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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM IN GHERALTA: HAWZEN  
WORDA EASTERN ZONE OF TIGRAY**



**BY  
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*Title*

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By  
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Tourism and Development

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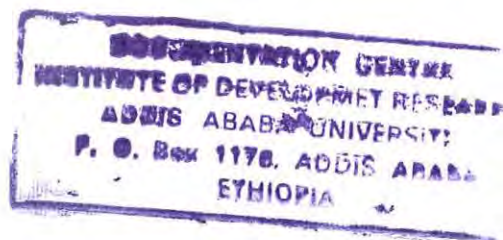
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Dr. Yohannes Aberra

INTERNAL EXAMINER





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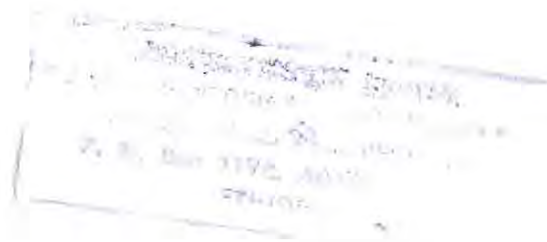
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## **Acronyms**

**ACC**-Africa Conservation Center

**CBE**-Community Based Ecotourism

**CSA**-Central Statistics Authority

**EFNP**-European Federation of National Parks

**FDRE**-Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**FGD**-Focus Group Discussion

**IES**-International Ecotourism Society

**NGO**-Non Governmental Organization

**TESFA** –Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives

**TIES**-The International Ecotourism Society

**TSE**-The Society of Ecotourism

**WWF**-World Wildlife Fund

**WTO**-World Tourism Organization

**WTTC**-World Travel and Tourism Council

**TSE**-The Society of Ecotourism



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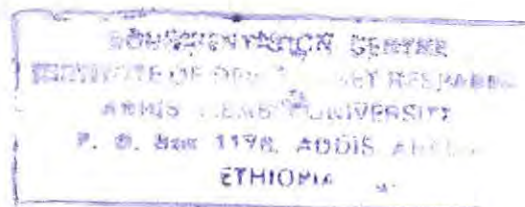
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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate and document the role of community based ecotourism to the local communities of **Gheralta** on the basis of data collected from the three sample kebelles of **Koraro, Korkor and Megab**. The study employed a household survey questionnaire to (90) respondents to collect quantitative data on a major aspects of the topic under study, namely, household socio- economic features, local livelihoods, awareness about and attitude towards tourism. Moreover in- depth interviews were also conducted with 6 selected household heads and with 10 relevant persons including tourists on the spot. FGD was also conducted with one group consisted of 6 members having 2 members from each of the study sites. The study made use of community based ecotourism model that states the local community of the destination or site to be at the heart of the tourism activities in terms of community empowerment, income sharing, ensuring local communities' involvement in their localities tourism activities, ownership of tourism resource and taking care of local resources. The study shows that since majority of the local peoples of the study area are dependant on agriculture as their main livelihood, minority of them have made tourism as their means of livelihood. This is true either as employee in the lodge or as tourist guide. Moreover there are also individuals engaged informally to use it as a means of **off-farm income sources**. The study further revealed that, while the study area is potential for community based ecotourism, and the presence of positive attitude towards it, local people at a grass root level were not yet beneficiary. As the finding shows this emanates from lack of training and the absence of community based ecotourism system that works at a community level. However there were good starts at **Megab** where locally owned tourism guide association and privately owned lodge in **Hawzen** which can be taken as a model to the other near by areas. Hence, any future tourism activity in the area should take into consideration the need, ability and capacity of the local people so as to make them part and parcel of tourism business.



# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The history of travel goes back to the history of human kind. From the time when human instigated to exist in the earth, human has traveled for thousands of centuries seeking new and fertile land for their cattle, for religious purpose, for war, to escape from harsh environments and climates and so forth (Ayalew, 2009).

In the Romans era, wealthy aristocrat and high government officials also traveled for pleasure. Seaside resorts ...afforded citizens [the haves] the opportunities to escape to their vacation villas in order to avoid the summer heat of Rome. Travel except during the Dark Age has continued to grow (Theobald, 2005).

But tourism as an economic sector is particularly a 20<sup>th</sup>c phenomenon. Scholars suggested that the advent of mass tourism was started in Britain in the era of 'Industrial Revolution. The reason was many middle class societies were began to emerge. Moreover, the means of transportation has also become relatively cheap. The creation of commercial airline industry following World War II and the subsequent development of jet aircraft in the 1950 signaled the rapid growth and expansion of the international tourism. This growth led to the development of major new industry tourism. As a result the international tourism [business] became the main agenda of many world governments including [Ethiopia].This is because of the fact that ,tourism provides new employment opportunities, and become a major foreign earning as well (Theobald,2005:33).Today

tourism is one of the largest growing [Service] industry (World Wildlife Fund [WWF], 2001).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is the biggest industry in terms of its gross output, value added, and capital investment and tax contributions. According to this report in 2003, the industries gross output was estimated to be more than \$ 4.5 billion US, more than 10% of the total gross national product spending, nearly 195 million job opportunities which accounts about 7.6% of the employees, 10.2% world gross domestic product and \$ 685 billion US \$capital investment in a new facilities and equipments, and around \$ 650 billion US direct and indirect-personal taxes each year (Theobald, 2005).

Many international and regional tourism organizations forecast the tourism industry will continue its fastest growth in the future. World Tourism Organization (WTO) predicts by the year 2010 international tourist arrivals are expected to reach 1 billion. Similarly it is expected to grow the total revenue of international tourist to 1.55 trillion in the same year (Gobeze, 2008).

While this is the factual figure at international level, Africa's share from the international tourism business is very low. In the 2000 Africa's share of world tourist arrival was only 1.5% (Demmelash & Yirga, 2005). This is because of the lack of political stability, poverty, and other reasons, which impeded Africa couldn't utilize its rich tourism resource.

When we come to the case of Ethiopia the history of tourism was a very recent Phenomenon. It was in about 1960s that tourism has begun to get attention from the imperial government. Since then, the history of tourism has come across through various phase of development during the consecutive three governments of Ethiopia (Ayalew, 2009) It was during the imperial period that Ethiopia has adopted “Ethiopia the 13Months of Sunshine” as its national tourism slogan (Cherinat, 200).

Between the years 1963-1974, the total annual tourist arrival has grown up by 12%. But with advent of the military government of ‘Derg’, tourist’s arrival declined sharply. This was because of the political instability, the consecutive drought and famine together with the restrictive policy of Derg’s political ideology. As a result many of the tourists generating countries of the world reduced their interest in Ethiopia. In the aftermath of ‘Derg’, tourism has shown a progress until the Ethio –Eritrean war in 1998 (Tony, 1993 E.C),

Nowadays more than any time else, the tourism industry has got due attention from the government and the private sectors. Moreover it is also established at a ministerial level. Tourism policy which has not existed before was also endorsed so as to guide the overall function of the tourism industry. Hence we can realize that there is a fast growing tendency in the tourism industry in terms of the number of visitors, quality and quantity of the service giving institution and employment opportunities that come from tourism (Tony, 1993:335 & Ayalw, 2009). According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s 2003-2005 report, Ethiopia has registered... high arrival growth rate of (15.1%) in the

2002/3 to (23.5%) in the 2004/5. But still Ethiopia has remained at the bottom in terms of its receipts and tourist arrival having a 0.58% of its share from Africa. According to the report the major tourist generating countries for Ethiopia were US and UK respectively. When we examine these tourists on the basis of their purpose, visitors account (30%), transit (18.2%), Business, (13.4%), conference (13%), vacation, visiting relatives and friends (3%) and the rest (19.6%) were not identified.

The sex and age ratio of the visitors (2003-2005) indicates that between the age of 25 and 44 holds a lions share. And between 45 and 59 comes next. In terms of sex male tourists account about 70% while Female were 30% (Cherinet, 2008). Despite the fact that Ethiopia is rich in its diversified tourism resource as compared with its neighboring countries, the economic, social gain from tourism is very low (Tony, 1993: & Ayalew, 2009).

Nowadays there are many kinds of tourism in practice, such as nature tourism, medical tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism (Getachew, 1996 EC). But starting from 1960s Ethiopia has only used the historical circuits of Axum, Gondar, Lalibela as its main tourism destination while the possibility is at its hand. So in the absence of such timely and diversified tourism it is difficult to compete in the world market by taking Ethiopia as one destination. Moreover, we can't ensure the benefits of the local communities unless we charged them into use. It is this reason that the researcher initiated to conduct his research on community based Ecotourism particularly at Gheralta and its environ.



## **1.2. Statements of the problem**

Although the least developed countries of Africa were too late to involve in the tourism business as their means of foreign earning, employment opportunity and economic revitalization, many things related with the tourism business were not taken into consideration. Basically it is due to low capital, trained manpower and political instability as well. Hence, the tourism businesses of the least developed countries were highly dominated by the multinational companies of the development countries. In the name of quality standard requirement and certification as a pretext, the least developed countries became far looker on their resources. Moreover, since the tourism operation was too far from tourism guide of conducts and practice, tourism as a business has brought an adverse effect on natural, cultural, social, and economic and in the overall well-being of the tourist destination community and the country in general. Similarly the same history is true in Ethiopia where “inbound tour operators, and ground handlers” were alienated from the game (Mulugeta & Cherinet, 2010).

Such kind of tourism has resulted in capital leakage. Moreover, it can't also ensure the socio economic well- being of the host community of the destination and the tourist receiving country. Because of this and other reasons, tourism was exposed to criticisms from various corners of tourism scholars. Hence, an alternative approach of tourism, i.e. 'Eco tourism' was emerged (World Wildlife Fund [WWF] 2001).

Through out the courses of its history, Ethiopia is well known for its rich and diversified cultural, natural scenic beauties, archaeological and historical sites. And these are among

the good potentials for the establishments of community based Ecotourism. One of the areas that were selected by the researcher is Gheralta and its environs which are found in Hawzen Woreda of the National Regional State Administration of Tigray. The rationale behind for selecting this area as area of study was: The presence of many and well structured rock-hewn churches which dates thousand years back

The Gheralta Mountains are among the most attractive natural landscape that seems to be designed by a perfect architecture. Moreover the existence of Gheralta lodge in the near by which is a good attraction by itself. While this is the fact, for along time the local community of the area is not beneficiary from their local tourism resources. So it is this gap that creates inspiration in the researcher to conduct his research work on this topic.

### **1.3. Objectives**

#### **1.3.1. General objective**

The general objective of this study was to assess the state of community based ecotourism in Gheralta.

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives:**

1. To identify the specific tourism resource of the area
2. To find out factors that impede the developments of community based ecotourism
3. To explore the awareness and attitude of the local communities about the significance of community based ecotourism
4. To assess the involvement of the local communities in tourism activity

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

This paper has attempted to answer the following research questions.

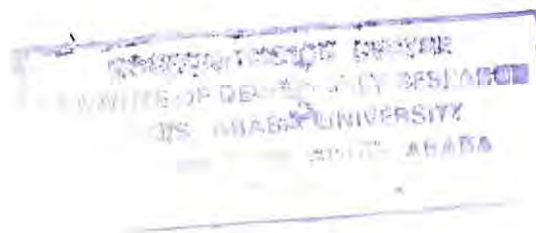
1. What are the main tourism resources of the area?
2. What are the possible challenges of community based Ecotourism?
3. What are the attitudes and awareness level of the community towards tourism?
4. What is the degree of communities' involvement in tourism activity?

#### **1.5. Significance of the study**

While the rich natural and cultural heritage resource are available and the possibilities are in our hand we fail to change them in to tourism attractions. That is why the country in general and the local community in particular couldn't benefit from it. Therefore this research will contribute a lot in ensuring the socio economic benefits of host community from their tourism resource as an alternative means of livelihood. Moreover; this research can also serve as jumping stone for other community based ecotourism developments researches in other parts of the region.

#### **1.6. Delimitation of the study**

This research is delimited only on the three village kebelles of Koraro, Korkor and Megab which has been selected from the ten village kebelles of Gheralta in Hawzen Woreda Eastern zone of Tigray.



## Chapter Two

### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1. Ecotourism

##### 2.1.1. Meaning and Concepts of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is frequently debated term among tourism scholars (WWF, 2002). This is because there is no universal definition for ecotourism. Hence many fancy terms such as, ecotourism, eco-travel, and eco safari ... ecotourism are used for ecotourism as alternative meanings (Tewodros, 2002). Moreover; David (1999) has also given environmentally friendly travel, alternative tourism, soft tourism, low impact tourism, green tourism and ethical tourism as an equivalent meaning to ecotourism. Bjork (2007) ... A true ecotourism, however, requires a proactive approach that seeks to mitigate the negative impacts and enhance the positive impacts of nature tourism.

But the most widely accepted definition of ecotourism was given by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES). As Michal Tsegay (2008:15) has explained by citing the (TIES), "*Ecotourism is a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustaining the well-being of the local people.*"

As TIES is cited in Watkins (2003:3) *ecotourism is: "Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively uncontained natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate natural (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impacts, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of the local population."*

As the European Federation of National parks cited in Tewodros (2002.3), ecotourism is *“All forms of tourism development, management and operations which maintain environmental, socio and economic integrity and well-being of natural, built and cultural resources in perpetuity.”*

Therefore, ecotourism is a form of tourism inspired primarily by natural and indigenous culture. The eco tourists visit the area which is relatively undisturbed with the aim of participation, appreciation, education. They involve in activities which are non-destructive of all natural resources and historical and cultural resources. They also contribute financial support aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and ensuring the well-being of the host community (Michael, 2008).

Ecotourism involves travel to enjoy and engage with attractive and interesting natural areas and relatively authentic culture in a way they don't contribute to the general degradation of the site. The local communities are at the heart of benefit sharing, decision making and as well as conservation of the tourism resources (Mengistu, 2008).

## **2.2. Historical Development of Ecotourism**

Tourism is one the fastest growing industry in the world (Maanela, 2008). Especially in the post world war II, tourism has registered unprecedented growth at the international level (Drummand & Moore, 2005).

Travel and tourism industry supports about 200 million job opportunities world wide-1 in every 12.4 jobs. And by 2010 it is forecasted to grow to 250 million which accounts 1 in every 11 jobs ( Drummand & Moore).

Predicated as an option of socio-economic changes in the more developed countries, international tourism in the less developed countries has become as alternative means for their economic development (Berno & Bricker 2001).

However, this fast growing industry has brought untold social, economic and environmental damages (Blang & Mehta, 2006). This is true especially in the third world countries of the world, where they don't have the economic capability to overcome it (Trent, 2005:1). *"In most cases, the host communities are marginalized and drawn on to disadvantage corners of extreme positions and paradox of miserable social life while living in the neighborhoods of tourism paradises (Cherinet, 2008)."* Hence, many scholars criticize the tourism industry that it's only the big international institutions benefit a lot at all social, environmental and economic costs of the local communities of the destination areas (Ayotte, 2009).

Now days there is a new shift in tourisms out looks moving from tourism on the general concepts of calculating the economic significance towards tourism's economic impact and the local livelihood improvements of the poor local communities (Cherirnt, 2008).

Weaver (2006) has mentioned 4 tourism platforms by citing Jafari. These platforms as described below indicate the evolution of tourism in the post world war II.

### **2.2.1. Advocacy Platform**

This was the 1950s and 1960s tourism perspective. It was a pro- mass tourism perspective. The main advocators of this ideology give due attention to the economic and social significance /contributions/ of the mass tourism as an alternative means of

employment, income, foreign earning especially to the poor countries regardless of its negative impacts (Weaver, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Cautioners Platform**

In the 1960s and early 1970s many factors pave the way for the emergence of the cautionary platform model (Weaver, 2006). The major one was the intensification of tourism development in many parts of the world as a result of the advocacy approach. (Goeldner & Riutchie, 2006). Hence the adverse impacts of mass tourism on socio-culture, environment and economic of the host community has become inevitable. So many “dependency theorists like Marxist and other environmentalists stood against the unregulated tourism development eventually culminates in unacceptable high environmental, economic and socio-cultural costs for the residents of the destination who have the most to lose as a result of those costs (Sue, 2006).

### **2.2.3. Adaptancy platform**

In 1970s and 1980s Adaptec platform was emerged. The core idea of this tourism perspective is that tourism should be made its base on the Adaptec of the unique socio cultural and environmental circumstance of any given community so as to alleviate the negative impacts of tourism. Many umbrella terms were used to explain these adaptations, but the one to gain the widest recognition was “alternative tourism” meaning specifically that those options were alternative to mass tourism, which was regarded as the antithesis of the adaptive tourism (Sue, 21).

