

**COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM FOR CONSERVATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN LESOTHO: A CASE OF HA-KOME**



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**COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM FOR CONSERVATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN LESOTHO: A CASE OF HA-KOME**

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*Together in Excellence*  
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DECLARATION

I, Maanela Thabelo Maanela, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, "Community-based ecotourism for conservation and development in Lesotho: A Case of Ha-Kome" is the result of my own investigation except where stated, and that it has not been submitted for a degree to any other university.



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## ABSTRACT


This study evaluates the potential for community-based ecotourism as conservation and development strategy in Kome village, which is an unprotected area. The study adopts the ecotourism concept to illustrate how community-based ecotourism can be a tool for conservation and development in poor rural communities. Adopting the intensive case study design, the study investigates the major challenges for community-based ecotourism in Kome village. Findings reveal that Kome community derives low socio-economic benefits including limited earnings, low employment, poor benefits sharing and lack of entrepreneurship.



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Kome has a potential to offer better community-based ecotourism products due to diverse tourist attractions ranging from historical, cultural activities to natural scenery. The study suggests and recommends formation of a partnership between the Kome community, private, public sector and the NGOs as a strategy for development. The study concludes that ecotourism can be an appropriate option for conservation and development for Kome village.

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## ACRONYMS

BTDP	Botswana Tourism Development Programme
CAMPFIRE	Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resource
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IYE	International Year of Tourism
LHDA	Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
LNDC	Lesotho National Development Corporation
LTB	Lesotho Tourism Board
LTDC	Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTTP	Maluti Drakensburg Transfrontier Project
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
PCPD	Popular Casual Passive Diversionsary
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
QWDT	Quthing Wildlife Development Trust
RETOSA	Regional Tourism of Southern Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Commission
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UN	United Nations

UNDP

United National Development Programme

WTO

World Tourism Organization



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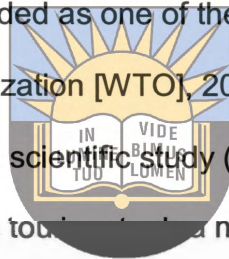
## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The tourism industry is regarded as one of the fastest growing industries in the world (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2003) and is now established as an object (tourism) of social and scientific study (Wallance and Russell, 2004).

During the past two decades tourism has taken a new form which involved tourism activities related to the natural environment and rural communities especially in non-developed areas.

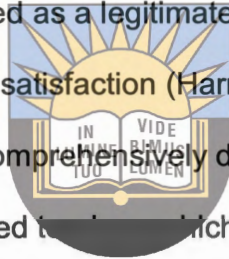


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This new form of tourism which is called ecotourism was found and debated at different levels by academics, conservationists, environmentalists, developers, business people and other stakeholders. Ecotourism was then accelerated by different International Organization and Agencies of which the year 2002 was declared the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) by the United Nations (WTO, 2003). Furthermore governments of most developing countries increased their interest in ecotourism as a viable development option (Diamantis, 2004) to improve their economic, social and environmental status especially in peripheral regions. Ecotourism is an agent of change (Wall, 1997 cited in Stone, 2002) and

as such, it has been linked to resource protection, policies, protected area conservation efforts, sustainable development initiatives, and regional and community development strategies in many places.

Even though this concept of ecotourism has gained vast recognition in academic arena, research and business world there is no universal definition of it. If ecotourism is to be recognized as a legitimate segment of the tourism industry, it must be defined to universal satisfaction (Harrison, 2003). Fennell (cited in Viljoen and Tlabela, 2007) comprehensively defines ecotourism as a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism which focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature and which ethically (in terms of control, benefits and scale) managed to be low-impact non-consumptive and locally oriented.



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The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2005) gives two different views of ecotourism of which the first is concerned with sustainable development and while the other one is concerned with market segment. The sustainable development part defines ecotourism as the responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (TIES, 2005). The market segment indicates that ecotourism is advertised as being equivalent to nature tourism in the market place. Furthermore, the market segment describes ecotourism and adventure tourism as sub-components of

nature tourism even though ecotourism has stronger links to natural and cultural than adventure tourism (TIES, 2005).

The most important core emphasis for ecotourism definition should indicate conservation which ecotourism is rooted in and in both protected and non-protected areas and other natural attractions, educational aspect (interpretation and training programs) and sustainability with equal emphasis on socio-cultural and economic aspects (Diamantis, 2004). In this research ecotourism is defined as tourism and recreation that is both nature-based (in protected and non-protected) and sustainable especially in rural areas with more focus on conservation and improving lives of the local community.



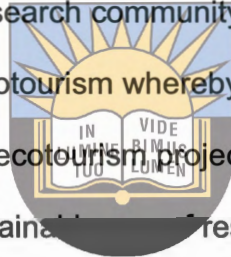
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Many scholars define conservation as ethic use, protection and careful management of the environment and natural resources. Miller (2005) defines conservation as the use of natural resources in a way that ensures their continuing availability for future generations. Conservation in community-based ecotourism context can be defined as the use of any resource material (tangible and not tangible) in a sustainable manner such that social, cultural, environmental and economical aspects are well catered for. Therefore, for conservation to take place in the rural areas, the community serves as the most important component of such an activity (conservation), as it uses those natural resources to be conserved in their area for survival.

Ecotourism is seen as a tool for conservation (Viljoen and Tlabela, 2007).

Therefore to sustain community-based ecotourism, communities play a critical role in achieving conservation. Community-based is a people centered approach which seeks to empower (Wolf, 2004), build capacity and give the community a will and incentive to participate collectively. Denman (2001) argued that community-based ecotourism takes the social dimension a stage further than ecotourism alone. In this research community-based ecotourism is defined as a community driven type of ecotourism whereby the local community collectively has substantial control over ecotourism projects and are involved in its development and foster sustainable resources working together with other stakeholders in achieving conservation and development.



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Community-based ecotourism researches by academics have been done in protected areas of which these areas are very few in most developing countries. Furthermore, unprotected areas seem to be of little interest to researchers and developers, but they have a potential to host community-based ecotourism because of the inherent qualities they possess. Unprotected areas in rural settings provide a good juncture for interaction between man and nature. Hence the marriage between the two can create tourism, income and conservation.

There are some strong arguments in support of ecotourism playing a central role in conservation and rural development in sub-Saharan Africa (Nelson, 2004).

According to WTO (2003), less developed countries have advantage over developed countries with aspects to offer such as culture, art, natural landscapes and wildlife. Wallace and Russell (2004) argue that developing countries have a weak resource base and regard tourism as a potential contributor to their economic development. Globally, ecotourism is expected to contribute to the transfer of wealth from the urban sector to the agrarian economy and also to a nation's foreign exchange (Allen and Brennan, 2004). Although tourism projects are seen as icons of development they have potential to create both positive and negative impacts in areas where they have been implemented. Despite the economic benefits of community-based ecotourism, the lack of integrated planning has led to adverse effects on the environment and especially on rare ecosystems (Fotiou, 2004).



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These rare ecosystems are mostly found in the remote areas and at the same time ecotourists are interested in communities living in these awkward places. For this reason ecotourism had to form partnership with the hosting communities, which lead the development of community-based ecotourism (Allen and Brennan, 2004). There has been an increased realization by ecologists and natural resource managers that many ecological relationships in the so-called natural landscapes are actually the result of a complex set of relationships between the use of the land by native people and the creation of habitat (Aagesen, 2004 cited in Hall and Page, 2006). This means that traditional

knowledge of native people becomes a vital ingredient for effective ecosystem management (Hall and Page, 2006).

For many countries ecotourism is not seen as a marginal activity intended to finance protection of the environment but as a major sector of national economy and a means of getting foreign currencies. In countries such as South Africa and Botswana, community-based ecotourism is seen as a development strategy which can bring benefit for both the first and the second economy (Viljoen and Tlabela, 2007).



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Even though community development in the rural areas can bring negative or positive effects, rural communities have their own lifestyle and at the same time developers who might be the state or conservationists normally take that privilege away and worsen the lives of the rural community. It is important that conservationists learn more about unique environmental, cultural and social sensitivity of local communities. Furthermore, it is also wise for rural communities to learn more about new conservation strategies without deserting their indigenous knowledge of conservation (Viljoen and Tlabela, 2007).

This research therefore takes the reasons mentioned above as a point of departure with the general aim of evaluating how the Kome community together with their environment can benefit from community-based ecotourism, in an effort

to find ways in which tourism and conservation can be used to bring development. This study focuses on investigating the potential of community-based ecotourism in unprotected areas for conservation and development.

### Conceptual Framework

This study adopts ecotourism as the conceptual framework. Ecotourism is a tool for conservation (Hall and Page, 2006). It emphasizes on seeing and saving natural habitats and archeological treasures. Ecotourism is anchored by three main components which are natural-based, educational and sustainable management that includes economic, social, cultural and ethical issues.



Ecotourism's objectives include studying and enjoying the scenery and its flora and fauna together with any existing cultural manifestations both in the past and present, found in undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas (Ecclectica, 2005). Ecotourism again advocates for rehabilitation of damaged lands, restoration of damaged heritage sites (Ecclectica, 2005) and conservation of local biodiversity in order to secure long term sustainability of tourism. Natural conservation, maintenance against degradation, improvement and protection of biodiversity are some the issues ecotourism strives to achieve for the area in which it operates (Diamantis, 2004).

Ecotourism is a segment of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism at the same time is not equivalent to sustainable development but it is only a part of the

whole idea of sustainable development (Wright, 1996 cited in Diamantis, 2004). Sustainable development concept includes five interrelated issues which include: economic, social, political, cultural and ecological components. According to Diamantis (2004), development is always intended to emphasize the first two dimensions, particularly the economic aspects. Therefore, the ecotourism concept considers all the five components of sustainable development even though it is more linked to the natural (protected and unprotected areas) and cultural aspects.



Ecotourism has the ability to address the needs and aspirations of society in the mixed situation taking into consideration the cultural and political components that shape social and economic conditions and values of the host community. Therefore the ecotourism concept is the cornerstone of community-based ecotourism for conservation and development in the rural setting.

### Literature Review

Lesotho tourism has a wide natural resource base which comprises of protected and unprotected areas from national to community level with diverse and dramatic scenery (Maloti Drakensburg Transfrontier Project [MDTP], 2005) with small areas remaining untouched by developers. However, few protected areas were managed as separate islands of biodiversity of which they did not benefit local communities. Those areas which remain unprotected are being under

utilized for tourism activities by the communities living around them and become poorer in condition due to lack of proper management (Allen and Brennan, 2004).

Due to the degraded physical environment, tourism destinations are in danger of losing their original attractions, increasing the levels of cheaper mass tourism and forcing more nature-based tourists to move on to new destinations, which are likely to be more inaccessible and fragile. According to Diamantis (2004), tourism has the power to enhance the environment to provide funds for conservation, to preserve culture and history, to set sustainable use limits, and to protect natural attractions.



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Development benefits of ecotourism ventures can vary considerably and may be dependent upon ownership and control of such projects. In cases where ecotourism ventures are controlled by outsiders rather than local communities, the main beneficiaries have been governments or international tourism companies and local entrepreneurs (Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation [LTDC], 2004). Lumpkin (1993) argues that the projects in many countries illustrate that when communities become involved in grassroots level tourism, they can preserve their local environments and earn additional income, thus reducing their reliance on unsustainable environmental practices.

Many scholars have shown interest in the studying how to achieve sustainability in ecotourism. Lim and McAleer (2005) describe how difficult it has been for tourism as an industry to maintain sustainability. The argument is that it is difficult to run a tourism satisfying ecotourism while at the same time satisfying the needs of the “host communities”. As an economic activity, the effects of tourism to the environment are inevitable.

Therefore:



“...the environment is often regarded as the major pull factor of tourists’ movements contributing the desirability and attractiveness of a tourist destination. As the environment is an indispensable asset to the tourism industry the protection and conservation of environmental resources (which include natural, cultural and historic resources) are prime considerations for the tourist industry upon which it depends as primary inputs in the production of the tourist outputs” (Lim and McAleer, 2005).

The above statement shows that the well being of the environment determines the output of the tourist activity of an area. Hence the economy is dependent on the environment in as much as the environment itself is dependent on the economic benefit from tourism.

Conservation, tourism and development are interdependent to one another and they are all related or connected to man or communities living at or adjacent to the tourist's destination. The environment is the core of the tourism product. Ecotourism cannot exist without the environment, yet the relationship between ecotourism and the environment is often one of destruction of the very foundation on which it is built (Keyser, 2002).



Lumpkin (1998) indicates that efforts must be made to link community-based ecotourism with conservation; otherwise, community level tourism actually can have negative effects upon local environments. Lumpkin further argue that other sectors must actively support community efforts to engage in grassroots ecotourism of their own tourism effects are to succeed. One of the greatest successes in rural community development and eco-tourism is the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resource (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe.

Keyser (2002) argues that since the introduction of the project of CAMPFIRE, the incomes of the communities involved in the project have increased, allowing them to fund their own development projects. Villagers have become sensitive to the need to protect and recognize sensible utilization of their resources for sustained flow of income. However recent literature indicates that there is a distinct increase in cases of CAMPFIRE projects disintegrating or suffering from

mismanagement on many scales and from corruption (Balint and Mashinya, 2006; and Child [Undated]).

This example shows how local community can benefit from the environment they are living within and they can meet their target of development through conservation of their environment. Kane (2006); Magi and Nzama (2002) argue that ecotourism is a wise utilization of natural resources because it calls attention to the outstanding natural features of state, provides an excellent additional motive for conservation of our natural resources.



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Weddell (2002) argues that externalities of conservation are borne by local people, whereas the benefits are enjoyed by outsiders. Mountain gorilla in Rwanda is one of the most studied and best known species in Africa but the knowledge had been obtained by and was communicated to outsiders only (Weddell, 2002). Weddell further argued that after the initiatives to protect those gorillas, funds were generated from related activities to the local communities and additional income was obtained from entrance fees, jobs were also created for the locals as scouts, wardens, guides and maintenance workers as well as in service positions.

Emphasizing the educational aspect of ecotourism, communities and other stakeholders promote a less damaging brand of ecotourism with high beneficial returns. One of the most exceptional ecotourism characteristic is its ability to

provide learning and educational experience to both the local community and ecotourist's (Weaver, 2002).

Weaver further writes that these can range from highly formal guided tours and interpretation to informal and personalized encounters with the environment. In Belize, for instances, conservation education goes hand in hand with recreation; signs, pamphlets, posters, and t-shirts are used to advice visitors to the Belize Zoo against disturbance and destruction of wild species and habitat (Marin, Norris and Wilber, 2002).



Weaver (2002) indicates that one effective way of achieving learning experience to tourist is to encourage tourist's participation in activities such as tree planting and trial maintenance, which is a very attractive option for visitors who want to have a meaningful travel experience.

Biodiversity is a main reason why tourist visit protected areas which shows the relation between ecotourism and conservation. Linking biodiversity conservation with indigenous knowledge systems and ecotourism can best be described as ethno-tourism (Lumpkin, 1998). In Panama Canal there is an increasing interest of tourists in medicinal plants and local indigenous knowledge including how traditional healers heal and communities are well positioned to offer tourists such experience (Lumpkin, 1998).

Non-Governmental organizations (NGO's) in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize regularly support their conservation programs by selling tours, guide services, maps, publications and souvenirs to tourists (Marin et al., 2002). Marin et al. (2002) further argue that many tourists voluntarily contribute amounts above and beyond the actual costs in their visits.



Dressler (2004) writes that linking tourism development, culture and the environment have been recognized as an interrelated and interdependent web. Dressler (2004) further indicates that conservation and development are interrelated and mutually interdependent. Njoroge and Adamowicz (2005) argued that maintaining of bird's biodiversity some of Uganda's Forest Reserves was economically beneficial to forest department which run ecotourism center as various species of birds increased in number and attracted more ecotourists.

Poorly planned, unregulated ecotourism can bring marginal financial benefits and major social and environmental costs. Weaver (2002) argued that due to spatial distribution of accommodation within Thailand most ecotourism activities are popular, casual, passive, diversionary (PCPD) variety which is linked to mass tourism which poses a great threat to ecotourism product. While in Kenya, Maasai Mara Natural reserve, illegal but virtually unregulated off-road driving by operators has scarred the landscape (Vanasselt, 2001).

Viljoen and Tlabela (2007) argues that in developing countries many challenges for developing rural tourism may be complicated by political and institutional obstacles such as administrative complexities of dealing with less densely populated areas, the lack of policy co-ordination between rural development and tourism development and low priority provided to rural area by central government.



Mbaiwa (2003) argued that in Botswana, the tourism industry was criticized by bodies such as Botswana Tourism Development Programme (BTDP) and Tourism Development Bank. The tourism industry was criticized that it has failed to retain revenues for the country's citizens but benefited foreign investors who have taken their land and created conflicts between the local farming communities and the wildlife industry.

Blackstock (2005), Hang (2005), Ngubane and Diab (2004), argued that engaging local community in tourism development planning and maintaining is central to sustainable tourism. Hollard, Burian and Dixey (2003) cited in Viljoen and Tlabela (2007) argues that it is important to develop tourism in the rural areas in order to increase participation of the poor in the development of tourism and bring wider benefits to the rural areas. The notion of participation is central

to many progressive and radical approaches (Attwood, 2002) to tourism development in developing countries.

Participation of the poor in tourism development can result with shared decision making. The Rural Community Irrigation Project in Philippines reveals a good example of shared decision-making (Long, 2001). Long further indicates that the communal groups of farmers, tourism enterprises and water users participated in the process of designing the project, and their inputs were incorporated into the final plan of the project.



In Botswana, wildlife utilization schemes provide participation of local communities in the management of wildlife resources and encouraged with a view to provide employment opportunities in the rural area (Harrison, 2003). Shared ownership of the ecotourism development process both in terms of planning and benefits, would reduce the conflicts and can lay the foundation for proposed natural resource management.

Stringer (1999) cited in Attwood (2002) writes that active participation is the key to feelings of ownership that motivate the people to invest their time and energy to help shape the nature and quality of their community lives. Wallace and Russell (2004) argued that reports from projects in other countries illustrate that when communities become involved in tourism at local level, they can conserve

their local environments and earn additional income, thus becoming their reliance useful source of income. Despite the economic benefits of nature based tourism such as ecotourism, the lack of integrated planning has led to adverse effects on the environment and especially on rare natural ecosystems (Fotiou, 2004).

Apart from this, community participation provides local knowledge, technology, skills development and resources management to be used and fully employed. The local community has a better understanding and knowledge of the change taking place and problems associated with the changes in their area. This can increase flexibility and responsiveness of a community initiative to local condition (Donaldson, 2002).



