

Contributions of Public and Traditional Institutions in Sustainable Eco-Cultural Tourism Development in the Lawra Municipality, Ghana

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Abstract: - The study assessed institutional roles in the development of potential eco-cultural tourism sites in Eremon in the Lawra Municipality of Ghana. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (i.e. questionnaires administration, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews) were used. A sample of 138 household heads was drawn from five purposively selected communities for the study. In addition, six heads of formal institutions and 10 community (traditional) leaders were selected for in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that traditional authorities play crucial roles in managing and controlling potential tourism attractions in the community but they lack coordination with formal institutions. Their efforts are also challenged by inadequate technical knowledge, financial resources and logistics constraints. As a result, the attractions are currently not developed and promoted to be of benefit to the community. The study recommends strengthening institutional capacities to enhance the development and management of eco-cultural tourist sites.

Keywords: Eco-Cultural Tourism, Formal Institutions, Management, Promotion, Traditional Authorities

I. INTRODUCTION

Eco-tourism, over the years, has been identified as an engine of socio-economic and cultural growth, facilitating rural poverty reduction and for achieving sustainable community development in developing countries (Liu, 1996; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). The successes of many recent tourism destinations are due to the contributions of both formal and informal (local) institutions. For instance, proactive eco-tourism projects led by institutions ensure the following successes: sustainability, effective participation and collaboration between parties, reduces future obstacles to management, and smoothens tourism development processes (Ah-Choy, 2010; Bhuiyan et al., 2011). Understanding the roles of various institutions and their influences in tourism projects in rural areas is important because these institutions influence behaviors in all aspects of community development. They are also a very critical factor in determining whether, and in what form, local residents may participate in eco-tourism projects (Simpson, 2008; Osumanu and Ayamga, 2017).

In Ghana, eco-tourism is now a major economic activity and one of the fastest growing sectors of the country's economy

(Eshun and Tagoe-Darko, 2015). The growth of eco-cultural tourism, a subset of eco-tourism, has helped in increasing the country's foreign exchange earnings from eco-tourism and contributed to poverty reduction in many rural communities (Eshun and Tonto, 2014). The influences of institutions in eco-cultural tourism development, promotion and management are considered very relevant in Ghana's tourism sector (Ministry of Tourism, 2013). Hence, the roles of formal and informal institutions in reaping the benefits and successes of eco-cultural tourism in rural communities cannot be downplayed.

Eremon in the Lawra Municipality of Ghana can generally be classified as a poor community (Lawra Municipal Assembly, 2018). Eremon has enormous potentials in eco-cultural tourism development, which can play a very vital role in reducing poverty. Hence, the study assesses the contributions of formal and informal institutions in facilitating sustainable eco-cultural tourism in Eremon of the Lawra District of Ghana. Unlike other recent studies in Ghana (e.g. Eshun and Tonto, 2014; Eshun and Tagoe-Darko, 2015; Osumanu and Ayamga, 2017), this study provides a mixed methodological assessment of institutional roles in sustainable eco-cultural tourism development in a rural setting.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutions ensure reliability of decisions by specifying rules and regulation that govern actors, actions and relationships (Heywood, 2000). Institutions evolve over time, reflecting the time and place experiences of the groups they originate from (Bonye, 2011). For example, clan groups are connected by some common interests that tend to bind them. Members of every institution have a common interest and help each other in the internalization process, maintenance of the institutional structure and relations as they affect every day interaction in the group (Bacho, 2004). Usually, such institutions are purposely formed based on certain social, economic, political or physical contexts of the given group.

