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Exploring the Significance of Alternative Tourism as a way of Alleviating Poverty in Rural Areas

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A discourse submitted to the faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Development Planning

JOHANNESBURG, 2007

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my own work, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Masters of Science in Development Planning in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

C Thuketana

November 2007

ABSTRACT

The tourism industry, which is practiced in this country, does not benefit the majority of the population. The industry is still white dominated, with emphasis on urban and well-established areas. Rural areas are not included in the overall tourism development, despite the claims that are attached to it, i.e. poverty alleviation, employment opportunities; etc. Rural areas still suffer the burden of poverty. At the same time, rural areas possess a number of natural, cultural and man-made resources that can be exploited in a sustainable way to improve the people's lives. The study explores the significance of 'alternative tourism' as a way of alleviating poverty in rural areas. Noko Cultural village in Limpopo Province was chosen as a case study. From the analysis, Noko Cultural Village did not perform well as an example of 'alternative tourism'. The study confirms that there are challenges that need to be considered to achieve a full development of 'alternative tourism' such as participation, gender, stable financial support and partnership with private sector and government. Through the analysis of the case study 'alternative tourism' should be not abandoned as a development strategy in rural areas, rural communities should be empowered to understand the challenges of the tourism industry. The local government through facilitating, coordinating and support in terms of capital and expertise should play an active developmental role in rural areas. Although tourism is still new in many municipalities, partnership with the communities and private sectors can enhance this development strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Contents		Page
Declarations		i
Abstract		ii
Acknowledgements		iii
Dedications		iv
List of figures		v
Lists of Maps		vi
List of Tables		vii
Abbreviations		viii
PART 1		
Chapter 1	**Introduction**	
1.1 Introduction		1
1.2 The Scope of the Study		1
1.3 Hypothesis		2
1.4 Aims and Objectives		2
1.5 Methodology		3
1.6 The Structure of the Study		5
Chapter 2	**Conceptualisation**	
2.1	Introduction	6
2.2	Definitions	6
2.2.1	Tourism	6
2.2.2	Alternative Tourism	7
2.2.3	Sustainable Tourism	9
2.2.4	Rural	10
2.2.5	Poverty	11
2.3	Problem Statement	13
2.3.1	Current Tourism in South Africa	13
2.3.2	Poverty in Rural Areas	14
2.4	Potential in Rural areas	16
2.4.1	Overview of tourism in Rural Areas	16
2.4.2	What rural areas can offer?	17
2.5	Summary and conclusions	18

PART 2

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1	Introduction	20
3.2	Literature Review	20
3.2.1	Tourism Trends	22
3.2.2	Tourism in Developing countries	27
3.2.3	Tourism Impacts	28
3.2.4	Evolution of Alternative Tourism	33
3.2.5	Forms of Alternative tourism	35
3.3	South African Context	39
3.3.1	The Reconstruction and Development Programme	40
3.3.2	The Tourism Green Paper	41
3.3.3	The White Paper on Tourism	41
3.4	Institutional Framework	42
3.4.1	The role of the government	43
3.4.2	The role of the private sector, NGOs and communities	44
3.5	Summary and conclusions	47

Chapter 4 Theoretical Framework

4.1	Introduction	49
4.2	Dependency	50
4.3	Participation	53
4.4	Gender	58
4.5	Sustainability	60
4.6	The Economies of Tourism	64
4.7	Summary and Conclusions	65

Chapter 5 Tourism Planning

5.1	Introduction	67
5.2	Tourism And Planning	67
5.3	Approaches To Tourism Planning	68
5.4	Tourism Planning Methodologies	71
5.5	Role of a Planner	74
5.6	Conclusions	76

PART 3: CASE STUDY

Chapter 6 Description of the Case Study

6.1	Introduction	78
6.2	Limpopo Province	78
6.3	Greater Tzaneen Municipality	79
6.4	Ga-Mogoboya Rural Village	80
6.4.1	Location	80
6.4.2	Infrastructure	81
6.4.3	Socio-Economic Aspects	82
6.4.4	Environment	83
6.5	Noko Cultural Village	85
6.5.1	Brief Background	85
6.5.2	Attractions	87
6.5.3	Linkages With Other Tourist Attractions	88
6.5.4	Economic and Employment Status	88
6.5.5	Community Participation	89
6.6	Marketing Strategy	90
6.7	Government And Private Sector's Support	90
6.8	Other Development Projects	91
6.9	Key Findings	91
6.10	Conclusions	93

Chapter 7 Analysis and Interpretations

7.1	Introduction	94
7.2	Infrastructure	94
7.3	Community Participation	97
7.4	Institutional Elements	98
7.5	Economic Analysis	101
7.6	Environmental Analysis	102
7.7	Social and Cultural Analysis	102
7.8	Training	103
7.9	Marketing Strategy	104
7.10	Conclusions	104

PART 4 **CONCLUSIONS**

Chapter 8 **Conclusions and Recommendations**

8.1	Introduction	105
8.2	Alternative Tourism And Rural Areas In SA	105
8.3	Lessons And Recommendations Emanating From The Case Study	107
8.4	Conclusions	110

REFERENCES **112**

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Interview Schedule: Director Of The Cultural Village
Appendix B	Interview Schedule: Community Leaders and members
Appendix C	Interview Schedule: Department Officials
Appendix D	Interview Schedule: Private Sectors

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1: Public Participation
Fig 2: Strategic Planning
Fig3: Tourism Planning Process
Fig4: Organogram for BRDT
Fig5: The Cultural Village
Fig6: Noko or Porcupine
Fig7: Traditional pots, Bowls etc
Fig8: Women Weaving
Fig9: Traditional Building Techniques
Fig10: Traditional Dances
Fig11: Traditional Hut

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Terminologies Associated with Alternative Tourism

Table 2: The Growth Pattern of Tourism

Table 3: Doxey Index: Tourism stages of development

Table 4: Types of Participation

ABBREVIATIONS

ACACHS	African Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies
ANC	African National Congress
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
IDPs	Integrated Development Plans
GNU	Government of National Unity
GTM	Greater Tzaneen Municipality
LED	Local Economic Development
NGOs	Non- governmental Organisations
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SMME	Small Medium Micro Enterprises
SATOUR	South African Tourism Board
UNISA	University of South Africa