

Cultural tourism and livelihood diversification: The case of Gwihaba Caves and XaiXai village in the Okavango Delta, Botswana

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This paper uses the livelihoods framework to analyse how cultural tourism can diversify livelihoods at XaiXai village in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. Both primary and secondary data sources were used in this study. Primary data sources included household and key informant's interviews conducted at XaiXai village and Gwihaba Caves. Secondary data included both published and unpublished materials on cultural tourism, XaiXai village and Gwihaba Caves. Results indicate that the San (Basarwa) of XaiXai's traditional life of hunting and gathering has become a cultural tourism product in the Okavango Delta. Gwihaba Caves' geological formation particularly the stalagmites, stalactites and channels also attract tourists that visit the Okavango Delta. The caves also have a cultural history in that they were used as a hiding place by the Basarwa in times of wars, rainy season and cold winters. As such, the cultural values of the San of XaiXai and Gwihaba Caves are cultural tourism products that can diversify livelihoods at XaiXai village. Therefore, policies and strategies that address cultural tourism and rural livelihoods in tourism destination areas need to be developed. The Gwihaba Caves and XaiXai Village case study demonstrates that cultural tourism can be a tool for rural livelihoods diversification in tourism destination areas of developing countries.

Keywords: Gwihaba Caves; livelihood diversification; sustainable livelihoods; cultural tourism

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is arguably the most rapidly growing industry in the world (Campbell, 1999; Edwards, 2004; World Tourism Organization, 2003). In Botswana, tourism was almost non-existent at the country's independence from British rule in 1966. However, by 2007, the tourism industry had grown to become the second largest economic sector after mining contributing 9.7% to Botswana's gross domestic product (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2007). Much of the tourism industry in Botswana is nature-based and is carried out in national parks, game reserves and other protected areas – containing world-renowned wildlife, biological diversity and natural attributes – as well as the unique and spectacular scenery and cultural attractions. As a result, the cultural aspect or

cultural tourism though significant is given minimum attention in Botswana's tourism development strategies and policies (Mbaiwa, 2004).

Cultural tourism implies a tourism industry that is owned, controlled, acceptable and desired by the local people as well as meeting their socio-cultural and economic needs (McIntosh, 2004). It relies on local cultural products, artefacts and host populations in destination areas. Richards (2001) argues that cultural products and attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of the world culture to attractions that underpin local identities. Culture can be viewed as comprising what people think (attitudes, beliefs, ideas and values), what people do (normative behaviour patterns, or way of life) and what people make (artworks, artefacts, cultural products) (Littrell, 1997). Culture is therefore composed of processes (the ideas and way of life of people) and the products of those processes (buildings, artefacts, art, customs, and atmosphere) (Richards, 2001). Culture can also be viewed as an artefact of human social practice which has visual outcomes that reflect the messages of particular organizations and send them to individual participants (Berwick 2003). Cultural tourism is, therefore, a form of tourism built around cultural resources (Mbaiwa, 2004; McGettigan & Burns, 2001; Swarbrooke 1999). Cultural tourism involves the consumption of cultural resources (McGettigan & Burns 2001). As a result, cultural tourism is not only just about visiting sites and monuments (a view traditional held about cultural tourism), but it also involves consuming the way of life of areas visited (Richards, 2001). Cultural tourism includes both heritage tourism (related to artefacts of the past) and arts tourism (related to contemporary cultural production) (Richards, 2001). The benefits of cultural tourism are that visitors come to experience local cultures, and thus improve their awareness, understanding and appreciation of local cultures (McIntosh, 2004). Cultural tourism also has economic benefits in the form of income in the host regions such as the Okavango Delta. Cultural tourism thus provides a symbiotic relationship between visitors and host populations leading to economic success and cultural preservation in destination areas.

Cultural tourism is viewed as a new, emerging and growing market in the world (Mbaiwa, 2004; Richards, 2001). In Botswana, cultural tourism is largely ignored in terms of policy development since emphasis is placed on wildlife-based tourism. This study, therefore, examines the potential of cultural tourism using monuments such as Gwihaba Caves and the cultural heritage of the San of XaiXai village in diversifying livelihoods in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. The goal is to analyse the effectiveness of cultural tourism in diversifying livelihoods from traditional livelihoods options such as agriculture, hunting and gathering, which are on the decline to tourism development that is growing in the Okavango Delta.

