



**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
College of Development Studies
Tourism and Development Program**

**Religious Tourism Development: The case of Lalibela town,
Amhara region, Ethiopia**

Berhanu Esubalew

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism and Development.**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June 2013

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Center for Environmental Studies**

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June 2013


DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled: "**Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia**" is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia

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The overall significance of tourism in general and religious tourism in particular has got recognition from different scholars and organizations. However, its development mainly in Africa has faced numerous challenges. Ethiopia is unique and sacred in Africa for the ancient two monotheistic world religions namely Islam and Christianity. The existence of the ancient religions together with traditional African beliefs and their spiritual elements, made Ethiopia most preferable religious tourism destination in Africa. One of the ample religious sites of the country, Lalibela town, is the study area. The objectives of this study entitled with 'Religious Tourism Development: The case of Lalibela town Amhara region, Ethiopia' are identifying the religious tourism development challenges and opportunities, assessing mechanisms that help to promote opportunities and minimize the challenges of religious tourism development, Analyzing the ways in which religious tourism can serve as a tool in conserving heritages, empowering communities and bringing sustainable development. The study is both qualitative and quantitative in its design. Interview, questionnaire non participant observation, and document analysis are the main data gathering tools used in this study. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) and presented through tables, graphs and charts where as the qualitative information were precisely narrated. Accordingly, the findings of the study demonstrated that the town of Lalibela is one of the most impressive religious tourism destinations in Ethiopia. The town is endowed with ample religious attributes. However, there are also challenges influencing the development of the site as the most successful religious tourism destination in the country. These challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town are properly identified in this study. Thus, minimization or alleviation of all identified challenges and effective promotion and utilization of opportunities with proper involvement of the local community would enable religious tourism to be an effective instrument for local community empowerment, heritage conservation and sustainable development in the town as well as the country at large.

Key words: *Awareness, Challenges, Local community, Monotheistic, Opportunities, Religious Heritage, Religious Tourism, Sacred, Sustainable development*

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACTPDB	Amhara Culture, Tourism and Parks Development Bureau
CBET	Community Based Ecotourism Tourism
CBRT	Community Based Religious Tourism
CBT	Community Based Tourism
CCB	Community Capacity Building
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church
ESTDP	Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project
EU	European Union
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IATA	International Air transport Association
LDP	Local Development Plan
LLCTGA	Lasta Lalibela Community Tourism Guiding Association
LTACTD	Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Department
LTTVTC	Lalibela Town Technical and Vocational Training Center
MoCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
RTD	Religious Tourism Development
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
SLMA	Saint Lalibela Monastery Administration
SLTGA	Saint Lalibela Tourist Guide Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TC	Tourism Council
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
WHL	World Heritage List
WYD	World Youth Day



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Tourism is a multidisciplinary subject and has numerous definitions. The most accepted definition provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) says "it is the activity of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, religious and other purposes not related to the exercise of any activity remunerated from within the place visited" (Page, 2009). Since the fifties, the tourism industry has been seen exceptional expansion and the development has never weakened until now (Knyszewski, 2004). The tourism industry's contribution to the world economy has grown so fast that in recent years it has become the leading employer in the world and one of the leading foreign exchange earnings for many countries (UN, 2001). According to the UNWTO (1995) report, there are different motivations for tourism and travel which includes leisure, Visiting Friends and Relative (VFR), professional and business issues, health care, religion and others. Religion has long been an integral motive for undertaking journeys and is usually considered the oldest form of non-economic travel (Smith, 1992).

Religious tourism, one of the oldest tourism types (Vijayanand, 2012), has lots of definitions of different writers and organizations. UNWTO, the most influential intergovernmental tourism organizations worldwide, defined religious tourism as a type of tourism that calls for socially responsible actions by respecting the sacred and through stewardship of sacred sites (2011). This definition has a connotation that religious tourism is responsible and sustainable. Similarly, Esteve (2009) defined religious tourism as a tourist activity through which tourists seek for spiritual grace, looking for the proximity, immersion or contact with the Sacred. Accordingly, it has fundamentally to do with religious beliefs and involves people who mainly want to have a religious experience (Esteve, 2009). The other writer Rinschede (1992) defined Religious tourism as the type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons. Vijayanand (2012) on the other hand articulated religious tourism as

excursions to nearby pilgrimage centers or religious conferences. With the same concept, religious tourism also defined as tourism that is motivated by faith or religious reasons (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005).

As observed in the paragraph above, religious tourism has numerous definitions and is a complicated concept. However, all these definitions can be summarized as the movement or travel of people to churches, mosques and other religious and sacred places for religious purpose either fully or in part. Religious tourism in one or another way is similar with pilgrimage tourism, spiritual tourism and sacred tourism and used interchangeably in many literatures. However, in terms of professional approach, the tourism related to pilgrimage is not homogeneous with that of religious tourism; it is also structured differently in terms of participants, budgeting, products, and length of stay.

Religious tourism today, is one of the most important types of tourism and spread all over the world (Ebrahimzadeh, Kazemizad, and Eskandari, 2010). Religious tourism serves as a tool for socio-cultural and economic development in many countries of the world. It improves the living standard of local communities through infrastructural development, creating job opportunity, generating income and so on. It also plays a great role in creating social solidarity at various levels, and hence is crucial in the maintenance of existing social structures and creation of organization and structure where none existed before. As one of the most sustainable types of tourism in nature, religious tourism helps in conservation of cultural and natural heritages. The UNWTO estimates that 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites each year. Many countries of Europe and Asia are highly manipulating religious tourism sector for their economical and socio-cultural development with 40% and 20% share of the world market respectively. Some of the countries, which are generating a huge amount of income, include Spain, Italy, France, India, and China (UNWTO, 2011).

Ethiopia is sacred in Africa for the two ancient monotheistic world religions: Islam and Christianity. Furthermore, It is a country where all the ancient religions; Christianity, Islam and Traditional African religions are represented. The country has also a long historical tradition of inter-religious tolerance in which all religion followers live in peace and love with each other (Degu, 2012). Moreover, the country is home of ample religious heritages which represent all

religions mentioned. Above all the unique and original Orthodox Christian churches and their attributes like paintings, songs, dances, architectures, colorful festivals and courteous community make the country a religion and religious tourism paradise. Therefore, Ethiopia, having these all resources has a very good opportunity for a sensible development of religious tourism. However, the researcher found that this sector was not well identified, studied and developed in the town of Lalibela as well as in Ethiopia.

Lalibela, a town in Ethiopia, is one of the country's major tourism sites. This town is a religious paradise especially for Orthodox Christians. Because of the immense potentials the town has it could have been a big religious tourism destination and then could be a huge source of income for the local community as well as that of the country. Nevertheless, the opportunities and challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town are not properly studied and identified.

This thesis has identified and explored the opportunities and challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town and its role in local community empowerment, heritage conservation and overall sustainable development of the town as well as the country.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The idea of tourism in general and religious tourism in particular as a big development agent has been maintained for long ago. Religious tourism can have wider longer-term benefits as a local community development agent and lead to a sustained enhancement of cultural and art facilities in the religion (Gil and Curriel, 2008). Thus, this ancient form of tourism has to be developed and managed well so as to enjoy from its countless benefits. It is true that the tourism industry has chronic issues like seasonality, sustainability and sensitivity which can be affected by large external forces like global economic downturns, inflation, currency fluctuations, disease or viruses, political unrest, etc. But, religious tourism is different in that it is less seasonal, more sustainable and less sensitive to the external environment than any other types of tourism. This is because first, within ever changing global political and economic landscapes, religion has retained a significant place as a social movement (Raj and Morpeth, 2007). Second, the religious and faith based market has the advantage of appealing to people from around the world, of all ages and of all nationalities. Third, faith-based travelers are committed travelers that they tend to

save for these religious experiences and travel despite the state of the economy. Lastly, it is a growing business, tourism and travel professionals forecast that this market might be double by the year 2020 (UNWTO, 2011).

More than any other resources, Ethiopia has countless religious attributes from Orthodox Christian monasteries, churches and cathedrals to Islam mosques and shrines. Having these all religious tourism resources, if tourism has to be used as a developmental tool of the country, Ethiopia, it must be the religious type of tourism or religious tourism that should get proper attention in planning, and development activities. However, this was not the case in the country.

Being the home of the eleven rock-hewn churches, which is not available anywhere else in the world, warm and annual colorful religious festivals, enormous religious heritages, and other spiritual values, the town of Lalibela is the magic religious tourism village in Ethiopia. As religious tourism positively influences economic development at religious centers, it could be used as a development tool for the people of Lalibela and the country at large. Nonetheless, the religious tourism potentials and challenges of Lalibela town were not properly identified; mechanisms to minimize or avoid challenges and promote opportunities were not developed; the religious tourism resources were degrading and losing their authenticity; this specific type of tourism was not identified and included in the development plans: the benefits of religious tourism for local community empowerment, effective heritage conservation, and general sustainable development was not observed. Consequently, the site is not generating as much income as it ought to be in that the local community's life could not be changed. To that end, the researcher aimed to propose religious tourism as a tool for heritage conservation, local community empowerment and overall sustainable development of the study area and the country.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The main objective of this study is assessing religious tourism development: opportunities and challenges in the case of Lalibela town, Amhara regional state, Ethiopia.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

On the bases of the general objective, the specific objectives of this study include:

- Identifying the opportunities and challenges of Lalibela town for religious tourism development;
- Analyzing mechanisms that help to promote opportunities and minimize the challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town;
- Assessing ways in which religious tourism can serve as an instrument for religious heritage conservation, local community empowerment and overall sustainable development.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives mentioned above, the following are the basic research questions.

- What are the major challenges and opportunities of religious tourism development in Lalibela town?
- What are the possible remedies to alleviate the existing challenges of religious tourism development?
- How to promote and properly utilize best opportunities of the town for successful religious tourism development.
- How can religious tourism be an effective approach for conserving religious heritages, bringing sustainable development and empowering local community in the study area?
- How is the local community level of awareness and capacity for religious tourism development?

1.5 Scope of the study

The scope of this study was delimited to the identification of religious tourism development, challenges, opportunities, local community involvement, and its role in local community empowerment, heritage conservation, and sustainable development in the town of Lalibela. It is a survey study in the town of Lalibela specifically the two *Kebeles* namely *Kebele* one and *Kebele*

two. Though very recently Na'akuto Leab area was included in the town administration, mainly because of the following three reasons; it was not included in the survey. First, the Na'akuto Leab area is too far from the center of the town and is more of rural area that the influence of tourism is limited. Second, it is not accessible as there is no regular transportation to the area. Third, shortage of finance and time did not allow the researcher to survey the whole areas of the town. In order to assess the religious tourism development: challenges and opportunities and its role for sustainable development in Lalibela town comprehensively, the respondents of the survey were carefully selected. The respondents of this survey include those people who were directly or indirectly engaged in the tourism industry of the Lalibela town like Hotels, Guides, destination managers, domestic and foreign tourists and the local community.

