

Community Based Tourism in Twyfelfontein Conservancy: Exploring Local Community's Involvement

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Local communities in Namibia have few options for alternative income, apart from selling souvenirs and livestock farming. The overall aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between tourism as a modern economic activity and the plight of indigenous people venturing into Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTs). The study examined actors, structures and institutions within the context of community involvement in CBTs and made use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The purpose of using a qualitative approach was to get an in-depth understanding of the social and psychological phenomena that could lead to the formation of certain perceptions towards community based tourism (CBT) at Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy. On the other hand, the quantitative approach sought to use numerical measurements and statistical analysis to examine social phenomena data obtained through the use of questionnaires. Sample population comprised 58 community members and 9 stakeholders made up of government, private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations. It is apparent from the study that issues of governance and ownership of commercial activities are still beyond reach of the community members. CBT partnerships have been pursued for economic purposes than for sustainable development. Whilst the conservancies were set up as a strategy for poverty alleviation the study observes that development has not yet filtered down to the needy. Local participation through ownership, capacity building and control should have precedence above pure economic issues. The study further recommends that the CBRM program as a dominant development model should recognize the need for capacity building, shared values and desires of the potential beneficiaries.

KEYWORDS: *Sustainable development, community based tourism, poverty alleviation, local participation, tour operators.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The constitution of the Republic of Namibia stipulates, in article 95 (1), the importance of promotion and maintenance of the welfare of the people of Namibia through sustainable utilization of natural resources for the benefit of all Namibians (Namibian Constitution, 2002:36).

As a result, tourism has been developed so that sustainable utilization of natural resources can benefit the rural communities in Namibia. These communities have been involved in the development of community based tourism projects in their regions for over 10 years since the policy on community-based tourism was established in 1995 (NACSO, 2006). However, the Ministry of Environment

and Tourism recognizes the inequalities that exist in the tourism industry hence the introduction of Community Based Tourism Programs. This paper provides the background of the study, the literature review, methodology and the findings. The last part of the paper discusses and contributes towards sustainable development.

Background to the Study

One of the most prolific and progressive conservancy is the Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy, which is situated 90km west of Khorixas in the Kunene Region. The Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy was registered in 1999 and the constituency is in the north-western part of Namibia. The conservancy has a total population of 280 Damara inhabitant homesteads. The main tourist attraction in the Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy area is the rock engraving site. The site gained international prominence in 2007 as Namibia's first World Heritage Site (NHC, 2007:3).

The Twyfelfontein rock engraving site has the largest single concentration of rock engravings in Southern Africa (Kinahan, 2005:8). It has generated a significant tourist arrival growth to the region over the past 10 years. A total of 50 000 visitors visited Twyfelfontein in 2007 (NHC, 2007:12). A number of benefits accrue to the local community at Twyfelfontein. Locals are employed at the World Heritage Site as local tour guides, while some are absorbed by the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge in various occupations. An income sharing agreement was entered between the National Heritage Council of Namibia (a statutory body of the Namibian government responsible for the management of Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site) and the tour guides association of Twyfelfontein. It allows for 35 % of revenues received from entrance fee to be shared among the tour guides as remuneration for the services provided (NHC, 2007:16).

In addition, a joint venture agreement between the community and the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge provides additional income and employment in a variety of areas. The distribution and management of the financial resources derived from tourism joint ventures lie with the conservancy committee members. This arrangement has resulted in lack of transparency and involvement of the community at large. The community members lack the capacity to understand issues related to tourism.

While it is acknowledged that the locals are involved in community based tourism (CBT), the current management approaches do not encourage entrepreneurship.

Considering the geographical isolation of this CBT from the mainstream tourism and the perceptions of inferiority in the quality of CBT products, community benefits are marginal. This is exacerbated by lack of marketing of CBT products. To realize the potential to increase community benefits requires aggressive marketing. However, the local communities are incapacitated due to lack of resources for both marketing and product development. Even though NGOs and other partnership organizations have helped in financing community projects at Twyfelfontein, community dynamics tend to hamper progress. Apart from developing and implementing CBT projects, the local community faces a plethora of challenges. Some of the most noticeable challenges include the remoteness of CBT projects. Whilst the local community can readily showcase unique cultural handicraft and other artifacts, all these products require capitalization. Even though the community can use their land as collateral for borrowing money from banks, this may pose a high risk to this public resource. Therefore, this lack of collateral has become a big challenge to investors to manage tourism expectation and local community perceptions.

