



A SURVEY OF CULTURAL HERITAGES AND THE GROWTH OF TOURISM IN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry in Ethiopia is beginning to rise owing to the UNESCO inscribed world heritages and dependable security of the country since the 1990s. But, scientific research papers on Ethiopia's tourism growth and development are scant. There is a series gap in description of the tourism resources of Ethiopia and analysis of the development of the sector from its inception in the 1960s up-to-date.

The challenges, the different stages it went through and prospects of the sector need to be studied. Tourism resources of Ethiopia need also be revealed to the global community via academic papers. The purpose of this paper is to write a substantive overview of the historical development of tourism and survey the cultural heritages of Ethiopia. This paper is based on secondary sources from government documents, policy documents, researches, magazines, tourism reports and tourism statistics and related sources.

It is argued that the potential of Ethiopia's cultural heritage remained untapped for centuries and the country named as one of the poorest countries in the world. As a recommendation, academic researchers on Ethiopian tourism need to be a priority by scholars in the field and the government if the country has to take advantage of its tourist resources.

Key Words: Cultural Heritages, Ethiopian Tourism, Growth of Tourism, Tourism Resources, World Heritages.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major questions about tourism development of a country is related to how and when a country is known to the global community. Tourism is an economic sector that is highly dependent on the state of familiarity to the wider community and availability of cultural and natural heritage resources. When these two preconditions are met, people will travel to a destination and the business of tourism takes place. Ethiopia's name is found in many classical literatures that make Ethiopia one of the oldest countries of the world. The three religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam have taken the lions' share to introduce Ethiopia to the outside world next to trade that started in the more remote past.

A well documented version of foreigners' visit to Ethiopia and its people began with the expedition of Francisco Alvarez in 1520 by the order of the King of Portugal to convert Ethiopians in to Catholicism. Alvarez was later followed by other fellow Europeans. A Scottish traveler named James Bruce traveled to Ethiopia with the objective of tracing the source of the Blue Nile River. He was able to produce the most inclusive traveler account about Ethiopia. He stayed in the country for more than four years (1769-1772) and produced five volume account about Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and its people (Bahiru, 2002). He contributed a lot in introducing Abyssinian culture, politics, economy, religion and daily life. He inspired other European scientists, diplomats, business people and missionaries to come to Ethiopia afterwards.

Many more visitors came to Ethiopia after Bruce. The nineteenth century saw diversification of travelers that included medical doctors, geographers, scientific and commercial crews which further boosted the exposition of Ethiopia to the outside world. People with different curiosity in the country explain more about issues that caught his attention and the issues that explain his trip to the region (Hotten, 1968). The victory of Adwa against Italian colonial aggressors in 1996 and the subsequent developments gaining of attention from the international community also marked another opportunity for Ethiopia to be more familiar for many people globally.

On the other hand, recurrent wars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and famine in the second half of the twentieth century inflicted sheds on the popularity of Ethiopia. Even today there are many people who know Ethiopia for the 1965 and 1984/85 starvations and famine in Ethiopia instead of its world class heritage sites like Axum, Lalibela and Gondar (Yabibal, 2010; Ayalew, 2009; Mengistu, 2008). The inception and growth of tourism in Ethiopia and opportunities and the challenges has not been studied and disclosed to the largest global community and academia. Therefore, the study and communication of the growth and development of tourism in Ethiopia is a timely issue and a necessity.

2 SURVEYS OF CULTURAL HERITAGES OF ETHIOPIA

Heritage in its broader sense is considered to include everything that people want to save. Hence, heritage refers both the material and non-material culture of man as well as elements of nature where man lives with. The aspects of the past that people want to save include human-made historic environment, nature, landscape, monuments, sites, artifacts, activities historic buildings, and archaeological sites, historic gardens, battlefields, industrial buildings and historic ruins and people. These are elements of heritage that are commonly organized at official level as well as the subject of management. Heritage is considered as one of the subject that includes almost the whole of human experience.

Ethiopia in particular and eastern Africa in general is proved to be center of early human and cultural evolutions. The region has provided abundant evidences on such aspects of human past that have widened our understanding on human behavior and appearance. This is basically related with the geological active nature of the region with faulting and rapid erosion that has exposed numerous layers from deposits that contain early fossil remains (Finneran, 2007; Merid, 1984).

Ethiopia is endowed with abundant Christian and Islamic Heritages. Ancient monuments, Churches, Monasteries, Mosques, ruins of palaces, inscription and unique cultural traditions are the major cultural wealth. Diverse population meant different practices and way of life which make Ethiopia attractive for international tourists and domestic tourists. The rich wealth of Ethiopia's material culture has been exposed to plunder and looting at two historical periods. The first was the looting of considerable amount of Christian cultural heritages from the northern half of the country in 1868 by the British army. The second as the longer period of the Italians episode from 1935 to 1941 when the Italians occupied major cities and urban centers and the majority of the country remained in guerilla fight until 1941 final liberation (Pankhurst, 1999).