Alternative tourism characteristics, accordingly, are distinguished by the degree to which they contrast with mass tourism, as for example in supporting locally owned small scale

enterprise rather than those that are extremely owned and large scale. Ecotourism notably, first appeared in the mid 1980s as manifestation of alternative tourism that emphasizes on the attractions of the natural environments.

#### **2.2.4. Knowledge based platform**

It is the 1980s and 1990s tourism perspective which emphasize on the scientific knowledge and findings as the base of any tourism. This is because of the multidisciplinary nature of tourism (Sue, 2006).

Alternative tourism is therefore emanated as a solution to all evil effects of the conventional tourism which resulted adverse impacts on the environmental, cultural integrity and economic well-being of the local community (Chernet & Mulugeta, 2010).

As Chernet and Mulugeta (2010) have stated, alternative tourism was initially started as social movement aimed at social equitability, benefit sharing, wealth creation, ownership and control over the natural and cultural “[*historical*] heritage resources of tourism so as to realize the alternative livelihood options for the destination communities.”

The issue of environment, community involvement and improvements of the living conditions of the poor people in and around the destination area are nowadays becoming a center of gravity among many thinkers to serve as an alternative development options (Chernet & Tilahun).

Ecotourism, pro-poor tourism, environmental friendly tourism community tourism and community based ecotourism are among the alternative tourism options (Tedwors, 1993 E.C).

One way or the other, all the alternative development thinking revolves around the issues of environmental protection, fair benefits sharing and full participation of the host community in the overall tourism activities (Chernet & Mulugeta, 2010).

It is not without reason that the UN has recognized the 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. This was in order to give due attention for sustainable use of natural resources which are at the verge of total depletion. According to the UN's 2002 ecotourism summits report, delegates have come out with a conclusion that more attention to be given to ecotourism so as to contribute to the overall tourism industry more sustainable by increasing economic benefits for the host communities actively contributing to the conservation of natural resources and the cultural heritages of the host communities and by increasing awareness of travelers towards the conservation of natural and cultural heritages (Tewodros, 2002).

Many literatures indicate, the early history of alternative tourism particularly ecotourism was instigated in the Latin America countries as backyard tourism. Later on, as a result of pressure from the community activities, development operators and civil society groups, it emerged as alternative tourism (Tewodros, 1993 E.C.).

In the case of Africa and other developing countries, there is a shift in their mindset towards alternative tourism as an option of development thinking (Chernet & Mulugeta, 2010).

Because they strongly believed that alternative tourism gives them profound significant, "*to inter cultural dialogue, and understanding, and contact between the host and the tourist communities of different cultures* (Chernet & Mulugeta: 10)."

As Chernet and Mulugeta (2010,11) has cited, most countries in the transitional economics like Ethiopia are not yet at the stage of alternative tourism, rather they are exercising it as ecotourism forms.

But it is not surprising that ecotourism is facing similar problems as mass tourism. And this exposed it to criticisms for its miss use and miss interpretations by the tourism companies (Drumm, 1998). Literatures show us there are contrary views on the impacts of eco-tourism. Some tourism scholars compared eco-tourism with mass tourism by stating “a kind of imperialism that can overpower traditional institutions and destroy local culture (Ping, n.d). others suggest that, commoditization assists and protect and even make to revive their traditional practice and beliefs otherwise it would be lost. Majority of the literatures has neutral stand that eco-tourism is a tool that encourages the cross-cultural interaction and communication between tourists and the local people (Ping, 2).

### **2.3 Community Based Ecotourism**

In response to the growing criticism and negative impacts of mass tourism and the abuse of the term eco tourism, Community Based Ecotourism has got support as an alternative approach (Ayotte, 2009). The rational is community based ecotourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the economic, social and cultural well being of the majority of the local people. It is based on community, building or developments for local people with out damaging their natural habitats and cultural systems. It is unique from the other types of tourism for the reason that it focuses on local community empowerment and the participation of the marginalized sectors rather than on regional or national developments (Ping, n. d.).

As to the reports of the African Conservation Center /ACC/ is cited in Rutten, (2004), community based ecotourism was initially designed with the aim of empowering the local communities and make them *“self-reliant and raise their collective self stem about their exotic culture.”* This could be done by using a group process for local decision making, working together with stakeholders so as to solve the collective problems of the local community which are very much nearer to the tourism resources and who are responsible for conserving them more than any one else.

Generally speaking, many tourism, environmental and human right advocates took community based ecotourism as a “panacea” for the ever escalating global problems such as poverty, injustice benefit sharing within the tourism industry, environmental degradation and other social problems of the world particularly the people of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries (Beeton, 200).

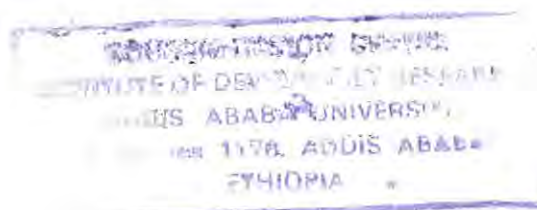
#### **2.4. Current Extent of Community Based Ecotourism**

Since the time when Ecotourism is burst into public consciences in the late 1980s, it become debating ground, generating a number of regional and international conferences focused on demanding new policy development at all levels of government, tourism industry and environmental movements (Neil & Wearing, 1999). Hence, nowday’s organization, such as World Bank, development organization, bilateral donors and environmental NGOs and indigenous right groups have all placed faiths in ecotourism as an alternative and sustainable development strategy (Duffy, 2006).

There are many successful community based ecotourism projects in many parts of the Latin American countries, in Africa particularly Eastern Africa especially Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya ... (Zepple, 2006).

Many literature shows that revenue generated from community ecotourism areas are much more attractive and encouraging than the revenue obtained from agriculture. Two good examples can be mentioned from Rwanda and Kenya. In Rwanda “Park de volcano” which is a sort of community based tourism project with a size of 150 km<sup>2</sup> is visited by more than 10,000 tourists annually. The revenue generated from this ecotourism is the third largest sources of foreign currency earning in the country. Moreover the local communities are also having their own share from the benefits other than employment opportunities like attendants, drivers, field guides, guards, suppliers ...etc. (Tewodros, 200). Similarly in Kenya, Amboseli community based ecotourism project is a generating (18-20) time higher than if the park is used for agriculture (Tewodrose ).

In the year 2001 the first Ethiopian family owned environmental friendly ecology was set up on the eastern shore of Lake Langano, 135 km from Addis Ababa. It was based on the natural resources, culture of the community and take care the biodiversity and respects the culture of the local community (Zepple, 2006). According to the same source, there were only two community based tourism in Ethiopia in 2002 which were initiated by SNV (Holland), SOS Sahle and GTZ (Germany). They established a forum in Ethiopia on the issue of community based tourism in order to improve rural livelihood and preserve natural and cultural heritages.



In 2003 TESFA community based tourism project (local tourism NGO) was set up in the Amara Regional States with the help of Save the Children (UK). Its principal objective was to encourage community based ecotourism as an important tool for the sustainable use of resources and as alternative option for the livelihood of the host community (Zepple, 2006).

From 2004-2007 TESFA has played a profound role in empowering the rural people in and around Lalibela. Moreover, tourism camp and cottage for trekkers were also built at mountain communities of Mequat Mariam and Wajela with the full involvement of the local communities as daily workers, suppliers, handicraft selling, horse rent, business owners (Zepple). Similarly two areas have been also selected from Tigray by TESFA community based ecotourism project. The areas were selected from Hawzen and Ganta - Afeshum Woredas.

Although it is very difficult to talk about significant achievements, there are also a good start at a project level on community based ecotourism in Adwa, Meqdela-Debreabor (Hiluf, 2002E.C) and in Addaba Dodola (Sisay; n.d, 1).

## **2.5. Principles of community based Ecotourism**

Many ecotourism literatures indicate that, before the development of ecotourism, wilderness areas were exposed to extractive uses by the government and local communities such as logging, grazing, mining and agriculture). Many countries took ecotourism as a viable alternative to these economic activities (Boos,1990:32) So to ensure socio- cultural, environmental and as well as economic well-being of the

community, ecotourism is recommended to be based on the following general ecotourism principles.

1. *Avoid negative impacts that can damage the integrity or character of the natural and cultural environments being visited.*
2. *Educates the traveler on the importance of conservations before and during their visit.*
3. *Allocate revenues generated from tourists for conservation of national areas and management of protected areas.*
4. *Bring economic benefit and direct revenue to the local communities and people living in the adjacent to protected area.*
5. *Emphasizes the need for planning and sustainable growth of the tourism industry, and seeks to ensure that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental "caring capacity".*
6. *Retains a high percentage of revenues in the host country by stressing the use of locally-owned facilities and services.*
7. *Increasingly depends on infrastructures that have been developed sensitively in harmony with the environment minimizing the use of fossil fuels, conserving local plants and wild life, and blending with the natural environment (The Ecotourism society [TES] cited in Eple ,1996: 54).*

Eco tourists unlike the mass tourists didn't demand such big star and fancy hotels and roads. Rather they are much more concerned about the neatness and healthiness of the

atmosphere, low impact housing such as small lodges and breakfast inns, rooms in villages built with the local traditional architecture. Such 'ecotourism' businesses are relatively easy to be run and owned by the host communities (Boo, 1990). Community based ecotourism is therefore, viable to communities whom they are dependent on the traditional and subsistence agriculture but endowed with all ecotourism potentials which are not yet harnessed. Here, Gheralta and its environs can be mentioned as a typical example in our case.

## **2.6. Conceptual Framework of Community Base Ecotourism**

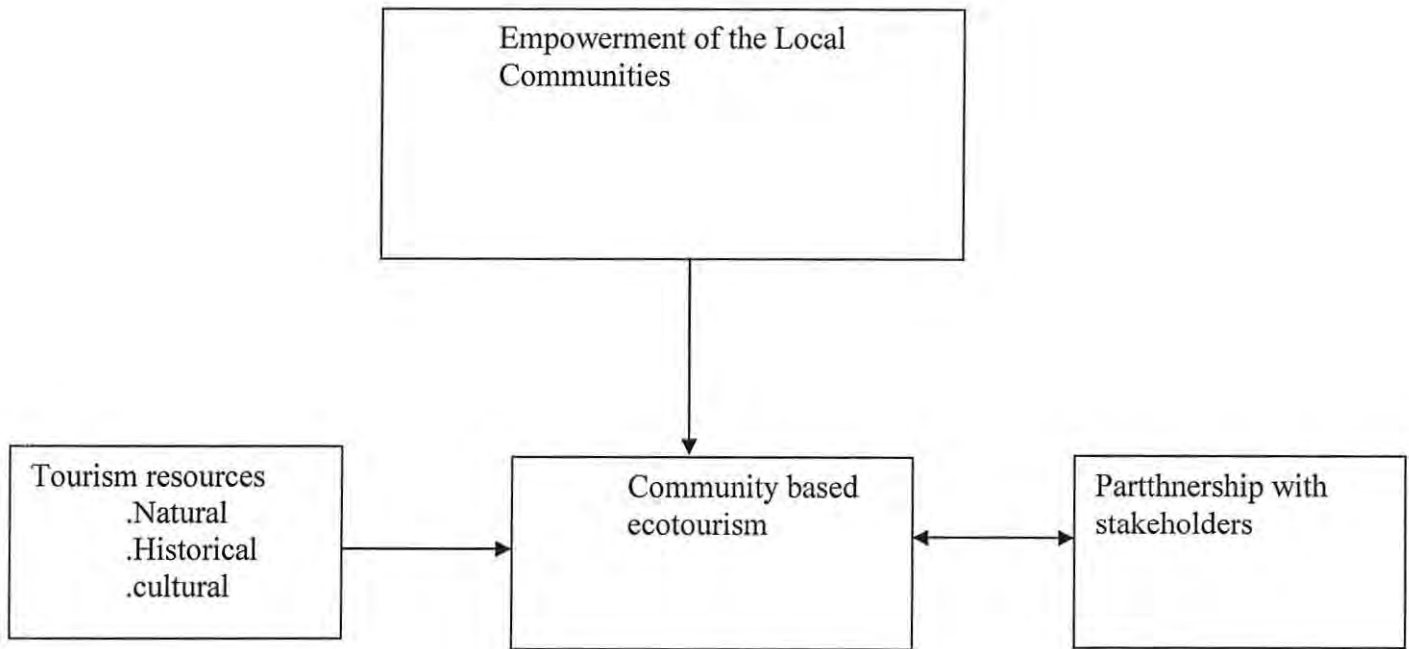
Ecotourism is defined as a purposeful travel to natural areas with the aim of understanding the natural history of the environment, by taking care not to degrade the integrity of the eco-system while ensuring the economic benefits of the local people.

Based on these concepts, this conceptual framework is formulated. The operationalization of the framework involves assessments of resources, NGO, community and Government partnership and community empowerment as important components of community based ecotourism.

It is generally believed that community based tourism must take people as important element of the system. One important contribution in the ecotourism framework comes from community based Ecotourism which can be defined as a kind of nature ,culture historical tourism where in the local community maintains full (major) control over the management and profit of the projects. The following figure shows the schematic diagram of community based ecotourism which emphasis on strategies of local community empowerment and participation. In doing so, the host community will create

a new economic incentives eg. Selling local (environmentally safe) products, crafts, horse rent thereby develop some entrepreneurial skills as alternative livelihoods of the traditional agricultural sectors.

**Fig. 2.1. Conceptual Framework of community Based Ecotourism**



## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Study area**

This study has been carried out in the three village kebelles of Koraro, Korkor and Megab. They are among 10 village Kebelles of Hawzen Woreda in the Eastern Zone of the National Regional State of Tigray. They are places where rook-hewn churches are available and some sort of community based ecotourism is undertaken. Further, Gheralta lodge which is one of tourist attraction site by it self is also found in the study area. The study area is located 70 kms north of Mekelle and 30 kms West of Wukro town.

#### **3.2 Study Design**

The researcher has employed cross sectional descriptive survey study design. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were utilized. Data were collected using questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion (FGD), and field observation. Furthermore, document analysis was carried out in order to substantiate the data collected through the above mentioned instruments.

#### **3.3 Sampling Techniques**

##### **3.3.1 Sampling procedures**

There are 10 kebelles in Gheralta. Out of these, 3 Kebelles were selected using purposive sampling approach. The criteria for selection were:

1. Their relative strong attachment with tourism activity.
2. Their relative potential tourism resources and
3. Their convenience in terms of accessibility

**Table. 3.1. Sample Kebeles, their Total Population and the Samples taken**

No	Name of kebeles	Total population	Household	Samples taken
1	Koraro	1432	239	32
2	Korkor	1240	207	27
3	Megab	1392	232	31

**(Source: Woreda's Administration office)**

From the three Kebele households a total of 90 people were drawn using simple random sampling technique. First, a sampling frame which consists of the list of residents in each kebele was received from the Woreda office. Then equal proportions of samples were drawn using simple random sampling technique based on table of random numbers. Accordingly, from Koraro 32, Korkor 27 and Megab 31 respondents were selected randomly.

#### **3.4. Sources of Data**

The researcher has used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and field observations. Secondary data sources such as official documents, reports, books and other media sources were also utilized.

#### **3.5. Tools of Data Collection**

Data can be collected using different data gathering instruments. Therefore, the researcher has employed the following tools for the purpose of data collection.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

Structured questionnaires have been distributed to respondents from the community of the three kebelles. Initially the questionnaires were prepared in English and then translated to Tigrigna for field purpose. It was translated back to English to keep its accuracy with its English version. A three hours training on the purpose, procedures of filling the questionnaire and on the ways how to approach respondents has been given to 3 high school students who carried out the data collection.

### **3.5.2 Interviews**

Unstructured interviews were held with two regional and two Woreda tourism officials. Moreover, two religious leaders from each of the Kebelle, one lodge owner, two local tourist guide, two travel agents and two tourists from the sites were also interviewed. Specific interview questions were addressed to each of them with respect to their tasks and responsibility within the community or tourism activities. These people were interviewed after getting their consent. The interview with these people enabled the researcher to be acquainted with the overall scenario of the area and the community. In addition, it helped to understand the integration of tourism activities with other sectors, the role and responsibility of the regional and Woreda tourism bureau in mobilizing and promoting its resources to ensure the benefits of the host community and sustaining the tourism resources of the area.

