



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 5.2  
IJAR 2018; 4(11): 133-139  
www.allresearchjournal.com  
Received: 21-09-2018  
Accepted: 22-10-2018

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## **Ecotourism, participation and benefits in Ghana: A case study of local residents of Wli**

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### **Abstract**

Eco-tourism by its nature according to The International Ecotourism Society (2001) is a responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of the local people. The purpose of the study was to find out the extent to which local people of Wli Traditional area participate and benefits in ecotourism in Ghana. The study was conducted in the Wli community as they play host to the Agumatsa Waterfall and its side attractions to determine the extent of their involvement. Wli Traditional area is located in the Hohoe Municipality of Volta region. The participation of local people is needed at all stages of ecotourism planning, implementation and evaluation. It was revealed from the study that to promote effective participation and benefits, efforts should be made to enhance local people's appreciation and awareness of the potential ecotourism values of their natural surroundings. The study also established clear-cut evidence that, the people of the area have a fair knowledge of the resource (the Agumatsa Waterfall) and its related economic activities, but not well involved due to several barriers to effective participation. In the view of most of the interviewees, majority of the local residents are not actively involved the eco-tourism business, hence there not sufficient benefits to the people of Wli traditional area.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, participation, benefits, economic exchange, Wli, waterfall

### **Introduction**

In the last thirty five (35) years, tourism has developed to become one of the major world economic activities (Dieke, 2000) <sup>[2]</sup>. This, according to him, is due to the social, economic and ecological contributions it has made. The good side of tourism all over the world cannot be over emphasized. So much has been achieved in the tourism industry which has become the driving force that is pushing all governments to promote it for its prospects. A visit to some well-established tourism centres globally reveals a host of tangible benefits of tourism to the people. In 2000, there was a record of 699 million international tourist arrivals which generated an estimated US\$ 476 billion in international tourism receipts (WTO, 2001) <sup>[13]</sup>.

In 2008, there were over 922 million international tourist arrivals, with a growth of 1.9% as compared to 2007. It is stated in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) World Barometre January 2010 that, international tourism receipts grew to US\$ 944 billion in 2008. Some negative trends like global recession and HINI influenza virus led to the world wide decline of 4% in 2009 to 880 million International tourist arrivals and an estimated 6% decline in international tourist arrivals of between 3% and 4% in 2010. Ecotourism, for instance, is primarily a nature-based activity and it is a fairly current phenomenon. Ecotourism is an agent of change (Wall, 1997) <sup>[14]</sup>, and it is linked to resource protection policies, protected area conservation efforts, sustainable development initiatives and regional and community development strategies in many places. The international Ecotourism Society (1990, p 142) defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the welfare of local people". The participation of local people is needed at all stages of ecotourism planning, implementation and evaluation. To promote effective participation, efforts should be made to enhance local people's appreciation and awareness of the potential ecotourism values of their natural surroundings.

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It must be noted that, when local or host communities of tourist attractions are actively involved in the planning and management of the resource, they are naturally motivated to render their services to sustain the tourism business. It is in this vein that, I believe, the people of Wli traditional area should be actively involved to guarantee the success of the tourism business in their community. Any attempt by anybody to neglect the local people in participating actively in tourism development could spell out doom for the local economy of host communities.

There is a general view that, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy and developing countries are attempting to cash in on this expanding industry. The main benefit that tourism holds over other forms of development is that, it is capable of reusing the resource, without greatly damaging or altering the resource. The expectation is to boost foreign investment and financial reserves. One also must concede that, while uncontrolled growth of this industry can result in dire social and environmental disaster, the United Nations argue that, such negative effects can be controlled and reduced.

In Ghana, the sector is also noted for the employment of both skilled and unskilled labour. The factors responsible for the significant growth of the tourism sector may include; Improved Gross Domestic Product, merchandise- export and trade, technological advancement, paid vacation, reduced working hours, improved transportation system and refined social perception about the tourism sector and its prospects. For the above success in the tourism industry to be sustained, the most important part of the product which is the local community must be given the due recognition. According to Murphy (1985) <sup>[1]</sup>, the product and image that intermediaries package and sell is a destination experience, and as such, creates an industry that is highly dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of the host communities of tourist attractions. For the afore-mentioned reason, residents of tourist destination areas are being seen increasingly as the nucleus of the tourism product (Simons, 1994) <sup>[1]</sup>. They are indeed, the pivot around which tourism must resolve to serve the need of all players in the tourism business.

