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## **‘Awusai Atso’: community attachment to and use of transatlantic slave trade resources in Danish-Osu, Ghana**

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Although there is much literature on the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TAST) and those concerning residents’ perceptions of tourism development, it can be suggested that there remains a significant knowledge gap regarding attitudes and perceptions of residents towards the history of the TAST and the possible use of such resources for tourism development. This study attempts to address this gap by investigating residents’ knowledge and attitude of developing tourism based on slave heritage in Danish-Osu, Ghana. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, 200 questionnaires were returned by residents in six communities in Danish-Osu. In addition, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with interest groups and opinion leaders. Results of the research suggest that residents have an appreciable level of knowledge on the slave trade and related relics in their community. Most respondents indicated that they are comfortable living in the community which has an image of a former slave site. Majority identified tourism as the preferred means of conserving the existing slave sites and relics. Perceptions regarding utilization of slave relics were also found to significantly differ across a variety of socio-demographic indices. The study concludes by examining implications for Ghana’s Slave Route Project to carve a niche for itself.

**Keywords:** transatlantic slave trade; Slave Route Project; knowledge; perceptions; tourism development; Danish-Osu

### **Introduction**

Being the first system of globalization in history, the transatlantic slave trade (TAST) and consequently slavery from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century were according to French historian Jean-Michel Deveau ‘the greatest tragedy in the history of humanity in terms of scale and duration’ (UNESCO, 2004). Perbi (2004), drawing on oral tradition and documentary records in Ghana, describes slavery as an ‘immemorial institution’. The TAST, consequently, was a determining factor in the world economy of the eighteenth century. Millions of Africans, including women and children, were forcibly taken from their homes, exiled to the Americas, Europe, Caribbean, and sold.

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Without doubt, Ghana has become a base for studying and documenting the TAST (Bailey, 2003; Dako, 2002; Der, 1998; Devau, 2005; Eltis, 2000; Howell, 1988; Perbi, 2004). Ghana served as an important supply point for the TAST, with 63 slave markets (about 30 of these being located along the coast), during the period (Perbi, 2004). Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, Ghana (then Gold Coast) became a 'slave-mine' for Western Europe. From 1650, Ghana alone contributed about 10.1% of the total Atlantic Slave Trade up to 1800 (Lovejoy, 2000). Again, Ghana supplied 18.4% of slaves to England between 1701 and 1807 (Perbi, 2004).

Because of growing international awareness of the repercussions generated by the TAST, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) – at the initiative of Haiti and several African countries – launched the Slave Route Project (SRP) in 1994 with two objectives. First, it aims to break the silence and make universally known the subject of the TAST and slavery in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean, with its causes and modalities, by way of scientific work. Second, it seeks to highlight, in an objective way, the consequences, especially the interactions between the peoples concerned in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2004). To trace the slave trade itineraries, the SRP and the United Nations World Tourism Organization in 1995 launched the Slave Route Cultural Tourism Program for Africa, aimed at identifying, rehabilitating, restoring and promoting sites, buildings and places of remembrance of the slave trade.

Since the launch of the SRP, Ghana has made commendable strides in preserving and documenting her part of the slave route for tourism promotion. As an outcome of a meeting in April 1995, Ghana put together a think tank of national experts on tourism and culture as well as researchers to brainstorm and initiate cultural tourism proposals on the subject of the SRP. This meeting culminated in the 'Accra Declaration on the Cultural Tourism Slave Route Project'. The declaration stated the government's commitment to rehabilitate, restore, and promote the tangible and intangible heritage handed down by the slave trade for the purposes of cultural tourism, thereby throwing into relief the common nature of the slave trade in terms of Africa, Europe, Americans, and the Caribbean (Ministry of Tourism/UNDP/WTO, 1996). In fact, the current National Tourism Development Plan (1996–2010) recognizes the Slave Route theme as having much potential for development, both to preserve an aspect of historic heritage of Ghana (and other African countries) and to offer an unusual type of tourist attraction. Accordingly, the Integrated Tourism Development Programme prepared prefeasibility studies for Assin Manso and Salaga (two former slave towns) to give impetus to the development of the theme. This was followed by a rapid assessment of 160 slave sites by the Itineraries Committee of the Ghana SRP to determine the most important sites for inclusion in plans for tourist itineraries (Mason & Odonkor, 2007).

As tourism continues to grow in relevance to the local economy, some efforts have been made to diversify the country's attraction profile. In that regard, attention has been turned to the SRP as one such important target market. Special events such as the biennial Pan African Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) and Emancipation Day celebrations have also been introduced to boost the country's image as the ideal destination for roots tourism. In addition, a number of international conferences and fora have been organized by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) and the Ghana Slave Route Project Committee on the landmarks, legacies, and expectations of the TAST.

Recently, Danish-Osu (Wellington, 2007) has been identified as a place of slave trade and been added to the stock of attractions in that genre. An important point on the route in its own right (on account of its role as a transit quarters), the area has received considerable attention in the literature (e.g. Dako, 2002; van Dantzig, 1982; DeCorse, 1993;

Hernaes, 1995, 1996; Kea, 1982; Norregaard, 1966; Perbi, 2004; Quaye, 1972; Wellington, 2007). According to Wellington (2007), Danish-Osu refers to the communities (*Ashanti Blohum, Kinkawe, Alata, Anohor, Amangfong* and *Salem*) within the precincts of the Christiansborg Castle which in the nineteenth century constituted what was known as ‘Danish Accra’ (Figure 1). *Amangfong* was the original residential enclave of the early Danish-Osu settlers, whereas *Salem* (coined from ‘JeruSalem’) was an extension of Osu due to the missionary activities of the Basel Mission and thus became a new residential enclave of converts from the indigenous quarters. These communities thus have rich history of the TAST and associated relics such as the tamarind tree-lined Danish Alley which served as a slave route from the interior. To include the area in slave-related activities, therefore, is welcome as it helps to place the pieces of the puzzle together within the framework of UNESCO’s Breaking the Silence Project. From a tourism development perspective, such inclusions tend to diversify the country’s tourism offerings and, in a way, stimulate greater interest in the country as a tourist destination.

