

## Sustainable tourism and cultural heritage in Zambia

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined Zambia's potential in Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Ten (10) natural waterfalls situated in five provinces of Zambia. The study investigated the extent of visitations of these waterfalls annually by international and local tourists. The United Nations World Tourism Organization General Assembly Resolutions guided the study. Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full cognizance of the current and future economic, social and environmental impacts on visitors, the industry and hosting communities. Cultural Heritage is an expression of the community's ways of living developed and passed on from one generation to another through customs, practices and values among others. Methodically, the study was guided by a purposive sampling technique using the descriptive and applied qualitative research techniques whose main objective was description of the state of affairs of the natural waterfalls as they exist currently and arrived at an inductive Ex post facto research for descriptive purposes. The findings indicated minimal visits of the sites mainly by domestic local tourists due to poor infrastructure and underdevelopment of the sites which is below international standards. The findings further highlighted little or no social and economic benefits of the local people due to few cultural heritage activities being done on the sites which has undermined tourism industry. The researchers, therefore, recommended development of the sites to international standards to make them more attractive to tourists and attainable to national economic tourism sustainability thereby contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction among the local people around these sites.

**Keywords:** Culture, heritage, intangible, sustainability, tangible, tourism

### INTRODUCTION

For several decades Zambia has been a tourist destination of choice for both domestic and international tourists. Tourism industry is a major and growing industry in the country with a lot of tourist attractions ranging from national parks, historic monuments, lakes, wildlife to waterfalls among others. This sector has been ranked third to mining and agriculture in terms of economic gains the country is getting from it as was cited by the policy monitoring research centre (September 9, 2021, Silungwe, Mbewe., Kalale & Silungwe, 2020).

To promote this sector the country has been involved in various agreements with various countries and groups with the aim of providing sustainability to the sector. Several frameworks have been initiated to guide the country on how it should move to promote sustainable tourism as stipulated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005).

In 2017, for example, the Policy Monitoring Research Centre (PMRC-2017) through the Zambia's Vision 2030 and the Seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) National Development Plan (2017-2021), recognized tourism in Zambia as an important

economic sector for economic diversification, foreign exchange and employment. At that time, Zambia was cited to be one of the world's fastest growing economies in Tourism for the past 16 years with the real Growth Domestic Product (GDP) growing average of roughly 2.7% per annum (World Bank Report, 2021). According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Tourism contribution to GDP had grown by 14% in the year 2017 (WTTC, 2017). This sparked the desire by the Zambian government to embrace Sustainable Tourism Development.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) report (2005) suggested that Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage Tourism, if exploited further, have the potential to provide economic benefits and improve the livelihoods of the local people. Beech and Chadwick (2006) argued that Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage are neither permanent nor irreversible hence there was need to undertake them cautiously in terms of their development and management.

In exploring sustainable tourism, prior studies have focused on tangible and intangible cultural heritage as postulated by researchers (Kim, Whitford and Arcodia, 2021; Khalid and Chowdhury, 2019; Crilli, Tyllianakis, Luisatti, Ferini and Turner, 2021; Rubanen and Whitford, 2021). Intangible cultural heritage include oral histories and legends, festivals, religious rites, folklores, superstition, greetings, language, songs and dance (Blake, 2011). However, there are limited sustainable tourism studies centered on tangible cultural heritage like the natural water falls especially in the Zambian context other than information found in a guide to Zambia's heritage (National Heritage Conservation Commission, 2016). The increasing interest in tourism, particularly around natural attractions such as waterfalls, presents a complex challenge at the intersection of sustainable tourism and cultural heritage (Buckley, 2012). As tourist footprints grow, concerns arise regarding the preservation of these pristine natural sites and the safeguarding of associated cultural heritage. The pressing issue is to develop comprehensive strategies that not only sustain the ecological integrity of waterfalls but also protect and promote the cultural heritage embedded in these landscapes, ensuring a harmonious balance between tourism development, community engagement and conservation (Higham and Bejder, 2020). Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to fill the gap identified in the

literature by establishing how the tangible cultural heritage (natural waterfalls) can be a source of sustainable tourism in Zambia.

The study explores to what extent the 10 out of 18 Zambian Waterfalls (Kalambo Falls, Lumangwe Falls, Kabwelume Falls, Ntumbachushi Falls, Chishimba Falls, Mumbuluma Falls, Ngonye Falls, Kundalila Falls, Mutumuna Falls, and Nyambwezi Falls) dotted around the country meet the requirements or how best they could be developed in future to bring about sustainable tourism and cultural heritage that could eventually contribute meaningfully to the Zambian people and society at large.

