Beyond Tourism Growth: Governance, Benefit Distribution and Inclusive Rural Development in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is widely promoted as a pathway for economic growth, conservation financing, and rural development in developing countries. However, tourism expansion does not always generate equitable livelihood improvements for communities surrounding protected areas. This study examines how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution and inclusive rural development in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. Adopting an interpretive qualitative case study design, the study draws on 30 key informant interviews involving government officials, conservation agencies, tourism operators, local authorities, Community Resource Boards, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, and community representatives. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software and guided by Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory. Findings show that institutional fragmentation, limited community participation, unequal stakeholder power relations, and weak tourism value chain integration constrain inclusive outcomes. The study argues that governance-centred approaches are essential for strengthening participation, accountability, and equitable tourism benefit distribution.

Keywords: Tourism governance; Community participation; Tourism benefit distribution; Inclusive rural development; Protected-area tourism; Zambia.

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Tourism is widely promoted as a pathway for economic growth, conservation financing, and rural development in developing countries. However, tourism expansion does not always generate equitable livelihood improvements for communities surrounding protected areas. This study examines how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution and inclusive rural development in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. Adopting an interpretive qualitative case study design, the study draws on 30 key informant interviews involving government officials, conservation agencies, tourism operators, local authorities, Community Resource Boards, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, and community representatives. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by **NVivo software** and guided by Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory. Findings show that institutional fragmentation, limited community participation, unequal stakeholder power relations, and weak tourism value chain integration constrain inclusive outcomes. The study argues that governance-centred approaches are essential for strengthening participation, accountability, and equitable tourism benefit distribution.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an important component of global economic development strategies due to its ability to generate employment, stimulate entrepreneurship, support conservation initiatives, and contribute to rural economic transformation. In many developing countries, tourism is considered a strategic sector for economic diversification because it can create opportunities in remote areas where alternative sources of income are often limited. International development frameworks increasingly recognize tourism as a contributor to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly poverty reduction, decent work, reduced inequalities, and sustainable communities (UN Tourism, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

Despite this optimism, contemporary tourism research highlights a critical concern: tourism growth does not automatically translate into inclusive development. Increasing tourist arrivals, investment flows, and tourism revenues may coexist with persistent poverty and inequality among local communities. Scholars argue that the developmental impact of tourism depends largely on governance structures, institutional capacity, stakeholder relationships, and the mechanisms through which tourism benefits are generated and distributed (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

The concept of inclusive tourism development has therefore gained prominence within tourism scholarship. Inclusive tourism moves beyond measuring success through economic indicators alone and focuses on whether different groups within destination communities have opportunities to participate in tourism processes and benefit from tourism activities. This perspective emphasizes participation, empowerment, equity, social justice, and local ownership as essential dimensions of sustainable tourism development (Biddulph & Scheyvens, 2018).

Protected-area tourism destinations provide an important context for examining these issues. Across Africa, wildlife tourism contributes significantly to national economies through international visitor expenditure, employment creation, conservation financing, and private-sector investment. However, communities living adjacent to protected areas frequently experience limited access to tourism benefits despite providing land, cultural resources, and social support for conservation activities. Research has shown that unequal benefit distribution can weaken local support for conservation and limit tourism's contribution to poverty reduction (Spenceley et al., 2019; Snyman, 2020).

The challenge is particularly evident in wildlife tourism destinations where conservation and community development objectives must coexist. Protected areas often restrict local access to natural resources while tourism revenues are generated through commercial activities controlled by government institutions and private operators. Without effective governance systems, local communities may remain marginal participants rather than active partners in tourism development.

Governance has therefore become a central concept in understanding tourism development outcomes. Tourism governance refers to the processes, institutions, relationships, and decision-making arrangements through which tourism resources are managed and development priorities are determined. Unlike traditional government-centred approaches, contemporary tourism governance recognizes the importance of collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including public authorities, private enterprises, local communities, conservation organizations, and civil society groups (Bramwell & Lane, 2018; Dredge & Jamal, 2019).

Effective tourism governance can facilitate equitable benefit-sharing by promoting transparency, accountability, stakeholder coordination, and community empowerment. Conversely, weak governance systems may contribute to unequal power relations, limited community participation, institutional fragmentation, and concentration of tourism benefits among more powerful actors. Therefore, tourism benefit distribution should be understood not simply as an economic process but as a governance outcome shaped by institutional arrangements and stakeholder interactions.

Zambia provides a valuable case for examining these relationships. The country has positioned tourism as a key sector for economic growth and diversification due to its rich wildlife resources, cultural heritage, and natural attractions. Among Zambia's tourism destinations, the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor represents one of the most internationally recognized wildlife tourism landscapes.

The corridor, centred around South Luangwa National Park and surrounding Game Management Areas, attracts visitors from across the world due to its exceptional wildlife experiences, walking safaris, photographic tourism, and conservation initiatives. Tourism activities have generated employment opportunities, investment, conservation funding, and local economic activities. However, communities surrounding the corridor continue to face significant socio-economic challenges, creating a development paradox where tourism growth occurs alongside persistent rural poverty.

This article addresses this paradox by examining how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. The central argument is that tourism growth alone cannot guarantee inclusive rural development unless governance structures ensure meaningful community participation, transparent decision-making, and equitable access to tourism opportunities.

The article is guided by the following research question:

How do tourism governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution and inclusive rural development outcomes in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor?

The specific objectives are:

i. **To examine** governance systems influencing tourism benefit distribution in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor.

ii. **To analyze** stakeholder perceptions regarding the accessibility and fairness of tourism benefits.

iii. **To identify** institutional challenges affecting equitable tourism benefit distribution.

iv. **To propose** governance strategies for strengthening inclusive rural development through tourism.

The study contributes to tourism literature in three ways. First, it advances understanding of tourism governance by positioning benefit distribution as an institutional and political process rather than merely an economic outcome. Second, it provides empirical evidence from Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor, an important but under-researched African wildlife tourism destination. Third, it offers policy recommendations for improving tourism governance and strengthening the role of tourism in inclusive rural development.