However, one recurring weakness in the strategy of including new relics/towns to Ghana’s slave route is the continual neglect of the community’s sentiments concerning the prospects of developing tourism around these sites. Unlike the Silk Route, the Slave Route has the potential of arousing social and ethical problems, if tourism is not well planned (Boakye & Dei, 2007). Hence, there is the possibility of tourism destroying the very resource on which it depends, a classic case of killing the goose that lays the golden egg (Berle, 1990; Pigram, 1995). As succinctly put by McKercher and du Cros (2002, p. 231): ‘...tourism is a double-edged sword: it can be seen both as a threat and a potential saviour’. Although, tourism development at the destination level is about

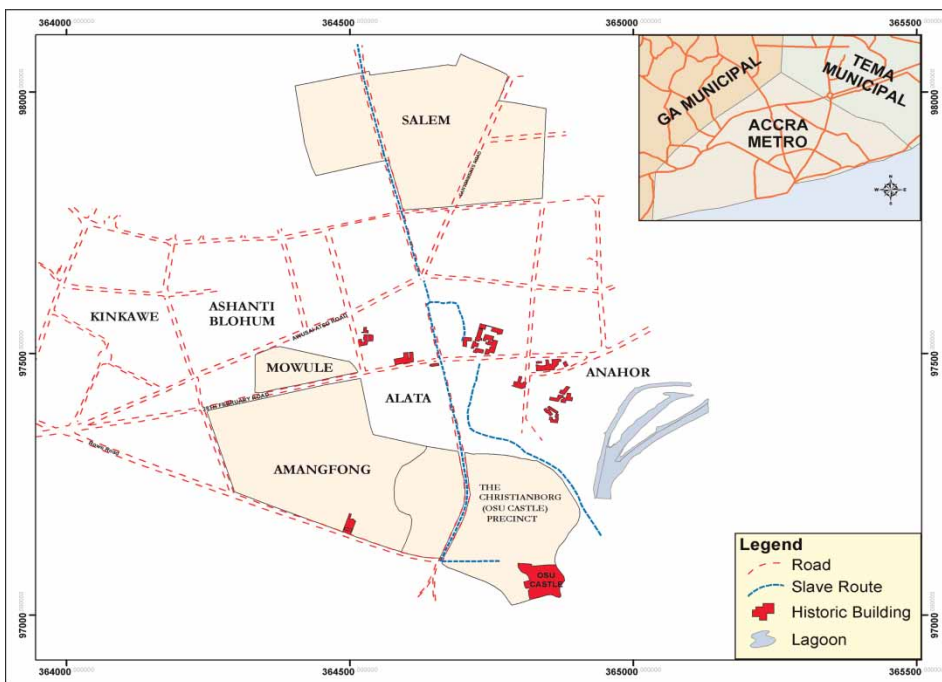


Figure 1. Map of Danish-Osu showing study areas.  
Source: Adapted from Wellington (2007).

improving the standard of living of the host community, it most often than not degrades vulnerable environment and worsens the plight of the people. Indeed, Gardner and Stern (1996) feel that development projects should not be viewed in isolation from the environments and cultures on which they are imposed.

The purpose of this study is to explore residents' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards the history of the TAST, identify the socio-demographic factors that influence residents' use of TAST resources, and to initiate examination of the major issues that challenge the sustainability of TAST resources in Danish-Osu. The rationale for choosing Danish-Osu is premised on two major reasons. First, within published literature on the TAST in Danish-Osu, there is a dearth of information on attitudes and perceptions of residents' towards the history of the TAST in contemporary times and the possible use of such resources for tourism development. Wellington (2006), using a multiplicity of sources from archival, historiographical, archaeological, and oral traditions sources, has investigated the Danish presence, ancestry and genealogy of the various groups of people who have been associated with locally built slave houses, which derived their spirit and the architectural history from the Christiansborg Castle. Thus, the historical and architectural interpretation of Danish-Osu has provided the necessary consciousness for research into heritage tourism and the Ghana SRP in particular. Second, many of the TAST relics in Danish-Osu are either in a deplorable state of disrepair or under physical abuse owing to the lack of heritage management guidelines and strategies by appropriate state agencies, in this case the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB). According to du Cros, Bauer, Lo and Rui (2005, p. 172), the way a society manages its heritage assets may also be considered an important dimension of sustainable tourism for three primary reasons. First, the loss of heritage assets deprives future generations of tourists of opportunities for identification with history and traditions as they travel. Second, the use and reuse of heritage assets can improve resource productivity. Third, social justice principles are often violated when cultural heritage values are alienated or destroyed by the destruction, redevelopment, overuse or over-commercialization of heritage assets.

### **TAST and Danish-Osu**

From the literature, one can deduce that the Danish-Osu area was an active spot in the trade because of the presence of the Danes on the Accra littoral (Quaye, 1972). Particularly, in the mid-seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, Osu served as a market town for slaves brought along the interior route that linked Kumasi to Accra (Perbi, 2004). According to oral tradition, the people referred to the Old Danish Slave Market as '*Awusai Atso*' – a corrupted vernacular word of '*ewusia*' literally meaning an orphan. Thus, '*Awusai Atso*' refers to the place where those who have lost their relatives were sold (Wellington, 2007). In order to consolidate its slave-trading activities on the Guinea coast, the Danes built the Christiansborg Castle, which emerged out of its original roots in the Old Portuguese Ursu lodge (1640), and the Swedish Fort (1652), to its present state. The Christiansborg Castle thus served both as an architectural contraption for self-defence for Danish TAST domination and exploitation of the natives, as well as a means of storage house for the slaves who were shipped across the Atlantic (Priddy, 1970 cited in Wellington, 2006). The Christiansborg Castle is also given prominence in almost all Danish accounts of the TAST on the Guinea Coast, because it also became the 'extended fort' community (Polanyi, 1966 cited in Hernaes, 1996).

