

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS DIVERSIFICATION: INSIGHTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Pearl Thobeka MNISI

Department of Development Planning and Management, University of Limpopo, South Africa

Corresponding author: Pearl Thobeka Mnisi

E-mail: pearl.mnisi@ul.ac.za

Volume: 4

Number: 6

Page: 1767 - 1772

Article History:

Received: 2023-08-23

Revised: 2023-10-13

Accepted: 2023-11-15

Abstract:

This paper aims to analyze the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa. Global evidence demonstrated a nuanced connection between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood diversification. Biodiversity conservation is flourishing, and its industry has grown to a point where it accounts for a big part of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product. However, it remains a concern that the poverty levels in rural communities continue to rise, and there is no improvement brought by biodiversity conservation towards sustainable livelihood diversification. This is a theoretical paper that adopted the qualitative research method. The data for the paper was compiled through a desktop study wherein newspapers, scholarly journal articles, and government documents related to the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa. Therefore, Document analysis was appropriate and selected to analyze the data. The paper found that balancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood diversification remains challenging in South Africa. This makes it difficult for rural communities to have sustainable livelihood diversification. This paper concludes that biodiversity conservation needs to do more justice to ensuring sustainable livelihood diversification for rural communities in the country. Therefore, it recommends the government delegate candidates or departments to continuously monitor and ensure that nature reserves practicing biodiversity conservation give back to nearby rural communities. Biodiversity conservation policies and legislations in line with the development of rural communities should be reviewed, adjusted, and ensured that they have operated accordingly.

Keywords: Biodiversity Conservation; Sustainable Livelihood Diversification; Rural Communities; Poverty, Employment

Cite this as: MNISI, P.T. (2023). " Biodiversity Conservation And Sustainable Livelihoods Diversification: Insights And Policy Implications For Rural Communities In South Africa." International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability and Social Science, 4 (6), 1767 - 1772.



INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyze the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa. Global evidence demonstrated a nuanced connection between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood diversification (Kingmengsi et al., 2020). In recent years, nature reserves have functioned as isles of biodiversity conservation in isolation from rural communities (Kingmengsi et al., 2019). Nevertheless, there is a rising agreement that nature reserves are extra operative in biodiversity conservation, predominantly in developing countries. The nature reserves should include the livelihood needs of rural communities where they frequently share borders (Kingmengsi et al., 2019). This is because

the majority of these rural communities previously pre-date the nature reserves and have previously existing rights to resources in them.

Furthermore, rural communities have often been unfavorably affected by their designation. Biodiversity conservation is flourishing, and its industry has grown to a point where it accounts for a big part of South Africa's Gross Domestic Products (Kingmengsi et al., 2020). However, it remains a concern that the poverty levels in rural communities continue to rise, and there is no improvement brought by biodiversity conservation towards sustainable livelihood diversification. According to the literature, successful biodiversity conservation relies on the partnership, engrossment, and support of rural and local communities (Kingmengsi et al., 2019).

Connections between growth and conservation were established in the 1970s and early 1980s, culminating in the formulation of the World Conservation Strategy led by IUCN and other institutions (Kingmengsi et al., 2020). The World Conservation Strategy acknowledged the boundedness of natural resources and the necessity for guaranteeing their sustainable use (Gibbens & Schoeman, 2021). Acknowledgment of the significance of biodiversity conservation and its connections to global growth concerns has risen substantially during the roughly four and a half years since the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (Kingmengsi et al., 2019). Stockholm decided that natural resources are essential for economic development and that conservation and improvement are inseparably associated (Woyesa & Kumar, 2020). A period later, after Stockholm, the 1982 World Congress on Parks and Protected Areas in Bali marked a main revolving idea in conservation repetition by cheering methods that endorsed superior local contribution and sustainable use of resources (Woyesa & Kumar, 2020; Rachel et al., 2021). The fifth objective of the Bali Action Plan was the rise of a connection between endangered part administration and sustainable development and Endorsement, precisely recognizing that people living in or near endangered parts can support endangered area organizations if they feel they share properly in the reimbursements flowing from endangered areas, are appropriately rewarded for any misplaced right, and are taken into account in preparation and processes (Woyesa & Kumar, 2020). The rank of incorporating biodiversity conservation with sustainable economic improvement was further underscored in 1987 in the report issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Gibbens & Schoeman, 2021). The report coined the term sustainable development and gave it its worldwide catchphrase level it now appreciates. A further official international dedication to the objectives of conservation and growth was established at the 1992 UNCED (the Rio Earth Summit) when countries drafted the CBD to address the loss of biodiversity and develop mechanisms for funding (Woyesa & Kumar, 2020).

