

Chapter 8

Socio-economic impacts of community-based ecotourism on rural livelihoods: A case study of Khawa village in the Kalahari region, Botswana

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Abstract: Community-based tourism has become an increasingly important activity for local development in Southern Africa. This chapter uses a case study approach to analyse the socio-economic impacts of community-based ecotourism on a remote community in the Kalahari region of western Botswana. The study was conducted in Khawa village, which is located within a wildlife management area (WMA) designated mainly for wildlife conservation purposes. Data were collected using a semi-structured household survey and a telephone survey. Furthermore, a participatory observation was utilized. The main results indicate the following benefits: increased awareness of tourism reduced illegal hunting activities, improved visibility of Khawa village, seasonal job opportunities, monetary benefits to the CBO/Trust, individual cash, game meat and infrastructure developments for tourism and the community. However, there were also negative impacts from tourism, such as noise pollution and disruption of the village peace and tranquility, especially during the annual Khawa Dune Challenge and Cultural Festival.

Keywords: Protected areas, wildlife, conservation, ecotourism, community-based tourism, Khawa, Kalahari, Botswana

8.1 Introduction

Since the 1990s ecotourism has emerged as a form of tourism that emphasizes the ideals of nature conservation and community participation and benefits in tourism development (Cobbinah et al., 2017; Stone & Nyaupane, 2015). Emphasis is on rural communities who subsist on natural resources found in abundance within their areas of abode. In general, ecotourism promotes tourism activities that are both nature-based and cultural in character and its principles are based on sustainable tourism (Anup et al., 2020; Wood, 2017), responsible tourism (Manning et al.,

2017) or community-based tourism (Lorio & Corsale, 2014; Mmopelwa & Mackenzie, 2020; UNWTO, 2018). In some studies, ecotourism has been characterized and contextualized as nature-based tourism (Fennell, 2015; Borges de Lima & Green, 2017) with links to tourism in protected areas such as national parks and game and nature reserves (Dhakal & Thapa, 2015; Garekae et al., 2020; Stone & Nyaupane, 2015).

Although there has been a strong focus on natural environments in ecotourism research, Cater (1994) has posited that culture must be recognized as an important aspect of ecotourism. This highlights the idea that natural and cultural landscapes should not be separated. Accordingly, Caldwell (1996) further contends that most landscapes we consider as natural have some cultural influences and human impacts based on their historical evolution (Diallo & Proulx, 2016; Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005). In this respect, ecotourism has the potential to protect and benefit both natural and cultural environments (Cobbinah et al., 2017). However, it is important to note that there may also be environmental and social challenges in ecotourism development (Anup et al., 2020; Moswete & Mavondo, 2003). Increased tourism based on conservation areas and local community resources has sometimes led to crowding and over utilization of natural resources, which has created serious threats to environment and/or community livelihoods (Panta & Thapa, 2017). Indeed, uncontrolled tourism development can be destructive since it can enable nature enthusiasts to penetrate further afield, exploring natural areas which could not otherwise have been accessed, thus, exposing them to tourism related pressures and damages (Fennell, 2015). Furthermore, some unsustainable practices of local ecotourism have been observed in which enclave tourism price out local people from participation (Anderson, 2011; Mbaiwa, 2005; Mbaiwa & Hambira, 2020; Saarinen, 2010, 2017; Saarinen & Wall-Reinius, 2019; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

Despite potential challenges ecotourism has become a tool for economic development and environmental protection in many developing nations, including Botswana (Mbaiwa, 2008, 2015; Saarinen et al., 2021; Stone & Nyaupane, 2015). If it is to be beneficial and sustainable, local communities should be allowed to derive a substantial amount of the socio-economic benefits generated by the industry (Fennell, 2015). Similarly, community-based ecotourism has been identified as an alternative option of economic growth in Botswana (Garekae et al., 2020;

GoB, 2007). Based on these premises, this study is interested in examining the impacts of community-based ecotourism development in Khawa in southern Kgalagadi, in Botswana, which is a small, marginalised and remote village. The chapter aims at assessing the socio-economic impacts of community-based ecotourism (CBE) on the livelihood of the residents. The objective of the study is to assess the socio-economic impacts of community-based ecotourism in Khawa and to examine the perceived impacts of tourism on the environment at the area. Furthermore, the study seeks answers for the following specific sub-questions: a) has ecotourism benefitted local residents of Khawa?; b) How has tourism impacted the local landscape at Khawa; and c) Has CBE empowered the local residents of Khawa?