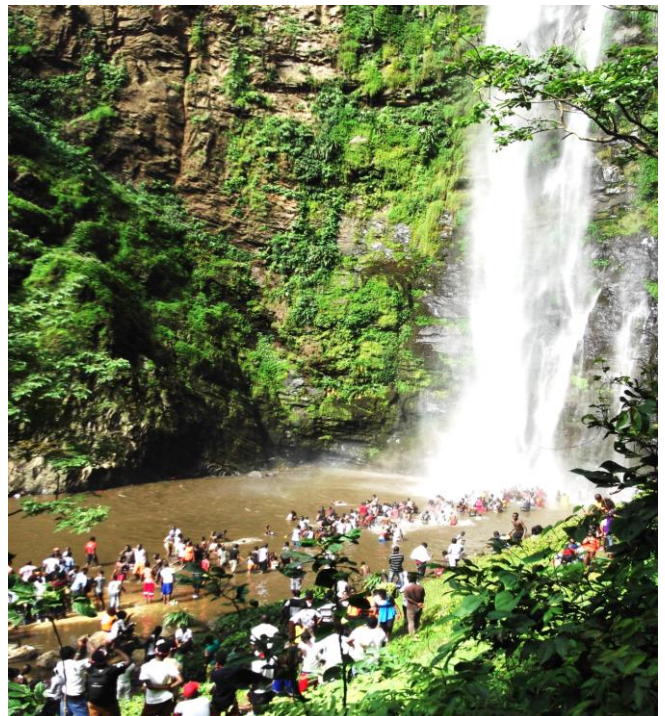
Consequently, community involvement in tourism development is encouraged in many countries. This is due to its potentiality of changing lives for the better. In Costa Rica for instance, individual entrepreneurs do not dominate the provision of services to the visitors. This is due to the fact that, local people especially women are central in the delivery of most of the services rendered. Tourists reside with locals in their local residence and spend their wealth on accommodation, food and other facilities with the indigenous people.

Similarly, Ghana is also endowed with resources which can equally be developed to meet the prospects as seen above. We have resources ranging from cultural heritage, cultural diversity, to relief which can be developed using a community-based tourism system. The Hohoe Municipality of the Volta Region is one of the promising areas which are highly endowed with tourism potentials. Some of the attractions in the area are; Afadzato, Likpe ancestral caves, Tsatsadu Waterfall (the talking river), the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary which is now located in the newly created Afadzato South District and the Wli Agumatsa Waterfall. The people living around Wli Agumatsa waterfall known as the Wli traditional area are the main focus of this study.



Source: Field work (2016)

Fig 1: Half-way through the Front View of Agumatsa Waterfall



Source: Field work (2016)

Fig 2: Tourists at the Base of the Wli Waterfall on Easter Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2016.

The Wli waterfall is a community-based ecotourism destination with huge potential of changing lives and at the same time, preserving its natural environment for posterity. It is located in the Ghana- Togo Plateau Forest Reserve, which has a rich flora and fauna. Wli waterfall is a popular attraction that receives several tourists and excursionists from both outside and within the country due to its perennial water cascades throughout the year. Tourism development comes in handy as local people find other ways of benefiting from the phenomenon such as job opportunities which can improve community development. Besides, local people can produce handicrafts for sale because a lot of foreign and local tourists visit Wli waterfall.

