



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF AWASH NATIONAL PARK ON
RESIDENTS OF AWASH SEBAT KILO TOWN.**

By:

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JULY, 2025

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES FOR THE PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
IN GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Eyasu Jorge, entitled: socio-economic effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, Afar Regional State, Ethiopia and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies, complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Acronyms

ANP:	Awash national park
EMA:	Ethiopian mapping agency
EWLCA:	Ethiopian wild life conservation Authority
IBA:	Important Bird Area
LULCC:	Land use land cover change

Abstract

National Parks used to be seen as just National Reserves for contemplation and conservation, but have been gradually considered as sites which to some extent may contribute to the development and enhancement of local communities. The existence of positive socioeconomic effects consequent on the establishment of National Parks are assumed such as revenues derived from tourism and brand driven identity, creation of local employment and aids for rural development projects (Mills, 2002). The main objective of this study was to examine the overall socio-economic effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, with particular emphasis on its tourist attractions, social and economic impacts, and the role of key stakeholders. Awash National Park is one of nature based Recreationl sites in Ethiopia for its impressive Landscape and diversity of Fauna and Flora. The ANP has the Socio-economic Impacts on the development of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. The Park is Economically significant, because it diversifies the economy, increases income regeneration for Residents, increases local government revenue in the form of direct and indirect taxes, brings foreign exchange to a Country, improves production, increases GDP (Gross Domestic Product), creates employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers and contributes to the development and expansion of various economic sectors and activities such as Agriculture. Awash Sebat Kilo Town is situated within Afar regional state, 350 kilometers away from its Capital City (Samara) and 225 kilometers from Addis Ababa, the Capital of Ethiopia. Geographically, the town is bounded by 61500 to 63500 meters East and 991500 to 1024500 meters North. The study used purposive sampling techniques to select the town. Three kebeles of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, namely, Allalimo, Bank Sefer and Mariam Sefer, were purposively selected, while 98 representative sample household heads from the three kebeles were randomly selected. Data gathering tools such as questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and site observation of the park were used. To fulfill the importance of the findings, a descriptive survey design was employed. The findings of the study revealed that large biodiversity of fauna and flora, exceptional variety of landscapes and active volcanic activities are the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park. Wider range of employment opportunities and expansion of social services and public infrastructure are the major positive benefits of Awash National Park for residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. However, frequent conflicts for resource competition, Increasing Cost of Living (inflation) and modification of indigenous culture are the negative side effects of the park on the residents of the town. The Major Roles to be played by Stakeholders So as to mitigate the Negative Effects of Awash National park on the Residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town and to enhance Positive benefits of the park. Creating awareness, park protection, law enforcement and job diversification are the major roles to be played by stakeholders to mitigate the Park's negative effects and to enhance its positive benefits to the Residents.

Keywords: *Tourist, tourist attractions, local community, resource conflict, Awash National Park, Awash Sebat Kilo Town*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

National Parks used to be seen as just Natural Reserves for contemplation and conservation, but have been gradually considered as sites which to some extent may contribute to development and enhancement of local communities. The existence of positive socioeconomic effects consequent on the establishment of National Parks are assumed. Such as revenues derived from tourism and brand driven identity, creation of local employment and aids for rural development projects (Mills, 2002).

Awash Sebat Kilo Town is located in eastern Ethiopia, in the rift valley system, approximately 350 kilometers south-west of Samara, the capital of the Afar regional state. Geographically, it is bounded by 61500 to 63500 meters east and 991500 to 1024500 meters north. The Kebena, Kessema, and Fulwaha streams flow towards the settlement. The Awash River drains to the northeast of the town. The town's height spans from 820m to 1120m. The average monthly temperature is between 22.6°C and 30°C. The town's climate ranges from semi-arid to desert, with an average annual rainfall of 606mm.

Tourism is economically significant because it diversifies the destination economy, increases income regeneration for residents, increases local government revenue in the form of direct and indirect taxes, brings foreign exchange for a country, improves production, increases GDP, creates employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, and makes multiple contributions to the development and expansion of various economic sectors and activities such as agriculture.

Human activities in the area around Awash National Park include pastoralism, agricultural agriculture, and natural resource harvesting. The Afar Region and Kereyu are pastoralists who inhabit the park's western and southern areas, respectively.

Awash National Park is currently facing huge challenges due to a growing confrontation between opposing parties over local residents' subsistence demands. Policy imbalance was identified as the main hindrance to park resources. The expansion of private farms in Afar and Kereyu

villages reduced rangeland resources, prompting them to invade Park territory (Solomon et al. 2012).

The Rift Valley Lake Basin and Awash River Basin have recently begun to produce high-quality flowers and vegetables for export. In 2001 and 2002, vegetable exports increased by 95% over 1998. The Awash River Basin produces 45% of all flowers exported.

As the external market opportunity expands, several private flower enterprises are emerging. Summer farming patterns, such as cotton, are common in drier regions' lower valleys when rainfall is critical. In contrast, sugar cane accounts for the vast majority of crop production in the Upper Valley. Ethiopia is completely self-sufficient in cotton. This crop has a high potential for export. Existing textile manufacturers consume around 50,000 tons of lint cotton every year. Furthermore, there is a great opportunity to export lint.

At the same time, it may result in economic disappointments in that area owing to increased demand for consuming products and services in the destination's economy; tourism generates a scarcity of some commodities in the local area; and could boost prices, raising the cost of living. Tourism investment may come at the expense of other economic sector developments, diverting monies away from other forms of economic development. Because capital is a limited resource, removing such money results in a significant opportunity cost in terms of other sectoral investments. Furthermore, tourism boosts import demand, meaning that money will leave that country (Yidnekachew, 2018).

Conflicts between local communities and park authorities. Ethiopia's protected areas face a variety of challenges, some of which come from border conflicts between local people and community relations with park management (Ashenafi and Leader, 2005). Many of the country's parks are threatened as a result of these situations. Conflicts persist between communities surrounding the ANP, such as the Kereyu/Ittu and the Afar, as well as between locals and park officials (Mulugeta and Hagmann, 2008). As a result, the conflict between the Afar and the Kereyu/Ittu tribes continues in the country's eastern part (Ayalew, 2009).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Awash Sebat Kilo Town is located in eastern Ethiopia's rift valley system, near Awash National Park. It is one of the towns of Afar, located around 350 kilometers south-west of Samara, the seat of the Afar regional state. The Awash National Park has both positive and negative consequences for the population of the area.

The park is economically significant because it diversifies the economy, increases income regeneration for residents, increases local government revenue in the form of direct and indirect taxes, brings foreign exchange to a country, improves production, increases GDP, creates employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, and contributes to the development and expansion of various economic sectors and activities such as agriculture.

At the same time, it may bring economic disappointments in the area owing to increased demand for consuming products and services; the park's service to tourism causes a shortage of some commodities in the local area; and chickens raise prices, increasing the expense of living. Tourism investment may come at the expense of other economic sector developments, diverting monies away from other forms of economic development. Because capital is a limited resource, removing such money results in a significant opportunity cost in terms of other sectoral investments. Furthermore, tourism boosts import demand, meaning that money will leave that particular country (Adugna, 2016).

Ethiopia's protected areas face a variety of challenges, some of which come from border conflicts between local people and community relations with park management (Ashenafi and Leader, 2005). Many of the country's parks are threatened as a result of these situations. Conflicts persist between communities surrounding the ANP, such as the Kereyu/Ittu and the Afar, as well as between locals and park officials (Mulugeta and Hagmann, 2008). As a result, the conflict between the Afar and the Kereyu/Ittu tribes continues in the country's eastern part (Ayalew, 2009).

Several studies have been conducted to assess the benefits of Ethiopia's recreational and national parks. For example, Fisseha (2014) used the individual trip cost approach to determine the recreational visit demand of Abijata Shalla Lakes National Park, whereas Aduigna (2016) used a

choice experiment strategy to evaluate the economic value of the Nechisar National Park environment.

Some researchers have tried to assess the effects of national parks on the surrounding communities. Even if such studies had been done, no one had sought to assess the economic benefit of Awash National Park.

To close this gap, the researcher aimed to analyze the socioeconomic effects of Awash National Park on residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. In addition, the researcher attempted to describe some of the roles of stakeholders in improving the prospects for Awash National Park. Thus, this thesis will serve as a springboard for future studies.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the overall socio-economic effects of Awash National Park on the development of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, with particular emphasis on its tourist attractions, social and economic impacts, and the role of key stakeholders.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify and describe the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park.
2. To analyze the positive and negative social effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town.
3. To evaluate the positive and negative economic effects of Awash National Park on the development of Awash Sebat Kilo Town.
4. To assess the roles of key stakeholders in mitigating challenges and enhancing the socio-economic contributions of Awash National Park.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park?