The existing literature on community based tourism development in Namibia has focused on the perceptions of government, NGO's, business investors, donors and tourists. There is no readily available information regarding the local community perceptions towards community based tourism development. As such, lack of validated information on community based tourism has hampered the understanding of local community needs with regard to development of local economies. Therefore, determining the perceptions of the local community at Twyfelfontein towards CBT is a prerequisite for establishing a successful and sustainable tourism sector at Twyfelfontein.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Community Based Tourism

In Namibia, Community Based Tourism came about in 1995 because of the new policy introduced by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The policy paved way for the local community from communal areas to run tourism enterprises and form joint venture with the private sector. It came about because of inequalities in the tourism industry whereby local communities were not involved in tourism planning on communal land and did not receive any benefits from tourism (MET, 1995:3). Sharpley & Telfer (2002:150) define the term Community Based Tourism as a

sustainable form of tourism development whereby the needs and aspirations of the community are met and their local economy is sustained.

However, Tosun, (2000: 613) in his definition of Community Based Tourism incorporates the social-cultural benefits by describing it as a form of development that brings forth social and cultural benefits to local communities. He further states that the movement towards sustainable development in recent years has shifted the form of tourism planning to incorporate the needs of local residents who are directly impacted by tourism development. Community Based Tourism has no universal definition. Rather, it is defined by various authors in terms of the involvement of the local community in tourism development with the aim of meeting their needs (Ashley, 1995:8, Sharpley, Telfer, 2002: 150, MET, 1995:2). It can therefore be best defined as a type of tourism activity which is spearheaded by the local community, for economic, social-cultural benefits.

Sustainable Tourism Development

Community Based Tourism is closely linked to sustainable tourism development. Community participation in tourism planning is emphasized rather than the tourism product or industry. Several authors have tried to define the term and inevitably creating confusion on the real meaning of the term (Hunter, 1995:156, Saarinen, 2006:1131, Hardy & Beeton, 2001:168, Muller 1994:132). However, the WTO (2004:17) provides a widely accepted definition of sustainable tourism development, by stating that it provides guidelines and principles that are used in all types and forms of tourism including that of community based tourism. This makes community based tourism an integral component of sustainable development as it requires that the economic, social and cultural benefits for the community are continuously improved and the impacts assessed for the benefit of the present and future generations. However, the conceptualization of sustainable tourism development has failed to address rural tourism development concerns (Halstead, 2003: 7). This has resulted in the term being redefined to suit individuals' requirements thereby losing its meaning and being used as a marketing gimmick to increase market growth rather than incorporating sustainability principles in tourism development.

Local Participation in Community Based Tourism Planning

MET (1995:5) through its policy, states that community based tourism planning in Namibia should incorporate the views of the local residents and tourism development priorities should aim at maximizing community participation. This should therefore lead to an increase in benefits derived from tourism. However, the implementation of these objectives has been a challenge over the past 10 years. The community at Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy is still not self-reliant and do not have full control of the direction of tourism planning in their region. This shows that the participatory process being followed at Twyfelfontein may not be effective. Further investigation is required to identify reasons underlying the ineffectiveness of the participatory processes.

Local community's involvement in CBTs can present difficulties in the implementation of theoretical concepts and models of local participation in tourism planning. CBT originated from the developed world with unique circumstances. The few studies that have documented examples of community participation in Community Based Tourism in developing countries show that tourism planning has been a foreign inspired process and foreign experts lead the process of tourism planning in local communities (Tosun, 2000:613).

The concept of local participation in tourism planning can be interpreted in a variety of ways. In the western world, community participation in tourism development planning has been explained and studied with reference to Pretty's typology of participation (Mason 2006:119) and Butler's Tourist Area Lifecycle (Tosun, 2000:627). Pretty (in Mason 2006:119) argues that participation of residents in tourism planning can mean different things to different people. Hence Residents' participation in CBT ranges from manipulative to passive participation. However, Mason (2006:119) argues that there has been no real evidence in the developing countries that local participation was able to go past the manipulative and passive stage.

Tourism planning has not been under the control of the community. Halstead (2003:20) argues that there is no generic recipe for success of community based tourism due to different criteria involved in assessing their success. Therefore it is important to assess each community based tourism project individually based on information gained on site from the perceptions of all stakeholders. Murphy (1985:48) argues that the type and extent of interaction

between the tourist and the community, such as the importance of tourism to the community, level of community dependence on tourism and level of tourism development in the community are variables that influence resident's perceptions towards supporting tourism development.