Justesen (2003) describes four groups that participated in the commercial trade on the Gold Coast. In the case of the Danish settlements, they included African producers and

intermediaries, who acted within the sphere of their own Ghanaian entities as private merchants (Europeans and European Africans or mulattos) who did not transact business through the African political oligarchy. There were merchants and brokers such as the Danish mulatto brothers, Heinrich and Christian Richter, G.A. Lutterodt, C.C. Lokko, and *Nii Okantey Shikatse* who played key roles in the slave-trading activities in Danish-Osu. For example, Heinrich Richter has been described as a trader and politician who managed to gain influence on the policy of the Danish Administration for most of the period between 1820 and 1840 (Justesen, 2003). Oral traditions gathered by Wellington (2006) buttress the assertion that the boom in Danish exports of slaves from the Guinea Coast was actually due to these ‘caboceers’ who changed the indigenous slavery in Osu.

Today, a visit to the town affords one the opportunity to see evidence of the TAST in vestiges such as the Christiansborg Castle, *Nii Okantey Shikaste* Trading House, and Richter’s Fort, where slaves were kept and sorted out for transport over the Atlantic. Indeed, local residents talk of an ‘illegal slave route’ from the Richter’s Fort that continued the trade in slaves long after the Danish official abolition. There is also a local myth of an existence of an underground tunnel that linked the fort and the Christiansborg Castle. In addition, there still exist families, which are direct descendants of Danish civil servants and officials sent to the Guinea Coast in Danish-Osu. Notwithstanding the trend towards urbanization and globalization, Danish-Osu is ancient and in architectural terms, quite striking compared with Elmina and Cape Coast, two other slave trade sites to the west of the country.

Plans are underway to develop a tourism product around the town and some of its relics. As noted earlier, one major flaw in these otherwise well-intentioned schemes is the overlooking of the community sentiments based on the implicit assumption that host communities readily welcome development interventions. Moreover, not much has been done to bring alive the ‘cultural history of the Danish slave trade’ (Dako, 2002). Many of the vestiges of Danish-Norway involvement in the Gold Coast are crumbled and in ruins. However, the recent restoration of *Frederiksgave* through the instrumentality of Yaw Bredwa-Mensah (PhD), in *Sesemi* and the exhibitions mounted by Nii Adziri Wellington (PhD) on Danish-Osu, should raise the needed consciousness about developing the Danish heritage in Ghana. After all, the most visible, permanent and handsome remainders of the historical and political ties between Ghana and Denmark are the two imposing buildings, dissimilar in architecture but sharing name and function – the Christiansborg Castle in Copenhagen and Christiansborg Castle in Danish-Osu (Winsnes, 1994).

### Issues today

There are clear links between the justification for the TAST and ongoing concerns and attempts by various scholars to undertake scientific enquiry into the phenomenon. Anquandah (2007), in a literature survey on the subject, points out that past research and discussion on the issue of slavery was limited because of the culture of silence in local communities where slave-trading activities were perpetrated. He claimed that a number of issues need to be addressed regarding Atlantic Slave Trade enquiry in Ghana. One of them is epistemological, namely what we know on the subject, how we know it, and what untapped sources/methods may be exploited to generate high quality results to expand the existing knowledge in future research. The second issue is related to the outcomes. What are the possible short- and long-term impacts of such research finding on the Ghanaian society and what form of research should be undertaken? Considering that, the slave trade is an unavoidable subject of Ghana’s past that virtually touches on her social, cultural, economic,

and political fabric, and any attempts at scientific enquiry should be seen as complementing the developmental efforts.

Nevertheless, only a modicum of research has been conducted in Ghana on the TAST. The reasons for the dearth of literature on the subject are rather obvious. First, many African countries whose men and women were sent to the New World have become passive (associated social stigmatization) about the episode with all the massive TAST resources and relics yet to be preserved and harnessed for tourism development. Second, Great Britain, representing the European slave masters is spearheading the anti-slavery movement through the memory of William Wilberforce without the 'inculcation of issues on slavery/slave trade in the curricula of educational institutions'. Finally, a cursory look at the literature on slavery and the TAST reveal that the issues explored constituted peripheral topics (Anquandah, 2007).

By the same token, the last decade has witnessed a growing number of Diasporan visitors to Ghana. According to Essah (2001), Ghana is turning the darker aspect of its past into a tourism commodity with marketing efforts targeting United States and Diaspora. Such visits serve to highlight the popularity of dark tourism (Foley & Lennon, 1996) or thana-tourism (Seaton, 1996). According to Seaton (1996), the motivation to visit sites of death are intended to prevent further death which are historically and temporally unrestricted, both explicitly and by implication. In the case of slavery heritage (Bruner, 1996; Teye & Timothy, 2004), visitations, related to the TAST, are often framed in a specific discourse of memory, from which the contemporary African Diaspora (especially African-Americans) has emerged. Lennon and Foley (2000), in a comparative study of Scottish Wars of Independence sites and the United States' Vietnam War Memorial, argue that sites beyond the memory of the living do not count as sites of dark tourism for they do not incite anxiety and doubt about modernity. They found that the Scottish sites did not induce questions on modernity or its consequences due to their chronological distance, whereas artefacts and messages left behind at the Vietnam Memorial stirs anxiety and contention over the war. Likewise, Foote (1997) points out those sites associated with tragedy and atrocity have four possible outcomes: sanctification, designation, rectification, or obliteration. However, in reference to TAST relics, memorialization of the dead with emotional and ethical underpinnings (Austin, 2000; Teye & Timothy, 2004) as perceived today have been shaped by the geo-political, socio-cultural, and economic factors generated by the trade over a number of decades. Therefore, memorializing former slave trade sites emphasizes a deep convergence in commemoration and raises high the stakes of remembrance among all the regions where TAST took place.

