



Religious pilgrimages and tourism development: Selected cases from the Ibandla lamaNazaretha and Ibandla lamaKatholika in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Abstract

A religious pilgrimage is generally viewed as a process through which pilgrims depart geographically and psychologically from social structures that govern their daily lives for personal development and spiritual upliftment. Pilgrimages with a strong component of religious tourism are a big revenue generator for different countries for example, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Religious pilgrimages in particular, have not been classified under big revenue generators based on the fact that their spaces including surroundings have no tourism facilities for tourism development purposes. This paper aims to present both a review and systematic reflection on the trends that pertain to sustainable development of tourism at religious pilgrimage destinations. The relationship between religion and tourism, has been studied from different perspectives. Ideally, religious consciousness is considered as a positive influence to sustainable development providing religious travellers with an improved attitude towards nature. The paper uses both the theory and document analysis to look at this phenomenon. Further the paper uses Modernisation and Globalisation theories in guiding the lensing and framing of the questions and objectives for this study. The findings of this paper indicates that the study area could benefit a lot if the required tourism facilities could be available for tourists.

Keywords: Tourism development, pilgrimage, pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism, sustainable development, pilgrim tourist, religious tourism.

Introduction

Every pilgrimage undertaken by a believer is a unique experience with great spiritual value. Travel on a pilgrimage is also an chance to interact with one's friends and families. Religious pilgrimage contributes to one's happiness and general quality of life (Nicolaidis & Grobler, 2017) and is thus an important undertaking requiring careful planning. From a religious perspective a pilgrimage generally adds great value to a person's sense of wellbeing. The notion of pilgrimage tourism seems to be a newer academic concept but it is certainly not a new phenomenon (Dallen, Timothy & Daniel, Olsen, 2006, Collins-Kreiner 2010a, 2018; Terzidou *et al.* 2017). A large literature exists which indicates that there is a long history of this religiously embedded tradition which is characterised by the flow of people to places of religious importance has been going on for centuries (Nicolaidis, 2016, Sunkul & Dorji, 2016, Rinschede, 1992). A number of studies conducted from different perspectives indicate that there is a relationship between religion and tourism (Collins-Kreiner 2010a, 2018; Terzidou *et*



al. 2017, Telfer, 2002; Brouder, 2013). A growing research demonstrates that religious pilgrimages are gradually becoming a strong component of religious tourism (Cohen, & Smith, 1992, Abbate & Nuovo 2013; Amaro *et al.* 2018; Drule *et al.* 2015; Hughes *et al.* 2013; Kaewumpai 2018; Kim & Kim 2018; Olsen 2013; Terzidou *et al.* 2018; Wang *et al.* 2016). Given an empirical evidence that religious tourism is a big revenue generator for different countries especially in cases where pilgrims and tourists value the benefits of pursuing sustainability (Nicolaidis, 2020; Tutek *et al.*, 2015 Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012:24, Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997:65-66; Saarinen, 2007:42). It is worth investigating the extent to which religious pilgrimages can be used as a tool for sustainable tourism development and sustainable livelihoods at various pilgrimage destinations in KwaZulu Natal in South Africa. This paper uses six pilgrimage destinations of Ibandla lamaNaretha and Ibandla lamaKatholika as a case study.

These two churches, though different in their religious approaches, what is common between them is that they participate in religious pilgrimages several times annually to specific destinations where they gather for a certain period. For the purpose of this article the pilgrimage destinations are Engome Marian Shrine, Ebuhleni, Fatima, Judea and Gibsile which are located within four district municipalities in KwaZulu Natal in South Africa. Due to the long history and prominence of these congregations in terms of the number of followers in KwaZulu Natal, they are able to attract pilgrims from different parts of the country outside of the study area. The Nazareth Baptist Church also known as "The Nazarite Church" "iBandla lamaNazaretha", is the second largest, African initiated church based in South Africa, founded in 1910 (Fisher, 2010). This church has some 6.7 million members and it venerates Shembe as a prophet sent by God to reinstate the teachings of the prophet Moses, the other prophets, and also Jesus Christ. It is said that Isaiah Shembe was drawn to the area where the Holy Spirit advised him to start a Church (SA Tourism, 2010). Ibandla lamaKatholika also has a large number of followers and a long history which, in the South African context is linked to prominence of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in 1922 that provided the official missionary support to the church through evangelization and charitable works.