Other researchers (Liu & Var, 1986:207, Belisle & Hoy 1980:98) have added factors such as the length of residency in the community, native-born status in the community, extent of tourism concentration, economic reliance on tourism, values and social representation, distance of residence from tourist zone. All these factors have an influence on the residents' attitudes towards tourism development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The purpose of using a qualitative approach was to get an in-depth understanding of the social and psychological phenomena that could lead to the formation of certain perceptions towards community based tourism (CBT) at Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy.

The qualitative approach targeted tourism stakeholders. Through a quantitative approach, the study sought to use numerical measurements and statistical analysis to examine social phenomena (Struwig & Stead 2001:4). This was targeted at community members. By using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study was able to provide results that are reliable and valid. In this study this approach is referred to as triangulation.

Sample size refers to the number of units that should be included in a study (Malhotra, 1993:354). The size of the sample was calculated statistically by using a statistical sample size formula. It consisted of 58 community members and 9 stakeholders (the government, private sector, financiers, and the management committee). This method of determining the sample was found to be valid and accurate since a representative sample was obtained for this study.

Data Collection Tools

The researcher distributed questionnaires to tourism stakeholders whilst a key informant technique focused on in-depth interviews for data collection. Questionnaires were used to probe the respondents for more information regarding the research problem. At the same time the questionnaire enabled the researcher to find answers to the

research questions and to provide data required for the achievement of the research objectives.

A five-point Likert Scale was applied in the design and structure of the questions for the quantitative research approach. In this case respondents were asked to rate their responses on a five likert scale. The scaling ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Since the study was in English and considering that most of the participants were from the rural community who were not conversant in English, the researcher then made use of a research assistant who assisted in the translation of the questions into the local Damara language. In-depth interviews were applied using a key informant technique. The questions were asked from an unstructured interview guide. All interviews were recorded electronically and manually and these were conducted in English.

Results of the Empirical Survey

Based on the empirical survey, three main concerns were noted. Firstly, the community is unaware of the nature of tourism development projects. The study reveals that sometimes the residents are not given enough information regarding community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) and therefore no community input into tourism plans and projects is made. Furthermore, the study notes that sometimes community meetings are rushed and invitations are sent out to highly educated professionals and local entrepreneurs mostly. These meetings are usually held in English which excludes the majority of the population. Secondly, the study observed that on the one hand, donor organizations and support agencies are given the responsibility to implement tourism projects. On the other hand, the larger community is excluded from participating in these projects. Thirdly, the study reveals that communities are given high expectations at the beginning of tourism projects, which sometimes do not materialize at the end.

Community's Involvement in Tourism Development at Twyfelfontein Conservancy

The results show that 50,7% of the respondents agree that income from CBT projects is used to alleviate poverty Twyfelfontein conservancy. Therefore, after 10 years of CBT development at Twyfelfontein the majority of the local community and stakeholders recognize tourism as a

means to alleviate poverty. Only 4.5% strongly disagreed that income derived from CBT projects is used for poverty alleviation. It is interesting to note that 20.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that tourism income can alleviate poverty. These results are in line with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism's (MET) community based tourism policy document that was developed by the Namibian government in 1995 which seeks to provide opportunities for the rural communities to have access to tourism and enjoy benefits derived from it for purposes of local economic development (MET, 1995:3).

Respondents were asked to indicate whether "tourism provides jobs for the local people at Twyfelfontein". 52.2% of respondents agreed with this statement and this could be due to the fact that the majority of the local residents have been absorbed or employed by the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge, the National Heritage Council of Namibia and other accommodation establishment in the area. Surprisingly 6% disagreed whilst 38.8% strongly agreed. Therefore, the respondents' perception is that tourism does provide jobs for the local residents (50.7%) but the locals are being employed in low skilled jobs which are at shop floor level attracting low wages.

An interview with Ndalikokule indicates that "the income the locals receive from selling craft is of minimal value to address their needs". This is in agreement with Liu and Wall (2006:163) who argue that in developing countries human resources development is only included in tourism plans superficially and is not implemented on the ground for local communities to become fully empowered to take control of their local resources. Based on these observations local residents at Twyfelfontein remain at the bottom of the scale of development and tourism private sector has failed to create measures that can develop the skills of the locals and enable them to become entrepreneurs who can spearhead tourism development at Twyfelfontein.