Similarly, the growing body of literature on dark tourism has provided a knowledge base that is 'commodiously postmodern or poststructuralist' in nature (Wight, 2006). The major dark tourism sites have been identified (Blackburn, 2000; Seaton, 1999; Walter, 2001; Wight & Lennon, 2007; Young, 1993), research needs delineated and methodological approaches developed (Austin, 2002; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Siegenthaler, 2002; Wight and Lennon, 2005). Relevant for this study is the social exchange theory, which grew out of the intersection of economics, psychology and sociology to become one of the most prominent and ambitious theoretical conceptions in explaining tourism community relationships. According to Hormans (1958), the initiator of the theory, it was developed to understand the social behaviour of humans in economic undertaking. He emphasizes that social behaviour is an exchange of material goods and non-material ones such as the symbols of approval or prestige. In a similar way, Blau (1964) claims that in sociological studies, the exchange theory establishes the social platform within which rewards are the starting point for social relations. As applied to tourism studies, Gursoy and Rutherford

(2004) propose a theoretical tourism support model using the multivariate social exchange theory. They demonstrate that the host community backing for tourism development is affected directly and indirectly by nine determinants of residents' support: (1) level of community concern, (2) the utilization of tourism resource base, (3) community attachment, (4) the state of the local economy, (5) ecocentric values, (6) economic benefits, (7) social benefits, (8) social costs, and (9) cultural benefits. Thus, the exchange theory is concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation (Ap, 1992). Interactions are treated as a process in which 'actors' supply one another with valued resources. In the case of Danish-Osu, interactions have not yet occurred. However, since perceptions are a result of expectations, residents would have certain expectations of tourism development, especially when residents are aware that the numerous TAST resources are potential tourism attractions which are yet to be developed. It is also possible to explore residents' attitudes towards the reuse of TAST resources based on their historical past and make a comparison with other similar destinations with similar resources.

### Methodology

From an ontological and epistemological perspectives, to conduct a study which attempts to gain insights and understanding of people's attitudes to the past would require a qualitative survey, as opposed to a quantitative one which would yield limited information, albeit, a larger number of people. Wight (2006) observes that most research in dark tourism and thanatourism have been qualitative in terms of methodologies adopted by researchers given the relevance of conceptual sociological issues and suggested the possibility of utilizing quantitative inquiry. But as Denzin (1989) points out, different research methods captures different types of information, and, because no single research method can ever completely detail all the relevant features of any given social reality, the researcher should employ multiple methods in the analysis of the same phenomenon. According to Yin (2003), qualitative data can be represented by perceptual and attitudinal dimensions, and real-life events not readily converted to numerical values. Mindful of the fact that the issue of TAST arouses emotional sentiments and also that reuse of associated relics have become a bone contention in the Danish-Osu community, this study employed the multi-strategy approach (Bryman, 2004; Depoy & Gitlin, 1998). This allowed the researchers to 'triangulate' methods (Decrop, 1999) and to gain better insights into the phenomenon under study.

Accordingly, three data collection methods were employed to collect primary data over a three-month period from October to December 2007. These comprised questionnaire survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) and administered in six communities namely *Kinkawe*, *Ashanti Blohum*, *Alata*, *Anohor*, *Amangfong* and *Salem*. The sampling procedure was similar to that suggested by Sarantakos (1998), specifically a three stage stratified technique. The total sample size was calculated using a formula suggested by Fisher, Laing, Stoeckal and Townsend (1998).

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2},$$

where  $n$  is the desired sample size (when the population is greater than 10,000);  $z$  denotes the standard error corresponding to desired level of confidence (when using 95% confidence level,  $z = 2$ );  $p$  is the proportion in the target population estimated to have particular



characteristics. The result being a minimum sample size of 246 respondents, 270 questionnaires were in fact distributed to allow for the possibility of spoilt and uncompleted questionnaires.

The first-stage stratification involved compiling a household list in each community to be used as a sampling frame. Based on the household list obtained, a proportional allocation of the sample size was apportioned to the six communities in the second-stage. The household list was used because the current census data do not capture the population of the selected communities. Finally, a random sampling technique was employed to select the appropriate household in each community. A household head (either male and female or any member of the household above 18 years) that was prepared and willing to participate was interviewed. There were 22 open- and closed-ended TAST knowledge and perception statements. Most of the items which measured residents knowledge of Danish-Osu as a former slave market, values, attachment and use of TAST relics were modifications of those employed by Boakye (2003) and were adapted to local conditions.

Out of the sample size, 200 completed questionnaires provided useable data for analysis. Potential respondents contacted did not consider themselves eligible to share their opinions on the phenomenon under study, and therefore, declined participation. For example, many of the younger individuals thought that they were relatively too young to speak on the topic, while some older individuals thought the information was going to be used to identify slave descendants in the community. Nonetheless, a high response rate (74.1%) was achieved with the following representation: 39(95.1%) for *Kinkawe*, 30(73.1%) for *Ashanti Blohum*, 35(85.3%) for *Alata*, 28(68.3%) for *Anohor*, 30(73.2%) for *Amangfong*, and 38(92.7%) for *Salem*. Only 25.9% could not complete the survey.

To corroborate the household heads survey, IDIs were conducted with the traditional authorities and some opinion leaders. These key actors who are very influential in any development initiative in the Danish-Osu community were purposively chosen based on their knowledge of the phenomenon under study. The interviews were semi-structured to give the interviewees the opportunity to explore and discuss the phenomenon under study. The data gathered were then used to explain the findings of the survey. The main advantage of IDIs is that a better understanding of respondents' thinking and attitudes on TAST and related issues could be achieved than when structured interviews are conducted (Churchill, 1991).

Furthermore, the study analysed 12 different FGDs (two sessions in each community, one with interest groups such as youth association and market women association) assessing their attitudes and perceptions towards the TAST. The procedure used a convenience sampling method in which a contact person in each group (with the same age group) was mandated to assemble eight of his/her colleagues at an agreed time for the discussion to take place. In each case, moderators were trained with an interview guide. A series of structured questions following the questionnaire and IDIs were asked, augmented with open-form probing questions to obtain additional information.

The qualitative methods used in this study served two primary purposes. The first purpose was to trace the historical antecedents of the of the Danish-Osu community in order to understand the issues and challenges likely to emerge with regard to tourism development in the community. The second purpose was capturing both the verbal and non-verbal messages from the key stakeholders on account of the face-to-face IDIs.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the data. With regard to quantitative data, Statistical Product for Service Solutions was used to generate both descriptive and inferential statistics to identify trends and relationships. In the qualitative analysis, the 'framework' method as devised by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) was employed.