In the context of Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 209/2000 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia defined cultural tourism as ‘anything tangible or intangible which is the product of creativity and labour of man in the pre-history and history times, that describes and witnesses to the evolution of nature and which has a major value in its scientific, historical, cultural, artistic and handicraft content.’ Ethiopia’s cultural heritages include productions of the pre-Christian and Christian era that are the sole source of history and Ethiopian studies. Ethiopia and the horn of Africa are usually studied as a whole because of the influential positions Ethiopia had in the region and because of the availability of Geez sources not only for Ethiopia but also for the majority of the Horn of Africa.

2.1 TANGIBLE CULTURES

Ethiopia is rich in natural and cultural heritages with one natural attraction and eight cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage list. The eight UNESCO world tangible cultural heritages of the country are the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela(1978), the Castles of Gondar(1979), the Obelisks of Axum(1980), Tiya Carved Stones(1980), the Lower Valley of Awash(1980), the Lower Valley of Omo(1980), the fortified town of Harar(2006) and the Konso Cultural Landscape (2011)(<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ET/>). Still, there are other magnificent cultural heritages that are put in the waiting list to be registered as world heritages by the UNESCO.

Some of the key world cultural heritage destinations in Africa include Ethiopia (Axum, Lalibela, Gondar) and Zimbabwe (Great Zimbabwe) from the Sub-Sahara Africa and Egypt (Pyramids, Luxor, Abu Simbel, Aswan) and Libya (Leptis Magna, Sabratha, Ptolemais, Apollonia), Mali (Timbuktu, Djenne) and Morocco (Fez, Volubilis) from North and West Africa (World Bank, 2006). The ancient town of Axum, where Ethiopia’s statehood and early civilization started in the first century BC, is known for its age old obelisks and many other historical and archeological remnants. Axum was the ancient political and religious capital of Ethiopia. A three thousand years old languages inscription in South Arabian, Geez and Greek languages is a testimony of its ancient contacts with the major states of the period outside the continent of Africa.

The monolithic stelae of Axum are still the mysteries of the Axumite civilization with huge obelisk carved out of a single rock body as high as 33 meters. A funeral symbolism is connected with these monuments erected probably in the vicinity of the unfound tombs of the great kings of the pre-Christian era. In numerous spots of the town of Axum and its vicinity, a

great number of dressed stones, roughly carved, correspond to the same ancient funeral customs.

2.1.1 Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela

Ethiopia has one of the marvellous and architecturally impressive cultural heritages at northern Ethiopia, Lalibela. These churches were built in the twelfth century by the then king, King Lalibela. According to oral traditions, the King built these churches for his ambition and attempt to create a second holy land in Ethiopia and to avoid the long journey of Ethiopian pilgrims to Jerusalem that had been endangering the lives of Ethiopian pilgrims.

It is very mysterious and confusing to have a clear imagination of how these churches might have been constructed with such magnificent architectural features in the early years of medieval Ethiopia. Based on their nature, these churches can be classified into three main categories. The first group are built-up cave churches. The second group are rock-hewn cave churches where some part of the churches is made from monolithic basalt rock. The third, rock-hewn monolithic churches are the most amazing and are completely freestanding (Mengistu, 2008; Temesgen, 2013).

King Lalibela founded Lalibela town during the time of the Zagwe dynasty which ruled over Ethiopia from the eleventh to the mid thirteenth centuries after power shifted southward with the decline of the Aksumite Empire. The locality was known first by the name of Roha, and the town was renamed Lalibela after the king's death to honour his achievements. The architecture of the churches is thought to have been influenced by the early Aksumite architecture. Each building is architecturally unique with beautiful craftsmanship, and some are decorated with interesting wall paintings and carved figures (Elene & Getu, 2012; Sergew, 1972)

2.1.2 The Castles of Gondar

The Castles of Gondar denotes the entire complex of castles and palaces in the town of Gondar and its vicinity. The oldest and most impressive of Gondar's imperial structures is the two-storeyed palace of Emperor Fasiledes, built of roughly hewn brown basalt stones held together with mortar. One of the most widely debated issues is whether the architecture is an Ethiopian or a foreign influence. Some sources claim that the architecture is influenced by contemporary Portuguese architectural design. Still, some sources claim that Gondarine architecture was the creation of an Indian architect (Bahiru, 2002; Ayalew, 2009; Mengistu, 2008).

In addition to the palace complex, Gondar is known for hosting a number of Monasteries and churches with immense Christian material cultures and traditional crafts. During the medieval period, Gondar was an important trading centre connecting Sudan and Ethiopia with the Red Sea line of trade. The main Fasil Ghebbi (palace compound) contains the Castle of Emperor Fasilidas, the Castle of Emperor Iyasu, the Library of Tsadiku Yohannes, the Chancellery of Tsadiku Yohannes, the Castle of Emperor Dawit, the Palace of Mentewab and Banqueting Hall of the Emperor Bekaffa. In the outskirts of Gondar we find the Debre Berhan Selassie (Monastery and church), the Bath of Fasiledes; Kiddus Yohannes, Qusquam (Monastery and Church), Gorgora (Monastery and Church) and the Palace of Guzara (Getachew, 2007; MoCT, 2009).