### **3.5.3 Observation**

Here purposeful systematic and selective observation and recording of information about the existing natural setting of the area, its existing status, the possible challenges and opportunities of community based tourism of the area have been observed. Digital photo

camera was used to take the pictures of the natural, historical and cultural tourism resources.

#### **3.5.4 Focus Group Discussion /FGD/**

One focus group discussion which consists of 6 members was made with key informants from each kebele. Two informants from each kebele participated in the FGD. This has been carried out for the purposes of triangulation .They were purposively selected. They were three females and three males having different age groups.

#### **3.5.5 Document Analysis**

The researcher has carried out document analysis as one means of data gathering. Here documents and literatures about the theoretical aspects of community tourism, case studies, official documents and reports of the national, regional , and Woreda tourism bureau and media sources were reviewed and assessed.

#### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The quantitative data collected using questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS for windows- version 16. Its outputs were analyzed through descriptive statistics like, percentage, frequency tables whereas; the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. In this case the interviews were repeatedly and thoroughly read so as to gain the major themes of each interview.

#### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The necessary amendment was made with all respondents, regional and Woreda officials ahead of the actual data collection. Interview and focus group discussion were only conducted with the full consent of the persons being selected for interview and FGD. The objectives of the study were clearly explained. The participants were informed that the

aim of the study is not to blame any body rather it is to collect relevant information pertaining issues under investigation.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Geographical Location, Climate, Demography and Tourism Resources of the Study Area**

#### **4.1. Geographic Location, Climate, and Demography**

The National Regional Administrative State of Tigray has five administrative zones. These are Mirabawi (Western) zone, Makelay /Central/ zone, Misrakawi /Eastern/ zone, Mekelle /the capital of the region, and Debubawi/ Southern/ zone. The Regional Administrative State of Tigray has 34 Woredas (Berhane, 2003:53/.

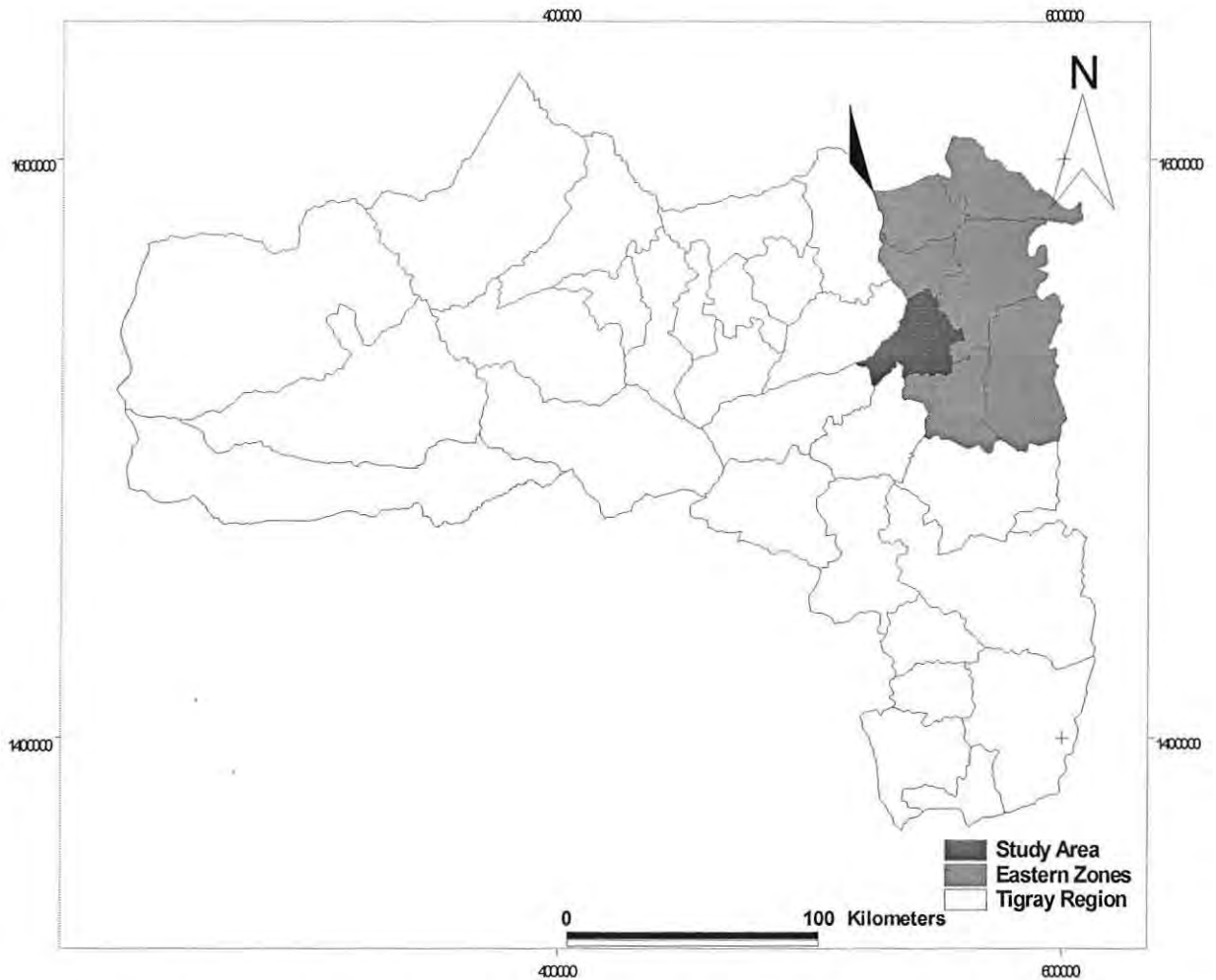
As part of the Tigray Regional State, the Eastern Zone of Tigray has 9 Woredas. Out of which Gheralta is one of the historical sites of the region which is part of two woredas of the Eastern Zone of Tigray. While the eastern part of Gheralta belongs to Kilege Awlalelo woreda, the Western part which is selected for this research is part of Hawzen woreda.

Hawzen Woreda is bounded by Ganta- Afeshum in the North, Temben in the West, Adwa in the North West, Kilege Awlalelo in the South and Saesi- Tsaida Emba in the East (Birhane, 2003).

Topographically, the Woreda under study consists of gorges and ragged terrain, mountains and plain lands. Ecologically, it is divided into Dega, Waina Dega and Kolla (Abiy, 2008).

According to the 2008 Central Statistics report, majority of the Woreda's population is rural dwellers and highly dependent on subsistence agricultural production. As it was

revealed in other reports, the population of the Woreda has been frequently exposed to drought and food insecurity in the absence of other alternative means of livelihood.



Map 4.1 of the study area. Note that figures (latitudes and longitudes in UTM) along the border of the map are for Tigray region

#### 4.2. Tourism Sites and Clustering in Tigray

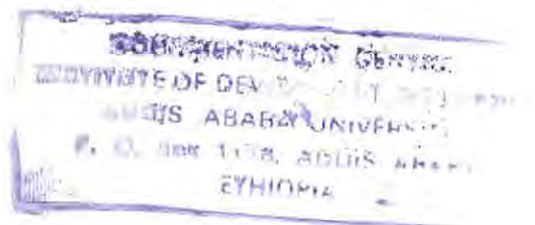
According to the head of the Agency of Tourism and Culture of Wokro branch office, generally all historical, archaeological and natural tourist sites in Tigray are grouped into 5 clusters. These are: Wokro, Axum, Michew, Humera and Mekelle clusters. This

clustering system has come into practice in the region with the introduction of the Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) reform in the Tigray Regional Tourism and Culture Bureau. He also added that under BPR the office was renamed as Agency of Tigray Tourism and Culture which was earlier named as Tigray Culture and Tourism Bureau. This transformation from Bureau to an Agency according to the Woreda tourism head has made the administration task more effective and efficient.

As to the head of the Woreda tourism office, Wokro cluster comprises nine Woredas of eastern zone. These are: Wokro, Klteawlaelo, Astbi-Wonberta, Sasitsaida-Enba, Gantaafeshum, Adigrat, Glomkada, Irob and Hawzen. Although it is not officially approved by the Region's Culture and Tourism Agency and yet not set its own office informally Hawzen Woreda has been grouped under Gheralta cluster which consists of many villages including Megab, Korkor and Koraro where the research was undertaken.

#### **4.2.1. Gheralta-and its Tourism Potentials**

As Mengistu 2008 & Brhane (2003) indicated, there are about 120 Monolithic rock-hewn churches in Tigray within an area of 180x140 kilometers. Out of which 30 of them are found at the heart of Tigray, in the Gheralta cluster. Among the many tourism potentials of this cluster the priceless and unique rock-hewn churches and monasteries take the lions share. Many scholars and visitors have left their account about Gheralata Rock-Hewn Churches. Ivy Pearce stated that *"the rook – hewn churches of Gheralta are the most interesting site for visitors on the fact that one can see antiquity in people, thing, places and religious ceremonies which are unchanged for over a thousand years"*. She also



ranked them as, “*the greatest of the historical cultural heritages of [Tigriyan and] the Ethiopian people* (Ivy Pearce cited in Tigray Tourism; undated Brochure, 1).”

#### **4.2.1.1. Rock-Hewn Churches**

Gheralta rock-hewn churches and monasteries are famous for their architectural style, their stone workmanship, their colorful painting in their ceilings and walls and their age old manuscripts. They are also famous and very unique for their magnificent view and difficult to ascent. Moreover, they are also rich treasure houses of various religious collections which have attracting power of tourists’ interest. Some of those collections are Gold, Bronze and Silver made crosses, manuscripts, Negarit (Drum), sistrum, and Metsahafe Gedil (Mengistu, 2008:214 & Berhane, 2003:54). All these resources can tell us a lot about the secret of the past. They are also good sources of attractions especially for researchers from all directions. Since, it is time and space consuming to describe all these churches of Gheralta, an attempt was made below to throw light only on two of them.

##### **A. Abune Yemata (Guh)**

It is among the Gheralta Churches located in the most inaccessible cliff. It is 8 kms away from the historical town of Hawzen and 4 kms from Megab. Pearce has explained the location of the church as follows: “*it seems near to the moon than to the earth.*” Similarly Ruth Plant has also explained his admiration on the location and its stone workmanship of the church as: “*the most unusual church in the most unusual place, that place being majestic and awesome* (Ruth plant cited in Tourism Tigray, undated brochure, 15).”

The church is also known for its preserved paintings which dated back to 16<sup>th</sup>C A.D. It has four free and six non-freestanding columns. It is also well decorated by exciting murals of old and New Testament Stories of the 9 of the apostles (Tigray Tourism, undated brochure).

### **B. Debre Mariam Korkor**

The name of the Church was adopted from the village kebele Korkor where Debre Mariam Church is found. It is 8 kms from Hawzen and 1 km from Megab. It takes an hour to climb from Korkor to the church. After a minute walk apart from Debre Mariam Church you will find Daniel Korkor Rock-Hewn Church. When you climb to the church, you can enjoy the panoramic view of Hawzen plain to the north, Dugum which is located 10 kms to the East and the far off Imbasneity to the west. It is one of the biggest and complex rock-hewn churches of Tigray having six huge pillars which are 2.4 ms apart from each other. It is well known for its rich ancient murals, paintings, manuscripts, crosses, and other collections (Phillips, & Carillet, 2006). So this is one among the many Gheralta rock-hewn churches which are potential tourist attractions of the region. As to the head of the Woreda's Tourism Agency, recently, Gheralta has become a major tourist destination site in the region. As the religious leaders and written documents indicated, the history of some of the churches goes back to the time before the birth of Christ. This hypothesis emanates from the fact that there were no symbols of Christianity in the churches. It was after the introduction of Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that probably changed from center of spiritual practices to churches (Belay Giday, 1995).

**Table. 4.1.The Towns and Number of Hotels Recommended for Tourists in Tigray.**

Towns	No of Hotel	Level of their stars					Non star
		5 Star	4Star	3Star	2 Star	1 Star	
1. Alamata	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
2. Machew	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
3. Mekelle	23	-	-	8	10	4	1
4. Wokro	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
5. Adigrat	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
6. Adwa	4	-	-	-	2	1	1
7. Axum	14	-	-	4	6	2	2
8. Shire Endasslasie	4	-	-	1	-	-	3
9. Abi Addi	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
10. Hawzen	4	-	-	-	1	-	3

(Source: Regional Tourism Statistics bureau, 2009)

With the exception of Abbi- Addi and Hawzen, all the above cities and towns are on the main road that extends from Alamata in the south across all towns to Shire Endasilassie in North West of Tigray. In Hawzen there are 3 tourist recommended hotels and an Italian owned lodge which has 30 beds. The lodge has created employment opportunity for 34 local peoples who work at different levels of the lodge with a salary that range from 300-800 Ethiopian Birr excluding the managers and guides. It was built on the local traditional style of building a house. The various materials within the lodge are made up

of local materials. Some of the tourists I interviewed are very much interested to be served and to stay in such kind of lodge. But because of its limited holding capacity, when the lodge's bed room all taken, they use the hotels in Hawzen 1.5kms away from the lodge (see picture 6 & 7 above).

#### **4.2.3.4. Tour Operation**

According to the head of Marketing Department of the Tigray Tourism Agency, there are 10 tour operating agencies functioning in the region. But as he revealed there was a tendency of taking Axum as the only tourist site in the region among the tour operators. He noted that this problem emanated from their limited knowledge about the other destinations and sites. To alleviate these problems, the regional tourism office had launched discussion with the tour operators in Mekelle and Addis Ababa on the tourist attraction sites and about their tour operations in the region. The region has also prepared a familiarization tour to various sites to the tour operators. As a result the situation has now improved. So tourists can use any of these tour operators working in the region whose head office is either in Addis or in Mekelle. The Woreda cluster head added that there were also individuals engaged in illegal and in unorganized car renting activity in the town of Hawzen as a result of fear of taxation.

#### **4.2.3.5. Tourist Guidance**

Tourist guiding by amateur tourist guide is a common practice in Ethiopia and in Tigray tourist sites of which Gheralta is not an exception. This practice has its own impact on the tourism activities. Because these amateur guides lack qualified know-how about the real history of the site, lack the necessary ethical requirements on how to handle tourists and

have a problem with language proficiency, it is likely that they result in poor tourism operation. Moreover, there were also lack of coordination among local guides, tour operators and tourists who use their own guide. This has a potential to expose tourists for multifaceted problems. To solve this problem the Regional Tourism Agency together with the Woreda Tourism Bureau has organized 16 students who completed grade 10 and 12 to perform the guiding activity in Gheralta. These tourist guides were recruited from the local community and their office is located at Megab. Training on tourism related issues has been given twice in Wokro and Mekelle for these guides. Now they are facilitating the guiding operation in Gheralta. This locally established guiding association has got recognition from the Region and Woreda Tourism Agency. The head of the association has stated that, they are benefiting from their guiding services. Each of the tourists who come either individually or in a group pays 150Birr. So the guide took 100 Birr as his/her per diem and the remaining 50 Birr goes to the association's account. But the members of the guiding association have mentioned many problems which they have faced in their day-to-day operations. Some of them were lack of support from the concerned bodies (local administrations), limited capacity and skills on various issues such as computer and language skills. In addition they also raised financial constraints, lack of computer and other office equipments. Their office has no telephone which contributed for lack of communication with others working in similar business. Although this is the case, this local guide was able to alleviate many of the problems that the tourists have faced before this association has become operational.

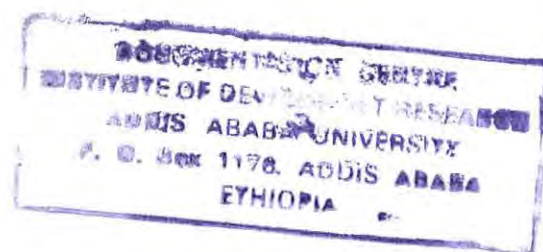
**Picture-1. The exterior and interior views of Mariam korkor**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

#### **4.2.1.2. Scenic Beauty of Gheralta.**

The geological history and landscape of Gheralta and its surrounding are among the unique land features of Ethiopia. The scenery of Gheralta is spectacular. The view of the graceful mountain of Gheralta and its far-reaching Hawzen plain are a rare combination of extra ordinary beauty. As Georgy Gerster, the well known Swiss photographer is cited in one of brochures, he compared Gheralta Mountains with Arizona by stating, “*Gheralta with its western film scenery of mountains seems to be a kind of Ethiopian Arizona, an Arizona, however, without motels or desporados. But nevertheless an Eldorado’s with the choice of intellectual pleasure of constantly stimulating and satisfying the passion of discovery* (Tigray Tourism: undated brochure).” So the region is potentially favorable for trekkers, photographers, mountain climbers, researchers and adventurers.