2. The sustainable livelihoods framework

The sustainable livelihoods framework recently became central to the discourse on poverty alleviation, rural development and environmental management (Ellis, 2000; Scoones, 1998). The livelihood framework has its origins in the work of Chambers and Conway (1992). Since then, it has appealed to both researchers and development practitioners involved in poverty eradication. According to Chambers and Conway (1992, p. 7) "a livelihood comprises the capabilities (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living" Ellis (2000, p. 19) also points out that "a livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital), the activities and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine

the living gained by the individual or household". Chambers and Conway (1992, p. 5) note, "a livelihood in its simplest sense is a means of gaining a living".

The sustainable livelihoods framework is considered a suitable tool for analysis of livelihoods in this study because it links the broader socio-economic components of household assets, livelihood activities, outcomes of livelihood activities and factors mediating access to livelihood activities (Ellis, 2000; Farrington, Carney, Ashley, & Turton, 2004; Scoones, 1998). Activities are strategies or various ways in which households generate their livelihoods (Ellis, 2000; Kgathi, Ngwenya, & Wilk, 2007). The sustainable livelihoods framework therefore seeks an accurate understanding of people's assets and capital endowments and the processes and conversion of these into desirable livelihood outcome (Mubangizi, 2003). The sustainable livelihoods framework shows how in different contexts and through different strategies, people support themselves through access to a range of resources or assets (natural, economic, human and social capitals) (Chambers & Conway, 1992; D'Haese & Kirsten, 2003; Scoones, 1998). The means of achieving sustainable livelihoods are usually diverse and can be based on natural resource or non-natural resource (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Ellis, 2000). Kgathi et al. (2007) argue that natural resource-based activities in the Okavango Delta can be arable farming, livestock farming, collection of rangeland products, basket making, fishing and community-based tourism. Kgathi et al. also note that non-natural resource-based activities include formal employment, rural trade and social protection programs. Figure 1 shows the simplified version of the sustainable livelihoods framework.

Figure 1 shows the assets and strategies and activities that are used to achieve desirable outcomes (in this study, outcomes can be improved livelihoods or well being). Assets and resources are inputs to a livelihood system and they are the immediate means needed for generating livelihood (Niehof, 2004). Scoones (1998) argues that assets and resources may be seen as the capital base from which different productive streams are derived and from which livelihoods are constructed. In the case of XaiXai, Ghwihaba Caves are a cultural asset or capital which local communities use for cultural tourism activities such as storytelling and dancing. Development practitioners use sustainable livelihood

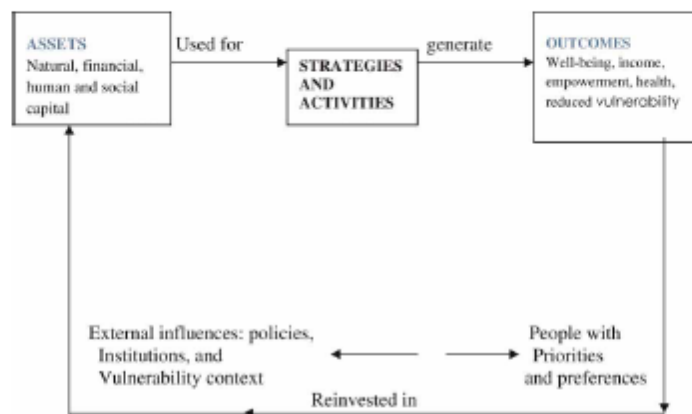


Figure 1. Sustainable livelihoods framework.
Source: Ashley (2000).

frameworks to identify entry points for understanding root causes of poverty and potential interventions for improving people's lives (Scoones, 1998). The sustainable livelihoods framework thus brings together the notions of well-being, security and capability, through in-depth analysis of existing poverty (wealth), vulnerability and resilience, as well as natural resource sustainability (Bhandari & Grant, 2007).

The sustainable livelihoods framework can be applied at a range of different scales, from individuals to households, villages, regions or even nations (Scoones, 1998). In this study, the framework focuses on at household and community levels to provide a broad understanding of how cultural tourism can diversify livelihoods at XaiXai village in the Okavango Delta. The sustainable livelihoods framework in this study should demonstrate how communities of XaiXai village collectively use natural resources, their knowledge and skills through cultural tourism to achieve commonly shared goals of improved livelihoods. The livelihoods framework in this study used on a broad understanding that the people of XaiXai, like any other community or society, have their own unique cultural or community capital that can be tapped and benefit them through tourism development. Jacobs (2007) argues that every community or society has community capital. Community capital includes all things in a community that have the potential to be a resource that can be invested, saved or used up (Jacobs, 2007).