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Athor (2005) argued that by encouraging ecological sustainability and grassroots development, community-based ecotourism offers hope that the environmental sensitivity and responsibility promoted by ecotourism can also serve the political, economic and social interest of the host community. Kontogergopoulos (2005) argued that the lesson learned in Thailand from ecotourism in Phuket relates to empowerment which is a corner stone of community-based ecotourism.

Tourism industry in South Africa was monopolized almost entirely by white minority as tourists and employees, but after the first democratic elections

tourism changed. Social exclusion has contributed to the historically narrow, myopic focus of the tourism industry in South Africa (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism [DEAT], 2002). Goodie, Khan and Kilian (1999) argued that in the past, few black South African were allowed access to the tourism industry, either as tourists, operators or managers. Worst of all, black cultures were ignored or repressed, and they become stereotyped and belittled communities in the tourism industry.



Jacob Zuma (former Minister of Tourism of Kwa-Zulu Natal) in his speech in Durban at "People and Parks Conference" on 23 May 1995, he argued that in the past black communities regarded themselves as playing no part in tourism, and they have been mere objects to view and photograph (Carruthers and Zaloumis, 1995 cited in Allen and Brennan, 2004). This is what is happening in most of the rural communities of Lesotho.

Lesotho is beginning to expand tourism projects or several projects have been identified to greatly expand the existing ecotourism. Even though ecotourism is a new concept in Lesotho and there is evidence which shows that communities are beginning to benefit from ecotourism in some rural areas. In Malealea, the community benefits from Malealea Lodge whereby tourists contribute more than money (Attwood, 2004). Tourists are encouraged to contribute to various community development projects such as tree planting, helping in dam

excavation, skills development and training. The Malealea community also recycles waste materials from the lodge such as cans and bottles to make fire rings in order to save firewood, construction of gabions for soil erosion and construction of greenhouse in a community garden (Attwood, 2004).

Environmental management in this areas included efforts to conserve and protect the natural environment where the primary focus is on water conservation, waste management and energy conservation.



### Research Problem

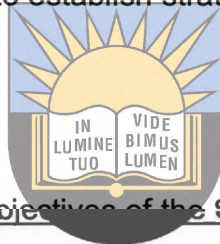
The Ministry of Tourism Environment and Culture (MTEC) and LDTC discovered that tourism can be an economic alternative for the Basotho who live within and around the naturally attractive areas that would provide sources of income while conserving natural resources and continuing with their traditional life style.

Community-based ecotourism which is a niche in tourism is seen as a good alternative to mass tourism because it allows communities to take advantage of the natural resources in their areas. Rural communities have very little knowledge and ability on how to be fully engaged in tourism projects. It appears that the two bodies (MTEC and LTDC) took the initiative of providing community-based tourism at Ha-Kome area but communities are benefiting very little. The existing tourism attractive natural resources at Ha-Kome are being underutilized but the environment is gradually being degraded by some of the tourism activities. This study examines the potential of community-based ecotourism

and perceptions of the community about tourism. Furthermore the study seeks to investigate possible constraints for sustainable tourism development Ha-Kome.

### Aim

The aim of this study is to assess the major challenges for ecotourism development at Ha-Kome and to establish strategies that can be used to achieve community-based ecotourism.



### Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the main causes for poor tourism development.
- To study the impacts caused by tourism activities at Ha-Kome.
- To study the perceptions of the Kome community about tourism and conservation.
- To establish whether community-based ecotourism is a potential conservation and development tool for the area and how it can be sustainable.
- To establish strategies to integrate the Kome community and related stakeholders in community-based ecotourism development.

## Research Methodology and Techniques

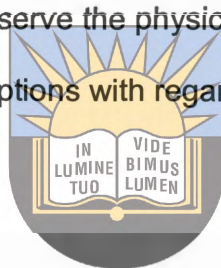
This section presents the research procedure used to undertake the study. The procedure included the methods, techniques and the sampling strategies for data collection and data analysis. The research method that was used is the qualitative research method. Mittman (2006) indicates that qualitative approaches are tools used in understanding and describing the world of human experience. Hoggart, Lees and Davies (2002) cited in Moorosi (2007) argue that qualitative research goes beyond science; it gains access to culture and how it relates to the surrounding.



Different techniques were used for gathering data from different respondents. The study included the rural community, local institutions and government officials (MTEC and LTDC). The study also included both illiterate and literate people.

Flick (2002) argued that interviews are a good method for working with respondents with different levels of literacy. In-depth interviews are conversation with purpose. The in-depth interviews are flexible, accessible and highlight interviews aspects and opinions. The in-depth interviews give the researcher the freedom to discuss a wide range of issues in length (Fairweather, Shone and Simmons, 2003) while using the interview guide. In this research the in-depth interviews were used to gather data from individuals selected from the Kome

village and the Kome cave village. The interviews were used to allow the community members to express themselves in their own language in order to be able to surface their emotional experience (Moorosi, 2007) regarding tourism in their village and abroad. In this research face-to-face in-depth interviews provided valuable insights of what the entire Kome community thought with regard to tourism. Interviews were useful in this research because they allowed the researcher to be able to observe the physical reactions of the community members and determine perceptions with regard to their previous experiences as far as tourism is concerned.



During the interviews the researcher was able to observe the physical reactions and emotions of the individual respondent when responding to certain questions. Where the respondents struggled to answer because of not being familiar with certain concepts probing was easily done. Again the researcher had to probe where clarity was needed for the answers given by the respondent. Interviews were helpful in this research because as mentioned above, that the Kome community have little knowledge about tourism therefore it was easier for the researcher to fully explain what is needed by a particular question or the meaning of certain concepts language.

Interviews also allowed the interviewer to repeat the questions wherever the respondent needed clarity with different words (Valentine, 2005). However,

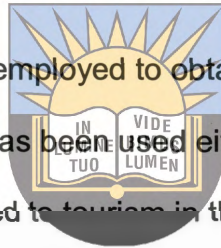
since an interview is a kind of conversation with purpose, it required quiet and private places in order to allow the respondents to respond freely. Interviews with the community members were conducted in their homes.

To find participants for interviewing from the community members both snowballing and purposive sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling techniques were used for the respondents who had common characteristics such as Kome cave dwellers. All the Kome cave dwellers respondents interviewed had their own interview guide.



According to Flowerday and Masiti (2005) Focus groups can obtain opinions and experiences from a group of people in a more natural setting rather than an artificial setting of conducting one-on-one sessions in questionnaire or interview research. Focus groups allow more interaction between the researcher and participants. In cases where clarity was needed, the researcher used follow up questions. The researcher was also able to observe non-verbal responses such as gestures, smiles and/or body movements which may have carried information that complemented or contradicted the verbal answers of the respondents. The aim of the focus groups was to gain insights into how people think and understand the concept of ecotourism, their role as the host community, and their perceptions on ecotourism.

Focus groups were used to gather data from local institutions (tourism committee members) and women who are living in the cave village. The focus groups were further used to gain insights, views and opinions from members of the local institutions about the development of tourism in their area. The local institutions focus groups also discussed issues pertaining the role and governance of tourism in their area.

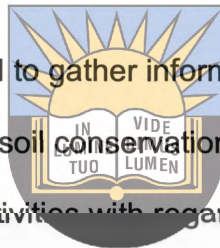


In addition focus groups were employed to obtain information about the indigenous knowledge which has been used either for conservation practices or developmental problems related to tourism in the area. The focus groups allow the researcher to return to comments and to cross-reference between participants in a more interactive manner than that afforded by a questionnaire or individual (Conradson, 2005 cited in Moorosi, 2007).

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The questionnaire survey is an important tool when primary data are required about people, their behavior, attitudes, opinions and their awareness about specific issues (Flowerdew and Martin 2002; Flick, 2002). The perceptions on ecotourism as an economic development strategy and a tool for conservation formed some of the major issues of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The questionnaires had both open and closed ended questions. Questionnaires mostly served to collect data related to socio-economic conditions, natural resources management, decision-making and

perceptions of community with regard to tourism development. The researcher used purposive sampling to recruit participants in the questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were used to gather data from community members. However, questionnaires are very objective and quick to obtain data within a very short time (Flick, 2002) but they limit answers of the respondents. To overcome this problem other techniques such as observations were used.



Lastly, observations were used to gather information by inspection of the local surroundings for example, the soil conservation measures which are in place, people's behavior and their activities with regard to tourism. Again the researcher used the observation method to identify potential natural features such as water falls, and other caves which could be of interest to tourists. The observation technique was the best method to review the natural setting of the area for the suitability of ecotourism. The researcher also used photographs to supplement observation in the study area. In this study photographs are used as part of personal observation not only to help the reader to imagine the area but also to provide evidence of some of the issues uncovered.

The overall number of interviewed respondents was thirty nine. The respondents included Kome Cave Village Community, the Kome Community, the Kome Tourism Development Committee and government officials. The Kome Cave Community respondents (cave dwellers) included six family heads of which five

were females and one male. The overall breakdown of respondent's category and research techniques used for data collection is indicated in Table1.

Table1: Research Techniques and Category of the Respondents

Data Collection technique	Category and Number of Respondents
Interviews	6 Cave dwellers
	1 Information officer (LTDC)
	2 MTEC officials ( Director of Culture and tourism officer)
	10 Community members
	1 Guard (LTDC)
Focus Groups	6 Committee Members
	5 Cultural group members
Questionnaires	8 Community members

### Significance of the Study

Most research on community-based ecotourism has been done in protected areas while little research has been done in unprotected areas where communities use natural resources for their survival. Previous research did not address the issue on how to control access to attractive resources in non-

protected areas that are used for tourism purpose. Previous research on community-based ecotourism did not address the issue how natural resources used by communities daily in non-protected areas should be conserved. This study hopes to devise strategies which can be used to conserve attractive natural resources through community-based ecotourism in non-protected area in order to bring development to rural communities. At Kome, cave dwellers forms a basic part of the tourism product. Therefore the study is intending to come up with possible strategies which can integrate the Kome community (including the cave dwellers) as part of tourism product, beneficiaries and managers of Kome community-based ecotourism.



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CHAPTER II  
CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief overview of the Lesotho's National Tourism Policy. The chapter also highlights tourism trends and assets in Lesotho. The challenges and constraints for both tourism and ecotourism development in Lesotho are also reviewed.



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Conceptual Overview

Contemporary debates in community-based ecotourism for conservation and developments are centered on the opportunities and disadvantages that tourism can generate for developing countries. Community-based ecotourism could be one way of creating a more sustainable tourism industry (Blackstock, 2005). According to Mashinini (2002); and Dohnal, Kathrada and Law (2001), community-based ecotourism is a viable strategy for development due to benefits such as increase in foreign exchange, local income generation, indirect and direct employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled people. Ofusu-Amaah (2007) and Jones (2001) argue that community based ecotourism

has ability to promote local economic development and it also has ability to forge positive economic linkage between agriculture and tourism.

Furthermore community-based ecotourism is recognized for its potential to provide education to both the host communities and tourists. Community-based ecotourism can be used to fund conservation; improve rural infrastructure such as roads, buildings and sanitation (WTO, 2003; and UNDP, 2000). Once the area is targeted for tourism development the process of infrastructure and communication improvement begins. These do not provide services to the tourism industry alone but also to the rural industry and also enhance rural



development in that particular area. Community-based ecotourism has the ability to preserve local handicrafts and skills and promote traditional art (Holmes, 2003).

Harrison (2003) writes that tourism tends to increase local reliance upon global economy, leaking upon global economic profits outside of the community back to the companies and countries that control most of the travel infrastructure. Again, those who criticize tourism development put more emphasizes on its ability to bring social impacts in rural communities such as promotion of prostitution, cultural denigration and disorientation through demonstration effects by tourists with regard to dress, mannerisms and alien behavioral patterns (Mashinini, 2002). Ecotourism development is also criticized for its ability to violate the

fundamental human rights, environmental hazards, and failure to deliver community benefit, source of conflicts over poor profit distribution and also ability to damage environments even though it persists as a strategy for conservation and development (Kamuaro, 2007 and West 2006 cited in Wikipedia, 2006). At national level community-based ecotourism can influence the development of tourism related infrastructure such as hotels, airports, transport, logistics to mention the few. The governments benefit from tourism and community-based ecotourism by collection of revenues from taxes and foreign exchange. However for all these important aspects to be possible a strong institutional background is central towards the success of tourism development.



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Lesotho National Tourism Policy: Historical Overview

Since independence in 1966, the government of Lesotho has sought to promote tourism as one of the major strategies for national development (Mashinini, 2002). The first tourism policy for the Kingdom of Lesotho emphasized the need to increase accommodation facilities especially hotels of international standards and this was between the 1970s and 1980s. The strategy was aimed at increasing the accommodation capacity from the existing individual local hotels in Maseru and in other district centers of Lesotho. During that period, two international hotels were build namely the Hilton hotel and Holiday Inn.

The second tourism policy sought to attract more international tourists to gain more revenue and to create more job opportunities (Mashinini, 2002). The national tourism plan emphasized the use of natural attractions, including physical and cultural environment of Lesotho to diversify its tourism product. The lack of supporting infrastructure such as roads, accommodation and adequate sign posts became the major challenges for this strategy. However in 1970s, Lesotho tourism reached its climax in terms of the revenues and number of international tourist's arrivals.



The tourism industry was based on gambling at the Casinos which were created by the opening of Hilton hotel and Holiday Inn (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993). There was no legislation for gambling and gambling was allowed in those Casino facilities provided. Lesotho had South African tourists as the main consumers because of apartheid and racial segregation in South African. Gambling was restricted in the Bantustans (Homelands) areas including Ciskei, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. Apart from this, Lesotho had an advantage in that interracial sex and pornography were allowed in the country (Mashinini, 2002). Lesotho used this strategy to achieve its objective of increasing the number of international tourist's arrivals.

Furthermore, tourists from abroad used Lesotho as vantage point to observe the apartheid system that was used in the Republic of South Africa. Unfortunately,

in the 1980s the Lesotho's tourism industry declined due to competition caused by the introduction of casinos, non-racial sex and pornography in former Bantustans. Liberal policy towards gambling in the Homelands created major developments in South Africa such as the Sun City and the Thaba-Nchu Sun (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993).

The third tourism policy emphasized the establishment of institutional structures to formulate policies and strategies develop the tourism industry. The strategy that was used to achieve these objectives was the establishment of four institutions which were closely working together for tourism development in Lesotho (Mashinini, 2002). The four institutions were the Department of Tourism, Lesotho Tourism Cooperation Board, Lesotho Hotels Group and National Tourism Information Office. However most of these bodies were not able to achieve the desired objectives due to poor funding from the government and lack of capacity. Instead the hotels which were owned by foreigners dominated the industry because they had much more capital as they were chain hotels.

During this period (1980s) the National Tourism Corporation Board ceased and Lesotho Tourist Board (L.TB) took over under the Lesotho Tourist Board Act 1983 as a designated statutory organization responsible for marketing the tourism sector at the macro-level and micro level.

The fourth tourism policy proposed to develop the tourism supporting infrastructure in order to improve accessibility (Mashinini, 2002). The strategy used to achieve the goals of this policy was the establishment of various mountain roads, footbridges and introduction of charter flights to very remote areas. However, problems such as poor maintenance of the roads and expensive charter flights posed difficult challenges for the industry to achieve those objectives.



During the 1980s in Lesotho, the institutional structure underlying the tourism sector together with the lines of communication between various government agencies that were involved and the private sector were practically not existing (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993). Apart from this, tourism in Lesotho remained virtually undeveloped and lacked essential and consistent public sector direction. Some of the reasons which are associated with these failures are that tourism was not prioritized by all the previous governments. There was also no formal tourism policy for the sector with solid objectives, implementable strategies and well defined action programs. Those informal tourism policies did not involve the rural communities but were aimed at improving the destinations. Tourism was not decentralized and few developments were undertaken in Maseru.

At the end of 1993, LTB was criticized for practically achieving marginal or no success in the development of tourism product in line with the product diversification scheme (Lesotho Tourism Board 10 year Anniversary Report, 1983 -1993). This was because of poor management and lack of properly defined and consistent policy framework.

After 17 years of full operation, in July 2000 the Lesotho Tourist Board ceased to operate. In 2002 the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) was introduced by the amendment of the Lesotho National Tourism Policy of 2001 into the Lesotho Tourism Act of 2002. The mandate of the LTDC includes promotion and marketing of tourism in Lesotho. Some of the goals of this organization are to make and sustain a quantifiable contribution to poverty reduction through tourism and facilitation of job creation and income generation projects. Some of the duties of the LTDC are to promote and market the tourism industry nationally and abroad.

In terms of tourism development in Lesotho, history reflects very little opportunity for rural community participation. The fact that most of the previous government did not prioritize tourism and at the same time the guidelines for tourism had little or no focus at rural community demonstrates that rural people have not been benefiting from tourism. Instead tourism was centralized, urban-orientated, benefiting very few Basotho community and foreign investors only.

### Current Lesotho National Tourism Policy

Lesotho gained independence in 1966 and since then the country has devised policies and pursued a number of strategies to promote tourism to achieve national development. However, no formal tourism policy existed until Lesotho went to the second democratic elections in 1992. The newly elected government after the 1992 election clearly stated that the role of tourism in Lesotho is important for social and economic development (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1994). Consequently a new Lesotho National Tourism Policy (Tourism Policy 2001) was formulated by the tourism sector together with different stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), private and civil sectors. The policy vision for tourism is to develop Lesotho into a quality destination and make tourism industry the biggest national employer and revenue earner by the year 2020.

The current Lesotho National Tourism Policy's central focus is on actions that are necessary to combat poverty and reduce unemployment in the country (Lesotho Review, 2007). The policy also aims to increase the contribution of the tourism sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increase foreign exchange. The policy also fosters the formation of smart-partnership between public and private sector while involving community to participate in tourism. The policy also seeks to promote agriculture and other sectoral linkages onto tourism.

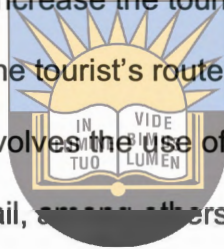
In line with this, the Lesotho National Environmental Policy (2000) advocates conservation of Basotho cultural heritage and utilize it for the benefit of the present and the future generations. The Lesotho National Environmental Policy (2000) seeks to foster the community development management and revenue sharing from sustainable utilization of natural resources on customary or public lands.