Institutions are often classified into formal and informal (North, 1990; Casson et al., 2010) with the former referring to laws, written agreements, and other organized rules while the later refers to conventional practices, beliefs, social networks,

and norms (Ostrom, 1990; Polski and Ostrom, 1999; Rydin and Falleth, 2006). Helmke and Levitsky (2004) notes that formal institutions are openly structured, in that they are well-codified and they communicate through widely accepted and recognized official channels, but informal institutions are based on communally-shared rules, most often unwritten, that are communicated, and enforced outside of authoritatively allowed channels. However, according to North (1997), informal institutions are similarly known but do not operate through laid down written rules and regulations, and they tend to be more persistent than formal institutions. Examples of formal institutions, as defined, include those institutions whose roles are well-defined largely by the organizational setting or emanate from a formally-established source. Besides, formal institutions, as explained by Appiah-Opuku and Mulamootil (1997), are usually established through sources which are external to a given community and are distinguished by fairly standard functional and structural arrangements. Informal institutions, on the other hand, are likened to social and communal networks, and they constitute the unit of organization at the community level (Polski and Ostrom, 1999; Rydin and Falleth, 2006). Also, informal institutions are self-identified social groups characterized by particular socio-political systems, languages, cultures, values and beliefs, and a close connection with the land as a whole (Goodwin, 1996).

Increasingly, institutions play very relevant roles in eco-cultural tourism development in many communities. Analysts of eco-cultural tourism growth agree that institutions (both formal and informal) are the lead agents in the sector (Buckart and Medlick, 1974; Pearce, 1989). The motive behind this is to ensure effective contribution of the two institutions in the sustainable development of the industry. The Ministry of Tourism (2013) indicates that both formal and informal institutions are key stakeholders and very vital in making tourism, particularly eco-cultural tourism, development a reality. According to the Ministry, the government is supposed to play five key roles in areas of facilitation, coordination, planning and policy-making, regulation and monitoring, and development promotion. Local government authorities (such as the Regional Coordinating Councils [RCCs] and District Assemblies [DAs]), the private sector, and civil society organizations (CSOs), have also been tied to the following roles by the Ghana Tourism Authority (2006):

- Supporting communities and community groups in organizing themselves;
- Making communities prepared for tourism and implementation of tourism programs;
- Ensuring effective participation of communities at appropriate levels of tourism programs;
- Ensuring the protection of biological diversity;
- To promote socially and ecologically responsible tourism;
- Involving local businesses in eco-tourism through collaborations and partnerships;

- Supporting the government in developing a standard for responsible eco-tourism;
- Assisting tourism authorities in the conduct of ecological-tourism consciousness programs; and
- Liaising between the private sector and communities to increase community participation in eco-tourism and stronger private sector commitment to deliver education, training and linking programs to rural communities.

Many, if not all, eco-cultural tourism attractions are located in or close to rural communities and, according to the Ministry of Tourism (2013), the role of informal or traditional institutions are very relevant as far as their development is concerned. These roles spelled-out by the Ministry include: contributing to the formulation of policies and strategies for the tourism industry; identification of potential eco-cultural tourism endowments; organizing community members to explore opportunities of eco-cultural tourism businesses (as entrepreneurs, entertainers, travel agents, tour guides, restaurateurs, workers, managers, guest house operators and other roles); supporting and promoting sustainable and responsible eco-tourism; ensuring equitable distribution of benefits from eco-cultural tourism, particularly ensuring fairness in the employment of women; promoting and ensuring respect for and dignity of women for participating in eco-cultural tourism; lobbying the support of eco-cultural tourism developers and authorities for the provision of services and infrastructure to enhance the position of women in the industry; and securing the provision of skills training and other advantages to expand the crafts-base of rural women (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2006).

Traditional authorities, representing formal institutions, are vitally important for natural resources development (Bonye, 2011), since they have power in the choice and incorporation of external actors into local practices (culture). They have shared social and environmental understandings and beliefs that are conveyed via religious platforms and other sacrosanct and cultural practices (Awedora, 2002). Also, they serve as the point of entry into their environments in pursuit for alternatives and wider strategies to the development of their natural endowments (North, 1990). This is relevant for eco-cultural tourism development since traditional authorities symbolize imperative forms of social capital, representing mediums (of cultural activities like festivals) where local people can unite and act jointly to ensure sustainable natural resources development (Impart Development Association, 1991).