2.1.3 The Lower Valley of Awash

The Lower Valley of Awash is found in Afar Regional State of Ethiopia. This is a site of Paleo-anthropological research. Tremendous findings are registered in the area contributing a lot in the search for human origin and evolution. The most spectacular discovery of Lucy, *Australopithecus Afarensis*, a 3.2 million years old hominid in 1974, paved the way for more achievements in the study of human origin. The discoveries registered by the Middle Awash Research Project, an international, multi disciplinary scientific study with the objective of establishing an accurate geological information for elucidating human origins and evolution, has established the region as one of the world's most important paleontological sites with the discovery of the most ancient hominids dating between the time period of 5.3 – 3.9 million years (Mengistu, 2008; WB, June 2006).

The recent achievement with the discovery of Selam, a fossil that is the most complete and 150,000 years older than Lucy, is another testimony for the importance of the region for the study of human origin. The Lower Valley of Awash was included in the list of World heritage sites in 1980. The Awash valley is now one of the tourist attractions of the country. Ongoing archaeological and paleontological studies in the area contributed to the flow of considerable amount of tourists in the last decades after the security of the region has been improved significantly. Ethiopia is working too hard to benefit from this cultural heritage center by preserving the resources, improve infrastructure of the area and promoting the resources to the global community. The outstanding geological sites of Ertale active volcano and Daloll depression are the other tourist pull factors of the Awash Valley (Ayalew, 2009; ANRSTC, 2004; Mengistu, 2008).

2.1.4 The Lower Valley of Omo

The lower valley of Omo is the other major archaeological and paleontological research site in Southwestern Ethiopia bordering Kenya and south Sudan. The Lower valley of Omo is found in South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia. The discovery of many human and animal fossils and stone tools in the valley has been of fundamental importance in the study of human evolution. Omo is a river that is 760 kilometers long that stretches from the high lands of West Shoa to Lake Turkana, one of the Great Rift Valley lakes. The entire Omo river basin is an important geological and archaeological site in south western Ethiopia. Several hominid fossils and archaeological localities have been excavated by French and American research teams (Finneran, 2007).

The oldest ever found stone tools dates back to about 2.4 million years ago. Because of its importance for the understanding of the human evolution the site was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1980. The area is also home to people with diverse cultures and natural beauty with national parks and an amazing flora and fauna. In addition, the region is a symbol of cultural and ethnic diversity where more than forty ethnic groups are living in harmony. The majority of these ethnic groups maintained traditional lives which can attract the interests of many tourists and cultural and anthropological researchers from abroad and in Ethiopia (Yabibal, 2010; Temesgen, 2013; WB, June 2006).

2.1.5 Stelae of Tiya

Tiya is located in South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. It is found 90 kilometers South of Addis Ababa. The site contains 36 monuments, including 32 carved stelae covered with symbols. They are believed to be a mark of the large prehistoric burial complex.

This archeological site was listed as World Heritage Site in 1980. The area is one of most attractive archaeological site for cultural anthropologists and other social scientists interested in material culture. Researchers from all over the world especially from Europe and USA make frequent visit which again has a bearing effect on increased demand of tourists to this destination (Mengistu, 2008).

2.1.6 Harar

In the ancient and medieval history of Ethiopia, Harar was a major commercial and centre of Islamic learning. It is a walled city. The wall was built during the time of Emir Nur Ibn Mujahid successor of Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi also known as Ahmad Gragn (the Left

Handed) who conquered the Christian highlands of Ethiopia in the 16th century. The wall was constructed to protect the city and its people from possible attacks from the surrounding Oromo expanding and nomads. It is a 3.5 kilometer long wall with a height of nearly 4 meters. It has five gates and the wall is still intact and is a symbol of the town (Temesgen, 2013).

The presence of many mosques made Harar to be considered as the Fourth Holiest City in Islam next to Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Harar is a symbol of tolerance and peaceful co-existence of peoples and religions. In recognition of its cultural heritage, the Historic City of Harrar (Jugol) was registered by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 2006. In the city of Hara, there are many Muslim and Christian heritages like books, utensils, coins, traditional local crafts and so on. We have public and privately owned museums of these material cultures which attracts many domestic and international tourists (Getachew, 2007).

2.1.7 Other Tangible Cultures

In addition to the UNESCO registered cultural heritages, Ethiopia is endowed with a wide varieties of Christian, Islamic and non religious tangible cultures. Ancient and medieval monasteries all over Ethiopia (especially in the northern half) and Islamic cultures in the central, southeastern and north eastern Ethiopia elucidate the wealth of Ethiopian cultural heritages.

2.1.7.1 Dire Sheik Hussein and Al Nejashi Mosque

Dire Sheik Hussein is located in the south eastern part of Ethiopia. It is a 10th century Islamic centre of pilgrimage for people coming from different corners of the country, and Islamic communities of the Horn and the Middle East countries, twice a year. Dire Sheik Hussein is a site of magnificent groups of buildings, monumental tombs and courts representing early medieval period of Islamic architecture and buildings of significant engineering qualities.