8.2 Community-Based Ecotourism

Based on the global tourism trends and developed policies in Southern Africa (see Monare et al., 2016; UNWTO, 2018) there has been an increasing interest in community-based tourism (Stone & Stone, 2020; Moswete & Thapa, 2018). In practice, CBE is organized in various ways in different socio-economic and political contexts. In general, the key principles of CBE related to the requirements to involve so called gateway communities and villagers living adjacent to protected areas to enhance their income (Anup et al., 2020; Panta & Thapa, 2017; Moswete et al., 2012). CBE may also help rural residents to refrain from agricultural dependence as local people who participate in CBE can receive benefits (income, employment) from tourist consumption (Dhakal & Thapa, 2015). Well managed CBE can also restore degraded rangelands, revive cultures, protect, and preserve endangered species of fauna and flora, reduce resource conflicts, and improve the living standards of rural communities (Greeffe, 2009; Moswete, Thapa & Lacey, 2009; Mbaiwa, 2008). Indeed, in many cases in southern Africa, CBE has contributed positively to communities (Kimaro & Saarinen, 2020; Mbaiwa, 2013; Mmopelwa & Mackenzie, 2020; Moswete et al., 2012).

In Botswana, some working examples are the Nqwa Khobee Xeya Development Trust (Kgalagadi north) and Sankoyu Tshwaraganyo Development Trust (northern Botswana) (Arntzen et al., 2003; Mbaiwa, 2013; Moswete & Thapa, 2018). With reference to Botswana's Ecotourism Strategy (GoB, 2003), CBE implies that a community is "caring for its natural

resources in order to gain income through tourism and is using that income to better the lives of its people; it involves conservation, business enterprises, and community development” (GoB, 2007).

In positive cases, CBE commonly involves business initiatives that are wholly owned by local communities and are inherently less dependent on foreign suppliers. The small-scale community initiatives are resident owned, managed, and operated, and the benefits accrue to the local community (Greeffe, 2009). Furthermore, in successful cases local people and all villagers are trained on issues of how to initiate, start and operate a CBO/Trust (GoB, 2007; Moswete & Thapa, 2018). Further, communities are supported and encouraged to venture on CBE initiatives by forming community-based organizations (CBOs) or Trusts (Kimaro & Saarinen, 2020; Mbaiwa, 2013; Moswete & Thapa, 2018). For Botswana, the CBOs or Trusts are "tourism initiatives that are owned by one or more communities, or run as joint venture partnerships with the private sector with equitable community participation, as a means of using natural and cultural resources in a sustainable manner to improve local livelihoods and safeguard the environment (Mbaiwa, 2013).

However, as previously noted, there can be challenges and failures involved with CBE due to varying resource availability as well as management plans and policies (Moswete et al., 2020; Stone & Stone, 2020). Based on previous research some local communities have not benefited from tourism activities due to a lack of skills and various capacities about the industry (Moswete and Lacey, 2015; Saarinen, 2010). Some studies have revealed that tourism can only benefit the non-local tour operators, while the residents were found to have had limited knowledge to facilitate ecotourism ventures (Cobbinah et al. 2017; Mbaiwa, 2003).

8.3 The case study: Socio-economic impacts of community-based ecotourism in Khawa

8.3.1 Khawa village

Khawa is a village in the Kalahari region of south western Botswana. Khawa is one of the smallest villages in Kgalegadi District with a population of 817 in 2011 (Statistics, Botswana,

2013). The village is growing, and it has steadily become a so-called complete village (see the revised Botswana Settlement Strategy of 1998) with one primary school, mobile health stop, Kgotla (traditional meeting place) offices and the village development quarters (GoB, 2001; Moswete, 2009). The roads connecting Khawa village with other nearby settlements, villages and farm areas are dirt roads, treks and pathways (Moswete, 2015). The ethnic groupings of Khawa include Bangologa, Batlharo, Coloureds and Nama and they live under the leadership of Kgosi Titus Manyoro. History of Khawa shows that the people of this village hailed from South Africa and as such many of their relatives are found in South Africa. The livelihood activities for the community are subsistence arable farming and rearing of small stock (goats, sheep). A few individuals in the community own cattle, donkey, and horses for subsistence purposes. However, poor, and infertile sandy soils make crop farming a problem, while low to unreliable rainfall, water shortage and poor pastures (desert) render keeping of livestock (cattle, donkey, goats) a challenge to residents (Moswete, 2009) (Figure 8.1).