Culture, which is part of community capital, can be reinvested in a tourism market. That is, culture is a capital. Cultural capital consists of symbols and language, festivals, celebrations and events (Jacobs, 2007). Cultural capital is part of people's identity, traditions and understanding of each other (Bourdieu, 1986; Jacobs, 2007). Cultural capital is formed when communities live through historic events together (Jacobs, 2007). Bourdieu (1986) argues that cultural capital in its embodied form is a competence or skill that cannot be separated from its bearer, which is the person who holds it. The San of XaiXai village have a rich cultural capital of which Gwihaba Caves seem to be outstanding in that they attract international tourists that visit the Okavango Delta. This rich cultural capital is critical in livelihood development through tourism development at XaiXai village. Livelihoods diversification at XaiXai village has also been possible through the introduction of community-based tourism which is carried out through the Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme. The CBNRM programme has been implemented in the Okavango Delta since the mid-1990s and it aims at linking rural livelihoods development and sustainable use of natural resource (Mbaiwa, 2005). As a result, cultural tourism and safari hunting tourism at XaiXai village and Gwihaba Caves are partly achieved because of the implementation of the CBNRM programme in the Okavango Delta.

3. Study area

This study was carried out at XaiXai village and Gwihaba Caves both located in the extreme northern west corner of Botswana in the Okavango Delta region (Figure 1).

3.1 *Gwihaba Caves*

Gwihaba Caves are situated roughly 10 km from the Namibian border (Figure 2). Gwihaba Caves is a San (the so-called "Bushmen") word that means "the hyena's lair" (Melenhorst, 2008). Gwihaba Caves are situated on a sand ridge. The caves are a faraway warren of passages, pits and caverns. The caves are part of the Kalahari ecosystem and are three million years old (Melenhorst, 2008). The caves were formed during the Pleistocene era when conditions were much wetter (Melenhorst, 2008). Gwihaba Caves

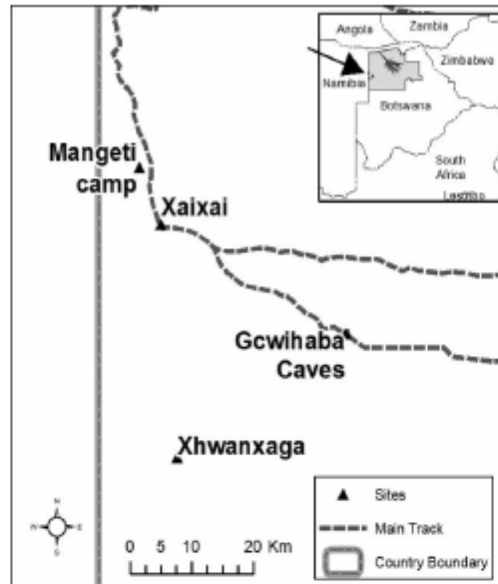


Figure 2. Map showing the location of XaiXai village and Gchwihaba Caves.

were formed as a result of acidic water flowing underground and slowly dissolved the dolomite marble rocks resulting in a system of passages, carvens, holes, hallways, frozen waterfalls and a series of stalagmites and stalactites that rise to heights of about 10 m.

Gchwihaba Caves are archeologically and paleontologically important because they hold clues to the way prehistoric peoples lived and related to their environment. For example, late Stone Age tools, burnt ostrich eggshells, animal bones and fossilized primate skull have been found at Gchwihaba Caves (Melenhorst, 2008). Melenhorst argues that these artefacts suggest that Gchwihaba Caves and their immediate surrounding areas were inhabited by foraging people thousands of years ago. Gchwihaba Caves are also home to countless bats, barn owls and cornucopia of invertebrates. The areas around the caves are home to the Kalahari tent tortoise and geckos. Large mammals such as elephant, eland, kudu, gemsbok, wild dog, lion and cheetah are occasionally seen in the area. Plant species found around Gchwihaba Caves are those that survive in arid conditions such as acacia. Because of its natural and cultural significance, the Gchwihaba Caves and its immediate environs have since been designated a national monument and a UNESCO's World Heritage site in 1999. It is this cultural and natural heritage that the people of XaiXai have since commodified for the tourism market.

