

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

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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. M. M. M. M.

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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.

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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