

Roles of Tourism/Ecotourism in Conservation and Development in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The aim of this review is to highlight the roles of tourism/ecotourism in conservation and development in Ethiopia. Tourism industry is currently emerging as one of the most important economic sectors in the world. In 2013, tourism accounted for 6 % of the world's overall exports, 9.1 % of the employment (1 in 11 jobs) and 9 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In line with the growth of international tourism, the tourism industry in Ethiopia is now growing fast. Indeed, there is a great potential for the development of the tourism industry in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has many remarkable natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions. It is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. International tourist arrivals in Ethiopia increased from 138,856 in 1997 to 596,341 in 2012. Tourism receipts (revenues) also increased from USD 43 million in 1997 to USD 1.2 billion in 2012. Tourism is, generally, with minimum impacts on the environment. Moreover, tourism contributes to the conservation and management of natural, historical and cultural resources. Some of the revenues generated from tourism can be used (should be used) for conservation of biodiversity (establishment and management of protected areas, greening landscapes), preservation and restoration of historical and cultural resources and raising the environmental awareness of residents and visitors. Tourism significantly contributes to the local and national economy. In 2011, tourism accounted for 6.6 % of the overall export. In 2012, tourism generated over 700,000 jobs and accounted for 2.29 % of the GDP. Therefore, tourism plays a great role in natural and cultural heritage conservation and socio-economic development. Ethiopia needs to promote sustainable tourism including ecotourism. On the other hand, if tourism is not properly planned and managed, tourism development can lead to negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Tourism development in Ethiopia should be based on the principles of sustainability – social equity, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability. Sustainable tourism maximizes the benefits of tourism and minimizes its negative impacts. Ethiopian tourism, through effective policy and plans, is expected to make major progress in the future.

Keywords: Conservation, Development, Ecotourism, Ethiopia, Sustainability, Tourism, Tourist attractions

1. Introduction

Tourism has been given many definitions by various scholars, but no single, satisfactory definition has been universally agreed upon (Bull, 1995). Tourism is difficult to clearly define because of the involvement of many different stakeholders and economic sectors.

On the other hand, there are definitions of tourism recommended by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):

Visitor: Any person visiting a country (or community) other than that in which the person usually resides, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited. This definition covers two classes of visitors – tourist and excursionist.

Tourist: A temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours in the country (or community) visited, the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: (a) leisure, recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, or sport; or (b) business, family, mission, or meeting.

Excursionist: A temporary visitor staying less than 24 hours in the country (or community) visited (including travelers on cruises).

Tourism: In terms of balance-of-trade, accounting is defined as travel and transportation and is determined a business service export from the tourism recipient to the tourism generating economy.

In simple terms, tourism is the practice of traveling and also the business of providing associated products, services and facilities (Edgell and Swanson, 2013). Indeed, tourism is a service sector. Tourism, in the broad sense, encompasses the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. In order for tourism to happen, an individual has to travel, using any type or means of transportation. But all travel is not tourism (Chaudhary, 2009).

While travel and cultural tourism can be traced back to the time of gatherers and hunters, the notion of different types of tourism began early on with pilgrimage, educational travel, and cultural tourism already being well established by the 15th century (Timothy, 2011). He pointed out that travel for strictly leisure or pleasure purposes began in the post-industrial era of the 20th century, and contemporary patterns of human mobility are marked by increasing levels of independent travel, more off-the-beaten-path destinations, and a wide variety of

experiences. Today, hundreds of millions of people travel each year for pleasure, recreation, holiday, visiting friends and relatives (VFRs), curiosity, research, education, business, conference, meeting, sport and many other reasons or purposes.

A destination or host gains benefits by providing goods and services to visitors coming from the generators or generating areas and of course to local people. A destination may be a country, locality or city to which visitors travel as their main objective. A transit point or stopover is a point which, usually for transport or connection reasons, may be visited, but not as a main objective of travel. A generator or generating area is a country, locality or city where visitors normally live. To a destination, the generators or generating areas will be the markets.

Tourism is not a single industry, but rather a set of industries or activities. It is a human activity, which encompasses human behaviour, use of resources, and interactions with other people, economies and environments. It also involves physical movement of tourists to locales other than their normal living places. According to Bull (1995), tourism includes:

- Tourist needs and motivations;
- Tourism selection behaviour and constraints;
- Travel away from home;
- Market interactions between tourists and those supplying products to satisfy tourist needs;
- Impacts on tourists, host economies and environments.

Tourism is a large and highly competitive sector of the economy at all levels – local, national, regional and international. Tourism offers economic, social, cultural, intellectual, political and environmental benefits (Edgell and Swanson, 2013).

There are different forms of tourism. Based on tourist flows, tourism is divided into domestic tourism and international tourism. Domestic tourism involves those residents traveling within their own country, whereas international tourism involves those who travel to a country other than that in which they normally live. International tourism is subdivided into inbound tourism, in which non-residents are traveling in a given country, and outbound tourism, in which residents of a given country are traveling abroad to other countries. Based on tourism resources (attractions), the forms of tourism include cultural tourism, religious tourism, ethnic tourism, ecotourism (also known as nature tourism), medical tourism (also known as medical travel or health tourism), adventure tourism, event tourism (e.g. sport tourism, conference tourism) and dark tourism (visiting sites associated with death and human suffering).