Formal institutions, on the other hand, have the general authority/mandate to develop, control and manage all available natural tourism resources, including eco-cultural attractions (Bhuiyan et al., 2011), and contribute towards the reduction of poverty, especially in deprived rural communities (Eshun and Tagoe-Darko, 2015). Their involvement in eco-cultural tourism leads to achieving some economic development objectives, such as balance of payment, regional

development, diversification of rural economies, increased national revenue, and creation of new employment opportunities (Eshun and Tonto, 2014). Additionally, formal institutions may enforce rules and regulations for achieving certain socio-cultural goals, like minimizing adverse social impacts of eco-cultural tourism, marketing cultural meanings, and acting as arbitrators of infringements on cultural values (Wood, 1984). Boonzaaier (2012) argues that environmental protection is basically a responsibility of the formal sector, though others, including Hall (2008), Akama et al. (2011), and Chipfuva and Saarinen (2011), believe there is an individual or corporate responsibility as well.

In spite of the significant contributions of institutions (both formal and informal) in sustainable eco-cultural tourism development in developing countries, few communities in Ghana have benefited from the sector. The Ministry of Tourism (2013) identified several factors that limit eco-cultural tourism's effective role in national and local economies to include: supportive and favorable environments; quality of eco-cultural tourism products and facilities; promotion; financing; and management and administration. According to Ministry, politically, challenges of supportive and favorable environments pose problems of deficient in government assistance regarding actions to allow eco-cultural tourism to develop to higher levels. Eco-cultural tourism in particular, is not regarded as a priority of rural economic diversification and poverty reduction, hence its policy lag in national tourism development agenda.

Besides problems inherent in securing land for eco-cultural tourism development in rural areas, there are other economic challenges that discourage would-be investors, including expected benefits and financial returns to investment (Ministry of Tourism, 2013), which engenders limited interest amongst investors to get involve in eco-cultural tourism. Socially, lack of knowledge and awareness of eco-cultural tourism's benefits among local communities and entrepreneurs deters potential investors. Other deterrent factors are scarce human resources for eco-cultural tourism development in rural areas, concerns over safety and security including harassment of tourists by locals, highway robbery, road accidents, food hygiene and money fraud (Mkono, 2013), limited economic returns to local communities, e.g., through revenue sharing (Eshun and Tonto, 2014), and inadequate consideration of gender matters in the eco-cultural tourism business in general (Duvic et al., 2014).

Ghana's natural tourism attractions have not been adequately protected as a result of several environmental problems including air and water contamination from mining and agricultural activities, improper liquid and solid waste management, declining wildlife numbers due to poaching and encroachment into reserved areas, deforestation by unsustainable levels of timber extraction and cutting of trees for fuel wood and charcoal production, ineffective bush fire control mechanisms, overgrazing of pasture lands, and coastal erosion along the entire coastline due to natural causes as well

as human practices of sand winning (Buckley, 2010; Craigie et al., 2010; Eshun and Tonto, 2014). These practices adversely affect sustainability of the country's eco-cultural tourism industry (Buckley, 2018). In addition to the above environmental (local) problems, Jamieson et al. (2004) have identified four obstacles which will restrain a rapid rate of sustainable eco-cultural tourism development and promotion in developing countries in general. These are:

- little appreciation of eco-cultural tourism's potentials by aid agencies;
- inadequate government programs and institutional capacity to respond to the openings provided by eco-cultural tourism development;
- insufficient education and training of tourism officials in channeling eco-cultural tourism as a rural poverty reduction tool; and
- non-availability of eco-cultural tourism infrastructure in rural areas.

Also, Eagles et al. (2002) recognizes insufficient formal education and foreign language skills, and scanty tourism development and management decision-making skills as constraining factors for eco-cultural tourism development. Other preventive factors are inadequate human capital, gender norms and restrictions, insufficient social and financial capital, and limited local capacity to meet visitors' expectations (Overseas Development Institute [ODI], 2002), lack of institutional control structures and financing mechanisms among local communities (Buckley, 2018).