The holy site was founded by the Islamic saint known as Sheik Nur Hussein. He was one of the nine Islamic venerated saints who entered Ethiopia (from South Arabia) along the eastern route via the walled city of Harar. Within the compounds and courts of Dire Sheik Hussien there are huge and magnificent mosques, shrines, residential buildings, artificial water ponds and other cultural spaces of Islamic religious processions and diverse ritual practices. It has annual festive events of religious celebrations and cultural practices of thanks giving and blessing. Dire Sheik Hussein is also considered as a sacred site with a large area of spiritually protected forest landscape. Dire Sheik Hussein is a place where people exercise a mixture of Islamic religion and African traditional belief, known as Muda (Hussien, 2006).

In Islamic history and tradition, Ethiopia (Abyssinia or Al-Habasha) is known as the "Haven of the First Migration or Hijra." For Muslims, Ethiopia is synonymous with freedom from persecution and emancipation from fear. Ethiopia was a land where its king, Negus or Al-Najashi, was a person renowned for justice and in whose land human rights were cherished. History has shown that the first migration to Ethiopia and the second migration to Madinah have indeed laid down the foundation on which Islam, as a universal religion, was built (Abbink, 1998). Al Nejashi Mosque is as old as the faith of Islam in Ethiopia. It is the first mosque in Africa. The mosque was built in the 7th century AD and is considered by many as one of the most sacred places of Islamic worship and rightly dubbed by some as 'The second Makkah'. Negash has been a place of great historical and religious significance in a sense that it is a symbol of peaceful coexistence between the Muslim and Christian religions. Even though Negash is considered as one of the important places in Ethiopia, there are also other important Muslim places like the Sof Omar Caves (Ayalew, 2009; Abir, 1968). Ethiopia's Geez script and immense literature from ancient time gave the country another priority for tourist destination choices in Africa. The fact that Ethiopia had a literary cultures as early as the fourth century surprises many social scientists and historians and had give chances to inquire more about it. Considerable number of researches has proved that one of the splendid and unique features from the entire black Africa is its literary tradition with its own script. Many of the ancient and medieval churches and monasteries are full of Geez religious, astronomic, philosophic and traditional medication science books. These geez language books are now a day one of the major cultural heritages of the country at national level (Mengistu, 2008).

2.1.7.2 Museums and Art Galleries

The country's huge material heritages have given way to the establishment of museums at national and regional levels. The largest number of museums is found in Addis Ababa including the National Museum. The national Museum is known for its paleontological archaeological collections as old as millions years fossils like Lucy or Dinknesh. The archaeology section displays findings from the pre-Axumite time to the contemporary times like pottery, sculpture, minted gold, silver, bronze, coins, crescent discs, household items, funerary items, books and so many others. Ethiopian cultural, traditional and ceremonial customs are on display in the ethnographic section of the museum (MoI, 2014).

Entoto Museum, Zoological Natural History Museum, Ethiopian Postal Museum, Addis Ababa Ethnographic Museum, Addis Ababa Museum, Permanent Exhibition of the Ethiopian

Tourism commission, St George Cathedral Museum and Theater and Cinema hall are all hosted in the capital Addis Ababa. The National Library and Archives and IES(Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa University) are the two major sites where ancient, medieval and modern literary treasures are open for visitors and researchers (Bahiru, 2008; Mengistu, 2008; MoI, 2014).

2.2 INTANGIBLE CULTURES

The intangible cultural heritages have for long been excluded from preservation efforts. Even more badly, conceptualizing intangible heritage itself remains highly controversial people were by questions on how to safeguard cultural expressions such as storytelling and music, dance, and handicrafts. The concept of intangible heritage emerged in the 1970s and the term itself was coined in 1982 at the UNESCO Mexico Conference (Leimgruber, 2010). Intangible cultural heritage was given a working definition by UNESCO as ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage’(UNESCO 2003b in Leimgruber, 2010: 163)

In addition to the eight UNESCO registered tangible cultural heritages, *Demera(Meskel)*, the annual commemoration feast of the finding of the True Holy Cross of Christ was inscribed as the 10th UNESCO registered heritage of Ethiopia in December 2013 . UNESCO has inscribed Meskel on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. UNESCO selected the Meskel festival from among the 31 heritages presented to its 8th Conference of intangible cultural heritages (<http://allafrica.com/stories/201312060344.html>).

Religion plays an important part of life in Ethiopia. The Orthodox Tewahedo Church ceremonies are unique and impressive. The Christian festivals include Enkutatash (New Year), Meskel (Finding of the True Cross), Debra Damo (Feast of Saint Aregawi), Kulubi (Feast of Saint Gabriel), Timket (Epiphany), Ledet, (Christmas) and Fasika (Easter). Some of the major festivals are specific to some geographical areas while others are common to all Christian areas of the country. Enkutatash (New Year), Meskel (Finding of the True Cross), Timket (Epiphany), Ledet, (Christmas) and Fasika (Easter) are common to all while the rest are area specific festivities to attract thousands of people across the country.

Many Ethiopians from all over the world visit their families and relatives at these occasions. Mobility of people across the country is very high at these festivals and religious ceremonies. The Northern Historic Route which includes the Obelisk of Axum, The rock Hewn Church of

Lalibela, the Castle of Gondar and the Monasteries of Lake Tana (Bahir Dar Area) constitute the majority of the country's cultural tourist attractions. These sites are the most frequently visited Christian cultural heritage of Ethiopia by domestic and foreign visitors (Tekeste, 2008; Ayele, 2008).