This paper presents a discussion that is based on the review of literature to indicate that religious pilgrimages have a potential to contribute to sustainable tourism development and sustainable livelihoods of communities at the pilgrimage destinations. The paper uses both the theory and document analysis to look at this phenomenon and further uses Modernisation and Globalisation theories in guiding the lensing and framing of the questions and objectives for this study.

Literature Review

A religious pilgrimage is generally viewed as a process through which pilgrims depart geographically and psychologically from social structures that govern their daily lives for personal and spiritual development to a specific destination (Knoblauch, 2010; Nicolaidis, 2016). Many **people** of all faiths participate in **pilgrimages**, often to a shrine, a holy place or a place of significance where they connect with God or a divine being. Pilgrimages are undertaken for a number of reasons which include expression of faith, experiencing spiritual enlightenment and deeper understanding of certain beliefs, finding the comfort that is desired to escape from a troubled world, wanting a specific favour such as a cure for an illness, etc. It is their beliefs and intentions in faith that are revealed and these grow more personal on each visit to a shrine or holy site. Pilgrimages generally end at a specific location where pilgrims spend a number of days participating in various specific pre-determined activities.

There is a growing number of studies that have linked religious pilgrimages with tourism development (Bremer, 2005; Shinde & Pinkney, 2013; Shinde, 2015). It is the activities that occur during the pilgrimage and the period that is spent away from the home environment at that creating opportunities for tourism development at the pilgrimage destination. The desire



for religious authenticity and deep introspection on a spiritual plane can be a huge income generator for communities at pilgrimage destinations (Nicolaidis, 2016; Nicolaidis & Grobler, 2017). Shinde (2015) asserts that pilgrimages with a strong component of religious tourism are a big revenue generator for developing countries such as South Africa. Shackley (2001: 9) observes that many of the pilgrimage destinations “have grown from villages to cities as a result of the pilgrim trade” and many more have experienced rapid growth and transformation with increasing religious tourism globally. These studies confirm to contribution of religious pilgrimages to tourism development at pilgrimage destinations. Tourism development in various regions is widely perceived as advantageous in multiple aspects (Niezgoda, 2011):

- Economic - Improving residents’ quality of life through job opportunities.
- Socio-cultural – Associated with establishing relations between residents and tourists
- Infrastructure– Improving infrastructure to facilitate the mobility and wellbeing of tourists.
- Service – improved services offered to both tourists and residents

All these aspects are significant for the tourism development at pilgrimage destinations. To sustain the aforementioned aspects, a balanced approach should be rigorously applied for the purpose of promoting sustainable tourism development at these destinations. The significance of sustainable tourism development is that it is compatible with and contributes to sustainable development of destinations. Sustainable tourism development forms the bases for sustainable tourism which forges a balance between protecting the environment, maintaining cultural integrity, establishing social justice, promoting economic benefits and meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term in both developed and emerging nations (Liu *et al.*, 2013; Mitchell & Hall, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2004).

Sustainable tourism further puts emphasis on both intergenerational equity and intra-generational equity (Liu, 2013) and in a form that can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time (Butler, 1993, 1999). Sustainable tourism requires both the sustainable growth of tourism’s contribution to the economy and society and the sustainable use of resources and the environment, which will be gained by a deep understanding and proper management of tourism demand (Liu, 2013). Sustainable tourism development becomes possible where pilgrims and tourists value the benefits of pursuing sustainability (Nicolaidis, 2020).

Sustainable tourism plays an important role in identifying ways to secure positive benefits, as well as the establish approaches of regulation and development control (Bramwell & Lane, 2012). Liu (2013) highlights the significant role of states in preparing a steady progress in life conditions for generations to come and associated with managed changes that cause improvement in conditions for those involved in such development.

There has been an observation that, people who visits these pilgrimage destinations are not only pilgrims but also tourists the majority of whom are willing to spend nights at and around these destinations for more enhanced spiritual experiences. An increase in the number of tourists at the pilgrimage destination increases the income and benefits obtained by the local communities mainly those that are dedicated to hospitality services in the area. Tourists who participate in pilgrimages and who visit pilgrimage destinations can be divided into two categories, that is, religious tourists and traditional tourists. The religious tourist, is more faithful to the destinations while the traditional tourist has motivations that are both driven by faith but relate to quality of life and real experiences at the destination and based on those experiences may return to the site in a shorter period of time (Robles, 2001; Nicolaidis & Grobler, 2017).