Whilst 40.3% of the respondents indicated that local residents enjoy a quality of life due to CBT projects, the evidence on the ground is to the contrary. This is evident since 31.3% of the respondents disagreed that economic development at twyfelfontein is sustainable due to CBT projects. Even though 26.9% agreed, 19.4% strongly disagreed. Table 1 shows the stakeholders' perceptions regarding the level of development at Twyfelfontein.

TABLE 1. Stakeholders' perceptions towards the level of development at the Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy.

	<i>Local Residents and Stakeholders perceptions towards economic development and poverty alleviation at Twyfelfontein Uibasen Conservancy.</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
	<i>Percentages</i>	%	%	%	%	%
1.1	Income derived from CBT projects is used to alleviate poverty at Twyfelfontein.	20.9	50.7	3.0	20.9	4.5
1.2	Tourism provides jobs for the local people at Twyfelfontein.	38.8	52.2	3.0	6.0	0.0
	<i>Percentages</i>	%	%	%	%	%
1.3	Local residents enjoy a quality life due to CBT project at Twyfelfontein.	11.9	40.3	10.4	22.4	14.9
1.4	Economic development at Twyfelfontein is sustainable due to CBT projects.	4.5	26.9	17.9	31.3	19.4
1.5	Infrastructure is well developed for the local residents because of CBT projects.	6.0%	6.0	10.4	34.3	49.3

Perceptions about the community's involvement in planning CBT development

Respondents have shown that 32% disagree that local residents are spearheading the process of CBT planning process, 20.9% strongly disagreeing. 34.3% strongly disagree that residents have an input in CBT policy formulation and 31.3% indicated that residents are not involved in decision making process. 31.3% strongly agreed that local residents are over dependent on foreign investors, NGOs and government when it comes to CBT

planning at Twyfelfontein. Since this is the case, locals are incapacitated when it comes tourism expertise (29.9 % strongly agree and 31.3 % agree).

CBT theories indicate that local residents have become co-dependent on NGO's for tourism planning and often the NGO's do not understand the needs of the local residents. As such the local residents become objects of community based tourism development rather than to be the ones spearheading tourism planning in their region (Louis, 2010). Whilst the Ministry of Environment and Tourism policy stipulates that community participation should be maximized in community based tourism planning process

(MET, 1995:5), the community is not fully involved in the planning process.

The study reveals that when the whole process of setting up the Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site started the local community residing at Twyfelfontein were identified as one of the stakeholders who would be involved in the decision making process, especially when it comes to certain issues that need to be implemented at the site. However the current status indicates that the local community is treated rather as an unequal stakeholder in decision making in the conservancy. The conservancy members feel they are removed from the operations of the site and the community does not understand some of their rights in terms of governance issues. To support this view, the majority of respondents (31.3%) agreed that local residents lack expertise in tourism and therefore they cannot participate in CBT development. The findings of this study show that, Twyfelfontein is experiencing operational limitation because tourism planning is fragmented. External agents spearhead the process of CBT

planning whilst residents are expected to deal with the negative impacts that arise due to tourism development. The study shows that there are structural limitations as well; the leadership of the conservancy and the structure of the constitution seem to have limited the progress and development process.

Cultural limitation is evident at Twyfelfontein. There is apathy among the previously disadvantaged Namibian people and they feel inferior and therefore cannot effectively participate in tourism planning. As a result their needs are not being met through the implementation of CBT projects at Twyfelfontein. Snyman (2010) argues that this is a problem with many CBTE's. The study reveals that the community has this idea that tourism brings in a lot of money so they want to get into tourism but they do not understand the industry. The study notes that the project proposals that communities submit are not up to scratch. Respondents explained that sometimes the community does not have any clue about the business they want to venture into.

TABLE 2. Perceptions towards community participation in CBT planning

	<i>Cal Perceptions towards community participation in CBT planning</i>	<i>5 Strongly Agree</i>	<i>4 Agree</i>	<i>3 Undecided</i>	<i>2 Disagree</i>	<i>1 Strongly Disagree</i>
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
2.1	Local residents are spearheading the process of CBT planning at Twyfelfontein.	4.5	28.4	13.4	32.8	20.9
2.2	Local residents have input in CBT policy formulation	0.0	29.9	9.0	26.9	34.3
2.3	Local residents are fully involved in decision-making process at Twyfelfontein.	4.5	26.9	14.9	22.4	31.3
2.5	Local residents lack expertise in tourism and therefore cannot Participate in CBT development.	29.9	31.3	4.5	28.4	6.0
2.6	Community participatory process followed at Twyfelfontein is not effective.	14.9	40.3	11.9	29.9	3.0

Respondents were asked to state whether community participatory process followed at Twyfelfontein was effective or not. 40.3% agreed that the process was not effective whilst 29.9 disagreed. Besides the fact that annual general meetings are held at Twyfelfontein involving the local community, the majority of the respondents still feel that the participatory process is not effective as alluded by Sharpley and Telfer, 2002:152.