The demand for tourism is influenced by a variety of factors. According to Eagles *et al.* (2002), Boniface and Cooper (2009), Chaudhary (2009), Timothy (2011) and Edgell and Swanson (2013), the demand for tourism is determined by:

- Tourism resources (natural, historic and cultural attractions);
- From world view: the level of economic development (least developed countries, developing countries, developed countries), population characteristics (levels of growth, distribution, density) and political regimes (political complexion, political groupings, deregulation, political instability);
- From personal view: income, employment, holiday, social status, educational level, leisure, mobility, age, gender, ethnic group, health, marital status, family constraints and personality factors (attitudes, perceptions, motivations);
- Technology, price, mode and frequency of transport, as well as characteristics of accommodation, facilities and travel organizers;
- Geographic location (distance);
- Climate, weather, and global climate change;
- Institutional seasonality such as school breaks;
- Social and environmental (conservation) concerns;
- Health concerns such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and avian influenza;
- Natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, hurricanes and floods;
- Special events such as world sports events, notably the World Football Cup, World Championships and Olympic Games.

Tourism has a significant impact in many economies, and it is growing fast (Glasson *et al.*, 1995; Chaudhary, 2009; Edgell and Swanson, 2013; UNWTO, 2014). Indeed, the growth of international tourism is attributed to higher standards of living in the Western world, improved modes of travel, and the end of liberation wars and the establishment of democratic governments in the developing countries – restoring peace and political stability (Harrison, 1995; McIntosh *et al.*, 1995; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996; Mbaiwa, 2003). Tourism has been growing rapidly since World War II and will continue its dynamic growth into the future (Eagles *et al.*, 2002; Boniface and Cooper, 2009; Timothy, 2011; Edgell and Swanson, 2013).

Today, most governments encourage the growth of tourism in their respective countries in order to

support socio-economic development. Tourism is vital for many countries, due to the income generated by the consumption of goods and services by tourists, the taxes levied on tourism businesses and the jobs created in tourism and tourism-related businesses. For poor countries, localities, cities and towns, tourism is seen as the fast track to development. Tourism can be a catalyst for local and national development, bringing employment, exchange earnings, balance of payments advantages and important infrastructure developments benefiting locals and visitors alike (Glasson *et al.*, 1995). Most countries now identify tourism as a discrete productive sector of their economies.

Tourism should be seen as a means of development in a broader sense (McIntosh *et al.*, 1995; Wahab and Pigram, 1997; Cooper *et al.*, 1998). These analysts describe the broader sense of tourism to mean the potential of the industry to have direct socio-economic impacts on destination areas. Development should not only refer to economic matters but should encompass economic, social, environmental and ethical considerations such that its measurement may incorporate indicators of poverty, unemployment, inequality and self-reliance (Binns, 1995). Indeed, there is a cumulative relationship between tourism development, the environment and socio-economic development (Carter, 1991). This means that if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, then it must be economically viable, culturally appropriate and ecologically sensitive (Wall, 1997). This suggests that the development of tourism in destinations should be based on the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as the conservation and management of natural resource bases, and the orientation of technological and institutional change, in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for the present and future generations (WCED, 1987).

The concept of sustainability is anchored on three main principles – social equity, economic efficiency and ecological sustainability (Serageldin, 1993; Angelson *et al.*, 1994; Mbaiwa, 2003). As such: social equity advocates for the fairness and equal access to resources by all the user groups; economic efficiency aims at the optimal use of resources to meet human needs or to maximize human welfare; and ecological/environmental sustainability stresses the need to preserve the integrity of ecosystems and use renewable natural resources at a rate that should not be faster than the rate at which the natural process renews them.

Related to the issue of sustainability in tourism development is the new concept of ecotourism. In the simple sense, ecotourism is the practice of visiting an area to see unspoiled habitats and the plants and animals that live in them. But it has many other dimensions. Ecotourism is a type of tourism that promotes conservation, has low visitor impacts, provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local communities and promotes visitor awareness in environmental conservation (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). It focuses on the need to promote a symbiotic, or at worst, co-existent relationship between tourism and environmental conservation (Carter, 1991). Ecotourism is environmentally sound, advocates for sustainable use of natural resources and takes into account the needs, aspirations and participation of the local communities. As such, ecotourism is sustainable. This implies that the two concepts of ecotourism and sustainable development are interrelated and both advocate for secure livelihoods of the poor, equitable distribution of tourism benefits and equal participation of stakeholders in decision-making and promote environmental conservation. While cultural tourism still predominates, presently there is the growing realm of ecotourism. Many tropical countries have capitalized on ecotourism by establishing protected areas and support services to tourists. Notable African countries include Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

Tourism industry is currently emerging as one of the most important economic sectors in the world. In fact, tourism is becoming more and more important in the economies of both developed and developing countries. The world is now striving for sustainable tourism in order to improve the local and global quality of life and provide a foundation for peace and prosperity. International tourism, through effective policies and plans, has the potential to be one of the most important stimulants for global improvement in the economic, social, cultural, intellectual, political and environmental dimensions of future lifestyles (Edgell and Swanson, 2013).

Tourism industry in East Africa including Ethiopia remained in its infancy, mainly because the economy has been disrupted by drought and political strife (Boniface and Cooper, 2009). In Ethiopia, this potential economic sector has not been given due attention until very recently. In line with the growth of international tourism, the tourism industry in Ethiopia is now growing fast (Mulugeta Lemenih, 2009; MoCT, 2013a, b). Cognizant of the importance of tourism for poverty alleviation and sustainable development, Ethiopia is now promoting the development of the tourism sector. But much is left to do in order to promote the sector, particularly ecotourism (Mulugeta Lemenih, 2009). The Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC), established in 1995, coordinated tourism in the country until it was upgraded to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) in 2005. MoCT is now responsible for formulating national policies and programmes for the development and promotion of domestic and international tourism. Two new entities, the Tourism Transformation Council (TTC) and the Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO), have been established with the objective of transforming the industry and based on the necessity to coordinate the activities of various stakeholders in the industry. In addition, the Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP), established in 2009, coordinates tourism projects and assists the capacity building and institutional strengthening of MoCT. The three main

national policies of the tourism sector are: the Cultural Policy (1995); the Wildlife Development, Conservation and Utilization Policy and Strategy (2004); and the Tourism Development Policy (2009).