Tosun (1999) demonstrates that lack of capacity of poor people to handle development effectively and low levels of awareness are the main reasons which hinder communities from participating in nature-based tourism in their areas. Also, elitism within community structures is one of the major barriers to community participation. This problem is common in many local communities where local elites initiate tourism projects and end up taking a lion's share of benefits, thus leaving community members disenchanted with tourism development (Telfer, 2002). Additionally, ordinary local people tend to be excluded from the planning and implementation of tourism projects in their areas (Sindiga, 1999). Peoples' participation in decision-making entitles them to determine their own eco-cultural tourism development objectives and to have an expressive voice in management and benefits sharing (Whelan, 1991; Osumanu and Ayamga, 2017). Community participation in decision-making gives them an opportunity to voice their own hopes, desires and fears for development as well as allowing them to contribute to the planning process. This would result in local communities viewing nature-based tourism as accessible development that can enable them to improve their livelihoods (Timothy, 2002).

III. STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Profile of Eremon

Eremon is one of the three major towns in the Lawra Municipality, with the others being Babele and Lawra. Eremon is a divisional traditional area with an estimated population of 6,286 and a household number of 1,257 (Lawra Municipal Assembly, 2018). It has its catchment areas covering 11 communities - Danko, Dazuari, Zinpen/Kakaltuo,

Naayibog, Yagra, Bompore, Buree, Naburnye, Sourogoun, Toto and Eremon Tangzu (see Figure 1). Eremon, as a divisional traditional area, is currently headed by a Divisional Chief who is assisted in his role of decision-making by sub-chiefs. The autonomous people in the divisional area are the Eremolle, who speak the language called Eremollu. Christianity is the dominant religion in the area, with Catholics being predominant.

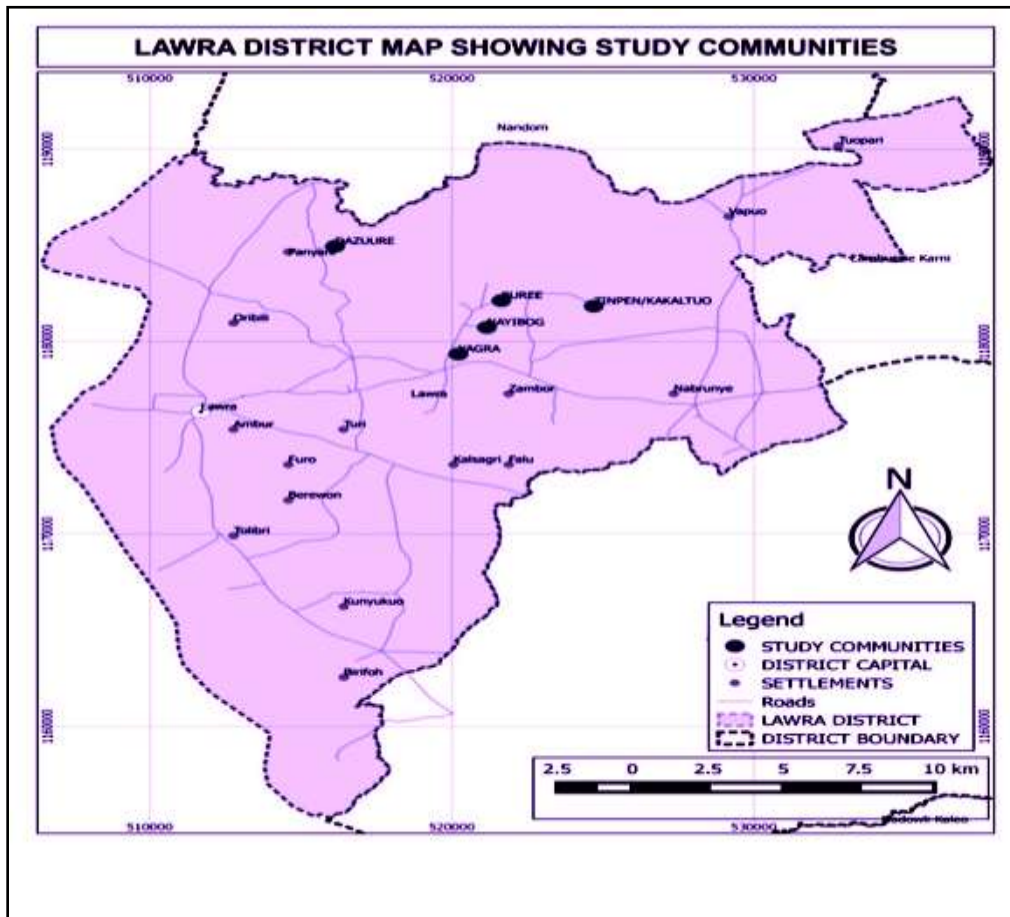


Figure 1: Eremon Traditional Area

Source: Lawra District Assembly, 2018.