This study makes significant contribution to both theory and practice by providing deep insights on how sustainable tourism can help to create employment, eradicate poverty and contribute to the country's GDP. Furthermore, adequate information must be provided to help policy makers prioritize resources to restore and maintain these sites. The results will also provide information that could be used to develop strategies to be used to enhance and maintain the cultural heritage (SDGs 14, 15) and promote more sustainable and resilient tourism industry in Zambia.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by a set of research questions that explored the various aspects of sustainable tourism and cultural heritage as follows:

1. To what extent are the waterfalls developed to attract sustainable tourism and cultural heritage?
2. What possible positive impacts do local people surrounding the waterfalls have within the catchment areas where social, culture and livelihoods are concerned?
3. How often are these natural waterfalls visited by both international and local people?
4. What measures need to be put in place to make the waterfalls more viable to the tourist industry and the socio-economic development of the country?

Each research question narrows and focuses on the purpose statement, which in this case, is the hypothesis. Both the research question and hypothesis work in conjunction with the purpose statement (nu.edu, 2023). Therefore, the following hypotheses relate to the research questions and serve as research objectives inferring the expected outcomes:

**Hypothesis 1:** Waterfalls developed to attract sustainable tourism and cultural heritage.

**Hypothesis 2:** Local people surrounding these waterfalls within the catchment areas

where social culture and livelihoods are concerned have positive impacts.

**Hypothesis 3:** Natural waterfalls are regularly visited by international and local tourist arrivals.

**Hypothesis 4:** There are measures that have been put in place to make the waterfalls more viable to tourism industry and socio-economic development of the country.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for sustainable tourism and cultural heritage draws on key concepts and models that integrate environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions. This framework aims to guide research and practice in developing strategies that ensure the preservation of cultural heritage while fostering sustainable tourism development. In this study, the *Triple Bottom Line* (TBL) sustainability model, introduced by John Elkington (1994), revolutionised the conceptualisation of sustainable development by emphasising the integration of three dimensions; that is environmental, social, and economic are employed. The TBL goes beyond the conventional focus on economic metrics and considers the broader impacts of business activities and livelihoods. The three dimensions—Profit (economic), People (social), and Planet (environmental), constitute the "triple bottom line" (Elkington, 1994). The model has informed sustainability policies globally. Governments and international organizations recognize the importance of balancing economic growth with social and environmental considerations (UN, 2015). While the TBL model gained widespread acceptance, scholars have raised several critiques. Some argue that balancing the three dimensions is challenging, and trade-offs may exist. Others contend that the model lacks specific metrics for practical implementation (Henriques and Richardson, 2004). But we still found the model to be appropriate and convenient for this study.

### Tourism

Tourism is a multifaceted industry that plays a crucial role in economic development, cultural exchange, and environmental management. It has long been recognised for its economic contributions to host destinations (Dwyer and Forsyth, 1997). In this study it can be defined as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people within and to countries or places outside their usual environment for leisure, personal or business purposes (UNWTO, 2008). Thus, tourism

reflects a dynamic field that encompasses diverse perspectives, from economic impacts to cultural preservation, sustainability, and the role technology plays in the tourism industry.

### Sustainable Tourism

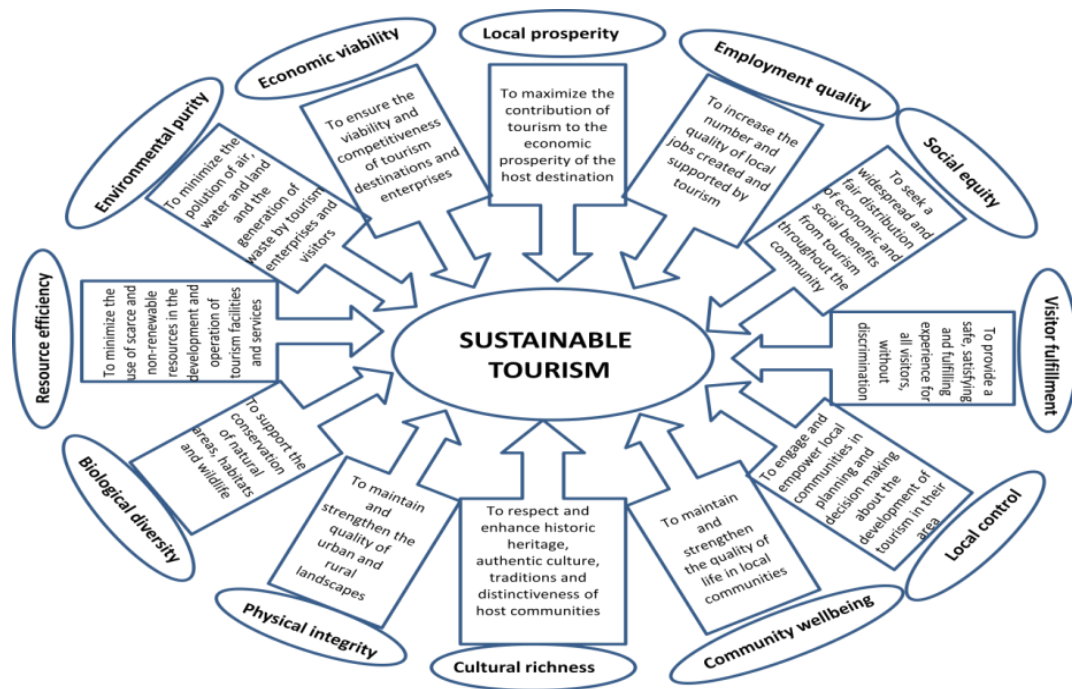
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2005) and United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005) viewed sustainability principle to refer to the establishment of suitable balance between environmental, economic and social-cultural aspects of tourism development. Therefore, sustainability of tourism is achieved when:

- a) The environmental resources are optimally used that is by maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.
- b) The socio-cultural authenticity of host communities is respected by conserving built and living cultural heritage and traditional values and contributing to their inter-cultural understanding and tolerance); and
- c) The Viable, long-term economic operations are ensured by providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are distributed.
- d) UNEP and UNWTO (2005) further observed that sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raise their awareness about sustainability issues and thereby promote sustainable practices among them. Much as this is the case in developed countries, Zambia would still learn from such sustainable principles on how to diversify its tourism industry, instead of depending on the Mosi-oa-Tunya (Victoria) Falls, the ten natural waterfalls captured in this study could equally bring about socio-economic gain in the country.

Much as sustainable tourism and cultural heritage are desirable in our Zambian context, making tourism more sustainable means taking its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts into account in planning, development, and operation of tourism (UNWTO, 2012). To provide guidance

towards realisation of sustainable tourism (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005) called for an agenda for sustainable tourism that composed of twelve (12) dimensions that address economic, social, and environmental impacts, the framework that could be used by

Zambia to enhance sustainability and cultural heritage in the catchment areas of the 10 waterfalls under study using the mixed tourism approach. Below is the sustainable conceptual framework Korez-Vide (2015) adopted from the UNEP and UNWTO (2005).



**Figure 1:** Source: Korez-Vide (2015) adapted from UNEP & UNWTO (2005)

With the help of UNWTO (2005) dimensions of sustainable tourism and their policy implications, Governments in developing countries have a crucial role to play in development and management of tourism and in making it more sustainable. Tourism is a means to create an environment that enables or influences the private sector to operate more sustainably and by this also foster patterns of visitor flows and behavior so as to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative impacts of tourism.

**Challenges faced in implementing sustainable Tourism in the Country**

The desire to sustain tourism in Zambia’s waterfalls apart from Victoria Falls is being hampered by underdeveloped infrastructure (Kachembele, 2014). Most if not all the ten waterfalls in this study are in remote places where road networks are bad and not maintained properly in some cases such that they become impassable during the rainy season. Challenges for tourists’ accessibility are that most of the ten waterfalls are located way off the main tarred roads, far away from airports and Central Business Districts (CBDs). The scenario has affected international tourists who shun visiting these

tourist attractions as much time is spent to access the phenomena, let alone the cost implications of hiring suitable transportation to the sites. This implies the waterfalls are mainly visited by domestic tourists, who bring less income and whose visits become heightened only during dry seasons and not during rain seasons. This situation negatively affects the economic viability of these natural waterfalls in Zambia.

The underdevelopment of infrastructures such as hotels, lodges and restaurants, and well-developed cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) also affect how much income is realised and how often the waterfalls can be visited by both local and international tourists. Apart from Lumangwe, Kalambo and Ngonye (Sioma), other waterfalls do not have lodges and guest houses nearby. This discourages tourists who intend to visit these places for many days to enjoy their natural endowed scenarios.

The non-availability of lodges or guest houses minimise income as local visitors only pay a small amount of fee for leisure excursions without lodging for nights. And yet Tourism sector gets a lot of income from

accommodation than gate fees (PRMC,2017). The scenario also limits employment opportunities for local people. In these waterfalls it has been observed that few local people are employed to work as cooks where they have restaurants while others are deployed as guides. This enables local people to think they do not benefit from the tourism taking place in their areas, as noted by Bwalya-Umar and Kabwe (2016) who postulated that there was a perception among Livingstone residents that very few households benefited from tourism. Equally, observations and casual talks indicate the same for people around the ten waterfalls and such attitudes have impeded the development required to better standards.

The underdeveloped infrastructure in the areas is facilitated by local communities' perception and beliefs that almost all waterfalls are associated with religious beliefs that they harbor spirits which cannot be disturbed by putting up big infrastructures such as hotels as that would affect their belief systems. Most of these places are considered sacred where certain practices attributed to tourist attraction places are not allowed. This is an area where local people are involved in maintaining the places. This has contributed to preservation of the environment for future generation and yet impeding standardized infrastructure. Almost all the waterfalls have their forests intact thus avoiding environmental degradation.

Despite advertisement on Television sets (TVs) and having Tourism week where such places are visited, a documentary made which run on TV under the theme **“Zambia Let’s Explore”**<sup>1</sup> most of these waterfalls remain isolated and are rarely visited hence not attracting many visitors even when there are good camping sites.

