 400 questionnaires for the general public (200 English versions and 200 IsiZulu versions), 20 questionnaires for the local business people and 20 questionnaires for the local municipality employees. The sample size was based on the estimated population size of Bergville and was deemed to be adequate for the purpose of collecting information required to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. The second question by Finn and Elliot - White (2000) is on the sampling method. Having arrived at the sample size of 330 respondents, the study had to decide on the best sampling method for the research. There are two sampling methods, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Salkind, 2000:87). In probability sampling, every element of the population has a known, non-zero probability of selection. In non-probability sampling, elements from a population are selected non-randomly. This non-random nature of selection is done where the population elements are selected on the basis of convenience (Mc Daniels & Gates, 2001:333). Non-probability sampling method also referred to as convenience or availability sampling was the most applicable methods for the study. Convenience sampling is sampling which involves selecting sample elements that are most readily available to participate in the study and that can provide the required information (Bhattacharyya, 2003:91). The study identified the research participants on the basis of the convenience sampling. The fieldworkers used two approaches to reach the respondents for data collection. The first one was the door-to-door approach whereby they visited households and administered the questionnaires. The second method was the use of different schools whereby learners were briefed on the questionnaire after which it was given to them (learners) to take home to their family members to complete and return it the following day. For business owners the field workers personally delivered and administered the questionnaires.

Data analysis

In the data analysis the study arranged the raw data obtained from the respondents in three questionnaires and organised it in order to extract useful information from it. Data from the questionnaires was coded and entered into the Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS



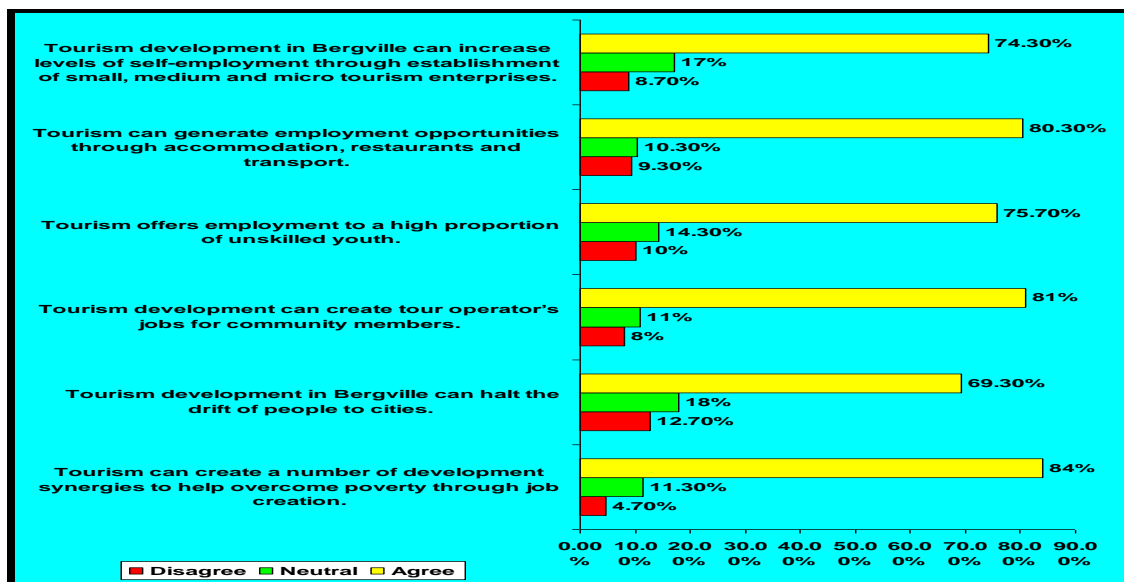
v.15.0 for analysis. This programme is available at the University of Zululand. The analysis of the data provided insight into various issues that relate to the objectives of the study. The study converted the raw data into a form suitable for analysis before it was subjected to statistical analysis. A series of univariate data presented in percentages, frequencies, tables and graphs to give an understanding of the data that is purely descriptive. Qualitative data was analysed separately by grouping and matching it with the research question. The analysis of the data is discussed and incorporated in detail in chapter seven of this study.