Figure 8.1 Queueing supplied water in Khawa. Water supply shortages are common in the Kalahari region (Photo: J. Saarinen).

Geographically, the Khawa village is situated about 20 kilometers from the boundary of the southern part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP), which straddles between Botswana and South Africa. Khawa is one of the very few villages found close to the Park's boundary line. Historically, the park was made up of two national parks: Gemsbok National Park in Botswana and the adjoining South African Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. In 1999, the two parks were merged and became Africa's first officially declared transboundary (peace) park. The park is still largely the only open peace park where tourists can move freely across the international boundaries of the park. Tourists who visit the park pay entrance fees, and according to the shared management and operation of the KTP, entrance fees are shared equally between Botswana and South Africa. However, each country is responsible for developing their tourism related facilities.

The village of Khawa is located within the Wildlife Management area (WMA) known as KD 15 (GoB, 2001; Mbaiwa, 2013). The specific WMA is a buffer zone with links to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. In general, land uses allowed in WMAs are classified in two - consumptive or non-consumptive wildlife utilization (GoB, 2001). In respect tourism development, the focus in WMAs is on nature-based tourism activities. In the case of the Khawa village, it was an unknown small village with very little or no tourism taking place till the 2000. However, with the advent of wildlife conservation policy of 1986 and the Botswana National Parks Act of 1992 wildlife hunting became tightly controlled. At the same time poaching or illegal hunting of wild animals and birds became problematic (Moswete et al., 2012). As a partial response, the Government encouraged rural communities to venture into tourism the Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) (Mbaiwa, 2013). As a result, the Khawa village became one of the first in the Kgalagadi district to establish a safari-based tourism CBO-Trust (BTDP, 2003; Moswete et al., 2009). It is formally known as Khawa Kopanelo Development Trust (Arntzen et al., 2003; Moswete et al., 2012).

Based on the previous studies, tourism has had limited benefits for the members of the community of Khawa (Moswete, 2009). Community benefits derived from the safari hunting included, meat, part time jobs (e.g., cooks, trekkers, skimmers, and campsite caretakers), income and overall pride for being associated with the KTP (Arntzen et al., 2003; Mbaiwa, 2005; Moswete et al., 2012). Reduced poaching in the area has been noted as local people began to understand the value of protecting wild animals in their area (Moswete, 2009). Also, the residents via their CBO/Trust began to freely become part of the community tourism project and got involved in conservation activities of wildlife in and around the village of Khawa (Moswete et al., 2012). Further, a CBO/Trust built a shelter as office, purchased a truck and people were assisted with some money and food during bereavement and ill-health (Moswete, 2009; Moswete et al., 2012). In 2012 a government initiative popularly known the Khawa dune challenge tourism related annual event was introduced and Khawa village was identified as a place suitable for the event. At the initial stage, the community was not happy with the event as it appeared like was imposed on them (Kgosi Manyoro, 2012). However, like many tourism development initiatives the introduction of event-based tourism in the community brought challenges but also potential opportunities.

8.3.2 Methods

Research materials were collected via a semi-structured systematic household interviews; every other home or plot that intersects paths and roads was selected and visited for interviews. The head of the household was requested to participate, and a consent form was signed by the interviewee before each interview. In instances when the head of the household was not home, any member of the family who was 18 years or older and had lived in the village or district for at least 12 months was asked to participate. As a result, a total of 75 household heads (more than 50% of all 128 households) were systematically selected, while 15 key informants were selected through purposive method. An unstructured casual discussion with the village headman, manager of the CBO/Trust and the Village Development Committee (VDC) secretary were conducted. An observation method with a situational analysis approach (see Koutra, 2010) was used during two of the Khawa Dune Challenge and Cultural Events to collect more information for this study.

Additional information and research materials were sought through a telephone interview from June to November 2020. Purposive and snowball sampling approaches were used to select key informants (see Patton, 1999; Robins, 1963; Veal, 2006). This was initiated by first identifying one of those who play a role in the village development activities of Khawa. It was through the initial contact that some names of persons were recommended, and telephone and mobile phone numbers were availed to the lead researcher. Once an individual was contacted by phone, a survey sheet was sent via mobile phone application and electronic mail (see Holliday, 2001; Veal, 2006). In total, a 15-item collection survey sheet was sent out to an identified key people, and 10 were completed and returned.