2.2.1 Enqutatash (Ethiopian New Year)

Ethiopian New Year falls on September 1 every year (September 11 Gregorian calendar) that signals the end of the Ethiopian rain season and is called Enqutatash. The origin of Ethiopian calendar is associated with the ancient Egyptians and the Coptic traditions of Alexandria. Ethiopian calendar has been known by religious (Christian scholars as, *bahere hasab* and also known as Abu Shaker, a name adopted from an Egyptian Deacon who modified the Egyptian calendar to fit the needs of the Coptic Christians in Egypt in the thirteenth century.

The Ethiopian calendar has a clear influence of the now abandoned Julian calendar, which was a modified ancient Egyptian calendar designed by the order of Julius Ceasar in the first century BC. The modern Gregorian calendar is said to be a modified version of the Julian calendar that finally had taken the name Pope Gregory XIII. Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1582. The Ethiopian calendar divides the total number of days into thirteen months. The year begins in September. Twelve months are assigned thirty days and the thirteenth month has five or six days, depending upon the leap year. Ethiopia's living unique calendar is a wonder to many people across the world (Ayele, 2008).

The Ethiopian calendar is further known and brought to the world with a promotional nomination known as Thirteen Months of Sunshine. Thirteen months of sunshine implies that, contrary to the twelve months of the year, Ethiopia is having thirteen months with an addition of a month with five (and six every four years) days. The world had a chance to notice Ethiopia's unique calendar when Ethiopian Third Millennium was celebrated eight years after the Third Millennium of the Gregorian calendar in 2008 (Ayele, 2008; Marcus, 2008).

2.2.2 Meskel (Finding of the True Cross)

This Christian festival is celebrated by dancing, feasting and lighting a massive bonfire known in Ethiopian tradition as *Damera. Meskel* commemorates the finding of the True Cross in the fourth century when Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, discovered the True Cross on which Christ was crucified. The feast is celebrated in Ethiopia on September 17 Ethiopian calendar (September 27 Gregorian calendar), 6 months after the discovery of the True Cross. The celebration of Meskel signifies the presence of the True

Cross at mountain of Gishen Mariam monastery and also symbolizes the events carried out by Empress Helena.

The Feast of the Finding of the True Cross celebrated in September gained unprecedented importance in late fourteenth- or early fifteenth century Ethiopia and became a national feast afterwards. The institutionalization of the festivity of Meskel is very close to the reign of Zara Yacob. The social drama of *Meskel* was not limited to the portrayal of imperial power and church celebrity. Other features of social order were also prominently expressed in the ritual process across many parts of the country (Kaplan, 2008).

2.2.3 Ledet (Ethiopian Christmas)

Ledet (Christmas) falls on December 29 Ethiopian calendars (January 7 Gregorian calendar). This is one of the major festivals in Christian tradition when thousands of people visit the sacred city of Lalibela from all over the country. Timket (Epiphany) is one of the greatest festivals in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church calendar. It commemorates Christ's Baptism by Saint John in the Jordan River. Timket is celebrated in Ethiopia on January 11 Ethiopian calendar (January 19 Gregorian calendar), two weeks after Ledet (Ethiopian Christmas), beginning on the Eve of Timket with colorful processions and ceremonies ending on the January 12 (January 20 Gregorian calendar).

A very fascinating distinction of the cultural heritages is the extent to which pilgrims make visits to the sites during festive and non festive times. Tens thousands of Ethiopians and thousands of international tourists visit Lalibela on annual festival day (on 7 January). The number of domestic and international tourists on non festive days is also considerable.

2.2.4 Music and Sport Events

Ethiopian as a multicultural country encompasses diverse traditional cultural songs and performance for different occasions and on daily life. The northern and central Ethiopia is influenced by the age old Christian tradition and maintained cultural hegemony over the rest of the country. The southern half of the country with south east and south west geographical limits on contrast hosts the largest number of ethnic groups with their own traditional music and dance styles.

Traditional musical instruments such as *Kirar*, *Kebero*, *Masingo*, *Washint* and *Begenä* constitute the major cultural instruments which helped Ethiopians to have their own unique cultural music. Religious performances by priests at religious festivals and occasional celebrations are also a unique dance genre that is associated with Ethiopia. In many parts of

Ethiopian towns and metropolitans it is common to find cultural dance and music recreation centers where only Ethiopian traditional music and dances are played (Kawase, 2005).

In southern, southeastern and southwestern part of Ethiopia, we find a wealth of diversified traditional music and dance styles. Many tourists come to Ethiopia to enjoy the diverse plays across different ethnic and cultural groups. Actually the wealth of traditional music and dances are not well studied yet and in many parts of the region the resources are not ready for market and promotion. Anthropological and cultural researchers also visit the area in large numbers which again stimulates the cultural tourists to flock in large numbers in to the area.

Ethiopia has been part of the global sporting community since the mid twentieth century. Ethiopia was a founding member of the Confederation of the African Football (CAF) in 1957 along with Egypt, South Africa and Sudan. Ethiopia's prominence in global sport was to come after Rome Olympics in 1960 when an Ethiopian athlete Abebe Bikila won gold medal in marathon recorded as the first African Olympic medal.