Findings and discussions

The main objective of the study was to establish the extent to which rural tourism development can contribute positively to job opportunities and entrepreneurial skills development in the Bergville area. Thus, the study revealed that tourism has a great potential to create Jobs within Bergville. The respondents were given statements on the role of tourism in job creation and poverty alleviation. They were requested to state whether they agreed with it or not. They were provided space to indicate if they were not sure. From the discussion and interpretation of objective one, it is clear that the majority of the respondents believe that Bergville has resources that can support the development of tourism. In line with this pessimism, the findings reveal that the majority of the respondents agree that tourism development in Bergville can create job opportunities and contribute towards poverty alleviation in different ways. The majority of the respondents agree that tourism development in Bergville can create a development synergies to help overcome poverty through job creation, create tour operator's jobs for the community members, offer employment to a high proportion of unskilled youth in Bergville, generate employment opportunities through accommodation, restaurants and transport industries, increase the levels of self-employment and halt the drift of people to cities.

Figure 1 below shows an overwhelming majority of the respondents agree that tourism development can contribute to job creation. The percentage of respondents who disagree is less than 30% for each statement. The figure also shows that some of the respondents, a small minority, remain neutral about the statements.

Figure 1. Job creation





(i) Creation of development synergies

When the respondents were asked to agree or disagree to a that tourism can create a number of development synergies to help overcome poverty through job creation, an overwhelming majority of 84% agrees. Less than 10% disagrees and 11.3% remain neutral as shown in figure 7.4 above. This means that respondents believe that tourism development can create the potential for additional jobs or the multiplication thereof. Page (2003:2) defines tourism as an activity of persons travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure. This implies that there is a relationship between tourism and accommodation. Tourism development in Bergville can boost the accommodation industry making it possible for it to create new demands for foodstuffs, furniture, transport, textile products, beverages, entertainment, security, telecommunications, sanitation services and other related industries. In this way tourism can become a centre of synergy for the creation of jobs and wealth for Bergville. It can be a source of local revenue, decent employment and poverty alleviation.

(ii) Creation of tour operators jobs.

Keyser (2009:215) argues that tour operators purchase the components of the tourism package and brand them into tour packages. When the respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree that tourism development can create tour operator's jobs for the community members, the majority (81%) agrees with the statement and only 8% disagrees. A total of 11% remains neutral about the statement This is summarised in figure 7.4 above. Tourism development is not an event but it is a process. During the process of successful tourism development in Bergville tour operators can be attracted into the area. This can afford the local communities an opportunity to participate in the in the tour operating industry either as partners or employees. The best type of tour operator system suitable for Bergville is the domestic tour operation because it starts locally and is driven locally and can benefit local people (Keyser, 2009).

Domestic operators can create jobs for the local people because their operation entails the development of packages for tourists who want to travel within the region. Tourism development can assist potential local business operators to get into the domestic tour operating industry. The tour operator's practice has a good potential to create employment opportunities especially for the youth and women. It can also create jobs for the unemployed drivers thus moving them out of poverty.

(iii) Youth employment

Juma (2007: 1) states that 35% of the world unemployed is the youth according to the recent estimates. When asked whether they agree or disagree that tourism development can offer employment to a high proportion of unskilled youth in Bergville, the majority of the respondents (75.7%) agree. Those who disagree are only 10.3% and the neutral respondents formed 14.3%. This supports the fact that rural tourism development in Bergville can contribute to the employment of the youth in a number of ways. Once successful tourism development takes off in Bergville, it can lead to the establishment of hotels and lodges in rural areas closer to the national parks, heritage sites, natural attractions and recreation areas. These can be used to train and employ the local youth in the tourism industry. The on-job training of unemployed youth in the tourism occupations such as management, cleaning, tour guiding et cetera can provide them with skills that would enhance their job readiness in tourism and other related industries. The tourism industry can also influence post-secondary schools to offer tourism related subjects such as hospitality studies, tourism and consumer studies in their curriculum packages. The tourism industry can offer bursaries to learners so that they can pursue tourism related careers for employment in the local tourism industry. Another way in which the tourism industry can contribute



to youth employment in Bergville can be the conversion of the unemployed graduates into tourism practitioners by opening training centres for them to take job specific training and form a pool of available employees for the local tourism industry.

(iv) Employment in accommodation, hospitality and transportation industries

The development of tourism can create job opportunities through the establishment of tourists' facilities such as camps, lodges, and bed and breakfast accommodation (Mbaiwa, 2003:452). The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that tourism development can generate employment opportunities through accommodation, restaurants and transport in Bergville. The findings reveals that the majority (80.3%) agrees with the statement and only 8.7% disagrees as summarised in figure 1 above.