Gibbens and Schoeman (2021) contended that The CBD consists of critical objectives, and they are biological diversity conservation, sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and the last one is the reasonable and unbiased distribution of the reimbursements resulting from the employment of inherent resources. The CBD states that fiscal and communal growth and poverty alleviation are developing countries' first and overriding priorities (Kingmengsi et al., 2019). Article 8 of the CBD on in situ conservation calls for systems and measures for protected areas to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity, as well as requiring countries to promote efforts to support environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas neighboring endangered parts, with an opinion to broadening protection of these areas. The CBD offers a judicial justification for relating poverty concerns to conservation and also nods that poverty can threaten the survival of protected areas (Kingmengsi et al., 2019). The recognition that natural resources are significant for sustainable development was further underscored in 2000 by implementing the MDGs intended to reduce poverty in underprivileged countries worldwide by 2015 (Gibbens & Schoeman, 2021). The United

Nations Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 was a follow-up to Rio. According to Gibbens and Schoeman (2021), biodiversity conservation was the basis for sustainable development inseparably correlated with economics and growth.

Furthermore, the 5th World Parks Congress organized in Durban, South Africa, in September 2003 highlights the centrality of national parks for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development with the theme 'Benefits Beyond Boundaries'; emphasis was put on that areas must be endangered and not anti-people but in support for people (Gibbens & Schoeman, 2021). Furthermore, emphasis was put on that protected areas should play a significant role in accomplishing sustainable development and ensuring that poverty is alleviated (Aazami & Shanazi, 2020). As stated above, this paper aims to analyze the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa.

This paper is divided into six sections. The first section provides an introduction to the study. The second section is the literature review, which comprises four themes: theoretical framework, characteristics and livelihood activities of rural communities, biodiversity conservation, and rural communities. As well as the biodiversity conservation policy implications for rural communities. The third section is the methodology and material used, and the fourth section discusses the results or findings from the study. Last but not least is the Conclusion and recommendations of the investigation. The last section of the paper provides a list of references from which information was drawn to validate the study's argument and obtain answers to unanswered questions.

METHOD

This section provides a straightforward methodology used to investigate the effects of biodiversity conservation on rural livelihoods. It comprises research design, sampling method, research instrument, data collection, and analysis.

Research design. This theoretical paper relied on a normative research design to investigate the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa. This research design is relevant to the study because it does not control variance and uses secondary data as a source of information. Nonetheless, the design is criticized for its remoteness from practical genuineness. It dedicates itself to evaluating the standard at the expense of the concerns of applying normative reasoning to practical challenges. Nevertheless, this did not pose any adverse effect on the purpose of the study.

Sampling method. To source relevant information, the purposive sampling method was adopted to select journal articles, newspapers, and other government documents published between 2018 and 2023.

Research instrument. This paper adopted the qualitative research instrument. The researcher chose a qualitative research instrument owing to the limited and rare nature of research on the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa. The research instrument delivered adaptable instructions on how the study should progress. A qualitative research instrument is usually used to get a detailed understanding once there is insufficient knowledge about the phenomenon and the researcher believes that the current information or theories may be prejudiced. Using the qualitative research instrument in this study was crucial because little information is available about the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa.

Data collection. The data for the paper was compiled through a desktop study wherein newspapers, scholarly journal articles, and government documents related to the effects of

biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa.