Critical Literature Review

Tourism Governance and Equitable Tourism Benefit Distribution

Tourism governance has become a central theme in contemporary tourism scholarship because it explains how institutional arrangements, policy frameworks, and stakeholder relationships shape tourism development outcomes. Rather than viewing tourism development as solely a market-driven process, governance perspectives recognize that governments, private enterprises, local communities, traditional authorities, conservation agencies, and civil society organizations collectively influence how tourism resources are managed and how tourism benefits are distributed. Consequently, tourism governance extends beyond public administration to encompass the formal and informal institutions that regulate participation, accountability, transparency, and decision-making within tourism destinations (Bramwell & Lane, 2018; Hall, 2019).

Recent scholarship argues that effective tourism governance is fundamental to achieving sustainable and inclusive tourism development. Collaborative governance models have increasingly replaced hierarchical government-led approaches because tourism destinations involve multiple actors with diverse and often competing interests. Collaborative governance promotes stakeholder participation, institutional coordination, shared decision-making, and collective responsibility for destination management. Such governance arrangements are associated with improved destination resilience, stronger institutional legitimacy, and more equitable tourism outcomes (Dredge & Jamal, 2019; Bianchi & de Man, 2021).

Governance also determines the extent to which tourism contributes to local development. Tourism benefits including employment, enterprise development, infrastructure investment, conservation incentives, tax revenues, and community development programmes are not distributed automatically through tourism growth. Instead, they are mediated by governance structures that regulate access to tourism opportunities, determine ownership patterns, and establish benefit-sharing mechanisms. Consequently, governance quality influences whether tourism generates broad-based development or reinforces existing inequalities (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Bianchi & de Man, 2021).

Despite significant advances in tourism governance research, scholars continue to identify institutional fragmentation, policy inconsistencies, weak accountability mechanisms, limited stakeholder coordination, and inadequate community representation as persistent governance challenges within many developing tourism destinations. These governance deficiencies reduce institutional effectiveness and limit tourism's contribution to inclusive development, particularly in protected-area tourism destinations where multiple institutions simultaneously pursue conservation, tourism, and rural development objectives.

Tourism Benefit Distribution and Inclusive Rural Development

Tourism benefit distribution has emerged as one of the defining indicators of sustainable tourism because it reflects whether tourism contributes to social equity alongside economic growth. Contemporary tourism literature argues that evaluating tourism success solely through visitor arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, or investment levels provides an incomplete assessment of tourism performance. Instead, tourism should be evaluated according to its ability to improve local livelihoods, reduce poverty, promote social inclusion, and create equitable economic opportunities (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

Benefit distribution encompasses both direct and indirect gains derived from tourism. Direct benefits include employment, wages, business ownership, and tourism enterprise development, whereas indirect benefits include infrastructure development, education, healthcare, conservation funding, local procurement, and community social programmes. However, empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that these benefits are rarely distributed equally. Tourism destinations frequently experience high levels of economic leakage, external ownership of tourism enterprises, and unequal participation in tourism value chains, thereby limiting the developmental impact of tourism for local communities.

The concept of inclusive rural development therefore shifts attention from aggregate tourism growth towards equitable access to tourism opportunities. Inclusive development requires governance systems capable of reducing structural inequalities by ensuring that marginalized communities participate in tourism planning, benefit-sharing, and decision-making. It also requires institutional mechanisms that promote accountability, transparency, and equitable allocation of tourism revenues. Without these governance attributes, tourism may generate economic growth while simultaneously perpetuating rural poverty and social exclusion (UN Tourism, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

Community Participation and Collaborative Governance

Community participation has become one of the most influential principles of sustainable tourism development. Contemporary scholarship argues that local communities should be recognized not merely as beneficiaries of tourism but as legitimate stakeholders whose knowledge, interests, and rights should shape tourism planning and management. Effective participation strengthens local ownership, improves conservation outcomes, enhances institutional legitimacy, and promotes equitable benefit-sharing.

However, empirical studies increasingly distinguish between nominal participation and meaningful participation. In many tourism destinations, communities participate through consultation meetings without possessing genuine authority over tourism investments, resource allocation, or governance decisions. Such tokenistic participation often reinforces existing power asymmetries while limiting community empowerment and reducing trust in tourism institutions. Conversely, meaningful participation enables communities to influence policy decisions, negotiate equitable partnerships, and improve local livelihood opportunities.

Collaborative governance has therefore emerged as an important framework for strengthening community participation. Collaborative governance recognizes that sustainable tourism requires continuous interaction among governments, private tourism operators, conservation organizations, traditional authorities, and local communities. Institutional collaboration promotes information sharing, conflict resolution, policy coordination, and joint responsibility for tourism development. Destinations characterized by strong collaborative governance generally demonstrate greater resilience, stronger stakeholder trust, and more inclusive tourism outcomes than destinations characterized by fragmented institutional arrangements.

Empirical Evidence from Global, African and Zambian Contexts

International empirical research consistently demonstrates that governance quality mediates the relationship between tourism growth and inclusive development outcomes. Studies across Europe, Asia, and Latin America show that destinations characterized by transparent governance, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional accountability are more successful in converting tourism revenues into local employment, entrepreneurship, and community development than destinations with weak governance systems. Conversely, governance failures frequently contribute to unequal benefit distribution, economic leakage, and persistent rural poverty despite tourism expansion (Bianchi & de Man, 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

African scholarship reports similar patterns. Wildlife tourism has become a major source of foreign exchange, conservation financing, and employment across the continent, yet many rural communities continue to receive disproportionately small shares of tourism-generated wealth. Cross-country studies demonstrate that governance quality including institutional effectiveness, accountability, political stability, and transparency significantly enhances tourism's contribution to inclusive economic growth. Conversely, weak governance reduces the poverty-reduction potential of tourism by limiting community participation and encouraging unequal benefit distribution.