2. What are the social effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town?
3. What are the economic effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town?
4. What roles must the Stakeholders play so as to mitigate the challenges that Awash Sebat Kilo Town face from Awash National Park?
5. What roles must the Stakeholders play so as to enhance the socio-economic contribution of ANP to the town?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This thesis tried to evaluate the Socio-economic effects of Awash National Park on the Residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. In addition, it attempted to mention some of the roles of stakeholders in improving the prospects for Awash National Park. Thus, this thesis will serve as a springboard for future studies.

It may also contribute to the existing literature and provide an extra source of reference. As a result, the findings of this study may be very useful for policymakers, stakeholders, NGOs, and environmentalists involved in planning and management to update their plans and activities in order to develop a better plan and management strategy. It also provides valuable insights for future research in the field.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

The study's objective is limited to assessing the Socio-economic effects of Awash National Park on residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. The study examined the entire area of the Awash National Park in terms of negative impacts and opportunities for Awash Sebat Kilo Town people.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Security problems, Earthquake, and financial problems hindered to deeply search the problem and gather reliable data.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis was divided into five chapters, each of which was then divided into smaller portions. The first chapter covers the overall introduction, the problem statement, the study's objectives, and the scope of the study. The second chapter discusses the theoretical foundation and empirical literature relevant to the topic. The third chapter discusses the study design and methods utilized, the research design and methods used, the source of data, the sample design, the data collection tools and procedures used, and how the data will be examined methodologically and presented.

The fourth chapter outlines the result analysis and discussion, which includes demographic information about respondents, the positive and negative socioeconomic effects of Awash National Park on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, and the roles that stakeholders can play to mitigate the negative effects and maximize the positive benefits of the park. The final chapter presents the study's conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Historical background of Awash National park

Awash National park is located between the Oromia and Afar provinces, 215 kilometers from Addis Ababa, the country's capital. To the south comes the Awash River, which originates in Ethiopia's highlands. This is complemented by spectacular waterfalls seen throughout the park. Like the rest of Ethiopia, the region has a bimodal rainfall pattern, with a rainy season followed by a dominant dry season that can last up to 10 months.

The park's altitude changes, which range from 700 to 2000 meters, present an incredible variety of beauty, from the plains of Ilala Sala to the hot springs of Filhoua, passing by the falls and canyon of Awash and the Fantale volcano (2007 meters).

This park's diversified surroundings, which encourage high biodiversity, make it a legendary destination for Ornithologists, Priimatologists, and Archaeologists seeking sanctuary (remember that East Africa is the cradle of civilization) (Jon, 2024).

The park covers 756 square kilometers and is largely made up of acacia and grassland, but it also has a diverse range of volcanic scenery. The wide grasslands and grass plains are home to zebra, Beisa oryx, kudu, Soemmerring's gazelle, and Swayne's hartebeest. Olive and Hamadryas Baboons, as well as Colobus and grivet Monkeys, can be seen near the river, and the small dik-dik is usually hidden in the shade of an acacia thorn. Cheetahs, Servals, and Leopards are also present (though less apparent), along with lions, black-backed and golden jackals, and caracals on occasion.

Awash features around 400 bird species, ranging from the well-known great Ostrich to the less common secretary bird and Abyssinian ground hornbill. Carmine bee-eaters and Abyssinian rollers emit bright flashes of color. There are countless other species, such as birds of prey, forest birds, and savannah birds. A network of well-kept paths winds through the park, taking in the different stunning locations; nevertheless, to get the most of your visit, it is advised that you engage a professional park guide (Hampshire, 2024).

Awash Sebat Kilo Town is located in eastern Ethiopia, in the rift valley system, approximately 350 kilometers south-west of Samara, the capital of the Afar regional state. Geographically, it is bounded by 61500 to 63500 meters east and 991500 to 1024500 meters north. The Kebena, Kessema, and Fulwaha streams flow towards the settlement. The Awash River drains to the northeast of the town. The town's height spans from 820m to 1120m. The average monthly temperature is between 22.6°C and 30°C. The town's climate ranges from semi-arid to desert, with an average annual rainfall of 606mm.

2.2 Tourist Attractions of the Awash National Park

Awash National Park is one of Ethiopia's few national parks with a rich biodiversity. Awash National Park's exceptional resource values include ecosystems, fauna, vegetation, scenic terrain, and tourism. It is Ethiopia's second most important bird region and the most diverse conservation area for birds, with over 450 species. The Awash ecosystem's diverse habitats and services include the endangered African Lion, as well as spectacular geographic panoramas such as Fentale Crater, Ellala Sala plains, hot spring area, Awash Falls, and gorge (EWCA, 2011).

Other distinguishing qualities of the Park include its role as a buffer zone between different ethnic groups, its proximity to the capital city, the lodges therein, and its diverse ethnic and cultural traits, such as the Gada system in Oromya and the Belaadar in Afar (Sintayehu et al 2012).

Awash National Park is home to more than 81 mammal species, including Ethiopia's largest protected population of Beisa oryx. Other captivating creatures are the small Salt's Dik-Dik, the Grivet Monkey, and the Lesser Kudu. Several threatened species can also be seen, including the Soemmerring's Gazelle, lion, and Spotted-necked Otter (Jon, 2024).

This is a significant region for avifauna, with over 453 species (including 6 endemics) recorded in the park! The bird diversity is incredible, ranging from the Kori Bustard, which lives in dry savannas, to the Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, which frequents thorny shrubs, to the flamboyant Little Bee-eater and Abyssinian Roller. The park also boasts a variety of reptiles (43 species contacted), amphibians, and an unknown amount of invertebrate species, making it an ideal destination for seasoned naturalists! The park has risen in popularity in recent years, with

visitors drawn mostly to the cultural diversity of the surrounding groups (Kereyu, Itu, and Afar), the quantity of flora and fauna, breathtaking vistas, and archaeological sites.

Awash National Park protects a semiarid section of the Rift Valley bottom teeming with dry-country antelope including the graceful Beisa oryx and the spectacular spiral-horned greater kudu. The checklist includes more than 500 bird species, including the Arabian bustard, African swallow-tailed kite, northern carmine bee-eater, Abyssinian roller, endemic yellow-throated serin, and near-endemic rock chat. The breathtaking crater of Fantelle Volcano and the peculiar Lake Beseka, situated amidst stark black volcanic rubble at its base, as well as the roaring waterfall at the head of the Awash Gorge and a field of palm-lined hot springs frequented by Hamadryas baboons.

A visit to Aga Edu Cave at dusk may reveal some of the over 20 spotted hyenas that live there. Doho Lodge & Hot Springs is an eco-lodge on the northern border of Awash National Park. It provides accommodation and a variety of meals and beverages. The rooms are self-contained and isolated from their neighbors. They are traditionally built and offer relaxation. The Lodge is renowned for having one of the world's finest hot spring pools. It is also suitable for bird watching, game drives or wildlife viewing, mountain and woodland walks, hyena sightings, and fishing (Mot, 2023).

Having said that, the park's interior is still pretty intact. It encompasses slightly more than 756 square kilometers and is fed by the Awash River, which originates in the highlands around Addis and ends 1,200 kilometers later in Lake Abbe near Danakil. The Awash River Gorge waterfalls, located in the south, are one of the park's most stunning attractions. Aside from that, the river's currents and, to the north, the hot springs at Filwoha in the Kudu Valley break up the acacia scrub and grassland. The Alledoghi Wildlife Reserve covers around 1,800 square kilometers and includes meadows, wooded rises, and mountains in the south.

The reserve is one of Ethiopia's most rewarding wildlife areas, with seven lion prides, cheetahs, Beisa oryx, Soemmerring's gazelle, spotted hyena, Northern gerenuk, and Grevy's zebra. As in Awash, the birding is superb, with Somali ostrich, Arabian bustard, North carmine bee eater, Abyssinian roller, and even Scissor-tailed kite (Atta, 2025).

2.3 The positive Socio-economic effects of Awash National Park

2.3.1 Ecotourism Development

The unusual scenery and fauna of Awash National Park make it an ideal destination for ecotourism, attracting visitors interested in wildlife viewing, bird watching, and cultural experiences. Tourism can be utilized as a development tool since it attracts buyers to the product and, unlike other exports, it can provide direct value to locals by allowing them to sell goods and services to tourists and tourism businesses.

According to Kim (2012), Tourism has the potential to create jobs, supply foreign exchange, increase product return on investment for emerging economies, bring technology, and raise destination People's living standards.

The most significant benefits claimed to stimulate tourist development are the economic gains that communities can expect to reap as tourism activity increases. Tourists create cash for local businesses and shopping malls. Tourists benefit from a variety of services that are constructed and offered to them, and tourism gives momentum for the improvement and development of local infrastructure and services. The number of receipts, or the net revenue generated by those receipts, that a community can expect from tourist spending is determined by government regulations and a variety of local economic factors (Kim, 2012).

In general, the economic importance of tourism is that it diversifies the destination economy, increases income regeneration for residents, increases local government revenue in the form of direct and indirect taxes, brings foreign exchange for a country, improves production, increases GDP, creates employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, and makes multiple contributions to the development and expansion of various economic sectors and activities (Kim,2012).