In general the findings indicate that the majority of respondents (44.8%) are in agreement with the fact that community participation in CBT planning is not being successfully implemented at Twyfelfontein because local resident lack capacity (25.4%) and startup capital

(43.3%). But the issue on the ground is more than just getting community participation but rather incorporating human resource development into the planning process to increase the capabilities of the locals to participate actively in CBT planning and development (44.8%). The mere participation of the community through meetings and workshops which are held once a year at Twyfelfontein may not be effective as long as the perceived benefits are not in line with the expected returns. The following Table 2 summarizes the perceptions of local community on CBT planning. Perceptions towards the Leadership of CBT Projects at Twyfelfontein

Whilst Community Based Tourism has been recognised by the Namibian government as a development vehicle with a

potential to improve livelihoods (MET, 1995:3), there is a conflict amongst community members due to unequal distribution of benefits (53.7%). This is exacerbated by the fact that CBT projects are initiated by outsiders (29.9%). Therefore, local residents should be the driving force of CBT development so that they would be able to take ownership of their resources. Respondents strongly disagreed (31.3%) that projects are evaluated in line with

the community's needs. The table that follows indicates the results discussed above.

TABLE 3. Perceptions towards the implementation of CBT projects at Twyfelfontein.

<i>Local Residents and Stakeholders perceptions towards the implementation of CBT projects at Twyfelfontein.</i>	<i>5 Strongly Agree</i>	<i>4 Agree</i>	<i>3 Undecided</i>	<i>2 Disagree</i>	<i>1 Strongly Disagree</i>
Percentages	%	%	%	%	%
CBT projects fail because local residents do not have start-up capital to develop their own tourism businesses.	43.3	25.4	17.9	7.5	6.0
Successful implementation of CBT projects is depended on the resident perceived benefits from tourism in exchange for expected returns.	20.9	44.8	19.4	10.4	4.5
Lack of effective laws to support the implementation of CBT projects has lead to failure of some of the endeavors.	40.3	29.9	11.9	14.9	3.0
Lack of transparency and accountability has contributed to some of the challenges being faced in the implementation of CBT projects at Twyfelfontein.	35.8	34.3	14.9	11.9	3.0

While the existing literature on sustainable tourism development states that there is a shift in recent years on CBT projects and how they are incorporating the needs of the local residents as a focal point (Tosun, 2000:613, Sharpley, Telfer, 2002:150). However this may not be the case at Twyfelfontein and this anomaly will continue to hinder the successful implementation of CBT projects. As discussed, if the needs of the community are not addressed properly, long term sustainability of CBT at Twyfelfontein is at stake.

An interview with Mr. Durant indicates that, "the profit sharing money gets paid directly to the conservancy and what the conservancy does with the money has nothing to do with Namibia Country Lodges. The money is divided up among the members but he notes that they would like to see schools, hospital, clinics built in the area and the reason why they pay them a levy is to utilize that money to uplift the community out of poverty. Mr Durant feels the community is not utilizing the shared income in a correct way."

Integration of the Local community into CBT projects

Reid (1999:41) developed an integrated approach for CBT development by outlining stakeholders that can be involved in CBT from tourism planning through to the

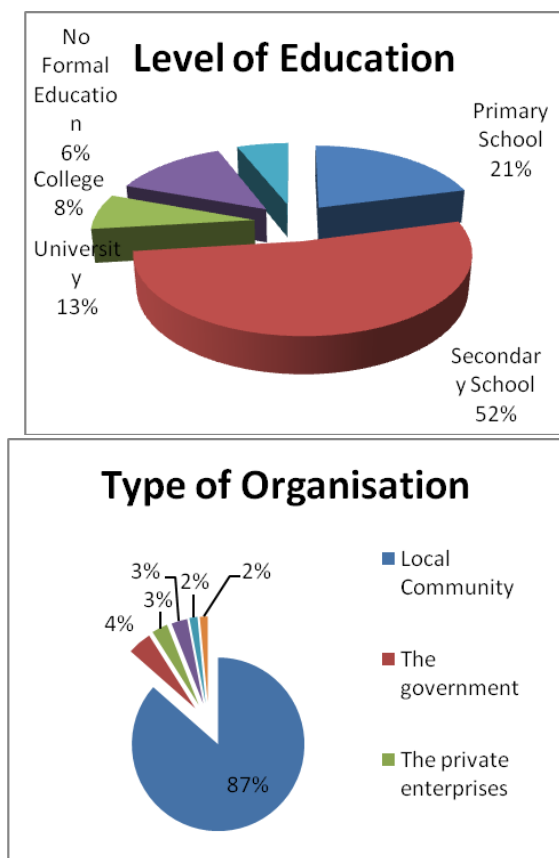
implementation of CBT projects. In this study the majority of respondents (71.6%) agreed that there is no integrated process that involves the Locals in CBT. An interview with Mr. Louis confirms that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has no capacity to implement tourism policies especially from the directorate of tourism. The evidence gathered from the study shows that Tourism is the second highest contributor to gross domestic product (GDP).