The Lesotho National Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) also highlights tourism as one of sectors which should be prioritized in order to achieve development and reducing poverty in the country (www.Lesotho.gov, 2005). In line with Lesotho National Vision 2020 aims and objectives, strategies have been formulated to help Lesotho be a prime tourist destination and make the industry the biggest employer and source of revenue by 2020 (Lesotho Vision 2020, 2002).

The strategies which are implemented to achieve these tourism objectives include bilateral cooperation of Lesotho and South Africa. The government of Lesotho is intending to increase the average tourist's spend and the average length of visit from two to four days. This is because South Africa is important in that it serves as the gate way to Lesotho.

Another strategy of the National Tourism Policy is the development of tourism circuits between these two countries so that tourists to South Africa could visit Lesotho as part of their tourism package (Mashinini, 2002). In this strategy, Lesotho is promoted as one of the main “stopovers” in the circuits (Lesotho Review, 2007). This strategy is also strengthened by the development of smart partnerships and joint ventures with South African tourist operators. Another strategy which is intended to increase the tourist’s expenditure within the community is the creation of the tourist’s routes in the country which comprises of adventure tourism which involves the use of pony trekking, hiking, climbing, and mountain biking or 4x4 trail, and so on and so forth.



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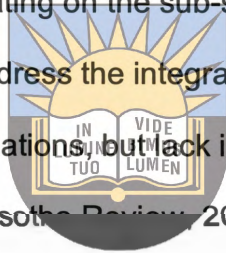
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Lesotho is affiliated to World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the recent national tourism policy seeks to address the key issues such as sustainable tourism which is informed by this organization. The strategy which is used to implement the sustainable tourism policies includes preservation of historical and cultural heritage, creation of cultural parks and promotion of cultural tourism which are the basis for the development of ecotourism (Lesotho Review, 2004).

Another strategy which is aimed at achieving the sustainable tourism policy is the protection of the physical environment through the development of parks and protected areas. The strategy is also aimed at promoting community's

participation in decision making and management with the intention to ensure that the communities are benefiting from such projects.

The combination of Pro-poor tourism and Bilateral Cooperation is seen as an important strategy to be adopted in order to integrate poverty concerns in tourism (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2006). The cooperation between Lesotho and South Africa was aimed at concentrating on the sub-sectors which employed unskilled poor people. Strategies to address the integration of poverty concerns in tourism have focused on tourist destinations, but lack initiatives targeted at communities living in around such area (Lesotho Review, 2007).



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The communities are also encouraged to take part in tourism related activities such as food production (for example, horticultural micro-projects), tour guides, handicrafts production, organization of tourist tours, provision of animal transport such as horses and ponies and the provision of traditional entertainment and accommodation. The private sector is encouraged to take part at improving facilities such communication, infrastructure, accommodation and other facilities which require huge capital. The national tourism policy seeks to provide enabling environment for local and private investors to invest in the tourism industry of Lesotho.

However, since the inception of the new national tourism policy, little has been done in the implementing the proposed strategies. There is lack of accommodation especially in the tourists attractive places in the mountains which result in short stays of the tourists. Tourists normally reside in South Africa and go to Lesotho for a day trip not sleeping over. There lack of tourism information centers throughout the country and the few available personnel in the offices need adequate training in order to render efficient service to tourists (Mashinini, 2002).



#### Tourism Prioritization in Lesotho

Lesotho is a member of several international organizations at the global and regional levels. In its efforts to promote the tourism industry the MTEC cooperates with other national and international organizations.

At the global level Lesotho is a member of United Nations, WTO, UNDP, among others. At regional and continental level Lesotho is a member of Southern African Development Commission (SADC), Regional Tourism of Southern Africa (RETOSA), Maloti Tourism Forum and many more. Few of the initiatives which the country has embarked on are briefly discussed below.

The government of Lesotho is therefore committed to the international ideas for the achievement of sustainable development for poverty reduction. Lesotho is

also committed to the declarations made by the Heads of State and Government ratified in the World Summit Sustainable Development, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs forms one of the bases of the National vision 2020 and Poverty reduction Strategy. The MDGs, Goal 7 which is to “Ensure Environmental Sustainability” is in line with the overall national program for tourism, environment and cultural development as established in the government of Lesotho PRS and Vision 2020.



The government of Lesotho is actively engaged in developing policy for the tourism sector in collaboration with other organization such as WTO and UNDP. The government of Lesotho has also worked with UNDP and WTO to develop the support of institutional and capacity strengthening for the tourism sector. For the promotion and preservation for Lesotho’s natural and cultural heritage, the UNDP in collaboration with government of Lesotho has worked on the integrated watershed management project to increased food security and livelihoods (<http://www.undp.org.ls>, 2007). The aim was to facilitate the employment of communities and community’s representatives in integrated natural resource management to enhance food security and livelihood at the watershed and catchments level.

The tourism sector in Lesotho has been prioritized at the national level. This is evident in that many national policies have incorporated tourism in order to

achieve economic and social development. The Lesotho National Environmental Policy (2000) guiding principles indicate that tourism is the development sector in which economic returns are mostly dependent on the quality of the environment. Some of the strategies aimed to achieve this policy include the public awareness and to promote understanding of the essential fundamental linkages between development and environment. The policy is also in favour of conservation of the natural and cultural heritage for tourism and community development.



The Department of Culture of the MTEC is responsible for protecting and promoting Lesotho's national cultural heritage. The aim is vigorously promote cultural activities in order to enhance national image and identity which are the foundation for the tourism industry (Lesotho Review, 2007). The Department of Culture is also engaged in research related to cultural heritage and monuments found in Lesotho, educating young people about their culture, promoting tourism and small scale manufacturing among others.

### Tourism Trends in Lesotho

The tourism industry has experienced marginal development over a number of decades. Some of the factors which are associated with this problem include political instabilities, lack of accommodation in mountainous region, roads, and capital to mention a few. According to the Lesotho Central Bank, tourism is expected to contribute more to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the

country. It was expected that tourism would contribute more than 2.7% of the GDP in the 2006 (Table 2).

Table 2: Contribution of Tourism to the Lesotho's GDP

Year	Percentage Contribution	Current Prices (Prices in Million Maloti)	Constant Prices 1995 (Prices in Million Maloti)
2000	1.5	80.4	54.7
2001	1.5	83.9	53.4
2002	1.5	102.2	55.6
2003	2.0	146.7	60.6
2004	2.0	160.4	63.3

Source: Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2006

The data on international arrivals indicated a declining (Table 3) trend which is different from the increase observed at the international level (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2006). Even though there is limited information based on the arrivals and tourism contribution to the country's GDP decline can be associated with 1998 political unrest that culminated in rioting and destruction of property.

**Table 3: International Tourist's Arrivals to Lesotho from all Countries**

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
All countries	3008451	301758	294644	287281	360955	300955	303578

Source: Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, 2006

It is believed that tourism benefits are not fully realized due to lack of distributional convections with rest of the economy (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2006). The decline in the international arrivals may be caused by tourism authority to capture the tourist's arrivals at the different ports of entry of the country. Failure of the tourism authorities to register tourist in various place of interest may result in poor Tourism statistics. There is also a large number of international arrivals recorded which is not indicated to what was their purpose for visiting Lesotho (LTDC, 2006). Furthermore, there is no distributional convention to the rest of the economy such that factor of arrivals in relation to business purpose are not considered as important to tourism of having a positive effect on tourism development.

Majority of the tourists coming to Lesotho are from South Africa of which most spend one day. Other visitors from Africa and abroad spend two to three days on average. The purpose of the visits is mostly scenery, adventure tourism, sight seeing and cultural tourism and village tourism to the lesser extent of which this

destination are in the remote areas. South African tourists use their own cars and tourists from abroad use South African tour operators (LTDC, 2007). Few of the tourists prefer to use Lesotho tour operators companies, however these companies are small and not well marketed (LTDC, 2007). Accommodation, food and drinks fetch the highest amount of revenues collected from tourists. Most of these benefits are borne in Maseru and other centers of Lesotho and to the lesser extend in the rural areas.



### Tourism Assets and Opportunities in Lesotho

Lesotho is completely located out of the tropics and the country is bilharzia and malaria free. Lesotho has well distinct seasons with hot summers and long, warm autumn days and has an average sunshine of over 280 days each year.

The country often marketed as “The Mountain Kingdom” or the “The Kingdom in the Sky” because it lies above 1200m from the sea level. The country possesses various pleasing aesthetic scenery which comprises soaring peaks, unique rock formations, spectacular weathered sandstone formations and waterfalls. There is scarce wildlife but plentiful birdlife. Many attractions are found in remote areas and are not yet explored or utilized (Lesotho Review, 2004).

Lesotho has a wealth of historical and paleontological features which include caves villages, caves with rock art made by Bushmen, dinosaur footprints.

Natural resources include common and extraordinary flora and fauna not found

elsewhere which include the ice rat, spiral aloe and numerous endemic afro-alpine plants. Lesotho also offer several opportunities which include sports, hiking, trout fishing, health retreats, rock climbing, bird watching, skiing in winter, camping and many others (Lesotho Review, 2002; and Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993).

### Constraints for Tourism Development in Lesotho

Lesotho's tourism industry is faced with a number of critical challenges. Firstly, the environment of Lesotho is rapidly degrading because of socio-economic and agriculture related activities. Secondly, there has been lack of will to prioritize tourism as an important sector for the development of the country by the government and the developers (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993). Thirdly, the country has lack of capacity for tourism development in terms of technical, financial and human skills. Lastly, the country has poor infrastructure to support tourism activities such as roads, accommodation, tele-communication to mention the few (Mashinini, 2002).

Tourism in Lesotho has not been viewed as a national priority by previous national tourism policies and by most of the governments. There is limited integration of local communities by the government policies and the developers in tourism development (Lesotho National Tourism Development Plan, 1993). There is also limited funding for the local entrepreneurship in tourism

development. The government bodies (MTEC and LTDC) responsible for tourism development are small, poorly funded and without enough human resource to facilitate tourism development in Lesotho. The individuals or enterprises which can afford to be engaged in tourism development have to compete with foreign investors who have large sum of capital and expertise. There is also lack of tourism related education such as hotel management, catering, hospitality management and others in Lesotho (Mashinini, 2002).



Ecotourism and Ecotourism Projects in Lesotho.

Lesotho is a mountainous country and there is a lot of outstanding scenery to be enjoyed. The government of Lesotho has realized that tourism has a potential to be the largest employer in the country and can be used for conservation of natural resources and heritage. The linkage between ecotourism and other sectors can create employment to several rural communities. The creation and promotion of ecotourism in rural communities can help to successfully reduce the pressure of unemployment in urban areas while combating poverty in rural areas (Lesotho Review, 2004). However, tourism as a sector is not well developed in Lesotho while ecotourism is in the early stage of development.

The MTEC and LTDC strategies for development of the tourism industry included the cooperation of tourism with natural resources available on communal lands or with those heritage sites that are individual or communally owned to develop

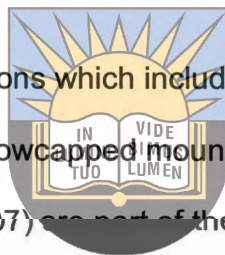
community-based ecotourism project. The rural communities in Lesotho have limited knowledge and experience on how to fully engage in tourism enterprises. Most of the communities depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods and they tend to conceptualize their environment as a place to live, farm, extract food, water and firewood not as something they can sell intact (Ishida, 2004). Therefore, using the forests, rivers, caves and scenery that are already in their possession to attract tourists is a new idea to them.



The few ecotourism initiatives which are being implemented in Lesotho are collaboration of the government together with the private organization. Most of these initiatives are run by international experts and financed by the international organizations. The other few are operated by private business and local communities.

The government strategies of implementing sustainable tourism policy in Lesotho used the concept of ecotourism to promote tourism development programs and responsible management. Ecotourism and environmental conservation efforts have been undertaken in different projects in which many stakeholders such as the government of Lesotho and South African government, development agents, private sectors and the communities formed partnerships.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHDA) is being considered as a powerful catalyst for ecotourism opportunities in the highlands (Lesotho Review, 2007). Lesotho Highlands Natural Resources and Rural Income Enhancement Project which is developed by the African bank is another project which is also aimed at generating income at grassroots level to reduce poverty while protecting the environment (Lesotho Review, 2004).



Prominent ecotourism attractions which include flora and fauna of a unique high-altitude wetland as well as snowcapped mountain peaks and outstanding scenic beauty (Lesotho, Review, 2007) are part of the peace parks which is being developed between Lesotho and South Africa under the MDTP. This project is expected to benefit many people as it covers three provinces in South Africa and a large number of districts in Lesotho. The project is also expected to bring several opportunities directly and indirectly linked to ecotourism such as improved range management, sustainable natural resource management, infrastructures such as roads linking Maloti Mountains to Kwa-Zulu Natal (MDTP, 2006; and MTDP, 2007). Financed by the Global Environment Facility and World Bank the project is aimed at conserving biodiversity and cultural heritage while contributing to community-based tourism.

The Quthing Wildlife Development Trust (QWDT) is one of the newly established communities initiatives aimed at ecotourism development and conservation of

rare flora and fauna as well as preservation of heritage and culture in the Quthing district of Lesotho. The QWDT has successfully implemented ecotourism projects in four communities in that district (Vogeley, 2005).

In Malealea, the Malealea Community Development Trust and the Malealea Lodge have formed partnership in development projects. There are various projects which are being carried out and they education, health and well-being, environment, income enhancement and self sufficiency and infrastructural development (Attwood, 2002). The lodge encourages their clients to interact with the local people in a number of different ways such as involvement of tourists in local development projects, waste management initiatives and water conservation initiatives, among others.



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### Challenges for Ecotourism Development in Lesotho

Lesotho is a fence-free country. One of the challenges facing ecotourism development is that most of the tourist attractive places are unprotected and geographically fragmented. This poses a threat to responsible and controlled tourism. Most of these wonderful features are found in communal lands are exposed to damage by people who have little knowledge about tourism. Another challenge is the abundance of plant and animal designated area for conservation and tourism development are under constant threat from commercial interests, encroaching of timber plantations and cropping (Lesotho Review, 2007). There

is also a lack of understanding of how to convert the rich environment and cultural heritage into ecotourism business by both communities and the business people living around these attractive places. Furthermore, most of the alpine lodges found in Lesotho do not have close relations with the communities which are adjacent to them. In fact they market their business as eco-destinations but totally practicing the opposite (Mashinini, 2002).



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## CHAPTER III

### STUDY AREA

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the area where the study took place. It gives a brief description of Lesotho and origin of the Kome Cave Village. The chapter also discusses the socio-economic aspects in the study area and further traces the history of tourism and the present tourism situation in Kome village. Lastly, the chapter highlights other tourism attractions around the Kome village that could be developed.



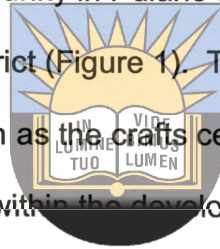
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Lesotho is a small land locked country by the Republic of South Africa and it is one of the only three remaining monarchies in the African continent. The country lies entirely out of the tropics with its altitudes more than 1000m above the sea level. The country lies between the latitudes 28° & 31°S and longitudes 27° & 30°E ([www.lesotho.gov.ls](http://www.lesotho.gov.ls)., 2005). The extreme elevation gives Lesotho a moderately temperate climate. Because of the topography, the country has abundance of water, range lands and diamonds which are some of its primary natural resources. About seventy-five percent of the country is mountainous with deep valleys and rivers while the remaining twenty-five percent is made up of the

lowlands, foot hills and the Senqu River Valley. The Basotho tribe comprises 90% of the total populations while the smaller groups of the population are Indians or European descent and mixed races. Lesotho's cultural and historical traditions co-exist with the economic progress ([www.lesotho.gov.ls.](http://www.lesotho.gov.ls.), 2005).

### Research Location

Ha-Kome is a small rural community in Pulane area which is situated in the foothill of Lesotho in Berea district (Figure 1). The headquarters of the district is Teyateyaneng (TY) town known as the crafts center of Lesotho. Ha-Kome is one of the new tourist destinations within the developed tourist route in the northern part of the country. Kome became one of the top tourist destinations in Lesotho in 2005 soon after the opening of the Kome Information and crafts center. The main tourist attraction of the area is the heritage found in the caves (caves with various archeological features such as dwellings) and the cave dwellings known as Kome cave village.



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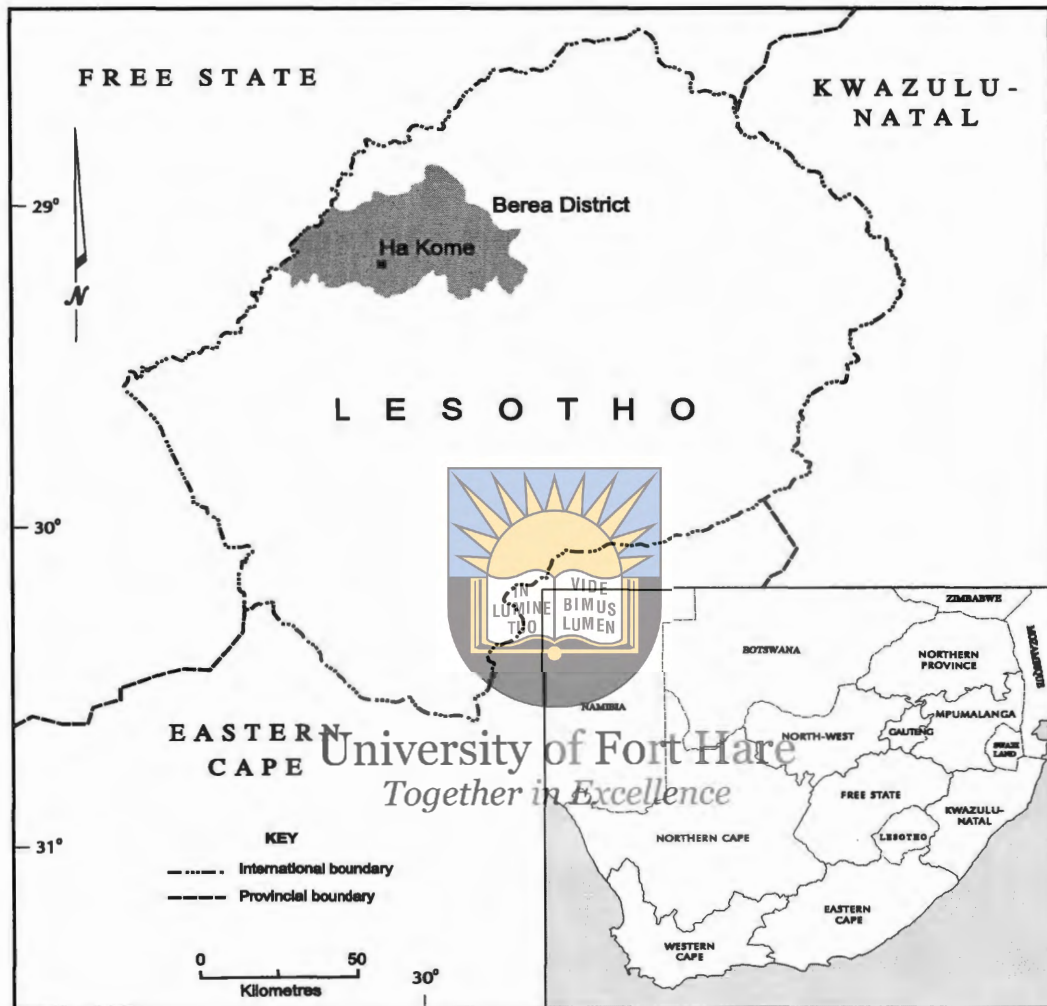


Figure 1: Kome Village, Lesotho (Source: Author, 2008)

The choice of the study area was based on a number of reasons. Kome village and Kome cave village was seen as the best area to initiate community-based ecotourism for conservation and development. The principles of the concept of ecotourism which is the framework for this study were used as guidelines to identify the study area. The reasons for choosing Kome as the study area include the following:

Kome is an unprotected rural area and has a potential to attract many tourists. The area has heritage (cave dwellings) which is used by the local community as part of their livelihoods and it is surrounded by great history of Lesotho. The Kome village is within some of the newly developed tourist routes (Figure 2) in Lesotho and has potential to offer a wide range of tourism activities.