Community participation in the tourism planning process is the involvement of individuals within a tourism-oriented community in the decision-making and implementation process with regard to major manifestations of political and socio-economic activities (Pearce, Mascardo, & Ross, 1996). Murphy (1985)<sup>[6, 1]</sup> also supports this view when he asserted that, community participation in tourism is the involvement of the community in a tourism development enterprise. Again, he sees community participation in two main perspectives. These are passive or active. With passive involvement, locals have only basic knowledge of the tourism activity, while with the active involvement; the community takes part in the day-to-day running of the tourism activity. Sometimes, it is my considered opinion that, some power brokers in the community seek to sideline government and non-governmental organizations from the direct control and or full control of the management and development of any such business such as tourism as far as community participation is concerned. Tourism comprises an extensive range of economic activities and can be considered the largest industry in the world. International tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy. During the 1990s, when the globalization of tourism reached unprecedented proportions, international tourism receipts had a much higher average annual growth rate of 7.3% than that of gross world product. Tourism, however, is the only major service sector in which developing countries have consistently recorded trade surpluses relative to the rest of the world. Between 1980 and 1996, for instance, their travel account surplus increased from \$4.6 billion to \$65.9 billion, due basically to the impressive growth of inbound tourism to countries in Africa, the Caribbean Asia, and the Pacific regions (UN, 1999)<sup>[12]</sup>. Economic benefits in the area of sustainable employment, sustainable alternative livelihood enterprises and other business kinds must be promoted. Financial support in the form of credit could be given to those that genuinely need it. Indirect benefits and socio-cultural progress are also worthwhile.

### Statement of the Problem

It appears the people of Wli community are not fully involved in the development of ecotourism in their area, and in spite of several works on ecotourism in many areas and the availability of countless opportunities in the area; there is no scientific data on the level of participation of the local community in ecotourism management. This has created a gap in literature. Again, over the years, there has been the perception of tourism not meeting desired goals of sustaining the environment, ensuring community participation and economic benefits, including enhancing the experiences of the tourists. According to the International Ecotourism Society (2001)<sup>[11]</sup>, the phenomenon is increasing in growth by 20%-34% per year. A situation, when sustained, will rejuvenate the ugly menace of mass tourism since issues of 'ecological exploitation' are now prevalent. The intensity of benefits host communities and for that matter nations derive from tourism depends largely on the extent of the scale of the tourism, size of the area and nature of the economy. It was based on the above mentioned that we embark on this paper to investigate how much the local residents of Wli in the Volta region of Ghana has participated or benefited from ecotourism.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the extent to which local people of Wli Traditional area participate in ecotourism. Specifically, the objectives of the study include the following;

1. Determine the level of participation of the residents of Wli Traditional area in ecotourism.
2. Ascertain the extent to which the local people of Wli Traditional area have benefited from the ecotourism business.

### Significance of the Study

Ecotourism for instance by its nature and definition according to the International Ecotourism Society (2001)<sup>[11]</sup>, is "a responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of the local people". This study, therefore, could serve as a baseline for the Hohoe Municipal Assembly to evaluate the tourism in the Wli traditional area. The outcome will enlighten the Wli community in the creation and exploitation of alternative livelihood measures to reduce poverty.

### Theoretical Framework

The theory which constitutes the foundation upon which this current study is anchored is the Social Exchange theory which was modified by Ap (1992)<sup>[1]</sup>. The model outlines the process by which residents become involved in tourism exchange, how they continue in the exchanges and become disengaged from the exchange. In effect, this model therefore, helped me in determining the participation level of the people of Wli traditional area, and also explained the quantum of economic benefits and cost, including; employment, income, and its multiplier effects, leakages, opportunity cost as per the perception of the people of Wli in eco-tourism development in the area. The issue of social exchange is being juxtaposed in this context with the participation of the people of Wli traditional area in tourism development.

### Method and materials

#### Scope of the study

The study was conducted in the Wli community as they play host to the Agumatsa Waterfall and its side attractions to determine the extent of their involvement. The Wli Traditional area is located in the Hohoe Municipality of Volta region. There are many tourist sites in the Hohoe Municipality such as Afadzato, Likpe ancestral caves, Tsatsadu Waterfall (the talking river), the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary which is now located in the newly created Afadzato South District and the Wli Agumatsa which may be facing same problem of low community participation. The study was, however, confined to the Wli Waterfall area.

### Research Design

The research design adopted for the study is Case Study, using the qualitative approach. A Case study involves critical studies of an aspect of a problem (Seidu, 2012). In fact, Plummer (1983)<sup>[7]</sup> argues that, it is an ideal method for student projects because of the constraints under which most students do their research. It also has a holistic focus, which aims at preserving and understanding the wholeness and unity of the case under study.