2.3.2 Expansion of commercial crop production

In 1988, the entire irrigated area of the basin was estimated to be 69,000 hectare. Currently, state farms control 90% of the irrigated area, private farmers control approximately 7%, and the remaining 3% is mostly abandoned owing to salt accumulation and water logging from shallow

ground water. The state farms are primarily situated in the valley's middle and lower sections, while the primary irrigators in the upper valley are Ethiopian Sugar Corporation (ESC), Ethiopian Share Enterprise (ESE) and Ethiopian Horticultural Corporation Share Enterprise (HDC). Sugar and cotton have historically been the principal crops grown in the Middle and Lower Awash valleys.

Fruit production has expanded since 1999, with the majority of fruits and vegetables sold in local markets across Ethiopia's river basins. The Rift Valley Lake Basin and Awash River Basin have recently begun to produce high-quality flowers and vegetables for export. In 2001 and 2002, vegetable exports increased by 95% over 1998. The Awash River Basin produces 45% of all flowers exported. As the external market opportunity expands, several private flower enterprises are emerging. Summer farming patterns, such as cotton, are common in drier regions' lower valleys when rainfall is critical. In contrast, sugar cane accounts for the vast majority of crop production in the Upper Valley. Ethiopia is completely self-sufficient in cotton.

This crop has a high potential for export. Existing textile manufacturers consume around 50,000 tons of lint cotton every year. Furthermore, there is a great opportunity to export lint.

Ethiopia has numerous prospects for cotton cultivation and processing. The most prevalent crops in the upper Valley are sugarcane (74%), cotton (82%), and cotton (75%). Furthermore, 20,000 ha of land along the park's eastern boundary, where the Afar ethnic population lives, were recently designated for sugar plantation (AFWADO, 2010).

The Awash Basin boasts Ethiopia's most sophisticated water infrastructure, and as a result of these accomplishments, it has been a major contributor to the Ethiopian economy for the past four decades. The basin's first major investments were in sugar and cotton production. Sugar remains a significant crop, with both farmed area and production increasing. However, cotton production has fallen. Fruit and vegetable crop production for the domestic market is rapidly developing in the valley, with high-value vegetable and flower production emerging in recent years (Girma 2012).

The expansion in commercial farming and land alienation by Ittu migrants resulted in the loss of pasture land for the Kereyu community outside the park (Ayalew, 2009). Permanent

communities in and around the park contribute significantly to continuous human demand for park resources. Four sub-districts on the Oromiya side of the park, Gelcha, Benti, Kobo, and Debiti, were discovered to have permanent settlements (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.3.3 Expansion of social services

Another indication of settlement in the park is the construction of various public service buildings (schools, clinics, millhouses, storehouses, waterworks, etc.) by the Gudina Tumsa foundation, a Kereyu-based non-governmental organization.

2.3.4 Expansion of pastoralism

The pastoral populations that surround Awash National Park survive primarily through substantial pastoral herding based on a communal grazing system (Abule et al., 2005; Tessema et al., 2011). Livestock from pastoral and agro-pastoral populations share resources with wildlife in and around ANP, as is customary in other African conservation areas and around the world. The area is home to pastoralist groups that rely largely on cooperative natural resource management strategies. They live off the natural resources found in and around ANP. The community's broad presence within the park's boundaries has had an impact on how natural resources are managed and developed (Melaku, 2011).

The pastoralist population of camels, cattle, sheep, and goats is overflowing Awash National Park. As a result, wildlife is stressed owing to disturbance and a shortage of food.

Kereyu, Ittu, and Afar are the main cattle owners in the nearby awash park. According to the aerial survey, the region had 106,301 cattle, grouped into three categories. The majority of them rely on natural fodder found in Awash National Park areas, whether seasonally or permanently, which has a direct negative influence on flora density and diversity (Jacobs & Schroeder, 2019).

The Afar region, which is part of the Middle and Lower Awash River Basin, has 3.6 million cattle, or 7.4% of the national total, while the sheep and goat populations are 2 million (7.8%) and 3 million (13.8%), respectively. In addition, the Afar region has 192,872 pack animals (3% of the national total) and 871,832 camels (27% of the national total) (Reporter 2013). The livestock population in the Afar Region in the Middle and Lower Awash Basin has grown since

1998. This was mostly due to the establishment of numerous water points in the region, which was formerly a major issue in the area.

Currently, a lot of effort is being put into pastoral development in terms of boosting feed resources, watering stations, health, and marketing. The basin is now essentially closed, and water supplies may have been over appropriated. Furthermore, several factors, such as rising population, migration into the basin, extra extension of irrigated fields, poor upper catchment management approaches, and so on, are jeopardizing the basin's irrigation viability (Girma 2012).

2.4 The Negative Socio-economic impacts of Awash National Park

2.4.1 Frequent conflicts among local communities for resource competition

Awash National Park is currently under considerable threat as a result of rising demand from locals seeking resources. Conservation of biodiversity is a point of dispute as communities seek to increase agricultural land in a country experiencing rapid population growth. Locals (Afar and Kereyu-Itu) frequently cross the park's borders in search of expansive pastures for their cattle. These chronic pressures irreversibly damage environmental quality and lead to a reduction in native species. However, grasslands in the central 250 km² area, meticulously managed by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, are in good condition and support large herbivore populations (Jon, 2024).

In terms of indigenous peoples, the Awash and Alledeghi Plains are bordered by three major pastoral tribes: the agriculturalist Kereyu (to the west), the Somali Issa (east), and the Afar. The Kereyau and Afar, who were previously at conflict, have reached an understanding, albeit the latter continues to oppose the Issa. The Afar men still carry the jile, a curved fighting knife, but the practice of removing enemy testes is no longer common. Born survivors, the Afar way of life is intrinsically harsh, with dagu - news sharing - functioning as both a greeting and a manner of appraising, arranging, and planning their existence (Atta, 2025).

Conflicts between local communities and park authorities. Ethiopia's protected areas face a variety of challenges, some of which come from border conflicts between local people and community relations with park management (Ashenafi and Leader, 2005). Many of the country's

parks are threatened as a result of these situations. Conflicts persist between communities surrounding the ANP, such as the Kereyu/Ittu and the Afar, as well as between locals and park officials (Mulugeta and Hagmann, 2008). As a result, the conflict between the Afar and the Kereyu/Ittu tribes continues in the country's eastern part (Ayalew, 2009).

Natural resource scarcity and border conflicts between neighboring communities have been highlighted as the sources of community enmity. Furthermore, shortages of pasture and water sources, as well as border sharing, are causes of conflict between the Kereyu/Ittu and Afar tribes, which frequently result in livestock looting (Elias 2008).

2.4.2 Increasing cost of living (inflation)

At the same time, it may result in economic disappointments in that area owing to increased demand for consuming products and services in the destination's economy; tourism generates a scarcity of some commodities in the local area; and could boost prices, raising the cost of living. Tourism investment may come at the expense of other economic sector developments, diverting monies away from other forms of economic development. Because capital is a limited resource, removing such money results in a significant opportunity cost in terms of other sectoral investments. Furthermore, tourism boosts import demand, meaning that money will leave that country (Yidnekachew, 2018).

Furthermore, tourism development generates a number of economic disputes and obstacles, not the least of which is land use. Tourist development necessitates space; land must be made available for tourist activities. Fortunately, tourism, as Chris Taller mentioned in Robinson (2019), avoids center places and makes great use of outlying regions; unfortunately, tourism needs frequently conflict with agricultural demands--the tourist destination may overlap with an area predominantly committed to arable or pastoral farming.

2.4.3 Seasonality of job and unemployment problem

Tourism also has a negative impact on the economy owing to seasonality. Because tourism is seasonal, it generates seasonal unemployment. Arrivals are high between November and January, probably due to the cold in the northern hemisphere, and major religious celebrations, such as Ethiopian festivals, occur around this time. This seasonality improves resource usage. Because of

its unpredictability, cutbacks in tourist arrivals and revenues may occur as a result of unforeseen events such as terrorism or severe weather. Political instability (both in the originating and destination nations) has a major negative impact on tourism-dependent economies during periods of sharp drop in tourism demand. Tourism disrupts traditional labor patterns and incurs costs for infrastructure construction and upkeep (Goodwin, 2006).

2.5. Status and factors of degradation in Awash National Park

Over two-thirds of the park is being used for non-conservation purposes, such as permanent housing and extensive grazing. The Park's resources have degraded dramatically as a result of bad relationships between Park management and adjacent communities, as well as a lack of understanding of the economic importance of animal resources (Adugna, 2016). Awash National Park has a semi-arid climate and is composed of grasslands, savannas, and shrubs. The predominant vegetation type is the Acacia-Commiphora woodland, which is comprised of drought-tolerant shrubs.