2. Global and Regional Tourism Trends

World international tourist arrivals increased from 527 million in 1995 to 1,138 million in 2014 (Fig. 1). In 2009, however, international tourist arrivals recorded a 35 million (3.7 %) decline from 2008 (UNWTO, 2009). The global economic downturn, the A(H1N1) influenza pandemic and the air travel disruption caused by the volcanic eruption in Iceland turned 2009 into one of the toughest years for the world's tourism industry, especially for Europe and Americas. Africa was the only region to show positive figures in 2009 (Table 1). In the period 2005-2013, international tourist arrivals grew by 3.8 % (UNWTO, 2014). UNWTO forecasted international tourist arrivals to reach 1.4 billion by 2020 and 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO, 2014). The same source indicated that in 2012 and 2013 the world's top 10 tourism destinations were (international tourist arrivals in millions for 2012 and 2013, respectively, in parenthesis): France (83.0, pending), USA (66.7, 69.8), Spain (57.5, 60.7), China (55.7, 57.7), Italy (46.4, 47.7), Turkey (35.7, 37.8), Germany (30.4, 31.5), UK (29.3, 31.2), Russian Federation (25.7, 28.4) and Thailand (22.4, 26.5). Of all international tourist arrivals, 52 % travelled for leisure, recreation and holiday, 14 % for business and professional purposes and 27 % for VFRs, religion, health treatment and other reasons, while the purpose of visit for the remaining 7 % of arrivals was not specified. Of all international tourist arrivals, 53 % travelled by air, 40 % by road, 2 % by rail and 5 % by water.

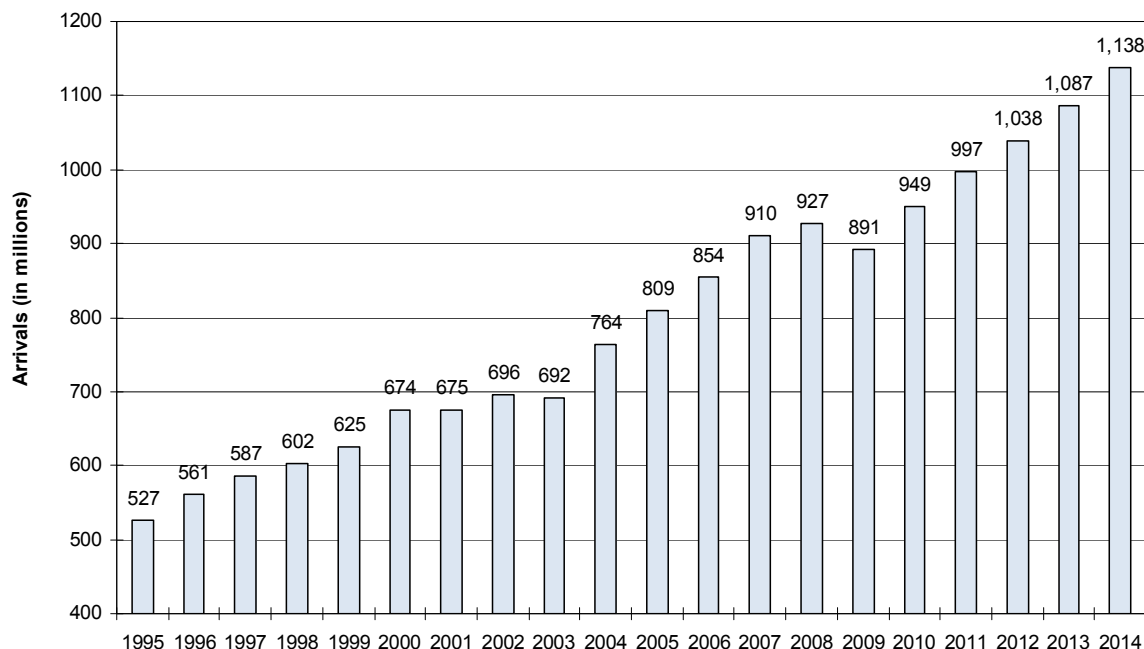


Fig. 1. World international tourist arrivals (1995-2014).

Source: UNWTO (2015)

Table 1. World international tourist arrivals by UNWTO region (2008-2014).

	International tourist arrivals (in millions)							Average annual growth (%) (2005-2013)**
	2008 *	2009 *	2010 *	2011 *	2012 *	2013 **	2014 ***	
World	917	883	952	996	1,035	1,087	1,138	3.8
By UNWTO region:								
Europe	485.2	461.7	487.6	517.8	535.1	563.4	588.4	2.9
Americas	147.8	141.7	150.3	156.13	162.1	167.9	180.6	2.9
Asia and the Pacific	184.1	181.1	205.1	218.1	232.9	248.1	263.0	6.2
Middle East	55.2	52.8	59.2	55.13	52.6	51.6	50.3	4.5
Africa	44.4	45.9	49.8	49.2	52.3	55.8	56.0	6.1

Sources: *UNWTO (2013); **UNWTO (2014); ***UNWTO (2015)

World international tourism receipts (revenues) increased from USD 211 billion in 1989 to USD 445

billion in 1998 (UNWTO, 1999), and from USD 851 billion in 2009 to USD 1,159 billion in 2013 (see Table 2 for the latter). In 2013, tourism accounted for 6 % of the world's overall exports, 9.1 % of the employment (1 in 11 jobs) and 9 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (UNWTO, 2014).

Table 2. World international tourism receipts by UNWTO region (2009-2013).