Information gathered from the study indicates that there are only four people who manage community based tourism development from the MET office. In addition, there are only two senior people and the rest are just administrative staff. In an interview with Mr Thaniseb, he posed a question, "How can you manage such a million dollar industry with four people?" He further explains that "the reason why communities depend heavily on NGO's is due to the fact that government has a structural problem. Within the directorate of tourism, there are not enough regional CBT officers to assist communities". Based on this evidence, the study shows that no meaning integration of communities into CBTs can take place. If this is the case, the community's involvement in CBTs remains a concept yet to be fully realized.

General Information on the Respondents

As outlined in table 4, the largest number of respondents (52.2%) had formal secondary education. This implies that they have some basic skills to further develop their capacity in tourism and business management. The practical experience they are gaining from being employed in the tourism sector will help them to gain confidence in their understanding of the industry and become future entrepreneurs at Twyfelfontein. The table below shows the level of education of and the type of organization for the respondents in percentages.

TABLE 4. Level of Education and type of organisation



The sample population was sufficient to validate the generalisation of the findings on the perceptions of the local community and stakeholders in CBT development at Twyfelfontein. The study concurs with past researches which show that residents' attitudes towards tourism development are associated with key factors such as age, income, length of residence, ethnicity, education, gender, distance from tourism sites and resident's economic dependence on tourism.

Discussion and Contribution towards Sustainable Tourism Development

Whilst the local community is involved in sustainable development, residents need to have control over tourism development programs. This includes the broad-based community in-put. It is evident from the study that the benefits from tourism are not flowing squarely to the needy. There is need for mutual cooperation amongst and between stakeholders. The external agencies and other tourism businesses must provide an integrational equity regarding long term plans and tourism strategies. These strategies must be linked to the broader context that reflects socio-economic development.

The study has revealed a discrepancy between community needs and expected benefits. For sustainable development to be realized there is need for harmonization of the tourists' needs vis-à-vis the place and the community. Even if there is agreement on the acceptable limits and use of natural resources at Twyfelfotein, the community heritage and resources must be maintained and enhanced in a more sustainable manner, thereby providing high tourist experience which may eventually lead to high return on investment.

Sustainable tourism development is premised on the management of capacities and sites which recognizes the sensitivity of a place to different uses and this depends on the values and perceptions of the users. Strategies should be developed to ensure that sustainable tourism becomes socio-economically sustainable by benefiting the Twyfelfontein community. These strategies should provide a framework upon which local communities can effectively be involved and participate in sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the actors, structures and institutions within the context of community involvement in CBTs. It was revealed that the Government of Namibia has recognized tourism as a potential means of poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Issues of governance and ownership of commercial activities are still not yet in the hands of the locals. Whilst the conservancies were set up as a strategy for poverty alleviation, the study concludes that development has not yet filtered down to the needy hence the local people's involvement is minimal. Whilst the communities are participating in CBT, the study observes that their involvement is questionable.

Therefore, the study recommends a CBNRM operational framework for CBTs, where locals manage their own economic endeavors. The framework should promote natural resource conservation and sustainable development whilst allowing 'local participation which seems to appeal more to the local communities. In Twyfelfontein, rather than providing development opportunities, tourism has become a development constraint in some cases for the locals. This study recommends that for sustainable development to be meaningful, the development process should empower the local people to take control of their own lives and be involved in building their own capacity, resources and culture. It is further recommended that longitudinal studies be done to monitor residents' attitudes over time which should give guidance in the development of policies and CBT projects that are not sensitive to the needs of the local residents over time.

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