The number of competitive long distance runners in Ethiopia increased in the 1990s and in the first two decades of the twenty first century up to date. The times of Derartu Tulu and Haile Gebreselassie, Kenenisa Bekele and many more long and mid range distance runners make Ethiopia known to the sport community. Many people in different part of the world associate Ethiopia with Abebe Bikila for 1960s and Haile Gebressilassie for the period afterwards. In the last two decades, Ethiopia has been hosting successful and successive Sport event named the Ethiopian Great Run. The Ethiopian Great Run invites ten thousands of Ethiopian and guest athletes all over the world (EAF, 2014).

2.2.5 Unique History in Black Africa

Henze's assertion that "if history were like petroleum, extracted from the earth and refined for profit, Ethiopia would be one of the richest countries in the world" cannot in anyway be refuted (Henze, 1984: 102). The discovery of a new forebear of modern man, *Australopithecus afarensis* by American palaeontologist Donald Johansson tin 1974 was critical to the notion that Ethiopia was the origin of human kind. Lucy, therefore, is a national pride for Ethiopia and a vital treasure for the world at large (Bahiru, 2008; Abink, 1998).

As indicated somewhere in the introductory part, Ethiopia's relation with outside world started before almost three thousand years relates Ethiopia's early civilization with civilization in south Arabia and early contacts of Ethiopians with the South Arabians. According to this version of the fusion of the south Arabians and indigenous Ethiopian pre

history and early history of the Ethiopian region, the final result of the fusion was early urbanism, writing, foreign trade, metallurgy, plough agriculture, monumental architecture and state formation (Gamst, 1970).

Alongside its long history, early civilization and early contact with the outside world, Ethiopia is also known for another splendid historical and cultural resource: the *geez* script which helped it to inscribe its history from time immemorial. The way Ethiopia had its first surviving alphabet in the entire black Africa again makes Ethiopia a country of endemic cultural heritages to the entire continent of Africa. Ethiopia's alphabet is an area of marvel for researchers and sparks curiosity for international tourists that could make Ethiopia competitive in the sector in many parts of Europe like Germany, France, Britain and the Scandinavian, there African study centers focused on Geez literature and as the only sources of information about ancient and medieval Africa (Alemseged, 2004).

Language diversity, ethnicity and multiculturalism well characterize historical and contemporary Ethiopia. More than eighty ethnic groups and languages are gifts of Ethiopian beauty. The southern and southwestern part of Ethiopia takes the lion's share as far as language diversity and multiculturalism is concerned. Diversity of language, culture and ethnicity helped the country to have a distinguished multicultural society and consequently to be one of the top priorities of global cultural tourists (Alemseged, 2004; Gamst, 1970; Ayele, 2008; Mengistu, 2008).

Ethiopia's unique history in Africa is undisputed. The battle of Adwa that signaled the white can be defeated by black people all over the world was the recent historical phenomena that brought Ethiopia in to attention. Italy came to the scramble of Africa very late and desperately invaded Ethiopia in the 1880s. Italy was humiliated and lost the war and Ethiopia became the first black African country to resist colonization. Ethiopia's independence and resistance of the European imperialism is mysterious and fascinating to many people. The traditional cultural value was not affected by colonial intrusions (Markakis & Asmelash, 1967). The Victory of Adwa is considered by many historians as the victory of all Africans who had suffered the evils of colonization and domination. In an effort to disallow the notion that black people had defeated white people in history, some European scholars attempted to claim that Ethiopians were not people of black origin (Teshale, 1996).

In addition, natural endowments of Ethiopia such as all year suitable climate and diversified topography and eye-catching scenery of varying altitudes ranging from 4620 meters above sea level at Simen Mountain to 155 meters below sea level at Dallol constitute one of the best

tourist attractions of the country. The country is also known for its rift valley geographic features and lakes that host beautiful fauna and flora. Ethiopia's biodiversity is quite unique compared to neighboring African countries. The country's Protected Area (PA) includes national parks, game reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and controlled hunting grounds and these protected areas offer leisure activities such as wildlife viewing, trekking, sightseeing and bird watching for outdoor lovers (Assegid, 2011).

3 BIRTH AND GROWTH OF TOURISM IN ETHIOPIA

It was unfortunate that the first Five Years Development Plan of Imperial Ethiopia in 1957 did not include tourism as development venue. Only infrastructure, education, agriculture, industry and some selected economic sectors were given priorities. Tourism as a sector had to wait until the Second Five Years Development Plan inauguration in 1962 to be considered as one of the lucrative economies of the country coupled with the pressure from international organizations to mainstream the sector for job creation and macroeconomic endeavors (Ayalew, 2009; Mengistu, 2008).

Tourism as one independent economic sector is a very recent phenomenon in the context of Ethiopia. Tourism was first established as a sector for economic development in 1962 and was able to show 12% progress for the coming four years. However, the first formative years of tourism in Ethiopia in the mid 1970s was challenged by turmoil of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and civil wars that followed the revolution. Drought and hunger that prevailed in the country in 1965 and 1984, as a result of which thousands of Ethiopians are said to have died, were also to have its own effect on Ethiopian image in general and tourism growth and prosperity in particular (MoCT, 2009; Keller, 1981).