### Population and Sample

A sampling size of 10 (ten) participants was selected for a one-on-one interview for data collection, from an estimated population of 2,500 residents. The Purposive Sampling technique was used to select the 10 participants made up of an official from the Hohoe Municipal Assembly, 2(two) land owners, a local woman, 2(two) artisans, a trader, an employee at the tourist centre who was a member of the Local Tourist Management Team (LTMT), the Assemblyman for the area, and the paramount chief of the area.

### Instrumentation and Data Analyses Plan

The instrument used in collecting data was Face-to-Face: one-on-one, in-person interview. Both open ended and close-ended questions were used. A major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. Another instrument used was observation, under this instrument, I, being part of the community under study, concealed my real identity and intention and closely observed and kept notes on the participatory levels of the locals of Wli community. This enabled me to get first-hand experience with informants. I chose this instrument because the issues under study are sensitive and as such some of the residents may not be willing to give out a true account of the situation as the case may be. The result from the respondents were qualitatively analyzed

### Findings and Discussion

#### Educational Background of Interviewees

The levels of education among interviewees were as follows: 1(one) interviewee had no access to any form of formal education. 3 (three) had access to only primary education, while 1(one) had Junior High School (JHS) education. Furthermore, 3 (three) were Senior High School (SHS) graduates, with 1(one) person being a post-secondary holder (Cert. 'A'). Only one interviewee was a degree holder (B.Ed. Mathematics. Many inhabitants of Wli community were found not to be highly educated as the statistics may suggest. This scenario may not guarantee an effective participation level and the achievement of desired goals, which could lead to poor performance and foreign dominance in the ecotourism business due to lack of requisite skills and knowledge needed by the local people to effectively engage them in the tourism industry. Indeed, it is this active youth group that is suffering from unemployment and its related challenges that pose a threat to Wli community. Their involvement in the study was thus very crucial and relevant as far as finding out the truth about the Wli community's participation in the tourism business and its impact on the community is concerned.

#### Areas of Local Participation in Ecotourism in Wli Traditional Area

The interviewees were asked if they were personally really involved in the development and management of the resource and to what extent their community members were involved. Their responses showed that, a good number of the population of Wli traditional area was involved in one way or the other. 8 (eight) of the interviewees were involved in the eco-tourism business themselves. They were however quick to add that, apart from a few of them who are directly involved in the management and development of the Waterfalls, majority of the population offered help in the

form of communal labour or services. The chief who was interviewed attested to the fact that, the level of participation of his subjects in communal labour was quite impressive in the past but it is gradually dwindling due to apathy by many locals who are not directly benefiting from the exchange. The areas that the community often offers help include clean-up campaigns to improve upon the sanitation of the area, and clearing the way to the Waterfall.

Documents from the Wli tourism centre showed that, some locals were employed either as tour guides, ecotourism management team members or as ticket sellers. Those employed fall within the categories of permanent and casual workers. For instance, services of ticket sellers are sought for only when visitor numbers greatly increase as the case may be on busy periods such as on Easter Mondays, Boxing Days, and on national holidays. My personal observation on this year's Easter Monday shows that, a good number of ticket sellers came from Hohoe to do the sale on commission bases. Here are their words;

Am from Hohoe and I am here to sell tickets on commission. On a good day, especially on Easter Monday like today, I can make not less than 200 hundred Ghana cedis by close of day. But, I wish I could get more than that. (A local ticket seller, Wli Tourism Centre).

The situation therefore in my view does only offer some relatively permanent employment to only a few youth of the area. This situation certainly does not go down well with most of the interviewees, since they had wanted to see many unemployed youth in the area gainfully employed by the eco-tourism business in the area. This is an indication that, local residents of Wli are not so much involved in most of the commercial activities that take place in relation to the waterfall business. This creates a sense of urgency in my view, and calls for action by relevant authorities concerned in the development of eco-tourism in the area to support in divers ways for the development of the Wli community.

The study also found out that, other areas of service delivery in the area include; trading activities such as selling of iced-water, fruits, mangoes, pears, handicrafts, banana and the like to visitors. Apart from the 8 (eight) out of the 10 (ten) interviewees who were selected by purposive sampling technique to reflect the objectives and purpose of the study, who were directly engaged in the exchanges and a few others, majority of the people are not actively involved. This, I believe can have adverse effects on the development and management of the resource.