Some argue that even when people want to invest in the sector (Kachembele, 2014) there is a lot of political interference or bureaucracy on one hand and the Local Traditional Chiefs on the other, in the running of the tourism sector which discourages prospecting investors. As such it is noted that much as policies formulated they are not stable or consistent and can be revoked any time even to those who have licenses as it is noted that it is not a guarantee to possess licenses as this

can also be revoked anytime by the government if envisaged that the local chiefdoms and their people have no meaningful social and economic gain.

### Cultural Heritage

As part of this study refers to the local people’s world view in terms of their culture, traditions and values (intangible heritage), it is understood from a heritage perspective as a shared bond and the sense of belonging to a community surrounding the natural phenomena. We can therefore comfortably assert that cultural heritage provides clues to a particular community’s past, the present and how its society may evolve going forward as could be understood from the synonyms of heritage such as ancestry, legacy, right and traditions. Cultural heritage, according to Epplett and Williams (2021), can be categorised into two, the tangible and intangible. *Tangible cultural heritage* includes assets like books, tools, clothing, food, artwork, archeological discoveries and waterfalls among others. On the other hand, *Intangible heritage* comprises oral histories, legends, festivals, religious rites, folklores, superstition, greetings, language, songs and dance (Brigid, 2023). Cultural heritage is also important as it is seen to be a protection of the sense of who the local people are (cultural identity or ethnicity). It is further divided into two types of heritage namely *natural* that include forests, rivers, waterfalls, animals, birds as well as aqua life where as *cultural* connotes such things as temples, shrines, paintings and a variety of cultural and historic artifacts.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in October (2013) at their general assembly came up with twelve (12) aims of sustainable tourism which Zambia embraced that pointed to possible economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community well-being, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental.

### Similar Research Studies

A number of studies have been carried out to explain the complex relationship between sustainable tourism and tangible cultural heritage, covering aspects such as community

heritage and historic sites

(<https://www.travelmole.com/Zamb...>). Sourced on January 12, 2024. Time: 14:02hrs.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a Travel Safari Company under Zambia Tourism known as a Travel Mole specialised in walking safari, at Victoria Falls, along the wild Zambezi River,

involvement, economic viability, and conservation strategies. Farsari, Sigala, & Voulala (2013) explored the relationship between residents' support for tourism, place image, and perceived impacts. The study suggests that positive place image and perceived positive impacts contribute to residents' support for tourism development, which is crucial for the sustainable management of tangible cultural heritage. A study conducted by Gursoy, Chi, & Lu, (2013) on the framework for understanding the antecedents and outcomes of sustainable tourism identified economic viability as one of the critical success factors for sustaining heritage tourism. Market led approach to sustainable tourism is one aspect which has been investigated. For example, a study conducted by Leask & Fyall (2006) emphasised the importance of businesses being engaged in sustainable practices for the long-term viability of heritage tourism too. Additionally, Garrod & Fyall (2000) underscored the need for effective management strategies to preserve tangible cultural heritage while accommodating tourism. Other studies have emphasised the need to conserve tangible cultural heritage and promote sustainable tourism (Coccosis & Mexa, 2004; Briguglio, Briguglio, & Briguglio, 1996). On the other hand, the study by Coccosis & Mexa (2004) called for a balanced approach to conserve tangible [and intangible] cultural heritage as a way of managing challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was practical in objective and descriptive-analytical in nature. Available secondary data on United Nations Tourism Organization (UNWTO:2017) General Assembly Resolutions, Eureka Journals (2020), Cultural Heritage, according to Epplert and Williams (2021) and some Zambian Tourism Board and Cultural Heritage from the Zambia National Heritage Conservation Commission (NHCC) and other relevant secondary data materials were reviewed and analyzed. The research adopted purposive sampling in that the sampling technique allowed the researchers to use cases through review of secondary data that have had the required information with respect to the objectives of their study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:50), in this case the sustainable tourism and cultural heritage. In such cases, purposive sampling was applied to get location or district in which the units of observation have the required characteristics

as was the case with the Zambian ten natural waterfalls phenomena and the surrounding local people's cultural tangible and intangible heritage. Data analysis was done by reviewing the characteristics that the four research questions solicited for per each of the ten waterfalls under study to determine to what extent they all met most of the UNWTO (2005) 12 dimensions of sustainable tourism and their cultural heritage.

## Descriptions and Locations of the Ten Waterfalls

### Ten (10) selected waterfalls for the study

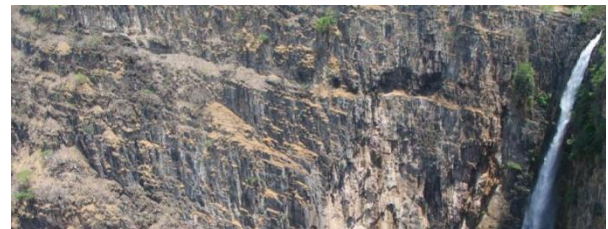
The following ten natural waterfalls in Zambia were selected to determine the extent to which they met the standards to sustainable tourism and cultural heritage and if at all they were attractive and socioeconomically viable.