3.2 XaiXai village

The village of XaiXai is situated in the north west of Botswana about 10 km of the Namibian border (Figure 2). About 400 people live at XaiXai Village (Central Statistic Office, 2002). The Village is composed predominately of the Ju/'hoansi (a San linguistic group). According to the Central Statistic Office (2002), about 80% of the people at XaiXai village are the

San and the rest are Baherero and Mbanderu who settled in the area after fleeing civil conflict in Namibia in the 1960s. There is also an insignificant number of Bayei, Bambukushu and Batawana (Garner, 2008).

The San are generally referred to as the indigenous to Botswana (Hitchcock, 1995). Like other San groups in the Okavango Delta and Botswana, the San of XaiXai lived a hunting and gathering economic life. They also lived in small groups. They were nomadic in nature and their movements were generally around Gcwihaba Caves. Tlou (1985) argues that the oldest inhabitants of the Okavango Basin are the Basarwa or San. San is a collective name used for several groups of Khoisan-speaking people. Evidence based on Early and Middle Stone Age implements found at sites on or near the delta margins seem to indicate that man has inhabited the southern periphery of the delta for about 10,000 years or more (Tlou, 1985).

In modern Botswana, the San have become a minority group and are marginalized such that they have been displaced from their cultural land and their socio-cultural lifestyle of hunting and gathering is also on the decline (Mbaiwa, Ngwenya, & Kgathi, 2008). At present, the economic livelihoods of the San of XaiXai rely on a number of issues, namely short-term manual jobs offered by the government in the village such as road clearing and building construction. They have also come to rely on community-based tourism carried out through the CBNRM programme. Other ethnic groups such as the Bayei, Bambukushu, Batawana, Baherero and Mbanderu are pastoralists who live an agricultural economic lifestyle. The changes in the economic and cultural lifestyle of the people of XaiXai over the decades thus provide a rich cultural background, which has the potential to be part of the tourist package that can diversify livelihoods at XaiXai village.

4. Study methods

Data collection for this study was carried out between May and July 2008. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. Primary data collection involved household interviews. During the research design, the intention was to interview all 56 households at XaiXai village. However, this was not carried out as some household members were absent. There was also evidence that some households and houses have been abandoned for sometime maybe due to natural factors such as death and migration. In the end, a total of 26 households representatives were interviewed. That is, interviews were carried out in all the households where representatives were available. The head of the household or household representative was the respondent. The head in most households were found to be males. However, if absent, the spouse was selected. If neither were available, any household member 18 years or older (and thus considered an adult in Botswana) was interviewed. Data collection from households includes information on various livelihood and cultural activities used for tourism purposes. It also involved information on the perceptions towards Gcwihaba Caves.

Household data were supplemented by data from unstructured interviews with key informants. In total, six key informants at XaiXai village and Gcwihaba Caves were interviewed. These included the chief of the village, village Development Committee Chairperson, Community-based tourism trust manager and chairperson, village elders and National Museum and Art Gallery representative. The interviews were designed to obtain data on past and present livelihood activities at XaiXai village. There were also designed to understand cultural tourism activities carried out by XaiXai residents at Gcwihaba Caves.

Secondary data sources in the form of published and unpublished literature on the historical socio-economic life of the San of XaiXai village as well as on the effects of

tourism development on livelihoods in the Okavango Delta were used. This involved the retrieval of published and unpublished reports from libraries and documentation centers in Botswana, particularly at the Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre and the University of Botswana Main Campus Library. Secondary sources utilized included research reports, policy documents and journal articles on tourism and wildlife management, cultural tourism, and annual reports on community-based tourism activities at XaiXai village. Theses and dissertations on community-based tourism and the San of XaiXai village were also used. In addition, magazines such as Air Botswana's *Peolwane*, and any other relevant document with information about cultural tourism and the San groups in the Okavango Delta were used.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 *Traditional livelihoods of the San at XaiXai village*

The San of XaiXai have lived a hunting and gathering economic lifestyle since time immemorial in the Okavango Delta. This San group was nomadic and relocated in response to subsistence needs. As a result, their nomadic movements were driven by environmental conditions. Informal interviews with the chief of XaiXai and village elders indicate that the various sources of rangeland resources such as roots, berries, fruits, tubers and insects which women gathered from the semi-arid Kalahari Desert were depleted in one area, and when the wildlife moved on, the San also moved to access food resources elsewhere. Garner (2008) argues that the San were more dependent on wild plants than animals for their day-to-day dietary needs. Their small population and nomadic lifestyle had an ecological and social equilibrium hence they lived within the ecological limits of the land (Garner, 2008).