## Study results

### *The concept of 'Awusai Atso': whose heritage and nostalgia?*

Although Danish-Osu has numerous significant TAST relics and resources, 'Awusai Atso' appears to be the most recognizable TAST icon and justifiably so. Consequently, majority of the respondents (98%) to the survey mentioned that they knew the existence of 'Awusai Atso', which is also a street name (popularly called 'five junction') (Figure 2). Their knowledge of the slave market was primarily acquired through oral tradition handed down by their grandparents (35.5%) (Table 1).

As demonstrated in Table 1, the oral stories as being told by the older folks and handed down to the new generation is the predominant form of acquiring knowledge about the slave market although some were taught in school (12%) and read from the many historical books (12%) on the slave trade in Danish-Osu (Table 1). The age at which many of residents got to know of the 'Awusai Atso' ranged from 5 to 50 years with an average of 15 years. The age at which residents got to know of the existence of the slave market are as follows: those less than 10 years old (9.0%), those between 10 and 20 years (68.0%), 20 and 30 years (18.5%) and those above 30 years (3.0%) while 1.5% had never heard of the slave market. As to the length of residency, 13.0% have lived continuously in the same community less than 20 years, 44.5% between 20 and 40 years, 28.0% between 40 and 60 years and 14.5% over 60 years.

Further analysis shows that males (52.0%) were more knowledgeable about 'Awusai Atso' than females (48.0%). It was also observed that those between the ages of 35 and 60 years (62.0%) had a greater preponderance to know of the slave market than other age categories.

Another question was asked to find out respondents knowledge of the site. Less than half of the sample (37.5%) acknowledged that 'Awusai Atso' was the old Danish slave

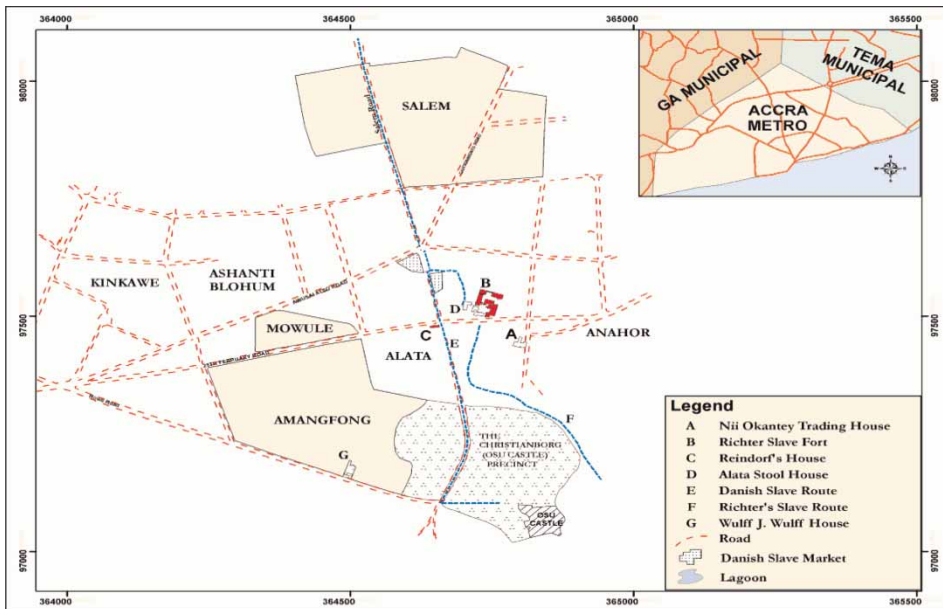


Figure 2. Map showing the slave routes, markets and some TAST resources.  
Source: Adapted from Wellington (2007).

Table 1. Knowledge of Danish-Osu as a slave market.

Sources of knowledge	Frequency	Percent
Told by grandparents	71	35.5
Taught at school	24	12.0
Read from history books	24	12.0
Through parents	22	11.0
Community elders and opinion leaders	21	10.5
Through discussions with community members	11	5.5
Through slave trade relics in the community	11	5.5
Grew up to know its existence	3	1.5
Through visits of African Americans	1	.5
Never heard	4	2.0
Do not know	8	4.0
Total	200	100.0

market where slaves and war captives were sold; others (19.0%) believe that the site provided sanctuary for children whose parents were sold during the slave trade. Some (17.5%) perceive the site as a residential enclave for people who had no parents. This was corroborated by respondents for the FGDs and IDIs who attest to the slave market that boomed during the slave trade period. However, it emerged that residents' knowledge of the slave market and what it meant to them was derived from the literal meaning of 'Awusai Atso'. Different description of the slave market site by respondents for the FGDs and IDIs name a 'big tamarind tree', which served as a shelter for slaves, while others recall a specific house that served as a place for auctioning slaves. Indeed, DeCorse (1993) recounts that the tamarind trees symbolize Danish presence on the Gold Coast, as they were planted around many of their outposts. Nevertheless, 7.0% of respondents indicated that the site always reminded them of the slave trade, whereas 5.5% expressed that the site does not mean anything to them.

Besides the Old Danish slave market, respondents were able to mention other slave markets site(s) in Danish-Osu (Table 2). The five most mentioned sites aptly describe the nature of slave trading activities in Danish-Osu (Figure 2). Obviously, the Richter's Fort (29.8%) is an important slave trade landmark. The *tolon moo*, as it is locally referred to, was a major slave market site where slaves were sold and kept by the house owners Heinrich and Christian Richter (Figure 2). It is situated at the end of the old Danish-Osu town street that led up to join the tamarind tree-lined Danish alley known as Frederiksberg

Table 2. Other slave sites in Danish-Osu.

Slave market sites	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Richter's Fort	179	29.8	1
Okantey Trading House	141	23.5	2
<i>Ablenshi</i> (Christiansborg Castle)	125	20.8	3
Salem	85	14.2	4
<i>Amangfong</i>	45	7.5	5
Did not know	25	4.2	
Total	600	100.0	

Note: The frequency count exceeds 200 because of multiple responses.