	International tourism receipts (in billions USD)				
	2009 *	2010 *	2011 *	2012 *	2013 **
World	851	927	1,030	1,075	1,159
By UNWTO region:					
Europe	410.9	409.3	920	457.8	489.3
Americas	166.2	180.7	1,991	212.6	229.2
Asia and the Pacific	203.1	255.3	289.4	323.9	358.9
Middle East	42.0	51.7	45.9	47.0	47.3
Africa	28.8	30.4	32.6	33.6	34.2

Sources: *UNWTO (2013); **UNWTO (2014)

Tourism, both for arrivals and receipts, has grown rapidly in the developing regions, for instance, Africa. International tourist arrivals in Africa increased from 44.4 million in 2008 to 56.0 million in 2014 (Table 1). In the period 2005-2013, international tourist arrivals in Africa grew by 6.1 %, the second highest growth across UNWTO regions. UNWTO forecasted international tourist arrivals in Africa to reach 85 million by 2020 and 134 million by 2030 (UNWTO, 2014). Africa's international tourism receipts also increased from USD 28.8 billion in 2009 to USD 34.2 billion in 2013 (Table 2).

The growth of tourism varies among African countries. In the early years of the 21st century: Kenya became the leading tourism destination in East Africa and one of Africa's most popular destinations (approaching 1 million arrivals), and tourism accounted for over 10 % of the GDP; in Ethiopia arrivals approached 150,000; and in South Africa tourism became a major industry, supporting 1 million jobs and accounting for over 8 % of the GDP (Boniface and Cooper, 2009). In 2012, international tourist arrivals reached 1,619,000 in Kenya and 596,000 in Ethiopia. In 2013, international tourist arrivals reached 9,510,000 in South Africa – the leading destination in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNWTO, 2014).

3. Ethiopia's Tourism Trend

International tourist arrivals in Ethiopia increased steadily from 138,856 in 1997 to 596,341 in 2012 (Fig. 2). In 2012, international tourist arrivals showed a growth rate of 13.92 % from 2011. The majority of Ethiopia's international tourist arrivals are from Americas, Europe and Africa. In the period 2009-2012, the top 10 inbound visitor markets were USA (the leading), UK, Germany, Kenya, China, India, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and France (MoCT, 2013a). In 2012, 32.1 % of international tourist arrivals reported traveling for leisure, recreation and holiday, 31.51 % for business and professional purposes and 22.83 % for transit, VFRs and other purposes, while the purpose of visit for the remaining 13.56 % of arrivals was not specified (MoCT, 2013b). The main mode of transport was arrival by air at Bole International Airport (86 %), and the remainder 14 % was arrival by land at border passings as the port of entry to the country.

Tourism receipts (earnings) also increased from USD 43,000,000 in 1997 to USD 1,190,775,613 in 2012 (Fig. 2). In 2012, receipts showed a growth rate of 189.27 % from 2011. The higher value estimated in 2012 is attributed to the update of parameters (the Tourist Expenditure Model developed) following the International Visitors' Exit Survey conducted in 2013 (MoCT, 2013a).

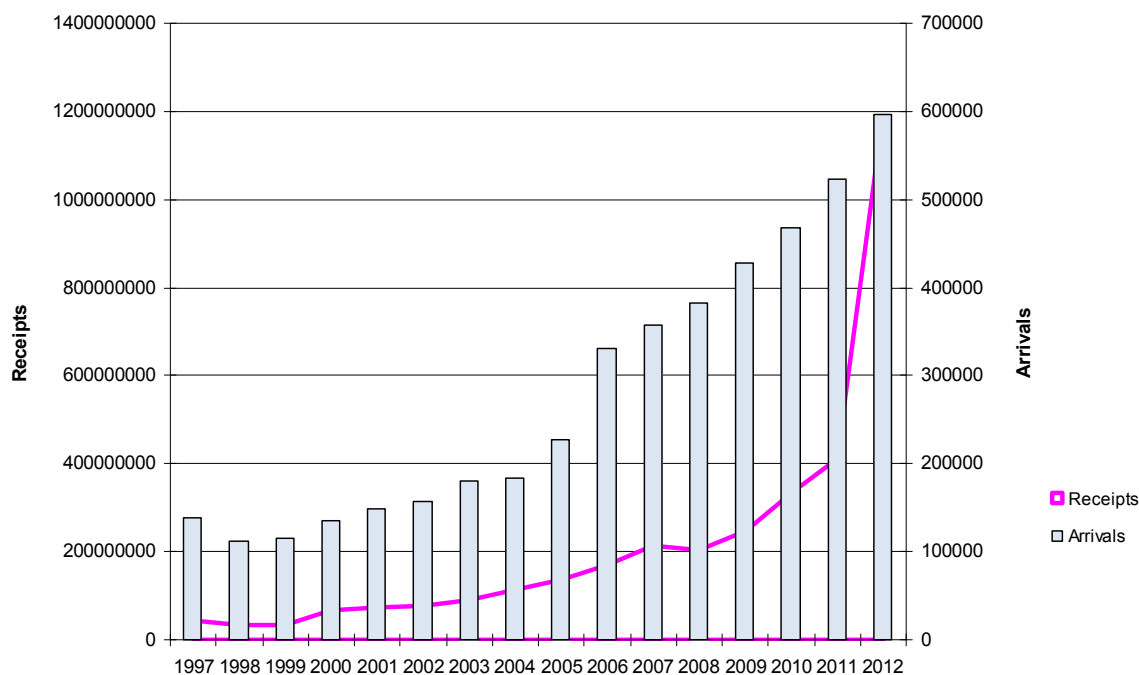


Fig. 2. International tourist arrivals and receipts (1997-2012).
 Source: MoCT (2013a)