The San of XaiXai village led an economic lifestyle different from that of other San groups in the Okavango Delta. For example, some of the San groups such as those of Khwai lived along the floodplains and river channels (Tlou, 1985). As a result, these San groups also relied in resources found in the river such as fish (Mbaiwa, 2008). Other San groups such as those of Mababe lived in the sand belt areas but migrated towards the wetter parts of the Okavango Delta during drier seasons (Mbaiwa, 2008). However, informal interviews with elders and the chief of XaiXai village indicate that his people lived in the dry parts of the Okavango region. They never migrated to inner parts of the Okavango Delta in the dry seasons in search of water or food like fish found permanent surface water areas. Instead, their movements were around Gwihaba Caves since the caves had a permanent water supply which supplemented wild melons they also relied on. This shows that the San of XaiXai relied on natural resources found in this dry parts of the Okavango region than those found in the wetter parts of the Okavango Delta.

The traditional livelihoods of other ethnic groups living at XaiXai such as the Bayei, Bambukushu, Batawana, Baherero and Mbanderu centre on agricultural production. Informal interviews with village elders and the chief at XaiXai indicate that cattle and goats were largely domesticated by these ethnic groups. Informal interviews with village elders also indicate that crop farming activities were traditionally carried out by Bayei but at XaiXai it was abandoned due to the lack of rain and river channels where floodplain crop production can be practiced as is the case in other parts of the Delta. Informal interviews with key informants established that most tourists who visit XaiXai village and Gwihaba Caves are not attracted to agricultural production. Instead, they are attracted by the San cultural lifestyle and the geological formation of Gwihaba Caves. As a result, this paper will pay much attention to the way of life of the San of XaiXai and the

geographical formation of Gwihaba Caves, which are a cultural tourism product in the Okavango Delta.

5.2 Current livelihood activities at Xaixai village

Current livelihood activities at Xaixai village were found to include livestock farming, collection of veld products, informal and formal employment in tourism activities and projects, employment in drought relief projects (i.e. labour-intensive government projects that involve bush clearance for road construction, maintenance of gravel roads, house constructions, etc.) and thatching grass for sale (Table 1).

Results in Table 1 shows that 50.0% of the households rely on tourism development (employment in community tourism projects and informal employment in cultural tourism activities) to sustain their livelihoods. These results therefore show that cultural tourism development plays a significant role in the improvement of household incomes and livelihoods at XaiXai village. On the contrary, traditional livelihoods such as subsistence hunting and the collection of rangeland resources (for Basarwa groups) and crop and livestock farming at XaiXai do not play a significant role in the improvement of livelihoods activities in the village. Informal interviews with village elders point out that livestock farming and crop production is not suitable in their area due to the lack of water resources. Results in Table 1 also show that none of the households was found to be practising crop production, which is commonly practiced by other groups in the Okavango Delta. None of the households was also found to be practising subsistence hunting which historically is the backbone of the economic live of the San. As such, cultural tourism development has a better potential to diversify livelihoods XaiXai village.

Apart from the decline in agricultural production and on subsistence hunting, households noted that they do not derive significant benefits from safari hunting as carried out by other communities in the Okavango Delta. For example, a 57-year woman noted, "we want cultural activities to be included as we do not benefit much from safari hunting tourism as the wildlife quota given to us run for only six months. Our livelihoods suffer in the remaining six months of the year as we cannot hunt. With cultural tourism we think or at least hope we have more benefits". Cultural tourism is not seasonal like safari hunting. This comment indicates that XaiXai residents are able to recognize the value of cultural tourism, especially when they compare it with safari hunting which is seasonal. Their culture can sell in the tourism market throughout the year. They also recognize that their livelihoods to be diversified through cultural tourism where monuments such as Gwihaba Caves and their culture are tourism products.

Table 1. Current livelihoods activities at XaiXai village.