**The map below locates where the ten waterfalls are found**



**Figure 2: SOURCE: ZAMBIA NEWSLETTER**  
<https://www.zambiatourism.com/destinations/waterfalls/>

### Kalambo Falls



The impressive Kalambo Falls can be found in the Northern Province, 33km / 20m from Mbala on the Kalambo River, which forms the border between Zambia and Tanzania. This spectacular jet of water falls is a single uninterrupted stream of 221 meters down into the gorge below and then on into Lake Tanganyika. They are the second highest falls in Africa, next to Tugela Falls situated in

South Africa and the 12<sup>th</sup> highest in the world. Kalambo is an important site because archaeologists have uncovered evidence of the use of fire by early humans dating as far as 60 000 years ago. It is one of the earliest known instances of our ancestors harnessing fire for warmth, protection, cooking, light and maybe even religious rituals. The area is a protected national monument and on the United Nations' list of possible new world heritage sites.



This is a sacred site and just downstream is the only known location of an endemic flower known as *Zygotritonia atropurpurea*, which is part of the *Watsonia* family.

### **Kundalila Falls**



East of the Great North Road near Kanona in Central Province, is an area of spectacular scenic beauty, the Kaombe River falls 70m / 230ft, breaking into thin veils and nourishing a natural botanical garden that surrounds the Kundalila waterfall. Visitors may swim in the deep natural pool at the foot of the falls and there is a camping site nearby. The top of the Kundalila Falls offers one of the most spectacular views over the vast Luangwa Valley, while at the foot is a delightful natural pool famed for its wildflowers. The name means 'cooing or crying dove' in Bemba, one of the many birds' sounds you will hear in this tranquil setting. The waterfall is an official Zambian Natural Monument.

### **Ngonye (Sioma) Falls**



Also known as Sioma Falls because these Falls are near the village of Sioma in Western Province of Zambia. These beautiful falls mark the transition point of the Zambezi River's flow from Kalahari sand floodplain to basalt dyke, the latter eventually contributing to the magnificent Batoka Gorge of the Victoria Falls. The horseshoe shaped Ngonye Falls are impressive because of the sheer volume of water that cascades over the staggered 20m drop. An interesting aspect is that the river flows underneath the rock on either side of the falls. It is quite remarkable to stand upon them, feeling and hearing the underground flow.

### **Lumangwe Falls**

Near the Chimpembe Pontoon in the Northern Province, an astounding drop in the middle of nowhere creates what looks like a smaller version of Victoria Falls. At 35m / 115ft high and 100m / 328ft across, the waterfall nourishes a small rainforest on the Kalungwishi River. They are quite magnificent and well worth the 9km / 6m detour off the main road from Kawambwa to Mporokoso. It is an ideal spot for camping, with visitor facilities. Because of its remote location, you may well be the only one there. The waterfall is said to be the home of the Great Snake Spirit called **Lumangwe**. In the olden days, this snake was said to have stretched itself between the Lumangwe and Kabweluma Falls, a distance of 5km.

### **Chishimba Falls**



Fed by the Luombe River, Chishimba Falls are actually a combination of three successive falls, incorporating Mutumuna Falls, Kaela Rapids as well as Chishimba itself. The spot is situated about 33 kms from the town of Kasama, in the Northern Province. The impressive main part of the falls is around 20 metres high. On the Eastern bank of the river just above the falls is a camp site. There is a rainforest on the Western Bank. There are various trails and viewing points around the falls.

The Bemba people regard the Chishimba Falls as one of the most sacred places of power. The nature spirit *Chishimba* resides in the cave below the falls which is a place of prayer and honour. No insults, curses, words of vengeance or hatred may be uttered in the vicinity of the cave. You can walk behind the falls into this cave. Mutumuna is above the Chishimba Falls and it is believed the spirit of Mutumuna resides here. The High Priest of Mutumuna is **Chitemenwe** who makes regular offerings. Because of the sacred nature of the Falls no sexual intercourse, arrogance and quarrelsomeness is allowed in the vicinity of the Falls. However, there is a hydroelectric diversion canal at the falls which helps provide power to Kasama and other neighbouring villages.

### **Kabweluma Falls**



Five kilometers down the Kalungwishi river from the Lumangwe Falls (above) you will find this group of three powerful cascades, each spilling into the next. The Falls are a revered shrine for the local people. Many frogs are seen here which locals say they are the earthly forms of snake spirits. The Spirits do not allow the building of houses or any frivolity nearby. The Spirits do not allow the building of houses or any frivolity nearby. Beneath the falls there is a thickly wooded ravine and some ancient paintings adorning nearby rock faces beneath a permanent rainbow.

### **Mumbuluma Falls**



Mumbuluma Falls, situated 33km from Mansa town in Luapula Province, cascades down in two steps on the Mumbuluma River. The height of the two steps is 10 metres high and the falls are around 30 metres across in total. Situated some distance south of the Falls, you will find the temple for the protective spirits of the falls, **Makumba** and his sister **Ngosa**, who, according to local

legends fell from the sky. The temple has a sacred fire which never goes out and is tended by the priests. There is a good swimming area just beneath the falls, surrounded by dense green woodland. While there are no facilities here at all, it is a beautiful place to camp. The falls are a fair way off the main tourist routes and tend to be quiet in terms of visitors, even though they are a national monument, so you're likely to have them all to yourselves.