4. Natural, Historical and Cultural Tourist Attractions of Ethiopia

Attractions are the *raison d'être* for tourism; they generate the visit, give rise to excursion circuits and create an industry of their own. Ethiopia has many remarkable natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions. Hundreds of thousands of international and domestic visitors travel to these sites each year. Indeed, Ethiopia is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. Semien and Bale Mountains, Blue Nile River (known in Ethiopia as Abay River) and Blue Nile Falls (known in Ethiopia as Tisat Falls), Lake Tana and its islands, and Rift Valley lakes are some of the leading tourist destination areas mainly because of their scenic beauty and/or rich biodiversity; and Axum, Gondar and Lalibela because of their historical and cultural significance. The International Visitors' Exit Survey conducted in 2013 by the MoCT showed that the motivations that made the international visitors to visit Ethiopia are cultural attractions (42.89 %), nature and wildlife attractions (29.29 %) and historical attractions (27.73 %) (MoCT, 2013b). The major tourist attractions of Ethiopia are given below.

Natural attractions

- ✓ Geological sites, especially the Rift Valley areas
- Danakil Depression/Afar Depression (with its colourful sulphur and salt lakes)
- Volcanically active areas such as Ertale (lava lake)
- Hotsprings, geysers and fumaroles (sites of health-related tourism)
- ✓ Wide altitudinal range – from 126 metres below sea level at the Danakil Depression/Afar Depression (the lowest point in Ethiopia) to 4,620 metres above sea level at Mt. Ras Dashen/Ras Dejen (the highest peak in Ethiopia and the fourth highest in Africa)
- ✓ Scenic landscapes such as the Semien and Bale Mountains, Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana and its islands, and Rift Valley lakes
- ✓ Blue Nile Gorge (known in Ethiopia as Abay Gorge), the largest canyon in Africa
- ✓ Favourable climate and weather (the climate varies from cool and temperate in the highlands to hot and arid in the lowlands)
- ✓ Rich biodiversity and endemism

Terrestrial ecosystems:

- Deserts and semi-deserts, woodlands, shrublands, grasslands, wetlands and forests (especially coffee forests in southwestern and southeastern Ethiopia)
- Afroalpine areas such as the Semien, Choke and Bale Mountains
- Islands of Lakes Tana, Ziway, Langano, Shalla, Abaya, Afrera and others

Inland water bodies:

- Rivers and their waterfalls such as the Blue Nile River and Blue Nile Falls, and Awash River and Awash Falls

- Lakes such as Tana, Ziway, Langano, Abijata, Shalla, Hawassa, Abaya and Chamo
- Hydroelectric power dams such as Koka Dam, Tekeze Dam and Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile River (under construction)

Endemic species:

- Endemic plants such as *Acanthus sennii*, *Bidens mesfinii*, *Echinops kebericho*, *Eragrostis tef*, *Erythrina brucei* and *Boswellia pirottae*
- Endemic animal such as Walia Ibex, Red Fox/Ethiopian Wolf, Mountain Nyala, Gelada Baboon, Swayne's Hartebeest, Menelik's Bushbuck and Bale Monkey

Protected areas:

- National Forest Priority Areas (NFPAs) such as Wof Washa (northern Shewa), Menagesha-Suba (western Shewa), Adaba-Dodola (Bale) and Bonga (Kaffa)
- National parks such as the Semien Mountains National Park, Awash National Park, Bale Mountains National Park, Nechisar National Park, Gambella National Park (with its spectacular seasonal migration of animals between Ethiopia and South Sudan in search of water and grazing), Omo National Park and Mago National Park
- Wildlife sanctuaries such as Babile Elephant Sanctuary and Senkelle Swayne's Hartebeest Sanctuary
- Wildlife reserves such as Allideghi (Afar) and Chew Bahir (SNNPR)
- Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs) such as Dabus Valley (Oromia) and Murle (SNNPR)
- Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) such as Guassa (Menz/North Shewa)

Historical and cultural attractions:

- ✓ Archaeological sites such as Hadar (Afar)
- ✓ The skeleton of Lucy (a 3.2 million years old female of the early human species *Australopithecus afarensis*)
- ✓ Ancient architectural ruins of Axum, Gondar and Lalibela
- ✓ War-related sites such as Mekdela (Wollo) and Adwa (Tigray)
- ✓ Cultural diversity (nearly 80 ethnic groups which have their own distinct languages, cultures and lifestyles)
- ✓ Alluring agricultural landscapes
- ✓ Historic villages such as Gafat (near Debre Tabor) where Sebastopol was manufactured
- ✓ People's hospitality
- ✓ Ancient churches such as St. Mary of Zion at Axum (where the original Ark of the Covenant has rested) and monasteries such as Debre Damo and those on islands of Lake Tana and Lake Ziway
- ✓ Ancient mosques such as Ahmed Negash (Tigray), Jemma Nigus (Wollo) and Sof Omar (Bale)
- ✓ Museums, especially the National Herbarium (ETH) and Zoological Natural History Museum (ZNHM) at Addis Ababa University and the National Museum of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa)

Internationally designated sites (by UNESCO):

- ✓ World Heritage Sites (9: 1 natural*; 8 cultural)
- Semien Mountains National Park (1978)*
- Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela (1978)
- Fasil Ghebbi, Gondar (1979)
- Axum (1980)
- Lower Valley of the Awash (1980)
- Lower Valley of the Omo (1980)
- Tiya (1980)
- Harar Jugol, The Fortified Historic Town (2006)
- Konso Cultural Landscape (2011)
- ✓ Biosphere Reserves (BRs)
- Kaffa Biosphere Reserve (2010)
- Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve (2010)
- Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve (2012)
- Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve (2015)