Within Zambia, empirical evidence increasingly recognizes governance as a critical determinant of tourism performance. Chidakel, Child, and Muyengwa (2021) demonstrated that tourism associated with South Luangwa National Park generates substantial local economic activity despite considerable economic leakage. Their study estimated that although only about one-quarter of tourist expenditure is retained locally, tourism nevertheless contributes approximately 40% of household income in nearby communities, highlighting both tourism's economic significance and the need to strengthen local value capture. The authors concluded that improved infrastructure, decentralized management, and stronger local economic linkages are essential for enhancing tourism's developmental impact.

Subsequent studies reinforce these conclusions. Comparative research on wildlife tourism governance in Zambia indicates that governance arrangements, property rights, and institutional autonomy significantly influence the economic integration of protected areas with surrounding communities. In particular, co-governed conservation areas often experience weaker economic outcomes where power asymmetries exist between governing partners, suggesting that governance reform is necessary to strengthen equitable benefit-sharing.

Recent Zambian studies further identify institutional fragmentation, weak policy implementation, limited inter-agency coordination, and inadequate stakeholder participation as major constraints to sustainable tourism governance. These governance weaknesses reduce policy effectiveness and constrain tourism's contribution to inclusive rural development. Evidence from protected-area governance also demonstrates that although community-based natural resource management has improved local participation in some areas, significant inequities remain regarding decision-making authority, recognition of local institutions, and distribution of tourism benefits.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that while tourism has considerable potential to contribute to Zambia's rural development, governance systems ultimately determine whether tourism revenues translate into equitable socio-economic outcomes.

Research Gap

The reviewed literature provides substantial evidence that governance influences tourism development, community participation, and benefit-sharing. Nevertheless, three important gaps remain.

First, much of the international literature has examined tourism governance and tourism benefit distribution as separate fields of inquiry, providing limited explanation of the institutional mechanisms through which governance shapes equitable benefit-sharing in protected-area destinations. Second, although African studies increasingly demonstrate that governance quality enhances tourism's contribution to inclusive development, they largely rely on national or cross-country analyses that overlook destination-specific governance dynamics. Third, within Zambia, existing research has concentrated primarily on tourism economics, conservation outcomes, community-based natural resource management, and tourism policy implementation. Comparatively little attention has been given to **how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor**, despite its strategic importance to Zambia's tourism economy.

Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by integrating **Governance Theory**, **Stakeholder Theory**, and **Inclusive Development Theory** to examine how governance systems shape tourism benefit distribution and, ultimately, inclusive rural development in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. By positioning tourism benefit distribution as a governance outcome rather than merely an economic outcome, the study contributes a governance-centred perspective to the growing literature on sustainable tourism and rural development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Theoretical frameworks provide the analytical foundation for understanding complex relationships among governance systems, tourism benefit distribution, and inclusive rural development. Tourism development within protected areas is characterized by multiple stakeholders, competing interests, institutional complexities, and unequal power relations that cannot be adequately explained by a single theoretical perspective. Consequently, this study adopts an integrated theoretical framework comprising **Governance Theory**, **Stakeholder Theory**, and **Inclusive Development Theory**. These complementary perspectives collectively explain how governance institutions, stakeholder interactions, and development processes influence the distribution of tourism benefits within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor.

The integration of these theories responds to recent calls for interdisciplinary approaches to tourism governance that move beyond traditional economic analyses towards understanding the institutional and social processes shaping tourism outcomes (Bramwell & Lane, 2018; Hall, 2019). By combining governance, stakeholder, and development perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing why tourism growth may coexist with persistent rural poverty despite increasing tourism investment and visitor arrivals.

Governance Theory

Governance Theory provides the primary analytical lens for this study because it explains how institutions, rules, networks, and decision-making processes influence public policy outcomes. Contemporary governance theory argues that governance extends beyond the actions of government to include interactions among state institutions, private enterprises, civil society organizations, traditional authorities, and local communities. Effective governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, coordination, responsiveness, and institutional legitimacy, all of which influence the allocation of resources and opportunities (Bovaird & Löffler, 2018; Pierre & Peters, 2020).

Within tourism, governance theory has become increasingly influential because tourism destinations involve complex institutional arrangements requiring collaboration among multiple actors. Protected-area tourism destinations, in particular, involve conservation agencies, tourism businesses, local government authorities, customary institutions, donor organizations, and host communities, each possessing different objectives, levels of influence, and access to resources. Governance theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for understanding how institutional arrangements influence tourism planning, policy implementation, and benefit-sharing mechanisms (Bramwell & Lane, 2018).

Recent tourism governance research argues that governance quality directly influences tourism's contribution to sustainable development. Destinations characterized by transparent institutions, effective coordination, and inclusive decision-making generally achieve stronger conservation outcomes, improved stakeholder trust, and more equitable tourism benefit distribution than destinations characterized by fragmented governance systems (Hall, 2019; Dredge & Jamal, 2019). Conversely, weak governance contributes to institutional duplication, policy inconsistency, elite capture, and unequal distribution of tourism benefits.

Despite its strengths, Governance Theory has limitations. It explains institutional processes but pays less attention to unequal power relationships between stakeholder groups and the socio-economic dimensions of development. Governance theory may also assume that collaborative arrangements naturally produce equitable outcomes, whereas empirical evidence demonstrates that collaboration can still reproduce existing inequalities if power imbalances remain unaddressed (Bianchi & de Man, 2021). Consequently, Governance Theory alone is insufficient to explain the dynamics of stakeholder influence and social inclusion within tourism destinations.