1.6 Limitation of the study

The study and implications drawn out of it are subjected to the following limitations. Because of diverse and numerous stakeholders working in the study area and the sampling method used, non probability purposive sampling which is based on personal judgment of the researcher, most probably there could be some sort of bias on the data gathering instrument distribution. However, the researcher has tried to minimize any possible bias and incorrect information by using multiple data gathering techniques like an interview, non participatory observation and document analysis.

The study also failed to reach the entire area of the town mainly because of limited resources, difficult topography, scattered settlement of the local community, lack of transportation within the study area and suspicions of respondents. Since the case study is conducted on purposefully selected limited amount of households in Lalibela town, the findings have no possibilities to be generalized in other religious sites of the country.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study has numerous relevancies to the existing knowledge mainly in five basic aspects. Firstly, the study provides a clear picture about the general concept and theories of religious tourism development. Secondly, the opportunities and challenges of religious tourism in the study area can be easily and clearly understood in the thesis. Thirdly, it gives insights about the

role of religious tourism in heritage conservation, local community empowerment and sustainable development. Fourthly, the study gives highlight on the participation level of the local community and related issues. Then, the study is also helpful to the governmental and non-governmental organizations, the public and academia, the host communities, destination management bodies, regional and federal tourism offices; to make more effective tourism policies and plans designed to realize the full social and economic potential of tourism in general and religious tourism in particular. Finally, it can serve as an input for further studies on the same or related topics.

1.8 Operational definitions

1. **Community based religious tourism** - religious tourism that involves the local community in deep.
2. **Local Community** - is a group of interacting people sharing an environment, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and a number of other conditions.
3. **Pilgrimage tourism** - religious journey: a journey to a holy place, undertaken for religious reasons.
4. **Religious tourism** - a form of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups exclusively for religious or any other reasons like pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes.
5. **Sacred places** - Special places where the physical world seems to meet the spiritual world. These might be awe-inspiring natural places, sites connected to a god, a saint or a hero, places where miracles occurred, or special buildings consecrated for worship or ritual.
6. **Sustainable Development** - Development that meets the needs of the present stockholders (Industry, community, government, tourists and others) without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

1.9 Organization of the thesis

The whole thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is about 'Introduction' which introduces readers about the background of the research, the problem discussion, research

questions, objectives to be achieved, significances of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

'Related literature' is the heading of the second chapter of this study. It consists of reviewed literatures related to the study. The sources of these literatures include books, journals, published and unpublished papers and electronic materials like websites. The researcher's conceptual framework is also involved here.

'Methodology of the study' is found in the third chapter. It presents, and draws the methodological process of sampling, data collection and analysis. Thus, the research methodology applied in the thesis like method of sampling, sample frame and size, data collecting tools or techniques are briefly discussed.

The fourth chapter is 'Data analysis and interpretation' section. It depicts a descriptive summary of the empirical data collected together with detailed analysis, results and discussion. Different data collected through various techniques are analyzed using SPSS and displayed in tables, charts, and pictures.

The last section, chapter five, is about conclusion and recommendations. Here, the whole thesis is summarized in a short and precise manner. The researcher's recommendations for different stakeholders and functional groups are also listed and described.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition and concept of religious tourism

Travel is the phenomenon of the very antiquity and the reason for travel was diverse and numerous. Religion and religious related matters were some of the reasons why people of the ancient world were traveled. However, tourism with its current basic elements and feature is the very recent phenomenon (Wright, 2008; Gill and Curiel, 2008).

According to UNWTO (2011), Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. There are different types of tourism based on different ways of classification. Based on motivation of tourists, we can identify different forms of tourism like holiday tourism, cultural tourism, social or group tourism, sport tourism, economic tourism, political tourism, religious tourism and so on.

Though religious or spiritual tourism seems to be a newer academic concept but it is certainly not a new phenomenon. Even it is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, form of tourism and the difference between religious tourism and other forms of tourism relies on the religious motivation that is the reason for the dislocation (Wright, 2008). In different books, religious tourism has been stated as spiritual tourism, religious heritage tourism, religious based tourism, pilgrimage tourism, faith tourism, sacred tourism, and so on (Phukan, Rahman, Devdutt, 2012; Petroman, et al., 2011). In fact these pilgrimages and other similar travels are identified with the concept of religious tourism with of course the necessary accompanying explanations (Vukonic, 1998).

Based on literatures assessed, religious tourism has lots of definitions written by different scholars, researchers and organizations. For instance, Esteve (2009) defined religious tourism as a tourist activity through which the tourists seek for spiritual grace, looking for the proximity, immersion or contact with the sacred. The other writer Rinschede (1992) defined Religious

tourism as the type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons. The concept of religious tourism also defined as a form of tourism in which believers travel individually or in groups as pilgrims, missionaries, or for leisure (Petroman, et al., 2011). According to the Wright (2008), religious travel is somehow complex in that it includes travel to a religious destination site (example: trip to the Holy Land); travel with a spiritual intent (example: Christian conference); leisure travel with a fellowship intent (example: Faith-based cruise). Generally, from the above definitions and others it can easily understand that religious tourism is a tourism type or form that is motivated by faith or religious reasons. Accordingly, religious tourism includes all the religions, religious places associated with, emotional attachment to these centers and infrastructure facilities for the tourists (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005).

Based on the criteria of length of stay, there are two forms of religious tourism: short-term without an overnight stay and long term with overnight stay of at least one day. Short - term religious tourism involves limited travel over short distances. The main goal of such tourism is to go to a religious center with local, regional, or super regional area to participate in a religious celebration, a religious conference, or a church meeting. Whereas long-term religious tourism involves visits to religious centers for several days or weeks. It includes the visitation of other national and international religious centers (Rinschede, 1992).

On the other side, religious tourists are those who engage in tourism but do so at religious sites (Stark, 2009). As per the researchers, Ebrahimzadeh, Kazemizad, and Eskandari, religious tourists can be classified into two: pilgrims or travelers and multi- purpose religious tourists. For the first group tourists, their motivation is only the religious affairs that the time and duration of their station do not depend on their acts whereas the second groups do participate in religious ceremonies and visit other touristy places with a priority given to the pilgrimage (2010). Participants of religious tourism do not look for luxury but arduous journeys to meet the divine goal or simple life (Phukan, Rahman and Devdutt, 2012).

Spiritual tourism, pilgrimage tourism and religious tourism are highly related and mostly used interchangeably (UNWTO, 2011; Norman, 2004; Onions, 1983). Spiritual tourism is that type of tourism motivated fully or partly by spiritual or religious values (UNWTO, 2011). Whereas,

pilgrimage tourism is a form of tourism motivated, partly or wholly by religious motives closely or loosely connected with holiday making or with journey undertaken for social, cultural or political reasons over short or long distances (Vijayanand, 2012; Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Petroman, et. al, 2011). The other author Norman defined Spiritual tourism as the travel of tourists who seek out religious or spiritual settings for the purpose of fulfilling their desire to travel, either in whole or in part, and to have some form of religious or spiritual experience (2004). Moreover, religious tourism is closely connected with holiday and cultural tourism. Participants of pilgrimage and religious tourism have a chance to travel to the surrounding area and wonder culture of the local community. It has also a strong affinity with social and group tourism. Religious tourism has political aspects as well (Rinschede, 1992).

2.2 Historical background of religious tourism

Man has been a confirmed traveler since antiquity that traveling has been a characteristic feature of human society and life style. People have always traveled for different reasons some of the reasons for early patterns of travel were basic human needs (finding food and shelter), exchange (trade), relationships with natural phenomena (developing new settlements, escaping droughts or floods etc.) and as a result of conquest and conflict (occupation, expulsion, forced migration and resettlement) (UNESCO, 2006).

There are a range of historic examples of linkages between religion and travel. For instance, Prophet Muhammed's migration (the Hijira) from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. In contrast the Nonconformist church through the emergence of Methodism in England, the organizer, John Wesley traveled over 250,000 miles on hours back to preach sermons (Raj and Morpeth, 2007). Therefore, religion has been a powerful force which has long caused people to travel to religious centers in many parts of the world. Travel due to religious impulses is deeply rooted in the history of mankind as well as in the history of tourism. Their most frequent form pilgrimage are indeed, thought to be predecessors of the modern tourism phenomenon (Vukonic, 1998).

In 1990s marketing specialists use the term pilgrimage in the media to describe non sacred activities such as a pilgrim to a destination for music, ecotourism and other activities. As a result, it was difficult in the Western countries to distinguish between the categories of travelers. Tourists and pilgrims require the same fundamentals of leisure, income and sanction; they also

require the same facilities or infrastructures and another thing that makes differentiation uncertain is the increased privatization of religion in the West (Smith, 1992). Even today, since religion is not identified as a separate visitor category on inbound or outbound statistical collections, making the task of defining and identifying religious tourists is somewhat difficult (UNWTO, 2011).

According to Lefevre (1980), cited in M. Nolan and S. Nolan (1992), faced with the problem of administrating the wide variety of travel destinations associated with their faith, officials of the Roman Catholic church in Europe often use the term religious tourism to describe the system that encompasses a range of holy places, from grandest cathedral to the smallest rural chapel, the service facilities associated with them, and the spectrum of visitors from the devout to the secular. Being a sacred for the three monotheistic ancient world religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism, Palestine is most probably the oldest religious tourism destination (Suleiman and Mohamed, 2011). Today religious tourism is now recognized as a source of diversifying the countries' economy (Vijayanand, 2012). The UNWTO estimates that 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites each year (2011).

2.3 Characteristics and significances of religious tourism

According to Hitrec (1990) cited in Vukonic, (1998) religious tourism has a role in that case of humanist perspective of the tourism of tomorrow. Religious tourism is big business. It is estimated that in the US alone some 25 percent of the travelling public is interested in faith-based tourism. When one adds to this the number of people who travel for faith-based conventions, and faith-based activities such as weddings, bar mitzvahs or funerals, the number become extraordinarily large. World religious travel is one of the fastest growing segments in travel today. Religious travel is estimated at a value of USD 18 billion and 300 million travelers strong. Faith based tourism, although often dominated by group or affinity groups is also gaining ground among the individual leisure travel. Especially among young people (who compose about one third of faith-based visitors) there are a great number of people who seek spiritual aspects to their vacations (Tarlow).

