

Community-Driven Tourism Projects

Subjects: Others

Contributor: Susan Matiku

Community-driven Tourism Projects (CDTPs) are initiated, operated, managed and fully controlled by the community. The communities identify the tourism resources they have access to, and utilize them for livelihood. The CDTPs are a platform for not just livelihood but also for poverty alleviation

Keywords: Sustainable livelihood

1. Introduction

Community-driven tourism projects is a way of providing social and physical services to the poor, creating economic activities through utilization of tourism attractions and resource management. Community-driven tourism projects (CDTPs) are a platform for community development. They empower the poor and improve governance. Just like other community-driven developments (CDDs), CDTPs give control of resources to community groups ^[1]. These groups may work in partnership with demand-responsive support organization such as NGOs, tourism private investors or local government agencies ^[1]. By directly relying on poor people to drive development activities, ^[2] alludes that CDDs have the potential to make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demands, more inclusive, more sustainable and more cost-effective than traditional centrally led programs ^[1]. Manzuri and Rao ^[3] recognize that CDDs play a key role in poverty alleviation exertions, realizing immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level and complementing market economy and government-run programs. By use of CDD approach the private sector and NGOs are able to provide some of these services for poverty reduction ^{[4][5][6]}.

The Makuleke Contractual Park (MCP) community-driven tourism project is one example of the many tourism projects in South Africa that have seen community development through tourism. The Makuleke community pursued an eco-tourism joint venture with private lodges to conserve the pristine nature of the park and generate employment and significant economic benefits for the community ^{[7][8]}.

Community-driven tourism projects (CDTPs) enhance sustainability. As consumers the local communities are the most legitimate and well informed of their priorities ^[9]. Demand is better expressed when the communities contribute to investment costs and control investment choices hence making it sustainable. ^{[1][10]} reveal that when Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are allowed to control their investments, there is higher sustainability of resources because the communities are willing to pay for what they want. Furthermore, since responsibilities and resources are devolved to grassroots, development activities are instantaneous and as a result poverty is alleviated ^{[1][11]}. All these can be achieved if the community participate fully in development. The tourism projects enable the communities to access tourism resources and utilize them for economic gain.

2. Impacts of CDTPs

2.1. Community Capital Framework (CCF)

Community capital framework (CCF) provides a tool for analyzing community-driven tourism project economic contributions to community livelihoods. This framework (CCF) provides an instrument to examine and analyze community development exertions through identification of economic resources in each investment, the economic capital invested (flow), the interaction and relationships among other capitals and the subsequent effects across them ^[12]. Flora and Flora ^[13] introduced the CCF so as to comprehend measures relating to poverty, natural resource management and social fairness. This model emerged from the practice and application of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) as well as other participatory strategies ^[14]. The SLA was developed with the belief that livelihoods are sustainable when individuals or households can recover from shocks while maintaining their stocks of capitals, including natural resources.

Many sustainable livelihood approaches (SLA) track five capitals (human, economic, social, natural and physical). In many cases, the five capital assets presented in the SLA framework establish livelihood 'building blocks'^{[15][16]}. A capital can be converted into another capital ^[16]. In other words, one capital can spiral up to other capitals ^[9]. For example, natural tourist attractions (natural capital) such as wildlife or landscapes may be transformed into financial capital through entry fees for viewing. The entry fee may then be used to construct physical tourist attractions (physical capital) such as restaurants and/or accommodation facilities. These facilities create employment opportunities for the local communities, create market for local produce and hence build the local economy and increase the sustainability of livelihoods of the local communities.

Community capitals have been used to analyze community development efforts, as well as how communities utilize them for livelihood diversification ^{[15][9][13][17][18]}. However, few studies have examined the community-driven tourism projects' economic contribution to community livelihoods. In this study, the community tourism economic capital (CTEC) was used to analyze the Makuleke Contractual Park tourism project economic contributions to community livelihoods. It also looks at the rippling effect of the economic capital towards other capitals.