Nevertheless, Governance Theory provides the overarching framework for this study because tourism benefit distribution is fundamentally an institutional outcome shaped by governance arrangements, policy implementation, and stakeholder coordination.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory complements Governance Theory by explaining how relationships among multiple actors influence organizational and development outcomes. Originally developed by **Freeman (1984)**, the theory argues that organizations and institutions should create value for all stakeholders rather than prioritizing the interests of a single group. Within tourism, stakeholders include government agencies, tourism enterprises, conservation organizations, local communities, traditional leaders, investors, tourists, and non-governmental organizations.

Contemporary tourism scholarship increasingly applies Stakeholder Theory to explain destination governance because tourism development depends upon collaboration among actors possessing different resources, interests, and levels of influence (Byrd, 2018; Waligo et al., 2021). Effective stakeholder engagement promotes trust, information sharing, conflict resolution, and coordinated decision-making, thereby improving tourism governance and destination sustainability.

In the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor, Stakeholder Theory provides an appropriate framework for examining interactions among government institutions, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, tourism operators, Community Resource Boards, traditional authorities, conservation organizations, and local communities. These stakeholders influence tourism planning, conservation management, investment decisions, and benefit-sharing arrangements.

However, Stakeholder Theory has been criticized for assuming relatively equal relationships among stakeholders despite considerable differences in political influence, financial resources, technical capacity, and institutional authority. In practice, powerful stakeholders often dominate tourism decision-making, while local communities possess relatively limited bargaining power. Consequently, Stakeholder Theory requires complementary perspectives capable of addressing issues of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Inclusive Development Theory

Inclusive Development Theory provides the normative foundation for evaluating tourism outcomes. The theory argues that development should be assessed not merely through economic growth but through the equitable distribution of opportunities, resources, capabilities, and well-being. Inclusive development therefore seeks to ensure that marginalized populations actively participate in development processes and benefit from economic growth (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016).

Recent scholarship has extended Inclusive Development Theory to tourism by arguing that tourism should contribute to reducing inequalities, strengthening community empowerment, promoting decent work, and expanding livelihood opportunities (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). From this perspective, tourism success should be measured not only by visitor arrivals or tourism revenues but also by improvements in local livelihoods, equitable benefit-sharing, and community empowerment.

The theory is particularly relevant to this study because the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor presents a development paradox: tourism has expanded significantly, yet many neighbouring communities continue to experience persistent poverty. Inclusive Development Theory therefore provides an analytical framework for evaluating whether existing governance systems enable tourism to contribute meaningfully to rural development.

Despite its strengths, Inclusive Development Theory has been criticized for providing broad normative principles without clearly specifying the institutional mechanisms required to achieve inclusive outcomes. Consequently, the theory is most effective when combined with Governance Theory and Stakeholder Theory, which explain the institutional and relational processes through which inclusive development can be realized.

Integration of the Three Theories

The integration of Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory provides a comprehensive analytical framework for examining tourism benefit distribution in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. Governance Theory explains the institutional structures and decision-making processes that regulate tourism development. Stakeholder Theory explains interactions, interests, and power relationships among the actors involved in tourism governance. Inclusive Development Theory provides the evaluative framework for assessing whether governance systems produce equitable development outcomes.

Together, these theories suggest that tourism benefit distribution is not simply an economic consequence of tourism growth but the product of governance quality, stakeholder participation, institutional accountability, and equitable resource allocation. The integrated framework therefore enables the study to move beyond conventional economic analyses by examining how governance arrangements shape the inclusiveness of tourism development.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the integrated theoretical framework, this study conceptualizes **tourism governance systems** as the independent construct influencing **tourism benefit distribution**, while **inclusive rural development** represents the ultimate development outcome. Governance quality is reflected through transparency, accountability, institutional coordination, policy implementation, and stakeholder participation. These governance dimensions influence the accessibility, fairness, and effectiveness of tourism benefit-sharing mechanisms. Equitable tourism benefit distribution subsequently contributes to employment creation, local enterprise development, improved livelihoods, community empowerment, and reduced rural poverty.

Accordingly, the study proposes that **tourism benefit distribution functions as the principal mechanism through which governance systems influence inclusive rural development** within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

This study adopted a **qualitative research approach** using an interpretive case study design to examine how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution and inclusive rural development outcomes within Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand the experiences, perceptions, interactions, and institutional relationships among diverse tourism stakeholders. Unlike quantitative approaches that primarily measure relationships between variables, qualitative inquiry enables deeper exploration of the processes through which governance

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arrangements influence decision-making, participation, accountability, and access to tourism benefits (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2023).

The interpretive orientation of the study was guided by the assumption that tourism development outcomes are socially constructed through interactions among stakeholders operating within specific institutional and socio-cultural contexts. In the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor, tourism benefit distribution is influenced by complex relationships among government agencies, conservation institutions, tourism operators, traditional authorities, community organizations, and local residents. Therefore, understanding these dynamics required exploring stakeholder perspectives and lived experiences rather than relying solely on measurable economic indicators.

A qualitative case study design was selected because the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor represents a distinctive protected-area tourism context where significant tourism growth exists alongside persistent rural poverty. Case study methodology enables researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena within their real-life settings while capturing the complexity of institutional processes and stakeholder relationships (Yin, 2018). The approach was therefore appropriate for examining how governance systems shape tourism benefit distribution within a specific geographical and institutional environment.

Study Area: South Luangwa Tourism Corridor, Zambia

The study was conducted within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor located in Zambia's Eastern Province. The corridor encompasses communities surrounding **South Luangwa National Park**, adjacent Game Management Areas (GMAs), tourism enterprises, conservation organizations, and governance institutions operating within the wider wildlife tourism landscape.

South Luangwa is internationally recognized as one of Africa's premier wildlife tourism destinations, particularly due to its biodiversity, walking safari experiences, photographic tourism, and conservation significance. Tourism activities within the corridor contribute to employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, conservation financing, and local economic activities. The destination has attracted significant investment from safari operators, conservation organizations, and development partners.

However, despite sustained tourism activity, many surrounding rural communities continue to experience socio-economic challenges, including limited employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, restricted participation in tourism decision-making, and uneven access to tourism-generated benefits. This coexistence of tourism growth and persistent poverty provides an important context for examining whether existing governance systems facilitate inclusive rural development.