This habitat, which has been subjected to considerable human-caused stresses in other parts of the Rift Valley, is relatively well protected within the park. The most serious hazards include firewood and charcoal extraction for the country's major towns, as well as overgrazing, both of which lead to erosion and environmental degradation (Jon, 2024).

Ethiopia, on the other hand, has increased its efforts to establish national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and reserves in order to obtain environmental and economic benefits, although the value of these protected places is extremely low (Solomon & Dereje, 2015).

Because the majority of the country's protected areas are degrading and have faced serious challenges from illegal settlement, illegal poaching of wildlife, deforestation and degradation, illegal agricultural expansion, conflicts on competing park resources, habitat destruction, livestock grazing, soil degradation, bush fires by cultivators around the park, charcoal production, and over-exploitation of natural resources (Getachew & Weld

Despite being formally gazetted in 1969, Awash National Park continues to encounter a number of challenges. Domestic animal grazing, a lack of conservation funding, the spread of invasive alien species, lax law enforcement, encroachment on human settlement, human-wildlife conflict,

and a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities for the community are the most serious threats to ANP (Malede & Girma, 2015).

As a result, it has had a vital role in preventing further damage of ANP's wildlife and vegetation. Protected areas are experiencing an increasing number of difficulties. The presence of agricultural communities, as well as pastoralist and agro-pastoralist lifestyles, are the primary sources of natural resource degradation in parks (UNEP, 2013). Awash National Park, for example, was established among Kereyu and Afar indigenous communities' home villages (Ayalew, 2009; World Bank, 2006).

For example, Awash National Park discovered that dispersed bushland fell by 29.4% between 1972 and 2006, whereas grassland rose by 14.2% between 1972 and 1986 and 10.5% between 1986 and 2006. Furthermore, due to rising demand for agricultural and pasture property in and around ANP, bare land increased dramatically. Between 1972 and 2006, 4.9% of Mount Fentale became barren (Solomon et al. 2014). With the exception of animal crossing facilities, the route runs across the intended areas' fragmented terrain. Furthermore, the ecological safety management of wildlife vehicle crashes is insufficiently designed, resulting in the death of conservation-sensitive species (Getachew & Weldemariam, 2016).

During an incidental assessment, a large number of wild animals and birds were killed, and the road was packed with heavy automobiles throughout the day. The route's arid atmosphere requires vehicles to drive on a frequent basis during wild animal activity hours. Such traffic patterns may increase the rate of wildlife roadkill in the park. Conservation efforts on road ecology, on the other hand, are impractical due to insufficient law enforcement and a lack of multi-sector collaboration before to and after construction. As a result, such issues are posing a challenge to biodiversity conservation efforts and will have a substantial impact on the future decline of Awash National Park's wild mammal resource base (Tezera, 2015).

2.6 Roles to be played by stakeholders to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects and to enhance socio-economic benefits of Awash National Park

2.6.1 Creating awareness and involving community in the protection of ANP

The parks are important sources of rivers, lakes, and recognized plant species. Despite the areas' immense potential, agricultural land is rapidly growing, grazing areas are highly degraded, forests are being destroyed, charcoal production, habitat conversion, conflicts between settlers and park managers over natural resources, and water systems are affected. There is no effective resource-responsible organization in the area, thus communities rely on open-access resource management regimes. As a result, the parks' vegetation and wild mammal species variety is gradually diminishing. To address the concerns, the government and other stakeholders have done nothing to protect park resources.

As a result, raising awareness and improving capacity for protected areas' long-term resource conservation should be necessary (Fitsum 2018). Non-governmental groups use environmental conservation, sustainable natural resource management, and community sensitization to provide comprehensive active preservation of Ethiopia's environments and species (Jon, 2024).

Protected areas in Ethiopia are managed by a variety of stakeholders, including local communities, regional governments, the Ethiopian Wildlife Authority, the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, and non-governmental organizations. However, there is a lack of coordination among the different players, which range from state governments to project implementers.

As a result, they design and plan to achieve a variety of objectives. Such discrepancies are common when conservation efforts are linked to development money from donors. Thus, all of these factors eventually hamper park resource management (Alers et al., 2017).

2.6.2 Law enforcement

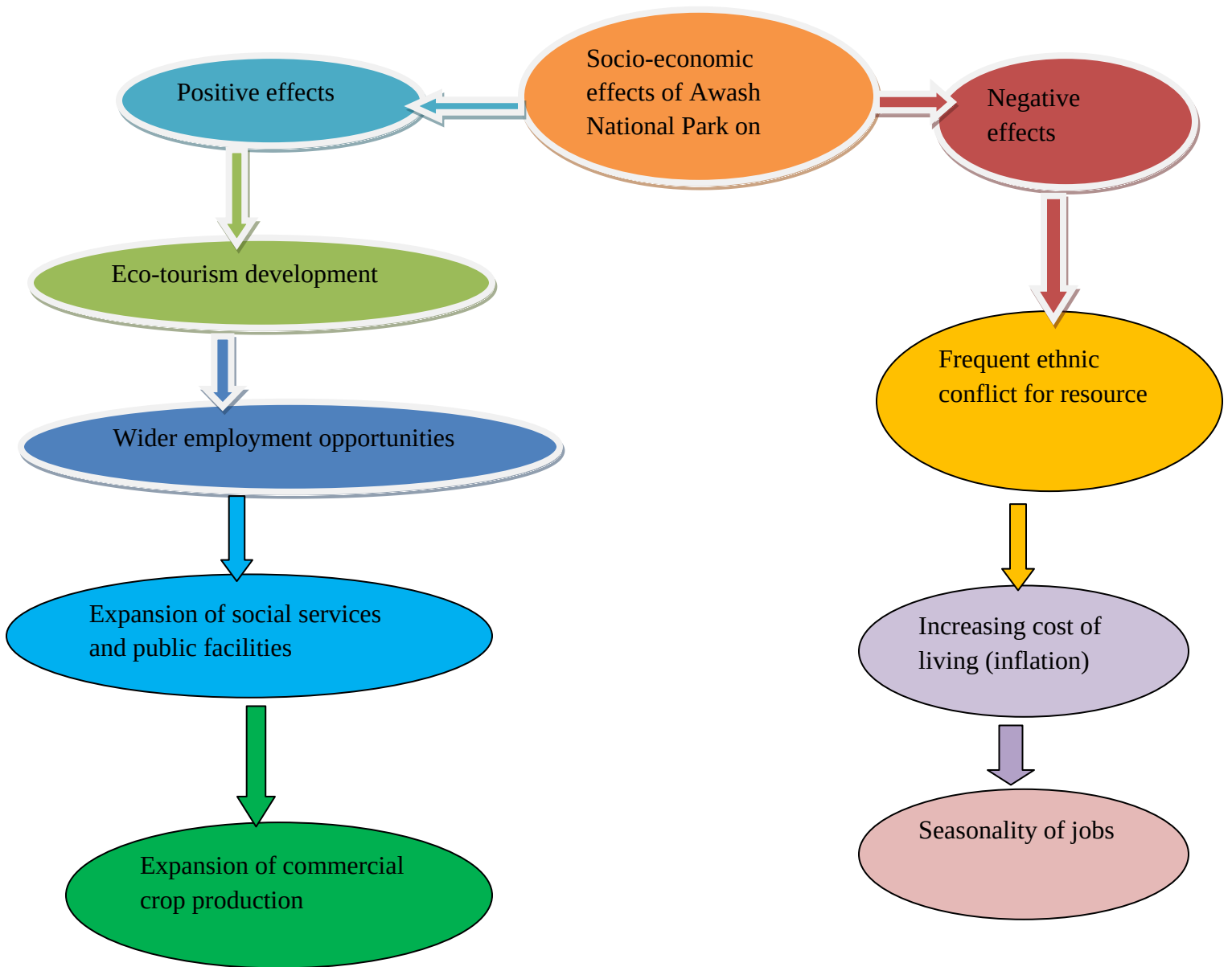
According to some experts, law enforcement is the most effective way to avoid further biodiversity loss and is essential for protected area management as a common benefit (Gibson et al., 2015; Fischer, 2018). Settlements, agriculture, poaching, and other activities are prohibited by the IUCN definition of protected areas; yet, no adequate law enforcement has been enacted to prevent such activities in Ethiopia's protected areas. For example, in Yangudi-Rassa and Awash

national parks, resource conflicts between Issa (Somali) and Afar tribes forced scouts to leave park areas for grazing and settlement (Mengistu et al., 2017).

2.6.3 Job diversification

The livelihoods of locals living in and near protected areas, particularly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, rely on them, so permanent resettlements and alternative life sports activities should be developed. The legislation enacted to safeguard regions should be enforced on the ground, and the responsible agency should consider the long-term viability of local community livelihoods and natural resources. Most protected areas lack clear ground-level demarcation, necessitating re-demarcation. Most protected areas lack adequate and consistent data on biodiversity and its changes. Thus, ongoing monitoring of PA biodiversity is necessary (Fitsum, 2018).