Religious travel is often less prone to economic ups and downs in the market place. Because faith-based travelers are committed travelers they tend to save for these religious

experiences and travel despite the state of the economy. Though most religious travel takes place to religious sites, Faith-based tourism does not have to be built around a pilgrimage site only. Faith travelers tend to have different motives for travel than do travelers for other reasons. For example, the faith-based traveler often travels as part of a religious obligation or to fulfill a spiritual mission. Faith-based travel can provide a steady flow of income to a local tourism economy. The religious and faith based market has the advantage of appealing to people from around the world, of all ages and of all nationalities. Tourism and travel professionals forecast that this market might well double by the year 2020 (Tarlow).

Pilgrimage tourism is now recognized as a source of diversifying the countries' economy worldwide (Vijayanand, 2012). Despite negative factors and forces like terrorism, racism, economic recession and possible self-imposed limitations on travel due to concern for climate change, tourism is and can be a greater force for peace than envisaged by those who think of it as merely a ritual (UNWTO, 2011).

Tourism is spiritually inclined or favorably disposed towards the values of different cultures and is sensitive towards, and cognizant of, differences, has an important role to play in creating social solidarity at various levels, and hence is crucial in the maintenance of existing social structures and creation of organization and structure where none existed before (UNWTO, 2011). Religious tourism also insists the involvement of local communities in the business. In religious tourism, local community is as important as the discerned visitor in protecting and preserving the religious/cultural sites, events and pilgrimages that form the base of religious tourism. According to UNWTO (2011), religious tourism should not be considered as business instead a tool for heritage conservation, local community empowerment, and sustainable development. Besides economic, socio cultural and environmental significances, religious tourism brings a wide and potentially receptive audience to religious sites (Vijayanand, 2012).

2.4 Paybacks of tourism and religious tourism

Generally tourism has great influence on the destination area and host societies. Tourism can be both a source of international amity, peace and understanding and a destroyer and corrupter of indigenous cultures, a source of ecological destruction, an assault of people's privacy, dignity, and authenticity. However, if tourism is properly managed and controlled, its benefit excides its

costs and can be the most effective tool for the overall development of many countries (UNWTO, 2011).

Today, tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. According to recent statistics, tourism provides about 10% of the world's income and employs almost one tenth of the world's workforce. Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, and introduction of new management and educational experience actively affect various sectors of economy, which positively contribute to the social and economic development of the country as a whole.

The benefits of tourism can be seen as socio cultural, economical and environmental categories. Socio cultural benefits of tourism directly or indirectly related to the paybacks to the society and their culture generated because of tourism development. Tourism creates cultural interaction and understanding through which some useful cultural values and qualities can be exchanged. In relation with cultural interaction, education from one another and improvement in the way of life of the community is inevitable in tourism destinations. Tourism also advocates the remote and marginal area local community to participate and engage in different economic activities that could result in self employment, establishing small scale industries and other tourism supporting services. On the other way, the depth and breadth of tourism industry provides job opportunity to the whole range of local community from skilled and semiskilled to non skilled. Furthermore, tourism leads to transfer of technology between hosts and guests that most of the time helps the local community to access technologically developed world. Above all, tourism facilitates local development through improved infrastructure facilities in a tourist destination like electricity, water supply, sewage, communication, government services like security and transportation services. Generally, tourism in one or other way improves the living standard of the neglected and forgotten local community. Enrichment of the existing culture and cultural diversity through promotion, appreciation, and funding for establishment of museums is another role of tourism related with culture. Culture can also be conserved and preserved using tourism as a tool so that many disappearing and degrading cultures can safeguarded in the tourist destination (Phukan, Rahman and Devdutt, 2012; Swarbooke, 2002).

Any activity related to the component of tourism environment has a direct or indirect impact to the general environment. Well planned, developed and managed, tourism can generate important environmental returns. It justifies and pays for conservation of natural resources and wildlife, cultural and historic monuments by way of establishing national parks, preserves, sanctuaries and museums which otherwise may deteriorated or even disappear. Tourists in nature like attractive, clean and non - polluted environment that indirectly promote quality environment and increase the local environmental awareness (Phukan, Rahman and Devdutt, 2012).

Economic benefits are the most widely discussed and well known aspect of tourism industry. Tourism generates income via different forms of tax and other revenues. The money tourists spend in different sectors during their visit and stay has multiple effects in the economy. The tourism industry has a range of sectors or business which provides a variety of employment opportunity. Research shows that job creation in tourism is growing one and- a-half times faster than in any other industrial sector. Foreign exchange, the exchange of one country's currency for that of another country, is one of the most important paybacks of tourism industry. Foreign exchange helps to increase the total travel account and balance of payment of the host country (Swarbooke, 2002).

As one type of general tourism, all the benefits mentioned above are also the returns of religious tourism. Religious tourism, both domestic and international, is a vehicle for change, better, suitable and peaceful life if properly guided by codes of ethics and conduct (UNWTO, 2011). Religious tourism influences the development of the population, settlement, and economy at religious centers (Rinschede, 1992). As religious tourism encompasses pilgrimage, trip to sacred places and other religiously related travels like visitation of religious ceremonies, church meetings, and other religious conferences and organized activities, which may take place annually, or at regular intervals of several years, has very big influence on the overall development of the site. As Rinschede (1992) described, mainly pilgrims have a large influence on the population development of the religious site.

Religious obligations have become a fashionable trend all over the world as a means of expressing beliefs and faith in the ability of God to protect and guide mankind. It would amount to stating the most obvious that Religious practices both under the auspices of Christianity, Islam

and traditional practices have in no small way contributed to the development tourism in the world. It is a known fact the Christian pilgrimages to Israel has formed an economic platform for the empowerment of the localities and contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Also, in the Saudi Arabia, where many Islamic faithful converge twice every year for religious rituals, has been of tremendous economic benefit to the country and her people. With these scenarios and many others around the world, it has become valid that religious tourism can become a source of economic revival to a country and its people (<http://www.tourismandmore.com/people/peter-tarlow/>)

Furthermore, according to Mitchell and Coles (2009), tourism has tremendous advantages in delivering pro-poor growth some of them include the following;

- Tourism is generally labour intensive although less than agriculture and therefore can impact on a large number of lives through the labour market;
- Tourism has considerable potential linkage with other economic sectors;
- Tourism provides opportunities for diversification of economic sectors;
- Tourism can provide poor countries with significant export opportunities;
- It is a catalyst that create initial demand for other goods or service like natural resources and culture, to which the poor often have access;
- Infrastructure associated with tourism development can provide essential services for local communities.

2.5 Festivals and festival management

Events for celebration, sport, business, and fun are universal. They originate from a time before the written history (Getz, 2002). Different types of events, such as festivals, sports events, culture events, political and religious events, are organised in a big number of towns (Larson). Events and festivals are considered as public themed celebrations which include dance, film, music, the arts, crafts, indigenous cultural heritage, sporting events, seasonal rites and agricultural products. In other words festivals are special occasions declared by government, society, religion, or others. By their very nature, events and festivals are of short duration usually in a particular month or season (Jin, 2002).

In recent years, the growth of festivals and special events has been enormous (Getz, 1997). Numerous communities develop festivals and events as leisure and cultural pursuits for residents, as well as for their economic and community development benefits (Getz, 1997; Getz and Frisby, 1990). Furthermore, special events and festivals offer a specific time and place for visitors to celebrate and enjoy others' culture, create cross cultural understanding and widen their knowledge level. By participating in a festival or a special event, a visitor can socialize, escape from everyday routine, enjoy local food and customs, enjoyment of nature and spend quality time with family members or friends. Large numbers of people around the world every year dedicate huge amounts of time and money to attend festivals. In Australia and America, events attract large numbers of visitors and involve huge organization. Though most events and festivals are planned for public occasions and for the enjoyment and relaxation of local communities, they are unique type of tourism and travel attractions. Therefore now a time it is noted that these events and festivals whatever in their type are becoming big business in local communities and destinations. They also involve tremendous amounts of marketing and organization. Many retail businesses depend on them for their success, because when tourists attend events, they shop, eat and drink, which indirectly boost these retail businesses (Shanka and Alamiyo; Jin, 2002).

2.6 Ethiopia and Religion

Mankind, in search of its identity and the reason for its existence, has long sought answers to questions in a series of teachings, beliefs, and dogmas that later gave rise to the different religions that characterize different cultures (Phillips and Carillet, 2009).

Religion is a very complex concept that it has no simple definition, according to Hinnells (1984) cited in Raj and Morpeth (2007), it is a system of recognizable beliefs and practices that acknowledge the existence of a 'superhuman' power that enables people to both address and transcend the problems of life. As Sherratt and Hawkins (1972), Religion is more concerned with unseen forces. Harvey (2000) describes religion as structured, orderly, socially sanctioned ways of reaching out for what people want most (Rotherham, 2007). And the belief is that somewhere beyond the known world there exists a power that can make right the difficulties that appear so insoluble and intractable here and now (Norman, 2004).

Ethiopia is a multi ethnic country that harbors different religious beliefs. The main religions in Ethiopia are Christianity, Islam and traditional African beliefs. Ethiopia is a predominantly Christian country and the majority of Christians are Orthodox Tewahedo Christians, who belong to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. There are also Christians who are Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Christianity - Though, many Ethiopians claim that the Treasurer eunuch, Bacos (Eunuch of Queen of Candace), probably introduced the Christian faith when he returned to Ethiopia from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem well before the fourth century, but Christianity did not become the officially recognised religion until the reign of King Ezana in 341 AD. Christianity began in Ethiopia when two Syrian Christians (Frumentius and Aedissius) came to Aksum and started to tell people about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Frumentius and Aedissius influenced King Ezana, who ruled Aksum in the early part of the fourth century, and successfully converted him to Christianity. Immediately after King Ezana was converted to Christianity, he officially decreed Christianity as the main faith of his kingdom in 341 AD and ordered Frumentius to go to Alexandria where he was consecrated bishop under the name of Abba Selama by the Patriarch of Alexandria in 346 AD. Frumentius (Abba Selama) then returned to Ethiopia and became the first bishop of Ethiopia and founded the Ethiopian Church. Since then Christianity was expanded in the while sections of the country and become the dominant religion. The Church is wealthy in different treasures despite of countless destructions occurred in different times. The Church has also a number of religious festivals highly celebrated by the Church. Some of these include Easter, the most Solomon one, The Timket or Epiphany, the most celebrated festival, Gena or Christmas, Kidus Yohannes or Ethiopian New Year and so on (Phillips and Carillet, 2009; www.ethiopianorthodox.org).