Livelihoods activities	Number of households involved	Percentage
Livestock farming	6	23.1
Crop farming	0	0
Remittances	4	15.4
Collection of rangeland resources	1	3.4
Employment in community tourism project	8	30.8
Informal employment in tourism	5	19.2
Employment in drought relief projects	2	7.7
Subsistence hunting	0	0.0
Total	26	100.0

5.3 *Historical uses of Gcwihaba Caves and its immediate environs*

Gcwihaba Caves have a long history of being used by the San of XaiXai for various purposes. Informal interviews with the chief and elders of the village indicate that the caves were used as a form of protection or hiding place when their community was in war with other ethnic groups such as the Batawana of Maun in the 1890s. The chief and village elders also noted that the caves were their refuge in times of storms or continued rainy seasons. The caves were also used a warm place to stay during the cold winter season particularly at night. An 88-year-old woman during household interviews pointed out that when it was raining, they danced and sang from within the cave, thanking their ancestors for the rain. The old woman further noted that people mostly lived along the caves or within its vicinity since wild animals and bees were found in Gcwihaba Caves and its environs. The old woman also noted that game meat was a reliable source of food. The 88-year-old woman also noted that by then, their economic activities centered on hunting and gathering. Wild fruits (e.g. wild melons) and berries played a significant role in supplementing their daily diet. Garner (2008) argues that the San of XaiXai were in fact more dependent on wild plants than on game meat for their day-to-day dietary needs.

The small population and nomadic lifestyle of the San resulted in an ecological and social equilibrium where they lived within the ecological limits of the land (Mbaiwa, 2005; Thakadu, 1997). The San of XaiXai's lifestyle of conservation is thus contrary to debates that indigenous people cannot be associated with conservation since most of them depleted resources around them (Flores, 2007; Krech, 2007; Orme et al. 2005). Indigenous peoples are often characterized as primary perpetrators of environmental degradation (Holt, 2005). This thinking has often led to indigenous peoples being marginalized in conventional land-use planning and natural resource management (Wilshusen, Brechin, & West, 2002) and excluded from discussions about conservation policy (Brosius, 2004). This has affected the San community of Botswana who generally have little or no participation in policy development and natural resource management in their local environments (Mbaiwa et al., 2008).

Both household and key informant interviews noted that the abundance of game meat and the free use of the Gcwihaba Caves have since been restricted by the government. That is, in modern Botswana, subsistence hunting is restricted by government regulations and the community cannot use previous resources as freely as they use to do in the past. It was observed during the study that members of the Botswana Defense Force have been working in the caves since around 2000 removing the sands from some of the channels in order to make them accessible for tourist activities. In addition, the caves have been declared a national monument and are managed by the Department of Museum and Art Gallery. As a result of these changes, households felt that the caves no longer belong to them but to the government. This shows the extent to which the Botswana Government has interfered with the traditional livelihoods of the San of XaiXai village.

The restrictions in the use of Gcwihaba Caves resulted in the San finding a permanent place to stay of which the present location of XaiXai Village was chosen. XaiXai village is located about 25 km from the caves. At XaiXai village, economic activities of the San changed as they began to live a cash economic life. For example, there is an introduction of trading stores where they now have to work, earn money and buy food. These changes in livelihoods at XaiXai village and the historical significance of Gcwihaba Caves provide a cultural heritage that is presently marketable to different tourists segments that visit the Okavango Delta.

5.4 Cultural tourism activities at Gcwihaba Caves and XaiXai village

Community-based cultural tourism activities at XaiXai and Gcwihaba Caves are carried out through the CBNRM programme. The people of XaiXai have since formed a tourism trust to manage community participation especially the interaction with tourists and other stakeholders. As a result, safari operators and independent tourists take their tourists on a 5-day tour to XaiXai area where visitors are given the opportunity to see the San traditional way of life. Visitors are shown how the San used (and still do to some extent) to hunt small game, gather, dance, laugh and live together (Garner, 2008). According to Garner (2008, p. 19) who visited XaiXai village and Gcwihaba Caves as a tourist had this to say about the visit, "a truly unforgettable experience". This demonstrates the appreciation by some cultural tourists on the cultural value and significance of the caves and the San culture at XaiXai village.