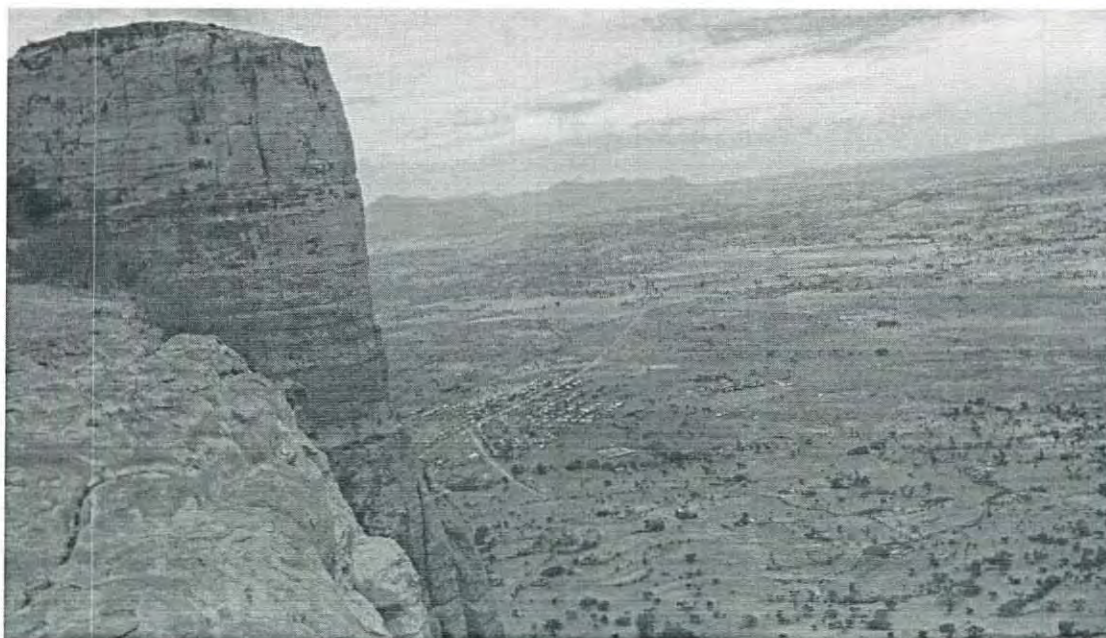


**Picture 2. The Impressive Landscape of Gheralta**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

**Picture 3. The Panoramic Views of Megab.**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

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#### **4.2.1.3. Religious Ceremonies**

Religious ceremonies and fests are among the colorful events in the history of Ethiopian Church. They are celebrated on the occasion of religious calendar or simply on special family days with a great veneration and pomp (Kefyalew, 1999). This is also true in the Gheralta area which is the home of many ancient historical rock-hewn churches with people highly dedicated to their tradition and ritual ceremonies. All the religious chants of the people together with the spiritual dances at the annual event are something unique for visitors. Furthermore the traditional musical instruments such as sistrum, drum the various crosses, colorful deacons and priest clothes are the additional spices of the event that motivate tourists' interest in the area.

#### **4.2.1.4. Monastic Way of Life**

In some of the Churches and Monasteries of Gheralta, I have personally observed that there are people who alienate themselves from the earthly way of life and live in the inaccessible Churches and lead religious way of life. These monks gave up earthly life and invested their whole life on religious services. In Korkor Marian, I interviewed one monk and narrated his situation as follows:

*"I started to live here when I was 12 years old boy. Now I am 120 years old. So I have been here for 108 years. Since then I have never changed my residence. I know nothing except my religious duty."*

He also added that even he did not know and has never saw the village of Megab which is at the foot of the hill where Korkor Mariam is found. Some of the tourists I interviewed

have expressed their admirations for the way of life of the monks, their care taking as first get keepers of the churches and their dedications to their religious services. The monks also render religious schooling to children from the surrounding areas.

#### **4.2.1.5. Traditional Handicraft products**

Some of the materials that attract tourist's attention and motivate them to spend much of their money and lengthen their stay in the visiting site are the availability of local traditional handicraft products. In this case the town of Hawzen which is about 8 kms from the Megab and Korkor is a market center where many people from all direction of the Woreda and from other Woredas meet every Wednesday with their traditional local products.

As I understand from my observation, there were many locally produced traditional handicraft products ready for sell in Hawzen market. They come from Koraro Korkor, Megab and other areas which are potentials that the local community can be benefited from. But they are not yet tourist standardized and not ready for that purpose. Some of the local handicraft products are:

.1 Items made of clay. Such as:

Pottery (local beer /tella/ brewing container, water container), braking griddle for Enjera, sauce making material, water and coffee cup etc...

2. Items made from plants.

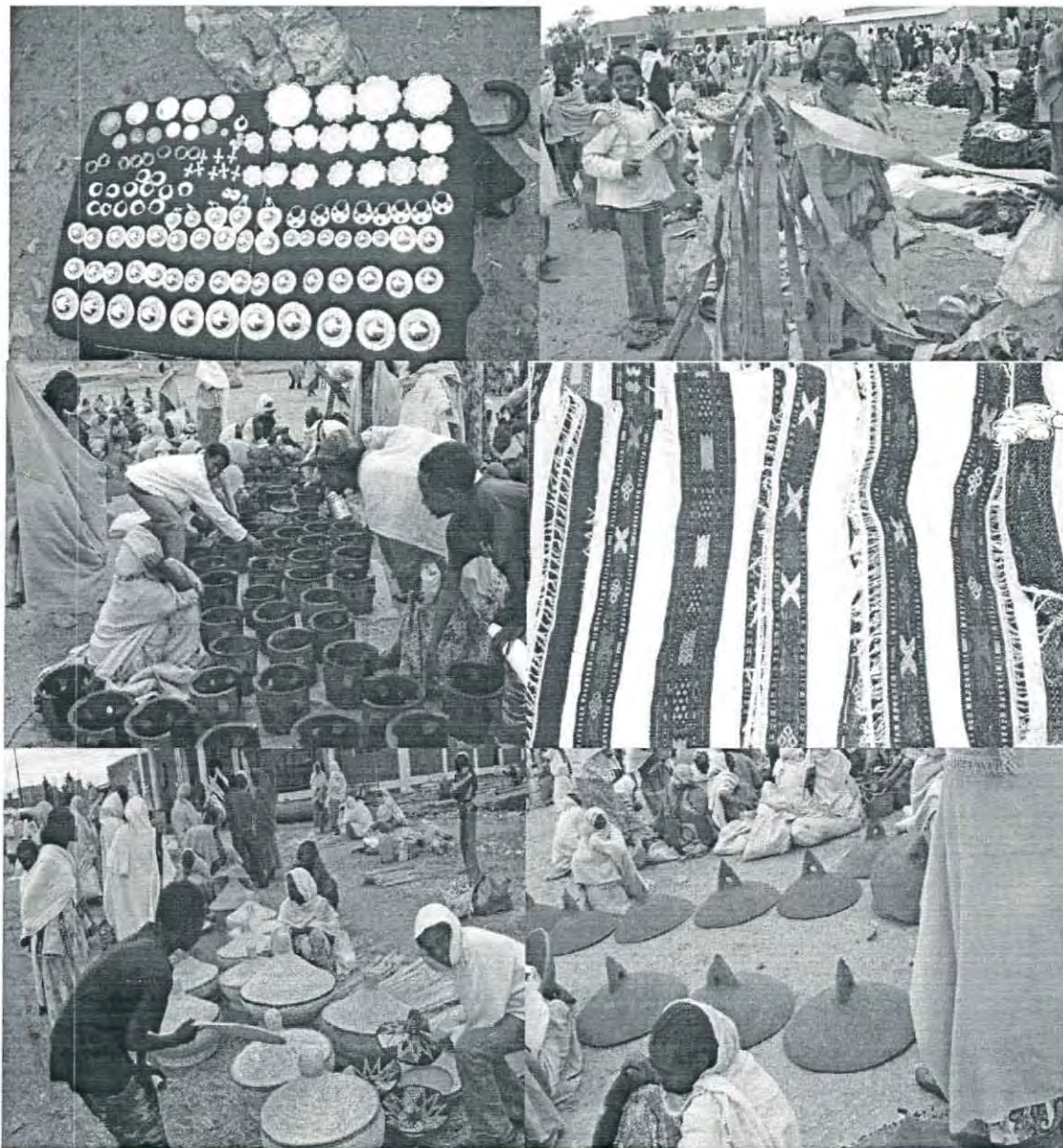
Such as Sefed , Mesob, Agelgil, Mats, Ropes, and Caps.

3. Leather products. Belts, container for grain, Sleeping mat, drum, saddle and traditional shoes
4. Wood products. Stools, chairs, cross, household articles
5. Weaving. Various sophisticated artistic skills Shema or kemis, caps, scarf
6. Blacksmith products. Agricultural products, saddle accessories, household articles, musical instruments, ornamental articles are among the many.

In my observation, I have seen some of the visitors in the market when they were taking photographs and buying items of their interest. One tourist said that,

*“There must be a sort of local displaying room for these various collections so as the tourist can easily access all the time and the local communities can be benefited”*. He also added that the tourist should not wait one week until the market day comes.

Picture 4. Local Traditional Handcrafts Displayed at Hawzen on Market Day.



(Sources: field survey, Jan, 2011)

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#### 4.2.1.6. Traditional and Cultural Heritages

Traditional type of Agricultural practices such as (Plowing, harvesting, threshing, collecting practice and the traditional house of the local people like Hidmo, Agudo (hut) and the weeding ceremony of the community are also among the valuable cultural heritages that could be taken as a possible tourism potentials of the study area (Berhane, 2003:61). Further, traditional musical instruments like Chira (*Mesenko*), Kebero (drum) and Embilta are examples that can create market for the local people.

Traditional foods such as Enjera, Hilbet, Tsebhiderho (*doro wot*) and Tihlo are customary to the area. Sewa (*Tella*) and Mies (*Tej*) are the traditional drinks. Coffee ceremonies are also good cultural manifestations of the area under study and they are tourist attractions.

The traditional sports like Karsa, Gebeta, and Qilis (*Tigil*) together with the traditional dances and songs like Kuda, Gumaye and Mase are typical examples. These cultural practices have stood the test of time and continued to be practiced currently. For example, the annual cultural festival and religious celebrations called Epiphany, Meskel (the finding of the true cross) and Ashenda are an important part of the community life that can be used for tourism. Axum being one of the world heritage sites of UNESCO, can serve as potential center of tourist attraction for the surrounding areas as tourists may visit them on their way to Axum. As a result of Axum's popularity, it is possible to make the study area in particular and Gheralta as a whole a potential tourist zone.

#### 4.2.2. Accessibility of Destination Areas and Heritage Sites

If we take Gheralta as one tourist destination area, it is easily accessible either through:

- . Mekelle – Wokro- Dugum- Korkor- Megab
- . Mekelle – Workro – Sinqata- Hawzen – Megab- Korkor
- . Adwa – Nebelet – Hawzen – Megab- Korkor or
- . AbbiAddi- Koraro – Megab-Korkor – Duqum

But if we examined them at a site level, it is very difficult to visit every site within a short period of time. This is because some of the heritage sites are situated far apart from each other. Some are found in places far from the main roads and towns, and others are also on a difficult cliff which is not accessible by all age groups of visitors. The accessibility of the major tourists sites of the destination are characterized either by a short walk from major towns (villages), direct car drive or using packs animals.

The wide spread nature of the tourist sites has its own impacts on the stakeholders and government involvement on the development and expansion of infrastructures and other services such as hotels, electricity, clean water supply, roads and telephone. In the absence of all these provisions no one could expect a longer stay of tourists on the sites. So the local communities can play a vital role in alleviating these problems if they have been empowered.

### **4.2.3. Tourist Facilities of Gheralta**

The situation and availability of tourist facility in Tigray in General and in Gheralta in particular is not different from the situation of tourist facility of the country (Brhane, 2003). It is recently that tourism as one economic sector has got more attention from the government and private sectors by taking its profound contribution to the overall economic growth of the country. Hence the country had drafted its own tourism policy document in 2010 in its history. Moreover, the tourism office has also grown up from commission to the level of minister (Minister of culture and Tourism, 2009). This shows how much attention is given to the sector from the government. This policy issue determines the over all growth and facilities of the tourism business which in turn resulted in certain promising works on the provision of tourism facilities in Tigray and in Gheralta in particular. Some of the tourism facilities which were given due attention by the government are airport, road facility, hotel, lodge, and so forth. Let's see some of the facilities in more detail.

#### **4.2.3.1. Airport**

In Tigray there are four airports. These are Mekelle, Axum, Shire- Endasilassie and Humera. Mekelle and Axum airports give international flight services. So tourists who have an interest to visit Gheralta as a destination or site can use Mekelle or Axum airport for their international or local flights more conveniently or if these airports were not possible they can make use of the other options.

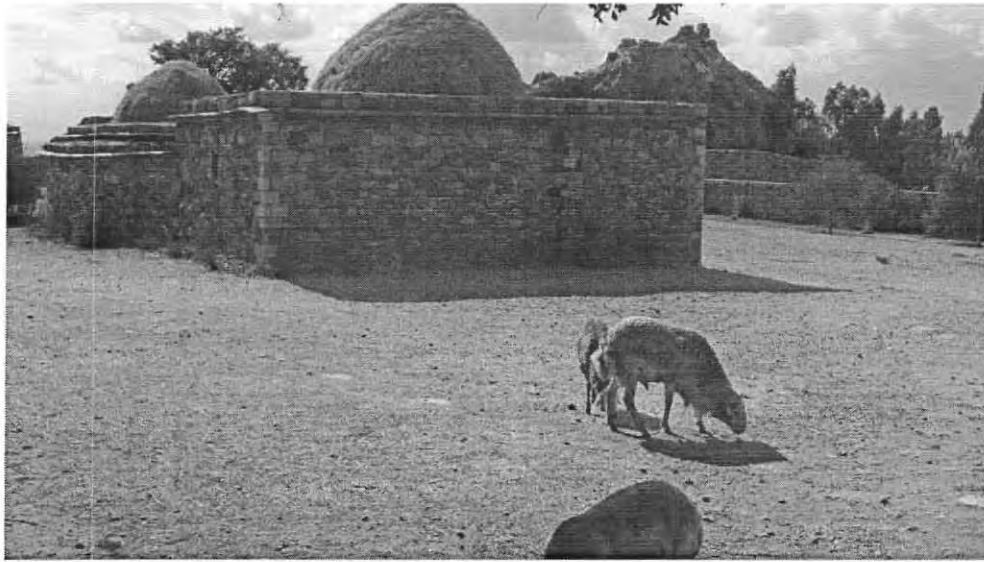
#### **4.2.3.2. Roads**

Road network is a backbone for all economic sectors. Hence, the Federal and Regional Government have given attention to the expansion of roads in rural and urban areas in Tigray. Even some of the roads are deliberately directed towards the tourist destinations and sites. But still there are problems in their comfort, lack of public vehicles to the sties unless one uses market day on which public vehicles are available or personally owned, rented or government cars. This was one of the critical problems that I have faced during data collection. Especially this problem is experienced by tourists who visit the area privately. Tourists who come in a group are more likely to have their own vehicle.

#### **4.2.3.3. Hotels**

Since some years ago the numbers of tourist standard hotels are growing in the region. But they are highly concentrated in Mekelle the capital of the region and Axum (most known and well visited site) in the region (Brehane, 2003). It is obvious that, the availability of star and tourist recommended hotels are among the determinant factors of visitor's satisfaction and for the overall success of the sector (Lattin, 1985).

**Picture 5. Gheralta Lodge (bed room)**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

**Picture 6. Gheralta Lodge (Open air recreational area)**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

According to the documents of the Tigray Culture and Tourism office, there are about 39 nationally recommended tourist accommodations in Tigray. But the region has recommended 64 hotels in the region which are found in 10 towns of Tigray. This difference can be the result of using different criteria in recommending hotels as tourist standards. In other words, the Federal Culture and Tourism Minister uses more tight criteria in recommending hotels as tourist standards compared to the regional bureau.