Figure 2.1 Conceptual frame work of the study



Source: Author's Construct based on Literature.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description and Identification of the site

Awash Sebat Kilo Town is located in eastern Ethiopia, in Rift valley System, approximately 350 kilometers South-west of Samara, the Capital of the Afar regional state. Geographically, it is bounded by 61500 to 63500 meters East and 991500 to 1024500 meters North. The Kebena, Kesseem and Filwuha streams flow towards the settlement. The Awash River drains to the northeast of the town. The Town's height spans from spans from 820m to 1120m. The average monthly temperature is between 22.6 °c and 30°C. The town's climate ranges from Semi-arid to desert, with an average annual rainfall of 606mm.

Awash National Park is one of Ethiopia's oldest national parks, overseen by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWLC). It is located 225 kilometers east of Addis Abeba, on the boundary between Oromiya and Afar. The park covers 756 square kilometers. ANP was established in 1958 as one of Ethiopia's first two gazetted national parks, alongside Semien National Park. This park is located between the Oromia and Afar provinces, 215 kilometers from Addis Ababa, the country's capital. To the south, the Awash River meanders, beginning in the Ethiopian highlands and accented by stunning waterfalls in the park.

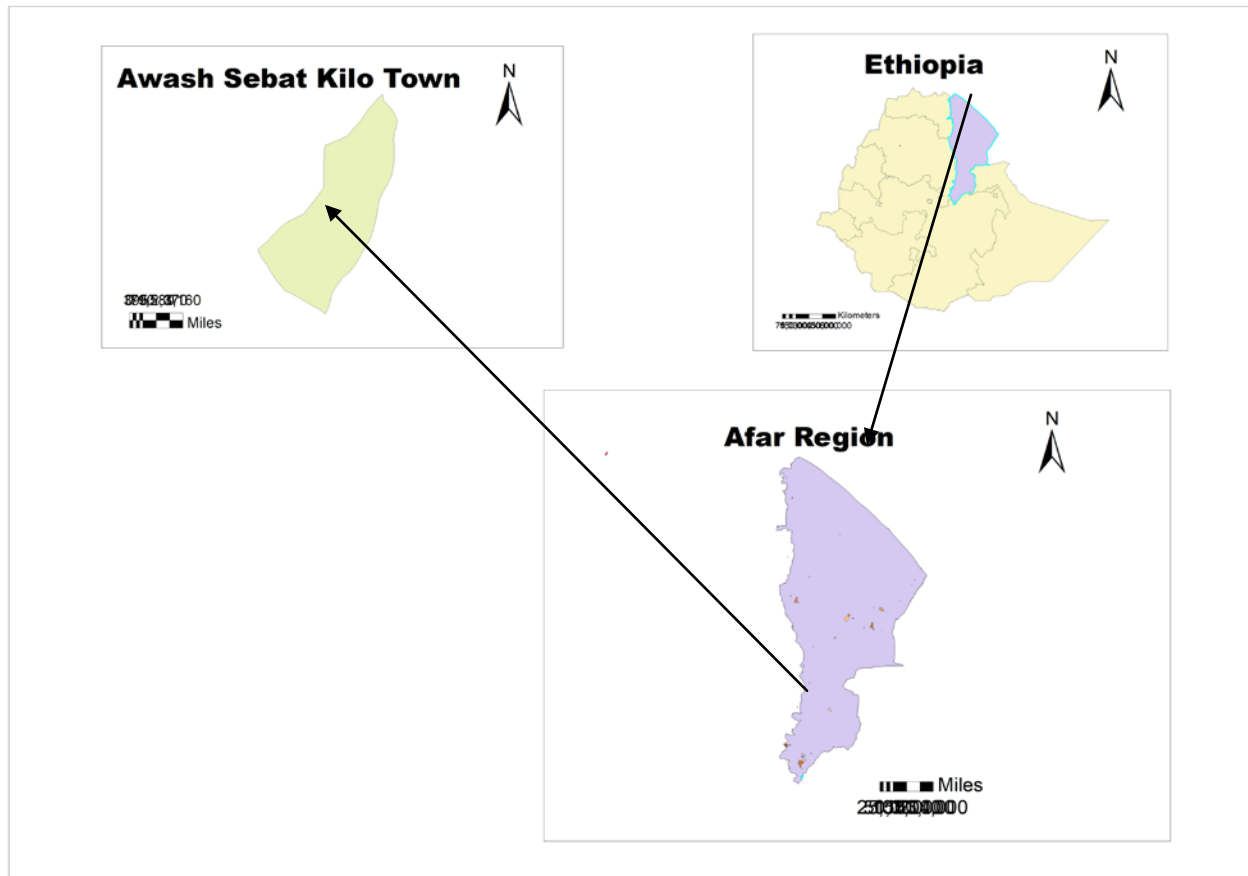
Like the rest of Ethiopia, the region has a bimodal rainfall pattern, with a rainy season followed by a dominant dry season that can last up to 10 months. The park's altitude fluctuations, which range from 700 to 2000 meters, provide an incredible variety of beauty, from the plains of Ilala Sala to the hot springs of Filhowa, passing by the falls and canyon of Awash and the Fantale volcano (2007 meters). This park's diversified surroundings, which encourage high biodiversity, make it a legendary destination for ornithologists, primatologists, and archaeologists seeking refuge (remember that East Africa is the cradle of civilization) (Jon, 2024).

Its proximity to the capital Addis Ababa, as well as its ecological diversity, magnificent beauty, and rich cultural heritage, make it one of the most tempting conservation destinations to visit and explore. It boasts numerous magnificent natural attractions, like the Awash River Falls, hot springs, Mount Fentale, and Hyena Park, which is a dormant volcano with pumice slopes and

historic lava flows. The temperature in the park can reach 42°C. The park's dominant vegetation is grassland, savanna, and shrubland. The park's north and west meadows are extensively grazed. The park's main mammal species are Gazelle, Greater Kudu, Defassa waterbuck, Salt's dik-dik, Abyssinian Hare, Warth dog, Anubis baboon, Hamadryas baboon, Lion, Leopard, Aard wolf, and bat-eared fox.

Awash National Park is an Important Bird Area (IBA), home to over 460 species, including six endemic, five fragile, and three near threatened species. The park is home to around 60% of Ethiopia's migratory bird species. There are 43 other reptile species (Daniel, 2011). The people that surround the park maintain a pastoralist lifestyle, earning the majority of their income from animal sales. They are ethnically Ittu, Kereyu, and Afar.

Figure 3.1 Location map of the study area



Source: Author's Construct based on Ethiopia News,2007.

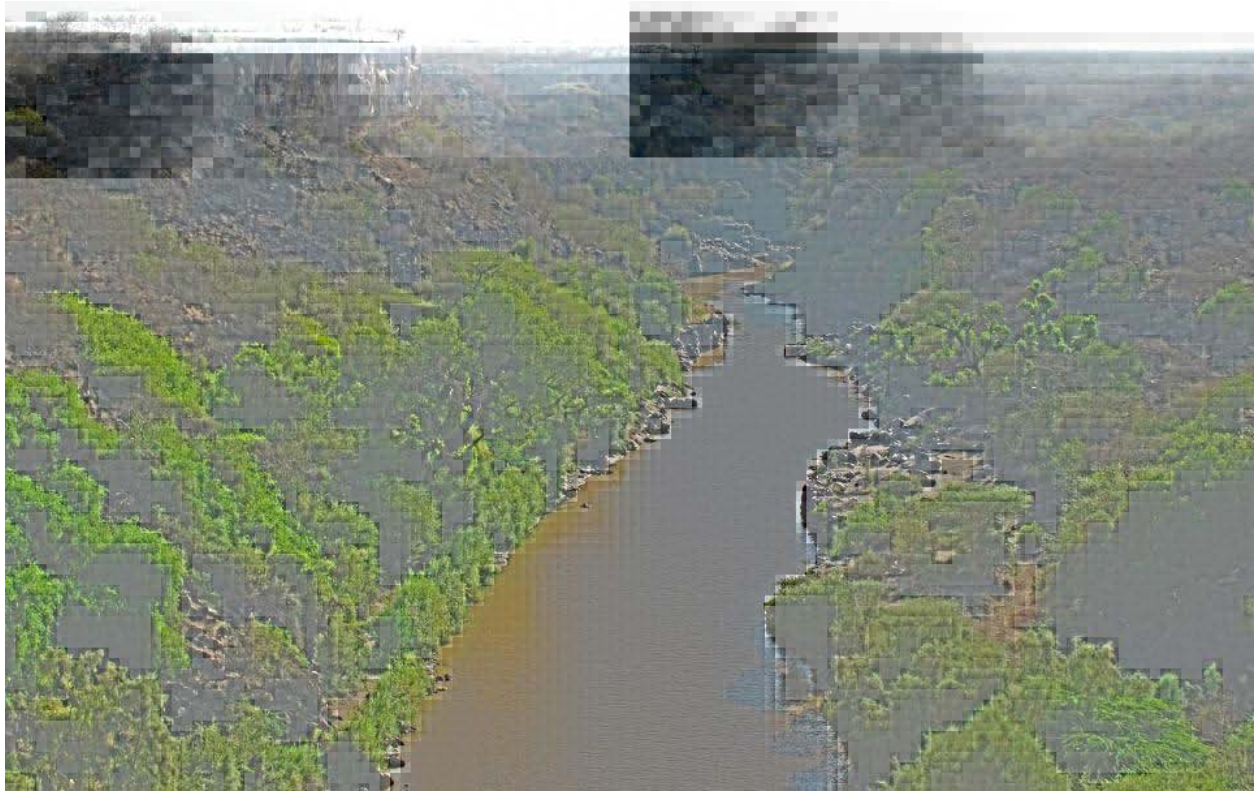
Climate

The area is located at a height of 705 to 2007 meters above sea level. Meteorological data taken from the nearest meteorological station show that the area's mean annual rainfall distribution ranges between 400 and 700 mm. The monthly mean temperature ranges from 25 to 30°C.