8.3.3 Demographic characteristics (Household Interview)

There were more female participants (59 percent) than males. Many were born (natives) of Khawa and 60 of them had lived in the village all their lives, while others had lived there for more than ten years (24 percent). The remaining participants had resided in the village for less than ten years (16 percent). The youngest participant was 18 and the oldest was 81 years with about 83 percent of them being able to read and write. In the data the ethnicity of Khawa was comprised of Batlharo (69.3 percent), Coloreds (10.6 percent), Bakgalagadi (6.7 percent), Bangologa (5.3 Percent), BaNama and Baherero with 1.5 Percent respectively and others (5.3 percent). The estimated household monthly income among the 75 participants ranged from less than P500 (USD45) to P3500 (USD320). Almost 21percent had a formal job, 20 percent were part time and unemployment stood at 32 percent. Many families (23 percent) were involved in the government welfare programs known as drought relief project (namula leuba), whereas 15 percent were registered under the destitution program where they receive food basket monthly. Fewer members of the community (10.6 percent) were involved in farming (sheep, goats) while only three persons mentioned craft as a source of income.

With respect to the key informant telephone survey, there were slightly more females (6) than males (4); with age ranging from 27 to 49 years old. Those who took part in the mobile phone interview came from 6 villages in Kgalagadi, with two from Gaborone and one was from

Palapye. These representatives included a CBO/Trust officer, village elders, tourism development management offices, environmental and safety manager, teachers, and retirees). Nearly all of them had visited Khawa for purposes including officer on duty, field visits, business, and as spectators (visitors/tourists) during the community annual event.

Since the study is exploratory, data was analyzed by descriptive statistics where proportions and pivot tables were used to validate data and present the results. Qualitative data generated from open ended questions and information obtained from interview were transcribed and analyzed (see Groves et al., 2004; Holliday, 2001; Miles et al., 2014). Observation information gathered (unobtrusive technique) was incorporated in the analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 2017; Veal, 2006). Thus, open, axial, and selective coding of qualitative data was used to derive key findings and conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Urquhart, 2013).

8.3.4 Socio-economic impacts: Economic-tourism related activities

The community of Khawa owns a CBO/Trust known as Khawa Kopanelo Community Development Trust (KKDT). The community initiated a joint venture safari hunting activity through their KKDT with the assistance of the CBNRM-CBO government initiative program. With respect to the interview, the respondents indicated that they had engaged a safari hunting operator to manage their tourism enterprises and activities for them and that they had a contractual agreement as stipulated in the joint venture legal contract document (see Thusanyo Le fatsheng, 2005). The CBO/Trust operated within the concession area known as the Kgalagadi District (KD) 15, community-based camping activities.

The KKDT offers several safari and ecotourism activities to local and international tourists, especially those with vast interest in nature, wilderness, wildlife and cultures and history. The safari operator offeres camping at designated fenced off camping grounds, which has long drop shower, pit latrine, garbage bins, fireplace and barbecue stands with some sitting areas (see Moswete et al., 2009). The socio-economic benefits revealed by both household representatives and almost all the key informants were casual, part time and full-time employment, income (salary and tips), business opportunities and game meat. Empowerment activities for the villagers

were through formal meetings (seminars, workshops), informal training (Kgotla meetings) and some benefitted through on job training (CBO/Trust and VDC members).

The community derive monetary benefits through the CBO/Trust and other ecotourism activities in the village. According to the interview with the CBO/Trust manager and the village headman, the safari operator pays the community a lump sum of money. The money is shared in which the CBO/Trust management subdivides cash amongst all households in the community. For instance, in the period 2011/2012 the Khawa CBO/Trust generated revenue amounting to P16, 000 from tourism activities (Mbaiwa, 2013) and this was shared amongst individual homes.

Still on benefits at community level, one of the key informants observed:

From the 2019 Khawa Dune Challenge and cultural tourism event socio-economic survey report that the revenue accrued to the community of Khawa from [tourism-related businesses, . . . Do It Yourself (DIY) campsite and the resident vendor accrued [stoop up to] P130, 341.45 for just the Khawa annual event weekend.