Islam - Islam came to Ethiopia by way of the Arabian Peninsula, where Mohammed began to preach the first of a serious of revelations he had been generated by God through the Angel Gabriel. More specifically, Islam was introduced to Ethiopia in 615 AD when the followers of Prophet Mohammed, including his wife sought refuge in Aksum. According to the tradition, Mohammed asked Aksumite King Aderaz to protect their relatives from persecution in Mecca. The king of Aksum welcomed them, respected their religion and offered them protection. Although part of the group went back to Arabia, many of them remained in Ethiopia and settled

in Tigray being the founding fathers of the Muslim community in Ethiopia (<http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/religion.htm>).

Traditional African beliefs - Paganism or indigenous religious beliefs are widely practiced in Gambella, Southern Peoples' State, Oromia administrative regions. These regions also contain considerable animist communities (<http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/religion.htm>).

2.7 Factors that affect Religious tourism development

The tourism industry plays a vital role in the economy for all of the countries of the world, providing employment, incomes, taxes revenues and foreign exchange (Suleiman and Mohamed, 2010). Religious tourism as any other type of tourism is volatile in nature that anything can affect it. Changes like global economic downturns, inflation, currency fluctuations, disease or viruses, and political unrest hamper religious tourism development. Some other factors that affect religious tourism include political instability, other political obstacles, financial problems, environment and health factors, marketing, services and facilities factors and so on. However, despite negative factors and forces like terrorism, racism, economic recession and possible self-imposed limitations on travel due to concern for climate change, religious tourism is and can be a greater force for peace, solidarity and integrity of the world. Therefore, religious tourism can achieve multiple benefits only through stable economic and political environment. Besides stable political environment, strong financial capacity, frequent marketing activities and availability of facilities and services can enhance the development of tourism in general and religious tourism in particular (UNWTO, 2011; Page and Connell, 2006).

2.8 Religious tourism development in different countries

Religious tourism is one of the ancient types of tourism in the world. However the first international conference on religious tourism was conducted in 1967 in Cordoba, Spain, by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), entitled “Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue of Cultures, Religions and Civilizations”, highlight the sociology of religions in world tourism (UNWTO,2011). Historical documents and prehistoric signs and evidences from the ancient great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt indicate that there were numerous religious trips of the thousands of people from past up to now. In fact, mankind for thousands of years take

long journeys in order to do religious practices Today, the religious tourism is one of the most important kinds which currently has been spread all over the world, and has overcome to weather (climatic) obstacles (Ebrahimzadeh, Kazemizad, Eskandari, 2010). The UNWTO estimates that 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites each year (UNWTO, 2011).

Being the ancient home of the world's three major religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, Palestine is most probably the first center of religious tourism (Suleiman and Mohamed, 2010).

Religious tourism today, according to UNWTO (2011), is dominated by Europe followed by Asia. Out of an estimated 600 million religious and spiritual voyages, 40% were in Europe and around half in Asia. Sustainable development of religious tourism with education and training given their rightful place is the key to safeguarding the vast cultural heritage of the world (UNWTO, 2011).

UNWTO defined religious or spiritual tourism as the type of tourism that include tourism that is motivated fully or partly by such values (religious values), both domestic and international. And is a vehicle for change for the better and can lead to peace if properly guided by codes of ethics and conduct (for tourists as well as managers) that are sourced from religions and social-cultural values derived from religions (2011).

Religion and religious tourism has an enormous influence in the daily life of Asians. Religions have inspired the construction of some of the most spectacular monuments in the region and all forms of art and architecture find expression in them. However, religious tourism has not been fully exploited due to the high sensitivity of the subject, the lack of scientific data and its overwhelming domestic nature.

Religious tourism in Australia, although not internationally renowned for its religious tourism product, there are religious sites and events in Australia that draw international and domestic visitors. For instance the Catholic Church's World Youth Day (WYD) was held in Sydney in 2008 and received over 223,000 registered pilgrims, including 110,000 from 170 nations (UNWTO, 2011). At the same time religious tourism is fundamental in the republic china. Religious tourism is as old as Chinese history and given the rich mosaic of Chinese traditions, culture, monuments and attractions it is not surprising that China possesses a large number of

World Heritage Sites of UNESCO, of which, one third are classified as religious monuments of Buddhist and Taoist origins. The growth of religious tourism is reflected with inbound arrivals shot from 3.5 million in 1980 to 53.05 million in 2008, with reciprocal increases in earnings (UNWTO, 2011).

According to UNWTO report of 2011, the role of pilgrimages in Iran is quite specific to the country as there is a long tradition of visiting shrines (Ziyarat) of which there are many in Iran itself as well as in neighboring Iraq that are revered by the Shies. At the moment Iranian religious tourism is mainly domestic but the authorities launched a 20 Year Outlook Plan in 2005 with the aim of reaching 20 million visitors in two decades. In the other countries of Asia, Thailand, religious tourism is one of the fastest emerging tourism segments. Religious tourism in Thailand is also known as Buddhist tourism. This niche market not only draws international tourists into Thailand, but also boosts domestic travel and contributes significantly to the local economy.

India is one of the well known religious tourism destinations in Asia. According to domestic tourism survey conducted by the Indian Ministry of Tourism in 2002 reported that more than 100 million visitors travelled for 'religious purposes and pilgrimages' and eight of the top-ten ranking domestic tourist destinations were pilgrimage sites. According to the Ministry's Tourism Satellite Accounts, religious tourism segment contributed almost 20% towards the total domestic tourism consumption (approximately INR 2.8 Billion) and this contribution is likely to increase annually. But still India's tourism potential despite a wealth of natural and cultural resources, has not been fully tapped and its performance compared to later entrants like China and Thailand into the world tourism market is poor (UNWTO, 2011).

2.9 Importance of local community participation in tourism development

More recently, France (1998) defined participation as "a process of empowerment that helps to involve local people in the identification of problems, decision-making and implementation which can contribute to sustainable development". Indeed, local participation is one important aspect of sustainable tourism development and it is included in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Principles for Implementation of Sustainable Tourism (Sinha, 2006). In order to increase tourism development in any development areas all stakeholders including local

community should be included. Another possible tactic for better tourism development is establishing capacity building projects so that human resources and institutional capacities are strengthened (Sanchez, 2009).

Community Based Tourism (CBT) this type of tourism has a community-based planning approach (Getz, 1987 cited in Hall, 2008) that emphasizes the role of host community in the tourism experience. According to Addison (2004), cited in Jigang & Juixia, (2007a), the “community-based tourism planning method” has as fundamental principles:

- to allow local community to participate in tourism planning process and exchange information with the planners,
- to provide local residents with the chance to monitor and supervise tourism development,
- to make projects and plans of tourism development mutually complementary.

Generally speaking Community-based tourism represents a win-win scenario, where both community and tourists are benefited. The need of community participation in tourism development and in others fields of activity is a key element recognized by national and international organizations (Sanchez, 2009). To highlight some of the importance of the local community participation in tourism development,

- Conservation: the most nearest and effective body to conserve and preserve any natural or cultural heritage is the local community (Sanchez, 2009);
- Sustainable development: participative and collaborative approach is a key element to achieve a sustainable tourism development (Mair & Reid, 2007; UNWTO,1999);
- Catalyzing effect: participation can build skills in leadership as well as reinforce local institutions while ensuring that local people can achieve broader goals through economic benefits (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).
- Community support: if residents feel that their opinions are taken into account, they will support tourism projects. Moreover, the atmosphere and attitudes towards tourism will be more positive (Beeton, 1998).
- Effectiveness of the planning and management of tourism (Garrod, 2003) and effectiveness of the implementation of investment by the government (Yen & Luong, 2008).

2.10 Community capacity building for tourism development

Many writers accepted tourism as a community development agent that promotes community economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Moreover, many view tourism as an essential tool for economic development, especially in local communities. Tourism also has been one of the most popular strategies for development. Hence tourism development can enhance local and national development (Aref and Redzuan, 2009).

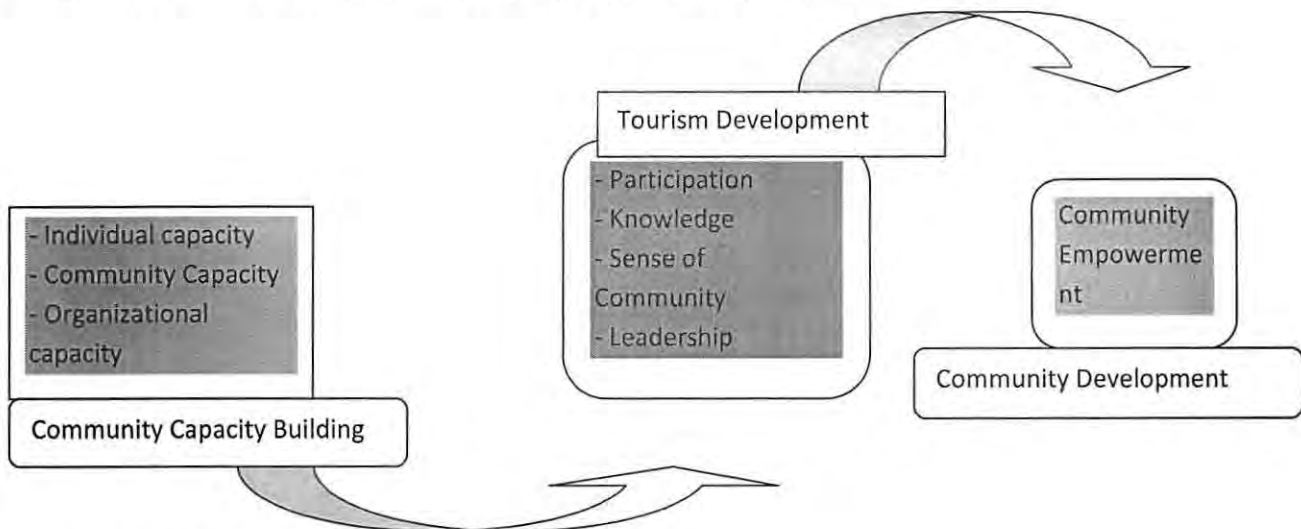
Community Capacity Building (CCB) concerns the development of skills and abilities that will enable local people to make decisions and actions for tourism development (Aref and Redzuan, 2009). In other words, CCB can be seen as the capacity of community residents to participate in tourism activities, both as individuals and through groups and organizations. Furthermore, community capacity is an essential condition for improving the process of tourism development and enhancing its benefit for local communities. Smith et al. (2001) cited in Aref and Redzuan, (2009) describe community capacity building as the essence of community development. It helps communities to improve their ability to participate in the tourism decision making. Therefore, Community capacity building is a process aimed at strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations to develop and sustain conditions that support all aspects of community life (Blackwell and Colmenar 2000; Aref and Redzuan, 2009).