At XaiXai, traditional hunting safaris can be done on horseback or by a four-wheel drive vehicle. Visitors are taken into the bush, to watch and learn how the San hunters have tracked, hunted and survived in the harsh desert environment for centuries. At XaiXai, visitors have the opportunity to see how resourceful the San can be in terms of gathering rangelands resources. The physical appearance of the San has also been described as tourist attraction. Some of the tourists travel to XaiXai village and Gcwihaba Caves to see how the San look like in physical appearance and to learn their way of life. The San are small in stature, have light skin colour and kinky hair. Many of the elders, both men and women, have traditional scarification on their faces, each scar carries knowledge and a story passed down from one generation to the next (Garner, 2008). Garner notes that like many cultures around the world, the San culture is dynamic and ever changing due to the increasing influences of outside cultures, education and the globalized market economy. Some of the San traditions are losing hold with new ones replacing them. For example, the San of XaiXai are no longer able to hunt major big game species like they did in the past. Hunting is traditionally one of the pillars of San culture, and the loss of these core livelihood activities, along with modernization and outside pressures, has implications on how San culture will continue to survive (Garner, 2008). Garner notes that some of the implications include increasing violence and alcohol abuse and changing social dynamics, which are issues affecting many indigenous communities across the globe.

The introduction of community-based tourism through the CBNRM programme at XaiXai has resulted in the commodification of San culture. Commodification of culture has positive and negative effects on people's cultural practices. On the positive aspect, the people of XaiXai are now able to tell stories on their way of life, dance and make hunting demonstrations and bush walks to tourists. In this regard, their culture is preserved. Informal interviews with key informants in the village of XaiXai pointed out that apart from the income they get from tourism at Gcwihaba Caves, they appreciate tourism in the area because it encourages the preservation of their cultural values and practices. In addition, tourism in the area has made their culture to be known worldwide and to be researched and have information stored in books for future generations. On the negative side, interviews with key informants indicate that commodification of their culture and Gcwihaba Caves has led to restrictions in hunting, especially of big game hunting. Informal interviews with key informants indicate that hunting has been the backbone of San culture; hence, its restrictions suggest that their children may never know how to hunt like they used to do. Despite these restrictions, both households and key informants seem to agree that cultural tourism has the potential to improve livelihoods in their village.

Table 2. Number of households with a family member employed in tourism activities.

Tourism activities	Number of households	Percentage
Tour guides	11	42.3
Porter	1	3.8
Taking out soil from caves	4	15.4
Cultural dancing	5	19.2
Safari hunting	1	3.8
No member employed	4	15.4
Total	26	100.0

5.5 Household employment and perceptions towards cultural tourism

Cultural tourism activities carried out at the caves appear to be providing employment for a significant number of households members. Table 2 shows the number of households who have family members employed in various tourism activities at the caves. For example, 11% or 42.3% of the households have a family member employed as guides for tourists at the caves. Only four households or 15.4% of the households reported that they do not have any member either formal or informal employed in tourism activities at the caves. Employment opportunities provided in cultural tourism activities at Gcwhihaba Caves at a household level demonstrate the extent to which cultural tourism in the area contributes to poverty alleviation problems and livelihood development in the Okavango Delta.

Households at XaiXai village were further asked to state their perceptions towards cultural tourism at Gcwhihaba Caves. Results in Table 3 show that households at XaiXai have developed positive attitudes towards cultural tourism and Gcwhihaba Caves. A total of 25 households or 96.2% interviewed had positive views towards cultural tourism in their village and Gcwhihaba Caves. For example, 19.2% of the households believes that cultural tourism at Gcwhihaba provides them with employment, 23.1% noted that it keeps their culture alive, 19.2% noted that it provides them the opportunity to sell their cultural products such as beads, wood carvings, bows and arrows, spears, drums and traditional oil used as body lotion to tourists and 11.5% noted that it has provided them with the opportunity to acquire skills in tourism particularly in tour guiding, animal tracking during safari hunting activities, ability to learn the English language and communicate with outsiders, generate income for them through community-based tourism and has provided the opportunity for infrastructure development through the construction of an air strip in their village. These attitudes have developed because of the financial gains XaiXai residents derive through tourism development at Gcwhihaba Caves makes the people of XaiXai to view

Table 3. Perceptions of households towards cultural tourism.

Perceptions towards Gcwhihaba Caves	Number of households	Percentage
Provides employment for us	5	19.2
Keep our culture alive	6	23.1
Market our cultural products	5	19.2
Makes us gain new knowledge and skills in tourism	3	11.5
Generates income for our community-based trust	3	11.5
An airstrip has been built in our area	3	11.5
Its of no benefit to us	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

the caves positively. Households regarded the caves as a source of income through cultural dances, storytelling and bush walks.