Other individuals benefitted by receiving direct cash income by selling handcrafted ornaments (*wooden spoons, bone tools*), herbal teas (e.g., *mosukujane*) and wild berries (e.g., *moretlwa*), wild mushrooms (*mahupu*). Compared to other communities or villages in Kgalagadi, only a small number of people were involved in craft work such as skin tanning for mats/carpet, sofa cushions and handbags. Unlike in the rest of Kalahari, only an insignificant number of residents were involved in bead work using ostrich eggshells in Khawa. From the household survey, a large proportion of the respondents (94.6%) said that CBE was essential to their community. However, when household respondents were asked if revenue from community-based tourism benefitted many persons in the community, slightly more than a half (52%) of the household representative answered yes to the statement, while quite a high number of the respondents (35%) said there were no benefits.

Furthermore, we discovered that Khawa was endowed with geosites and geotourism resources for adventure and photographic tourism. This small and remote community has also become a

popular village that hosts the annual Khawa dune challenge tourism activity in southern Kalahari. The village and its beautiful landscape have become an attraction on its own right (see Saarinen et al., 2012). In addition, from the recent interview data, the key informants resonated that the community of Khawa benefited from the annual Khawa dune challenge and cultural event because a good number of them profit directly from the ‘Do it yourself’ (DIY) campsite accommodation within their homes, personal vendor stalls, sale of foods and handcrafted local souvenirs to visitors. As one key informant observed: “*Residents benefitted through their community Trust (CBO) business, and from renting out their undeveloped residential plots/land for camping*”. Furthermore, the CBO/Trust also obtains monetary benefits from tourism business in which they offer lodging and other services including food.

Subsequently, the findings revealed that tourism has opened opportunities for employment within the local community. So far, some members of the community have secured jobs from tourism related businesses such as CBO/Trust guesthouse and campsites. Some work as part timers; casual laborers, while others said that they were engaged to do menial jobs for example, mending of the park (KTP) fence, campsite cleaners, watching/caretakers of campsites, skimmers and local guides and others were engaged as interpreters during hunting expeditions. For instance, a sizeable number (65.3%) of them said the KTP provides jobs for people in their community, while a substantial number (89.3%) were happy that their village is situated closer to the KTP. This has opened opportunities for them to secure jobs at the park whilst others were employed by the safari operator. However, we still found that unemployment at the time of study was relatively high (32%) in Khawa, while self-employment was 24%; formal employment at 21.3% and part-time or casual jobs was 20% among the household respondents.

Similarly, the key informants revealed that there has been increase in employment opportunities in the village, indicating that some of the residents get to work as casual laborers; pick litter and providing security services (policing/watching) unwarranted behaviours in the village and even poaching of wild animals. Other individuals from the village set up their own stalls, kiosk outlet to sell food and groceries creating jobs for helpers who are engaged from the village. In terms of tourism infrastructure and development, CBE facilities for tourism were minimal and standard during the first part of study, but there were some developments: e.g., the CBO/Trust had

purchased a 4x4 off-road vehicle with a tourism cash income obtained from the safari operator. The community benefited from the Trust/CBO as the vehicle formed a bigger part of the social capital (welfare support) to everyone in the village. For example, in the event of sickness or death in the community the vehicle is used to ferry them to and from a nearby clinic in Middlepits village or to a hospital located 167 kilometres, quite a distant away in Tsabong village (the largest village in southern Kalahari).

The study also discovered that most of the respondents (89.3%) held the perception that they were happy to have their village adjacent to the park (KTP). In a similar fashion, the key informants also echoed community attachment to the park (KTP) as it was a home for their forefathers and revealed that there are still heritage sites (dwelling remains) inside the park (Figure 8.2).



Figure 8.2 Dwelling remains, and old boreholes found near Rooipuits campsite inside the KTP (Photo: N. Moswete).

The developmental changes that we discovered at the study site fall as part of Botswana government mandate to diversify tourism away from urban centres to rural areas to promote community tourism and improve lives. There were some related concerns with tourism development. At the top of their concern was increase in incidents of HIV/AIDS infections and transmission (92%), followed by increase in social ills (e.g., crime) (86.7%), and that tourism

would change their cultural traditions (64%). However, they appeared to be slightly less concerned of the statement that tourism would destroy the environment (49.3%).

The key informants were also asked to share their views about community tourism development in Khawa. Specifically, they were asked to give out their views and opinions on maximum three major 'things' (issues) they disliked about tourism in Khawa. Nearly all of them stated that the gravel road that adjoins Khawa to other villages (main access road) was in a poor state of disrepair as was damaged, with potholes and was too dusty due to increased traffic and overuse.