### **Mutumuna Falls**



Mutumuna Waterfalls are located above the *Kayela Rapids* and the main *Chishimba Fall* in the [Chishimba Falls](#) cascade, across the *Luombe River*. They lie off the [Kasama-Mporokoso Road](#) (Road D20 Zambia). This is approximately 40 kilometres (25 mi), Northwest of the city of [Kasama](#), in Kasama District, in Zambia's [Northern Province](#).

### **Ntumbachushi Falls**



It is a series of water pools and rapids culminating in the main falls about 30m high on the Ng'ona River. This very picturesque waterfall was believed to be a sanctuary of spirits while the waters of the Ng'ona River are used for bathing chiefs before they are installed on the throne so as to cleanse them of bad luck and misfortune. Situated between Mwansabombwe and Kawambwa in the Luapula Province. An ideal site for camping.

### **Nyambwezi (u) Falls**

Found in North-Western province, 204 kms south of the Solwezi – Mwinilunga road on the Nyambwezu River is 20meters high waterfalls. There is a rock shelter close to the lip of the falls decorated with pre-historic engravings and evidence of late Stone Age occupation. It is possible to camp here.





The researchers identified the above natural waterfalls and wondered how these are currently sustained as tourist attractions in the country and they could fit in the country's sustainable tourism implementation framework. As such, underlying rationale is what this research study tried to address.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The natural waterfalls site location map above guided the researchers on the actual location of each of the 10 waterfalls and this is indicative that most of them are located in the Peri-Urban or Rural areas of Zambia. This factor on its own poses the challenges of accessibility to many tourist visitors who may not be aware of or familiar with the actual terrain of the destination sites. Most of the destination sites are on either gravel roads or rural dilapidated and rough road networks making it so difficult and expensive to access easily.

With regards to whether Sustainable Tourism is possible in Zambia along with her Cultural Heritage, the location of most of the natural waterfalls are located on the rivers of fresh waters and some of these natural phenomena are revered and treated by local people as sacred places or their ancestral shrines. As sacred places where the local people conduct clan or community rituals and prayers to communicate with the dead spiritual mediums (ancestors) and these are usually restricted areas and are managed by local Chiefs and as they fall under their chiefdoms. In this regard, most of these waterfalls natural phenomena in Zambia are abundantly rich in cultural heritage but need to be explored and developed further alongside Sustainable Tourism if they are to meaningfully contribute to the nation's socioeconomic development. In this study researchers endeavored to provide an insight that would promote modern socioeconomic and management as mixed tourism that would benefit greatly all the

<sup>2</sup> Tripadvisor is a travel agency specialized for guidance of millions of travellers on hotels, tours, activities and restaurants in Zambia (<https://www.tripadvisor.com>).

stakeholders, be they the international visitors, local visitors and surrounding communities to the tourist destination sites. By way of authenticating the number of tourists visiting Zambia tourist destinations, the researchers captured a table that indicated the statistical number of both international and local tourist from the scientific research journal. Despite the availability of this table the researchers had a challenge to determine further as to whether the tourists visited the waterfalls or other tourist destinations too, such as national parks and other monumental sites to mention but a few.

### Number of Tourists visiting prior and post

Year	Number of tourists	% of GNP
2021	554,000	1.8 %
2020	502,000	2.3 %
2019	1,000,000	3.5 %
2018	1, 000, 000	2.8 %

Source: Scientific Research Journal (2023): [<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paper-information.aspx?paperid=92096>]

### Covid-19 Pandemic

#### Demographic Information about the phenomena (Interpretation of findings)

The ten waterfalls, are endowed with their natural beauty of flora and fauna as exclaimed by many tourist visitors captured by the Tripadvisor<sup>2</sup> review app that the researchers used to determine the viability of the waterfalls in terms of Sustainable Tourism as well as Cultural Heritage.

Below are the analyses according to the research questions in line with the extent of measures of viability to economic development, frequency of tourists to the waterfalls, the presence of cultural heritage within the proximity of the natural phenomena and the extent to which they are developed as attractive tourist sites.

### **To what extent are the waterfalls developed to attract sustainable tourism and cultural Heritage?**

The analysis of sustainable tourism which anchors on economic viability, environmental and socio-culture of the local people illuminated that not much has been done on the ten waterfalls. It has been established that little infrastructure development has been done in terms of good road network, hotels and lodges, airports or airstrips, transport and communication networks. As such the water falls despite their good scenery and fresh water receives few international tourists. This implies that the contribution of waterfalls to GDP is very minimal coming from the little gate fees that are collected from all entering the water falls premises. Some waterfalls like Ngonye, Mutumuna are very isolated and are rarely visited as discussed in 2.4. Thus, the non-development of infrastructure to reach international standards has negatively affected sustainable tourism in the ten waterfalls. Most waterfalls are regarded as sacred places and attributed to certain local communities ancestral spirits. In this regard, constructing certain modern infrastructures for tourism would not be accepted as this would mean interfering with the local community beliefs. This has contributed to non-development of most waterfalls.