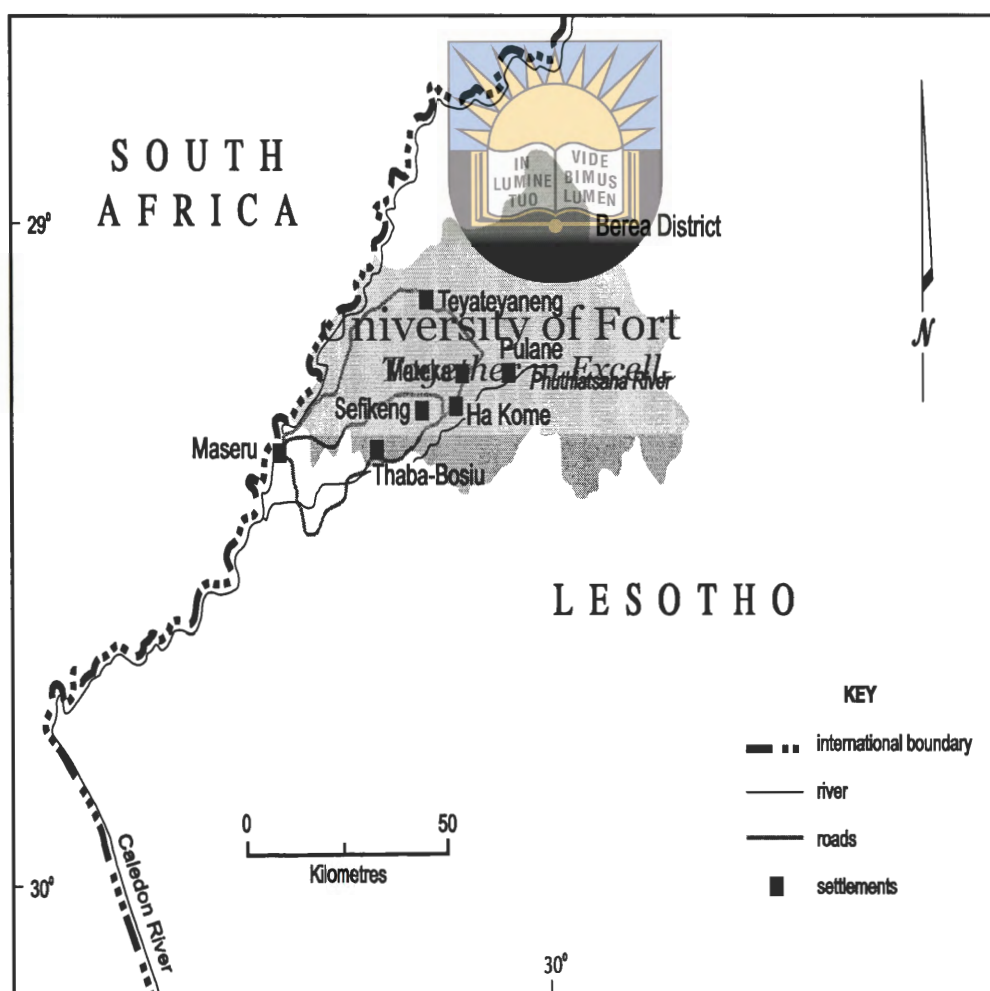


Figure 2: The Newly Developed Tourists Circuits (Source: Author, 2008)

Kome village is accessible through private or public transport and it is not far from main centers which offer public services. Kome village does not have various wildlife resources but has breathtaking scenery, history, culture and crafts among others. Kome can offer nature-based tourism, community tourism and heritage tourism.

### A Brief History of Ha-Kome

The village of Ha-Kome is in the Pulane part of Malimong (Place of Cannibals) Area, hence the name Pulane, Ha Kome ('Ha' means the place of- for example the place of Kome or Kome's) (Ramatshaba, 2006). The village is made up of two parts of which the first part is a typical rural area and the second part is the cave village (Kome Cave Village) which is the main tourist's attraction. The cave village is very little known because it is situated in a very awkward position. The Kome village is located in the Phuthiatsana valley in a big gorge of a small tributary of the river. The gorge has several high sandstone cliffs and a number of caves. The main cave (where the cave village is located) has some faint rock art that signifies that the early inhabitants were Bushmen (San) (Plate 1).

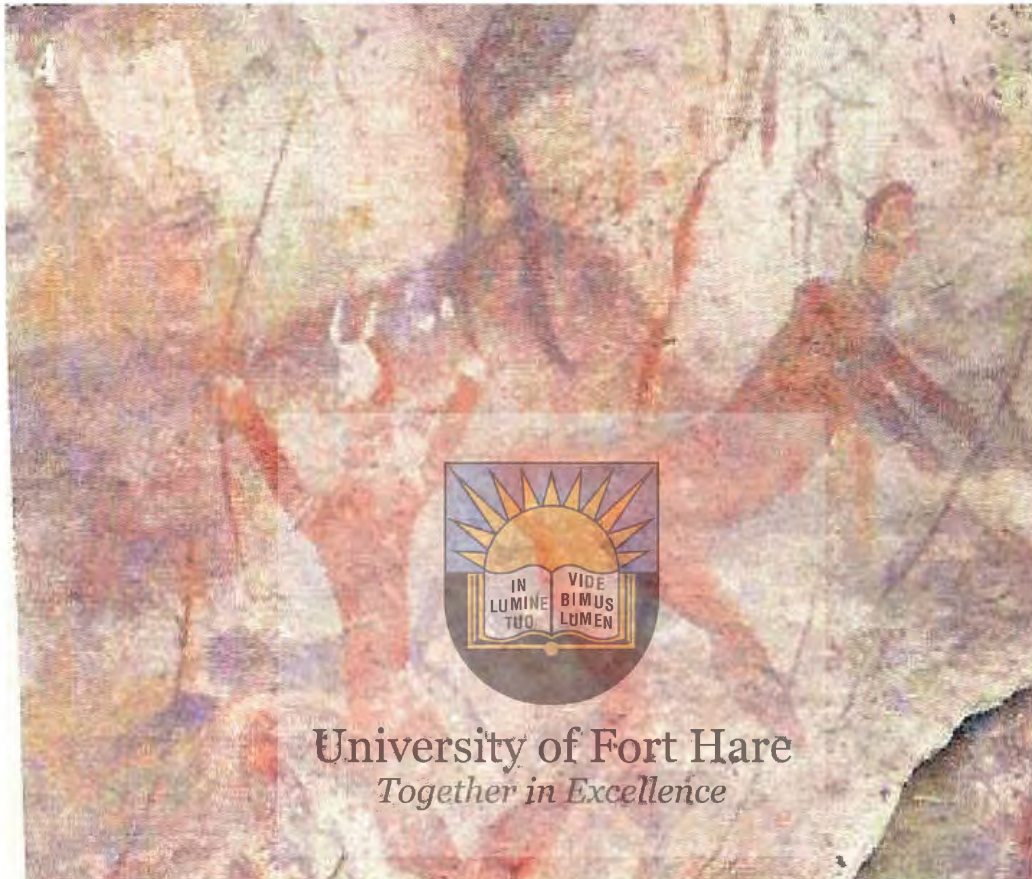


Plate 1: Rock Art in Kome Cave Village (Source: Ramakhula, 2006).

History tells that the gorge was bushy and the caves became shelters and a hiding place. Furthermore, it is believed that there were wild flesh eating animals which were danger to the early inhabitants of the cave. Later after the extinction of the flesh-eating animals around the place the cannibals (Refer to Plate 2) became another threat to the early inhabitants.

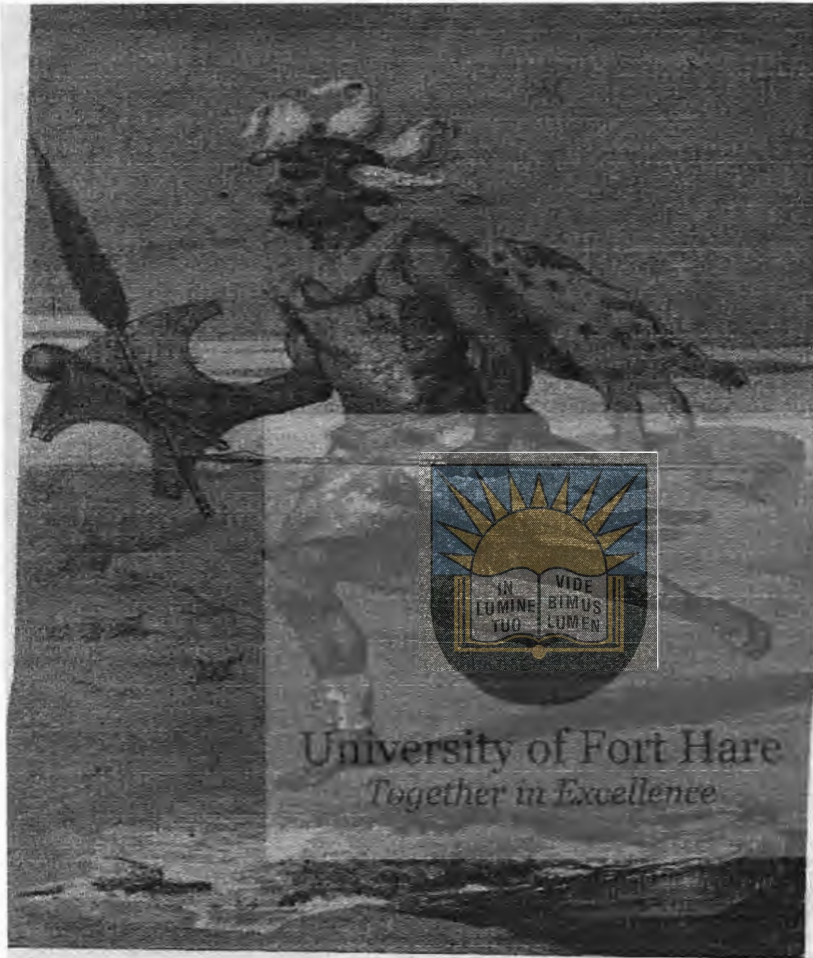


Plate 2: Lelimo – a Cannibal (Source: Ramakhula, 2006)

According to Ramakhula (2006), early inhabitants of the cave were able to protect themselves from their enemies either directly or by magic. History also reveals that another enemy at this place was a fearsome snake that lived in a four transaction tunnel that had an initial hole in the cave and the transaction had openings at different places (Ramakhula, 2006). The tunnel had a flat area which was a resting place for this huge snake. However, the Kome people

though their magical ability weakened the snake and later used the place for relaxation and hiding when attacked by foreigners who did not know about the hollow.

There are quite a number of different stories or versions about the original cave dwellers even though some do not actually specify the origin of those people.

Most of the versions reveal that the original cave dwellers had strong warriorship and knowledge of magical protection measures as they were able to weaken the power of those cannibals. The version further reveal that the Basia clan (belong to Kome's surname) was the first people to occupy the cave followed by the Bataung clan.

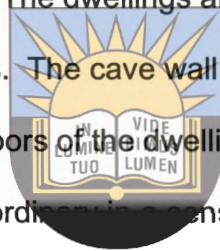


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As the population of the cave dwellers increased most of the Basia clan established a village adjacent to the cave village of which it extended to the top of the cave. The majority of the Bataung moved to the top of the gorge where they established their own village. The typical Ha-Kome village consists of clusters huts made of mud and stone material with traditional thatch and modern houses built with bricks and corrugated iron roofs. Each cluster is generally inhabited by generations of the family and each group of huts has a kraal. Most of the clusters consist of an extended family including the grandparents, parents and children.

### The Kome Cave Village

The cave dwellings are used by the descendants of the original cave dwellers who are the Kome's and other clans who later joined the original dwellers. The Basia (Kome) is a dominating group of the Kome Cave Village, followed by the Bataung clan. Presently there are eight families living in the cave village of which the majority is headed by women such as widows, women deserted by husbands and single mothers. The dwellings are built of mud, stones and indigenous materials and sticks. The cave wall forms the rear wall and roof of the dwellings (Plate 3). The floors of the dwellings are made of mud and cow dung. The cave dwellers are ordinary in a sense that even though their houses are unique their ways and means of living are by and large like any other Basotho villagers near and far from Ha-Kome (Ramakhula, 2006).



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The dwellers are illiterate and they are all unemployed and rely on seasonal or informal work. The dwellers use firewood for cooking and heating. In most families floor mats are used for sleeping and the dwellings have a single room dwelling used for different purposes such sleeping, preparing food and storing food and other household resources.

Harvesting of wild fruits and plants is common for the cave dwellers. Most of the families in the cave dwellings lack assets such as arable land, farm implements or livestock that are common in rural communities.

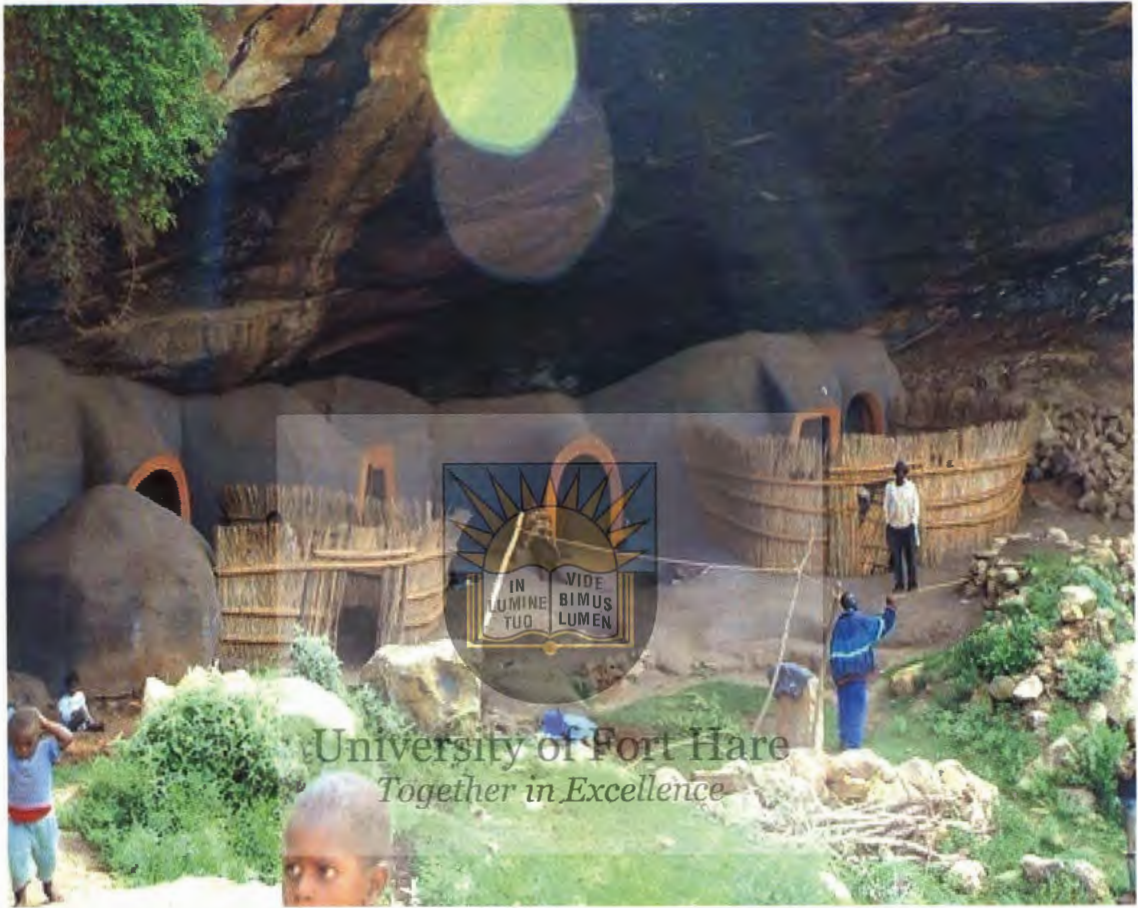


Plate 3: The Kome Cave Village (Source: Author, 2007)

Lack of availability of land for cropping and livestock forces the cave dwellers to be involved in share-cropping with other villagers who have such resources and willing to help them. The cave dwellers even lack backyard gardens for growing vegetables as the cave and land adjacent to the cave is held communally. The dwellers uses stone grinding mill for making meal mealie and for preparing other traditional food. Most of the women depend on income from the sales of traditional beer which they brew.

## Socio-Economic Aspects of Ha-Kome

The economic base of the Kome community is subsistence farming and remittances. In the past rural Basotho families have had members especially men involved in comparatively stable migrant employment in the Republic of South Africa (Lesotho Review, 2004). The level of unemployment due to the shrinking mine employment in South Africa and retrenchment of migrant worker has had a serious impact on poverty in the rural of Lesotho (Mbetu and Tshabalala, 2006). Ha-Kome as a typical rural village in Lesotho is experiencing poverty and high unemployment of men. The wages of the migrant labour was able to benefit families and surplus was used to support subsistence farming and to some extent commercial farming (Matebe and Makoae, 2000). According to Mbetu and Tshabalala (2006), the poor have limited assets whether it can be land or livestock. Lack of arable land is therefore a major constraint of subsistence agricultural production which is the economic base of the Kome village. The community also engages in 'matsema' which means work groups to tackle labour intensive duties such as harvesting, threading of grains to name a few.