Special events:

- ✓ Religious celebrities such as Meskel Festival (Finding of the True Cross of Jesus Christ) (inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013) and Ethiopian Epiphany
- ✓ International conferences in Addis Ababa (United Nations Conference Centre, African Union Conference Centre, Millennium Hall) as well as major towns
- ✓ Sports events, especially athletics such as the Great Ethiopian Run

5. Factors Affecting Tourism Development

Despite the existence of diverse tourism resources (natural, historical and cultural attractions), the tourism industry in Ethiopia is still poorly developed. There are a number of factors (challenges/problems/constraints) that have affected or are presently affecting tourism development in Ethiopia. The major factors are:

- Recurrent drought and famine, political instability (civil war), poverty and strained diplomatic relations with tourist generating countries, especially in the past (all affected international image of the country);
- Low level of understanding on tourism and its importance in the policymakers and local communities;
- Lack of appropriate tourism policy, strategies and plans;
- Lack of adequate human and financial resources;
- Inadequate infrastructure, facilities and support services;
- Limited tourism research, education and training;
- Lack of adequate tourism data;
- Deforestation, environmental degradation and loss of wildlife;
- Poor environmental hygiene and sanitation;
- Poor collaborations among tourism stakeholders;
- Limited Ethiopian tourism promotion in the international arena;
- Effects of global economic and political crises.

6. Roles of Tourism/Ecotourism

In Ethiopia, tourism has economic, social, cultural, political and environmental benefits. Tourism, if it is made sustainable, has the potential to enhance the conservation of natural, historical and cultural resources, improve the livelihoods of local communities and enhance national development.

6.1. Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation

Tourism is generally with minimum impacts on the environment. Other economic sectors such as agriculture, mining, industry and transport are far more environmentally damaging. Moreover, tourism contributes to the conservation and management of natural, historical and cultural resources. Some of the revenues generated from tourism can be used (should be used) for conservation of biodiversity (establishment and management of protected areas, greening landscapes), preservation and restoration of historical and cultural resources and raising the environmental awareness of residents and visitors. Tourism can also stimulate funding for conservation. Thus, tourism plays an important role in natural and cultural heritage conservation.

6.2. Local and National Economy

Tourism significantly contributes to the local and national economy. Tourism generates income and employment opportunities to local communities. In protected areas, local people are employed as managers, guards, scouts, drivers, tourist guides, cooks and housekeepers (tentkeepers). They also generate income by hiring riding and packing animals (horses, mules, camels) and selling traditional handicrafts. Moreover, community-based ecotourism has been recently started in some areas such as Guassa, Lake Ziway and Lepis forest (Arsi), bringing income to the local communities, while preserving the local environment and culture. Ecotourism activities help to diversify the livelihoods of local communities.

Tourism has also significant contribution to national employment and GDP. A large number of people are employed directly in tourism businesses (historic sites, religious sites, museums, protected areas, botanic gardens, zoos, hotels, cafeterias, restaurants, guesthouses, resorts, lodges, travel agents, tour operators, vehicle rentals, souvenir shops, banking, catering and tourism training centres, tourism consultancy firms, internet centres, entertainment venues, etc.) and indirectly in tourism-related businesses (wholesalers and retailers, supermarkets, etc.). In 2012, tourism generated over 700,000 jobs (World Bank, 2012).

Government revenues collected from the tourism sector are from tourism businesses and are in the form of license fees, import duties, and taxes from income, property and sales; and from visitors and are in the form of user fees (charged for airplanes, vehicle rentals, entry, camping and boating). Ecotourism in protected areas generates considerable revenue, as is the case in the Semien and Bale Mountains National Parks and Adaba-Dodola forest. Between 1993 and 2002, the total direct income from the country's 8 national parks, from sport hunting and live exports amounted to ETB 23 million (EWCO, 2003). In the year 2004, the income from provision of services to 1,000 visitors of the Adaba-Dodola forest amounted to about ETB 125,000 (Tsegaye Tadesse, 2009). The gross annual value of ecotourism (20 % of the tourism industry) is estimated to be USD 15.4 million (Mulugeta Lemenih, 2009). Thus, Ethiopia needs to promote the ecotourism industry as there is an abundance of nature-based tourism products in the country. Ethiopia has various protected areas for ecotourism development, which has multiple purposes. By promoting ecotourism through the protection of the environment, biodiversity is preserved, jobs are created, market for local products is created, environmental education within

the communities is promoted, and understanding of local peoples and cultures are fostered among the tourists who visit these communities (Belachew Beyene, 2016). Protected areas have environmental (conservation), scientific, educational, aesthetic, social and economic values. Protected areas need tourism, and tourism needs protected areas (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). They pointed out that the potential benefits of tourism in protected areas are to protect the natural and cultural heritage, enhance economic opportunities, and advance the quality of life of all concerned.

Tourism is the third main source of foreign exchange earnings in Ethiopia (MoCT, 2013b). The contribution of the tourism sector to foreign exchange export and GDP in the period 2007-2012 is given in Table 3. In 2011, tourism accounted for 6.6 % of the overall export. In 2012, tourism generated USD 1,190,775,613, accounting for 2.29 % of the GDP, which is much higher than that of the previous years under consideration. However, it should be noted that the contribution of the tourism sector to the national economy (GDP) is still low compared to that of many African countries. As indicated previously, tourism accounted for over 10 % of the GDP in Kenya and 8 % of the GDP in South Africa. Furthermore, World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) forecasted tourism development in Ethiopia to contribute 26.2 % of the country's overall export, 8.3 % of the overall employment and 9.6 % of the GDP by 2020 (WTTC, 2012).

Table 3. Contribution of tourism sector to foreign exchange export and GDP (2007-2012).