Currently, the Eremon Traditional Area houses some unique principal cultural and natural attractions with high potentials for eco-cultural tourism including the tributaries of the Black Volta (called Korbekye and Kukula), Shrines, and the Nayibog crocodile pond. The historic connotations, physical and mythical appearances of these sites are very unique for sightseeing and experiential learning.

3.2. Study methodology

The study employed mixed methods involving a survey of households, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Five communities (i.e., Buree, Nayibog, Zinpen/Kakaltuo, Yaga and Dazuari) where potential eco-cultural tourist

attractions are found were purposively selected for the study. A sample size of 138 was drawn from the sum of 591 households in these communities using the International Fund for Agriculture Development’s (IFAD, 2009) formula for sample size determination, i.e., $n = t^2 \times p(1-p) / m^2$, where: n is desired sample size; t is confidence level set at 95% (standard value = 1.96); p is estimated proportion of the target population with similar characteristics (set at 90%); and m is margin of error set at 5% (standard value = 0.05). Due to the differences in the five communities, in terms of number of households, the sample size of 138 was proportionally distributed amongst them as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportional distribution of sample by community

Community	Number of households	Sample share
Buree	71	17
Nayibog	91	21
Zinpen/Kakaltuo	116	27
Yaga	146	34
Dazuuri	167	39
Total	591	138

Source: Based on Lawra Municipal Assembly, 2018.

Households in the sampled communities were selected using a systematic sampling technique which allowed for a proportional interval of four in-between houses, where the household head was identified and administered a questionnaire by the researchers until the sample size proportionately allocated to each community was exhausted. The household heads survey was done to solicit views on the contributions of institutions to eco-cultural tourism development.

In addition to the household heads questionnaire administration, one in-depth interview (using semi-structure guides) were conducted with two officials each the following formal institutions: the Lawra Municipal Assembly; Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA); Centre for National Culture; Department for Community Development; Museums and Monuments Board; and Forestry Division. Furthermore, community leaders, including heads of youth and women groups, assemblyman, 'tindeme' (Earth priest), chief and elders, were interviewed for the study. Focus Group Discussions were used to solicit information from 10 mixed groups of respondents such as: youth groups, women groups, elders, and sectional heads. The 10 focus groups comprised 7-

11 members each, and organized in three (Dazuuri, Nayibog, and Buree) of the sampled communities. The discussions were held in a conducive and opened atmosphere within the environments of the participants to enable them freely talk and express their feelings.

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for the data analysis. In analyzing the quantitative data using SPSS Version 20.0, questionnaires were first pre-coded by assigning numbers to pre-determine responses and developing an SPSS template, which allowed variables including socio-economic characteristics of respondents, views on roles of institutions and challenges in eco-cultural tourism development to be created. Descriptive statistical techniques (frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations) were used to analyze the data and presented in tabular and graphical formats. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, on the other hand, were coded and indexed using content analysis in order to identify major themes. The themes were structured to allow categorization of the responses and identification of divergent responses from the major themes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Roles of institutions in eco-cultural tourism development

The results (Figure 2) show that, 33.2% of the respondents think that the Tindana (spiritual leader) is very important in the management and control of sacred sites in the community because he is seen as the autochthonous of the people. This was followed by 31.8% of the respondents who see the chief as the most important person in management and control of sacred sites. Other respondents (14.6%) think that community elders are very important in the management of eco-cultural tourism sites, while 0.7% is of the view that opinion leaders and traditional herbalists play a key role as far as the management of these sites is concerned.