“they should consider developing and improving the road from Khuis village to Khawa so as to minimize the likelihood of accidents because the road as is, is very bad with potholes and the sand is loosened and is dusty as traffic to the village increases during the Khawa dune challenge tourism event.”

In addition, the issue of noise pollution was highlighted. Some respondents felt that noise pollution disrupted village peace and tranquility during the event. One of the respondents stated that some residents even visit relatives as they are not able to withstand what they refer to as 'commotion' during the event weekend. There was also a mention of crowding problems during the tourism event week. There were no tourism related issues raised beyond the event. Thus, it seems that the tourism related challenges are mainly linked to the Khawa Dune Challenge and Cultural Event, which was considered as creating changes to the village. This also includes challenges in the economic system of the Event. Since many tourism services are imported into the village for the Event, such as camping equipment, tents, hired toilets, food stuffs, most of the generated revenue from tourism does not stay in the community but leak out to those operators who come from larger villages such as Tsabong, or towns such as Jwaneng and Gaborone.

Despite the challenging issues, almost all the key informants observed that there were some recent positive developments that have taken place within the community due to tourism. There was a mention of a paved inner road which starts at the beginning of the village stretching up to the village Kgotla. Other positive changes brought about by tourism include solar streets lights and flood lights which have been erected. Trees have been planted alongside pavements, and

brick and mortar permanent stalls have been built to assist the community during the Khawa tourism annual event or any other activity that would be hosted by the community. There is a camping ground with a gated house. All these are villagescape changes that have given a new look to the village and its touristic attractiveness. In addition, the residents indicated that there were some intangible benefits, such as better visibility and awareness of the village:

“The Khawa sand dunes (mounds) as tourist attractions for adventure tourism is now known countrywide, and also are known in neighboring countries such as in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, although the event tends to attract more of domestic tourists.”

8.4 Conclusions

When CBE is well planned, and activities are appropriately managed it has great potential to benefit local people and their associated environment. Several studies have demonstrated the positive effects of community-based ecotourism in the Southern Africa (Mbaiwa, 2013; Mearns, 2003; Monare et al., 2016; Moswete et al., 2012; Saarinen, 2010; 2011; Snyman, 2012). In a similar fashion, the community of Khawa is one such village where residents have formed a CBO/Trust, which runs CBE projects that aim to benefit community members. In order to boost the tourism impacts, the government introduced an annual tourism event the Khawa Dune Challenge, which has brought benefits to the people in a form of increased employment. Furthermore, revenue accrued by the community tourism and the Trust is significant based on tourist camping grounds, tented accommodation, sale of food and horse rides. So far developments are noticeable as community tourism campsite is upgraded; the main inner road into the village is paved and trees planted for soil conservation. In addition, the residents of Khawa have been empowered through increased participation on and awareness of tourism as business and they have gained skills and understanding on how to venture into tourism. This indicates that community-based ecotourism can have a potential to unlock socio-economic development challenges in marginalized lands and disadvantaged ethnic communities. These findings are comparable to other studies in Kgalagadi – KD1 Ncaang, Ngwatle and Ukwi

(Moswete et al, 2009; Saarinen et al., 2020), Okavango region (Mbaiwa, 2005) and North East Botswana (Lenao & Saarinen, 2015). However, like in the other parts of the country, there is an economic leakage problem; the revenue made during the Dune Challenge does not sufficiently trickle down to the community.

Historically, many households were depended on government support in the Khawa area. In this respect the community and the government have identified tourism as a potential game changer. However, tourism is still lowkey level and highly seasonal. Still, the industry has already created some negatively perceived development paths, which need to be proactively managed. A high concentrations of tourist activities during the Dune Challenge has resulted in waste disposal problems, which impacts the attractiveness of village natural environment – sand dunes, scenic areas, and roadsides – both for tourists and residents. Furthermore, the Khawa village is small, traditional, and surrounded by fragile desert natural landscape. Large numbers of adventure tourists can have a devastating effect on the environment as it is already being experienced during the Dune Challenge with trampling of the sand mounds by too many people, quad bikes and 4x4 off-road vehicles. Increased tourism has also resulted in noise pollution and social ills. Therefore, more sustainable development-oriented tourism activities and new products are needed within the locality, so that tourism would be more beneficial with inclusive and balanced nature of the tourism development in Khawa.

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