Year	Tourism foreign exchange receipts	Export (in millions USD)	% contribution of tourism sector to foreign exchange export	GDP (in millions USD)	% contribution of tourism sector to GDP
2007	213,936,063	1,185.10	18.05	19,539.00	1.09
2008	204,855,489	1,465.70	13.98	26,579.00	0.77
2009	246,415,374	1,447.00	5.78	32,256.00	0.76
2010	333,352,000	2,003.10	6.01	34,836.48	0.96
2011	411,638,987	2,747.10	6.59	38,539.00	1.1
2012	1,190,775,613				2.29

Sources: MoCT (2013a, b)

Tourism can also influence the domestic economy through its influence on infrastructure development. In the last two decades, the growing tourism industry has stimulated the development of infrastructure and support services such as roads, water and electric power supplies, hotels, cafeterias, restaurants, guesthouses, resorts, lodges, campsites, airports and airstrips in destination areas. For instance, the Semien Mountains National Park and Bale Mountains National Park have made expansion of infrastructure to satisfy tourists' needs. Ethiopia's domestic and international flight routes have increased. Moreover, tourism businesses are increasing, especially in Addis Ababa, Axum, Gondar, Lalibela, Bahir Dar, Hawassa and Arba Minch, to offer goods and services to visitors and local people. The capital Addis Ababa is the seat of the African Union Headquarters and many international organizations, with facilities for shopping, communication and entertainment, and transportation by air and road to most parts of the country. On the other hand, it should be noted that available infrastructure and support services are still inadequate compared to the ever-increasing tourism demand (tourists).

Tourism is a viable option for Ethiopia for natural and cultural heritage conservation and socio-economic development. Tourism has several advantages, which include:

- It is environmentally friendly;
- It creates income and employment opportunities to a large number of people;
- It contributes to the national economy (GDP);
- It enhances infrastructure development;
- It requires relatively low investment capital;
- It does not require high technology;
- It catalyzes other economic sectors, especially hotel, transport, communication, banking and trade;
- It fosters entrepreneurship (spawning new businesses);
- It promotes production of local handicrafts;
- It facilitates cultural exchange;
- It promotes peace (as it improves relations between people, and Ethiopia's relations with other nations).

It is thus worthwhile to promote the tourism industry in Ethiopia. On the other hand, if tourism is not properly planned and managed, tourism development can lead to negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts.

7. Negative Impacts of Tourism

While tourism has mostly positive impacts, there are also negative impacts of tourism. Most tourism development places additional pressure on the environmental resources upon which it is based, compromising the future prospects of the local communities and, indeed, the expectations of tourists themselves (Carter, 1991).

Tourism is, by its very nature, an agent of change (Glasson *et al.*, 1995). Some of the impacts of change may be controlled, regulated or directed. If properly managed, tourism has the potential of being a renewable industry, where resource integrity is maintained or even enhanced. If mismanaged, or allowed to expand within short-term goals and objectives, it has the capability of destroying the very resources upon which it is built. The concept of sustainable development is thus important to tourism development since the destruction of tourism resources for the short-term gain will deny the benefits to be gained from mobilization of those resources in the future (Carter, 1991). The costs or negative impacts of tourism are of three kinds – financial and economic, socio-cultural and environmental (Eagles *et al.*, 2002).

For instance, in the Okavango Delta in northwestern Botswana, tourism development is predominantly foreign owned and controlled; it has resulted in negative socio-economic impacts (loss of local people's resource ownership and use rights, inequitable distribution of tourism benefits), socio-cultural impacts (crime, prostitution, the Western influence on local language and dress) and environmental impacts (habitat destruction, water pollution, noise pollution); and generally it is not according to the principles of sustainability (Mbaiwa, 2003). In Kenya, Western visitors have caused offence to a traditional Muslim society by their dress and behaviour and social mores are changing to the extent that sex tourism is a problem (Boniface and Cooper, 2009). Tourism development should be in harmony with the socio-cultural, ecological and heritage goals, values and aspirations of the host community (Ritchie, 1991).

The tourism industry in Ethiopia is now beginning to have negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (but a small-scale). Indeed, there are little or no studies on this matter in Ethiopia. What follows is a narration from some sources and observations.

Benefits (e.g. revenues) that local communities obtain from protected areas and community-based tourism are insignificant when compared to those obtained by the private tour operators or by the government (i.e. limited share of tourism earnings reaching the local communities). This means tourism does not have substantial and meaningful economic benefits to the local communities (meager economic benefits because of revenue leakage from the area); hence, its sustainability in terms of socio-economic benefits becomes questionable. In the real sense, local communities should be both the benefactor and beneficiary of the tourism development in their area. If the local communities do not benefit from the tourism in their area, they are less motivated to conserve the area's natural, historical and cultural resources upon which tourism is based and support tourism activities, leading to loss or degradation of the resources and eventually to the detriment of tourism in the area. In Ethiopia, protected areas have failed to meet their conservation objectives mainly because of the exclusion of local people from participation and lack of sharing of benefits derived from the protected areas (Haileab Zegeye, 2004). Local communities should gain economic, social, cultural and other benefits from the tourism in their area. The study on local community support for tourism development in the Semien Mountains National Park (SMNP) showed that the local communities support the tourism development when they participate in the tourism development decision-making and planning, are aware about the tourism development and gain socio-economic benefits from the tourism development, while the tourism development would help to preserve the natural environment (Leul Yohannes and Endalkachew Teshome, 2013). In many areas, with tourism development, prices tend to rise, making everyday life more expensive for visitors, and local residents as well.