Traditional beliefs and practice persist to be important and there is a strong spirit of cooperation based on traditional practices even though there are some members of the community who are westernized. The community members also have religious beliefs but traditional and cultural beliefs are practiced from family, clan and at village level.

## Employment

Lesotho's unemployment problem has been compounded by a slow economic growth in many sectors for long time (Mbetu and Tshabalala, 2006). However, it has been established through a variety of studies that in Lesotho, in both rural and urban areas, the higher the level of education attainment the lesser the poverty level in most households (Mbetu and Tshabalala, 2006). Few of the people in the labour force are working in the formal sector. Most of the illiterate people are faced with serious challenges of unemployment. The education system in Lesotho in general has not been preparing children for the future (Seotsanyana and Muzvidziwa, 2002; and Ministry of Education Lesotho (MOE), 2000). Furthermore many children who drop out or complete even secondary school still cannot make living out of skills acquired from schools (MOE, 2000) and therefore become unemployed.

Some men are involved in or rely on casual employment such as construction work or seasonal employment in the commercial farms in South Africa. The rapid expansion of the off- farm employment in local factories have increased the number of women working as compared to males. The life of the Kome villagers still follows traditional beliefs even though there are some modern ways of living adopted by few of the community members who can afford to. Kome community relies on a number of different survival strategies apart from subsistence farming. Most of the community members illegally grow cannabis (dagga) for sales and

battering to people from major towns. Livestock farming is still practiced even though there is a high rate of stock theft.

### Rural Community Services

There is lack of community services in most of the rural areas of Lesotho. Kome community does not have most of the basic services and these forces the community members to go to other villages or towns for services. The Kome village is not connected to the national electricity grid and the community depends on various energy resources such as gas, coal, paraffin, wood and cow dung for space heating, cooking and lighting. There are some community water facilities which were constructed by government and the community. The community is responsible for maintaining and management of the facilities. However, water shortage becomes a problem during the dry seasons.

Christian-missionaries played an important part in the development of Lesotho's education during the colonial period and post-independence (Lesotho Review, 2007). At present the Christian based religious organizations still play a crucial role in Lesotho's education development. Lesotho government is presently running a free primary education in both government and Christian schools and children are able to attend school from various villages around (MOE, 2000).

There is no primary school in Kome village. Most of the children in Kome village attend school at Tsetsana Primary School (Christian School) which is less than 3 km from the village. Other children attend schools in other villages such as Motseaere Primary School and Pulane Secondary School which are across the river. However, children use a foot-bridge constructed adjacent to the village to cross the river during rainy seasons when the river is in flood. Part of Kome community members form part of the management of both government and Christian schools. The community also participates in some of the developments which are run by the government such as feeding schemes, construction and maintenance of the schools buildings.



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The Tsetsana Clinic (Christian Clinic) also owns a clinic which receives subsidies from the government and it is the nearest health center for the Kome community. The clinic provides primary health care and it is a support center for out-patients of major hospitals. The provision of these is part of the national health priority for rural communities in Lesotho (Lesotho Review, 2004). The Tsetsana Clinic is also responsible for immunization of children, ante and postnatal services, family planning consultations.

For serious health problems the Kome community had to commute to Teyateyaneng town for the district government hospital. In Kome village there are Public Health Teams that provide education in sexual and reproductive

health through village health attendants. Apart from Public Health Teams in the village, various other categories of community based health workers include traditional birth attendants and water minders. Kome community also uses a combination of medicinal plants and traditional medicine when a family member is sick. There are also traditional healers who use indigenous knowledge to heal the people. Even though there are few community services in Kome village, the community is involved in organizing, implementation and management of various community services both in their village and neighboring villages where they get services. This indicates that Kome community can successfully interact with other communities in community's development projects.



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Environmental Conservation

Lesotho has introduced a number of projects and programs pertaining to soil conservation and environmental rehabilitation, the country faces serious environmental problems (Lesotho Review, 2004). The Kome village is faced with environmental problems such as soil erosion, deforestation, shrubs and bush encroachment in the rangelands to name a few. These are characterized by bare patches of soil, dongas and unpalatable bushes on rangelands. Possible causes of these kind of environmental problems include overgrazing, drought, ploughing and cultivating on steep lands and poor agricultural practices.

Environmental conservation forms an integral part of both ecotourism and agricultural development in Kome and improper environmental conservation and management can adversely affect ecotourism development. The Kome community priorities are centered on controlled grazing, afforestation, earth dams construction to conserve water, construction of silt traps in gullies and grass planting to stop soil erosion and conservation of the cave village.



Traditional Tourism  
Tourism as an industry in Lesotho has been taking place mostly in the urban areas to a lesser extent in the rural areas. However, at Ha-Kome tourism has been taking place for a long time even though the place was known by few people as well as very few tour operators from both Lesotho and South Africa.

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Tourism was taking place in a traditional way and the community did not associate it with economic and social development. The Kome community had been hosting or receiving tourists from various parts of the world but with little knowledge or understanding of what role they should play as the hosting community.

The tourists, like any foreign persons visiting a rural village firstly had to report to the chief of the village. Tourists were not registered or any information useful for tourism was not recorded. Once, they have reported to the chief or authorities of the village they were accompanied to the cave village by the chief or the

authorized members (indigenous guides) of the village. There were no fees charged to the tourists instead some tourists appreciate the assistance of the indigenous guides by giving them money. The money that was collected contributed to Kome Community Trust Fund. It was common that tourists used to give children some presents or money. Other tourists used to give the cave dwellers money or presents for allowing them to see their houses. Furthermore the tourists used to give the dwellers some incentives and presents in a form of cloths, food, garden seeds and toys for children.



In the late 1990s the Kome community elected a committee that was in charge of the caves and tourism. The committee had three members who were the chief, secretary and treasurer. Some of the reasons of electing a committee were to manage the funds generated through tourism and also to organize cultural performance for organized tours.

However, there are some reported cases of tourists who camped in the cave village close to the dwellings. While other tourist's preferred to stay (home stay) with some families which were able to offer such an experience. This formed direct benefits to the individual community members and Kome Community Trust Fund.

### Kome Information and Crafts Center

Tourists attraction projects so far implemented in Lesotho are found in rural areas, the focused location for development of an integrated tourism product (Lesotho Review, 2002). The Kome tourism development is one of such projects in Lesotho. After the Kome Information and Craft Center was officially opened in April 2006, the number of tourists coming to the place increased. The center has been attached to the Kome Cave Village which has been declared as a National Heritage Site. The opening of the center is one of the government (MTEC) initiatives of bring tourism facilities to rural communities where attractive places exist.



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To involve communities living close to the Kome tourism development, a committee of twenty members was elected from ten villages which included Kome and neighboring villages. Some of the responsibilities of the committee are to represent and link the communities with government officials in Kome tourism development and to organize cultural events at Kome Information and Crafts Center.

Visitors or tourists are expected to report and pay entrance fees at the center on their arrival. The Kome Cave Village together with Kome Information and Crafts Center are not fenced or protected. The center (Kome Information and Crafts Center) is situated at the entrance of a small plateau which leads to the main

village. At the center it is where tourists are informed about the Kome Cave Village and its history together with attractive places around. However, some visitors or tourists do not report and not pay entrance fees due to the fact that there are various small foot tracts which lead to the cave village. Apart from this, some of the tourists use their high-powered binoculars or cameras to view the cave village from a great distance. This results in loss of revenue which were supposed to be collected by the center and at the same time does not encourage control and responsible tourism. The center also sells crafts and souvenirs. The money collected from the sale of crafts and souvenirs is given to the owners of the particular items. Again the center provides tourism related information of Lesotho. Furthermore the center has facilities such as barbeque and relaxation areas.



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In August 2006 the MTEC officially handed the center to the LTDC which is responsible for promotion and marketing of tourism in Lesotho. The revenues are collected by the information officer employed by the LTDC. Local tourism companies based in towns together with LTDC organize cultural events for tourists coming in large numbers. The Kome community and the neighboring villagers actively participate in tourism activities through various cultural activities and are given incentives in the form of money.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter deals with data presentation and analysis. The first section of this chapter focuses on the background information of the Kome community members interviewed which included gender, age education and employment. The second section of the chapter discusses the socio-economic activities, environmental problems and community based ecotourism challenges and tourism development in Kome village. Finally, the chapter highlights other places of interest found in Kome.

#### Demographic Factors in Kome Village

The overall age of the respondents ranged between the age of thirty and seventy-five years. The total number of the respondents included thirty-eight males and sixty-two females. Fifteen percent of the total respondents were the cave community. The household's sizes of the respondents ranged from five to nine members including grandparents, children and the in-laws.

The interviewed cave dwellers have been staying in the cave village for a number of years. The length of their stay in cave village varied from five years to over fifty years. The reasons for their stay also varied greatly. One of the cave dwellers, an old woman revealed that she had been staying in the Kome Cave Village since she got married to her late husband who inherited the house from his parents. The male respondent indicated that they have been staying in the cave village with his family since he was born and he has inherited the house. Other females interviewed indicated that they have been living in the cave for a short period of time. Their reasons for staying in the cave village are that they were homeless and had been granted the dwellings by their relatives who are now living in an ordinary Kome village. The females interviewed also highlighted that because of their social status of being poor the dwellings are convenient as they do not require expensive maintenance.



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The sixty-two percent of all the respondents were unemployed female community members. Most of the families in Kome village are headed by females. Most of the few males available during the day at the village were under the influence of traditional beer and they were not interviewed. The interviewed females engage in village social activities such as burial societies, saving clubs and crafts making.

### Education Levels

Education is an important factor in the success of ecotourism development. There was a great variation of education levels between the interviewed respondents. Twenty percent of the males interviewed had tertiary education while others have basic primary education. Seventy percent of the interviewed females have basic primary education and very few have no basic primary education. Fifty-nine percent of the male interviewees indicated that they have basic primary education because they left school to seek employment in mines of South Africa after they were able to read and write.



The reason why female interviewees have a low literacy level is that there were very few schools in the past or schools were often very far from their homes and there was lack of financial support for their education. Some of the female's interviewees argued that males were more favored than females as far as education is concerned. According to Mbetu and Tshabalala (2006), in Lesotho, girl children are often abused on their way to school where schools are far due to the poor terrain or inaccessibility in the mountains such as in Mokhotlong district Lesotho.

### Employment Status

Unemployment and low literacy levels are some of the major problems facing the Kome community. With poor education background it is obviously difficult for

the majority of Kome community to compete in the tourism job market, run a tourism business and understand the concepts of community-based ecotourism. All the interviewed females had never had an opportunity to work in formal jobs because of lack of skills and literacy. Women disclosed that they are supposed to manage the family, farm and off-farm activities in the absence of their husbands and also have to bear children. Traditionally, males are the ones who work far away from their homes.



Fifty percent of the interviewed females indicated that they also depend on seasonal work of agricultural activities from their neighbors and outside the village. In general interviewed women depend on various strategies for their livelihoods. While fifteen percent of the educated interviewed males are employed in a formal sector such as banking and educational institutions. One of educated interviewed male has retired and he is self employed. Most of the interviewed males were employed in the mines and had been retrenched. The male respondents indicated that they depend on temporary work such as construction work, seasonal work in commercial farms in South Africa. Older men and females revealed that they entirely depend on pensions and other social grants. Few of the respondents indicated that they are engaged in self-help projects such as horticulture, sewing, crafting, piggery and poultry.

It is clear that ecotourism can create employment opportunities for the Kome community. The community members revealed that even though few people are employed permanently, temporary employment which is created by tourism is important for their livelihoods. The community members who are employed permanently include guards and cleaners. Some of the community members believe that more employment opportunities are to be created because the Kome Information and Crafts Center has been established.



The MTEC officials argued that there are many projects which are in the pipeline in Kome for tourism development which are expected to create employment opportunities and diversify tourism products. These projects include building of accommodation facilities, improvement for family owned accommodation, and the development of Basotho pony, camps and tracks construction. The ecotourism initiatives such as these can offer Kome Community some pathways to the development of community-based ecotourism.

### Natural Resources and Conservation

There are few natural resources and natural features found in Kome village and some of the resources or features are not considered important by the community members because they are not useful to them. The natural resources found in Kome include building material such as poles, grass and stones, grass for making crafts, clay for potting; fire wood, pastures, medicinal

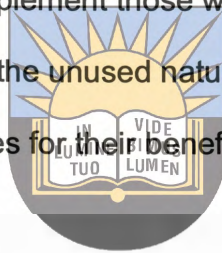
plants, arable land and water are considered important by the community. Natural features such as landscape, mountains, cliffs, unique sand stone formations and waterfalls among others are not considered important.

It was mentioned by some of the community members that the cave village serves many purposes to the community. The community members indicated that the cave village to them it is their home and it is the home of their ancestors. They further explained that the community uses the cave village to perform rituals and other traditional ceremonies. It was also explained that the cave is also used as shelter for livestock during bad weather conditions. One old community member revealed that two to three decades ago the village was attacked by a severe storm and most of the houses were seriously damaged especially the modern houses (corrugated iron roofed houses). All the community members together with their properties and animals were accommodated in the cave village for some days.

According to the male respondents there are wild animals which include porcupines, rabbits, wild hares, and variety of wild cats, variety of reptiles, fish and variety of birds. However, some of these animals are under threat due to vigorous hunting by the people and traditional healers. Some of the plants are also under threat as they are heavily used for medicine by the community and

traditional healers. It is evident that Kome community competes for the common natural resource for health, economic benefit and as source of livelihood.

Most of the respondents have grown some of the medicinal plants in their backyards especially those that are heavily used and rare. This puts pressure to most of the natural resource and it important for the Kome community to use other natural resources to supplement those which are heavily used. Some of the respondents are aware of the unused natural resources but do not have capacity to use those resources for their benefit.



However, the respondents indicated that there are few conservation projects that are implemented in their village. The most common is the pasture management and there is a village committee in charge for pastures. Other projects include government initiatives such donga rehabilitation, earth dam construction and tree planting and the community is encouraged to participate through use of incentives. The community actively participates in these conservation initiatives.

There is litter which is visible around the Kome Information and Crafts Center, according to the respondents and the information officer it caused by visitors especially if they come in large number such as school trips. However the community members and children voluntarily help in cleaning the litter. There are also signposts which are put in place to caution the visitors to keep Kome

clean (Plate 4). The signpost provides education and direction to both the community and the tourists which are significant to responsible tourism. These initiatives are important to community-based ecotourism development.



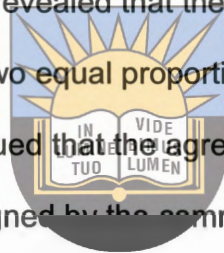
Plate 4: Signpost to Kome Village (Source: Author, 2007).

Kome village promotes conservation of heritage by emphasizing the Kome Cave Village as the main tourist attraction although there are little or no direct benefits for conservation from tourism in place. It is important to recognize that the Kome tourism development focus is more on individual benefits not for the entire

community and environment which can lay a good foundation for community-based ecotourism.

### Revenue and Management of the Center

According to the respondents there were no written agreement on how the revenues collected by the center would be shared between the community and the center. The respondents revealed that they were told that the revenues collected will be divided into two equal proportions between the community and the center. They strongly argued that the agreements were verbal and there were no written agreement signed by the community and officials. The respondents also argued that they were not told after how long the revenues would be shared by the two bodies.



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The MTEC officials claimed that it was recommended that the revenues would be shared once annually even though there was no written agreement.

However, MTEC officials indicated that they handed the center to LTDC four months after the center was opened. According to the MTEC officials it was emphasized to the LTDC officials to honor the agreement between by MTEC together with community to share revenues at the end of each year. The information officer explained that the revenue he collects goes to the LTDC head office. The information officer further indicated that LTDC management has not yet taken decision on how the revenue is going to be shared with the community.

The MTEC and LTDC officials further indicated that they are in a process of identifying a local private company to form a smart partnership between the three entities which are the public, private and the community.

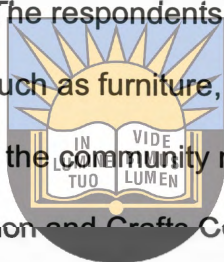
Most of the respondents are not satisfied about the management of Kome Information and Crafts Center. Therefore, they assumed that the workers (the information and guards) pocket some of the revenues for their own benefits.

They further indicated that the center does not function effectively. The unsatisfied community members argued that center is not consistent in terms of opening and closing. The community members indicated that the center is often closed on weekends and public holidays. They believe that during the weekends and public holidays there are many tourists who visit normally return and without being attended. This discourages tourists, at the same time resulting in loss of revenues and income. The respondents further revealed that they do not have control on tourism and management of the center. Therefore most of the respondents felt betrayed, less empowered and not part of the tourism development in their village.

#### Other Income Generating Activities

Most of the male respondents who are unemployed illegally grow dagga and sell it to the outsiders who are from major towns. According to the respondents, dagga is the most important source of income because it is easy to grow in their

area and can easily tolerate harsh conditions which crops cannot tolerate. They further explained that in the previous cropping season most of the crop failed badly while dagga survived. They further indicated that access to their village by intruders is difficult because of the topography of the area which motivates them to illegally grow dagga. The respondents again disclosed that they have good market for dagga and it has high returns as it does not need high inputs as compared to ordinary crops. The respondents further indicated that they use dagga for battering of goods such as furniture, clothing, food and other household products. Some of the community members indicated that the opening of the Kome Information and Crafts Center poses a threat to the way they have been making a living.



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Most of the female respondents have various livelihoods strategies that they use for survival which includes beer brewing, stokvel, sales of crafts to the center and sales of brooms and other grass products in nearby villages and towns. Some of the respondents own small piggery, broiler projects of which they sell the products locally or in towns. The Kome community members also obtain money from sales of food surpluses such as maize, sorghum and beans. Furthermore, livestock sales and livestock products such as wool and mohair contribute to income generation. To most of the community members, tourism offers them new pathways of livelihood strategies as they are able to use natural resource more productively than before to obtain income.

### Participation in Tourism Development

Participation of the poor and marginalized should be an essential element in Kome community-based ecotourism development. There are many different answers which aroused concerning participation and consultation together with the channels used in the process of tourism development at Ha-Kome. The respondents indicated that the consultation was done through community meetings. According to the respondents community meetings were often not successful because of the following reasons; the meetings were normally held at awkward times and seasons when the community members are busy with farm work; the meetings were also not announced in advance and as a result few people used to attend the meetings.