**Picture-7 Janitor Workers of Gheralta Lodge.**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)

**Table. 4.1. The Towns and Number of Hotels Recommended for Tourists in Tigray.**

Towns	No of Hotel	Level of their stars					Non star
		5 Star	4Star	3Star	2 Star	1 Star	
1. Alamata	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
2. Machew	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
3. Mekelle	23	-	-	8	10	4	1
4. Wokro	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
5. Adigrat	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
6. Adwa	4	-	-	-	2	1	1
7. Axum	14	-	-	4	6	2	2
8. Shire Endasslasie	4	-	-	1	-	-	3
9. Abi Addi	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
10. Hawzen	4	-	-	-	1	-	3

(Source: Regional Tourism Statistics bureau, 2009)

With the exception of Abbi- Addi and Hawzen, all the above cities and towns are on the main road that extends from Alamata in the south across all towns to Shire Endasilassie in North West of Tigray. In Hawzen there are 3 tourist recommended hotels and an Italian owned lodge which has 30 beds. The lodge has created employment opportunity for 34 local peoples who work at different levels of the lodge with a salary that range from 300-800 Ethiopian Birr excluding the managers and guides. It was built on the local traditional style of building a house. The various materials within the lodge are made up

of local materials. Some of the tourists I interviewed are very much interested to be served and to stay in such kind of lodge. But because of its limited holding capacity, when the lodge's bed room all taken, they use the hotels in Hawzen 1.5kms away from the lodge (see picture 6 & 7 above).

#### **4.2.3.4. Tour Operation**

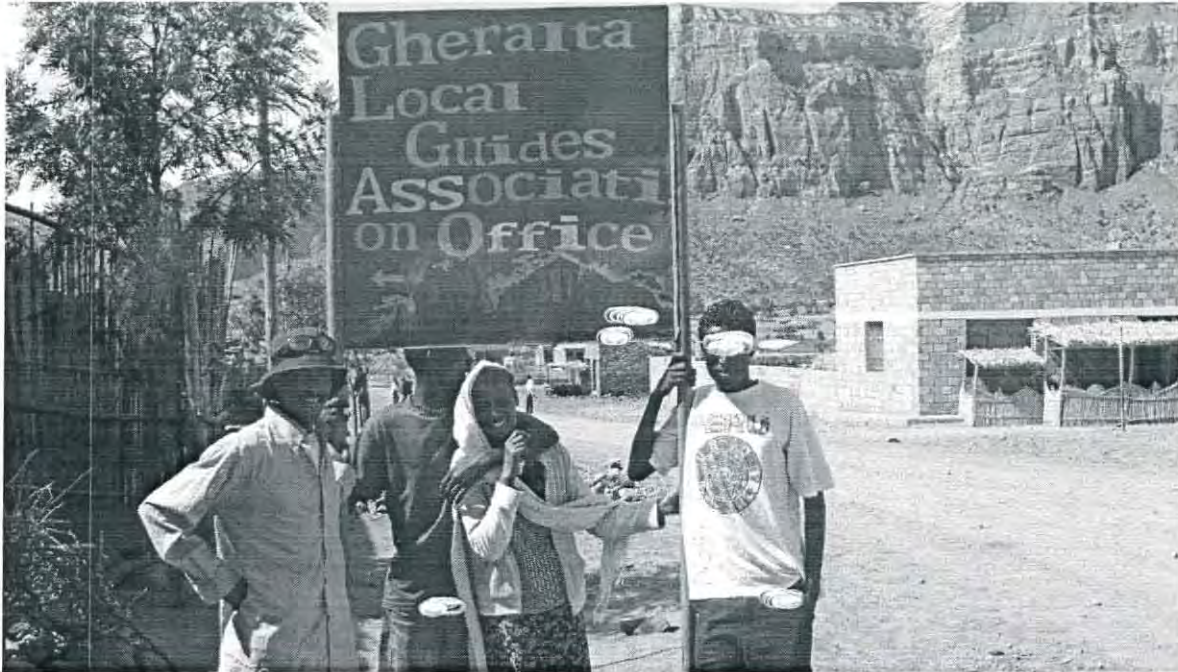
According to the head of Marketing Department of the Tigray Tourism Agency, there are 10 tour operating agencies functioning in the region. But as he revealed there was a tendency of taking Axum as the only tourist site in the region among the tour operators. He noted that this problem emanated from their limited knowledge about the other destinations and sites. To alleviate these problems, the regional tourism office had launched discussion with the tour operators in Mekelle and Addis Ababa on the tourist attraction sites and about their tour operations in the region. The region has also prepared a familiarization tour to various sites to the tour operators. As a result the situation has now improved. So tourists can use any of these tour operators working in the region whose head office is either in Addis or in Mekelle. The Woreda cluster head added that there were also individuals engaged in illegal and in unorganized car renting activity in the town of Hawzen as a result of fear of taxation.

#### **4.2.3.5. Tourist Guidance**

Tourist guiding by amateur tourist guide is a common practice in Ethiopia and in Tigray tourist sites of which Gheralta is not an exception. This practice has its own impact on the tourism activities. Because these amateur guides lack qualified know-how about the real history of the site, lack the necessary ethical requirements on how to handle tourists and

have a problem with language proficiency, it is likely that they result in poor tourism operation. Moreover, there were also lack of coordination among local guides, tour operators and tourists who use their own guide. This has a potential to expose tourists for multifaceted problems. To solve this problem the Regional Tourism Agency together with the Woreda Tourism Bureau has organized 16 students who completed grade 10 and 12 to perform the guiding activity in Gheralta. These tourist guides were recruited from the local community and their office is located at Megab. Training on tourism related issues has been given twice in Wokro and Mekelle for these guides. Now they are facilitating the guiding operation in Gheralta. This locally established guiding association has got recognition from the Region and Woreda Tourism Agency. The head of the association has stated that, they are benefiting from their guiding services. Each of the tourists who come either individually or in a group pays 150Birr. So the guide took 100 Birr as his/her per diem and the remaining 50 Birr goes to the association's account. But the members of the guiding association have mentioned many problems which they have faced in their day-to-day operations. Some of them were lack of support from the concerned bodies (local administrations), limited capacity and skills on various issues such as computer and language skills. In addition they also raised financial constraints, lack of computer and other office equipments. Their office has no telephone which contributed for lack of communication with others working in similar business. Although this is the case, this local guide was able to alleviate many of the problems that the tourists have faced before this association has become operational.

**Picture-8 Members of the Gheralta Local Guides Association.**



(Source: field survey, Jan, 2011)



#### **4.3.2.6. Banking**

It is only few months ago that banking service was commenced in Hawzen town which is the capital of the Woreda. It is in 2011 that the government has opened Commercial Bank in Hawzen after taking the ever growing demand of the people and tourism activities into consideration. So tourists are now easily getting banking service in the area. But the main problem is that there is no modern bank credit system like, ATM machine service. Furthermore tourists can also use banking service either in Tsigereda or Wokro. In addition, the most convenient option, for those tourists who look better banking and insurance services, are available in Mekelle city.

#### **4.3.2.7. Electricity and Communication**

All major and small towns of Tigray have electricity services. Hawzen, the small towns like Megab and Dugum also have 24 hour electricity services. As to the head of Tigray Tourism and my understanding from field observation, almost all of the Churches in Gheralta have electricity light.

Public Telephone is available in Megab and in the nearby Dugum including private mobile network which is functional in most of the tourist sites. But it is only in Hawzen that tourists can use internet service.

#### **4.3.2.8. Water Supply**

The availability of pure water supply is one of the pre-requisites for tourism operation. The Federal and the Regional Government of Tigray are exerting their effort to enhance access to pure water supply in the major towns of Tigray. Since majority of the people in Tigray lives in rural areas, they have no access to pure water supply. As most of the tourist attractions are located in rural areas, problems faced by rural people are also faced by the visitors. My informants including the manager of Gheralta lodge, visitors, and local people from Hawzen and Megab all agreed that lack of pure water supply is the most pressing problem in the area. Especially the manager of the lodge has stressed that, the day-to-day operation of the lodge is highly affected due to frequent on-off of the pipe. So tourists are expected to bring their own packed water from the nearby towns when they come to visit most of Gheralta areas.

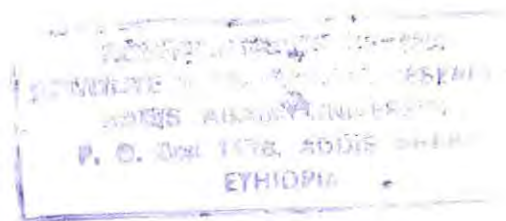
### **4.3.3. Promotion Activities**

As it is mentioned in many literatures, the time we are living is known as the age of information (Muganda, 2009). Due to the innovation of fast and new electronic device, people were able to have easy accesses for information from all corners of the glob while they were at home (Berhane, 2003). This fast information exchange has played a profound role in promoting tourism attractions of many countries. Moreover, tourists are also in need of all sorts of information about location, culture, and means of transportation, language, type of site, and even the type of diseases and pre-cautions to be made before their tour (Gunna, 1994).

In this competitive world, the type, quality and frequency of promotion activities determines the success or failure of once business (Berhane, 2003). It is based on this information that tourists decide where to go and allocate all their tour expenses for their visit before departure.

Tourism in Ethiopia in general [and in Tigray in particular] was criticized for its poor promotion (Mengistu, 2008). Although it is not satisfactory, nowadays the Tigray Tourism Agency is exerting a lot to promote the region's tourism resources through various ways. As to the head of Tourism Marketing Department of the Region, they use web sites, telex, fax, CD, exhibitions, local radio, television program, posters, brochures, News paper, discussion, conference and tours. At each Woreda level, promotion was carried out using public awareness raising programs, exhibitions, posters, touring, news paper and discussion. The Gheralta lodge is also playing an important role in promoting Gheralta as one tourist destination using its web- site.

Although the resources and facilities of the study area were mentioned, what is not clear and what remains the focus of this research is whether local communities in Korkor, Megab and Koraro participate in the area of tourism industry, and to what extent, if any. Moreover, how much the local communities are benefiting from the industry is also the question of this research.



## Chapter Five

### Results and Discussions

#### 5. Community's Livelihood

##### 5.1. Profiles of Survey respondents

This sub section throws light on the profiles of members of the local community in Gheralta village, who responded to the household survey. The study population was comprised of a total of 90 respondents from a household in three kebele villages. The study areas were Koraro, Korkor and Megab. Of the respondents 35.5% (32) were from Koraro, 30 % (27) from Korkor and 34.4 (31) were from Megab. Koraro have the highest representation due to its comparatively high number of household population, where as korkor had the lowest representations because of its small number of households. What is worth noting here is that the representation of households of a particular village was determined by the total household population size of that particular village.

Among the 90 respondents 51 % (46), slightly more than half of them were female and male were 48.9% (44). As far as the level of educational background of the respondents is concerned, 15.6% (14) had primary school education. High school education and preparatory school have equal representation of 23.3% (21) each. Tertiary/College and Universities accounts 12.2% (11) and the rest 25.6% (23) of the respondents had no formal education (illiterate). It is clear that majority of the respondents had low level of education in the formal sense, which could impact on their level of participation and level of awareness in tourism. Interestingly, the respondents were highly diverse in terms of

their ages with age groups 30-40 years and 40 and above years being equally represented by 25.6% (23) each. Some 12.2% (11) were between the ages of 18-20 years. And 36.7% (33) of the total respondents were between 21-30 years which represents the highest portion of the total household. Regarding their occupational category most of the respondents were farmers which account for 77.8% (70) and followed by respondents who said “others” 14.4% (13) and 7.8% (7) were engaged in small-scale business activities.

**Table 5.1. Profiles of Respondents (N=90).**

<b>No</b>	<b>Respondent characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	<b>Place of residence</b>		
	• Koraro	32	35.6
	• Korkor	27	30
	• Megab	31	34.4
2	<b>Sex of respondents</b>		
	• Male	44	48.9
	• Female	46	51.1
3	<b>Age of respondents</b>		
	• Between 18 and 20 years	11	12.2
	• 21-30 years	33	36.7
	• 31-40	23	25.6
	• 40 and above	23	25.6
4	<b>Educational level of respondents</b>		
	• Primary school education( 1-8 )	14	15.6
	• high school education( 9-10 )	21	23.3
	• preparatory school education	21	23.3
	• Tertiary/college, university	11	12.2
	• Illiterate	23	25.6
5	<b>Occupation of respondents</b>		
	• Farmer	70	77.8
	• Small-scale business		
	• Others	7	7.8
		13	14.4

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

## **5.2. Local Communities and Livelihood**

The household survey questionnaire that were filled by the respondents include questions that aimed to gauge information from respondents about their main means of livelihood, the availability of farmland for each household, land suitability and other off-farm income used and the means they employed in time of food insecurity. This enabled the researcher to be well acquainted with situation of the local community before dealing about the activities of community based ecotourism as an alternative means by the local peoples of the study area.

In order to assess the local communities' main means of livelihood, respondents were asked questions related with their livelihood means. The respondents were given agriculture, small scale business and 'other' as alternatives to be filled. So, as the out put of their response has indicated, out of the (90) total respondents 77.8% (77) have mentioned that agriculture was their main livelihood means. This was also highlighted by interviews that all of the members of the community involved in the FGD and interviews agreed that majority of the community's life is highly dependent on agriculture. This was followed by "other" which represents about 14.4% (13) of the respondents. This can be an indication of the overall situation of the country that majority of its population is dominantly dependent on subsistence agriculture. The same picture is also true from the three study sites. Partly it can also tell us the quality of life of the community. On the other hand 7.8% (7) of the respondents mentioned that small scale business was used as their means of livelihood.

**Table 5.2 Main Livelihoods of Respondents.**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture	70	77.8
Small-scale business	7	7.8
Other	13	14.4

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As we will see in the coming Table 5.3, majority of the respondents and the interviewed groups noted that there is shortage of farmland in all study areas. As a result 7.8% (7) of the respondents used small scale business as their main means of living. These include selling tela, enjera, running tea house, tourist guide and so forth. On the other hand 14.4% (13) of the participants were civil servants, daily laborers, and students dependent on their families who responded “others”.

Moreover an attempt was made in order to see if there exists difference between respondents’ livelihood means across the three study areas. For this reason respondent’s answers were cross tabulated with the place where they belong.

**Table 5.3 Main Livelihood by Categories of Study Areas.**

What is your main livelihood?	Study areas						Total	
	Koraro		Korkor		Megab			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Agriculture	32	100	22	81.5	16	51.6	70	77.8
Small-scale business	0	0	2	7.4	5	16.1	7	7.8
Other	0	0	3	11.3	10	23.3	13	14.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>100</i>

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As we can see from Table 5.3, 100% (32) of the respondents from Koraro indicated that agriculture was their main livelihood. Similarly Korkor follows whose 81.5% (22) of representatives were dependent on agriculture. In Megab 51.6% (16) of them which is slightly more than half of the respondents used agriculture as their livelihood means. Further, in korkor and Megab respondents who used small-scale business were 7.4% (2) and 16.1% (5) respectively. On the other hand, 11.3% (3) in Korkor and 23.3% (10) from Megab used other options as their main source of livelihood. In Megab 16.1% (5) of the respondents' main livelihood was small-scale business which represents the highest percentage as compared to the other study areas. Personally I observed that minority of the local people in Megab and Korkor were involving as tourist guide, daily laborers, church servants, and administrative staffs and civil servants which were incorporated in the "others" option.

### 5.3. Local Communities and Land Ownership

Respondents were also asked to indicate if they had their own farmlands. This question was addressed to those respondents who said that their main livelihood is ‘Agriculture’. Hence out of the 70 respondents who revealed that their means of living is agriculture considerable number 83.9% (60) of them said they have their own farmland. The remaining 16.1% (10) indicated that they do not have their own farmland. So when we examine the response of the target groups of the research, majority of them had their own farm lands. But minority of the respondents had no their own farmlands. Those who had no farmland were dependent on lands rented either from other farmers or make use of their parents land. Hence, members of the community who have no their own farm land may resort to other options like tourism.

In addition, an attempt was also made to assess the respondents’ answer in terms of their location.