This supports the fact that tourism development can offer permanent and seasonal jobs some of which are good for supplementary income for the retired people and those who are affected by work transitions (Marcouiller, 2007:280). Although most of the earnings from pro-poor tourism go to skilled people, tourism development can open up some opportunities for the unskilled and marginalised groups (Ashley & Roe, 2002:63). It is true that seasonal part-time tourism jobs cannot be a permanent solution to the problems of rural-urban migration and poverty. On the other hand, part time tourism related jobs can provide temporal survival to the local people. As mentioned earlier, some of the young people can obtain portable skills from the industry that they can use to find employment elsewhere.

(v) Self-employment

When asked to state whether they agree or disagree that tourism development can increase the levels of self-employment in Bergville. The high proportion of the respondents (74.3%) agrees and 8.7% disagrees. Rural tourism is a virgin industry and as such it is an industry that can offer many opportunities for self-employment. It can help individuals and groups to start their own businesses. Unemployment is both a problem and a disadvantage especially in rural areas like Bergville where employment opportunities are scarce (Okhahlamba Local Municipality, 2010:22). The unemployed people of Bergville can benefit from the tourism industry not only by looking for employment but through self-employment. This is in line with the disadvantage Theory which is based on the argument that a disadvantage such as unemployment encourages unemployed people to be self-employed (Mohanty 2005:39). To help the unemployed people in Bergville, the tourism sector can initiate them into the tourism business activities such as art and craft business. The tourism sector can provide them with assistance to start their businesses as groups or as individuals.

Bergville can create self-employed groups and individuals through a combination of tourism development and the enterprise facilitation model proposed by Sirolli (2003:10). According to Sirolli (2003), the enterprise facilitation model can be a successful development model in remote rural areas. Through tourism development Bergville can use the enterprise facilitation model to help local people to become self-employed through mentoring. This would entail the services of the enterprise facilitator to work with the community structures and provide them with free business skills linked to the tourism industry. Once these groups or individuals are ready, they can start their tourism related business and work as self-employed.



(vi) Halting rural depopulation

One of the coping strategies for the rural unemployed is migration to cities in anticipation of job opportunities and better standards of living. The respondents were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that tourism development can halt the drift of people to cities. The majority (69.3%) agrees and 12.7% disagrees as summarised in figure 1 above. The majority of respondents agree that tourism development can help to halt rural-urban migration. Tourism development has the potential to provide a variety of job opportunities for the Bergville community. These can include jobs in travel agencies, tour guiding, transport, arts and crafts and other industries as mentioned earlier in this discussion.

Whilst an overwhelming majority of the respondents agree that tourism development in Bergville can slow down the rate of rural depopulation, tourism development practitioners in Bergville must not ignore two critical issues mentioned by Abadjieva (2008:10). The first issue that creates rural depopulation is the problem of long-term unemployment where it takes too long for the rural unemployed to get jobs. The second issue is that rural entrepreneurs struggle to find qualified people for their businesses.

The development of tourism can change the problem of long-term unemployment by creating immediate jobs especially in the small and medium sized operations. Tourism development in Bergville can create small-scale industries which can provide a substantial scope for increasing employment because of their labour intensive nature, and a lesser gestation period (Desai, 2006:180). Besides increasing the income potential for the rural dwellers in Bergville, tourism development can also diversify the local economy and enhance employment opportunities in the small scale locally owned tourism related industries (Brown, 2010:2). The creation of small and medium sized businesses through tourism development can bring about new recruitment methods that suit the unskilled workers who find it difficult to get employment in large formal industries. Large industries require technical and academic specialization. The development of small tourism businesses in Bergville can result in the long-term employment of more local people because small businesses rarely export jobs by relocating their business operations to other regions (Beaver, 2002)