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The cave dwellers argued that they were not informed about most of the meeting concerning the consultation of tourism development. One of the cave-dwellers respondents said that “whatever the committee, chief and government officials plan and decide, we accept and do accordingly” while another old-aged cave dweller further revealed that “we were told what was going to happen, we did not to meet and discuss with the developers our welfare as cave dwellers” as far as tourism is concerned in the cave village. These signify dissatisfaction due to lack of decision-making power.

Furthermore, the respondents revealed that they were informed about the establishment of the center but were not given a chance to express their views especially their acceptance or refusal of the idea of establishing the center. The majority of those dissatisfied with level of say in decisions were those that do not belong to the Kome family and noted that chief and government officials hold most of the decision making authority. The respondents further indicated that the government officials had their own ideas or agendas which they were imposed on them.



According to the government officials, the majority of Kome community did not attend the initial meetings where people were given information about the problems and importance of tourism in their area. The government officials indicated that the Kome community was not corporative as they were called for several meeting and but few of the members of the community attended. The respondents indicated that they did not take part in decision-making to establish the Kome Information and Craft Center but they were told about the plan and they agreed. However, one of the interviewee presented rather a different story and was free to speak about what happened during the consultation process by the government officials. The respondent revealed that in one of the meetings they were given pens and papers to write as individuals about their views in relation to the development in question. The respondent further revealed that they were not given a feedback concerning what they wrote.

Another argument by the respondents is that the chief of their village was not literate and lacked knowledge in tourism but agreed without challenging the government officials or making some efforts to allow the community to discuss the issue on their own when most of the community members are available. Due to these reasons the respondents believed that the chief was bribed.

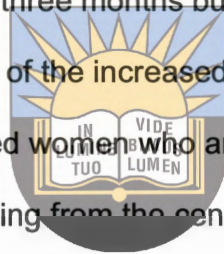


Most of the Kome community members interviewed are satisfied to live in a small Kome village with reasons that it is peaceful, calm and the cost of living is generally low. However, they complained about the lack of access to basic services such as electricity, water and roads. Few of the respondent agreed that tourism has brought some improvements to their families and would enjoy seeing more tourists coming to their village. The reasons for this are the economic gains that the respondents are getting from tourism.

The cave dwellers indicated that their lives have not changed since the centre was established but it has deteriorated. The cave villagers (women) expressed their experiences of living in the caves and role they play in tourism as well as the impacts caused by tourism development. The cave dwellers emotionally expressed their dissatisfaction that they are no longer receiving incentives from tourists which were the source of livelihoods but since the center was

established they only get little tips when showing the tourist their houses. The dwellers also showed their dissatisfaction about tourism development and they argued that it is dragging them further to poverty because it has taken away the little that they used to receive from tourists even though it was not stable.

The dwellers further argued that they used to re-build the floors of their dwellings and the surroundings once in three months but now they have to re-build at least two times per month because of the increased number of tourists coming to their place. Most of the interviewed women who are not staying in the cave dwellings indicated that they are benefiting from the center because the center sells their crafts without any charges even though the products stay for a long time before they are sold.

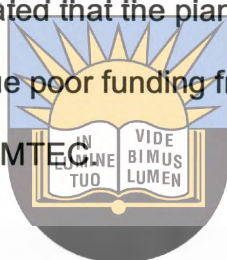


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The respondents revealed that before the center was opened they were offered some skills enhancement on crafts and arty-crafts making. The respondents revealed that all the workshops were for free and everybody was allowed to attend. They revealed that they were exposed to various ways of making crafts and how to diversify their products. Some of the respondents indicated that the skills enhancement project has changed their lives even though it cannot be monetarily proven or tangible. Some of the women indicated that they were promised to be trained in hospitality related issues such as providing home stays, hygiene, catering and accommodation but those promises were not

fulfilled. The respondents were also promised training in basic communication skills for them to communicate with tourists.

When responding to the question concerning training the MTEC officials indicated that it is planned that the Kome community together with other the surrounding communities will be trained in different pre-requisite skills. However the government officials indicated that the planned workshops are still in the pipeline but will be delayed due poor funding from the central government and poor technical capacity of the MTEC



### Environmental Concerns University of Poneke *Together in Excellence*

Most of the respondents in Kome community revealed that they cannot link tourism with conservation. To their knowledge conservation is related to agriculture not tourism. The literate respondents expressed their dissatisfaction concerning the impacts of tourism to their environment. They were concerned about several issues.

Firstly, they were not satisfied about the high soil erosion caused by the disturbance of land surface during construction of the center (Plate 5) and path leading to the center and the village. However, the Department of Tourism official accepted that during planning of the Kome tourism development they did

not consult other government ministries which are responsible for activities such as Environmental Impact Assessment and Department Rural Roads.

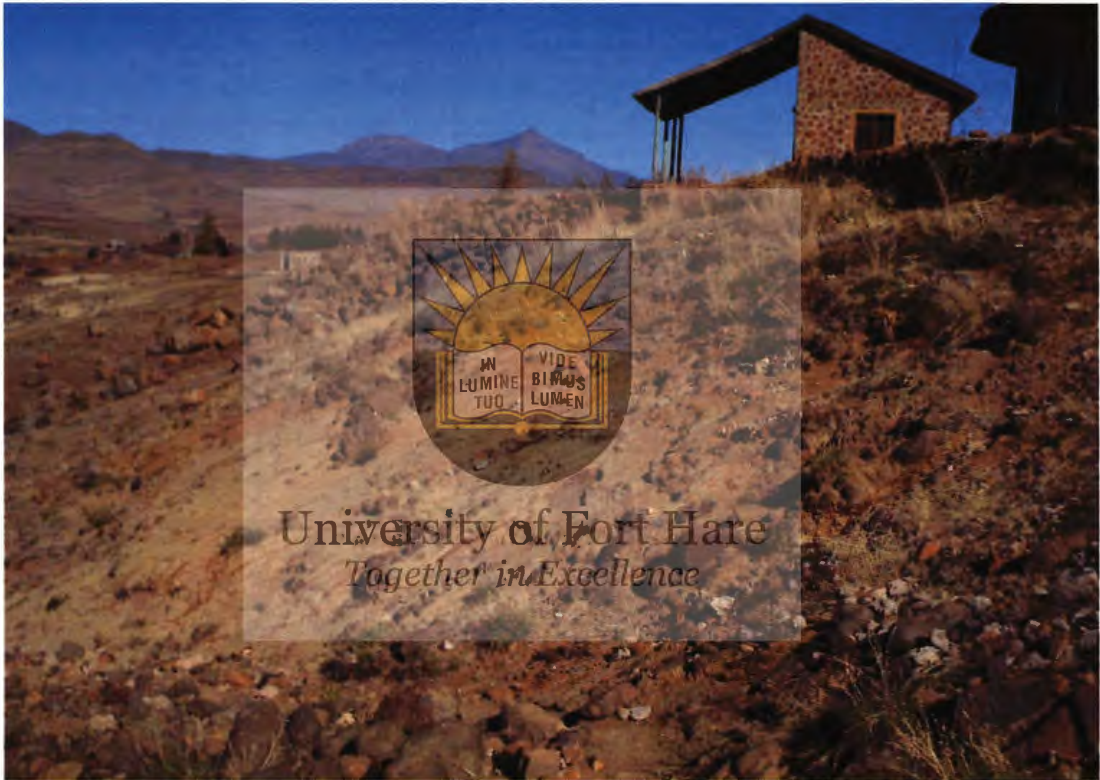
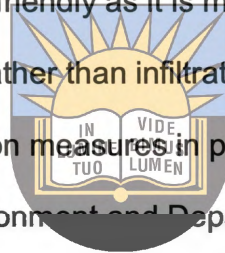


Plate 5: Signs of Erosion at Kome Information and Craft Center (Source: Author, 2007).

Second problem that was raised is littering and lack of management of solid waste. The respondents indicated solid waste such bottles, plastics and papers caused by tourists during their visit to center. According to the respondents the problem is associated with lack of dustbins in appropriate places where tourist can easily use them.

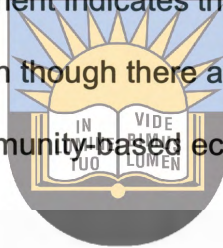
The third problem according to the observation of the researcher is sanitation problem at the cave village. There are no sanitation facilities such as latrines and pits for solid and liquid household solid waste. The dwellers use adjacent forest and donga to relief themselves. For household wastes the dwellers do not have pits which are hygienic and this often cause flies around their houses and unpleasant smell. Furthermore the small path constructed leading to the cave village is not environmentally friendly as it is made up of cement and it has a potential to increase run-off rather than infiltration and can lead to excessive erosion as there are no erosion measures in place. There is lack of coordination between Department of Environment and Department Tourism even though they are housed under MTEC. The two environmental problems (sanitation and erosion) are possible threads to the environment as well as future tourism at Ha-Kome.



The most important issue raised by the respondents was the social behavior of some of the tourists. The interviewees express their views that some of the tourists engage in socially unacceptable behavior in front of the public in their village. The community member seemed be concerned about such matters as they believe they would change the behavior of the children.

### Kome Community's Perceptions about Tourism

When respondents were asked about their views with regard to tourism development they indicated that tourism has many challenges in their village but the slight majority of the respondents (fifty-five percent) indicated that they are further looking forward to tourism development in their village. Although only a slight majority, the fact that a significant proportion of the population sampled are interested in tourism development indicates that the community has good impression about tourism even though there are problems that needs to be solved in order to initiate community-based ecotourism in Kome village.



Most of the male respondents with low literacy levels indicated that they have very little knowledge about tourism. They argued that they were made aware that tourism can be a source of employment, development and income but they have not experienced those since the center was established. They associated tourism with women and youth. Their problem was that most of the tourism related activities or issues have been putting women and few literate males in the forefront. The respondents have realized the importance of tourism development even though the benefits are very little. However, this has increased their interest with regard to tourism and they are willing to participate in tourism activities.

The study also revealed that most of the community members were not satisfied about the management of the center. Their argument is that at present all the promises which were made before and during the opening of the center have not been fulfilled to date. This gave the community a negative impression about how political leaders can use power to control the belongings of Kome community such as their homes (cave village) in order to benefit or achieve their political interest.



The majority of women interviewed have a good perception about tourism and they believe that they can benefit from tourism if they had enough skills and if tourism development was well planned. However, since tourism had been taking place in Kome village there is no crime reported which could be associated with tourism. This shows that the community appreciates tourism in their area.

The MTEC officials indicated that Kome tourism development embraces the concept of the Pro-Poor tourism (PPT). PPT overlaps with ecotourism and community-based ecotourism. The concept aims to unlock the opportunities for the poor rather than expanding the overall size of the sector (Ashley, Goowin and Roe, 2001 cited in Harrison, 2003). PPT advocates for participation by a range of stakeholders such as the government, private sector, and the poor. However, in Kome tourism, there are two stakeholders, the government and the Kome community. The Lesotho tourism policy suggest ecotourism as an option

for protected area whereby the managers of protected areas and the communities work together to achieve conservation and tourism.

The government official, the director of culture argued that there is a potential for community-based ecotourism at Kome village even though there are many obstacles such as lack of accommodation, lack of capacity in the community members for entrepreneurship and skills for handling ecotourism activities. The official also indicated that the conflicts caused by place of origin, surnames and clans amongst the community members are some of the major challenges they encountered when initiating tourism at Kome. However, government officials indicated that Kome village has a great potential for community-based ecotourism basing their argument on the history around Kome village, scenery and culture. There is a great deal of interest among the community members in organizing and implementing community-based ecotourism.

#### Other Attractions and Interesting Places found near Kome

There are various tourism interesting places and features around the Kome village (Figure 3). They vary from physical attractions such as waterfalls, beautiful landscape, unique sand stone formations, caves, mountains and valleys to Basotho culture and history of the area. In Kome village there are traditional healers. Traditional healers can educate tourists how they use plants to treat different illnesses. They can also educate tourists about their cultural

perspectives on illness, healing and health. Traditional healers have great significance in ecotourism development and this is evident in many ecotourism destinations such as Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana.

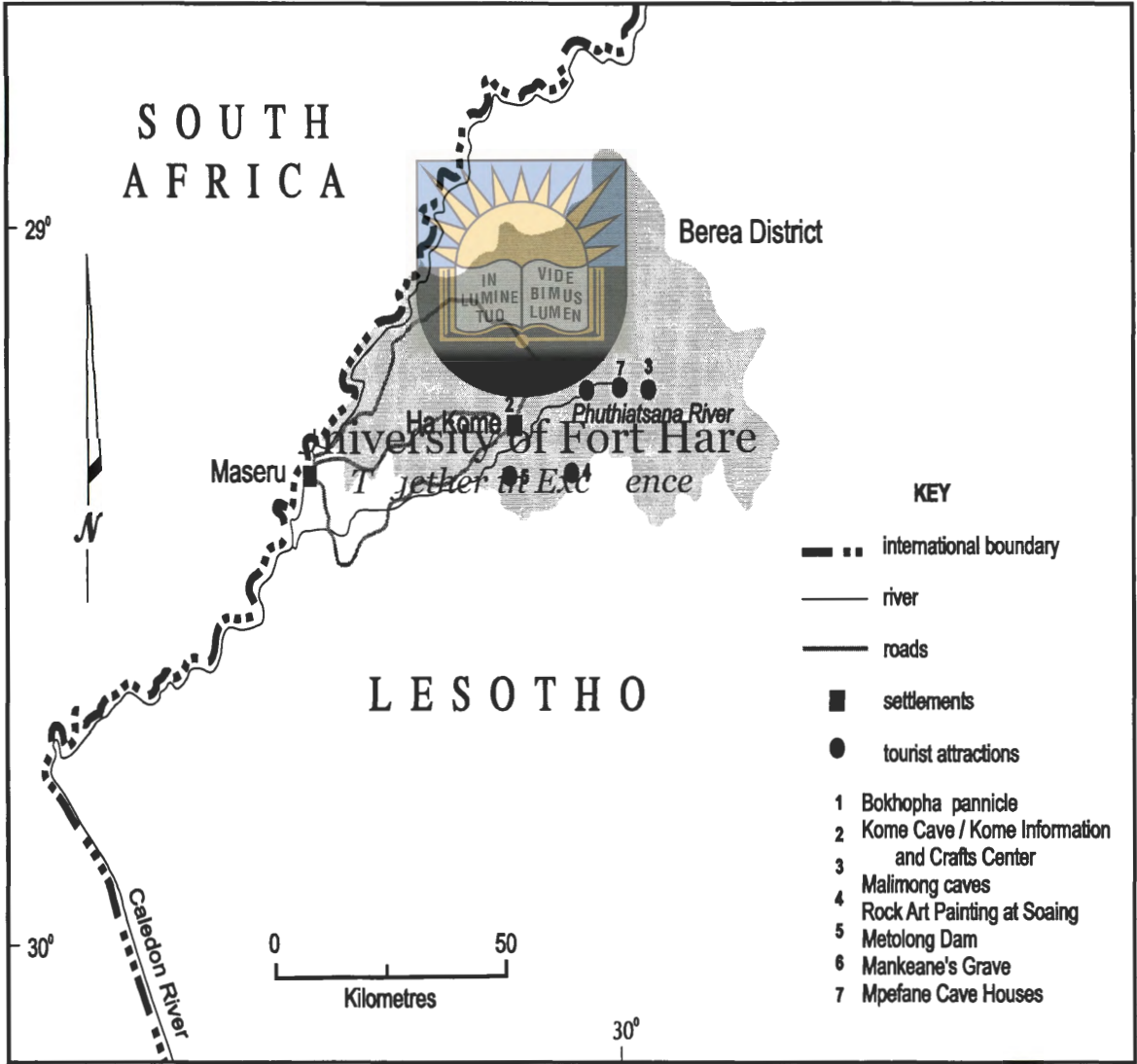


Figure 3: Places of Interest near Kome (Source: Author, 2008).

There is another cave dwelling a Kilometers up the Phuthiatsana Valley called Mphafane Cave Village in which the dwellings are totally different from those of Kome Cave Village.

Kome Cave Village origination is associated with the Cannibalism era and there are number of caves adjacent to the Kome Cave village which were the homes of the notorious cannibals under the leadership of Rakotsoane in the history of Basotho. The Cannibals has a great significant in the history and development of the Basotho nation. History tells that the Cannibals captured, killed and ate the father of the founder of Basotho nation King Moshoeshoe I during his exodus from Butha-Butha to Thaba Bosiu (Ramakhula, 2006). The group of Cannibal was mainly the Bakhatla clan (LTDC, 2006).

These caves include the Malimong Cave (Plate 6) which was the main cave occupied by very violent human eaters (cannibals) such as Mosoansoanyane whose pace could not be withstood by any chased man (Ramakhula, 2006). Another cave which is the most important is the Penane Cave and in the same gorge where the there is Khoalibe Cave which has rock art being clipped off by irresponsible people (Ramakhula, 2006). Furthermore, Khoalibe Cave was used if the loot was too much for the capacity of the greater caves (Ramakhula, 2006). Lastly, the Masouoeng Cave which was also used by the cannibals and it is positioned at an awkward location.



Plate 6: The Main Malimong Cave (Source: Ramakhula, 2006).

Another area of interest is the Bokhophu pinnacle (Plate: 7), which was used effectively by cannibals to way-lay the passer-by with long grass thongs (LTDC 2006). On top of the gorge where Kome Village is situated there is a great Mankeane's grave at Ha-Mateka village. According to history Mankeane caused a war between cousins which was known as Khamolane war. Adjacent to the Kome Village it is the ongoing construction of Metolong Dam which is going to serve water to the central part of the lowlands which includes Maseru, Morija, Roma and Teya-teyaneng.