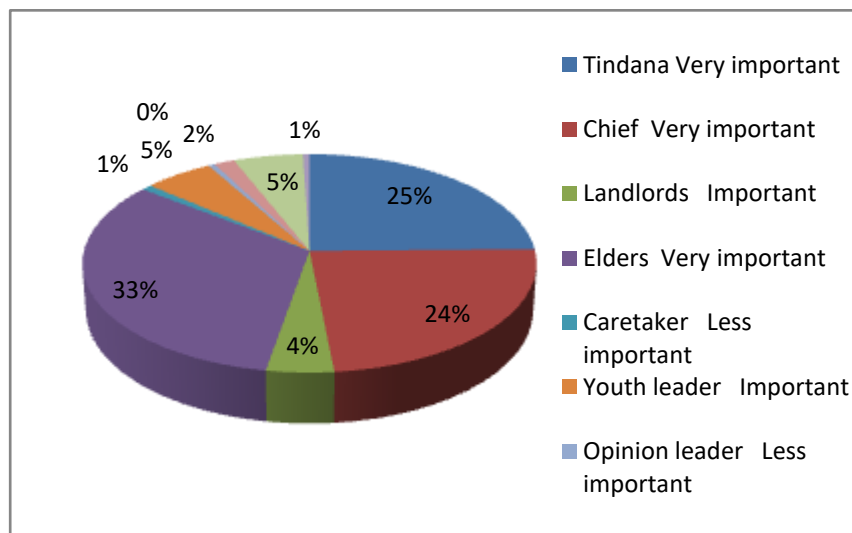


Figure 2: Respondents' views on responsibility for tourism sites

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews further discussed the roles of informal institutions in the management and control eco-cultural tourism sites. For instance, the *Tingansobs* are seen as the main managers of sacred sites because they are the land priests, they keep the land on the peoples' behalf, make sacrifices on the land and have firsthand knowledge of any settler in the community. This finding affirms Millar's (2004) view that *Tindanas* control sacred groves in consultation with soothsayers. Furthermore, the chief is seen as an administrator who arbitrates and settles disputes in the community and does not perform any religious function. Aside this, the chief together with his elders, landlords, and women traditional leaders (*Pognaa*), is to create awareness and educate community members on the by-laws/taboo governing sacred sites. This finding supports Lars' (1999) findings that the chief, considered as a link between people and their ancestors, also doubles as a spiritual, cultural and judicial leader and the guardian of community values. He leads several aspects of communal life for the realization of community aims and aspirations, and creates harmony between the people and their natural, spiritual, social, cultural and economic environments. The roles of other traditional institutions, such as caretakers and youth leaders, are to organize communal labour to carry out the following duties; create fire belts around eco-cultural tourism sites, prune tree branches, and serve as watch-dogs to sacred sites.

The study reveals that informal institutions made some efforts to preserve eco-cultural tourism sites. With regards to these efforts, 45.6% of the respondents indicated that some efforts were made through festivals and other platforms to educate and create awareness on the existence of attractions in the community, and the need to preserve them for present and future generations. Besides, other efforts like pacification of sites, and setting of by-laws/taboo, were mentioned, although

ineffective. Others (54.4%), however, thought that no effort was made by the community to preserve sacred sites. Responses from the focus groups further indicated that, though some efforts were made by the community to preserve the sites, the real intention was not to promote eco-cultural tourism because the community had no idea about what tourism is, but rather, the efforts made were for their own traditional and cultural/spiritual purposes.

The results indicates that majority (89.1%) of the respondents has no knowledge of formal institutions working to develop eco-cultural tourism attractions, while 11% has knowledge in that regard. Those who have knowledge of that went further to mention names of the institutions to include: the Lawra Municipal Assembly and NGOs (but could not mention their names). This clearly shows that a hand-full of formal institutions contributes the eco-cultural tourism development in Eremon and, possibly, make attempts to promote existing attractions. The roles of these institutions were as well mentioned by the respondents to include the organization of community meetings to plan on rehabilitating some sites for agricultural and tourism purposes, and market sites to tourists, experts and for donor support.

Furthermore, the results indicate that majority (86%) of the respondents have not seen any form of support for eco-tourism tourism development from formal institutions, since there has not been any government or NGO support on such a development project in the community. On the contrary, 14% of the respondents were optimistic to this effect with the explanation that formal institutions have supported informal institutions to work to develop eco-cultural tourism. The kind of support mentioned by these respondents (Figure 3) is encouraging informal institutions to mobilize labor, community participation, and sites/lands available with a spiritual backing to ensure that the gods of the land are in support of the mission.