Community capacity building in tourism context can be done in three different levels. They are Organizational, community and individual (Kieffer and Reischmann 2004; Raik 2002) cited in (Aref and Redzuan, 2009). At the individual level implies the development of skills and knowledge that allow individuals to increase the degree of control and influence they have over relevant aspects of their lives. Community Capacity building at the community level reflects the needs to improve power for advocacy and decision making in tourism activities. The process may imply training at the community level. This level refers to informal groups bounded geographically. At the organizational level, community capacity building requires significant changes in the way many helping professionals deliver their services. This level refers to a community organization or set of local organizations (Raik 2002).

Community capacity building plays a central role in tourism development. To illustrate how concepts of community capacity apply to tourism development; look the following figure. The

figure depicts that community capacity building, namely individual, community and organization leads to tourism development and finally to community development. This necessitates improving three community capacities to achieving tourism development (Raik 2002).

Figure 1: Contribution of community capacity building in tourism development



Source: Adapted from: Aref and Redzuan, 2009

Though community capacity building is an important principle for tourism development but it has some limitation. Therefore, capacity building activities or initiatives in local communities must acknowledge and address the many barriers to that capacity building. According to Hunt 2005 cited in (Aref and Redzuan, 2009) some of the constraints include:

- A lack of community participation in tourism development policies
- Power imbalances between governments and local communities
- Lack of tourism knowledge
- Short term funding programmers

Besides all mentioned above, time availability, skills, funding limits, abilities of individuals and groups to collaborate, lack of skilled community development practitioners are major barriers that influence the productivity of capacity building for tourism development. To resolve these limitations improving community knowledge and enhancing community participation in tourism development is fundamental for enhanced community capacity in tourism development (Aref and Redzuan, 2009).

2.11 Religious tourism for sustainable development

Sustainable development can be defined as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Swarbooke, 2002). Whereas sustainable tourism is tourism development which meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (UNWTO, 2011).

Sustainable tourism provides quality experiences for the tourists while protecting the environment and improving the quality of life for local residents (Moscardo, 1998). Another way to think about this is that we should pass on to our children a world that is at least as good, and hopefully better, than the one that we inherited. The concept of sustainability has evolved since the 1987 definition to embrace three dimensions or 'pillars' of sustainable development.

Economic sustainability has a focus on generating prosperity at different levels of society and ensuring the viability of enterprises and activities is maintained in the long-term. While social sustainability has a focus on respecting human rights and providing equal opportunities in society. There is an emphasis on local communities, recognizing and respecting different cultures and avoiding exploitation. Environmental sustainability has a focus on conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable, requiring action to minimize pollution of air, land and water and conserving biological diversity and natural heritage.

Tourism is in a unique position because of the contribution it can make to sustainable development and the challenges this presents. If developed without concern for sustainability, tourism can harm the natural, cultural or social environment. Conversely a sustainable approach to tourism has the capacity to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment (South Australian Tourism Commission [SATC], 2007). According to UNESCO and SATC, the following are 12 principles of sustainable tourism development that consider economic, social and environmental issues relevant to the general development.

Sustainable type tourism should consider local and global environmental impacts of the sector and *minimize negative environmental impacts* at all possible mechanisms. It also should seek to *support the conservation* of natural areas, habitats and wildlife and minimize damage to them. One of the keys to successful and sustainable tourism is achieving a clear sense of difference from other competing destinations. Maintaining and *achieving authenticity* of the original culture, history and environment is the other principal elements of sustainable tourism. *Reflecting community values*, all the past, present and future aspirations of the local community in a living and dynamic way rather than embalming the past or imposing development. *Understanding the broad market* trends and the needs and expectations of specific segments is critical. This involves the development of specialized products based on the inherent attributes of an area. Tourism should try to enhance the appeal of places, likely hood of visitation and the *experience of visitors*. *Adding value* to existing attributes achieves a richer tourism experience and helps to diversify the local economy and make tourism most sustainable. This can include accommodation, sales outlets or dining, in association with established industries. Furthermore, *Having good content ('telling the story')*, *enhancing sense of place through design* *Building local capacity*, and *providing mutual benefits to visitors and hosts* enable the existing tourism more sustainable environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically (UNESCO, 2012; SATC, 2007).

2.12 Lalibela as World heritage site

Most researchers agree that heritage is linked to the past that it represents some sort of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations both in terms of cultural traditions and physical artifacts. Heritage is what elements of the past a society wishes to keep. This shows that heritage is selective to some cultural and natural artifacts. Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generation. Heritages are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They are our touch stones, our points of reference and identity (Russell, 2007).

World heritage sites are places of international importance for the conservations of mankind's culture and natural heritage, and needed to be preserved for the future generation. Sites of cultural and natural significance primarily belong to the local community. However, their importance can encompass a wider regional and national level and their 'Universal Value' makes them exceptional. World heritage sites belong to all peoples of the world, irrespective of the

territory they are located (unesco.org). The principal aims of the World Heritage Convention are to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value (Elene, 2010; UNESCO, 1999).

Until September 2012, the world heritage list includes about 962 properties forming part of cultural, natural and mixed heritage which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value. These include 745 cultural, 188 natural and 29 mixed properties in 157 states. From these 962 properties, Ethiopia has the largest share in Africa by 9 properties with the ratio of 8 cultural and 1 natural properties. these include Simien National Park , Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela, Fasil Ghebbi (Gondar Region), Aksum, Lower Valley of the Awash, Lower Valley of the Omo, Tiya, Harar Jugol, the Fortified Historic Town, Konso Cultural Landscape (unesco.org).

The rock-hewn churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia were one of the first twelve sites to be inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List in 1978. Lalibela is a living heritage. The churches, the ecclesiastical objects and the religious practices constitute an important part of the local community and traditional way of life. The conservation challenge is to safeguard both tangible and intangible aspects of the site in the context of development and town expansion (Elene, 2010).

As a living heritage, the cultural significance of Lalibela consists of a range of values to be preserved, including the rock hewn churches, the sacred ecclesiastical objects and the spiritual practices to the vernacular buildings, the town, the topographic impact on settlements, the cultural landscape and the spirit of the place (Elene, 2010). According to the same author, a wealth of ecclesiastical objects forms an intrinsic part of the churches and the religious practices, ranging from processional crosses, bells, chandeliers of gold and silver, priestly vestment and robes, to church paintings, icons, scrolls and manuscripts. Many date to the period of the churches themselves, such as King Lalibela's hand cross and prayer stick. However, theft and illicit trade in cultural objects remain a critical problem (Elene, 2010). In 1997, the richly decorated golden healing handcross of Lalibela approximately 800 years old was stolen from the Medhane Alem Church, despite security measures. It was smuggled to an antique dealer who

sold it to a Belgian collector for USD 25,000, but eventually returned to Ethiopia in 2001 (European Commission, 2003 in Elene, 2010).

The rock-hewn churches are places of worship and amongst the most significant places of pilgrimage for believers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian Christmas (*Genna*) and the Epiphany (*Timkat*) constitute the most important festivals of the place and these attract large numbers of people each year. These intangible dimensions of the heritage contribute to the significance of the churches as a sacred or religious site (Elene, 2010).

However, according to Assefa (2007) cited in Elene (2010), the Church has suggested that the spiritual value associated with the site is being threatened due to a shift towards a more materialistic and foreign influenced type of culture. This may have an adverse impact on the traditional values of the site in the future, particularly with growing emphasis on tourism, economic development and processes of modernization. As Elene (2010), cultural heritage and world heritage sites in particular are increasingly promoted as a focus for international development assistance. The World Bank and UN agencies have included in their agendas the idea of heritage as a cultural resource for achieving socio-economic development.

2.13 Religious tourism resources in and around the Lalibela town

Ethiopia, as it is described as the land of thirteen months of sunshine, the cradle of mankind, and the source of Blue Nile, is one of African countries which is greatly endowed with both cultural and natural tourism resources. Amhara National Regional State is one of the nine regional states of the country, Ethiopia. The region covers 15% the land size of the country and several of Ethiopia's most popular tourist sites are found in Amhara regional state. Some of them includes the former imperial capitals of Lalibela and Gondar, Simien Mountains National Park include Ethiopia's highest peak, 4,533m Mount Ras Dashen and the country's main concentration of endemic gelada baboon, red fox, and walia ibex. The magnificent Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana and its monasteries with tremendous heritages in it adorn the region (Amhara Culture, Tourism and Parks Development Bureau (ACTPDB), 2011; Mengistu, 2004).

The town of Lalibela, one of the towns in the region, is situated at an altitude of 2480m.a.s.l. in the North Wollo Administrative Zone at about 700 Kms away north of Addis Ababa, 180 Kms northwest of Woldya and 300 Kms from Bahir Dar (Mengistu, 2004; ACTPDB, 2011). The

historic town of Lalibela and its surrounding are most known for their magnificent rock hewn churches and religious environment. These world heritage churches are Monolithic, semi-monolithic and cave types. The rock hewn churches of Lalibela were not constructed- they were excavated. Each church was created by first carving out a wide trench on all four sides of the rock, then painstakingly chiseling out the interior. Most of the churches are monolithic in character and are full of religious treasures. Legend states that king Lalibela was exiled or fled to Jerusalem in fear of persecution from his half brother. Intrigued by the buildings he found, king Lalibela vowed to build a new holly town when he returned. Another legend claims that it was in fact a heavenly vision that Lalibela saw (Phillips and Carillet, 2009). Perhaps king Lalibela was making a deliberate attempt to create a New Jerusalem on African soil, accessible to all Ethiopians that saved the Orthodox Christians from traveling long distance to Jerusalem. These churches took approximately 24-30 years to be completed. It is a very important religious tourism center and most pilgrimages takes place on Ethiopian Christmas. In the pilgrimage, Orthodox Christians from all parts of Ethiopia as well as from all over the world participate in the festivity (Mengistu, 2004).

Francisco Alvarez, the first European to visit Lalibela in 1520 expressed his feelings as, "*What tongue is capable of giving description of them? The one who beholds them will never be able of gaze his fill. His marveling is so great that his heart is never tired of admiring them.*" (Phillips and Carillet, 2009; Mengistu, 2004).