(b) Entrepreneurial skills development

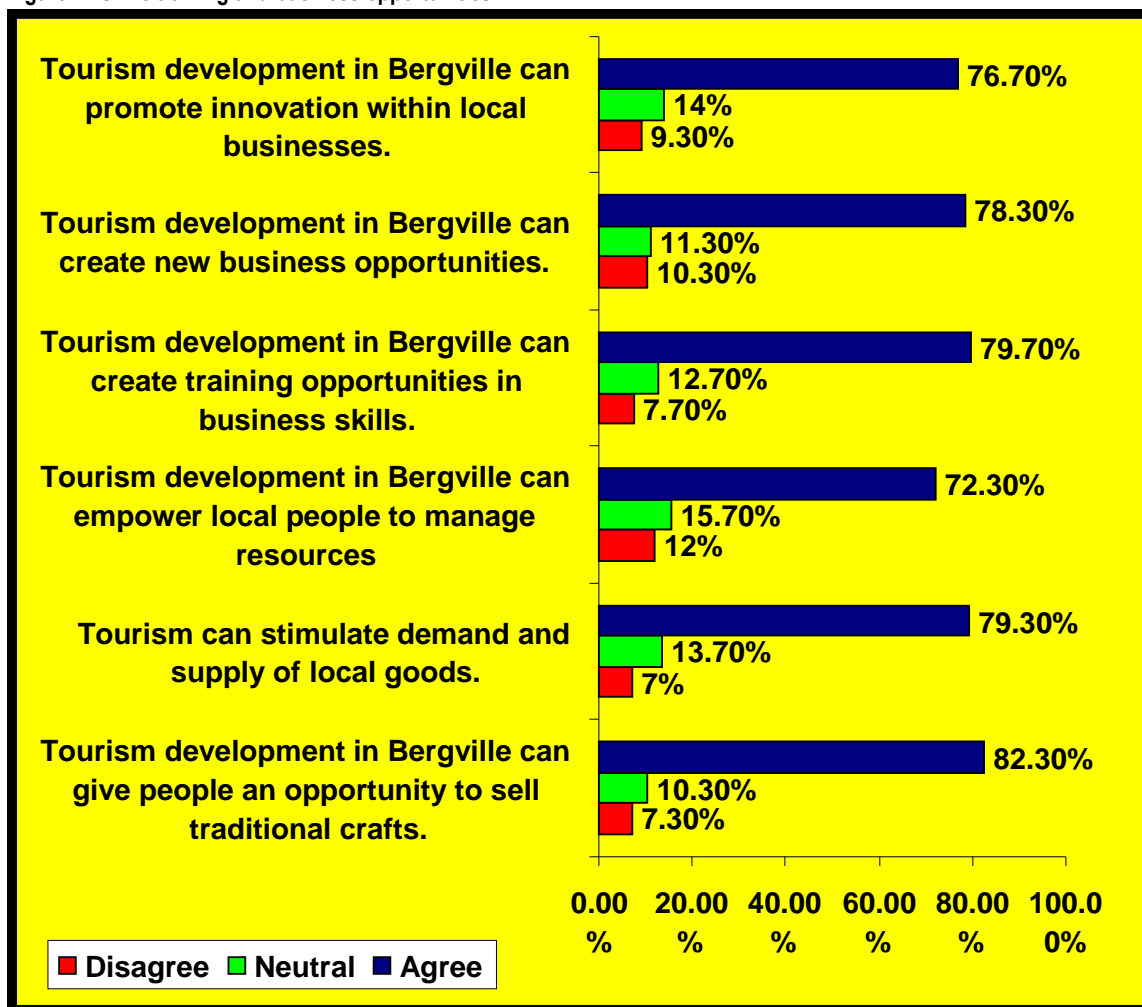
Entrepreneurial skills are an important aspect of development. The respondents were given eleven statements relating to entrepreneurship. They were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The following discussion and illustration report on the findings.

The findings of the study show that the majority of the respondents agree that tourism development can create opportunities for entrepreneurial skills development. The respondents agree that tourism development can create opportunities for entrepreneurship through the involvement of local people in the craft business, street vending et cetera. The respondents also agree that entrepreneurship can be further promoted by the demand of local goods, business innovation, the creation of business opportunities, the introduction of new products as well as the ownership of businesses. More than 60% of the respondents agree that tourism development can stimulate the demand for the local goods, empower the local people to manage resources, create the training opportunities in business skills, create new business opportunities, promote innovation within local businesses and give people the opportunity to sell traditional crafts.

Figure 2 below, shows that more than 70% of the respondents agree that there is the potential for Bergville to achieve the abovementioned benefits of rural tourism. The percentage of the

respondents who disagree is minimal ranging between 7% and 9%. The same applies to the neutral respondents who are less than 15% in all the given statements.

Figure 2. Skills training and business opportunities



(i) The craft business

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that tourism development in Bergville can give people the opportunity to sell traditional crafts. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents (82.3%) agrees with the statement and only 7.3% disagrees. A minority of 10.3% is neutral on the statement as shown in figure 2 (above). This implies that the majority of the respondents agree that tourism development can create new entrepreneurs in the craft business.