The inauguration of Ethiopian Tourism Organization under the office of the Prime Minister in the early 1960s was followed by unreserved efforts to reach the outside world by distributing pamphlets and promotion leaflets. The promotion of Ethiopian Airline to jet technology was said to be a boost for the growth of tourism in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa that hosted some international organizations also contributed to the country's exposure to the global community (ANRSTC, 2004).

H.E Mr. Habte Sellassie Tafesse who served as Minister of Tourism is the man credited for introducing tourism to Ethiopia. Mr. Habte Sellassie coined the brand name of Ethiopia "*Thirteen Months of Sunshine*" to explain the unique Ethiopian calendar and a favorable whether condition as major tourist attractions. He worked hard to introduce modern tourism in Ethiopia and was also instrumental in creating what has become to be known as *The*

Historic Route, a collection of tourist attractions that consists of The Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana, Gondar, Lalibela, and Axum in today's Tigray Regional State. The formidable task of establishing modern tourism and the demand of the sector for collective effort of different stakeholders and sectors was a business to be dealt. Tourism as a lucrative business cannot be run without skills required by the sector (Teshale, 2008; Ayalew, 2009).

It also demanded financial and material resources for the commencement of modern tourism in the country and benefit from it as one economic sector. These conditions highly challenged the early phases of Ethiopian tourism development. The attitude of the people towards making money out of travel and tourism was obscure to many people. Modern infrastructures like roads, water, electricity, telephone, and hotels and other forms of accommodations did not exist in major tourist attraction sites (Mahlet, 2011; Yabibal, 2010).

As far as tourism organizations in Ethiopia is concerned, for the first time, the Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO) was established in 1964 through order No. 36/1964 and was latter replaced by Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC) by proclamation No.182/1979 in 1980 with the main objective of preservation of natural and cultural heritages, expansion of accommodation and promotional activities to harness the potentials of Ethiopian attractions (Gebreananya, 2011). By 1965, the Commissioner of ETC issued regulations for the establishment of National Hotels Corporation (NHC), Ethiopian Tourist Trading Corporation (ETTC) and National Tour Operation and Travel Agency (NTO) (Mahlet, 2011; EMI, 2004; Ayalew, 2009).

The first tourist hotel in Ethiopia was established in 1907 after a number of foreigners began to settle in Addis Ababa for diplomatic and business reasons following the Adwa victory against fascist Italy in 1896. Ethiopian began to be more popular and many government and private enterprises began to show interest and diplomatic communities increased dramatically. The first railway of the country that stretched from Djibouti to Addis Ababa via Dire Dawa started in 1917 that made Ethiopia more accessible for people coming from the Indian Ocean. Ethiopia became a member of the League of Nations in 1923 which further stimulated fertile grounds to promote Ethiopia and to bring Ethiopian causes to the world community at large (Bahiru, 2002).

The period after the Second World War was in some ways a fertile ground for Ethiopian diplomatic position and Ethiopian tourism. A number of efforts were made by the imperial government since the early 1950s. There was a growing consciousness among the nobility that tourism as a sector can promote the country and generate money as well (Abraham,

1969). After the emperor get convinced with the prospects of tourism in Ethiopia, the sector was given legal grounds. The issue of hospitality and management of foreigners as government agents and private commercial agents gained attention more than ever.

For the first time, budget was allocated for tourism from government treasury in 1962 and few foreign advisors were in place. Two advisors from UNESCO were sent to study the tourism potential in Northern Ethiopia and the way forward to benefit from these tourist resources. In addition an international advisor called IANUS prepared the first Tourism Development Plan in 1969. Another advisor name Arthur D.Little Ltd., studied the tourism potentials in Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Gondar Semien Mountain, Lalibela, Axum and the rift valley and submitted a plan of action to the Imperial government (Getachew, 2007; Bahiru, 2008).

After the revolution of 1974 and government change with a socialist ideology, the establishment of Ethiopian Tourism Commission in 1979 was a new beginning towards development and promotion of tourism as a sector. Private hotels, tour operators, travel agencies were transferred to the ownership of the government and were put under the administration of the Ministry of Natural Resources Development. Later in 1985 three corporations were entrusted to ETC. These were National Hotels Corporation (NHC), National Tour Operation and Travel Agency (NTO) and Ethiopian Tourist Trading Corporation (ETTC). Once 53 major Hotels were nationalized in 1974/5, hotels administration was re structured in to six regional chains with parent hotel at Addis Ababa. Therefore, the Ethiopian Hotels and Spa Corporation began to administer hotels, restaurants, and thermal baths in Addis Ababa and regions (Ayalew, 2009).

By 1945, Ethiopia was able to establish an airline in a joint venture with Trans World Airlines. On April 8, 1946, Ethiopian Airlines made its maiden flight to Cairo in one of its five Douglas C-47s. This ushered in an era of prominence: an African airline with weekly services to destinations in Africa and beyond with a truly leading role in the tourism sector. After nearly two decades of unreserved service of connecting Ethiopia with outside world, the Ethiopian airline entered a Jet Age where the Bole International Air Port became the main gate to the country welcoming hundreds of guests daily (Bahiru, 2008).