Informal interviews with elders of XaiXai village, especially the chief of the village, further indicate the value that local communities place on Gcwihaba Caves and their culture. For example, the local chief noted that tourists who visit the Okavango Delta are not only interested in seeing wildlife or simply visiting the caves for viewing, but are also interested in seeing the traditional or cultural activities of the people in his village. The chief noted that the fact that his people perform their cultural dance and give lessons on hunting and gathering, making firewood, and traditional healing to tourists is a sign that tourists are interested in learning San culture. This therefore shows the value and role of the San culture at XaiXai and Gcwihaba Caves in the tourism market and in the diversification of livelihoods at XaiXai village.

Households were further asked to state some of the activities that they believe their community can have in furthering local participation in cultural tourism at Gcwihaba Caves. Some of the activities that households suggested include the following: diversified cultural dances, entrance fees at the caves, selling of crafts, camp sites and traditional festivals. This shows that households assume that tourism activities at the caves can be expanded for their economic benefit. These positive attitudes by communities towards cultural tourism suggest that residents recognize that Gcwihaba Caves and their local culture have the potential to diversify their livelihoods from the declining livelihoods options such as livestock farming, crop production, subsistence hunting and the collection of rangeland resources. It can therefore be concluded that cultural tourism can be one of the tools that can improve the livelihoods in destination areas such as the Okavango Delta.

6. Conclusion

Cultural tourism and rural livelihoods in remote villages such as XaiXai in the Okavango Delta are intertwined. The use of the livelihoods framework demonstrates this relationship. The livelihoods framework indicates that assets (i.e. natural, financial, human and social capital) are inputs in a system where outcomes in the form of community well-being, income, empowerment, health and reduced vulnerability should be achieved. In this system, strategies and activities should be devised to achieve these outcomes. In the case of XaiXai village, communities have assets in the form of natural resources (e.g. Gcwihaba Caves, wildlife and plants), which they use to benefit from cultural tourism development in the area. XaiXai residents also have what is known as cultural capital, especially the skill and knowledge they have in hunting and gathering as well as traditional medicine, which are assets used in cultural tourism development in the Okavango Delta. In addition, the ability of XaiXai residents to form a local institution such as Tlhabologo Trust to enable them participation in cultural tourism demonstrates the community preparedness to derive benefits (i.e. income, employment) from the growing tourism industry in the Okavango Delta to improve the quality of life and livelihoods.

Cultural tourism at XaiXai and Gcwihaba Caves is emerging as an alternative option that can diversify livelihoods, promote local participation in tourism development, alleviate poverty and contribute to sustainable development. This is because XaiXai village is located within the Okavango region that has become one of the major tourist destinations in Botswana. The Okavango Delta a "pristine wilderness" with a variety of wildlife species and scenic beauty attracts international tourists more than any other destination in Botswana. Some of these tourists, especially international tourists, are interested in local culture and heritage particularly that of indigenous people of Botswana such as the San

or Basrwa. Although cultural tourism offers an alternative livelihood option at XaiXai, it should not be viewed as a panacea to all the socio-economic problems of the Village. As such, there is need to identify other livelihood options that can complement cultural tourism, particularly that tourism in the area relies on international tourists from developed countries. Instability such as political unrest and economic recession in developed countries may affect tourism development in the Okavango Delta (Mbaiwa, 2005). This therefore shows the need to develop other livelihood options to supplement cultural tourism development at XaiXai village.

The fact that cultural tourism has positive effects on rural livelihoods at XaiXai village is partly achieved because of the adoption of community-based tourism carried out through the CBNRM programme in the Okavango Delta. Therefore, while CBNRM has been accused for its failure to achieve its desired goals of improved livelihoods and conservation in other parts of the developing world (Brandon, 1998; Oates, 1999; Terborgh, 1999), at XaiXai village, it appears to be having positive results in improving local livelihoods. This is particularly so when considering the socio-economic benefits such the creation of employment opportunities, income generation, preservation of local culture, the acquisition of skills in the tourism business and the establishment of tourism facilities such as camps sites at Gcwihaba Caves for tourism development. These benefits demonstrate that tourism development carried out through the CBNRM programme can be an effective tool that can be used to promote rural development and livelihoods in the Okavango Delta. The contribution of cultural tourism through the CBNRM programme to livelihoods indicates that arguments against community development programmes are misleading. As such, it is erroneous to generalize that community development programme are failing to achieve improved rural livelihoods without consideration of the socio-economic and political dynamics of particular communities. The Gcwihaba Caves and XaiXai village case study demonstrates that performance of community development projects should be judged on an individual basis in order to inform decision-making at a regional or national level in tourism destination areas of developing countries.

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