Tourism in Bergville can create new small business operators in the craft market. It can create a motivating environment for entrepreneurship in the craft market as Saxena (2005:23) cites the influence of the overall environment as one of the motivating factors for people to become entrepreneurs. The inflow of tourists and the demand for local traditional artwork and crafts in Bergville can favour development of new entrepreneurs in the craft business. Besides the influence of the prevailing tourism environment, other environmental factors can influence people



in Bergville towards entrepreneurship in the crafts industry. These are factors such as the demand for the destination and availability of raw materials for the craftwork.

Tourism development in Bergville can bring about the growth of the existing small craft shops. The success of the small operators can motivate the other local people to make and sell traditional craftwork. The success of others in business can have an inspirational effect on the potential entrepreneurs". Saxena (2005:128) points out that the demonstration effect of successful entrepreneurs can result in the emergence of new operators. The motivation of local people to sell traditional crafts can solve the problem of unemployment and re-direct the attention of potential rural-urban migrants towards the utilization of local resources. In this way tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation in Bergville.

(ii) Stimulation of demand for local goods

The majority (79.3%) of the respondents agree that tourism can stimulate the demand for local goods in Bergville. A small total of 7% disagrees and 13.7% is neutral. Figure 2 summarizes this. If tourism development can be successful and Bergville being well marketed as a destination, the demand for local goods can be stimulated. Tourism development can change the consumption patterns within Bergville and introduce new consumers to local goods especially during the peak seasons. Farmers can start selling directly to visitors from stands. Tourism can create new markets for local products especially in the craft market as travelers would enjoy the pleasure of visiting crafts markets. Successful tourism development in Bergville can result in the emergence of new local markets occupied by small stalls that sell vegetables, fruits, crafts, work of art and farm produce supported and encouraged by the flooding of tourists. The tourists may demand products that are not available in the local market thus fostering the introduction of new products in the local markets and even the emergence of new entrepreneurs.

(iii) People empowerment and competitive advantage

Besides creating new entrepreneurs, the demand for local goods has the potential of creating new jobs for the local communities thus changing the focus of the youth from the city-centered opportunities to locally based prospects. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree that tourism development in Bergville can empower local people to manage resources. An overwhelming majority of 72.3% agrees. Less than 15% disagrees and 15.7% are neutral. The creation of the demand for the local goods can compel the service providers to hire more people to meet the supply needs of the local goods. This situation can empower employees with skills that they can use to start their own tourism related operations in the management, marketing and administration fields. In this way tourism development would be an agent of empowerment and development as well as a solutions to the problem of poverty.

The majority of respondents agree that tourism development in Bergville can lead to the empowerment of the local communities which indicates that tourism development does not only provide employment but it can empower the local people to utilize resources competitively. The fact that tourists have certain expectation means that local people must possess certain skills to meet the expectations of the tourists. This capacity to meet the expectations of the tourists is one of the factors that determine the demand for the destination and its products. For this reason, successful rural tourism development in Bergville can create opportunities for training and development which can empower the local communities with skills. Tourism development can change Bergville into an area of training and development can empower the local communities with relevant skills to achieve their livelihood outcomes. Capacity building can be achieved in areas such as gender awareness, customer care, communication skills et cetera. The empowerment of the community has the potential of growing the economy of Bergville because it



can obliterate the need for local businesses to import skills from other areas. As the local people become empowered, they become less vulnerable because they possess skills, which give them access to business opportunities and markets. The empowerment of the community can also improve their income levels, their health status, access to education and information thus rendering them less vulnerable to poverty. This can make tourism a generator of employment and additional earnings for the community.

If Bergville were to engage in tourism development, it would need to have a competitive advantage. The competitive advantage does not only depend on the natural beauty. It also depends on the man-made variables such as technology, information and innovation. It is not only the stock of natural resources that guarantees the success of the destination in attracting visitors, but rather, it is how resources are managed and the extent to which they are blended with the available natural resources.

The extent to which the expectations of the tourists are met can determine the attractiveness and survival of Bergville as a tourist destination. By responding to the demands and expectations of the incoming tourists, the community of Bergville can survive the competition between itself and other destinations in the region. This makes skills development in tourism a very critical variable for two main reasons. Firstly, tourism is a very competitive industry that demands very high levels of service and innovative professionalism from the employees. Secondly, tourism requires a sufficiently skilled workforce to occupy and benefits from the job opportunities it presents (Mathew, 2009:86). The level of uniqueness and professionalism offered are key variables that determine the success or failure in attracting a growing market share. Successful tourism development in Bergville has the potential of equipping local people with business skills demanded by the industry. These are skills such as technological literacy, managerial skills, information management, risk management, people management, financial management, planning, organising and leadership.