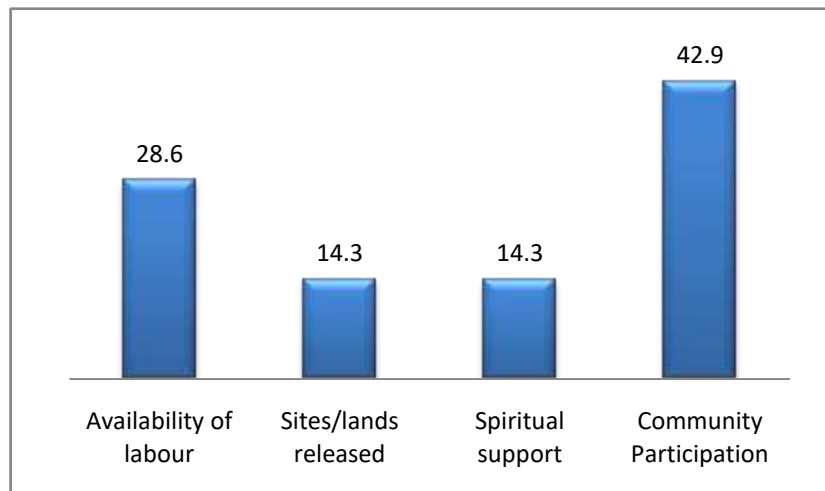


Figure 3: Support for informal institutions for tourism development

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Formal institutions are established by authorities outside a given community, and are characterized by structural and operational arrangements that are fairly well-defined (Appiah-Opuku and Mulamootil, 1997). They have overall responsibility for natural resources management in Ghana. Formal institutions from selected agencies namely: the Lawra Municipal Assembly, the Center for National Culture, the Forestry Commission, Ghana Tourism Authority, and Museums and Monuments Board, were interviewed on their roles in eco-cultural tourism development in Eremon. Information from these institutions indicates that they are aware of the existence of eco-cultural tourism sites in Eremon in particular and the Lawra District in general. For instance, the Planning Officer of the Lawra Municipal Assembly indicated that the Assembly is aware of the following potential tourist's sites: the Kwame Nkrumah Detention Centre in Lawra (where the first president of Ghana was imprisoned), the Eremon and Vile Crocodile Ponds, and the Colonial Administrative Bungalows. According to him:

"The Assembly is aware that these sites have existed over decades. Their original state has partially been lost, but could be rehabilitated to promote tourism in the Municipality. As a result, the Assembly has included, for example, the Naayiri-bog site in our long-term development plan. Aside, the Assembly is in partnership with the World Food Program to rehabilitate some of the tourism sites in the Municipality. We are also working together with the Centre for National Culture, Traditional Authorities, and the Ghana Tourism Authority to develop and promote the sites for future tourism."

The study revealed that the Assembly has been holding meetings with the people of Eremon on possible collaborations to rehabilitate some sites to promote the activities of tourism in the community. In-depth interviews with officials of the Forestry Division also revealed that they have knowledge of the existence of tourism sites in Eremon. They attested to knowledge of the existence of some sacred trees and animals, such as the Eremon Naayiri-crocodile pond, antelopes, and the Ville sacred baobab tree and crocodile pond. The Black Volta at Dekper, Bagre, Dapila and the Kwame Nkrumah Detention Centre, were also mentioned by these officials. According to the Head of the Forestry Division, they have supported the management of these sites, especially the forest reserve. He said that:

"We give communities technical knowledge on how to protect sacred sites by creating fire belts and other measures. With this, we have been working with the Traditional Authorities and the Municipal Assembly to manage the sites to promote tourism. However, the challenge is bush burning, community's ignorance about tourism, and political unwillingness to develop the tourism sites".