2.2. Economic Capital Contribution to Community Livelihoods

Scholars and researchers have adopted the economic capital description depending on the issue on their focus. The description has also been modified from time to time to suit the issues or the phenomenon under study. Scoones ^[19] p. 8, described economic/financial capital as "the capital base such as cash, credit/debt, savings, and other economic assets". Flora on the other hand ^[20] p. 33, described economic/financial capital as "savings, income generation, fees, loans and credit, gifts and philanthropy, taxes, and tax exemptions". Additionally, previous studies focusing on tourism described economic capital as income generated from tourism related activities such as employment in a tourism establishment, income from tourism activities and own tourism businesses such as restaurants, hotels, sell of arts & crafts, tourist attraction entry fees and traditional dance incentives ^{[21][22][23]}.

Several studies have described economic contribution of tourism through sustainable tourism indicators, community development or through the impacts of tourism ^{[24][25][26]}. In their study on community capitals stocks and flows, Emery and Flora ^[12] found that when the state development agencies invested in local resources, local businesses increased hence expanding job employments, local entrepreneurs increased assets and personal income also increased. In this vein, the present paper defines economic contribution of tourism projects as enhancement of income and employment multipliers within the local communities. The indicators of income and employment multipliers are job creation, tourism related small and micro enterprises, locally owned tourism businesses and creation of market for local produce.

Direct income is the one attained through daily tourist activities where the service provider or the seller of a tourism related item is paid directly by the tourist for the service rendered or the item sold as well as income from employment in a tourism establishment or tourism project. Indirect income is earning through group savings or group project businesses, dividends or organization trust fund.

2.3. Sustainable Livelihoods

Sustainable livelihood comprises people accessing resources (financial, physical, natural, human and social), the ways in which people combine these capital assets to generate livelihoods and their ability to expand their asset base through relations with other actors and institutions ^[27]. For livelihood to be sustainable, there must be a secure ownership of or access to resources and income earning activities ^{[27][28][29]}. Community-driven tourism projects employ the local communities, provide an income through profits and communities have access to capital assets. Chambers and Conway ^[30] referred to this ownership of and access to resources as security. This security may comprise reserves and possessions to counterbalance risk, reduce shocks and deal with eventualities.

A household may be empowered to achieve sustainable livelihood security in many ways. It may be through ownership of property like land, livestock or having rights to grazing, fishing, through steady employment with adequate remuneration or through varied collection of activities ^{[28][29]}. In respect of community-driven tourism project, a household is a family whose members or at least one member of the family is a member of the project. A household which has membership in a community-driven tourism project is expected to own capital assets such as traditional skills, indigenous/cultural knowledge, natural tourism attractions, employment in tourism facility and earning an income from the tourism project, hence one can say that the CDTP provides sustainable livelihood to the household.

3. Conclusions

The tourism industry revenues contribute significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa [31][32]. Tourism contributes to rural development through job creation, employment, social cultural growth, as well as infrastructural development [15]. Tourism can be a powerful tool for community development and reducing inequalities if it engages local populations and all key stakeholders in its development [33]. It can also contribute to urban and rural development hence reducing regional imbalances through rendering communities the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin [33]. The sustainable tourism indicators that influence the growth of tourism are economic, sociocultural, environmental and management of tourism [34][35]. Tourism does not exist in a vacuum, it is operated and controlled by stakeholders one of them being the host community. It is paramount to encourage rural communities to utilize the tourism resources which are at their disposal for their livelihoods. Much research has been done on the contribution of tourism to a region's socioeconomic growth and community benefits. However, only few studies have been found to rigorously assess the economic contribution of community-driven tourism projects (CDTPs) to community sustainable livelihoods. Understanding this economic contribution is important for proper planning, operation and management of the CDTPs and for proper management of other community tourism resources that build up the economic capital of the community.

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