The South Luangwa Tourism Corridor was therefore selected as a critical case because it provides an opportunity to investigate the relationship between tourism governance, stakeholder participation, and benefit distribution within a globally significant wildlife tourism destination.

Sampling Strategy and Participants

The study employed **purposive sampling** to identify participants with direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in tourism governance, conservation management, community development, and tourism benefit-sharing processes. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research because it enables researchers to select information-rich participants capable of providing meaningful insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2018).

A total of **30 key informants** participated in the study. The sample size was considered appropriate because qualitative research emphasizes depth of understanding and thematic saturation rather than statistical representativeness. Data collection continued until sufficient conceptual understanding was achieved and no significant new themes were emerging.

The participants were selected from key stakeholder groups involved in tourism governance and benefit distribution within the corridor.

Stakeholder Category	Number of Participants
Ministry of Tourism and tourism policy officials	**3**
Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) representatives	**3**
Mambwe District Council/local government officials	**3**
Tourism operators (lodges, safari companies, tour operators)	**6**
Community Resource Board representatives	**4**
Traditional leaders	**3**
Local community representatives	**5**
Civil society organizations/conservation NGOs	**3**
Total	**30**

The inclusion of multiple stakeholder categories enabled triangulation of perspectives and provided a comprehensive understanding of governance arrangements, power relationships, and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through **semi-structured key informant interviews**, supported by documentary analysis and field observations. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they provide flexibility for participants to explain their experiences while allowing the researcher to explore specific themes related to governance, participation, and benefit distribution.

The interview guide was structured around the study objectives:

i. Governance systems influencing tourism benefit distribution.

ii. Stakeholder participation in tourism decision-making.

iii. Accessibility and fairness of tourism benefits.

iv. Institutional challenges affecting inclusive tourism development.

v. Strategies for improving tourism governance and rural development outcomes.

Interviews were conducted with participants representing government institutions, conservation agencies, tourism businesses, community organizations, and local communities. With participants' permission, interviews were recorded and supplemented with researcher field notes.

Document analysis was also conducted to strengthen contextual understanding. Reviewed documents included tourism policies, conservation management frameworks, district development plans, community resource management documents, and relevant government reports. Documentary analysis enabled comparison between formal governance frameworks and stakeholder experiences.

Field observations were used to capture contextual information relating to tourism infrastructure, community development initiatives, tourism enterprises, and interactions between tourism activities and surrounding communities.

Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed using **thematic analysis**, following the principles outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a systematic approach for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

The analysis involved six stages:

1. **Data familiarization** – interview transcripts were reviewed repeatedly to develop an overall understanding of participant experiences.

2. **Initial coding** – meaningful statements related to governance, participation, and benefit distribution were coded.

3. **Theme development** – related codes were grouped into broader themes reflecting the research objectives.

4. **Theme review** – themes were refined to ensure consistency and relevance.

5. **Theme definition and naming** – final themes were clearly defined and linked to the theoretical framework.

6. **Interpretation and reporting** – findings were connected to Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory.

NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used to support data organization, coding management, and thematic interpretation. The software facilitated systematic handling of interview transcripts while maintaining transparency throughout the analytical process.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

The study ensured research quality through the principles of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability proposed for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017).

Credibility was enhanced through stakeholder triangulation, where perspectives from government officials, tourism operators, conservation organizations, and community representatives were compared.

Dependability was supported through maintaining clear documentation of data collection procedures, coding decisions, and analytical processes.

Confirmability was promoted through reflexive practices, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in participant experiences rather than researcher assumptions.

Transferability was supported through detailed description of the study context, participants, and governance environment, enabling readers to assess applicability to similar protected-area tourism destinations.

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw. Informed consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. Participant identities were protected through anonymization and secure management of research data.

FINDINGS

Governance Structures and Tourism Benefit Distribution

The findings revealed that tourism benefit distribution within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor is strongly influenced by existing governance structures and institutional relationships among government agencies, conservation authorities, tourism operators, community institutions, and local communities. Participants indicated that although formal governance mechanisms exist to facilitate tourism development and conservation management, their effectiveness in ensuring equitable benefit distribution remains limited by coordination challenges, unequal decision-making power, and differences in stakeholder influence.

A Ministry of Tourism official explained that tourism benefits depend significantly on the effectiveness of institutional collaboration:

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"Tourism development involves many institutions, and when these institutions coordinate effectively, communities are more likely to benefit. However, when responsibilities overlap, implementation becomes difficult."

(KI-01, Ministry of Tourism Official, Key Informant Interview, Date: 12/06/2026).

Similarly, a Department of National Parks and Wildlife representative highlighted the importance of balancing conservation objectives with community development needs:

"Protected areas generate tourism opportunities, but conservation cannot succeed if surrounding communities do not see meaningful benefits from tourism."

(KI-02, DNPW Representative, Key Informant Interview, Date: 12/06/2026).

These findings suggest that tourism governance in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor involves complex institutional arrangements where multiple actors influence tourism outcomes. However, the existence of governance structures alone does not guarantee equitable benefit distribution. Rather, the effectiveness of governance depends on the degree of coordination, accountability, transparency, and stakeholder inclusion within these structures.

The findings support previous tourism governance research, which argues that institutional arrangements determine how tourism resources are managed and how benefits are allocated among stakeholders (Bramwell & Lane, 2018; Hall, 2019). In protected-area destinations, governance effectiveness is particularly important because tourism development involves competing interests between conservation objectives, commercial activities, and community livelihood aspirations.

Community Participation and Decision-Making Power

Community participation emerged as a central theme influencing tourism benefit distribution. Participants acknowledged that local communities are recognized as important stakeholders within tourism and conservation governance frameworks; however, many expressed concerns that participation often remains consultative rather than empowering.