Geographically, the churches are situated in the three groups, divided by a seasonal river called the Jordan. The first groups of churches are located north of the river and comprise Bete Medhanealem (House of savior of the world), Bete Mariam (House of Mary), Bete Meskel (House of the cross), Bete Denagel (House of virgins), Bete Golegota (House of Golgotha) and Bete Debre sina (House of Mount Sinai). Churches of the second group, located to the south of Jordan River are Bete Gabriel (House of St. Gabriel), Bete Amanuel (House of Emanuel), Bete Abba Libanos (House of Father Libanos) and Bete Merkorious (House of St. Merkorious). In the third group there is only one church, Bete Giorigis (House of St. George), standing by itself to the southwest and is isolated from the other churches. All of the churches are connected by a network of passages and tunnels cut out of the pink tuff (ACTPDB, 2011; Mengistu, 2004).

The churches of Lalibela are unique in many ways. They were carved with their architectural elements out of the living solid rock, without joining any piece of stone together. Their refined architectural and aesthetic expressions seem superhuman. They are still places of active and living worship more than 850 years after they were built. More than many other monuments in the world, they constitute a living link with the past. Each one of the churches is different in style and has its own unique features. Four of them are strictly monolithic in structure and have no resemblance with others of their kind in the whole world. They are completely free standing, attached to the rock at the base only. These monolithic churches are Bete Medhanealem, Bete Mariam, Bete Amanuel and Bete Giorgis Owing to their universal outstanding values, the churches of Lalibela have been recognized by UNESCO as part of the world cultural Heritage and included in the world heritage list in September 1978 (Carillet, and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

2.14.1 Highlights of the Eleven Rock-Hewn Churches

1. Bete Medhanealem (House of Redeemer of the world) – It is the first church from the first group that visitors access at the beginning from the main get of the town center. Resembling a massive Greek temple more than a traditional Ethiopian churches, Bet Medhane Alem (Savior of the world) is impressive for its size and majesty. Measuring 33.5m by 23.5m and over 11.5m high, it is said to be the largest rock-hewn church in the world. Some scholars have suggested that the church may have been a copy in rock of the original St. Mary of Zion church in Aksum. Unlike others the roof of Bete Medhanealem is significantly decorated by some architectural elements (Mengistu, 2004).

The feature that makes the church unique is the presence of external and internal columns on all four sides of the church. These columns are 72 in number out of which 34 are external and 38 columns inside which support the gabled roof. Some of the columns had collapsed, however, and they are now replaced by new built up structures.

The internal part of Bete Medhanealem has no decoration but it is very impressive. The interior of the church is dominated by four rows of rectangular pillars, which support the nave and aisles. The interior pillars are ornamented with bracket capitals and are linked to each other by semi circular arches. In the north eastern corner of the interior, there are three empty graves (tombs),

which symbolically represent those of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the biblical fathers. The church is also home of numerous priceless spiritual objects. Among these the Golden Gospel (14thC.) written in Ge'ez, Arabic, and Hebrew languages, and the famous Lalibela cross, Afro Ayigeba are the most precious treasures in this churches. Generally there are three unique features that distinguish Bete Medhanealem from other churches. These are its huge and impressive size, the large number of pillars both inside and outside, and the five aisles plan (Mengistu, 2004).

2. Bete Maryam (House of Mary)- Many believe it may have been the first church built by King Lalibela. The church is connected to Bete Medhane Alem by a tunnel is a large courtyard containing three churches. Bete Maryam, is small, yet designed and decorated to an exceptionally high standard. The courtyard of Bete Maryam has special place in Lalibela because it is used for the sacred dances during the Christmas. In the floor of the surrounding, there is a deep rectangular pool which is locally believed to make barren women fertile if they bathe there and get the blessing of priests. Dedicated to the virgin who's particularly venerated in Ethiopia, this is the most beloved church not only by the local clergy but also by among pilgrims (Carillet, and Phillips, 2009; Mengistu, 2004).

Bete Medhanealem is a rectangular church. The church has three rows of windows better viewed from the outside. The upper rows of windows are undecorated and rectangular where as the lower row windows are decorated with varieties of cross forms which are most interesting. There are more than nine variety of cross forms depicted on the windows including swastika. The presence of swastika design cross on the church surprises many people because they have associated it with the Nazi symbol of the Hitler regime. However, according to (Mengistu, 2004) that swastika was the ancient Persian Symbol of the sun and predates of the Nazi period. There are three entrances at the west north and south sides of the church which gives a cruciform shape to the floor plan. The doorways exhibit Aksumite framework style with carved monkey head corner posts.

The interior of Bete Mariam is the most decorated church in Lalibela. It has earliest frescoes painted around the ceiling and the walls of the church. The columns, capitals and arches are also covered with beautifully covered figures. The paintings are of various types and on some of which a legend on Ge'ez is written to explain the context. The church has a semi-circular gallery on the first floor consisting of seven rooms. At the eastern side of the nave, there is a column

permanently covered in white decorated cloth. There is still no clear justification why the pillar was covered but according to the oral tradition of priests the pillar was covered because the past and the future of the world are written on it and, thus it is difficult to the humans to bear the truth written on it (Mengistu, 2004).

3. Bete Meskel (House of Cross) - Carved into the courtyard's northern wall at Bete Maryam is the tiny semi chapel of Bete Meskel. Four Pillars divide the gallery into two aisles spanned by arcades. It has only one facade facing south. There are ten blind arcades that decorated the entire external part of the church. The arcades are similar with those in the Bete Medhanealem. On the facade of Bete Meskel there are three visible doors that imitate the Aksumite monkey head framework while two of them serve as entrance gates to the church the third one is inaccessible. The visible facade of Bete Meskel has two windows one of the windows has a swastika cross through which a Greek cross is pierced. The interior of the church is small and known for its many relief crosses (Mengistu, 2004; Carillet, and Phillips, 2009).

4. Bete Danaghel (The House of Virgins) – to the south of the Bete Maryam courtyard is the chapel of Bete Danaghel. It is semi monolithic church which is partly projected outside and partly in a cave. Bete Danaghel is the least impressive and roughest from the churches of Lalibela. It has only two doors in the west and north sides and only one false window in the north. This church has limitation of architectural features both inside and outside. The interior of the church is dark and has only four pillars with bracket capitals (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

The church is said to have been constructed in memory of the maiden nuns martyred on the orders of the 4th century Roman emperor Julian in Edessa. There are also another belief by priests who say it is dedicated to the 36 Saint Women who were among the 120 family members of Jesus Christ. There is also another dominant oral tradition which says that the Bete Meskel and Bete Danaghel where intentionally hewn by king Lalibela on the left and right sides of Bete Mariam for his followers. The king was supposed to have offered prayers in Bete Mariam and the men and women followers in Bete Meskel and Bete Danaghel respectively (Carillet, and Phillips, 2009; Mengistu, 2004).

5. Bete Golegotha and Selassie Chapel - tunnel at the southern end of the Bete Maryam courtyard connects it to the twin churches of Bete Gologotha and Bete Debresina. The twin churches appear from outside as one and are usually called together by the local people as Bete kidus Michael. There are windows and simple Greek crosses. There are three essential doorways which has no Aksumite framework a simple arch opening provides a link of Bete Debre Sinai with Bete Golgotha.

Bete Debre Sina (House of Mount Sinai) - The name Bete Debre Sinai is confused with Bete Mikael because the oldest Tabot of Kedemt Mikael (6th C. A.D.) is found in this church. As the source Hesse, 1996 cited in Mengistu, 2004, the tabot was transferred to Bete Debre Sinai in the 12th century because of damage of the earliest church which is now totally disappeared. Bete Debre Sinai is semi-monolithic church that the interior consists of a nave and two aisles which are divided by two pairs of carefully carved and connected rectangular pillars. Bete Debre Sinai displays the usual east west orientation and its sanctuary is placed in the upraised position. Bete Mikael serves as an anteroom to the Selassie chapel, one of Lalibela's holiest sanctuaries. It contains three monolithic altars. One is decorated with a beautiful relief of four winged creatures with their hands held up in prayer; it is thought to represent the four evangelists. The church has got its name from Mount Sinai where Moses had received the Ark of the Covenant from God.

Bete Golgotha (The House of Golgotha) - is a type of excavated church with one worked facade in the western side. Access to the church is via Bete Debre Sinai. The interior of the church is divided in to two by a row of three undecorated cruciform pillars. Bete Golgotha is distinguished by its typical bas-relief figures of Saints carved in to the niches of the walls. The names of the bas-relief Saints are engraved in vocalized Ge'ez characters which read as Kirkos, Giorgis, Yohannes, Estifanos and Gebre Kirstos.

Bete Golgotha is known for containing some of the best early examples of Ethiopian Christian art and some of Lalibela's most important religious treasures such as the prayer stick and hand cross of emperor Lalibela. In the north of the church there is a symbolic tomb of Jesus Christ which displays a bas-relief of the dead savior watched by the angel as the church itself is dedicated to the site of Golgotha in Jerusalem. In the southern corner of the church near to the tomb of Christ there is the tomb of king Lalibela. The Trinity chapel and the tomb of Adam are another mysterious complex of the church. The trinity chapel contains three monolithic alters and

the central one is decorated with beautiful relief of four winged creatures (Mengistu, 2004; ACTPDB, 2011).

To conclude, a number of bas-relief figures, the symbolic tom of Jesus Christ, the tomb of king Lalibela, tomb of Adam, and the Trinity chapel with its three monolithic alters distinguished Bete Golgotha from other Lalibela churches and make it the most secretive and holiest place of all.

6. Bete Gabriel Rufael (House of St. Gabriel) – In the second group churches of Lalibela which symbolizes heavenly Jerusalem; Bete Gabriel is a two story building with unusual windows. Unlike most Lalibela churches its entrance is at the top and is accessed by a small walkway, high over the moat like trench below. Its monumental northern facade is the most impressive. This is another building of Lalibela that display a survival of Aksumite style because pilasters and niches give the impression of breaking the line of the wall in to projections and recesses. It has two doors and five windows. Near Bete Gabriel, there is a curved band of rock rises from the ground and ascends to the roof though it does not give access to the church itself it is locally called "the path to Heaven". The base of the church is filled with water and sometimes the water flow on the floor.

The interior of the church is smaller than its exterior. Its internal part is properly carved and divided by arched pillars. The three Latin crosses incised in to the wall are the only decorations displayed in Bete Gabriel. Some people including archeologists argue on the original purposes of the building. According to them the building was not originally intended to serve as a church. These people have suggested that before the conversion of the building to church, it might have served as a residence of the Royal family, a secular assembly hall or a treasury (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

7. Bete Merkorios – It is the most seriously damaged cave like rock hewn church in Lalibela. It had partially collapsed and was repaired in 1989. It is reached via a long, narrow and pitch-black tunnel that starts from Bete Gabriel-Rufael. Bete Merkorios is irregularly shaped that pillars supporting the roof are rough and unequally spaced. Totally there are 20 pillars out of which eight are in the facade and other 10 are found in the interior of the church while the remaining two are fallen apart outside.