### **What possible positive impacts do the local people surrounding the waterfalls have within the catchment areas where social culture and livelihood are concerned?**

The review and observation of what is taking place in areas where the ten waterfalls are located indicated minimal positive impact. It has been observed that local people have very little contribution and benefits from tourism development taking place in their areas. In a situation where little or no infrastructure has been developed to open doors for local people to find employment, benefits are low. Few restaurants are established in most of these waterfalls by the National Heritage and where they are established less than ten people are employed. Other activities which would require employment of local people are non-existent. Exchange of ideas with international tourists rarely exists as few international tourists visit the sites. As Bwalya-Umar and Kabwe (2016) observed and indicated that local people at household levels have no positive impact from tourism taking place in their areas, positive socioeconomic impacts are non-existent. The few art and crafts items sold in some areas like Chishimba falls are only done by few

individuals and the impact does not extend to majority households.

### **How often are these natural falls visited by International and Local People?**

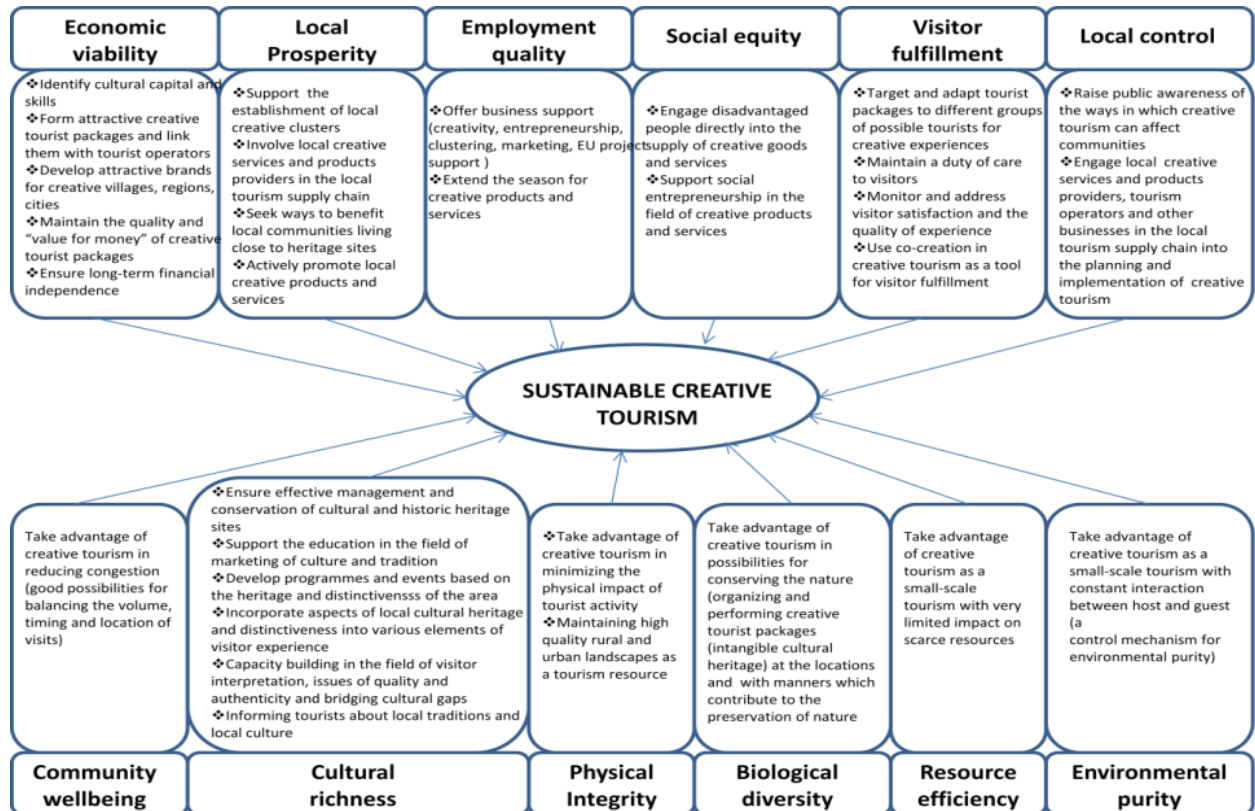
The review had indicated domestic tourists to have been visiting these waterfalls and were local people more than international tourists. The information from tripadvisor (2023) had indicated tourists who come to work in provinces where waterfalls are found and mere fact that they are within those areas they are prompted to visit these sites. In some districts only some teachers and pupils on public holidays and field work trips frequent water falls as excursion sites. Chishimba falls, Kundalila, Ntumbachushi and Kalambo have been known to be best destinations for pupils and teachers on long weekends and on Teacher's Day celebrations. The places have been reviewed to be excellent places to visit because of their good scenery, natural and fresh waters and quiet atmosphere that exist in these areas. International tourists' visits are limited because of above cited poor road networks and distances from Lusaka, Livingstone and Ndola Cities that are of international arrival destinations. This automatically affects sustainable tourism developments in these areas.