The establishments of office of Economic Commission of Africa in 1958, and the foundation and Organization of African Union by 1963 were another mega continental move where all independent African nations would meet for political and economic matters of the continent.

The third African Nations Cup was held in 1962 in Addis Ababa with immense capacity of tourism promotion and leisure environment.

However, tourism as an economic sector could not sustain and show any substantial progress owing to many internal and external problems until the last decade of the twentieth century. During the military government (*Derg* regime), tourism suffered two main setbacks. The first was the nationalization of private hotels in 1975. The second was the political turmoil and war that threatened the lives of the international tourists. In addition, the socialist ideology adopted from the Soviet Union angered many European and American tourists. Recurrent drought and famine played a great role in spoiling Ethiopia's image in the outside world during the military regime (Getachew, 2007; Ayalew, 2009).

4 THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY

In recent years, the role of tourism economic sector to third world economies seems to be promising. According to WEF (2015) the "Tourism and Travel industry continues to grow more quickly than the global economy as a whole." Yet, the sector referred as one of complex businesses "requiring inter-ministerial coordination and often international and public-private partnerships to overcome financial, institutional and organizational bottlenecks" and as a result only few countries succeeded in meeting standards.

Though progressing and promising, Ethiopia's tourism is not contributing to the economy proportional to the natural and cultural heritages available. But tourism is one of the major sources of foreign exchange with increasing rate each year.

Tourism supports economic growth endeavors in the form of direct, indirect and induced income generation and stimulations. One of the very stunning impact of tourism in Ethiopia is the foreign exchange(balance of payment) for the country's need of foreign currency to support its import based development projects. The impact of tourism on Ethiopia's economy is also significant in job creation and stimulating the entire economy by increasing the purchasing power of the low income economic groups. Tourism entrepreneurs like hotels, transport firms, tour operators and guides absorb considerable amount of the unemployed and contribute to the country's economic growth (Ayalew, 2009).

UNWTO Tourism Highlight(2015)emphasized that Ethiopia's share of tourism recipient in Africa is far beyond its neighbour Kenya and a small island, Mauricius. Ethiopia has taken 1% share of Africa while Kenya and Mauricius have taken 2.2% and 4% share respectively (UNWTO, 2015). This shows that Ethiopia's tourism is still lagging behind contributing only very little as a petty economic activity opposite to the expectations vested up on it.

According to The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 of World Economic Forum the real effect of tourism on Ethiopian economy is 4.2% (with a projected annual growth of 4.8)while job creation proportion is 3.8%(with a projected annual growth of 0.6) from the total government and private jobs at national level.

In a country where industry is at infant stage and tourism is a best option with rich natural and cultural heritages, tourism as a sector should have contributed far more than it is contributing in reality. The growth rate of job absorption is also a disgusting one with 0.6 % annual growth. This may hint to the policy gap that pro-poor tourism is a best for job creation and poverty alleviation in the third world country (WB, June 2006; Ayalew, 2009).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When Ethiopia's economic growth is taken in to consideration, some writers emphasize the two faces of the country by going back and refer to the successes and the challenges of the country from ancient time. The first is its splendid wealth in natural and cultural tourism resources. The other face is its backwardness and poor international images as a result of few incidents such as drought in the 1960s and 1980s and few prejudiced characterizations (Ayele, 2008).

Tourism Infrastructure development is a key and formidable assignment for Ethiopia if the country is to benefit from the sector. Tourism infrastructure is very poor in Ethiopia compared to even other African countries. All season roads, hotels, transport services, and communication and catering infrastructures are highly needed and must be made available for tourists. The other challenge of Ethiopian tourism is the task of changing the bad image of Ethiopia and making the world believe that Ethiopia is a different country than they heard about it and a country that tourists should choose to visit (Yabibal, 2010).

Ethiopian tourism as a sector was started in the mid 1960s following global political and socio economic changes in the aftermath of the Second World War. The available sources on Ethiopian tourism sector indicated that the harmful effect of wars and recurrent famine that devastated millions of lives in the 1960s and 1980s were major setback of Ethiopian tourism. The other causes of poor performance in tourism industry in Ethiopia are limited participation of the private entrepreneurs and lack of skilled manpower in tourism business.

A study of Ethiopian tourism by World Bank in 2006 came up with a conclusion that stated the industry has for long been under-performing relative to the tremendous potential value of

its cultural heritage as an anchor for a tourism industry. This is attributed to weaknesses in Ethiopia's image, market presence and penetration resulting in a demonstrable weak demand for its products; a severely under-valued cultural and natural resource base; uncompetitive supplier and support services (hotels, transporters, activity providers, restaurants, handicraft manufacturers and distributors, banks, telecoms and emergency health services); finally the absence of an efficiently coordinating and communicating governance framework to guide and integrate the many stakeholders at both the national and sub-national levels

Throughout its historical development, scientific researches products and their utility by the government for practical implementations has been a missing link for long period of time after the inception of tourism business in the country. Academic writing on Ethiopian tourism remained a rare phenomenon even after opening of tourism departments in some parts of the country. Government must work on issues when academicians give emphasis as field of research in Ethiopia's development agenda. Research output need also the attention of the practitioners beyond academic purpose .in educational institutions and research companies.

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