Furthermore, there are negative socio-cultural impacts such as cigarette smoking, prostitution, crime and the Western influence on local dress, especially on young people. Though most visits to Ethiopia are trouble-free, international visitors are now facing low-level but rampant street crimes such as mugging, purse snatching and pick pocketing by thieves that often operate in teams, and other safety challenges such as harassment, theft and holdups (MoCT, 2013b). Socio-cultural impacts of tourism in destination areas are associated with changes in traditional ideas and values, norms and identities of the local people (Glasson *et al.*, 1995). These changes are beginning to affect Ethiopia. This calls the need to create awareness in the youth on the importance of maintaining our cultural identity and social ethics. Stealing and vandalism of historic and cultural artifacts by visitors is also a problem.

Tourism development is also producing negative environmental impacts in tourist sites, especially protected areas. Development of infrastructure such as roads, lodges and campsites in protected areas reduces the scenic beauty of the areas, affects drainage, causes removal of vegetation, and affects wildlife breeding sites and travel routes. The Semien Mountains National Park, established as a park in 1967 and registered by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1978, was listed in 1996 by UNESCO as endangered World Heritage Site because of the decline in numbers of Walia Ibex caused by heavy encroachment from the local community as well as road construction across the park (Leul Yohannes and Endalkachew Teshome, 2013). Trampling by visitors and horses has caused soil erosion, soil compaction, and damage on vegetation and wildlife (including soil fauna). Rare and endemic flora and fauna are sensitive to trampling, and thus the issue should not be overlooked. Campfire and cigarette smoking can cause incidence of forest fires. Wildlife poaching/trafficking, especially elephant poaching/trafficking, by residents in and around protected areas for skins, ivory and horns for

commercial purposes is becoming a problem. There is chasing of wildlife by visitors, especially domestic. Habituation to humans has caused changed wildlife behaviour, such as approaching people for food, as is the case in Gelada Baboon. Powered boats are damaging aquatic animals and lake banks, for instance, in Lake Tana and Lake Ziway. In Addis Ababa and major towns, pollution due to discharge of domestic and industrial wastes has become a problem. In Addis, air pollution due to CO₂ emissions from factories and outdated vehicles is also becoming a concern, especially for international visitors. In protected areas, littering, especially plastic bags, pieces of paper, cans, bottles and human waste, along roads and on campsites, is causing environmental pollution. Noise pollution caused by vehicles and visitors, though temporary, is causing a disturbance to wildlife such as Walia Ibex and Mountain Nyala. Endemic species are, by virtue of their limited ranges, highly vulnerable to extinction. Thus, due attention should be given to areas with rich biodiversity and endemism, such as the Semien and Bale Mountains and Lake Tana. This calls the need for managing protected areas' resources and visitors.

Negative environmental impacts of tourism in protected areas worldwide are well highlighted by Eagles *et al.* (2002). They pointed out that tourism operations within protected areas need to be carefully planned, managed and monitored in order to ensure their long-term sustainability; otherwise, negative impacts will be generated and tourism will instead contribute to the further deterioration of these areas. Tourism in protected areas should develop in a sustainable fashion, while respecting local communities and conditions.

Hence, tourism in Ethiopia needs to be properly planned and managed such that negative impacts are minimal. Measures should be taken to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism. Understanding both positive and negative impacts of tourism will lead to practical sustainable tourism development. It is also important to learn from the tourism development experiences of other African countries (for example, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa) and elsewhere in the world (for example, Costa Rica, Maldives). Ethiopia should strive for sustainable tourism development that preserves the natural and cultural heritage, improves the livelihoods of local communities and enhances national development.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Tourism industry is currently emerging as one of the most important economic sectors in the world, and is so in Ethiopia. Indeed, there is a great potential for the development of the tourism industry in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has many remarkable natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions. It is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. Tourism is generally with minimum impacts on the environment. Moreover, tourism contributes to the conservation and management of natural, historical and cultural resources. Some of the revenues generated from tourism can be used (should be used) for conservation of biodiversity (establishment and management of protected areas, greening landscapes), preservation and restoration of historical and cultural resources and raising the environmental awareness of residents and visitors. Tourism significantly contributes to the local and national economy. Therefore, tourism plays a great role in natural and cultural heritage conservation and socio-economic development. Ethiopia needs to promote sustainable tourism including ecotourism. On the other hand, if tourism is not properly planned and managed, tourism development can lead to negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Tourism development in Ethiopia should be based on the sustainability principles – social equity, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability. Sustainable tourism maximizes the benefits of tourism and minimizes its negative impacts. Ethiopian tourism, through effective policy and plans, is expected to make major progress in the future.

Therefore, in order to promote sustainable tourism including ecotourism and thereby enhance its roles in conservation and development in Ethiopia, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- Formulate appropriate tourism policy and legislation;
- Ensure the involvement of scientists, policymakers, local communities, academic institutions, tourism organizations, the private sector, NGOs and all other relevant stakeholders in tourism policy, planning and development;
- Raise awareness about the tourism industry in the government and the general public;
- Allocate adequate human and financial resources to the tourism sector;
- Enhance the development of infrastructure, facilities and support services;
- Promote tourism research, education and training;
- Strengthen the conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites;
- Promote the generation and management of tourism data and information (for inbound, outbound and domestic tourism);
- Improve environmental hygiene and sanitation;
- Improve the quality of tourism products and services;
- Ensure fair and fraudless prices for tourism products and services;
- Ensure the involvement of local communities in tourism businesses;
- Provide training on tourism management and entrepreneurship skills to local people;

- Diversify tourism products and services;
- Strengthen the promotion of inbound tourism, as well as outbound and domestic tourism;
- Develop monitoring and evaluation system for the tourism industry;
- Ensure peace and security;
- Strengthen collaborations among tourism institutions at local, national, regional and international levels;
- Promote diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible.

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