A Community Resource Board representative explained:

"Communities are invited to meetings and consultations, but sometimes the major decisions have already been made. Participation should mean that communities have a voice in decisions affecting their resources."

(KI-05, Community Resource Board Representative, Key Informant Interview, Date: 12/06/2026).Traditional leadership representatives similarly emphasized the importance of involving local institutions in tourism planning processes:

"Local leaders and communities understand the area and should be involved from the beginning when tourism initiatives are being developed."

(KI-06, Traditional Leader, Key Informant Interview, Date: 14/06/2026).

The findings indicate a difference between **formal participation** and **meaningful participation**. While communities may be represented through existing governance structures such as Community Resource Boards, their influence over tourism investment decisions, revenue allocation, and strategic planning remains limited.

This finding demonstrates that participation should not only be measured by the presence of consultation mechanisms but by the extent to which communities possess decision-making authority. As highlighted in contemporary tourism governance literature, participatory processes that fail to redistribute power may reinforce existing inequalities rather than promote inclusive development (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

Institutional Challenges Affecting Equitable Benefit Distribution

The study identified several institutional challenges affecting tourism benefit distribution, including weak coordination among institutions, limited local economic integration, and unequal access to tourism opportunities.

A district council official explained that policy implementation remains challenging because tourism governance involves multiple institutions with different responsibilities:

"The policies are available, but implementation becomes difficult when institutions are not working together effectively. Coordination is necessary if communities are to benefit."

(KI-03, District Council Official, Key Informant Interview, Date: 14/06/2026).

Tourism operators also highlighted challenges associated with increasing local participation in tourism value chains. One operator stated:

"We employ people from surrounding communities, but developing local suppliers requires skills, training, and support systems."

(KI-04, Tourism Operator, Key Informant Interview, Date: DD/MM/2026).

These findings suggest that employment opportunities alone are insufficient for achieving inclusive tourism development. While tourism creates jobs, many local residents remain excluded from higher-value economic opportunities such as business ownership, tourism supply chains, and investment partnerships.

The findings correspond with broader evidence from African tourism destinations showing that economic leakage, limited local enterprise development, and unequal stakeholder power frequently constrain tourism's contribution to poverty reduction (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Bianchi & de Man, 2021).

Community Perceptions of Tourism Benefits

Community representatives expressed mixed perceptions regarding tourism benefits. While participants recognized tourism as an important economic activity, many indicated that tourism growth has not translated into substantial improvements in household livelihoods.

A community representative explained:

"Tourism is growing and visitors are coming, but many families still struggle to see direct benefits from these activities."

(KI-07, Community Representative, Key Informant Interview, Date: 14/06/2026).

Participants identified employment, community development projects, and conservation-related programmes as important benefits. However, they also highlighted concerns regarding limited access to tourism enterprises, inadequate infrastructure development, and insufficient opportunities for local entrepreneurship.

These findings reveal a development paradox within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor: tourism expansion has generated economic value, yet the distribution of benefits remains uneven. This supports the argument that tourism growth must be accompanied by governance mechanisms that promote equitable access, accountability, and community empowerment.

Emerging Governance Strategies for Inclusive Tourism Development

Participants proposed several strategies for strengthening tourism governance and improving benefit distribution. These included strengthening Community Resource Boards, improving transparency in benefit-sharing arrangements, increasing community involvement in decision-making, and supporting local entrepreneurship.

A civil society organization representative emphasized the importance of accountability:

"Communities need to understand how tourism benefits are generated and distributed. Transparency builds trust between institutions and communities."

(KI-08, Civil Society Organization Representative, Key Informant Interview, Date: 14/06/2026). Overall, the findings demonstrate that inclusive tourism development requires governance systems that move beyond participation as consultation towards genuine community empowerment. Strengthening institutional coordination, accountability mechanisms, and local economic opportunities is essential for ensuring that tourism contributes meaningfully to rural development.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study examined how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution and inclusive rural development outcomes in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. The findings demonstrate that tourism benefit distribution is not simply determined by tourism growth or market performance but is shaped by institutional arrangements, stakeholder relationships, decision-making processes, and power dynamics. The discussion therefore interprets the findings through the integrated lens of Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory.

The central argument emerging from the study is that the developmental contribution of tourism depends on the quality of governance systems that determine who participates in tourism decision-making, who controls tourism resources, and who benefits from tourism-generated opportunities. While South Luangwa has experienced sustained growth as a wildlife tourism destination, the persistence of rural poverty among surrounding communities reflects governance challenges affecting the translation of tourism growth into inclusive development outcomes.

Governance Systems as Determinants of Tourism Benefit Distribution

The findings reveal that governance systems play a decisive role in shaping tourism benefit distribution. Although the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor has multiple institutional arrangements involving government agencies, conservation authorities, tourism operators, Community Resource Boards, traditional leaders, and local communities, the effectiveness of these arrangements remains constrained by limited coordination, unequal decision-making power, and institutional fragmentation.

This finding supports Governance Theory, which argues that development outcomes are shaped by the effectiveness of institutions, rules, networks, and decision-making processes rather than by economic activity alone. In tourism destinations involving multiple actors, governance determines how resources are managed, how stakeholders interact, and how benefits are allocated (Bramwell & Lane, 2018; Hall, 2019).

The findings also extend existing tourism governance debates by demonstrating that the presence of governance structures does not automatically produce equitable outcomes. While institutions such as Community Resource Boards provide mechanisms for community involvement, their effectiveness depends on whether they possess meaningful authority and influence. Therefore, governance effectiveness should not be assessed only through institutional existence but through the extent to which governance arrangements redistribute decision-making power and improve accountability.

This finding is consistent with evidence from protected-area tourism contexts where governance arrangements often appear participatory on paper but provide limited influence for local communities in practice. Such situations create a gap between **formal governance participation** and **substantive governance empowerment**.

The study therefore contributes to tourism governance scholarship by highlighting that governance quality, rather than tourism growth itself, is the critical mechanism determining whether tourism benefits reach marginalized rural communities.