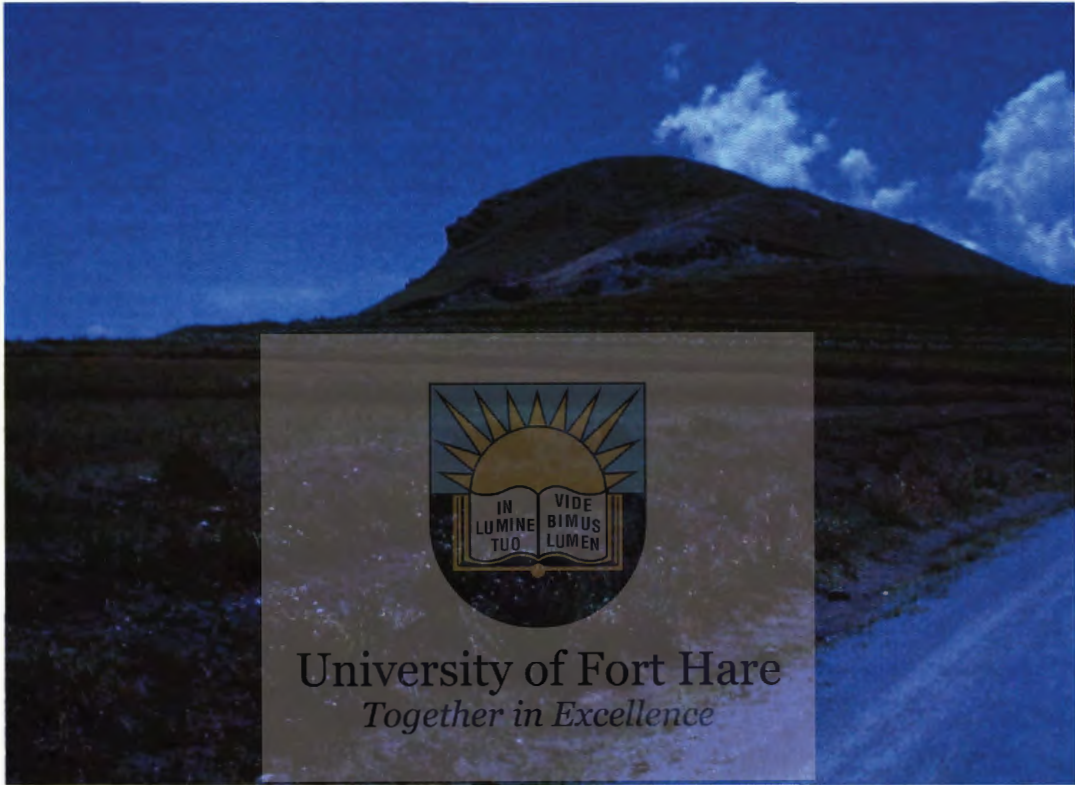


Plate 7: Bokhopho Pinnacle (Source: Author, 2007).

The Metolong dam will have a great potential to serve the Kome tourist with water sport and facilities such as fishing, water rafting and many more. These are some of the possible tourist attraction which are within a short radius of Kome village and can be of great significance in Kome tourism development

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with root causes of the poor development of tourism in Kome village. The second section deals with community's perception with regard to community-based ecotourism. The third section assesses the potential of community-based ecotourism as a tool for conservation and development in Kome village.



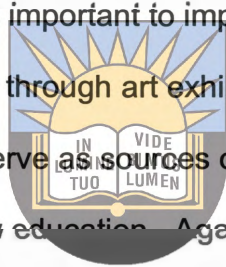
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#### Possible Root Causes for Poor Tourism Development at Ha-Kome

Tourism has been taking place at Ha-Kome for several decades but has benefited the community very little. The community has little knowledge about tourism which makes them not to be actively engaged in tourism development. This tends to slow down the rate of tourism development.

Most of the Kome community members are literate. Literacy is important in tourism development because tourism is a kind of business where the consumer and producer had to verbally and physically interact. There is a need for explanation and translation of particular issues and events such as history,

culture to mention a few, by the host community to the tourists. Community members can easily and effectively interpret their history and culture but the problem is the language for communication. At Ha-Kome, heritage is the main tourist attraction and as well as history which needs a lot of interpretation by the locals. Providing education and interpretation as part of the experience makes the visitors aware of the environment and how their actions can contribute to conservation of the area. It is important to improve the few existing means of interpreting history of the area through art exhibition, posters and brochures. This kind of information can serve as sources of interpretation which can be easily used by people with low education. Again the posters, wall papers, post cards and brochures can be a source of income for the community.



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Lack of skills at Ha-Kome village have caused the community members to be jobless and not being able to diversify their tourism product. The problem of unemployment can be reduced by government and other organizations through equipping the Kome community with skills that they can use in tourism related programmes as to compensate other livelihood strategies. Lack of diversification in Kome tourism has been hampered by the lack of skills. Therefore this results in a few people directly benefiting from tourism. Lack of skills and knowledge of tourism has resulted in under utilization of potential tourism related resources such scenery, indigenous knowledge and history among others. Community-

based ecotourism requires skills which are not broad but appropriate to tourist's need and the development of such skills is necessary for Kome community.

Knowledge often gives people power to participate in development. Power and participation are interrelated (Attwood, 2002 and Ngece, 2002). Without power, participation is minimal and often those without power are often oppressed.

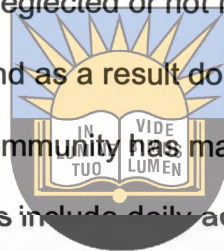
Power could be used for good of a group or for a leader's selfish aims (Ishida, 1999). The chief of Kome had power over the community at large and used it to serve his interest such as not allowing the community to work as a group or participate collectively. This is evident in that during consultation few of community members participated and did not consider different views of the community as a leader. Within the Kome community there are those who have more power than others. The Kome village, the chief and the Kome family (Kome surname) are the ones who have more power in Kome village.

The government officials with their power to achieve their goal did not consider community's knowledge and ability as well as the experience that the Kome community has in tourism. This further brought confusion and conflicts within the community and participation was also affected too. Furthermore, cave dwellers due to their social positions (not married, deserted by husbands and poor) had less power in tourism related activities. Their participation in tourism is not valued. Women in Kome village whose husbands are educated and working,

their participation is valued and they are assumed to be very responsible and reliable. The opposite can be said about men who are not educated, not working, and poor without common assets such animals and land, their participation is not valued. In general those community members without wealth or literacy are excluded in development such as tourism.

The cave dwellers were also neglected or not fully consulted during the initial tourism development phase and as a result do not fully participate in tourism related activities. The cave community has many responsibilities in Kome tourism. These responsibilities include daily activities such as cave keepers (cleaning and maintaining of the caves) and part of what is being viewed in the cave village by tourists. Therefore it is important for tourism development in Kome not to focus only in participation at village level but also at household and individual level. The cave dwellers are at the heart of tourism product of Kome and their participation remains crucial in tourism development in the area. Regardless of their social position of being poor, they should be considered in any aspect of development as they are part of the community.

Unresolved conflicts regarding the social status as well as differences in clans and surnames could still inhibit tourism development in various ways such as discouraging participation, oppression and degrading community's perception towards tourism development. Due to these problems there is tension within



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community members. Tension can threaten the community's cohesion.

Community's cohesion and peace are central to community-based ecotourism development. In most rural settings it is common that there are several institutions which are in charge of communal property and activities such as natural resource and socio-economic developments. Grootaert and Van Basterlear (2001) cited in Jones (2005) explain that the existence of community associations (structures and institutions) does not necessary testify strong personal connections among their members and the community at large.



In Kome village all these institutions are affiliated to the chief. It is therefore possible that the chief has more influence in the development of the area. At Kome village the Kome's are the royal family and also they are the majority. They have potential to influence the chief and also unite as a family during decision-making which makes other families to be inferior and fell rejected. This had a strong influence towards community's perception about tourism and making the community not to participate collectively but disagrees in most cases. The behavior of Kome family specifically the chief in mobilizing his traditional political status in the community to influence tourism development undermines the democratic spirit and overall participation of the community. These tend to slow down the rate of tourism development in Kome village.

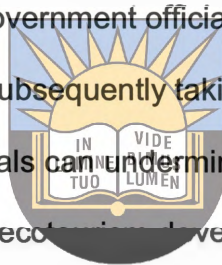
Strong local institutions are important for providing effective structures for developing successful community-based ecotourism (Nelson, 2004). Local institutions are also important in that they can help maintain values, identity and foster cohesion of the community. At Kome, the committee of the initial tourism lacked several principles which inform tourism development. However, the present tourism committee which has been formed by members of different communities seemed to have same characteristics of the initial committee. This indicates that the barriers to community-based ecotourism development exist in Kome village.



Both committees do not have clear or sound guidelines on which tourism should be based. This has created several problems between the committee members, developers as well as the Kome community. It is therefore important for the community to work together with external stakeholders to assist them in other to achieve institutional and capacity building to make community-based ecotourism successful. These are important in that the community will realize their needs and priorities as far as tourism development is concerned. With such a view, the community will be able to formulate their own village or local by-laws which will guide them together with their representatives on how to engage in tourism development. The by-laws can also help to bring transparency and equity amongst the community and developers. However, the Government of Lesotho also initiated tourism without clearly stipulated principles or guidelines for Kome

tourism development. This brought confusion between the developers (MTEC and LTDC) and the Kome community because there was no procedure to follow or any document to refer whenever problems arise. Therefore, there should be terms and conditions drawn to govern the community and committee as far as tourism development are concerned.

The act of the chief and the government officials for mobilizing their political status in the community and subsequently taking advantage of tourism project at Kome to achieve their own goals can undermine democratic spirit and overall success of community-based ecotourism development.



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### Community's Perception about Community-Based Ecotourism Development

The community feelings towards community-based ecotourism development are very complex. The community's attitudes or feelings are influenced by their social position within the entire community. The collected data showed variation between different community members based on the gender, wealth, education, participation, age and relationship with authorities. Apart from these economic benefits from tourism including employment (both temporary and permanent), infrastructure and income from the sales of crafts are some of the reasons for the community to support tourism in Kome village.

Poor relationship between tourism authorities (government officials and committee) and the community especially with the Kome cave community leads to hostile attitude of the community towards tourism development. The failure of the tourism authority to compensate for losses or opportunities foregone by the cave dwellers tends to result with unfavorable relationship between the two bodies. It was also found that there is a tension within the relationship between the government officials and the entire Kome community. The relationship seems to be built on enforcement (implementation) rather than participation of the community in tourism development. The community members do not participate in the decision-making but are involved during implementation. These tend to affect the community's cohesion, community leadership and altogether the outcomes of the tourism development while creating a negative attitude of the community members especially the cave dwellers towards tourism development in their area.

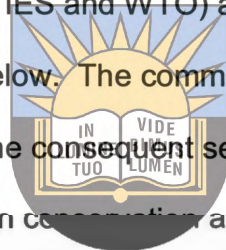
Another issue which was identified was a perception of the community that the tourism development should be more community-based rather than driven by the government. This is associated with issues regarding revenues collected and administration of the Kome Information and Crafts Center. These raise a question of transparency in whole management of the development. It can be argued that the Kome community members perceive tourism as a social development which is closely linked with issues such as peace, good

governance and justice for it to succeed. However, the majority of the community regarded tourism initiative as a positive step towards development and conservation.

### The Potential of Community-Based Ecotourism at Kome

The analysis for potential of community-based ecotourism at Kome is based on the principles of ecotourism (TIES and WTO) and the philosophy of community-based which are discussed below. The community-based philosophy stresses the advantageous results of the consequent sense of ownership and the use of local knowledge and values on conservation and development initiatives (Holmes, 2003). Community-based is a people-centered approach which seeks to empower (Wolf, 2005), build capacity and give the community a will and incentive in order to participate collectively. Kome community has been dealing with tourism for a long time but with little knowledge and lacked capacity to promote tourism so much that it can bring some change in their lives.

Development of tourism in that place should equip the community with skills and opportunities so that they can fully participate. The main point of this argument is the debate over whether the Kome is suitable for community-based ecotourism or not, and whether lacking ecotourism skills should be considered if Kome is to be developed as an ecotourism destination.



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According to the research findings the resources available at Kome and its surroundings are suitable for community-based ecotourism. There are some economically viable activities that exist and some are being established which can support conservation and community development. However the community is lacking capacity (technical and financial) of hosting community-based ecotourism activities. It is important before the development community-based ecotourism in Kome to enhance the community with skills which are appropriate for ecotourism. Potential for community-based ecotourism exists in Kome village because of the attractions, activities and accessibility to mention a few. Therefore it is important for the government authorities (MTEC and LTDC) to considerably improve the quality of strategies and marketing of Kome as ecotourism destination and to strengthen its competitive position locally and internationally because it's unique and an unspoiled attraction.

#### Existing Attractions for Kome Tourism Development

The first TIES ecotourism principle primarily focuses on the existing natural attractions at the tourist destination. Ecotourism emphasizes on seeing and saving natural habitats and archeological treasures. At Ha-Kome, the most attractive tourism resource is heritage, the Kome Cave Village which is unique and unspoiled. Tourists visiting Kome Cave Village admire and enjoy (Ecclectica, 2005) seeing heritage attached with life of normal people. Kome Cave Village is a true picture of a live museum. The Kome tourism cannot be

complete without the people living in the cave dwellings. The community forms part of the tourism product and they are not supposed to be mere object to see and photograph but they have to take part in whole process of tourism development.

The cave community as well as their activities is central to the attraction of the place and without them, the attractiveness of the place would have been different. The cave dwellers are important part of the tourism product as their participation is crucial because they are responsible for the dwellings re-building, cleaning and living in those dwellings (conservation in general). Other attractions around Ha Kome such as natural attractions, history, culture and they should be valued as well as the natural landscape. In fact, some of the tourists visiting Kome village enjoy seeing the natural landscape of the area even though it is not part of the package offered by the center and therefore it is important to recognize the potential of the natural area and diverse the product. It is important to recognize that the unique heritage and culture co-exist in the environment that forms the livelihood of the people of that area. This clearly indicates that Kome and its surrounding place have what it takes as far as tourist's attraction is concerned and development of community-based ecotourism.



### Ecotourism for Conservation at Kome

The second principle of ecotourism stresses the need to conserve the tourism attraction. Ecotourism is a tool for conservation (Ecclectica, 2005). This can be done using funds collected from tourism and also by including the community living adjacent to the attractive place. The Kome cave village conservation is deeply rooted and sustained by the traditional beliefs and customs of the Kome community. The Kome community forms the integral part of the conservation of this heritage site.



The community has managed to protect the cave dwellings for a long time from generations to generations without commercializing them. The cave community must also be motivated through incentives to continue to conserve the cave dwellings.

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Conservation of other existing tourism attractions around Kome has taken place for example; the Bokhopa panicle which was mined by road constructors for quarry has been officially stopped. Destruction and clipping off the rock paintings in some of the caves at Malimong has ceased. The MTEC officials, local chiefs and communities in these places are working together to conserve these heritage sites. Therefore community-based ecotourism can be initiated to further strengthen conservation of these sites.

Ecotourism also advocates for rehabilitation of damaged lands, restoration of damaged heritage sites (Ecclectica, 2005). However, in Kome village there are sites which needs to be restored which were part of the cave village. For example, the hole in the cave which has 4 transactions which was closed because of unpleasant behavior of the people but according to history it served as a hiding place for the original inhabitants of the cave village and therefore it is important to be restored. This can contribute to the tourism package that Kome tourism offers.



Ecotourism can also foster conservation of medicinal plants which the community uses daily as a source of medicine and this can be done through encouraging the community or individual community members to have botanical gardens. Studies have also shown that rural communities are often responsive to resources that are found in their vicinity. It is on this possibility that community-based ecotourism works hand in hand with conservation of resources such as species conservation. Kome community as individuals or group of individuals or traditional healers use various plant species as medicinal (for domestic and human), ritual ceremony, source of firewood and many more.

Conservation also goes hand in hand with development. The use of open pits or natural forest for sanitation is not good for the environment and not healthy to people. Furthermore, sanitation problems degrade the tourism product due to

negative consequences such as bad smell and flies to mention a few. The revenues collected can be used to improve the lives of the community by improving sanitation which will improve the health of the community as well as the aesthetic of the area. Therefore it is important to support the Kome community to participate in conservation efforts to maintain the heritage, beauty and health of their environment in order for the tourism product to be sustainable.



Presently on the way to Kome village sign boards which support conservation are placed to caution visitors to keep the area clean. There are also several ways that can be used to signal tourists about the conservation at the same time generating funds which can be used for conservation such as selling of postcards t-shirts, pictures, to name a few.

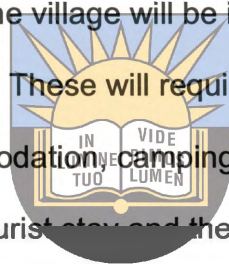
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### Economic Benefits for Local Community

Community-based ecotourism has the ability to bring benefits to the community in a direct or indirect manner. It must strive to maximize economic benefits for the host community but not at the expenses of the environment. Community-based ecotourism has to promote the local business and also promote all other sector which might be useful to tourism such as horticulture. At Ha-Kome there are various ways in which community-based ecotourism development can bring benefits to the community. There are various tourism related natural resource which have been identified and if developed and marketed can form the tourist

package of the village. However, some of these attractions are outside of Kome village and are under control of different chiefs. Some these attractions include historical places, Cannibal caves and caves with Bushmen paintings. These can employ and benefit more community members as tourist guides, maintaining the hiking tracks and rails and providing pony hiring services to tourists.

The length of tourist stay in the village will be increased due to number of activities and interpretations. These will require more tourism related services for the tourists such accommodation, camping facilities, meals, entertainment to mention a few. The longer tourist stay and the more they become involved in community tourism which offers an opportunity for the community to develop home stays or community guest house which can enhance their income.



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Providing accommodation and meals for the tourists at village level has an opportunity to increase benefit to a wider community. Some of the indirect benefits will include horticulture products which will be sold to those who prepare meal for the tourists.

At Kome provision of home stays is possible because some of the women have had tourists in their families and are very interested in that kind of business even though they were once promised to be trained for such activities. Provision of accommodation will also be important to the country as a whole because there is lack of accommodation especially in the rural areas.

### Encouraging Community Social Development

Social development can take various forms and can be a lengthy process. At the same time ecotourism is not a destination but also a process which involves several steps which need patience and guidance in order to be successful.

Community-based ecotourism on its own seeks to develop the community not only financially but psychologically and politically. These include both tangible and non-tangible aspects. At Kome village the community has been given limited training in some aspects of the tourism related to pre-requisite skills. The community is now eager to be fully trained because they realized the importance of having such particular skills.



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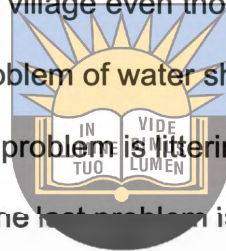
Training fosters empowerment which can lead to participation of the community in tourism activities. This kind of empowerment could diversify income generating activities within the community of Kome. Training in communication skills can contribute to community participation in Kome tourism by that the community members will be able to socially interact and exchange ideas and experiences with experienced ecotourists.

Capacity-building in terms of institutions, structures as well as political well-being of the Kome community forms other aspects which are lacking at Kome Village. These can help the community to actively participate in tourism development and at the same time feel empowered in order to use and manage their resources.