Water Resource

The Awash River serves as the water source for the area's irrigation systems. The Awash River is one of Ethiopia's major rivers, suited for both minor and large-scale irrigation.

Figure 3.2 Awash River



Source: Jon,2024

Vegetation

Currently, the research area is covered in open trees and shrubs dominated by *Acacia* species. Rural families in the study region cut down trees, lowering forest cover, and sell fuel wood and charcoal to make money. Furthermore, a lack of environmental awareness and willingness to grow trees among locals is a significant factor contributing to the destruction of natural vegetation.

Pastoralism

The majority of households in the study region rely on pastoralism as their primary source of income. Except for a few pastoralists who have access to irrigation, the great majority rely on animal husbandry. Drought and famine are common occurrences in the study area due to climate

anomalies. Livestock production contributes significantly to household income in the study area. The sale of cattle, goats, sheep, and cattle contributes significantly to livestock income.

Social Services

Education: There are public primary and secondary schools in the region.

Health care: The area contains health posts and medium clinics. The most common diseases in the research region are malaria, water-borne infections, and diarrhea. The research area suffers from a severe lack of potable water supply.

3.2. Research Approach and design

The researcher employed an exploratory research strategy to attain the study's purpose. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Because the goal is to generalize from the research participants to a larger population, the researcher used probability sampling to choose participants. As a result, the information was gathered directly from primary sources.

3.3 Sampling procedure and sampling size

In this thesis, the researcher selected a sample site using the purposive sampling technique, which included the kebeles included in the sample survey. However, individual families in the chosen kebeles were chosen using a random sample process. In general, the sample size is decided by a number of factors, including the size and variability of the target population, resource constraints, the allowable error between the sample mean and the population mean, and the required level of confidence (Martin, 2004).

In order to collect data, the researcher attempted to select three Kebeles, namely Allalimo, Bank Sefer, and Mariam Sefer, with a total population of 25000, with around 13000 males and 12,000 females.

There are approximately 5,400 household heads. Allalimo, Bank Sefer, and Mariam Sefer represented 2000, 1800, and 1600 household heads, respectively. The researcher purposefully chose these kebeles because of their proximity to the Awash National Park. This is due to their extensive knowledge of the park and their willingness to communicate both its positive and bad

consequences. So, I tried to attempt to use the following mathematical procedure to get the sample size from the three kebeles(Yemane,).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{5400}{1 + 5400 (0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{5400}{55} = 98$$

Where, n= required sample size

N=Average population size per annum

e= 10% of precision (90% of accuracy)

Table 3.1 Number of sampled household heads

No	kebele	Total household heads	calculation	Number of sampled households heads
1	Allalimo	2000	$98 \left(\frac{2000}{5400} \right)$	36
2	Bank sefer	1800	$98 \left(\frac{1800}{5400} \right)$	33
3	Mariam sefer	1600	$98 \left(\frac{1600}{5400} \right)$	29
	Total	5400		98

3.4 Data Sources and Data collection method

The optimum target audience for performing an onsite field assessment of the site was everyone who lives near the park. Primary data was gathered by onsite face-to-face interviews with standardized questionnaires.

To ensure the effectiveness of this investigation, the random sampling technique was used. A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 100 respondents. Before data collection began, the major goal of the study was conveyed to each and every respondent. By doing so, respondents were supposed to maintain secrecy, allowing the researcher to obtain unbiased data.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Individual households' data were collected using both open and closed-ended questionnaires. The researcher chose this strategy because surveys allow respondents to express their opinions in their own words. Open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were issued for quantitative analysis.

3.5.2 Interview

To get reliable information, key informants were interviewed in person. The interview aimed to elicit more information from respondents in order to augment the data collected and analyzed qualitatively. The researcher used six socially accepted key informants: three kebele leaders, one ANP guard, and two local elders who are more knowledgeable about the past and present socioeconomic effects of ANP on the Awash 7Kilo Town.

3.5.3 Observation

Field observations were conducted to verify and enhance the material gathered through interviews and questionnaires, and documentation was mostly accomplished through the use of photography.

3.5.4 Focused group discussion

According to Mwanje (2001), focus group discussions (FGDs) allow a small group of respondents to focus on the major elements of a study issue while being guided by an experienced moderator. They also help with the collection of data on group dynamics. The researcher chose six respondents (two from each kebele) based on their social standing within society and their knowledge of the current and previous environmental, social, and economic situation of the study area.

Focus group discussions were held with two members of a selected educated group, one local elder, two religious leaders, and one kebele (local) leader. The primary goal of the focus group discussion was to better understand the tourist appeal and socioeconomic impacts of Awash National Park on local populations, as well as the role of stakeholders in mitigating obstacles and enhancing the park's positive prospects.

3.5.5 Document review

Documents discovered in woreda and 'kebeles' were examined and utilized to generate secondary data. Census reports, activity progress reports, and relief distributions with demographic, climate, and economic information were analyzed and complemented the primary data.

3.6 Data Analysis Method

The questionnaire was divided into categories to collect information on tourist attractions and the socioeconomic impact of Awash National Park on the citizens of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. It was based on socioeconomic characteristics, onsite data, follow-up inquiries, and site observations.

The data was presented using descriptive statistics, while the frequency mean and other distributions were displayed or tabulated using a table and their respective distribution or percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter looks at how information was analyzed and interpreted using surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with key informants, sample home heads, and focus group members. An attempt was made to present the facts using tables generated from questionnaire replies from 98 respondents. Finally, the researcher made an effort to supplement the findings with relevant studies. The first issue in this chapter describes the respondents' demographic situation. The chapter's second section discusses ANP's beneficial socioeconomic benefits.

Third, the negative socioeconomic consequences of ANP on the Awash Sebat Kilo Town are discussed. Finally, it discusses the activities that must be taken to limit the park's negative consequences while also enhancing its favorable benefits.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the sampled household heads

kebele			Allalimo	Bank Sefer	Mariam Sefer	Total
Total population	F		36	33	29	98
	%		37	34	29	100
Sex	Male	Frequency	30	22	22	74
		percentage	31	22	22	75
	Female	Frequency	6	11	7	24
		percentage	6	12	7	25
Age	18-64	Frequency	32	26	24	82
		percentage	33	26.5	24.5	84
	>65	Frequency	4	7	5	16
		percentage	4	7	5	16
Marital status	Single	Frequency	6	4	-	10
		percentage	6	4	-	10
	Married	Frequency	30	29	29	88
		percentage	31	29.5	29.5	90
Educational status	Elementary school	Frequency	24	27	24	75
		percentage	24.5	28	24.5	77
	Diploma & above	Frequency	12	6	5	23
		percentage	12	6	5	23

Source: own survey result, 2025

The respondents' background information, which includes gender, age, literacy, and marital status, is the most crucial component connected to the study's topic. Table 4:1 shows the percentage of responses by sex structure. Men made up 75% of the study participants, while women made up the other 25%. This implies that the vast majority of household heads were men. Eighty-four percent of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 64, while twenty-five percent were over the age of 65.

As a result, the research area had a little higher potential for a population that is economically active and capable of contributing to the study area's socioeconomic growth. According to Table 4.1, about 100% of the research area's respondents were literate, including those in grade 8. As a result, there is a better approach to respond to both tourist attractions and the socioeconomic effects of Awash National Park on inhabitants of surrounding communities, as well as stakeholder contributions to alleviate issues and maximize park benefits.

This means that, while a better understanding of traditional knowledge requires modern education, indigenous wisdom may not require it in order to respond. As a result, literate persons understand more than illiterates. The majority of respondents are married. More than 90 percent of the study participants were married. Given the large number of workers, this could have improved socioeconomic patterns. Married couples, on the other hand, often contribute to population pressure, which raises demand for necessities due to an increase in births, degrades the land, and affects resource utilization. As the number of weddings grows, so does the demand for basic commodities.