**Table 5.4 Local Communities Land Ownership**

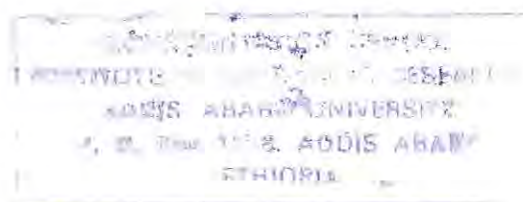
question	Place of respondents			
	Response categories	Koraro	Korkor	Megab
Do you have your own farm land?	Yes	96.9% (31)	100%(22)	28.6%(6)
	No	3.1%(1)	0%(0)	71.4%(10)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

When we examine the above table almost all the respondents in Koraro i.e. 96.9% (31) out of those 100% (32) who made agriculture as their main livelihood have agreed that they have their own farmland. All respondents in Korkor 100% (22) whose means of livelihood is agriculture stated that they have their own farmland. In contrary, only 28.6% (6) of the respondents from Megab have said they have their farmland. As some of the local leaders in Megab have explained that since Megab is growing as a small town, many people from the surrounding village are building their house for small scale business in the town. As a result there are problems to find land for farming as compared to Koraro and Korkor and some respondents from Megab made use of small scale business and “others” as alternative options.

Although the figures in Table 5.4 indicated that majority of the respondents of the three village kabbelles had their own farmland, my informants revealed that the size of the farmland per family was not sufficient. We can also see that there is variation at site level.

Respondents were also requested if their cultivated farmland produce enough food for their family. Accordingly participants had provided their response as it is indicated in the following table.



**Table 5.5. Local Community and Food Security.**

question	Study areas				Total
	Response Categories	Koraro	Korkor	Megab	
Do you think that there is food security in your family?	Yes	12.5%(4)	3.7%(1)	25.8%(8)	13 (14.4%)
	No	87.5% (28)	96.3% (26)	74.2%(23)	77 (85.6%)
	Total	90	100%(32)	100%(27)	100%(31)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As indicated earlier that most of the respondents have their own farmland. The researcher believes that the availability of farmland alone could not ensure food sufficiency for the family. Because we experience that people were starved while they have farmland. Accordingly out of the 90 participants 14.4 % (13) of them revealed that their family has sufficient food. But on the other hand 85.6% (77) of the respondents indicated the presence of food insecurity in their family. So majority of the participants were not in a position to produce enough food for their families. If we examine the respondents in respect to their place of residence, Megab 25.8%, (8) Koraro 12.5% (4) and Korkor 3.7% (1) has responded the presence of food security in their family respectively. It is relatively respondents from Megab and koraro who are able to get sufficient food for

their family. On the other hand participants who said 'no' represent 96% (26) in Korkor, 87.5% (28) in Koraro and Megab 74.2% (23). Out of the total respondents 85.6% (77) of them were not able to ensure sufficient food for their family and they were asked to list the reasons. Accordingly their responses were rated according to their percentage. So, large family size and shortage of farmland is the most frequently stated explanation and it was mentioned by 60.8% (48) of the total respondents. And it was followed by 22.8% (18) of the total respondents who reasoned highly degraded land as a reason. Some 13.9% (11) and 2.5% (2) of the respondents expressed that stony land and traditional farming system were the major reasons for insufficient production respectively. As we can observe from the figures in Table 5.6 below more than half of the respondents' reason shows that family size per household and the shortage of land are the main reasons.

But there is variation from village to village. More than three fourth 74.2% of the respondents from Megab indicated that large family size and shortage of land were the main reasons for food insecurity in their family. A slightly different number 62.5% (15) of respondents from Megab and a significantly small number 37.9% (11) of participants from Koraro revealed a similar reason for food insecurity in their family.

This variation among respondents across the three villages can be attributed to variation in land suitability; the number of their total population per-village and the size of farm land in each Kebele. In line with this, respondents' reasons were cross tabulated with their specific locations as follows:

**Table.5.6 Respondents' Reasons for Food Inadequacy**

Reasons of respondents	Place of residence		
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab
Family size and shortage of farm land	11(37.9%)	18(69.2%)	15(62.5%)
Highly degraded land	13(44.8%)	2(7.7%)	1(4.2%)
Stony land	2(6.9%)	4 (15.4%)	3 (12.5%)
Traditional farming practice	1(3.4%)	0(0%)	1(4.2%)
Others	2 (6.9%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (16.7%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As we can observe from Table 5.6 above, the reason which had been listed by the respondents are unevenly distributed across their respective kebelles. But Family size and shortage of farm land took a lions share from the other reasons in two of the study areas (i.e. Megab and Korkor). Although, there were some respondents who mentioned stony land and traditional farming as reasons, these reasons were forwarded by significant minority of the participants. This was because of the millennium project work in all the study areas on various social issues and provision of selected seed, fertilizer and introducing better agricultural techniques.

#### 5.4. How Do Local Communities Deal with Food Insecurity?

Earlier we have seen that sizeable proportion of the respondents have faced recurrent food insecurity. How did the local people manage the problem when their family faces food shortage? Since 85.6% (77) of the participants were not able to feed their family, the researcher had attempted to assess their possible problem solving mechanisms.

Respondents have mentioned alternative problem solving mechanisms when their family fails to get sufficient food. The researcher has attempted to analyze the respondents answer inline with their place of residence and their sex .Because the researcher wants to see if there is a difference in the type of problem solving mechanisms across area of residence and sex.

**Table 5.7 Food security Problem Solving Alternatives**

Respondents' various problem solving alternatives	Respondents place of residence		
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab
Use off-farming income	5(17.2%)	4(15.4%)	18(75.0%)
Sale their domestic animals	23(79.3%)	12(46.2%)	3(12.5%)
Seasonal migration	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(4.2%)
Assistance from relatives	1(3.4%)	7(26.9%)	2(8.3%)
Nothing can do	0(0%)	3(11.5%)	0(0%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As Table 5.7 indicates respondents from the three sites use different means so as to resolve food insecurity in their family. In Megab out of the 24 respondents 75% (18) of them used “off-farming income” as the best means of going through their problem. As I have tried to understand from the interviews and FGD, there were many people in Megab who use other sources of income than agriculture so as to deal with food insecurity. Similarly, in Koraro 17.2% (5) respondents out of the 29 and from Korkor 15.4% (4) out of the 26 respondents used off-framing income as one means. However, 79.3% (23) in koraro and 46.2% (12) from korkor sale their domestic animals when they face food shortage in their families. On the other hand, only one respondent from Megab have mentioned that he migrates to other areas until a better situation comes. In contrary, minority of the respondents from korkor said they ask assistance form their relatives or families and 11.5% (3) of respondents from the same area have said that they could do nothing. In general the participants’ major options revolved around off-farming income and selling their domestic animals as the best alternative solutions.

## **5.5. Local Community and Tourism**

### ***5.5.1 Respondents’ Awareness about Tourism***

The awareness and understanding level of local community about the essences, importance and contribution of tourism in general and community based tourism in particular are among the many factors that determine the level of participation and involvement of the local community in the tourism sector. So to determine their level of awareness informants were requested to forward whether they have knowledge about tourism.

**Table 5.8 Respondents' Tourism Awareness**

Category of response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	60	66.7	66.7	66.7
No	30	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)

Accordingly, out of the 90 total sample size 66.7% (60) of them have said that they know about tourism, but still approximately 33% (30) of them were without know-how about it. Although, the local communities of the study area experience tourists visiting their natural and historical as well as cultural tourism resources, this figure of the study implies that there are a considerable number of individuals who were not familiar with tourism. The researcher has tried to assess the level of awareness of the local communities based on their area of residence, sex and educational level.

**Table 5.9. Awareness and Area of Residence**

Categories of response	Place of residence			Total
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab	
Yes	29 (90.6%)	3 (11.1%)	28 (90.3%)	60 (66.7%)
No	3 (9.4%)	24 (88.9%)	3 (9.7%)	30 (33.3%)
Total	32 (100.0%)	27 (100.0%)	31 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)

(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)

Awareness levels of respondents were analyzed in line with their place of residences. Accordingly, 90.6% (29) of the total 32 samples taken from Koraro have stated that they knew what tourism is while the remaining 3 9.4% (3) knew nothing about it. Similarly, from Megab where 31 informants were selected, 90.3% (28) and 3 9.7% (3) of them said they knew the concept of tourism and the latter answered they have no clue about it. In the contrary, when we come to the case of Korkor, large percentage of the participants that is 88.9% (24 )out of their total 27 sub-sample forwarded that they have no the awareness about tourism while the remaining 11.1% (3) out of 27 were within the opposite category.

These figures of the Table show that there is a high variation in the awareness levels of respondents based on respondents' area of residence. In other words, their locations had significantly influenced their level of exposure to tourism activities. For instance, we have seen that respondents from Megab have a relatively better awareness about tourism. This might not be surprising, as Megab is a relatively urbanized small town which can provide a better opportunity to come across tourism activities. Korkor where we found a very low level of awareness about tourism may not have a similar opportunity as Megab. Moreover, in the places of Megab and Koraro there are individuals that involve in tourism activities in an organized manner which help them to have better understanding of tourism and its importance. However, even those who have the awareness have little knowledge or understanding of what role they should play as the hosting community.

Furthermore, the respondents' knowledge has been treated with respect to their sex. Accordingly, the figures in the above table depicts that among the total 44 male informants 68.2% (30) and out of the 46 female respondents 65.2% (30) were found to be

familiar about the concept of tourism. To put it differently, this tells that there is no as such considerable difference in the knowledge levels of respondents about tourism between the male and the female participants. As to the head of the Woreda tourism, when there exists any tourism training they give equal opportunity to both sexes and this might have contributed in narrowing the gap between them in their awareness about tourism. The following table depicts respondents' awareness about tourism based on their sex.

**Table 5.10 Respondents' Awareness and Sex**

Categories of response	Sex of the respondent		Total
	Female	Male	
Yes	30 (65.2%)	30 (68.2%)	60 (66.7%)
No	16 (34.8%)	14 (31.8%)	30 (33.3%)
Total	46 (100.0%)	44 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

In a similar vein, respondents' educational background was assessed whether it could contribute in determining their awareness levels about tourism. Therefore, the following table shows that there is a proportional relation between the informants' educational level and their awareness about tourism. Particularly, all respondents with tertiary educational level have the knowledge about tourism while those at High school and preparatory level

represented 90.5% and 80.9% respectively. On the other side, 50% and approximately 74% of the informants with the educational status of primary and those who had not formal education (illiterate) respectively have said that they had no the awareness about the concept of tourism. The following Table shows the relationship between educational level and awareness about tourism.

**Table 5.11 Respondents' Awareness and Their Educational Level**

Categories of response	Educational level of the respondent					Total
	Primary	High school	Preparatory school	Tertiary coll /univ	Illiterate	
Yes	7 (50%)	17 (80.9%)	19 (90.5%)	11 (100%)	6 (26.1%)	60 (66.7%)
No	7 (50%)	4 (19.1%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	17 (73.9%)	30 (33.3%)
Total	14 (100%)	21 (100.0%)	21 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)	23 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

### **5.5.2 Local communities' Accesses to Sources of Information about Tourism**

Those respondents who have awareness about tourism were asked their sources of information about tourism. Out of the 60 respondents who have awareness about tourism 21.7% (13) of them said that it was from media and another 21.7% (13) indicated that it was from various seminars and conferences. On the other hand, 41.6% (25) of them

explained the source was from schools while 11.7% (7) and 3.3% (2) revealed that it is from friends and “others” respectively. So the Table tells us that there is a variation among the respondents in their sources of information. The following table provides sources of information about tourism as mentioned by respondents.

**Table 5.12 Sources of Information about Tourism**

Observation	Sources of awareness of respondents					Total
	<i>Media</i>	<i>Seminar and Conference</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Others</i>	
<b>Frequency</b>	13	13	7	25	2	60
<b>Percentage</b>	21.7	21.7	11.7	41.6	3.3	100

(Sours: Field survey, Jan, 2011)

Moreover, the sample informants’ responses were analyzed in relation to their sex. As Table 5.13 reveals, both males and females have a relatively similar source of information. However, males outnumbered their female counter parts when we examine conferences and seminars as sources of information. This may reflect the relatively better access of males to such kinds of conferences and seminars. On the other hand, more female respondents asserted that their major source of information was school.



**Table 5.13 Source of Tourism Awareness based on Sex Category**

Sources of Knowledge	Sex of respondents			
	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Media	7	23.3	6	20.0
Seminar and Conference	9	30.0	4	13.3
Friends	4	13.3	3	10.0
School	10	33.3	15	50.0
Others	0	0.0	2	6.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100</i>

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

Furthermore, the respondents' sources of information were analyzed based on the three study areas. Accordingly, there are variations in the sources of their knowledge across the three study areas. The main sources for those from Koraro were school which accounts for 58.6% (17) of them and Medias serve as source of information for 24.1% (7) of the 29 samples who have awareness about tourism. On the other hand, among the 28 samples who have awareness and drawn from Megab, 28.6% (8) and 25% (7) of them indicated that schools and conferences and seminars were their main sources of information respectively. And media serves as source of information for 21.4% (6) of the respondents from Megab. In the contrary, out of the 3 informants who have awareness from Korkor, 66.7% (2) and 33.3% (1) claimed that seminar as well as conference and friends are their primary source of information respectively.

**Table 5.14 Source of Tourism information Across the three Study Areas.**

Study areas	Sources of Knowledge of Respondents					Total
	Media	Seminar and conference	Friends	School	Others	
<i>Koraro</i>	7 (24.1%)	2 (6.9%)	3 (10.3%)	17 (58.6%)	0 (0%)	29
<i>Korkor</i>	0 (0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
<i>Megab</i>	6 (21.4%)	7 (25%)	7 (25%)	8 (28.6%)	2 (7.1%)	28

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

### **5.5.3 Importance of Tourism to the local community.**

Respondents have been asked whether they think that tourism is important for them. Although the Gheralta community had been hosting or receiving tourists from various parts of the world, tourism was taking place in a traditional way and the community did not associate it with economic and social development. Yet, it is generally believed that the local communities should be the main play makers of the sector so as to ensure their economic and social well being.

**Table 5.15 Tourisms Importance in the Three Study Areas**

Response category	Place of Residence		
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab
Yes	29(90.6%)	4 (14.8%)	27 (87.1%)
No	3 (9.34)	23 (85.2%)	4 (12.9%)
Total	32	27	31

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

Participants were asked whether they believe tourism is important for them. Accordingly, 90.6% (29) and 87.1% (27) of the respondents from Koraro and Megab respectively replied that they believe tourism is very important for them. This can be attributed to their better awareness as compared to their neighbor Korkor in which 85.2 % (23) of them said tourism is not important for them. Hence, it is possible to conclude that those respondents who have better awareness about tourism are more likely to understand its importance.

Moreover the importance of tourism was also analyzed in relation to the sex of respondents. Out of the 60 total respondents who have mentioned tourism is important 63.6% (28) of them were males and the remaining 69.6% (32) were females. The figures indicate us that there is a slight difference between the sexes on the importance of tourism. On the other hand, 30.4% (14) females and 36.4% (16) males asserted that tourism is not important for them. The possible reasons might be low level of awareness

about the importance of tourism or they may not have benefited from the tourism activities in their locality.

This study has also attempted to investigate the relative importance that the communities provide for material (tangible) and non-material (non-tangible) tourism resources. Ideally, it is obvious that lay people are more likely to give more credit for material resources than non-material resources which are less concrete. Based on this assumption the local communities were asked during the interview and FGD, which tourism resource they think are more valuable as a tourism resource? It was found that most of the informants have the tendency to view tangible resources like buildings and landscape as more important than other intangible cultural heritages like music and cultural events.

#### ***5.5.4 Local Communities Involvement in Tourism Activity***

Many scholars state that the level of awareness of local community about the essence of tourism and its importance determines their involvement in tourism activity (Muganda, 2003). As we have seen in the preceding discussions majority of the respondents have indicated that they were aware of what tourism is meant and have positive outlook towards the importance of tourism. So to investigate the level of local communities participation in the local tourism activities, respondents were asked questions that requires 'yes' or 'no' response. Table 5.16 indicates that 48.9% (44) of the 90 respondents said that they participate in tourism related activities directly or indirectly. But 51.1% (46) of them which is slightly more than half did not involve. The following table shows local communities involvement across the study areas.

**Table 5.16. Involvement of Local Community in Relation to Study Areas**

Categories of Response	Place of residence			
	Korkor	Korkor	Megab	Total
Yes	15 (46.9%)	6 (22.2%)	23(74.2%)	44 (48.9%)
No	17(53.1%)	21 (77.8%)	8 (25.8%)	46 (51.1%)
Total	32 (100%)	27 (100%)	31 (100%)	90 (100%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

On the other hand, in relation to their area of residence, in Megab 74.2 (23) have said that they involved in tourism related activities. Similarly, 46.9% (15) respondents in Koraro mentioned that they participate in tourism. On the other hand, 77.8% (21) of the respondents from Korkor had never participated in tourism activities. Although this table shows the existence of variations on the levels of communities' involvements across the three study sites, slightly more than half of the total respondents had not yet participated in any tourism activities in all areas.