### **What measures need to be put in place to make the waterfalls viable to the tourist industry and the socio-economic development of the country?**

The researchers looked at the conceptual diagram under 2.3 where on advantages of creative tourism, Korez-Vide (2015), argues that because creativity is a process where tourism utilises tourist resources that are processes in essence, e.g., dancing, singing, crafts, culinary, paintings, festivals, these are more sustainable than tangible cultural products (citing Prentice and Andersen, 2003). She further emphasises that creativity can potentially add value more easily because of its scarcity as it allows destinations to innovate new products relatively rapidly thereby giving them a competitive advantage over other locations.

Korez-Vide further justifies that creativity is more mobile than tangible cultural products. Her assumption is that while cultural consumption is dependent on concentration of cultural resources, art performances and artworks can today be produced virtually anywhere, and faster without need for much infrastructure. Additionally, citing (Richards and Wilson, 2006) she argues that creativity involves not only value creation (economic

wealth) but also the creation of values (attitudes, behaviour, societal norms and morality).



**Source:** Korez-Vide (2015) own Model: The possible development path of cultural tourism/heritage.

This model answers the fourth research question of the measures that needs to be taken to make the ten waterfalls viable and sustainable. The advantage, therefore, for this creativity is that it requires both creative consumption and creative production on the part of the tourist and this arguably is what would foster sustainability.

The researchers found that despite the underdevelopment of most of the waterfalls in Zambia, using Korez-Vide's concept of creative tourism, this could turn around the potentiality of the waterfalls and make them more attractive and competitive to both local and international tourists.

Needless, to delve into specificity with regards to how sustainable Tourism and Cultural heritage in Zambia could be harnessed from such national tourism destination sites if developed further to International standards in line with the UNWTO 12 aims, tourism characteristics and policy implications, these natural waterfalls can be sources of high

socio-economic benefits to contribute meaningfully to Zambia's Growth Domestic Product (GDP) per annum instead of her dependence on the traditional mining and agriculture sectors, since tourism sector is placed third as contributor to the national GDP.

Culturally, under the framework concept of creative Sustainable Tourism and Cultural heritage, much could be realized as the Ten waterfalls are either within the catchment rural areas or are situated close to the tourist destination sites such as national parks although this was not a case in point for this study, an advantage that could make the local people productive in income generation. Such productive undertakings through mixed approach or One-Stop-Expo Tourism where both intangible and tangible heritages apart from being cultural exhibitions could generate resources and even create employment to local people thereby raising their standard of livelihoods as is the case in other countries like Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa to mention but a few.

## CONCLUSIONS

The above research findings are critical to Zambia as a nation as she tries to situate herself through Bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships and endeavoring to adequately explore what needs to be done and grow her economy. The researchers saw from this study findings that tourism industry and cultural heritage could contribute meaningfully alongside the other main traditional economic sectors, mining and agriculture, if deliberate measures by the government of the day would take to mitigate the challenges of viability and attractiveness of the waterfalls to international standards.

Reorganisation of cultural heritage, both intangible and tangible sites through mixed tourism or integrative approach would certainly enhance virtual exports that would in turn foster a sustainable economy that could be realised through sustainable tourism and cultural heritage making it more gainful by marketing the local tourism sites and cultural artifacts.

This study report could be aligned with other national impact related policy guidelines that the Ministry of Tourism could use to benchmark their future strategic developmental plans for the tourism industry in Zambia. The conceptual frameworks cited in this study, if utilised properly, would create the attractiveness and competitive standards of sustainable tourism and cultural heritage in whichever way possible to turn around Zambia's natural waterfalls under study as preferred tourism destinations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

If sustainable tourism and cultural heritage are to be achieved in Zambia, there must be a deliberate strategic intention to explore further how best using best practices adopted from developed countries to meet the international standards of these natural waterfalls. It is imperative that if the mixed or integrative one-stop-expo approach adopted to tap into the Zambian diverse and rich cultural heritage (both intangible and tangible) of the local people living around these natural phenomena, the tourism industry, without doubt would reach its much-desired sustainability and realise a positive contribution to the annual GDP of the country.

With the research outcomes in this study, Zambia must call for private investments and

partnerships that would improve on the accessibility, transportation, revenue collection and taxi regime, infrastructure development and internet connectivity technologies (ICT).

## Suggestions for further studies

The researchers encountering limiting factors as this study was delimited to the ten (10) natural waterfalls sites under study suggest the topics for further studies:

- a) How sustainable are Zambian Road works to the natural waterfalls destination sites?
- b) What has the Zambian Government done to improve sustainability of natural waterfalls economically and socially in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan through the implementation of Vision 2030 of Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs)?
- c) How integrative are the Zambian tourism natural waterfalls, cultural heritage, and National parks into mixed tourism approach and linkages?

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