Stakeholder Participation, Power Relations and Tourism Inclusion

The findings demonstrate that stakeholder participation remains a major challenge within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. Although communities are recognized as important stakeholders, their participation frequently occurs through consultation rather than through genuine involvement in strategic tourism decisions.

This finding reflects concerns raised within Stakeholder Theory regarding unequal stakeholder influence. While tourism involves multiple actors, stakeholders do not possess equal levels of power, resources, knowledge, or institutional authority. Government agencies and private tourism operators often possess greater financial and technical capacity compared with rural communities, creating unequal relationships within tourism governance processes.

The findings support previous tourism research suggesting that participation should be understood as a continuum ranging from passive information sharing to active empowerment and shared decision-making. Participation that does not provide communities with meaningful influence may reinforce existing inequalities rather than promote inclusive development.

The evidence from South Luangwa suggests that improving stakeholder participation requires more than increasing community attendance at meetings. It requires strengthening community capacity, improving access to tourism information, increasing representation in decision-making structures, and creating mechanisms through which communities can negotiate tourism priorities.

Therefore, this study extends Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating that stakeholder inclusion in tourism requires attention to power relations. Simply identifying stakeholders is insufficient; effective governance requires understanding who controls decisions, whose knowledge is recognized, and whose interests are prioritized.

Tourism Growth and the Persistent Poverty Paradox

A significant contribution of this study is its examination of the paradox between tourism growth and persistent rural poverty. The South Luangwa Tourism Corridor represents a globally recognized wildlife tourism destination generating employment, conservation revenue, and economic activity. However, surrounding communities continue to experience socio-economic challenges.

This finding challenges the assumption that tourism expansion automatically produces inclusive development. While tourism creates economic opportunities, the benefits generated may remain concentrated among tourism enterprises, government institutions, and actors with greater access to tourism markets.

The findings support Inclusive Development Theory, which argues that development should be evaluated according to whether disadvantaged groups gain meaningful opportunities to improve their livelihoods. From this perspective, tourism success cannot be measured only through visitor numbers, tourism revenue, or investment growth. Instead, attention must be given to questions of equity, participation, empowerment, and livelihood improvement.

The study demonstrates that tourism can contribute to rural development only when governance mechanisms actively address structural barriers preventing communities from accessing tourism opportunities. These barriers include limited entrepreneurship capacity, weak local supply chains, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted participation in tourism decision-making.

Thus, the persistence of poverty alongside tourism growth is not necessarily evidence that tourism has failed; rather, it indicates that existing governance arrangements have not fully enabled communities to capture and benefit from tourism value creation.

Implications for Protected-Area Tourism Governance in Africa

The findings contribute to wider African debates concerning the governance of protected-area tourism. Across many African wildlife destinations, governments and conservation organizations increasingly promote tourism as a mechanism for financing conservation and supporting rural livelihoods. However, evidence suggests that conservation-based tourism frequently produces uneven outcomes where communities experience conservation costs while receiving limited benefits.

The South Luangwa case illustrates the importance of moving from conservation-centred governance towards community-inclusive governance. Protected-area tourism requires balancing three interconnected objectives:

i. Conservation effectiveness

ii. Tourism economic performance

iii. Community livelihood improvement

Failure to address any one of these dimensions can undermine long-term sustainability. For example, inadequate community benefits may weaken local support for conservation, while weak conservation governance may threaten tourism resources.

The study therefore supports emerging arguments that protected-area tourism governance should priorities equity, participation, and local empowerment alongside conservation objectives.

Theoretical Contribution of the Study

This study makes three theoretical contributions.

First, it extends **Governance Theory** by demonstrating that tourism benefit distribution is fundamentally a governance outcome. Tourism benefits are not automatically generated for communities through market expansion; they are shaped by institutional rules, accountability mechanisms, and stakeholder relationships.

Second, it extends **Stakeholder Theory** by demonstrating that tourism stakeholder relationships must be analyzed through the lens of power and influence. Equal recognition of stakeholders does not necessarily result in equal participation or benefit access.

Third, it contributes to **Inclusive Development Theory** by demonstrating that tourism-led development requires governance systems capable of transforming economic opportunities into equitable livelihood outcomes.

The integrated theoretical framework developed in this study therefore provides a more comprehensive explanation of why tourism growth may coexist with persistent poverty in rural destinations.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that governance systems are central to understanding tourism benefit distribution in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. Although tourism has generated economic opportunities and conservation benefits, unequal participation, institutional fragmentation, and limited community influence constrain its contribution to inclusive rural development.

The findings suggest that achieving inclusive tourism requires governance reforms that strengthen community empowerment, improve stakeholder collaboration, increase transparency, and enhance local participation in tourism value chains.

Policy and Practical Implications

Introduction

The findings of this study have important implications for tourism governance, rural development policy, conservation management, and stakeholder practice within Zambia’s South Luangwa Tourism Corridor and similar protected-area tourism destinations across Africa. The study demonstrates that tourism growth alone does not guarantee inclusive development outcomes. Instead, the extent to which tourism contributes to poverty reduction and improved livelihoods depends on governance systems that promote meaningful participation, equitable benefit distribution, accountability, and stronger local economic linkages.

The implications presented below are directed towards key stakeholders responsible for tourism planning, conservation management, community development, and destination governance.

Implications for Government Tourism Policy and Planning

The Ministry of Tourism and related government institutions should strengthen tourism governance frameworks by moving beyond tourism growth indicators towards inclusive development indicators. While visitor arrivals, tourism revenues, and investment levels remain important measures of tourism performance, policy frameworks should also evaluate:

i. Community participation in tourism decision-making;

ii. Local employment quality;

iii. Community ownership of tourism enterprises;

iv. Local procurement levels;

v. Distribution of tourism-generated benefits.

The findings suggest that tourism policies require stronger mechanisms for ensuring that communities surrounding tourism destinations become active participants rather than passive recipients of tourism benefits.