As one of my informants told me about the reason why they did not participate, he explained: *“The real situation at the ground did not invite me to participate in the tourism businesses. Additionally, this is further aggravated because I don't know the area where I could involve in.”* Likewise, this informant added that the problem was emanated

from the low level of empowering and training of local communities in tourism related business by the Woreda and regional tourism bodies.

#### **5.5.4.1. The Provision of Tourism Training**

Out of the 90 respondents, 72.2% (65) of them had never taken any tourism oriented trainings. But at the level of respondents' place of residence, Megab stood first in getting tourism training for its community which represents 64.5% (20) of its total sub-sample size (i.e. 31) selected for this study.

As to the head of the woreda's tourism office, most of the time they provided trainings for those who were organized in association and who have better educational backgrounds. Moreover, Megab was also preferred for its proximity and its exposure to tourist vicinity. That is why the Gheralta Local Guide Association's office is found in Megab. In contrary, in the case of Koraro, although a large number of the sub-sample size taken involves in tourism activities and had also a relatively better awareness, 93.8% (30) of its total sub-sample (i.e. 32), have indicated that they never took training on tourism. As one of my informants from Koraro has informed me, there are people involved in tourism activities independently and in unorganized way. This indicates that their degree of involvement was simply based on an informal way. The following table reveals the provision of tourism training in relation to area of residence.

**Table 5.17. Tourism Training Across Place of Respondents.**

Categories of response	Place of Respondents			
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab	Total
Trained	2 (6.2%)	3 (11.1%)	20 (64.5%)	25 (27.8%)
Untrained	30 (93.8%)	24 (88.9%)	11 (35.5%)	65 (72.2%)
Total	32 (100%)	27 (100%)	31 (100%)	90 (100%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

The provision of tourism training was also analyzed in relation to sex. The following table indicates that both male and female had almost similar opportunity in receiving tourism training.

**Table 5.18: Tourism Training and Sex**

Categories of Respondent	Sex of Respondents					
	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Trained	12	(26.1)	13	(29.5)	25	(27.8)
Untrained	34	(73.9)	31	(70.5)	65	(72.2)
Total	46	(100)	44	(100)	90	(100)

From the 44 total male samples, 29.5% (13) and from the 46 total female samples 26.1% (12) had taken training in tourism respectively. On the other hand 70.5% from male and 73.9 % from females out of their respective total sample size did no take tourism trainings. As the data in the above table indicated, although there is no remarkable difference between both sexes who took tourism training, a larger number of them were not given any tourism training. As I understood from the interview and FGD even those who took the training, complained that the training was very limited in its scope. It was also given for very short period of time as a result it was not able to bring a difference in their capacity in various areas. As they noted, the training focused on tourist guidance like, how to handle tourists and on language skill. But they verified that those skills could not develop in a few days/in hours/ of training.

According to the head of the Gheralta Local Guide Association, there are many areas which demand short and long time training for the members of the association and the local community at large. As he added some of the areas that require training were on how to produce local products for tourism consumption, preparation of local, traditional food and traditional drinking and handicrafts. In doing so the local community would be able to have additional sources of income to their traditional agricultural activities. As he added this could be effective if a collaborative effort is made together with all stakeholders of tourism including, people engaged in tourism business, the local administration, NGOs and other organizations working at a community level.

#### **5.5.4.2 Who Involves in Community Based Tourism?**

Throughout the course of his field work observation and using the respondents' household survey questionnaire, the researcher has made an attempt to explore the presence of any locally or nationally owned association or organizations working on community based tourism business. Accordingly respondents had provided their responses in line with their respective areas of residence and it is presented in the following table.



**5.19. The Presence of Organizations Involved in Community Based Tourism across the Study Areas.**

Place of residence	Responses categories			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Koraro	2	(6.2)	30	(93.8)
Korkor	1	(3.7)	26	(96.3)
Megab	28	(90.3)	3	(9.7)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

To begin from Megab, 28 (90.3%) of the participants agreed that there are community based associations and tourism business organizations working at a community level. One of the typical examples mentioned during the interview was the Gheralta Local Guide Association which is run by locally recruited young students. Their office is in Megab. Moreover there is also the Gheralta lodge about 7kms away from Megab which is owned by an Italian investor. As the manager of the lodge explained, the lodge has 30 beds. As I understood from my observation the overall design of all its rooms are similar with the traditional house of the local people. Similarly, many of the inputs used for the construction of the lodge were home made. As to the manager of the lodge, there are 34 full time workers in the lodge. This didn't include the manager and part time workers.

Many of my informants agree with the manager of the lodge on the contribution of the lodge that *“it is playing a pivotal role in promoting the area and Gherlata in general through its website”*. The participants also added that, it is after its establishment that they are experiencing such large number of visitors from abroad. One visitor stated that, *“it is my second time to visit Gheralta. In my first visit, I have faced many problems such as bed and transportation problems. But now thanks to Mr. silvio Rizzotti [the owner of the lodge] there is no bed problem”*

The lodge also plays an important role in the conservation of local heritages. Moreover it also provides trainings to the local guide and organizes awareness raising programs to church guards (get keepers) once every year on heritage reservation and other issues. The lodge has also created job opportunities to the local communities. One young man from Megab stated that *“I have been idle for many years. Once I finished 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I can't continue further because of family problem. Now I am working as full time employee in the lodge with a salary of 580 Birr per/ month”*. The lodge has created job opportunities for: guards, drivers, cooks, guides, janitors, operators, and so forth. Moreover, it also contributed to the local community as tourists who came to visit it consume certain local products like, handicrafts and car rent. In a similar vein, as the lodge by itself purchase its inputs from the local community like agricultural and animal products (Goats, sheep, hen, egg, honey, tomato, potato, and the like)

When we came back to Table 5.18, we observed that in Korkor, 96.3% of (30) its 32 total samples stated that no association or organization is working in community based tourism business in their locality. Similarly in Koraro nearly 94% of the respondents provided

similar response with their Korkor counterparts. But it is possible to observe that, there are individuals from both Koraro and Korkor involving in the daily tourists visit as they carry tourists baggage, guiding their path, and guarding them in the course of their visit. In doing so, they received money from the tourists which its amount may depend on the good will of the tourists. As to the head of the Woreda's head, there is a good start at Adigrat on community run tourism business project which was initiated by the local NGO called TESFA. And Gheralta was one of the sites selected for this project. There are a number of projects which were planned to be implemented in the near future in collaboration with the local communities as the head noted. Besides, private lodge is also under construction in Dugum, a small town (10kms) west of the study areas. As the participants of the FGD posed in the discussion, the change in the life of the local people due to the overall tourism operation and the presence of local tourism related business organization significantly vary from village to village. Accordingly Megab's representatives indicated that there are changes in the life of the people who has already involved in the tourism activities. But representatives from Koraro and Korkor revealed that tourism did not bring as such significant change in the life of the local communities.

#### **5.5.4.3 Tourism as a Source of Income**

We can only talk about community based tourism if and only if we guarantee that the local community has made it as one source of income. With this assumption, the present study has attempted to assess whether the local community has made tourism as an alternative source of income. The following table provides the responses of the respondents to the question "Do you involve in tourism related source of income?"

**Table 5.20. Engagement in Tourism Related Source of Income**

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum</b>
Yes	29	32.2	32.2
No	61	67.8	100
Total	90	100	

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

As Table 5.19 shows, only 32.2% (29) of the sample informants were already engaged in various tourism-related sources of income while more than two thirds 67.8% of them have not yet involved. This indicates that significant number of respondents have still remained away from involving in tourism related sources of income. The major reason for poor community involvement in tourism business particularly in Korkor and in all the study area in general was lack of training regarding how to involve in such activities. That is why the representatives of the three study areas who participated in the focus group discussion frequently raised access to training on various areas of tourism was their prior demand but not yet materialized. The other reason mentioned during the interview was financial constraint.

The small proportion of respondents who have indicated that they were involved in tourism related sources of income were asked the areas in which they involve. The responses include: guiding, employment in Gheralta lodge, delivery service, selling agricultural products and local handcrafts.

**Table 5.21. Engagement in Tourism Related Sources of Income**

Categories of Response	Place of residence			
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab	Toal
Yes	4 (12.5%)	2 (7.4%)	23 (74.2%)	29 (32.2%)
NO	28 (87.5%)	25 (92.6%)	8 (25.8%)	61 (67.8%)
Total	32 (100.0%)	27 100.0%	31 (100.0%)	90 (100.0%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

Involvement level of sample respondents in different tourism-related sources of income was also assessed in terms of the three specific locations of the study areas. Based on this, out of the sub-samples from Koraro, Korkor and Megab, 12.5% (4), 7.4% (2), and 74.2% (23) respectively said that they involve in various tourism related activities. On the other hand 87.5% (28) of the 32 respondents from Koraro, 92.6% (25) of the 27 respondents from Korkor, and 25.8% (8) of the 31 informants from Megab have forwarded that they did not engage in such activities. This figure depicts that there is a significant variation in their level of involvement in tourism activities among the respondents of the three study areas.

Unlike the other two areas it is in Megab where there were a good number of individuals who were involved in various tourism-related sources of income like tourist guide (formal and informal), full and part-time employment in lodge, guiding, delivery service, guarding and so forth.

The level of engagement of the local community was also assessed in relation to the sex of respondents. Accordingly, as indicated in Table 5.21 below, there was no such big difference between the two sexes in their involvement in tourism related sources of income. Such gender equality is something that community based tourism advocates and we should appreciate and endeavor to further enhance it.

**Table 5.22. Respondents' Engagement in Tourism Related Source of Income across Sex Categories.**

Categories of Response	Sex of respondents		
	Female	Male	Total
Yes	14 (30.4%)	15 (34.1%)	29 (32.2%)
NO	32 (69.6%)	29 (65.9%)	61 (67.8%)
Total	46 (100%)	44 (100%)	90 (100%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

Hand in hand with this, respondents who were not engaged in tourism were asked to explain if they had the interest to involve in tourism activities in the future. All the 61 respondents who were not engaged indicated that they want to participate in various tourism businesses if any opportunity comes in the future.

#### **5.5.4.4. Future Areas of Interest in Tourism**

As indicated above, the 61 respondents who haven't yet participated in tourism related sources of income mentioned that they have an interest to partake in tourism if they get the opportunity. The researcher was also interested to explore the areas where these respondents want to participate in the future. Here respondents were asked to choose the areas in which they want to participate among the given alternatives. Understanding the communities' future areas of interest in tourism can provide an important basis for any future tourism enhancing activities such as in determining the type of training that the local community aspires for and the availability of human resources in future tourism investment.

Accordingly their responses were being examined in relation to their sex and the area of residence. The response categories are: involvement as guard, renting pack animals to tourists, tourist guide, supplying agricultural products to tourists, selling local handicrafts and 'others'. In line with this intention, the following table reveals the respondents' area of interest in tourism across their area of residence.

**Table5.23. Respondents Areas of Interest in Respect to the Three Study Areas**

Respondents areas of interest	Place of residences			
	Koraro	Korkor	Megab	Total
Guard of tourist sites	0 (0%)	1 (4.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.6%)
Renting pack animals for tourists	3 (10.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	5 (8.2%)
Tourist Guide	0 (0%)	3 (12.0%)	5 (62.5%)	8 (13.1%)
Supplying agricultural items to tourists	4 (13.8%)	16 (64.0%)	0 (0%)	20 (32.8%)
Selling handicrafts	21 (75.9%)	3 (12.0%)	1 (12.5%)	25 (41%)
Others	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.2%)
Total	28 (100%)	25 (100%)	8 (100%)	61 (100%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

So across the three study areas, respondents from Megab that represents 62.5% (5) out of the sub-samples of 8 individuals want to involve as tourist guide. This was followed by 25% (2) of the respondents who want to engage in renting pack animals to tourists visiting the area. On the other hand out of the 25 respondents from Korkor who had the interest, 64.0% (16) of them wanted to participate in the production and supply of agricultural items to tourists and to businesses working in the tourism sector as a whole. Similarly 12.0% (3) of the respondents from Korkor want to participate in tourist guide

and supplying handcraft products with an equal number of respondents. But in the case of Koraro, majority of the respondents 75.9% (21) wanted to involve in the areas of supplying handcraft products to visitors. And this was followed by 13.8% (4) and 10.3% (3) of the respondents who want to involve in agricultural supply and renting pack animals respectively. In our previous discussion, we have seen that majority of the respondents' main livelihood in Korkor was agriculture, and similarly majority of the respondents' has expressed that the area they want to involve was in the supply of agricultural products where as, respondents from Megab which was better urbanized have the tendency to involve in tourist guide.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to examine if there exist differences in the areas of interest based on sex of the respondents. The following table depicts their area of interest based on sex of the respondents.

**Table 5.24. Respondentes Areas of Interest across Sex Categories**

Areas of Interest	Sex		Total
	Female	Male	
Guard for tourist	1 (2.9%)	1 (3.7%)	2 (3.3%)
Hiring Horse for tourist	4 (11.8%)	1 (3.7%)	5 (8.2%)
Tourist Guide	5 (14.7%)	5 (18.5%)	10 (16.4%)
Supplying agricultural items to tourists	5 (14.7%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (14.8%)
Supplying handicrafts	15 (44.1%)	11 (40.7%)	26 (42.6%)
Others	4 (11.8%)	5 (18.5%)	9 (14.8%)
Total	34 (100%)	27 (100%)	61 (100%)

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

One can understand from the above Table that, 44.1% (15) of female and 40.7% (11) of male respondents wanted to involve in the production and supply of handicraft products as their first choice. Male respondents who want to involve in tourist guide and in 'other' areas which is not mentioned here represents the same percent which is nearly 18.5% (5). On the other hand female respondents who wanted to participate as tourist guide and suppliers of agricultural products were equal in their number which is 14.7% (5).

In general, even though majority of the respondents have a strong desire to participate in tourism related activities, most of them revealed that they didn't get the chance to involve

and benefit from their tourism resources. This was supported by the information obtained through the interviews. One of my informants from Korkor has stated that:

*“If you ask every one, you can’t find even a single person in our village who doesn’t want to involve and benefit from tourism, but a few can tell you the way how to engage and benefit from it.”*

This quote clearly shows the fact that local communities were not empowered regarding how to utilize their priceless tourism resources.

#### ***5.5.6 Local Peoples’ Attitude towards the Role of Tourism***

In order to assess the local communities’ perception about tourism’s role, respondents from the local people were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements, using a 5 point Likert scale. Table 5.27 presents the results of responses for each of the statements.



**Table 5.25. Local peoples' Attitude toward the Role of Tourism**

No	To what extent do you agree Or disagree with the following statements?	Response Categories*				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Tourism generates income	78 (86.7%)	7 (7.8%)	2 (2.2%)	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.1%)
2	Tourism promotes cross-cultural exchange (greater mutual understanding respects one another culture)	78 (86.7%)	11 (12.2%)	1 (1.1%)	—	—
3	Tourism provides worth while employment opportunity	76 (84.4%)	11 (12.2%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.2%)	-
4	Tourism promotes the local cultural and historical heritages to people others	81 (90%)	9 (10 %)	-	-	-
5	Tourism activity promotes the expansion of infrastructures services to the area.	69 (76.7%)	17 (18.9%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.1%)
6	Tourism can improve the life of the local people	71 (78.9%)	15 (16.7%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.1%)
7	Local people have enough knowledge about the importance and ways of preserving local tourism resources.	58 (64.4%)	14 (15.6%)	-	11 (12.2%)	7 (78%)
	Average observations of each response categories (out of the 90 frequency)	73 (81.3%)	12 (13.3%)	1 (1.1%)	2.7 (3%)	1.4 (1.6%)

\* Response category; SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree and SD: Strongly Disagree.

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

From the above Likert scale, it is clear that out of the total 90 respondents on average about 81.1% (73) of them strongly agreed to the statements indicating a positive attitude towards tourism. And 13.3% (12) of them indicated their agreement with these

statements. A very small proportion of the respondents fall in the category of undecided, disagree and strongly disagree each accounting 1.1%, 3%, and 1.6% respectively.