4.2 Major tourist attraction of Awash National Park

Respondents were asked to respond about the tourist attraction potentials of the Awash National Park. The following table 4.2 shows the tourist attractions of the park.

Table 4.2 Major tourist attraction of Awash National Park

What are the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park?	Number of respondents							
	Allalimo		Bank sefer		Mariam sefer		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
An exceptional variety of landscapes	9	9	6	6	10	10	25	26
High biodiversity	17	17	12	12	6	6	35	36
Cultural diversity	6	6	5	5	4	4	14	14
Volcanic activities	4	4	10	10	9	9	23	24
Total	36	37	33	34	29	29	98	100

Source: own survey result, 2025

According to table 4.2, respondents believe that the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park are the presence of a large number of biodiversity (varieties of fauna and flora), exceptional variety (beauty) of landscapes, active volcanic activities, and cultural diversity of local communities (36%, 26%, 24%, and 14%), respectively. According to key informants and group discussants, the research area attracts tourists due to its diverse sceneries, which include valleys, volcanic mountains, plateaus, rifts, hills, waterfalls, rivers, hot springs, lakes, lodges, gorges, beaches, and so on.

According to them, travelers are drawn to the place by the attractiveness and beauty of bird species, animals, reptiles, amphibians, and many plant species. They went on to say that active volcanic processes, such as fumaroles, hot springs, waterfalls, lava, dome-shaped mountains, fractures, and so on, are additional sources of tourism in the area. The presence of several ethnic groups, each with their own culture, religion, language, way of life, customs, and traditions, adds beauty to the study area, making it the most appealing site in Ethiopia.

The park's altitude changes, which range from 700 to 2000 meters, present an incredible variety of beauty, from the plains of Ilala Sala to the hot springs of Filhuwa, passing by the falls and canyon of Awash and the Fantale volcano (2007 meters). This park's diversified surroundings, which encourage high biodiversity, make it a legendary destination for ornithologists, primatologists, and archaeologists seeking sanctuary (remember that East Africa is the cradle of civilization) (Jon, 2024).

The park covers 756 square kilometers and is largely made up of acacia and grassland, but it also has a diverse range of volcanic scenery. The wide grasslands and grass plains are home to zebra, Beisa oryx, kudu, Soemmerring's gazelle, and Swayne's hartebeest. Olive and hamadryas baboons, as well as colobus and grivet monkeys, can be seen near the river, and the small dik-dik is usually hidden in the shade of an acacia thorn. Cheetahs, servals, and leopards are also present (though less apparent), along with lions, black-backed and golden jackals, and caracals on occasion.

Awash features around 400 bird species, ranging from the well-known great ostrich to the less common secretary bird and Abyssinian ground hornbill. Carmine bee-eaters and Abyssinian rollers emit bright flashes of color. There are countless other species, such as birds of prey, forest birds, and savannah birds. A variety of well-kept pathways weave through the park, taking in the numerous stunning vistas; however, to make the most of your visit, it is recommended that you engage a qualified park guide (Hampshire, 2024).

Awash National Park's exceptional resource values include ecosystems, fauna, vegetation, scenic terrain, and tourism. It is Ethiopia's second most important bird region and the most diverse conservation area for birds, with over 450 species. The Awash ecosystem's diverse habitats and services include the endangered African Lion, as well as spectacular geographic panoramas such as Fantale Crater, Ellala Sala plains, hot spring area, Awash Falls, and gorge (EWCA, 2011).

Figure 4.1 sample of animals and landscapes in Awash National Park



A(Doho-hot spring)

B(Awash falls)

C & D(Fentalle mountain)



E(Dik-dik dani)

F(Carmine bee eater)

G(Olive baboon)

H

Source: Salva Fauna, 2025.

4.3 Socio-economic benefits of Awash National Park for the residents of Awash 7 kilo Town

Respondents were asked about the major positive socio-economic significances of Awash National park for the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town.

Table 4.3 Socio-economic significance of Awash National Park for the residents of Awash sebat kilo town

What are the major positive social and economic significance of Awash National Park to the residents of Awash 7 kilo town?	Number of respondents							
	Allalimo		Bank sefer		Mariam sefer		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Wider range of employment opportunities	12	12	20	20	14	14	46	47
Expansion of social services and public infrastructure	20	20	10	10	12	12	42	43
Increasing cultural exchange	4	4	3	3	3	3	10	10
Total	36	37	33	33.5	29	29.5	98	100

Source: own survey result, 2025

As shown in table 4.3, respondents reported that the most important positive socioeconomic impacts of Awash National Park for them are the availability of a diverse variety of employment options (47%), as well as the increase of social services and public infrastructure. This hypothesis was confirmed by key informants and focus group discussion participants. They went on to say that the park's establishment opened up a larger range of employment options. According to them, a huge number of people work in irrigation agriculture, livestock rearing, social and public services, NGOs, park services, the hotel and tourism industries, charcoal manufacture, retail trade, and so on.

and producing income for their living. They went on to say that the establishment of Awash National Park paved the way for the growth of social services and public infrastructure in the study area, including public and private schools, health centers, HEP, NGOs, offices, all-weather roads and highways, railways, hotels and restaurants, shops, small-scale industries, fishing, and so on. They also noted that all of the aforementioned benefits have assisted the local community

in improving their living conditions by transitioning from nomadic pastoralism to a contemporary economic sector and way of life.

In this regard, they claim that Awash National Park assisted the people in exchanging culture with the rest of the world and allowing them to live a civilized lifestyle.

According to Yidnekachew (2018), Awash National Park's distinct landscape and animals offer exceptional opportunities for ecotourism, attracting visitors interested in wildlife viewing, birdwatching, and cultural activities. Tourism can be utilized as a development tool since it attracts buyers to the product and, unlike other exports, it can provide direct value to locals by allowing them to sell goods and services to tourists and tourism businesses. According to Kim (2012), tourism has the potential to create jobs, supply foreign exchange, increase product return on investment for emerging economies, bring technology, and raise destination people's living standards.

The most significant benefits claimed to stimulate tourist development are the economic gains that communities can expect to reap as tourism activity increases. Tourists create revenue for local businesses and retail outlets. Tourists benefit from a variety of services that are constructed and offered to them, and tourism gives momentum for the improvement and development of local infrastructure and services. The number of receipts, or the net revenue generated by those receipts, that a community can expect from tourist spending is determined by government regulations and a variety of local economic factors.

4.4 Negative socio-economic impacts of ANP on the residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town

Sampled households were asked about the negative consequences of Awash National park on the nearby local communities.

Table 4.4 The Negative social and economic impacts of ANP on the residents of Awash sebat kilo town

What are the major negative social and economic impacts of Awash National Park on the Residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town?	Allalimo		Bank sefer		Mariam sefer		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Degradation of indigenous culture	11	11	11	11	13	13	35	36
Ethnic conflicts and instability	17	17	12	12	13	13	42	43
Increasing cost of living(inflation)	8	8	10	10	3	3	21	21
Total	36	37	33	33	29	29	98	100

Source: own survey result, 2025

Table 4.4 depicts the most significant negative socioeconomic impacts of Awash National Park on the population of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. Accordingly, respondents identified ethnic conflicts and instability, deterioration of indigenous culture, and rising living costs (inflation) as the park's key negative socioeconomic repercussions (38%, 32%, and 17%, respectively).

According to key informants and focused group discussants, regular ethnic clashes among Oromo, Afar, and Somali pastoralists in pursuit of pasture and water kill animals and humans, make people insecure, and cause political instability in the research area. The lack of a clear boundary and competition for natural resources exacerbated the problem, complicating the park's negative impacts. On the other hand, tourism expansion has led in cultural engagement, which has a negative impact on indigenous cultures. KII and FGD also found that as the population grew owing to tourism and other job opportunities in the area, the cost of living (inflation) increased.

In terms of indigenous peoples, the Awash and Alledoghi Plains are bordered by three major pastoral tribes: the agriculturalist Kereyu (to the west), the Somali Issa (east), and the Afar. The Kereyau and Afar, who were previously at conflict, have reached an understanding, albeit the latter continues to oppose the Issa. The Afar men still carry the jile, a curved fighting knife, but the practice of removing enemy testes is no longer common. Born survivors, the Afar lifestyle is intrinsically difficult, with dagu - the sharing of news - functioning as both a greeting and a technique of appraising, structuring, and organizing their survival (Atta, 2024).

At the same time, it may result in economic disappointments in that area owing to increased demand for consuming products and services in the destination's economy; tourism generates a scarcity of some commodities in the local area; and could boost prices, raising the cost of living. Tourism investment may come at the expense of other economic sector investments, diverting funds away from other areas of economic development. Because capital is a limited resource, withdrawing such money results in a significant opportunity cost in terms of other sectoral investments. Furthermore, tourism boosts import demand, meaning that money will leave that country (Yidnekachew, 2018).

4.5 Roles to be played by stakeholders so as to mitigate the challenges and to enhance the prospects of Awash National Park

In Ethiopia there are various stakeholders involving in protected areas, including local communities, regional government, Ethiopian Wildlife Authority, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, and NGOs.