(iv) New business opportunities and innovation

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed that tourism development in Bergville can promote innovation within local businesses, an overwhelming majority (76.7%) of the participants agrees. A slim minority (9.3%) disagrees and the rest (14%) are neutral as illustrated in figure 2. The development of tourism can usher in a new business environment in the area. It can introduce a new relationship between tourism as an economic activity and the environment within which it operates. The most critical effect of tourism development can be new demands from visitors as they require goods and services which are not available in Bergville. In other words, tourists can become new consumers with new demands which can bring about a new challenge in the production, provision and consumption of goods and services in the area. The importance of innovation is confirmed by the fact that the majority of respondents, 78.3%, agrees that tourism development in Bergville can create new business opportunities. Less than a third (10.3%) disagrees. The rest (11.3%) were neutral on this statement as shown in figure 2. The emergence of new business opportunities from the tourism industry is in line with Schumpeter's theory of innovation as explained in Mohanty (2005:39). Schumpeter regards entrepreneurs as people who perceive the opportunity to carry out new business combinations. Schumpeter views innovation as the introduction of new goods, new methods of production, new markets and new sources of supply, and raw materials as well as new organisational strategies.

An overwhelming majority (76.7%) of the participants agrees that Bergville has the potential for business innovation. Successful tourism development can encourage local people to take part in economic activities and develop new ways of doing business. The process of tourism development is likely to go hand in hand with the process of creativity, which is a pre-requisite to



innovation. Local business people can bring new products into the market (Holt, 2002:32). The process of innovation can create new processes for the production of the goods. As this happens, more jobs can be created and poverty alleviation becomes a possibility in Bergville and rural-urban migration may gradually become history.

Conclusions

The study concludes that tourism development could be a centre of synergy for job creation. It can create population stability, propel industrial growth, create operator's jobs, facilitate youth employment, create jobs in the service industry, create self-employed people and alleviate poverty. The study also showed that tourism development can increase the participation of the local communities in the economy. It can increase the percentage of economically active people in Bergville, create demand for local transport, improve labour utilisation especially women, create small business operators and attract new businesses. Rural tourism has the potential to contribute positively to job opportunities, entrepreneurial skills development and increased income generation in the host communities. The majority of the world's poor live in rural areas. Their main coping strategy is migration to the cities. This is not a panacea for poverty alleviation since it only redefines rural poverty as urban poverty. Tourism is a strong sector capable enough to help the rural poor to reduce the impact of poverty through job creation, increased income generation, and entrepreneurial skills development. Rural tourism development can shift the rural communities from one source of employment to multiple sources of employment and create population stability.

In addition, the study concludes that Bergville has the potential for tourism development, which can lead to the creation of employment opportunities. The study further concludes that tourism development in Bergville can be a centre of synergy job creation, generation of local revenue and employment for the unemployed youth and women. The creation of employment and the generation of local revenue is likely to alleviate poverty and create population stability. The study further concludes that tourism development in Bergville can increase the opportunities for local people to participate in the local economy. There are opportunities for increasing the number of economically active people through tourism development. Tourism development in Bergville can contribute to the stimulation of demand for local goods and services thus providing a variety of ways in which labour can be utilised especially women and the youth. The demands for local goods and services in Bergville can result in the emergence of small business operators with a great potential to create immediate and permanent employment for people. The creation of employment by both formal and informal businesses can help to alleviate poverty in Bergville by creating new wage earners.

Recommendations

For tourism to contribute towards job opportunities, entrepreneurial skills and income generation, it is recommended that the local municipality strengthen partnerships with the local business sector stakeholders and policy makers to ensure a faster tourism development process.

Mindful of the fact that Kwa-Zulu Natal province is predominantly rich in tourism the study recommends the need for investing in rural development aligned to the principles of sustainability and responsible tourism as a mechanism to fight the 'War on Poverty'. This proposal may not be panacea to the overall rural tourism development constraints but concerted efforts to curtail challenges of meaningful and output related partnerships between the government, industry and



communities. The inadequate articulation of the opportunities and policy imperatives including incentives and regulations presents a short changed approach within the means of improving the lives of the people in the tourism value chain.

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