It can be also observed that the difference between percentage score of respondents per each statement is small indicating broadly similar opinions about the role of tourism. The result suggests that the local people have a very positive attitude towards tourism. However in the actual ground, large proportion of the local communities at a grass root level was not garnering the fruits of its tourism resources. Analysis of the interviews with administrative bodies supported this conclusion that they indicated they were trying to expand the good beginnings observed in Megab to other area. As a result the local people are developing positive out looks towards the contributions of tourism, but one informant noted that many thing had remained as an assignments which is going to be done in the future with the local people.

Though, seven statements were prepared to assess the overall attitude of respondents towards the role of tourism, only few of them which were deemed very crucial were discussed here separately. One of these statements was the one which asks the respondents' level of agreement on the statement which reads as "meeting tourists promotes cross-cultural exchange". Significant majority 86.5% of respondents strongly agreed to this statement even though it is apparent that the cross cultural exchange can result in positive, negative or both consequences. This strong agreement was also supported by the qualitative data. One local guide for instance said that:

*“I don’t know why some tourists really like to be so close with local people? We normally chat, eat, drink and play together. This is a great opportunity for us since it helps us to learn different cultures. In addition, through meeting tourist we have established strong friendships with them.”*

The other attitude measuring statement selected for detailed discussion was “Tourism provides worth while employment opportunity”. As one can understand from the above table most 84.6% (76) of the respondents strongly agree that tourism can provide job opportunity. This was highlighted by interviews with Gheralta lodge manager and the employees that many young people were employed in the industry either as full time or part time workers. Moreover some of the local communities during the interview and FGD indicated that tourism has created job opportunities for guides, drivers, restaurants, hotels, and the like.

#### ***5.5.7 Local People’s View about Their Role in Tourism***

Having examined local people’s perceptions on the role of tourism, it is important now to assess their views about what should be an appropriate role of the community in tourism development. This is because local communities’ participation in the industry is one of the core elements of tourism activities. Thus, one approach towards gauging the extent of local communities’ participation in the study area’s tourism activity is to assess their views regarding the role they have in tourism activities. To achieve these objective respondents were asked a 5-point Likert scale on the level of their agreements with seven statements regarding varying types of communities’ role.



**Table 5.26. Local People's View on Their Role in Tourism**

	In your view, what should be the appropriate role of the local community in tourism	Respondents Categories				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Local people should have voice in decision making process of local tourism activities	60 (67.4%)	27 (30.3%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)	-
2	Local people should take the leading role as worker at all level	57 (63.3%)	28 (31.1%)	-	5 (5.6%)	-
3	Local people should be supported financially to invest in tourism	67 (76.1%)	14 (15.9%)	1 (1.1%)	6 (6.8%)	-
4	Local people should take the leading role in running local business	65 (72.2%)	22 (24.5%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.2%)	-
5	Local people should play a lions share in preserving its local heritages	68 (77.3%)	16 (18.2%)	-	4 (4.5%)	1 (1.1%)
6	Local people should benefit from the local tourism activities	71 (79.8%)	11 (12.4%)	2 (2.2%)	5 (5.6%)	-
7	Local people should own local tourism resources	72 (81.8%)	6 (6.8%)	4 (4.6%)	3 (3.4%)	3 (3.4%)
	Average observations of each response categories (out of 90 frequencies).	66 (73.3%)	18 19.7%	1.3 (1.4%)	3.7 (4.1%)	0.6 (0.6%)

\* Response category; SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree and SD: Strongly Disagree.

*(Source: Field survey, Jan, 2011)*

Overall, respondents viewed all the seven statements as appropriate roles of the local people in tourism. Table 5.26 indicates that, on average 73.3% (66) of the respondents indicated their strong Agreement with the all statements. On the other hand, 19.7% (18) of them agreed with the statements on average. The remaining 1.4% (1.3), 4.1% (3.7), and 0.6 % (0.6) of them fall in the category of undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively.

When we examine each statement we find difference on their degree of emphases on their roles. Regarding weather the local people should have a voice in tourism decision making, 67.4% (60) of them strongly agreed. They further underscored during the qualitative data collection that allowing local people to have voice in their local development could help to protect the communities' interest and increase transparency and accountability. However, as many of my informants have agreed, the current level of tourism activity did not take the need and interest of the local communities into account. One respondent for example, said, *"We were left behind, our leaders put forward their interest first, that is why we could not benefit. But if we had the power to say we could have benefited a lot from our tourism resources"*.

On the other hand, about 63.3% (57) of the respondents strongly agreed and 30.3% (27) agree on weather local people should be given priority at every local tourism job. They said that by doing so, local people could increase their access to employment opportunities and consequently improve their poor living condition. But one of my respondents from Megab noted that:

*I have doubt that we can be hired at every job because, I know my capacity. But ideally I believe that if we are trained and we are cultivated in such a way we should have to be the main player at every job.*

Most of the respondents agreed that currently there is no financial support to run tourism business in their locality. Moreover there was less know how on the areas where to involve. But 76.1% (67) of the respondents strongly agreed that getting financial support is an area of priority so that they can involve in local tourism investment.

Similarly majority of the respondents as presented in Table 5.26 were in a position that involving in benefit sharing conservation of the local tourism resources were the appropriate role of the local people.

Generally speaking although the current involvement of the local people in the tourism activity is very confined only on a few individuals, their view indicates that they are in favor of handling the overall tourism activities in their respective areas. This emanates from some of the good starts at Megab and Gheralta lodge where many people have changed their life due to their involvement in the tourism activities.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 6.1. Conclusion

In general tourism is one of the largest and steady growing economic sectors in the world. Its contribution to the overall economic growth of many countries is also paramount. However it has been criticized for excluding the need and interest of the local communities, the well being of the natural, cultural and historical heritages of the sites. As a result many alternative tourism models, approaches and strategies emerged and implemented. Among them community Based Ecotourism is a typical which is basically based on the local tourism resources and put the local community at the heart of its overall activities.

As it has been discussed in chapter 4 Gheralta has enormous wealth of natural, cultural and historical tourism resources. The cultural activities and products can be realized in terms of cultural goods, services and practices. The local community has also a wider opportunity of being engaged in the tourism business and tourism system operation. The various natural resources and diversified landscape can be utilized for the local communities' alternative options of livelihood. The impressive ancient historical rock-hewn churches at every tip of the Gheralta cliffs which hold the attention of many tourists can also be a source of income for the community.

The local communities of the study areas do have awareness about tourism and its economic benefit when they usually see tourists coming to their areas. They always

observe tourists visiting the natural setting, churches and monasteries found in their vicinity.

However, the problem is that the communities do not know how this sector of tourism is working and how they can make use of it. The local community has a good understanding of the economic value of the attractions that they want to benefit from them. However, they commonly consider that this economic activity is some thing beyond their control. This emanates from lack of training and education. Due to this and other factors tourism is not linked to the local livelihood of the community.

If one is able to talk about the community based tourism business run by the local community, it is the Gheralta Local Tourist Association that could be taken as a typical example. The Gheralta Lodge which is privately owned tourism business is the first of its kind which is based on the essence of community based tourism. Here the local community involves directly or indirectly in the tourism activities either as employee in different branches of the lodge or suppliers of local food items. Out of this we can see individuals here and there involving informally.

In fact, what is found in the present study is that the community is largely lagging behind from utilizing its tourism resources. If the community did not have the chance to engage in the economic and development activities of the industry, it is always unlikely to channel to economic benefit of the industry to the host community. If there is no reasonable flow of revenue to the local area from the industry it is also very difficult to talk about its significance to the local economic well being.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study has established that there are policy issues which need to be addressed by the regional or woreda tourism offices for the effective involvement of the local people in the community based ecotourism decision making process so that they can share from tourism benefits. The following are the proposed recommendations that can help to improve the situation of tourism in the study areas:

- Lack of tourism education and training has been identified by the research as major factors impeding the development of community based ecotourism. But these are vital components for the local people to have access in tourism employment or run their own tourism business. So in order to increase the contribution of tourism to the overall well-being of the local community, there is a need to institute tourism training programs at the community level that will ultimately provide opportunities for the local people to involve in various tourism businesses.
- Although the result of this research reveals that the local community wants to participate in the local tourism decision making, benefit sharing and to involve in local tourism business, what is found in reality was that the community has not yet involved and were not benefited. So a system should be devised to encourage the local community at a grass root level so as to ensure their participation in the overall tourism activities.
- There are some constraints like start-up capital that need to be dealt with in order to foster the participation of local people. So the Wereda administrative together

with the regional and the Wereda tourism bureau and other stakeholders of the industry should create conducive ground for the local community to have access to credit system.

- The local community has little knowledge about importance of the intangible cultural heritages for tourism attraction. But these are tourism potentials of the area which requires relatively low investment capital. So the local people should be encouraged and trained so that they can recognize non-material cultures as tourism resources and change them into tourism products.
- This research has identified the problem that there is lack of co-ordination between the tourism sites especially the administrator of the rock -hewn churches and the concerned tourism bodies. As a result I personally observed that in some of these churches the ancient paintings, their wall and ceilings are disfigured by the church administrates in the name of conservation and preservation. So orientation should be given to the get keepers in the overall essence of heritages, their significance, and on what to and not to do.
- As some of the tourists and the local tourist guides have mentioned, since the entrance fee of each church is determined by each church heads, tourists were disappointed to see variation in the amount of entrance fee from what they read on website and tourist guide book. The woreda tourism head has similar idea on this issue that some of the churches have made changes in their entrance fee from 20 to 50 and it has now reached 100 Eth-Birr. Since this has its own negative impacts

in the overall quality of tourism operation, there should be uniform and central system that monitors the entrance fee.

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## Annex -1

Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies  
College of Development Studies  
Department Of Tourism and Development

### Household Survey Questionnaires

This is a household survey questionnaire on: Community Based Ecotourism In Gheralta: Hawzen Worda/Estern Zone of Tigray for an independent study prepared by Gebretisae Berhe a student in Tourism and Development at Addis Ababa University College of Development study.

This survey questionnaire contains several questions that you are kindly requested to provide your attitudes and knowledge about the issues that the questions dealt. Your honest answers are helpful for the study of community based ecotourism in the area you are living in. I again humbly request your kind cooperation and patience to respond carefully to each and every question considering the importance of the study to your area and your community in general.

Information gathered through this questionnaire will be used only for the purpose of this research, and any information that you provide will be kept confidential.

**N.B.** this booklet has four sections. Each part has its own instructions. Please you are honestly requested to attempt all the questions inline with their respective instructions.

- There is no need of writing your name
- Thanks you in advance for your cooperation!

### Section- One

#### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

**Instruction:** Place indicate the appropriate answers by using (✓) in the box provide.

1. **Name of the village you live:**

Koraro       Korkor       Megab

2. **Sex:** Female  Male
3. **Age:** 18-20  21-30  31-40  41 and above
4. **Educational level:**  
Primary , High school  Tertiary (college or university)  others
5. **Occupations:** Farmer  Business  Other

## Section -Two

### Communities Livelihood

**Instruction:** Here there are questions that dealt about the livelihood means of community members of the study area. So please make tick (✓) in any of the box which contain alternatives that fit with you.

7. What is your main means of livelihood?  
Agriculture  Business  other
8. If your answer for question No.7 is “**agriculture**” does the house hold have its own farm land? Yes  No
9. Is the area being cultivated sufficient for food production in sustaining the given family? Yes  No
10. If your answer is “no” why?
- Family size and shortage of land
  - Highly degraded farmland
  - Stony
  - Traditional farming
  - Others
11. If your answer for question No ‘9’ is “no”, how does the household manage to feed their families? List them

### Section -Three

#### Communities' Awareness about Tourism

**Instruction:** There are questions that assess the awareness of the local communities about tourism and tourism related issues. Please circle any of the given letters which you believe appropriate.

12. Do you know anything about tourism?

- A .Yes                      B .No

13. If your answer for question No '13' is "yes", what is the sources of your knowledge?

- A. Media                      C. Friends                      E. School  
B. Seminar, conference D. Other

14. From your observation and your understanding, is tourism important to you?

- A. Yes                      B. No  
Why?

15. Is there any member of your household that involve in tourism activity?

- A. Yes                      B. No

16. Have you ever taken any tourism training?

- A. Yes                      B. No

17. Is there any local, international organization or association that involves in community based tourism activities in your village?

- A. Yes                      B. No

18. If your answer for question No '17' is "yes", is there any change in your life since the organization is established?

- A. Yes                      B. No

If your answer "Yes", list them-----

19. Have you ever engaged in any tourism related sources of income?

- A. Yes                      B. No

20. If your answer for question No "19" is "no" do you have the interest to be engaged in tourism related sources of income in the future?

- A .Yes                      B .No

21. If your answer for question No "20" is "Yes", what are the areas that you want to participate?

- A. Tourist guide
- B. Tourist guard
- C. Hiring pack animals
- D. supplying agricultural products
- E. Selling handicrafts to tourist
- F. Others

**Section –Four**

**Communities' Attitude towards the Role of Tourism**

**Instruction:** the following are statements regarding community's attitude towards the role of tourism. Five alternatives are given for each statement, so make a tick (√) under any of the alternatives that seems convenient to you.

N.B. **Response category;** SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree and SD: Strongly Disagree.

No	To what extent do you agree Or disagree with the following statements?	Response Categories				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Tourism generates income					
2	Tourism promotes cross-cultural exchange (greater mutual understanding respects one another culture)					
3	Tourism provides worthwhile employment opportunity					
4	Tourism promotes the local cultural and historical heritages to other people					
5	Tourism activity promotes the expansion of infrastructures services to the area.					
6	Tourism can improve the life of the local people					
7	Your have enough knowledge about the importance and ways of preserving local tourism resources.					

	In your view, what should be the appropriate role of the local community in tourism	Respondents Categories				
		SA	A	U	D	SD
8	Local people should have voice in decision making process of local tourism activities					
9	Local people should take the leading role as worker at all level					
10	Local people should be supported financially to invest in tourism					
11	Local people should take the leading role in running local business					
12	Local people should play a lion's share in preserving its local heritages					
13	Local people should benefit from the local tourism activities					
14	Local people should own local tourism resources					

N.B. **Response category**; SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree, D: Disagree and SD: Strongly Disagree.

## **Annex -2**

### **Interview guide for focus group discussion /FGD/**

One focus group discussion with two key informants from each kebele has been made on the following points.

1. How do you evaluate the tourism activities of your respective area?
2. What do the Communities have benefited from tourisms?
3. What are the roles of woreda tourism office in mobilizing the community to involve in tourism business?
4. What are the major problems that impede community involvement in community based tourism business?

### **Annex -3**

#### **Interview guide with local tourist guide**

1. What is the name of your tourist guide business?
2. What are the major activities of your business?
3. What are the major achievements and significance of your business?  
to the local community?
4. What are the Supports you got from Woreda regional Tourism office?
5. What are the major problems of your business?

#### **Annex - 4**

##### **Interview guide with Wereda Tourism Personnel**

1. What are the tourism potentials of Gheralta and particularly the study area?
2. What are the major problems of tourism activities in Gheralta?
3. What are the Current C.B.E activities in the study area?
4. Is there any CBE projects at function in Gheralta and in the study area?
5. What are the stakeholders of tourism activities of the study area?
6. What is Woreda's responsibility on community empowerment and capacity development on tourism business?
7. What are the local communities have benefited from the local tourism activities?
8. What are the Weredas tourism investment issues on community based eco tourism?

## Annex -5

### Interview guide with regional tourism official

1. Is there Regional Tourism policy issue on CBE?
2. What are the institutional arrangements of tourism at regional and Woreda level?
  - Regional and Woreda Tourism activities
3. What are the major tourism resources of the region?
  - Exploited
  - not yet exploited
4. How do you evaluate the Current CBE Activities in the region and in the area under study?
5. What are the factors that Impede CBE In the region and in Gheralta?
6. Is there training on CBE sponsored by the regional tourism Bureau?



## **Annex -6**

### **Interview guide with Lodge owner**

1. Why was the lodge opened in Gheralta?
2. What is its significant to the region, woreda and local community?
3. What is Community's attitude towards your lodge?
4. Is it profitable?
5. What are the major challenges and opportunities that the lodge has faced?

## **Annex -7**

### **Interview guide with religious leaders /site guard/**

1. What is the name of the site?
2. What its historical development?
3. What is its current status?
4. Major customers of (domestic and international) of the site?
5. What is its significance to the community?

## **Annex-8**


### **Interview guide with tour operators**

1. What are the opportunities that your tour operator creates to the local community?
2. How do you evaluate the working environment in Gheralta?
3. What is your role in promoting the area as one tourism site?

## Declaration

I the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and all sources of information used in the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Gebretinsae Berhe

Signature: 

Date: June, 2011