Religious tourists are generally motivated by faith and especially veneration of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary (Nicolaidis, 2008) to participate in activities such buying of some souvenir or leaving some votive offerings, which helps the reactivation of certain local craft activities (Fernández, 2010). These tourists even participate in thanksgiving masses at these pilgrimage destinations as an expression of their faith and gratitude when their prayers are answered. Such a phenomenon is evident in Rinschede's (1986) seminal work in Lourdes, France where he identified three distinct areas (with overlapping boundaries) of pilgrims activities; the core area was the religious town comprising the shrine, the related accommodation facilities and the devotional article trade; the second area encompassed greater territory by extending into the business centre and municipal recreation areas (visited mainly by more mobile groups of pilgrims); and the third area expanded into the countryside and was loosely defined by excursions by pilgrims who used private cars and tourist buses to conduct their travels. It was found that the two major access routes to the shrine had intense use of space for pilgrimage related commercial activities including hotels and souvenir shops (Rinschede, 1986: 30). This spatial pattern, in many ways, resonates with the concept of tourist districts in destinations where one finds a core of dense economic activities related to the tourism attraction/ product in its vicinity and the density reduces as one move outwards from the core (Gladstone, 2005).

Pilgrimage destinations are selected because of their ability to provide diverse religious resources for the fulfilment of religious and non-religious purposes and spiritual experiences (Shinde, 2015). The variety and intensity of these spiritual experiences at times encourage tourists to extend their stay at the pilgrimage destination.

This need for enhanced spiritual experiences has led to an increase in religious travel in recent years where the main motivation for traveling is based on religion. Pilgrimages with a strong component of religious tourism are a big revenue generator for different countries for example, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The relationship between religion and tourism, has been studied from different perspectives (Collins-Kreiner 2010, 2018; Terzidou et al., 2017). Bremer, (2005) points out three approaches in which researchers place the intersections between religion and tourism: the spatial approach (pilgrims and tourists occupying the same space with different behaviours), the historical approach (relationship between religious forms of travel and tourism), and the cultural approach (pilgrimage and tourism as modern practices in a post-modern world). In traditional societies like ours, the pilgrimage journeys performed are to obtain God's grace and to learn moral values and possibly to help one obtain greater respect in the individual community. These religious pilgrimages stimulate tourism and have become a strong component of religious tourism.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2011) definition of religious travel was expanded as a form of tourism. Based on this definition by UNWTO the pilgrimage to destinations such as Engome Marian Shrine, Ebuhleni, Fatima, Judea and Gibsile would be considered as forms of religious tourism. Religious tourism is a big revenue generator for different countries (Telfer, 2002; Brouder, 2013). Religious tourism draws huge crowds in the form of tourists and hence has an edge over other kinds of tourism (Telfer, 2002). The religious tourism economy has proved to be intensely 'commercial' in nature as compared to the types of tourism that are driven by social and cultural exchanges observed in other traditional pilgrim-towns. Religious tourism can be driven from various levels from international, national, regional and micro-level (National Department of Tourism, 2012). At all these levels, religious tourism has a potential of becoming a tool for sustainable development especially in cases where pilgrims and tourists value the benefits of pursuing sustainability (Nicolaidis, 2020; Tutek et al., 2015).

Tourism is considered by many communities, especially in emerging countries as the only tool for development, and the only chance for increasing the quality of life. Since the rise of tourism in the global economy, the popularity of tourism as a vehicle for promoting provincial regional



economic development has been huge. The benefits generated by the tourism activities, which in this case are pilgrimage based activities, should be viewed from three sides: tourists and pilgrims, local community and authorities. These benefits should include the extent to which tourism contributes to sustainable livelihoods of local communities. Livelihoods perspectives have been a central aspect in rural development thinking and practice in the past decade. These perspectives become relevant considering that pilgrimage destinations in KwaZulu Natal are located in rural areas. Observations indicate that in the surroundings of these pilgrimage destinations there are no tourism facilities that are in place which would contribute towards tourism development and generation of livelihoods for local communities. The erection of tourism facilities in the surrounding of these religious pilgrimage destinations could sustain growth and development in these areas.

Sustainable development of tourism at pilgrimage destinations has thus emerged as one of the major issues for the stakeholders who require nurturing (Venkatachalam & Patwardhan, 2011; Nicolaides, 2015). The vital importance of pilgrimage tourism in the study area will contribute towards the development of pilgrimage tourism in a more sustainable way. The common concern that has been expressed by both private sector and visitors is that when visiting the pilgrimage destinations there are no accommodation spaces available and restaurant facilities for them to utilise during their stay (Nicolaides, 2016). These pilgrimage destinations need to cater for the pilgrims needs so that they will be able to prolong their stay and generate greater income. These kind of sectarian followers are generally serviced by specialised providers in religious and non-religious aspects (Ghosal & Maity, 2010: 176); and such tendencies for creating specific user-driven religious infrastructure are likely to raise the demand for prime space and real estate development (Deshpande, 2005; Shinde & Pinkney, 2013) thus leading to great inflows of needed capital to enhance the visitation sites.