The interior walls of Bete Merkorios are poorly decorated with three beautiful frescoes thought to represent the three wise men. With their little flipper hands and eyes that look askance, they are delightfully depicted; it many date from the 15th century. The 12 apostles are also represented in a less attractive fresco, probably of a later date. The church is dedicated to a Martyr of Rome, St. Merkorios, which recalls the contact of early Christian Ethiopia with the Roman Empire. However, according to some people, the original purpose of the building was not for the church rather a hall of audience, or assembly or a court of justice (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

8. Bete Amanuel – Freestanding and monolithic, this is considered one of the Lalibela's most finely carved churches. It perfectly replicated the style of Aksumite buildings, with its projecting and recessed walls mimicking alternating layers of wood and stone. It is the only rectangular purely monolithic and carefully hewn church of the second group churches. Its external walls are generally well ornamented by horizontal and vertical carvings.

Bete Amanuel is three story building with three row windows and three doors. The lower windows are cross shaped those of the middle are arch arched with capitals and the upper ones are squarer headed. The interior of Bete Amanuel has four complete and four three sided pillars. The most striking feature of the interior is the double Aksumite frieze in the nave. Some people still thought that it was used by the royal family as their private chapel during the reign of Emperor Lalibela (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

9. Bete Abba Libanos – located southwest of Bete Amanuel is hewn into the rock face and is unique among Lalibela's churches in that it is a hypogenous church. Like Bete Amanuel, many of its architectural features, such as the friezes, are Aksumite. The church is said to have been constructed in a single night by King Lalibela's wife, Meskel Kebra, with a little help from angels. The roof of the church is not separated from the rock but a tunnel detaches the other four sides. Bete Abba Libanos has three doors and three rows of windows. The bottom row windows display the Aksumite monkey head frames and have cross shaped openings where as the upper ones are square false windows and the middle ones are oval. (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

10. Bete Giyorgis (House of St. George) – Resting all on its own, south & west of the northwestern and southeastern groups, is Lalibela's masterpiece, Bete Giyorgis. It is an isolated

beautiful monolithic church in the rectangular courtyard. In the wall of the courtyard there are burial niches, small round caves and chambers. Unlike any other churches in the Christian world, Bete Giorgis has a cruciform shape from top to bottom.

Bete Giorgis is decorated by two rows of windows. The Aksumite style nine windows of the bottom row are blind where as the twelve windows of the row have give arches and bracket capitals. As usual Bete Giorgis has three doors in the west, north and south. The most interesting feature of this church is that the thickness increases step by step downward. The architecture is also sophisticated in that the horizontal bands of moldings of the exterior walls correspond to similar bands of moldings of the exterior walls correspond to similar bands in the interior. The interior of Bete Giorgis is simple cruciform, highly decorated and properly carved. It has no free standing pillars instead the arches are supported by four three sided pillars with corbels. The dome, the arches and the four high relief pillars are very harmoniously planned and carved. This church is dedicated to the popular Martyr of Ethiopia. Cruciform plan, proper orientation, harmonized proportion and decorations both inside and outside are unique features of Bete Giorgis (Mengistu, 2004; Carillet, and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011).

2.14.2 Churches around Lalibela

Besides those internationally well known eleven rock hewn churches of Lalibela there are numerous eyes catching religious tourism centers. To mention some of them Yimrhane Kristos (42 km north east of Lalibela), Geneta Mariam (22km south east of Lalibela), Asheten Maryam, Ne'akuto Le'ab (6km from Lalibela), Emekinna Medhane Alem, Emekina Lideta Mariam, Bilbaba Goirgis, Bilbala Kirkos, Sarzina Mikael, Arbatu Ensessa, Kenkenit Mikael, Abune Yoseph, and Tirkuza Kidane Mihret (Carillet and Phillips, 2009; ACTPDB, 2011; Mengistu, 2004).

2.15 Holydays and Religious festivals

Ethiopia stages a number of religious and public festivals throughout the year. Most of these festivals and holidays are associated with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. Being most known religious center, the celebration of religious holidays are very colorful in Lalibela town. The Holiday is given special prominence at Lalibela for the day matches to the birth day of

Emperor Lalibela who is Known for his holy deeds and left one of the most priceless imprints behind. Timket (Epiphany) is the other colorful holiday at Lalibela (Elene, 2010). Christmas (Gena), every Jan. 7, Epiphany (Timket), every Jan. 19, Easter (Fasica) falls either in the months of March or April, the Ethiopian New Year (Kidus Yohanes) every September 11 are the most important colorful celebrations of Lalibela.

Genna - is a particular impressive religious festival which falls every January 7 and celebrated throughout Ethiopia. However, Genna in Lalibela is very hot and colorful because King Lalibela was born in the same day of the birth Jesus Christ. This most interesting religious festival is carried out in the church of Bete Mariam and its enclosure. Besides all what makes the Genna ceremony unique in Lalibela are the dancing priests, chanting the hymns of the holiday to commemorate the birthday of Jesus Christ. The special hymn of the day is known as *Beza Kullu* (it means the Redeemer of all). The dance is said to symbolize the praise made by Angels and the shepherds at the night of Christmas (Mengistu, 2004; Elene, 2010).

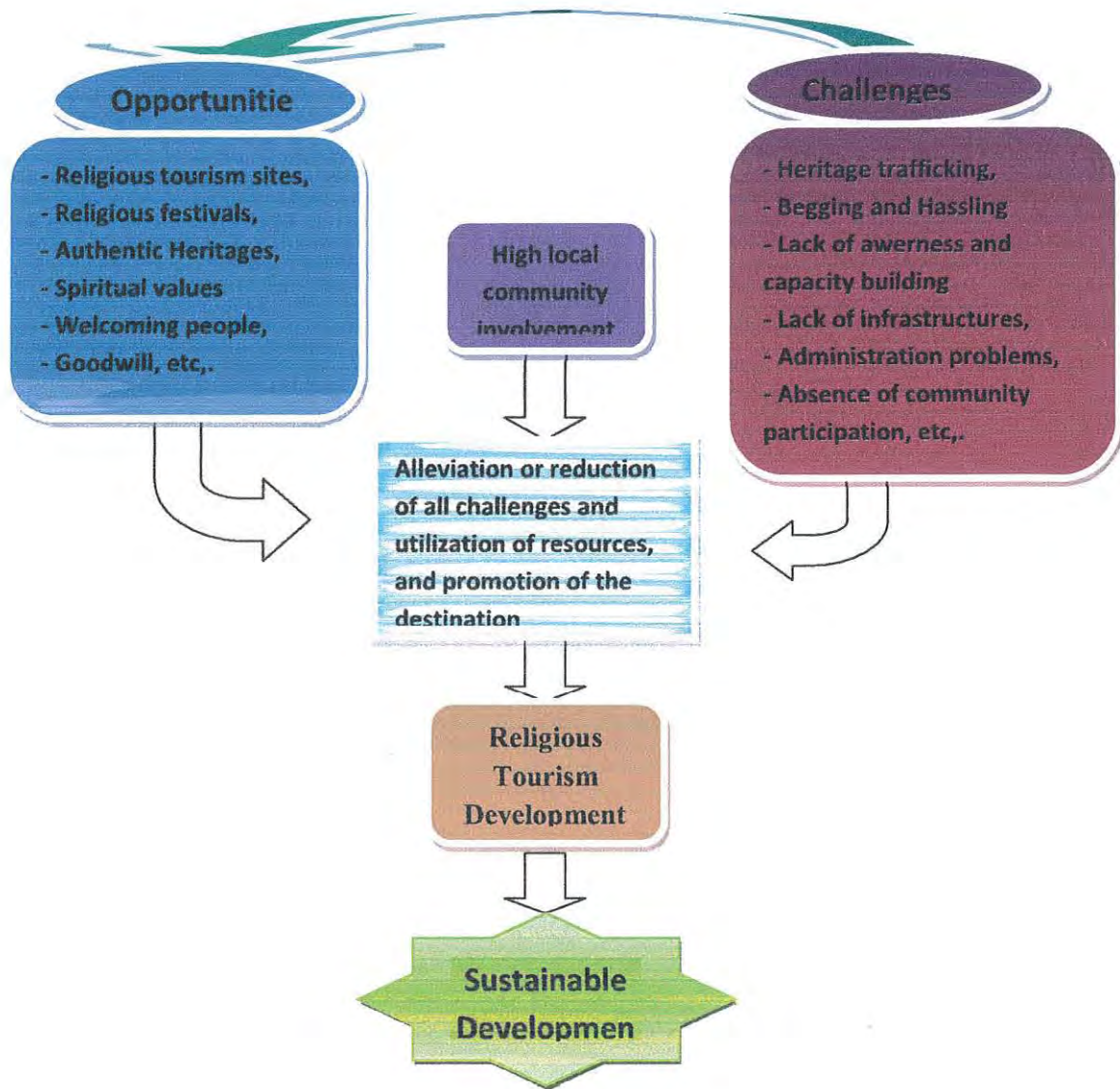
Timket - Is also very warm religious festival in Lalibela second only to Genna. Only two weeks after the Ethiopian Christmas, Timket is celebrated country wide. Timket celebration begins from the eve when the holy Tabots (replica of the Ark of the Covenant) are removed from each church and taken to an area where there is natural or manmade water body. On the day of Epiphany the Tabots are then processed back to the churches accompanied by warm spiritual and secular singing and dancing. Like Genna, the ceremony of Timket has its own special dances with the rhythmical beats of systrums and drums (Mengistu, 2004; Elene, 2010).

2.16 Conceptual Framework

Based on literatures reviewed above, the researcher developed the following conceptual framework discussed in Figure 2 below. Figure 2 illustrates the most important elements for religious tourism development and finally sustainable development. This conceptual model shows the relationships between factor variables like opportunities, challenges, local community involvement, and dream outcomes of Religious Tourism Development and finally sustainable development. The concept in the framework is proper alleviation of problems or challenges of religious tourism, besides effective utilization and promotion of potentials or prospects with

active participation of the local community, leads to better development of religious tourism and consequently leads to sustainable development.

Figure 2: Researcher's Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher's survey, 2012/13

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Description of the study area

➤ Geographical setting

The town of Lalibela lies within North *Wollo* Administrative Zone of the Amhara regional state. Administratively, before 2006, Lalibela was under Bugna *woreda* and later it was under Lasta *woreda* and very recently, the town of Lalibela began to be governed under the municipality of the Lalibela town administration of Lasta *woreda*.