Data analysis. Document analysis was appropriate and selected to analyze the data. Document analysis involves appraising electronic and tangible documents to explain and gain knowledge of their significance and enhance the understanding they provide. Utilizing the document analysis empowered the study to acquire fundamental motives, beliefs, and enthusiasm for the constant investigation of the effects of biodiversity conservation on sustainable livelihood diversification of rural communities in South Africa (Armitage et al., 2020). Diverse resources were assembled, data from the resources was compiled, and validity was confirmed by referencing other scholars with similar studies. This paper drew a conclusion based on the data collected through a desktop study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The paper found that refining rural livelihoods is a multifaceted responsibility requiring a complicated tactic. It starts with acknowledging that rural livelihoods and ecology protection must be more entangled. Deep teamwork between agriculturalists, public society administrations, establishments, and administrations who comprehend the urgent authority for universal alteration along the entire source chain. The paper found that rural communities are usually small in size as compared to urban communities. The houses built are very few and easy to count. However, the spacing between the houses is vast, unlike in urban communities. The paper found that the population density is low, and the residents usually have close relationships and face-to-face contact with each other. Agriculture is mostly the central occupation of the rural residents and serves as the foundation of the rural economy. The regularity of social communication in rural areas is shorter than in urban areas.

Nevertheless, the communication amount retains more steadiness and permanence. The relations and contacts in the primary classes are profound. The family satisfies the desires of the fellows and exercises power over them.

The paper found that rural residents have solid and close contact with nature. This is because much of their everyday doings rotates around the natural environment. South Africa's policy and legislative framework for biodiversity is developed well, delivering a robust foundation for biodiversity conservation and viable utilization. South Africa is one of the few countries worldwide to have a Biodiversity Act and a National Biodiversity Institute. According to the Constitution of South Africa, everyone has the right to a healthy, safe, and sound environment. However, it is also the responsibility of every person to ensure that the environment is protected and used accordingly to achieve sustainable development. The acts continue to emphasize the need for people to ensure that pollution and ecological degradation are avoided most if not all, the time. The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004) pursues to deliver for the management and conservation of South Africa's biodiversity within the framework of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) (2005) emphasizes the development of national strategies, plans, or sequencers for the conservation and maintainable habit of biological diversity or familiarise for this determination prevailing approaches, strategies or packages which shall imitate, put in the ground alia, the actions set out in this convention appropriate to the contracting Party concerned.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that biodiversity conservation needs to do more justice to ensuring sustainable livelihood diversification for rural communities in the country. Biodiversity conservation continues to flourish, and its industry continues to grow to a point where it accounts for a big part of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product. Conversely, it remains alarming that the poverty levels in rural communities continue to rise, and there needs to be improvement brought by biodiversity conservation towards sustainable livelihood diversification. Therefore, it recommends the government delegate candidates or departments to continuously monitor and ensure that nature reserves practicing biodiversity conservation give back to nearby rural communities. Biodiversity conservation policies and legislations in line with the development of communities should be reviewed, adjusted, and ensured that they have operated accordingly. Suppose farmers can earn a better income through a guarantee. In that case, they have a robust inducement to adopt the other necessities on the average that support better maintenance, including those that protect soil well-being and build climate flexibility.