This paper seeks to indicate the need to make local communities and authorities aware of the tourism opportunities around the religious pilgrimages at their areas and to develop an approach that links religious tourism with sustainable livelihoods of local communities at pilgrimage destinations. The local communities could see the opportunities if these pilgrimage destinations are well developed and sustained in the responsible manner and offer tourist security (Nicolaides, 2015; 2016). Developments at pilgrimage destinations should be user-friendly and inclusive so that they also accommodate those who have any form of disability. Furthermore, these developments should be sustainable in every manner, remain in a good state and serve the purpose of rest and spiritual growth to everyone who utilises them.

Sustainable livelihoods work, would be an attempt to draw economist colleagues and the institutional dimensions of tourism development and environmental change into the fray. If religious pilgrimages could be well promoted, they could lead to increase in demand of various tourism related commodities and general growth in business activities as well as the demand for extended travel, opportunities to participate in a variety of tourism activities and an expanded supply of tourism infrastructure that is purposefully created by provincial tourism entities.

The paper also seeks to promote the idea that religious pilgrimages can contribute to sustainable developments at the destination in the form of accommodation facilities, restaurants and other various forms of tourism products. Tourism developments could promote the sustainable livelihoods in the study area and see that the locals benefit from these developments long into the future through effective planning and consultation with all relevant stakeholders (Nicolaides, 2015). These tourism developments should not be for commodification of the religious activities and the pilgrimage destinations but should be for sustaining the religious trips and promoting the religious tourism aspect as another form of enjoyable and relaxing tourism.

Aim and objectives of the study



This paper aims to present both a review and systematic reflection on the trends that pertain to sustainable development of tourism at religious pilgrimage destinations.

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- (a) To ascertain the awareness of local people at the religious pilgrimage destination of the tourism opportunities of religious pilgrimages within the study area;
- (b) To find out if there are any tourism facilities and products that are packaged for tourists and pilgrims in the study area;
- (c) To establish the potential of religious pilgrimages in enhancing economic development and sustainable livelihoods of the study area.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study (Abend, 2008). A theoretical framework specifies which key variables influenced the study of interest and alerts one in examining how those key variables might differ and under what circumstances (Abend, 2008). Good theories in social sciences are of value because they fulfil the primary purpose by explaining the meaning, nature and challenges of the study. In line with this understanding, modernization and globalisation theories serve as the main theories which influenced this study and aligned with objectives of the study that relate to (a) the awareness of local people at the religious pilgrimage destination of the tourism opportunities of religious pilgrimages within the study area (b) tourism facilities and products that are packaged for tourists and pilgrims and (c) local communities at the pilgrimage destinations.

These theoretical perspectives allow for the clarification of economic and social setting at the pilgrimage destination and also contribute to the recommendations made for tourism development and improved sustainable livelihoods at these sites.

The use of these theories was motivated and informed by the attributes identified in the study area such lack of development characterized by dire poverty, lack of job opportunities nonexistence of basic infrastructure and under utilisation of natural and socio-cultural resources that are available at the pilgrimage sites. These two theories embrace the concept of transformation of social conditions at local levels, economic development driven by interaction and integration among people, improved communication technology leading to global interaction and poverty alleviation resulting from development opportunities.

Modernization theory

Modernization theory is an economic theory that has its origins in 1950s and 1960s that is used to explain the process of modernization within societies. Modernization theory stresses not only the process of change but also the responses to that change. It also looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies to local conditions. Modernization theory suggests that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Modernisation theory focuses on raising the standard of living of the poor which often consist of disseminating knowledge and information about more efficient techniques of production.

This theory is also used to explain the process of modernization within societies and also how local communities within these societies respond to that change. The concept of modernization incorporates the full spectrum of the transition and transformation that a traditional society has to undergo in order to become modern (Matunhu, 2011).