## Minimizing the Negative Impacts upon the Natural and Socio-Cultural

### Environment

According to the UNEP (2002) there are three main natural environmental impacts which can be caused by ecotourism and they include; depletion of natural resources, pollution and physical impacts. However at Ha-Kome all the three main impacts are observable but to a limited extend. Water resource is becoming a problem at Kome village even though it is difficult to associate it with tourism development. The problem of water shortage often experienced during the dry seasons. The second problem is littering by tourists. However there is poor management of litter. The last problem is erosion which has been accelerated by construction activities.



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These problems can be considered minor if awareness for conservation would be created. The community should not only focus on the positive impacts only but they should be taught about negative results caused by unplanned tourism development. However, it is important that conservation measures such as erosion mitigation, establishment of environmentally friendly trails or paths and proper wastes management to name a few should be put place where possible. Social-cultural problems are also encountered but few of the community members are aware of the situation and it is important that the situation should be corrected at an early stage. The most critical problem is the ability of tourism to threaten community's cohesion at Kome village. It is important for the

community-based ecotourism strives to reduce all the possible problems that can be caused by tourism development.

### Promotion of Cultural Education and Awareness

The initiatives of the Government of Lesotho to recognize the cave village as a potential tourist attraction have been sufficient to make a considerable difference both within communities and also politically at a regional or national level with regard to community development. This has been found simply raising awareness that there is some realizable value in heritage, history and culture as well as attractive landscape and therefore there is a need for conservation to achieve this development.



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The most important component of Kome tourism is based on heritage which is deeply rooted on history. The architectural part reflects the manifestation of man on the environment which was used for shelter and hiding. The architecture also reflects the culture of Basotho in relation to their housing. Kome community has been able to pass this legacy from their ancestors by not altering or changing anything by adding modern building material such cement. This clearly indicates how cultural education has been evolving within the community which is made of people from different background and origin.

The environmental education and awareness programs will allow both the community members and the tourists to have an understanding of what is expected in the whole idea of community-based ecotourism for conservation and development. To conclude most of the disadvantages or common problems to Kome tourism development can be possibly be corrected by implementation of community-based ecotourism.



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## CHAPTER VI

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, possible strategies and recommendations for community-based ecotourism for conservation and development in Kome village. This chapter reflects the researchers understanding of ecotourism concept and how it can be applied in Kome tourism in other to determine whether community-Based ecotourism is an appropriate tool for conservation and development in unprotected area such as Kome.

#### Summary of the Findings

Kome cave village, the home of the cave dwellers has become the consumption space for leisure and recreation of tourists. The cave village is no longer a private home for the Kome community but a public area because it has been declared a national heritage site. This has a potential to affect the cave community and the entire Kome community socially, economically and environmentally. The Kome community will have to acclimatize to increasing tourism intensity and be able to handle and minimize all the negative impacts related tourism activities.

The Kome community members stress the need and the importance of conserving the cave village. The cave village is strongly linked to traditional and ancestral beliefs of the community. The community still uses the cave village for rituals and other related traditional ceremonies. The cave village is therefore associated with a strong sense of the community identity. The Kome cave village conservation is deeply rooted and sustained by these traditional beliefs and customs of the Kome community. It is therefore important to consider indigenous knowledge and inherent rights when developing tourist attractive places such Kome village.



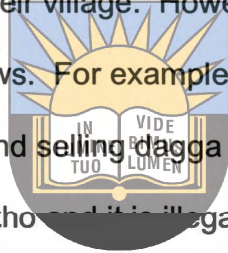
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The Kome community is faced with high rate of unemployment, extreme poverty and deteriorating environment. There is strong argument by the community and government officials that tourism can create employment opportunities and generate income in Kome village. However, there are also strong arguments by the community members that they do not have adequate control over tourism. Further arguments reveal that tourism also disrupts the peace and tranquility and have created divisions amongst the residents of Kome village. The cave community argues that they are no longer benefiting from the revenue collected from tourism and their overall quality of life has been degraded by recent tourism development initiatives. These clearly indicate that there is a gap between Kome

tourism development and the concept of sustainable tourism of which community-based ecotourism is grounded in its ideology.

Findings generally show that the Kome community had little knowledge about the concept of ecotourism. The Kome community (including the cave community) general holds positive views about implementing community-based ecotourism as a development option in their village. However, the present situation does not match with these positive views. For example, some community members entirely depend on growing and selling dagga for their livelihoods. Dagga is considered as a drug in Lesotho and it is illegal to grow and sell. At the same time ecotourism stresses the idea of culturally respectful activities free from drugs, prostitution and black markets which are the by-products of mass tourism (<http://www.untamedpath.com/index.html>, 2007).



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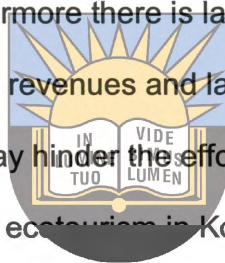
Furthermore the case of dagga production in rural areas of Lesotho is often not only associated with business but it has various uses such as a medicinal plant and fodder for animals. The community members argue that dagga has high returns as compared to other livelihood strategies in Kome village. It is regarded as a reliable source of income even though it is not legally accepted. However, dagga can negatively influence the tourist's perception towards the Kome village and its community. This is one of the great challenges facing community-based ecotourism development in Kome village.

Several examples show that the Kome cave community seemed to be aware of the issues that directly affect them. For example, all the interviewed cave village community pointed out that the developers (MTEC and LTDC) have taken away the privilege of benefiting from the tourists without giving them any compensation. The developers concern is on the heritage alone but not at the heritage found in Kome cave village together with the people living within the heritage. This is evident in that the basic improvements (latrines and waste pits) at the heritage site for the people living in cave are lacking. Again, compensation for losses or opportunities foregone by the community has not been done. These indicate that development did not consider the wellbeing of the community. Furthermore, participation by the cave community as far as conservation the cave village and in tourism is concerned seems to be not valuable to the developers. Compensation for losses or opportunities foregone can result with favourable community attitude and behavior towards conservation and tourism as well as forging relationships amongst the community and tourism authorities in Kome village.

Analysis of data collected from the community, government officials and personal observations indicates that there are many obstacles and deficiencies in Kome tourism but there is potential for community-based ecotourism for development and conservation. The data also indicates that the community

support tourism and some have also developed tourism facilities and services such as providing home stays and pony hiring for tourists even though they are not well established due to lack of capacity.

There are deficiencies such as human capacity, marketing, policy (guiding principles and by-laws), organizational structures and enforcement in Kome tourism development. Furthermore there is lack of transparency in terms of collection and handling of the revenues and lack of entrepreneurship by the community. These issues may hinder the efforts made in attempting to achieve successful community-based ecotourism in Kome village.



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It is important for the community councils and developers to invest in community's social infrastructure and human capital in order to achieve community-based ecotourism. When people are invested in a tourism development project they put their energies and talents (labour and capital) into it. Development of human capital will also help the community to manage the revenues. Kome tourism is more rooted in culture, history and nature-based tourism which need interpretation by the local people who know it very well than foreign people. It is important to develop human capital in order to improve education and communication skills which are useful for tourism. The Kome community needs to be empowered with skills and knowledge to manage their

tourism product and to enter into commercial world without being exploited by outsiders.

The entire political, socio-economic and environmental situation in Kome community help to frame people's perceptions towards community-based ecotourism for conservation and development as an option for source of livelihoods. It is therefore necessary to raise environmental awareness with regard to conservation and socio-economic development in Kome village for the community to acquire knowledge about community-based ecotourism.



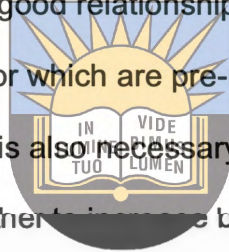
### Recommendations and Strategies

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Community involvement is an essential component of ecotourism and has been receiving attention recently for being a new economic alternative for rural development because it promotes conservation while diversifying and strengthening the tourism industry (Ashley and Roe 1998, cited in Nelson, 2004). It is important for the developers to involve the community in planning, decision-making and implementation of tourism development at Kome village. With such conditions the community will be able to carry rules that necessarily fit their local condition and they will have a right and power to make and enforce rules of which they will struggle to sustain the autonomy. One of the objectives of community-based ecotourism is to protect humans as part of the ecosystem. The fact that Kome community is part of the ecosystem that tourism

development seeks to protect and their inherent right to the land and the cave village should be considered as an important base for successful community-based ecotourism.

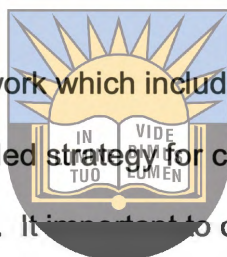
The developers have to identify potential conflicts among the community and other stakeholders. This is because solved conflicts between the various stakeholders can encourage good relationships and will contribute towards positive attitudes and behavior which are pre-requisites of community-based ecotourism. Furthermore, it is also necessary to assess other potential sources of finance and revenues in other than tourism benefits for the community and for conservation.



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Kome tourism should have a set of guiding principles and by-laws. It is the responsibility of the community, tourism officials and tourists to accept disciplinary guidelines (code of ethics) stipulated for Kome community-based ecotourism. Furthermore, the tourists and all the stakeholders have to observe and support regulations for control of tourism in Kome which is an unprotected area. Use of sign post or any material which can serve as warning to tourists about ecotourism ethics (for example: directions showing the tourists where to report before consuming the tourism product) when touring the unprotected area can be useful in that it will allow maximum control of tourism. This will also reduce revenue leakages from to such entry fees.

The strategy which is recommendable for Kome community-based ecotourism is the one which seeks advantages over its competitors by offering a better product and making an attempt to make the ecotourism product unique. The strategy should develop an action plan which incorporates local input and should be approved by local entities.



The inter-institutional framework which includes the community and other stakeholders is a recommended strategy for community-based ecotourism development in Kome village. It is important to create a framework that purposively includes representatives from the community (for example; Kome cave village member, Kome community member, one member from cultural groups, village council member) non-profit sector (NGOs), donor community, government and private sectors.

The strategy encompasses a range of activities that collectively can contribute to successful development, implementation and sustainable community-based ecotourism for conservation and development. Briefly the community collectively own and manage most of the resources used for tourism purpose. The private sector may be more efficient in marketing tourism and good business partners with the community. The NGO may be more useful in long term community welfare and conservation. The government can play a facilitative role

in the tourism development. The donor community can provide funds for skills development and empowerment while the public sector can offer training, guidelines formulation and implementation of idea.

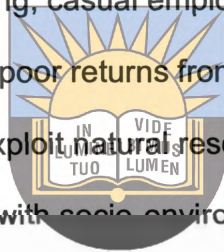
This case study involved initial stages of community-based ecotourism project development. Due to problems such as timeframes and lack of financial resources the researcher was not able to use Participatory Research Appraisal (PRA) which is an important research tool when dealing with community development especially in rural areas. Applying PRA to community-based ecotourism project can balance and develop an understanding of existing relationships between community and their environment. The research did not create a plan or strategy to coordinate Kome community with other communities near Kome where there are tourist attractive places in order to develop a joint tourism package. This study did not consider the views of tourists (both domestic and international tourists) with regard to the potential of community-based ecotourism for conservation and development in Kome village. This is important because tourists can influence the management through their activities to turn Kome into an eco-destination. It will be interesting if surveys can be conducted to ascertain the level interest and experience of tourists in community-based ecotourism and the feasibility of such development in Kome village.



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Finally tourism development in the rural areas such as Kome village should consider the need for social upliftment and protection of cultural values while conserving nature and tourist attractive places. Tourism development should also improve relations amongst various stakeholders while encouraging participation and transparency. The current economic activities of most Kome community members are biased and not sustainable. The community heavily depends on subsistence farming, casual employment, and illegal production of dagga to name a few. Due to poor returns from these livelihood strategies the community is forced to over-exploit natural resource or seek employment outside their village and these results with socio environmental problems. Therefore it is important for Kome community to adopt community based ecotourism as an alternative livelihood strategy.



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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Date	
Village	
Name of the respondent	
Questionnaire reference number	

Please indicate the most appropriate answer by using **X**

**1. Marital Status**

Married	Single
---------	--------



**2. Gender**

Male	Female
------	--------

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**3. Age**

<20	21-30	31-40	41-50	>50
-----	-------	-------	-------	-----

**4. Occupation**

Farmer	Housewife	Unemployed	Teacher	Other Specify
--------	-----------	------------	---------	---------------

**5. Monthly Income**

<500	1000	1500	2000	Above
------	------	------	------	-------

**6. Highest Education Level**

Primary	Secondary	High School	Tertiary
---------	-----------	-------------	----------

7. Do you have other sources of income?

Yes	
No	

If yes, specify.....

.....

### 8. Natural Resources

a. Which natural resources are important for your livelihood?

.....

.....

b. Is there any/ one institution which in control o the natural resources such as water, land, caves and others?

Yes	
No	

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If yes, state the name .....

.....

### 9. Tourism

a. What do you understand about tourism? .....

.....

b. How do you identify a tourist? .....

.....

c. Do you think tourism or tourists are important to you?

Yes	
No	

d. Why do you think so?

.....  
.....

e. What is the purpose of Kome information and crafts centre?

.....  
.....

f. Has your life changed since the centre was established?

Yes	
No	



If yes, how? .....

If no, why? .....

g. How does the revenue generated by the centre benefit the community?

.....  
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h. How can tourism contribute to the process of community development?

.....  
.....

i. Does the community participate in tourism activities?

.....  
.....

j. Are there any community-driven tourism development initiatives in this village?

.....  
.....

k. What are the constraints or problems that are facing those initiatives?

.....  
.....

l. What are the physical environmental problems associated with tourism?

.....  
.....

.....  
m. Are the communities willing to participate in tourism or ecotourism development initiatives? .....

.....  
n. If yes, are their initiatives supported and by whom and how?

.....  
.....

o) Are there any other sites that need to be developed to attract tourists?

Yes	
No	



If yes, indicate them .....

.....

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**10. Conservation**

a. Does the community participate in conservation programs aimed at protecting natural resources development?

.....  
.....

b. Are there any tourism initiatives related to conservation?

Yes	
No	

If yes, mention them .....

.....

c. How is conservation and tourism interrelated?

.....  
.....

d. What do you value or appreciate as a rural community?

.....  
.....

**11. Decision Making**

a. To what extent did the community participate in planning and decision making towards the development of the Kome Information and Crafts Centre?

.....

b. How do the communities currently participate at the centre?

.....  
.....

c. What were the major concerns of the communities about the establishment of the centre?

.....  
.....



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e. Do you think the centre is able to address those concerns as it was agreed upon by the different stakeholders before it was developed?

Yes	
No	

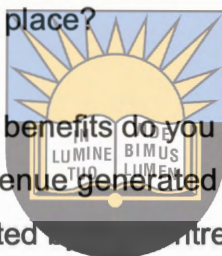
Explain your answer? .....

.....

**APPENDIX B**  
**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE CAVE DWELERS**

Date	
Village	
Name of the respondent	
Questionnaire reference number	

1. Why are you staying at this place?
2. Who maintains this place?
3. What are the challenges or benefits do you get from tourists?
4. Do you benefit from the revenue generated by the centre?
5. How is the revenue generated by the centre shared amongst the communities?
6. What were the major concerns of the communities about the establishment of the centre?
7. Do you think the centre is able to address those concerns as it was agreed upon by the different stakeholders before it was developed?
8. How do the communities currently participate now at Kome Information and Crafts Centre?
9. What are the physical environmental problems associated with tourism?
10. Are there any other sites that need to be developed to attract tourists?



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**APPENDIX C**  
**FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE**

1. What were your concerns about the establishment of the centre in your area?
2. To what extent do the communities participate in planning and decision making towards the development of the centre?
3. Is there cooperation between the communities, the centre and other stakeholders in terms of conservation and tourism planning?
4. How can tourism contribute to the process of community development?
5. Has tourism development empowered or disempowered the communities?
6. Is there any link between tourism and conservation?
8. What were the major concerns of the communities about the establishment of the centre?
10. Do you think the centre is able to address the concerns of the communities as it was agreed upon by all the stakeholders?
11. Are there any other sites that need to be developed to attract tourists?




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## **APPENDIX D**

### **DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH THE INFORMATION OFFICER (LTDC)**

1. What is your role as an information officer of this centre?
2. How do you identify tourists in this area?
3. What do tourists expect from this place?
4. What is the perception of tourists about this place and the community?
5. Which are the major sites of attractions to tourists in the area?
6. Since the place is not protected how do you control access to the area?
7. Do the communities participate in tourism activities?
8. Is there any integrated planning of tourism development in the area?
9. Do the communities participate in conservation programmes which are aimed at protect natural resource and enhance tourism development?
10. Does the communities benefit from the revenue which is generated by the centre?
11. Are there any other areas/sites that need to be developed to attract tourists?
12. What potential does Plane have for tourism or community-based ecotourism?
13. Are the communities willing to participate in tourism or ecotourism development initiatives?
14. What are environmental problems are associated with tourism?
15. Are there any community-outreach programs that are intended to improve the lives of the people and at the same time developing tourism?
16. How do you market this place?
17. Are there any community-driven tourism development initiatives?
18. What opportunities does tourism create for rural communities?
19. How can tourism contribute to the process of community development?

  
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## APPENDIX E

### DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR AN OFFICIAL FROM MTEC

1. What is the role MTEC in tourism development?
2. How can tourism contribute to the process of community development?
3. What are the major environmental challenges Plane?
4. What role does the MTEC play in minimizing negative impacts associated with tourism?
5. Does MTEC finance any restoration and conservation programs?
6. Does MTEC have any strategies for using tourism as a source of financing conservation?
7. What kind of tourism projects requires government approval?
8. What were the major concerns of the communities about the establishment of the centre?
9. Do you think the centre is meeting the concerns of the communities as it was agreed upon by all the stakeholders?
10. Does the communities benefit from the revenue generated by the centre?
11. How is the revenue generated by the centre shared amongst the communities?
12. Are there any other sites that need to be developed to attract tourists?
13. What potential does Plane area have for tourism or community-based ecotourism?
14. Are the communities willing to participate in tourism or ecotourism development initiatives?
15. Does the community have the capacity to manage community-based ecotourism?
16. What are environmental problems are associated with tourism?
17. Does MTEC support any community-driven tourism development initiatives?
18. Are there any plans or strategies aimed at improving or diversifying tourism



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the industry in Plane?

19. What opportunities does tourism create for development of the rural communities?
20. Are there any community-based conservation organization?
21. How close do you work with these organizations?



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