Again, an interview with the Museums and Monuments Board revealed that their work in the region is to restore or renovate monuments (historical buildings and structures) which are vulnerable. They also preserve, and conserve the historical monuments and do not deal with the ecological aspects. They also collaborate with the Ghana Tourism Authority for further promotion of attractions. According to Regional Director, the institution carries out these duties together with the community, youth leaders, Traditional Authorities, Municipal/District Assemblies and other key stakeholders of interest. He mentioned that:

"Currently, we have initiated some plans through the Lawra Municipal Assembly to renovate the Kwame Nkrumah Detention Centre but we are financially challenged".

All the key stakeholders interviewed indicated that, although they have well cut-out plans for eco-cultural development in Eremon, and eco-tourism promotion in the Upper West Region at large, they are financially and logistically constrained. Another constraint mentioned was the absence of decentralized offices for tourism development (e.g. Tourism Desk Officers in the districts/municipalities), which has made it difficult for them to execute their plans as expected. The other issue raised was lack of coordination among state institutions in research, documentation and the development of potential tourist sites in the Municipality. The findings revealed that these institutions, though to some extent work together, their linkages are weak leading to uncoordinated and overlapping actions. For example, the Ghana Tourism Authority has weak linkages with the Museums and Monuments Board as well as the Center for National Culture.

4.2. Challenges of eco-cultural tourism development

Although traditional institutions play vital roles in the development and control of eco-cultural tourism resources in their communities, they are faced with challenges regarding the development and promotion of potential tourist sites (Osumanu and Ayamga, 2017). This study revealed the challenges Eremon is encountering in developing and promoting sacred sites into eco-cultural tourism resources. The major challenge was indicated by 35% of the respondents as lack of financial resources. Also, 13% of the respondents were of the view that the community has inadequate knowledge and skills for tourism development projects. These affirm the Ministry of Tourism's (2013) assertion that the major challenge which hinders eco-cultural tourism development in many developing countries is lack of institutional power structures and economic systems among local communities and corroborate Tosun's (1999) observation that lack of capacity of rural people to handle development effectively and low levels of awareness are the main factors hindering communities' initiation of eco-cultural tourism development and promotion. Insufficient knowledge and lack of awareness of eco-cultural tourism's business potentials also deters private sector financial institutions and

potential investors from investing in eco-cultural tourism development. Social barriers, including peoples' behaviors towards visitors (e.g., rudeness, arrogance and unrealistic demands), lack of transparency, and exclusion of women, further exacerbates the problem of lack of interest by would-be investors in eco-cultural tourism development projects.

There is also a believe amongst some (3%) of the respondents that currently, they are faced with the challenge of not being able to control the youth from degrading the sites, since they have been brain-washed and influenced by some Western doctrines (e.g. Christianity, Islam, etc.) to see the sacred sites as evil and barbaric beliefs and practices. Consequently, the youth disregard bylaws and taboos instituted to govern the sites and go to the extent of destroying the sites for their own interests. This supports Appiah-Opoku and Mulamootil's (1997) view that, the spread of Western education and Christianity have partly taken a strong toll on community values, resulting in loss of socio-cultural beliefs and practices.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Potential eco-cultural tourism resources in Eremon have been managed and controlled by traditional institutions mainly for the spiritual and physiological roles they play in the lives of local people. The critical role of traditional institutions in sustainable development of eco-cultural tourism cannot be overemphasized. These institutions function better by depending on informal structures. They are the main governing bodies in charge of enacting and enforcing by-laws and other regulations to govern eco-cultural resources. They serve as power structures from which communities are able to organize their eco-cultural tourism resource based effectively and efficiently for development in their communities. They also serve as the decision-making bodies through which decisions are taken to successfully implement sustainable development projects in the community. Traditional authorities are, however, less effective in playing their roles in the development and promotion of potential eco-cultural tourism sites due to financial and logistical constraints. On the other hand, the roles of formal institutions in eco-cultural tourism development in Eremon appear to be very minimal. The interplay between formal and informal institutions to ensure that potential eco-cultural sites are developed is very important. The study recommends that the Lawra Municipal Assembly should build capacity of informal institutions and strengthen them to be able to work effectively with formal institutions to develop and promote potential eco-cultural tourist sites that exist in the community.

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