Avenue (Bech, 1989 cited in Wellington, 2006). The fort has a family insignia, coat of arms, with the date 1809 inscribed on the portal, indicating the probable date of completion. As suggested by the observations by the researchers and confirmed by the present inhabitants, the fort had slave dungeons and a cell for recalcitrant slaves just underneath the stairway to the fort. However, the Richter Fort suffered massive devastation during the earthquake that shook Accra in 1862 and 1939. It serves presently as a living quarters for inhabitants who claim ownership because the building was bequeathed to them by Heinrich Richter. Other sites include the Okantey Trading House (23.5%), *Ablenshi* (20.8%), *Amangfong* (7.5%), which form part of the eighteenth century Christiansborg Castle precinct and *Salem* slave corridor (14.2%), which includes the tamarind tree-lined Danish slave route.

Majority of the residents (57.0%) are comfortable living in the community with its image as a former slave market and are thus comfortable (78.0%) with tourists visiting to learn more about the TAST. The responses of respondents for the FGDs and IDIs were mixed. While some respondents felt that most of the tourists (apart from African Americans) were the perpetrators of the abominable acts against their ancestors and therefore should not be encouraged to visit, others thought otherwise. Most opinion leaders interviewed were also willing to talk about slavery and believe that it would promote Danish-Osu as a former slave market.

The study returned evidence to suggest that, slave descendants are well known and are generally identified with their names (65.3%), lifestyles (13.5%), and inscriptions on their houses (5.9%), while 15.3% did not know. When asked: 'are there any abusive words used to describe slave descendants in your community?', 42.0% answered 'yes', 50.0% responded 'no', and 8.0% 'did not know'. Some of the abusive words identified by respondents were *nyon* – slave (84.7%), *donko abii* – offspring of slaves (3.3%), *nyametse abii* – those whose origin cannot be traced (5.0%), *najiashi abii* – people in lower class (1.2%), *jamkaba* – someone to be pitied (2.3%), *dade agbomi* – those who are not regarded in the society (1.8%), and *Nortey/Nortei/Odorfoley* – names of the first and second male children and sister of those (1.7%). On the other hand, respondents who answered 'no' attest that slave descendants are 'treated as natives' (33.0%), 'treated as part of the family' (10.0%), 'not scorned upon' (2.5%), while 13.5% and majority 40.5% 'did not answer the question' and 'did not know', respectively. Respondents for the FGD and IDI, however, reiterate that slave descendants have long been integrated into the various families and live normal lives as natives of Danish-Osu.

Slave descendants are generally treated equally with 'free-borns'. This is shown by the fact that majority (90.0%) answered 'no' to the question: 'are slave descendants discriminated against in relation to land acquisition, marriage, employment or chieftaincy issues?', while 4.5% said 'yes' and 5.5%, 'did not know'. However, some opinion leaders recounted cases of discrimination against slave descendants especially with regard to succession and access to stool lands in Danish-Osu. One opinion leader from *Kinkawe* remarked:

One slave descendant [name withheld] wanted to be Osu Mantse(Chief) but he forgot we knew his status before he shot into prominence through national politics. ...they know they are not royals and cannot ascend the Osu Mantse stool but some of them have become tin gods and as such think they can become stool heads and chiefs.

This assertion was corroborated by a member of the Osu Divisional Council but reiterated that succession to the *Osu Mantse* (overlord) stool has since time immemorial been defined and anyone who does not come from the two royal gates does not qualify to become Osu *Mantse*.

### *Utilization of TAST relics and resources*

More than half of the sample (59.0%) prefers that the slave sites should be used for some purpose as compared with 37.5% who thought otherwise and 3.5%, who did not know to what use the site could be put. Respondents who thought that the site should be used for some purposes cited tourism development (29.5%), erecting monuments to commemorate the abolition of slavery (9.5%), and building a slave museum (10.0%). Table 3 presents the other uses of former slave sites as suggested by the respondents.

Despite the apparently irresistible lure of the past, 39.5% of respondents underrated the significant role that historic sites and routes play in the tourist industry (Table 3). On the other hand, respondents to the FGDs and IDIs hold the view that heritage, specifically TAST heritage, must not necessarily be a good thing and thus find it difficult to comprehend others who support counter claims, whether for the reasons of a religious, moral, economic or political nature. One opinion leader remarked:

The TAST has been abolished long time ago, and the memory of the dead through material culture plays a role in the decisions tourists make about where to go and what to see. . . . so we should be able to market 'Awusai Atso' to tourists especially Africans in the Diaspora who have distant family roots here.

### *Utilization of TAST resources by socio-demographic characteristics*

Previous research suggests that socio-demographic characteristics have an influence on possible utilization of resources found in their community especially for tourism development. However, utilizing resources associated with the TAST especially for tourism is contentious because of the emotional attachment connected with the trade. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistic was employed to determine whether a significant relationship exists between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and utilization of TAST resources at a significance level of 0.05. Characteristics of respondents explored in this analysis were age, sex, marital status, religious affiliation, educational attainment, and community of residence.

A significant relationship was found to exist between community of residence and utilization of TAST resources ( $p = 0.001$ ). While residents of *Ashanti Blohum* favoured tourism development (23.7%) of TAST resources in their community, those of *Alata*, *Kinkawe*, and *Amangfong* were oriented towards creating museum/research centres (35.0%), erecting monuments to commemorate slavery (26.3%), and developing an orphanage school (50.0%), respectively. Perchance, tourism provides the avenue to ensure the preservation and conservation of such resources. Respondents supported this view in the

Table 3. What purpose do you like the slave site be used for?

Uses of slave market	Frequency	Percent
Tourism development	59	29.5
Creating Museum/research centre	20	10
Erecting monuments to commemorate slavery	19	9.5
Providing low-cost housing project for locals	11	5.5
Preserving for historical purpose	10	5.0
Developing an orphanage school	2	1.0
Do not know	79	39.5
Total	200	100.0

FGDs and IDIs. One woman juxtaposed the perception that tourism development would pay for the conservation of TAST resources with the intention of the MoT and the Osu Divisional Council to make Danish-Osu a regular venue for Emancipation/Joseph Project.