This condition is certainly no good news if the following expert view is called to mind. "If local communities are not involved, a backlash against tourism may develop" (Murphy, 1985) <sup>[4]</sup>. It is my considered view therefore, that, the visible evidence of social backlash has started emerging in the Wli community. 1(one) local woman who was interviewed pointed out that, she and many others were not directly involved due to the lost of trust in the management of the tourism business. Below is an excerpt from one of the interviewees.

Many of us are not involved directly because we have lost trust in the chiefs and the management team. We see very little work being done with the proceeds in our community. They are just 'chopping' the money. I mean, 'Baboon dey work, monkey dey chop' (A local resident, Wli community) Even though there is a water project currently being undertaken by the Tourism Management Team, I cannot say confidently that we have been happy with the way proceeds

are disbursed and utilized. I have no evidence to prove any ill dealings but I strongly suspect that the money is not being used well. (A local resident, Wli Afegame).

This is in support of the Social Exchange theory which was modified and used by Ap (1992) <sup>[1]</sup>, which forms the framework for this current research, where he postulated that, the Social Exchange theory could be applied to tourism development to demonstrate that, its success or otherwise was a result of it, as perceived by community members, with greater support by individuals where the benefits of the development to them outweighed the cost. Indeed, community's perception of the cost and benefit of tourism development and their concerns for the state of the local economy and the extent to which they share proceeds from tourism and the impact, either positively or negatively upon individuals within local communities is very crucial as far as their involvement is concerned (Gursory *et al.*, 2002) <sup>[3]</sup>. Within this framework, the social behavior of the local people of Wli community is viewed primarily in terms of the pursuit of rewards and the avoidance of punishment and other forms of cost. Therefore, attitudes to tourism are seen as the residents' perceptions towards the positive and negative impacts of tourism which in turn influence support for the industry. This implies that, the local people of Wli traditional area are constantly evaluating the impacts of the tourism in their area and are consequently advising themselves. The Social Exchange theory modified and used by Ap (1992) <sup>[1]</sup> maintains that, higher level of involvement comes by only when the earlier involvement impacts positively on the socio-economic lives of individuals or the community. My personal observation points to the fact that, residents who are likely to benefit from tourism (either because they or family members are employed in tourism or because they believe that tourism's benefits outweigh its cost to them personally) are likely to support tourism and report more positive impacts from tourism. It is clear from the study that, many residents are not fully involved because they have a negative evaluation of the impacts of tourism so far on their lives and the community in general.

The study revealed also that, there were 2 (two) instances where some members from one of the families of the land owners fell two trees in the Agumatsa Wildlife Sanctuary, sparking widespread concern and condemnation about 8 (eight) years ago.

There are some particular families who claim the land is theirs and are always causing trouble in the restricted forest. Some are even burning charcoal in the forest as we speak, while some economic trees have been felled without authorization recently. Just look around on your way through to the waterfall and see things for yourself. (A dissatisfied local resident, Wli community, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2015). Master, you just get into the forest and see things for yourself, people are burning charcoal in there without authorization. How can this be happening in such a wildlife sanctuary? It means there is something wrong! (A dissatisfied local resident, Wli community, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2015).

My personal observation during this year's Easter Monday's visit confirmed some of these unfortunate developments as I saw two heaps of charcoal being burnt, and two trees fell down for timber on my way to the waterfalls. This, in my view is a threat to the preservation of this forest which must be looked at as early as practicable. The true ownership of the land must be established through research and the owners identified and compensated

adequately to pave way for the smooth development of the Waterfall. This situation if left unattended to is a recipe for chaos in the area as it can trigger a serious conflict in the near future. No single family or group of persons should be allowed to put the tourism potentials of area in danger. Even if the true owners are established, they must be well compensated so they can no longer interfere with the conservation of the forest.

### **Local Participation at Management or Decision-Making Levels**

The study revealed that, only a handful of the locals were involved in management decision-making. This situation goes sharply against contemporary views of managing common or communal property. In the view of the paramount chief and 6 (six) of the other interviewees, indigenous knowledge and expertise in such an exchange relation should not be neglected because, such knowledge does not only come about through several years of practice, but through several years of experience as well. Indeed, only 3 (three) of the interviewees were really involved in the management of the resource.