The modernization theory could be applied in this study because most of these pilgrimage destinations are in rural areas that would benefit from the proposed tourism development. This



theory also looks at internal dynamics while referring to social and cultural structures and the adaptation of new technologies to be in line with the goals of proposed development. Depending on how local communities embrace the envisaged tourism development the current state of these sites would be transformed as they respond to modernisation principles. If these tourism developments could take place in the study area it could have benefits such as the improved standard of living, job opportunities and the tourism facilities (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). This theory relates to this discussion because it is aiming at the development of the study area so that there are modern facilities that would benefit pilgrims, tourists and everyone who visits the site. Modernization theory is used as a justification that economics could be used as an index for social reform in which economic growth would “trickle down” to the masses in the form of jobs and other economic opportunities thus improving quality of life in the context of tourism. Modernization development in the study area is important as it will lead to generating foreign capital, increasing employment and facilitating the transfer of technology (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). These economic benefits are the focus of tourism development and tourism acts as a growth-pole down which resources trickle thus increasing the tourism multiplier effect (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008).

The application of the modernization theory could guide the stakeholders on what needs to be done in order to alleviate the standards of living around these pilgrimage sites. Modernization theory encourages socio-cultural changes; as economic growth demands these changes as a foundational stage for further economic development. The modernization theory could be infused to this objective two; To establish the perception of local communities towards the potential of religious pilgrimages in enhancing economic development and sustainable livelihoods of the area.

The African religious pilgrimage sites need to be modernised in order to attract more tourists, pilgrims and tourism developers. The modernisation theory presents both a review and systematic reflection on the trends that pertain to sustainable development of tourism at religious pilgrimage destinations.

Globalisation theory

Globalization or **globalisation** is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. It generally describes the spread and connectedness of production, communication and technologies across the world. **Globalization** has grown due to advances in transportation and communication technology. With the increased global interactions comes the growth of international trade, ideas, and culture. Globalisation is seen as a movement that has tended towards supplanting modernity with globality and intensification of worldwide communication.

Globalization theory emphasizes cultural and economic factors as the main determinants which affect the social and political conditions of nations (Reyes, 2001a). From this perspective, the systems of values, beliefs, and the pattern of identity of the dominant and the subordinate groups within a society are important elements to explain national characteristics in economic and social terms (Reyes, 2001a). This theory also contributes and links to the objectives of the study especially to the second objective that relates to tourism facilities and products that would be packaged for tourists and pilgrims and the third one that relates to local communities at the pilgrimage destinations. The envisaged tourism development should be of a global standard so to attract both domestic and international tourists to the pilgrimage destination.

This application of this theory could make the KwaZulu-Natal pilgrimage destinations visible internationally and contribute to enhancing the economic conditions of the study area. This theory if used effectively could aid in making the pilgrimage destinations attractive not only to visitors but also to potential tourism developers who could improve the current state of the study area.



Research methodology

This paper is based on the review of literature that relates mainly to religious pilgrimages, religious tourism and tourism development and related theories. Theories were also used to establish the trends in tourism development and how these would apply to pilgrimage destinations. The paper therefore uses both the theory and document analysis to understand the trends related to religious pilgrimages as a component of religious tourism. The literature review uses a systematic search process to assess the available high quality evidence relating to religious tourism and the extent to which religious pilgrimages can contribute to sustainable tourism development and sustainable livelihoods of pilgrim destinations.

Discussion

This section presents a discussion based on the review of literature and how theories link with the objectives as indicated above. The first objective of the study was to ascertain the awareness of local people at the religious pilgrimage destination of the tourism opportunities of religious pilgrimages within the study area. This objective focuses mainly on what needs to be done in order to promote tourism development and contribute to sustainable livelihoods of communities at these religious pilgrimage destinations. It also focuses on the extent to which local communities would participate in tourism development. As indicated above the religious pilgrimage destinations in KwaZulu Natal are largely based in rural areas which would benefit immensely from tourism development. The modernisation theory suggests that these rural societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. The key to the modernisation process is the awareness of the local communities of the opportunities that are presented by the pilgrimage destination in their localities. Awareness will lead to strategies and policies that would address the concerns expressed by both private sector and visitors that the pilgrimage destinations do not have accommodation facilities, restaurants and other facilities for them to utilise during their stay (Nicolaidis, 2016). The stimulation of awareness of these opportunities is reflected in modernization theory which brings up the significance of the response by local communities. The response by local communities will then be beneficial for tourism development of the pilgrimage destinations.