Unlike community of residence, no significant relationship was established between sex and utilization of TAST resources. However, the majority of females supports tourism development (52.5%) and launching Low-cost housing project for locals (72.7%), while males support creating museums/research centre (70.0%), preserving the site for historical purposes (80.0%), and erecting monuments to commemorate slavery (57.9%). Females (51.9%) also seemed uncertain as they did not know to what use the TAST resources be put when compared with 48.1% of males.

Like sex, no significant relationship was established between residents' educational attainment ( $\rho = 0.899$ ), age ( $\rho = 0.700$ ), religious affiliation ( $\rho = 0.970$ ), marital status ( $\rho = 0.845$ ), and utilization of TAST resources. The differences in preferences were also fashioned across the various educational levels. It was generally observed that respondents who have attained middle/Junior High School tended more to think that the slave sites should be (i) developed for tourism (57.6%), (ii) used as museum/research centre (45.0%), (iii) used to provide low-cost housing for locals (63.5%), (iv) preserved for historical purposes (50.0%), and (v) used to erect monuments to commemorate slavery (52.6%). Similarly, the secondary education group had the highest proportion of its members suggesting the creation of an orphanage.

Notable differences also emerged with the variable age. The middle age group were more favourably disposed towards developing the slave sites as an orphanage school (100.0%) than providing low-cost housing for locals (72.7%), developing tourism (62.7%), creating museum/research centre (60.0%), preserving for historical purposes (60.0%), and erecting monuments to commemorate slavery (42.1%). There was a variation with regard to the youth (less than 35) and elderly (greater than 60) year groups. While the youth preferred the slave sites be developed as museum/research centre (25.0%) and be preserved for historical purposes (30.0%), the elderly preferred providing low-cost housing for locals (18.2%) and erecting monuments to commemorate slavery (31.6%). The study also found out that Christian respondents were more likely to support tourism development (96.0%) of the slave sites than other religious affiliation.

Although no significant relationship was found between marital status and utilization of TAST resources, the pattern exhibited was not different from sex. Married respondents were more likely to have higher support for tourism development (81.4%), creating museums/research centre (85.0%), providing low-cost housing for locals (72.7%), preserving for historical purposes (70.0%), erecting monuments to commemorate slavery (84.2%), and development of an orphanage school (100.0%).

## Discussions

It can be deduced from the responses that 'Awusai Atso' holds a central place in the knowledge of the residents. Extending it into a concept, therefore, it could be argued that that slave market is iconic to residents when thinking of the slave route. A sense of nostalgia is detected as many respondents know and have heard of Old Danish slave market locally known as 'Awusai Atso' since they attained adulthood. The finding also points to the existence of an appreciable level of knowledge about 'Awusai Atso' among all the different age groups as an important TAST relic and its immense role as a slave market. The middle age group (also found to be more educated) compared with the other categories was more knowledgeable about 'Awusai Atso'. The fact that residents between the ages of

35 and 60 years tended to know more about the 'Awusai Atso' than the other age categories suggests the possibility that they represent the immediate beneficiary of the TAST heritage handed down by the previous generation.

It was observed that respondents indicated that they heard 'Awusai Atso' from their grandparents, taught at school, read from history books, and were told by their parents (Table 1). This contradicts observations made by Boakye (2003), in Assin Manso – a similar slave town to the effect that an all-pervading silence and social taboo is associated with public discussions of the slave trade in former slave towns and sites.

There were other slave sites mentioned by residents besides 'Awusai Atso' (Table 2) that support the literature that Danish-Osu contributed immensely to the 'golden age' of Danish slave trade on the Guinea Coast (Dako, 2002; Hernaes, 1995). It is also worth noting that though the *Salem* slave corridor ranked fourth (Table 2), the present *Salem* Road extends from the western gate of Christiansborg Castle through to join the slave route from the interior at the foot of Akwapim Mountains. Indeed, the *Salem* Road is a living testimony to the Danish tamarind alley, which has survived for more than 200 years.

The fact that residents are comfortable living in the community with its reputation as a former slave market and willing to talk to potential tourists about slavery fulfils one cardinal requirement for sustainable tourism development-community acceptance. Perhaps this willingness could be attributed to the interventions by the National Slave Route Project to educate the people to actively participate in rewriting their own history and success chalked by the SRP.

The observation that slave descendants are publicly identified by their names, lifestyles, and inscriptions on their houses is contrary to the findings by Boakye and Dei (2007) that it was a social taboo with stiff punishment to trace slave ancestry. In the case of Danish-Osu, residents' identification of slave descendants through names is perhaps due, as previously mentioned, to Danish mullato families in the community. Indeed, Wellington (2007) has identified over 26 families with links to Danish civil servants and officials to the Guinea coast. Nevertheless, abusive words are used to describe slave descendants in the Danish-Osu community. These 'words' aptly illustrate the assertion by Perbi (2004) that some terms such as the servant (*tsulo*-male in Ga), the pawn (*awoba*-in Ga), the slave (*nyon*-in Ga), the war captive (*gboklefonyo*-in Ga), and the slave under capital punishment (*nyon ni abaa gbe le*-in Ga) were distinguishable to describe various conditions and degrees of voluntary and involuntary subordination of one another. It appears from the evidence therefore that in Danish-Osu discussions about one's slave, ancestry does not evoke much emotion.

However, respondents citing instances when slave descendants are discriminated against in relation to chieftaincy succession lend support to findings that slave descendants were denied the right to succeed stools even though in the course of time, they might appear to be completely integrated into families and communities (Boakye & Dei, 2007; Lovejoy, 1983; Perbi, 2004).

The 'tourism development' reason advanced by residents of Danish-Osu for utilizing the slave market site lend credence to the findings that utilizing community resources for tourism improves entertainment and recreational opportunities for the host community (Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Kendall & Var, 1984). However, reasons proffered revealed that residents have different perspectives on possible utilization of the slave market site. It is evident from the study that residents were uncertain of possible use of the site because it is presently a major junction that links various suburbs of the community. Thus, it is probable that residents have less positive perceptions of utilizing slave sites for tourism and less favourable attitudes towards their reuse.