Most of the interviewees lamented over the issue and called for a change in order to include more locals in the development and management of the attraction to the benefit of all. They further conceded that, local peoples' decisions are mostly solicited by the Management of the tourist resources but most often, it is a mere placation (pretending to please locals). I think that, this circumstantial evidence of non-involvement as the study has revealed, can be a source of threat to effective development and management of the resource, which may result into withdrawal of support by the local people who view the resource as communally owned. According to Pearce *et al.* (1996) <sup>[6]</sup>, if local communities are not involved, a backlash against tourism may develop. This situation, among others, contributes to reducing security for both local communities and tourists and combine to inhibit the growth of tourism. I can therefore say that, until active community participation is actually practiced, proper tourism development would remain to be an illusion. Thus, making the Social Exchange theory modified by Ap (1992) <sup>[1]</sup>, a reality.

### **Benefits Derived by the Wli Community from Eco-tourism**

I sought the views of interviewees on the extent to which eco-tourism has been of benefits to the local communities. Two (2) interviewees held a strong view that; eco-tourism has had a negative impact on the development of the area, with little to show. They cited socio-cultural decadence (examples such as sex tourism and sanitation problems) and intangibility of benefit, economic leakage, opportunity cost, uncertainties of income, high maintenance cost of facilities and damage to crops by wildlife as being the reasons behind this negative perception.

This tourism is just spoiling our youth, who sometimes engage in immoral activities with some of the visitors, especially the foreign ones, while some of the visitors litter the environment. I don't even know how much we get from this so called tourism business. (A local resident, Wli Afegame).

Am just not too happy about this waterfall because of the problems we are facing. In fact, visitors always troupe in especially on holidays making noise and littering our streets.

Sometime, they even engage our young girls in sex and this has been a source of worry to some of us. So, I sometimes feel bad when national holidays are approaching. (An interviewee, Wli community).

This revelation indeed is no good news at all. It has the potency of discouraging mass tourism by locals who may feel being cheated. It must be a win-win situation for all the players in the tourism industry and not one sided. As can be seen in the Wli community, this development is already having a serious toll on participation. The participation of the local residents is relatively low. Efforts must therefore be made by all relevant stake holders in the tourism industry in the Wli traditional area to get the local residents in the area actively involved in the development and planning of tourism.

However, 7 (seven) of the interviewees disagreed that, damage to crops by wildlife is an economic cost, leaving only 2 (two) who still maintained that, crops are damaged by wildlife as a result of tourism development. The deduction here is that, residents of the Wli Traditional area have a relatively low negative perception about the cost of tourism with economic leakage and mismanagement of proceeds being the highest and damage to crops the lowest due to the nature of the major attraction at the place, which is the Agumatsa Waterfall.

I think that, such negative notions, whether small or great, are counter-productive since it affects participation. One (1) of the interviewees, however, was of the view that Eco-tourism has had little positive impact on the local community and not as much as they expected it to have done. This, I agree with the residents because, a close observation of the villages concerned in the area reveals a rather sad scenario where one is tempted to question what has been done so far with the proceeds from the resource which is receiving much popularity and thus receives hundreds of visitors daily over the years. The people put in charge of the utilization of the proceeds must be made more accountable to the people to avoid a more serious backlash in the tourism industry as being currently experienced in the Wli community.

But on the positive side, 7 (seven) of the interviewees including the paramount chief were convinced of the positive prospects of tourism on their community. It became evident from the interviews granted that, there was something to show in support for eco-tourism development in the area due to tourism related activities. These include; revenue generation, employment, multiplier effect, opportunity for peripheral regions and stimulated mass eco-tourism which comes with its economic gains. Revenue generation received the highest endorsement by 5 (five) interviewees, while mass eco-tourism had only 1(one) interviewee's affirmation. Again, 6 (six) of the interviewees maintain that, tourism offers employment.

Good question my son, you know as a tourist attraction, we receive many visitors both local and foreign, and that means money for development, employment for the youth, and it makes our area very popular. Again, it helps in promoting the conservation of our environment for fresh air, hahahaha... (An interviewee, Wli community).