The second objective of the study was: to find out if there are already any tourism facilities and products that are packaged for tourists and pilgrims in the study area. It should refer to the place of destination in order to arouse positive religious feelings of potential pilgrims. Moreover, the form of information about religious sites, both on the spot and in the tourist guides emphasize a multiculturalism, considering it as an asset and, thus, allowing the use of the religious tourism product by pilgrims of different faiths and by non-religious, (Sharpley & Jepson, 2011, Panasiuk, 2011). Observations indicate that there are no facilities that are packaged for tourists and pilgrims at all at the pilgrimage destinations in the study area. In certain pilgrimage destinations where the pilgrims have to stay for days the ablution system is not even hygienic and does not accommodate people to stay for a long period. The tourist who is not familiar with the study area finds it hard to cope with this situation. There are also no restaurants that are available where pilgrims and tourists can obtain refreshments or food. There are no rail clamps or ramps for the tourists and pilgrims who have physical disabilities they might wish to visit the religious pilgrimages in order to be miraculously healed. The products that you can access are the ones for religious purposes only such as holy water, candles, blessed rosary of all varieties (Catholics weapon), holy Vaseline and the photo (fodo) for all varieties (Nazarite blessed weapon) and impepho (which is a beef meat that is cooked with no salt). Other products are prayers of all kinds and hymn books.

It is important to note that not all pilgrims who are participating in the pilgrimage destination have religious reasons or motivations to do so therefore products can be expanded to include products that would appeal to non-religious visitors. The religious tourism package tours, the important identifiable characteristics affecting the decision-making of religious tourists are



travel agent reputation, tour guide, schedule and program on offer and price thereof (Trantafillidou et. al., 2010).

The third objective was to establish the potential of religious pilgrimages in enhancing economic development of the study areas. The tourists are motivated by faith to participate in the resident trade by buying some souvenir or leaving some votive offering, which helps the reactivation of certain local craft activities (Fernández, 2010). The modernization theory would be improving the current situation and improve the study area. The modernization theory could be infused into this objective because the pilgrimage sites need to be modernised in order to attract more tourists, pilgrims and tourism developers

Recommendations of the study

The recommendations presented below are based on the observations at the study area. Since the rise of religious tourism in the global economy, the popularity of tourism as a vehicle for promoting provincial and regional economic development has also been growing but this growth has not been evident at the pilgrimage destinations of KwaZulu Natal.

Based on this observation linked with the objectives of this study it is recommended that:

- stakeholders such as the government and the private sector work together in providing empowerment programmes that will assist in making communities at the pilgrimage destinations aware of the opportunities for tourism development in the areas.
- Tourism development be initiated that will encourage local communities to participate in the establishment of facilities such as guest houses, restaurants etc. and products that are packaged for tourists and pilgrims in the study area.
- Strategies be developed that will unleash the potential of religious pilgrimages in enhancing economic development and sustainable livelihoods at the pilgrimage destination.

It is anticipated that envisaged tourism developments because it will contribute to the alleviation of poverty and sustainable livelihoods of local people through job creation, and improve the experiences of tourists and pilgrims and the pilgrimage destinations.

Summary and conclusion

This paper concludes by pulling together the outcome of the literature review and the theories that could be useful in tourism development at the religious pilgrimage destinations of the two churches. It is evident that pilgrimages of these two churches have a potential of creating opportunities for tourism development but there is a need to make communities at destinations aware of these tourism related opportunities and understand that religious pilgrimages can stimulate tourism development in their areas and subsequently contribute to the local economic development of the area and the province in general. A link between religious pilgrimages and tourism can strengthen religious tourism which has a potential of becoming one of the drivers of tourism development at the pilgrimage destinations in KwaZulu Natal.

The concern is to ensure the stakeholders involved in tourism development do not move towards the commodification of the religious pilgrimages but focus on the well-being of the tourists, pilgrims and the local community. Often people visit these sites not knowing what to bring because they just heard other people's testimonies so they see the need of wanting to experience the same, not knowing some of these sites do not have any basic facilities in their immediate surroundings. Even a place to wash and good ablution facilities are needed. Some pilgrims and tourists come from far, and once the celebration of any event is over they need places to rest and to have some refreshments.



The purpose of this tourism development at these sites would be to motivate all the people who want to celebrate these religious events to see the need of visiting the religious pilgrimage sites. This study could benefit the local people, pilgrims, tourists and local municipality stakeholders. The erection of the facilities need to be become sustainable for pilgrimage destination expectations and everyone could be keen to visit these sites once the infrastructure is improved. Religious tourism could be seen once more as another form of tourism which could benefit the industry as a whole. Not only the popular coastal areas could be visited if pilgrimage areas are developed religious tourism could play a big role in the local KwaZulu industry.

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