REFERENCES

- Aazami, M. and Shanazi, K. (2020). Tourism wetlands and rural sustainable livelihood: The case from Iran. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 30:100284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2020.100284>
- Armitage, D., Mbatha, P., Muhl, E., Rice, W., & Sowman, M. (2020). Governance principles for community-centered conservation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. *Journal of Society for Conservation Biology*, 2(2):1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.160>
- Foster, J. (2021). Capturing and Losing the 'Lie of the Land': Railway Photography and Colonial Nationalism in Early Twentieth-Century South Africa. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003268260-9/capturing-losing-lie-land-railway-photography-colonial-nationalism-early-twentieth-century-south-africa-jeremy-foster>. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003268260-9>
- Francis, OA., Mohammad, DA., Grace, E. & Unique, N.K. (2021). Achieving sustainable river water quality for rural dwellers by prioritizing the conservation of macroinvertebrates biodiversity in two Afrotropical streams. *Journal of Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, 10:100103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indic.2021.100103>
- Gibbens, M. and Schoeman, C. (2021). Planning for sustainable livelihood development in rural South Africa: A micro-level approach. *Journal of Town and Planning*, 76: 265-320. <https://doi.org/10.18820/2415-0495/trp76i1.2>
- Hajdu, F., Neves, D. and Grandlund, S. (2020). Changing Livelihoods in Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa (2002-2016): Diminishing Employment and Expanding Social Protection. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14(4):743:772. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2020.1773721>
- Jacobs, R. (2018). An urban proletariat with peasant characteristics: land occupations and livestock raising in South Africa. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(5-6): pp. 884-903. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1312354>
- Karimi, A., Yazdandad, H. and Fagerholm, N. (2020). Evaluating social perceptions of ecosystem services, biodiversity, and land management: Trade-offs, synergies and implications for landscape planning and management. *Journal of Ecosystem Services*, 45:101188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2020.101188>
- Kingmengsi JN., Mukong AK., and Balgah, RA (2020). Livelihood Diversification and Household Well-Being: Insights and Policy Implications for Forest-Based Communities in Cameroon.

International Journal of Society and Natural Resources, 33(7):876-895.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2020.1769243>

- Kingmengsi JN., Pretzsch, J., Keicha, MA. And Ongolo S. (2019). Measuring Livelihood Diversification and Forest Conservation Choices: Insights from Rural Cameroon. *International Journal of Forest Economics, Policy, and Social Science*, 10(2):81.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/f10020081>
- Legrand, W., Chen, JS. And Laeis, GCM. (2022). Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry: Principles of Sustainable Operations. Published by Taylor and Francis, page 818.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003081128-2>
- Makhondo, CC and Thomas, DSG. (2020). Seasonal and intra-seasonal rainfall and drought characteristics as indicators of climate change and variability in Southern Africa: a focus on Kabwe and Livingstone in Zambia. *Theoretical and Applied Climatology*, 140:271-284.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00704-019-03029-x>
- Mbatha, MW., Mnguni, H. and Mubecua, MA. (2021). Subsistence Farming as a Sustainable Livelihood Approach for Rural Communities in South Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 11(3):338-402.
- Netshipale, AJ., Raidimi, EN., Mashiloane, ML., De Boer, IJM and Oosting, SJ. (2022). Farming system diversity and its drivers in the Waterberg District, South Africa land reform farms. *Journal of Land Use Policy*, 117:106116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106116>
- Nicolaides, A. (2020). Sustainable Ethical Tourism (SET) and Rural Community Involvement. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(1): 1-16.
- Rachel M., Craig. B. and Deidre, L. (2021). Exploring the rise of expenditure reviews as a tool for more effective biodiversity conservation and the protection of ecosystem services. *Journal of Ecosystem Services*, 47:101241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2020.101241>
- Sakhikonye, MTB., Dalu T. and Gunter A. (2016). Sustainable livelihood principles and urban greening in informal settlements in practice: A case of Zandspruit informal settlement, South Africa. *Journal of Development Southern Africa*, 33(4):518-531.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2016.1179101>
- Selemani, IS. (2020). Indigenous knowledge and rangelands' biodiversity conservation in Tanzania: success and failure. *Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*, 29: 3863-3876.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-020-02060-z>
- Shiyono, T., Kubota, Y. and Kusumoto, B. (2021). Area-based conservation planning in Japan: The importance of OECMs in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. *Journal of Global Ecology and Conservation*, 30:1783. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2021.e01783>
- Swanson, SS. And Ardoin, MN. (2021). Communities behind the lens: A review and critical analysis of Visual Participatory Methods in biodiversity conservation. *Journal of Biological Conservation*, 262:109293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2021.109293>
- Woyesa, T. & Kumar, S. (2020). Potential of coffee tourism for rural development in Ethiopia: a sustainable livelihood approach. *Journal of Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 23:815-832. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-020-00610-7>