

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGES AFFECTED BY THE
NANDONI DAM**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Community participation in tourism developments at Nandoni Dam forms an integral part of the government objectives for the tourism industry, which are *inter alia*, to build a world class tourism industry, and to integrate historically disadvantaged people into the mainstream of the tourism industry. The purpose of this investigation was to analyse the potential for sustainable community tourism development in the rural areas of the Limpopo Province, in terms of community engagement/involvement in tourism development, preservation and conservation of natural sites, and tourism awareness, in order to make recommendations to sustain the development of tourism and improve service quality, with special reference to the Nandoni Dam. The following objectives were set for this study:

- To determine the level of community involvement in tourism development at Nandoni Dam.
- To determine the level of understanding of environmental conservation of the area affected by the Dam.
- To determine the level of tourism awareness among the Ha-mutoti, Ha-budeli and Dididi communities at the study area.
- To identify the key problems affecting the development of tourism projects in the study area.

The results from the survey indicate that there are a number of local people who really want to get involved in tourism business ventures, such as traditional dancers at the Dam site; sell fruit and vegetables; braai meat at the picnic area; being a professional fisherman; traditional craft work; become cleaners, and so forth. At the present moment Nandoni Dam's community involvement in tourism development in the site does not exist at all. There is **no** community participation at any level of development at the Dam site. Problems seem to be more prominent than benefits that were promised at the first stage of the Dam development. Some of the problems identified are:

- The lack of jobs at Nandoni Dam.
- No improvement in the general infrastructure.

- The lack of tourism awareness has been identified as one major contributing factor that hinders community participation in tourism development, as well as the breakdown of communications between the villagers of Ha-mutoti, Ha-budeli and Dididi, and the Chief, including the Dam management.

Some of the recommendations that emerged from the study include the following:

- Tourism awareness campaigns are needed for the Nandoni Dam community.
- Community members interested in establishing any tourism projects must be encouraged and supported by all stakeholders.
- Local educational institutions, government departments that deal with tourism and conservation, forestry, transport departments, and local authorities should become more efficiently engaged as important players at the local level. The capability of these official agencies for facilitating participatory processes needs to be built up. Systems of feedback, to enable appropriate policy decisions and strategic planning at higher levels needs to be put in place