Oh yes....we benefit a lot from the tourism business as you can see. Some of our youth even though not many, do engage in some economic activities that earn them money as visitors troupe in, but government must support the youth

here with money so they can expand their businesses and earn more. (An interviewee, Wli community).

Well, I think it's a good business if only our youth will take it serious, especially the 'chop bar' operators and the artisans. Those who are serious and have money are making it big. We are really sitting on money that if tapped can change our lives. (An interviewee, Wli community).

There was evidence on the ground that, eco-tourism in the area has given employment to a number of people in the as operators of food joints (chop bars), drinking spots, commercial car owners, wood coverers, and fruit sellers. Others also sell palm wine to visitors.



Source: Wikimedia Foundations Inc. (20/30/2016)

**Fig 3:** One of the Hotel Lodges at Wli Waterfall area which provides Employment to the people

Further checks from the documents retrieved from the tourism centre indicated that, only 15% of the positive impact was generated through direct tourism proceeds. These include; canopies for hiring, plastic chairs bought for hiring, bridges built over the 11 (eleven) streams that are found on the way to the fall and 1(one) Hundred and fifty Ghana cedis commitment made into a school building renovation were the direct benefits that could be cited, which were done as far back as 2007. However, a mini-community eco-tourism bus bought from the proceeds to enhance the operations of the eco-tourism few years ago is no more in operation as it has broken down and has since not been repaired by the tourism board. Other benefits were in the areas of renovation of Primary and JHS buildings, renovation and supply of equipment to the community clinic, establishment of an ostrich farm(which has collapsed due to lack of funds for maintenance), and the acquisition of a new ambulance for the community clinic(also out of use as of now). Further inquiry reveals that, there is a water project currently been carried out for the community to supply good drinking water to the people with proceeds drawn from the revenue generated from the Waterfalls.

There is a water project (mechanized bore hole) currently going on in our community to supply us with good drinking water from the proceeds from the eco-tourism. As for this

one, I think the out-gone members of the Tourism Management Team have done well, and I hope the new leaders will do better to finish the project. (A local resident, Wli Community).

We have seen some development projects going on in our community being funded with the proceeds from the waterfall. I only pray it will be completed on time, because sometimes they will only start something and stop on the way claiming the money is finished. (A local resident of Wli community)

Interestingly, all these major developments except the water project and the eco-tourism bus was tourism related benefits from a philanthropist to the local community some years ago and not from the direct proceeds from the tourism business. However, it is interesting to note that, even the employees of the Tourism Management Team, the chief and most of the interviewees cited these related benefits as though they were direct benefits of the proceeds from tourism. This current revelation is close to a similar study commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism (1992) <sup>[1]</sup>, which noted that, most of the respondents recognized the tourism industry as an important economic activity and held strong views about tourism creating jobs and generating income.

### Conclusion

The study established that, the local people of Wli traditional area live close to all the tourist resources in their area. The people own the resources collectively although there were some negligible individualistic tendencies among them. They also jealously play host to all eco-tourism activities and are engaged in some form of service provision to visitors. Majority of the residents as indicated by the interviewees, know much about the benefits and cost that comes with the eco-tourism business, and so will encourage people to be part of it. This explains the Social Exchange theory which was modified and used by Ap (1992) <sup>[1]</sup> as applied to tourism, with residents making trade off in anticipation that, the outcome of this is either beneficial or costly. It must however be noted that, although there was high appreciation of the positive economic impacts of eco-tourism, a few number of the interviewees expressed concern over the negative impacts as well.

### Limitations

The recorder being used by the researcher encountered some mechanical problems which could not be repaired. This made it difficult for him to retrieve two (2) of the interviews for transcription. The researcher then went back and re-conducted the interview, but this time, by jotting down responses as the interviewees spoke, which they did reluctantly. This, the researcher believes might have had an effect on the quality of the interview, which might consequently have had adverse effects on the quality of the final data collected. However, since it involved only two (2) interviewees, its effect in the considered opinion of the researcher was negligible.

### Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Almighty God for giving us a healthy life and time for this paper. We are also grateful the Chiefs and the people of Wli traditional area, Dr. Lawrence Odumah, the Municipal tourists Council and the Ministry of tourism

Ghana. Special thanks go to our wives and children for their moral support.

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