The social exchange theory postulates that potential beneficial outcomes will create positive attitudes towards tourism development in the host community. Earlier research using length of residency as an indicator of community support indicated that community attachment has a direct impact on support for tourism development (Mansfeld, 1992; McCool & Martin, 1994). Although the finding suggests otherwise, perhaps residents' strong emotional attachment towards TAST account for their negative attitude. Because TAST relics induces emotions as a result of the interactions of the community's historical, cultural, and social experiences, social interactions may be sustainable. In such a case, perhaps developing heritage management guidelines with the community and involving them in tourism planning and implementation may lead to positive outcomes. Also, it may be useful to modify the application of the theory to include attachment to resources which hinge on community history (Pearce, Moscardo, & Ross, 1996).

The observed significant relationship between place of residence and utilization of TAST resources also confirms the key underlying assumption of the social exchange theory. Being aware that tourism may provide the avenue to ensure restoration and conservation of historical resources (Hunter & Green, 1995; Mathieson & Wall, 1982), social interaction may increase, thereby generating positive outcomes. Perchance, when faced with an opportunity to preserve community resources that symbolize a shared heritage, residents would choose the course of action that result in preservation of such tangible cultural heritage. Thus, memorialization of the dead through material culture has become a hallmark of SRP spearheaded by UNESCO.

### Implications

The '*Awusai Atso*', as a phenomenon, has implications for developing the TAST relics and resources in the national imagery of the SRP in Danish-Osu. For this reason, the responses to the questions show what they know, perceive, and consequently the potential or otherwise of developing SRP in Danish-Osu. Given the silence associated with public discussions on slavery and the TAST, residents have accepted their circumstance and prepared to recall memories associated with '*Awusai Atso*'.

Residents' knowledge about the TAST and related resources has implications for developing a tourism product based on the community feelings. Boakye and Dei (2007) have argued that TAST sites should be presented as pilgrimage because of the soul-connection attached to it. They suggest that special name like '*pilgrims*' instead of the normal 'tourists' be given to people who visit such relics in order to communicate the seriousness of experience not only to the person on pilgrimage, but also more importantly, to the local community. A key distinction between pilgrimage tourism products and other cultural tourism products lies in the possibility of tourists satisfying their 'religious needs' of visiting TAST relics and sites which have also become contested heritage. Conceivably, if the development of pilgrimage is linked to trade routes, such as the Silk Road in the Far East or the Incense Road in Arabia, then so could the Slave Route.

Residents' perceptions and attitudes towards the possible use of the slave sites and other TAST resources has implications for sustainability of such resources. Notable advocates of sustainable principles in heritage tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; McKercher & du Cros, 2002; Merhav & Killebrew, 1998) have argued for the need to protect and sustain heritage asserts for future generation. According to Shackley (1998 cited in McKercher & Ho, 2006), over-use of heritage assets can degrade its physical fabric, damage its tangible and intangible values, and lead to a diminished visitor experience. As previously mentioned, many of the TAST relics in Danish-Osu are yet to be properly identified and



marked for conservation and preservation purposes. In many instances, individuals living in and around heritage assets have caused to effect changes to the architecture of these assets without any recourse to the GMMB or laid down heritage management plans. A more encompassing assessment of the heritage values of TAST relics in Danish-Osu could be harnessed for positive didactic purpose of developing the SRP in Danish-Osu or alternatively can be erased if sustainable practices are urgently adopted. Agenda 21 of the World Travel and Tourism Council and International Council on Monuments and Sites Cultural Heritage Charter have proposed a set of sustainability principles that could form the basis for managing heritage tourism.

## **Conclusions**

An understanding of the anthology of the TAST makes utilizing resources connected with it difficult. Tragic as the TAST was to the human race, events like Emancipation Day and Joseph Project need to be celebrated to hark back the horrors and pain those unfortunate ancestors went through during those cursed years of the trade. Nevertheless, to relate properly the story of the most inhuman episode in human history, Danish-Osu cannot be wished away. Thus, ensuring universal awareness of the tragedy of the slave trade, and slavery is thus an essential task which has relevance not only for the past but also for the present and the future (UNESCO, 2004).

Despite the potency of the memory associated with TAST relics and resources, many of such resources in Danish-Osu are yet to be developed. Perhaps, interest in developing Danish-Osu as a slave site has been hampered greatly by the use of the Christiansborg Castle as the current seat of government. Interest has been rekindled in the last few years culminating in many consultative meetings with various stakeholders on tourism development in Danish-Osu. Given the many years of obscurity and vast heritage tourism potential of Danish-Osu, it is anticipated that tourism development could be used as a medium to improve on the quality of life of the people as well as supporting the conservation of such relics. Certainly, government's decision to make the Christiansborg Castle a tourist attraction upon completion of the new presidential palace will make Osu a more favourite tourist destination and add to the city's attraction base.

Suffice it to mention that the Ghana Slave Route Committee, MoT, GMMB, with assistance from tourism planners, development partners, and academia, should – as a matter of priority – develop a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the Joseph Project. This is because the Joseph Project is a laudable initiative worth securing Ghana a segment of the Diasporan African market. With Togo, Benin, Gambia, Nigeria, and other countries in the sub-region designing 'Roots Tourism' programmes to tap the African-American market, Ghana cannot afford to be left behind. The Christiansborg Castle, Richter's Fort, Okantey Trading House, the Wulff. J. Wulff House, and many others could generate tremendous economic benefits for Danish-Osu. A first major step towards this realization would be to send proposals to UNESCO to designate the Christiansborg Castle as a World Heritage Site in addition to the Cape Coast, Elmina Castles, and Fort St. Jago.

Finally, it would be worthwhile to replicate this research in the other 61 slave markets in Ghana, especially Salaga in the Northern part of Ghana. The case of Salaga would be interesting since it was the biggest interior slave market and had a great advantage over the other slave market because of its strategic position (Perbi, 2004). Heritage and tourism planners need to know more about the type and scale of tourism favoured by residents of former slave markets on Ghana's Slave Route. TAST resource users who live in the hinterland

areas where slave wars and slave-raiding activities took place are likely to view impacts more favourably than residents of the coastal areas (forts and castles), where the slaves were housed before being shipped to the New World.

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