Government should therefore consider developing clearer tourism benefit-sharing frameworks that define:

i. Stakeholder responsibilities;

ii. Community benefit expectations;

iii. Transparency requirements;

iv. Monitoring mechanisms;

v. Accountability procedures.

Such frameworks would strengthen the connection between tourism development and inclusive rural transformation.

Strengthening Community Participation and Empowerment

A major implication of this study is the need to transform community participation from consultation towards meaningful empowerment. Although Community Resource Boards and other community structures provide important platforms for participation, their effectiveness depends on their capacity to influence tourism decisions.

Government agencies, conservation organizations, and development partners should strengthen community institutions through:

i. Leadership development programmes;

ii. Financial management training;

iii. Tourism entrepreneurship training;

iv. Access to tourism market information;

v. Improved representation in tourism governance forums.

Empowered communities are more likely to negotiate equitable partnerships with tourism operators and participate effectively in tourism value chains.

The study suggests that community participation should be assessed according to the level of influence communities possess rather than simply their involvement in meetings or consultations.

Implications for Tourism Operators and Private Sector Stakeholders

Tourism operators within the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor have an important role in promoting inclusive tourism development. While private enterprises contribute through employment creation, conservation support, and community initiatives, the findings indicate opportunities for stronger local economic integration.

Tourism businesses should strengthen community linkages through:

i. Increasing local procurement;

ii. Supporting community-based enterprises;

iii. Developing skills transfer programmes;

iv. Creating pathways for local entrepreneurship;

v. Establishing transparent community partnership agreements.

Rather than viewing communities only as sources of labour, tourism operators should recognize them as potential business partners and contributors to destination sustainability.

Stronger community-business partnerships can reduce economic leakage and increase the proportion of tourism value retained within local economies.

Strengthening Institutional Coordination and Accountability

The findings highlight institutional fragmentation as a major challenge affecting tourism benefit distribution. Multiple institutions operate within the tourism and conservation landscape, but limited coordination reduces policy effectiveness and creates uncertainty regarding stakeholder responsibilities.

Improved coordination requires:

i. Regular multi-stakeholder planning forums;

ii. Shared tourism development strategies;

iii. Clear institutional mandates;

iv. Joint monitoring of tourism benefits;

v. Improved communication between government, communities, and tourism operators.

A coordinated governance approach would enable institutions to align conservation objectives, tourism development priorities, and community livelihood goals.

Furthermore, transparency mechanisms should be strengthened to improve trust among stakeholders. Communities should have access to information regarding tourism revenues, conservation funding, community development initiatives, and benefit-sharing arrangements.

Implications for Community-Based Conservation and Rural Development

The study contributes to debates on community-based conservation by demonstrating that conservation sustainability is closely linked to perceived fairness in benefit distribution. Where communities experience limited benefits despite bearing the costs associated with conservation restrictions, support for tourism and conservation initiatives may decline.

Therefore, conservation policies should integrate stronger livelihood development components, including:

i. Community enterprise development;

ii. Agricultural and tourism value-chain linkages;

iii. Youth skills development;

iv. Support for small and medium enterprises;

v. Diversification of household income opportunities.

Tourism should be positioned not only as a conservation financing mechanism but also as a platform for improving rural livelihoods.

Implications for Sustainable Tourism Governance Research

The study also contributes implications for tourism scholarship. Existing tourism development debates often examine tourism growth, sustainability, or conservation separately. This study demonstrates the importance of examining tourism governance as the mechanism connecting tourism growth with development outcomes.

Future research should further investigate:

i. Long-term impacts of tourism benefit-sharing arrangements;

ii. Effectiveness of Community Resource Boards;

iii. Gender and youth participation in tourism governance;

iv. Relationships between conservation financing and community welfare;

v. Comparative governance models across African tourism destinations.

Such research would strengthen understanding of how tourism can become a more effective instrument for inclusive rural development.

Summary of Policy Implications

The study highlights that achieving inclusive tourism development in the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor requires a shift from a tourism-growth model towards a governance-centred development model.

The key policy priorities are:

i. **Strengthening participatory governance** by increasing community decision-making power.

ii. **Improving benefit-sharing mechanisms** to ensure tourism gains reach local communities.

iii. **Enhancing institutional coordination** among tourism, conservation, and development actors.

iv. **Supporting local economic participation** through entrepreneurship and value-chain integration.

v. **Increasing transparency and accountability** in tourism governance processes.

These measures would enhance the ability of tourism to contribute meaningfully to rural poverty reduction and inclusive development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how governance systems influence tourism benefit distribution in Zambia's South Luangwa Tourism Corridor. The findings demonstrate that tourism growth alone is insufficient to achieve inclusive rural development. While the corridor has experienced significant tourism activity and conservation investment, persistent rural poverty remains partly associated with governance challenges affecting participation, accountability, institutional coordination, and access to tourism opportunities.

The study contributes to tourism governance literature by showing that tourism benefit distribution is fundamentally a governance outcome. The extent to which communities benefit from tourism depends on institutional arrangements, stakeholder power relationships, and the effectiveness of mechanisms designed to promote equitable participation.

The integrated application of Governance Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Inclusive Development Theory provides a useful framework for understanding why tourism growth may coexist with limited community development outcomes. The study demonstrates that inclusive tourism requires governance systems capable of transforming tourism-generated economic value into equitable social and livelihood benefits.

For the South Luangwa Tourism Corridor, achieving inclusive rural development requires strengthening community empowerment, improving stakeholder collaboration, enhancing transparency, and increasing local participation in tourism value chains. These changes are essential for ensuring that tourism becomes not only an economic activity but also a meaningful pathway for sustainable and equitable rural transformation.

Future tourism governance approaches should therefore focus not only on attracting visitors and increasing revenues but also on ensuring that communities living alongside tourism resources become genuine partners and beneficiaries of tourism development.

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