Table 4.5 Roles to be played by stakeholders so as to mitigate the challenges that the Awash 7kilo town face from ANP

What roles must the stakeholders play so as to mitigate the challenges that the Awash Sebat Kilo Town face from the Awash National Park and to enhance the positive prospects of the park?	Number of respondents							
	Allalimo		Bank sefer		Mariam sefer		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Job diversification	10	10	7	70	3	30	20	20.4
Creating awareness	13	13	11	11	6	6	30	30.6
Law enforcement	5	5	11	11	8	8	24	24.5
Resource protection and conservation	8	8	4	4	12	12	24	24.5
Total	36	37	33	33.5	29	29.5	98	100

Source: own survey result, 2025

Table 4.5 shows the respondents' responses regarding the roles that stakeholders should play in mitigating the issues that Awash Sebat Kilo Town faces from the Awash National Park.

According to table 4.5, stakeholders must play major roles in creating awareness, resource protection and conservation, law enforcement, and job diversification in order to mitigate the challenges that Awash Sebat Kilo Town faces from Awash National Park (30.6%, 24.5%, 24.5%, and 20.4%, respectively). These responses were highly corroborated by key informants and focus group discussion participants. They explained that the primary tasks include teaching everyone about the park's benefits, conserving the park, diversifying jobs for pastoralists and charcoal producers, and enforcing land laws.

According to Fitsum (2018), parks provide a large source of rivers, lakes, and recognized plant species. Despite the areas' immense potential, agricultural land is rapidly growing, grazing areas are highly degraded, forests are being destroyed, charcoal production, habitat conversion, conflicts between settlers and park managers over natural resources, and water systems are affected. There is no effective resource-responsible organization in the area, thus communities rely on open-access resource management regimes. As a result, the parks' vegetation and wild mammal species variety is gradually diminishing.

To address the concerns, the government and other stakeholders have done nothing to protect park resources. As a result, raising awareness and improving capacity for protected areas' long-term resource conservation should be necessary (Fitsum 2018). Non-governmental groups use environmental conservation, sustainable natural resource management, and community sensitization to provide comprehensive active preservation of Ethiopia's environments and species (Jon, 2024). According to some experts, law enforcement is the most effective way to avoid further biodiversity loss and is essential for protected area management as a common benefit (Gibson et al., 2015; Fischer, 2018).

The livelihoods of locals living in and near protected areas, particularly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, rely on them, so permanent resettlements and alternative life sports activities should be developed. The legislation created for protected areas should be put into action on the ground, and the responsible body should recognize the long-term viability of local community livelihoods and natural resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis work was conducted in Afar Regional state, Awash Sebat Kilo Town on the Title entitled, the Socioeconomic effects of Awash National Park on the Residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. The main objective of this study was to identify the tourist attraction, socio-economic challenges that residents of Awash sebat Kilo Town face from Awash National Park. The study was conducted in Afar regional state, Awash Sebat kilo Town. The study used purposive sampling techniques to select the town. Three kebeles of Awash Sebat Kilo Town, namely, Allalimo, Bank Sefer and Mariam Sefer, were purposively selected, while 100 representative sample household heads from the three kebeles were randomly selected.

Data gathering tools such as questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and site observation of the park were used. To fulfill the importance of the findings, a descriptive survey design was employed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The findings of the study revealed that large biodiversity of fauna and flora, exceptional variety of landscapes and active volcanic activities are the major tourist attractions of Awash National Park. Wider range of employment opportunities and expansion of social services and public infrastructure are the major positive benefits of Awash National Park for residents of Awash Sebat Kilo Town. However, frequent conflicts for resource competition, inflation and modification of indigenous culture are the negative side effects of the park on the residents of the town.

Creating awareness, park protection, law enforcement and job diversification are the major roles to be played by stakeholders to mitigate the negative impacts of the park and to enhance the positive benefits of the park.

5.2 Recommendations

Awash National Park has both Positive and Negative Socioeconomic effects on the Residents of Awash Sebat Kilo town. In order to enhance the positive effects and so as to minimize the negative effects of the park, this thesis work identified some crucial recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were forwarded for concerned bodies, including local communities, Regional government, Ethiopian Wildlife Authority, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, and NGOs to play their role in order to mitigate the challenges of Awash National Park and to enhance the positive prospects of the park.

1. Giving awareness for the community members about the benefits of Awash National Park. This can be done by concerned government bodies and NGOs.
2. Concerned Government body should have to create clear boundary and giving protection for the park through areal enclosure.
3. Local elders and religious leaders should have to minimize conflicts between community members with the help of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.
4. Government bodies should encourage local communities to participate in conservation efforts.
5. Government bodies and private investors should develop sustainable tourism practices so as to generate revenue for the park and local communities.

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Tentative Time Frames and Budget Breakdown for the Study

Tentative Time Frames for the Study

No	Activities	Duration											
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Au
1	Review literature searching			*	*								
2	Proposal writing and submission					*	*	*					
3	Modification of the proposal based on the given comments						*						
4	Submission of the correct proposal							*					
5	Designing of the questionnaires							*					
6	Data collection								*				
7	Analyzing the collected data								*				
8	Writing the first draft of thesis									*			
9	Submitting the first draft of the thesis to advisor for comment									*			
10	Modifying the thesis based on the comment given									*			
11	Submission of the correct thesis to advisor										*		
12	Submission of the final thesis										*		
13	Final thesis defence											*	

Table 1 Time frames for the study

Budget Breakdown

No	Items	Unit	Quantity in number	Unit price	Total price (cost in birr)
1	Stationery material				
	1.1 Paper	Packet	2	500	1000
	1.2 Pen with different color	Number	6	30	180
	1.3 Ruler	Number	2	70	140
	1.4 Notebook	Number	2	150	300
	1.5 Stapler and staples	Number	1	300	300
	1.6 Fluid	Number	1	80	80
	1.7 Flash disc 16 GB	Number	1	800	800
2	Service cost				
	2.1 Typing	Page	100	50	5000
	2.2 Printing	Page	100	20	2000
	2.3 Photocopy	Page	100	5	500
	2.4 Binding	Number	4	800	3200
	2.5 Telephone card	Number	30	50	1500
	2.6 Transportation	Round	6	1000	6000
3	Miscellaneous cost	-	-	-	5000
Total cost					26,000

Table 1 Budget breakdown

APPENDICES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLD HEADS

The main aim of this questionnaire is to collect data as input for the study entitled *socio-economic impacts of Awash national Park: the case of Awash Sebat kilo Town, Afar Region, Ethiopia*. The sole purpose is to qualify the requirement for awarding the Masters of Art degree (M. A) at Addis Ababa University. Dear respondents, you are expected to provide genuine, accurate and balanced information with respect to *Opportunities and challenges of artificial lake/dam to the surrounding community*. Your accurate information is highly valuable as it determines the success of this study.

N.B.

1. The response you give will not have any negative impact on you.
2. No need of writing your name on the questionnaire.
3. Please respond in full freedom.

Part I Background information of the respondent

You can ask the researcher any questions if there is an ambiguity and expect to receive satisfactory answers.

Kebele_____

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sex of household head: | A. male | B. female | | |
| 2. Age of household head | A. 20-30 | B.31-40 | C.41-50 | D. above 50 |
| 3. Religions of household head | A. Christian | B.Islam | C.others | |
| 4. Marital Status | A. Married | B. Single | C. Divorced | D. Widowed |
| 5. Educational Status | A. Illiterate. | B. Read and write | C. Primary education completed | D. High school complete
E. Higher education complete |

Appendix A

Respondents' Questionnaire

This survey Questionnaire is designed for the respondents on challenges and prospects of Awash National park in Afar region the case of Awash seven kilo town.

Please put a tick mark (-) below based on the challenges and prospects of Awash national park.

1. What are the Major Tourist Attractions of the Awash National park?

✓An Exceptional Variety of Landscapes.-----

✓High Biodiversity-----

✓Cultural Diversity-----

✓Volcanic Eruptions-----

If Any other Mention _____

2.What are Some of the Major positive Social and Economic Significance of Awash National park to the Residents of Awash Sebat kilo Town?

✓Wider Range of Employment Opportunities _____

✓Expansion of Social Services and Public infrastructure_____

✓IncreasingCultural heritage_____

3.What are the major Negative Socioeconomic effects of Awash national park on the Residents of Awash Sebat kilo Town?

✓Degradation of Indigenous Culture_____

✓Ethnic Conflicts and Instability_____

✓Natural Hazards_____

✓Increasing Cost of Living (Inflation)_____

If any other mention-----

4. What Roles Must the Stake holders play to mitigate the Challenges that Awash National Park Faces on the Residents of Awash Sebat kilo Town?

✓ Job diversification_____

✓ Creating Awareness _____

✓ Law Enforcement_____

✓ Resource Protection and Conservation_____

If any other Mention_____