Geographically, Lalibela is situated at 12⁰02'034"N and 39⁰02'611"E, at an altitude ranging from 2430 - 2550 m.a.s.l. The town is 700 km far from Addis Ababa. Except few parts in the West bordered by Meket *woreda*, the Lalibela town administration is entirely bordered by Lasta *woreda*. The northeast of the town of Lalibela is Mount Abune Yoseph, 4190 m.a.s.l., one of the dominant features of the northern half of the western Ethiopia. The south east of Lalibela is followed by the head water of Tekeze River.

➤ Climate and Vegetation

Based on the source obtained from Lalibela town administration information office, the town of Lalibela has three climate zones which include *Dega* (13%), *Woina Dega* (42%) and *Kolla* (45%). In most of the year, the climate is warm and dry. There are two rainy seasons i.e., *Keremt* (winter) and *Belg*. *Keremt* is from June to September and *Belg* is from February to April. But the whole area in and around Lalibela have exposed to shortage of rain. The temperature of Lalibela town varies between 27⁰C and 18⁰C.

The majority of Lalibela and its surrounding are devoid of vegetation except small patch of bushes and shrubs. Elsewhere the tree cover except the bushes has gone and has left rocky eroded surface. But a few sparsely distributed bushes on some places and indigenous trees dominated junipers in the highlands are kept in and around the churches and monasteries. In habituated areas, sparsely distributed eucalyptus trees are available. Based on the information from Lalibela town administration information office, long and continuous human habituation,

extensive agricultural expansion, over grazing, cutting trees for firewood and construction are the general factors for the depletion of the vegetation as well as environmental degradation of Lalibela town.

↓ Settlement pattern and socio economic profile

Lalibela town administration includes two urban *kebeles*; namely *Kebele* one and *Kebele* two but very recently Na'akuto Le'ab area is included in the town administration. The medieval town of Lalibela seems to have been established taking the rock churches of Lalibela as a hub. The church compound consists of three groups of churches and trenches, which connect them together. All of the three clusters of churches are located at the center and communities are habituated surrounding them. The settlement pattern of the population of Lalibela is dispersed one with *tukuls* or huts and few modern buildings, scattered over the landscape. These homesteads mostly organized in to parishes (locally known as *sefer* or *gots*) some of the *sefers* of Lalibela town includes Ne'akuto Le'ab, Chifrgoch, Geterige, Shimbrima, Adebabay, Adish Adai, Kurakur, Abay wiha, Work Dinga, Sebat Woira, Kedemit and so on. In those households, the families are composed of mostly the nuclear family. In terms of their spatial distribution, the majority people are settled on selected flat topped hills and long and jagged ridges which have a commanding view in the surrounding topography.

Besides agriculture, the community of Lalibela town earns their income from tourism sector. Tourism is the major potential source of income for the inhabitants. Based on the information obtained from Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Department (LTAICTD), almost 85% of the community of the town is dependent on tourism industry whether directly or indirectly. Huge number of the community lead their life in tourism and related activities like tour guiding, souvenir selling, hotel trade, employment in hotels, and even hassling. There is also an increase in the number of visitors as well as gross income in Lalibela in each year. For instance, according to information from Saint Lalibela Monastery Administration (SLMA), number of international tourist arrivals was only 14, 184 in 1996, and it raised to 24,000 by the year 2001. This resulted in considerable employment and income, for example, the church alone has employed over 1,190 individuals in Lalibela, whose wellbeing (and that of their families') is dependent on the income from the tourists and tourism.

Despite the volume and value of tourism is growing, it is evidently not large enough to provide all the extra jobs that are required by the town's growing population. Above all there is no fair distribution of income from the sector. The local church community (priests and their family), tour guides, musicians and other service rendering institutions in the area were the sole beneficiaries in the sector. There was particularly lack of artisanal manufacturing or commercial agriculture in the area that would make the majority of the society beneficiary from tourism.

In terms of Religion, Lalibela is seen as a very holy place by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and its influence is considerable. About 98% of its population are adherents of Orthodox Christianity, whereas the remaining 1.68% of the inhabitants are the followers of Islam and other Non-Orthodox believers. Almost all inhabitants in and around Lalibela are *Amharas* who speak Amharic language (Lalibela Town Administration Information Office).

Figure 3: Map of the study area



Source: The researcher and Google Map, 2013

3.2 Research design

The nature of the study problems most often dictates the methodology of the study (Creswell, 2003). The research strategy chosen for this study is a descriptive survey so as to examine the various aspects of religious tourism development in the study area such as opportunities and challenges. Here, the study implemented methodological pluralism (i.e., combination of different data collection techniques), whereby both qualitative and quantitative research designs are

employed in the study in order to augment and enhance the study. "Such methods are helpful to find adequate information and to get individual, group and institutional views" (Yeraswork, 2000: 296).

3.3 The study population

The subjects on focus of this study were local communities living in the Lalibela town, destination management bodies, religious leaders, hoteliers, hotel managers, tour guides, LTACTD, Lalibela town Police office, the town mayor office, municipality office, domestic and international tourists, Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP) Lalibela area organizers.

3.4 Research Instruments

This research work was basically dependent on primary and secondary sources of information. Therefore, so as to collect those primary and secondary data, the researcher employed different instruments in the study. These instruments include questionnaire, interviews, non-participatory field observations, analysis of documents and audio-visual materials.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The researcher has distributed self administered questionnaire to the local community living within the Lalibela town mainly in *kebeles* one and two. The English version questionnaire was translated into Amharic, the mother tongue of the local community and disseminated on the convenience and purpose bases.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts, containing close-ended and open-ended questions. The first part contained a set of questions that are used to capture general information regarding respondents' gender and occupation. The second part is the main body of the questionnaire which has five different sections. The first section consisted of questions designed to assess community awareness, capacity building, involvement and benefit sharing of the local community. The second section is about barriers that influenced the local community participation in the religious tourism activity of the town and possible measurements or solutions. The third section comprised of questions about the religious heritages' conservation status and local community participation in the conservation process. The fourth section of the

questionnaire dwelt with questions asking the benefits the local community has obtained whereas the fifth section was on potential and actual challenges and opportunities of religious tourism development. In the sections one and three of main body of the questionnaire the attributes were measured through the Likert - scale ranging from one (1) – Strongly Disagree, two (2) - Disagree, three (3) - Neutral (neither agree nor disagree), four (4) - Agree to five (5) – Strongly Agree. The researcher has provided all the necessary assistance to the local community respondents in the case of Likert - scale and other type questions.

3.4.2 Interview

To support the study with detailed and accurate information about the problems, besides questionnaire, semi structured interview mainly face-to-face interview and telephoning were used. Very intensive semi structured interview was conducted with key informants like higher officials, coordinators and managers from associations, governmental bodies, nongovernmental organizations and private sectors operating at the destination. Moreover, a significant number of domestic and international tourists who visited the destination during the survey was interviewed.

From the governmental sectors, higher officials working in LTACTD (Promotion and Advertisement unit, Heritage conservation and maintenance unit and Tourist service coordinator unit) were the main focus of the interview. Officials from Lalibela Town Municipality Office (Investment support and control unit, town sanitation and development unit, and the head of the municipality) were also interviewed so as to obtain important information about the town sanitation conditions investment, and other issues. Lalibela Police Office (the officer) was also part of the interview for more detail information on the security and related issues in the town. Beside all mentioned above, Lalibela mayor office (Vice mayor), was interviewed on the overall tourism development conditions, plans, projects and other related issues.

Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP) officials were the only nongovernmental organizations interview was conducted with. SLMA (general secretary) and the Lalibela World Culture Center coordinator were also interviewed on the issues they were concerned.

The associations working on tourism areas like tour guide associations and handicraft associations were also part of the interview. Thus, interview was conducted with the coordinators of Saint Lalibela Tourist Guide Association (SLTGA), Lasta Lalibela Community Tourism Guiding Association (LLCTGA) and Saint Lalibela handicraft making and selling association.

The more detailed interview was also carried out with private business owners and managers. The owners and managers of businesses operating in the study area like hotels and souvenir shops were interviewed. Some of the names of these businesses include Lal Hotel, Aleif Hotel, Yimreha Hotel, Tikull Village Hotel, Roha Hotel, Mountain View Hotel, Bete Abraham Souvenirs, Ethiopia gift shop, Moges Souvenirs and so on.

The last group with whom interview was carried are domestic and international tourists. Domestic tourists and international tourists from different parts of the world were interviewed about their experience in visiting religious sites, their feelings about Lalibela, problems they faced during their tour and they think need improvement, and possible solutions.

3.4.3 Non participatory observation

The researcher also used non-participatory field observation. Observation was on the rock-hewn churches, treasure houses, museum, the entire town infrastructure, waste disposition systems, and local community living styles. The observation helped the researcher to notice additional information about the problem and to get a firsthand experience with locals, religious -tourists and heritage conservation agents.

Document analysis on religious tourism, heritage conservation, history of Lalibela, sustainable tourism, and other related cases was also conducted. Minutes, journals, articles, books and other published and unpublished sources were assessed so as to supplement the study with more evidences.

3.5 Sampling techniques and sample size

Non probability purposive and convenience sampling were employed in order to select samples for the interview from different concerned stakeholders of the study area. Therefore, semi structured in depth interview was forwarded to a total of forty eight (48) different subjects. It incorporate three(3) experts of Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Department,

two (2) experts of Lalibela Town Administration Municipality Office, one (1) Lalibela town police officer, two (2) priests or monks of the Lalibela rock hewn churches, two(2) coordinators of tour guide associations, seven (7) Hotel managers and hoteliers, two (3) souvenir shop sellers and owners, one (1) handicraft association leader, one (1) Lalibela town vice mayor, twelve (12) international tourists, five (5) domestic tourists, six(6) tour guides and one (1) Lalibela town world culture center coordinator.

For the questionnaire provided to the local communities, non probability, purposive and convenience sampling were applied to select a total of one hundred forty five household sample size. Non probability purposive sampling was preferred basically because of the following reasons. First, since Ne'akuto Le'ab area is included in the town administration recently, the exact number of the population of the town during the study was not clearly known. Second, it was difficult to reach all the community with very limited resources (finance and time) and highly scattered population settlement in a very difficult geographical setup. And at last, it was more suitable to produce a sample that the problem more concerns as the study mainly focus on identifying challenges and opportunities of religious tourism development.

Similarly many researchers and writers advise non probability sampling in some situations like when the population may not be well known; when there may not be great interest in drawing inferences from the sample to the population and when there is limitation in time and money (Michael, 2011; Denscombe, 2003; Dattalo, 2008; Kothari, 2004).

Samples were selected based on the criteria like involvement in any tourism activities, literacy level, area of settlement (near or far from the hub of the town), position, profession and respondents' reference purposefully to attain the objectives of the study. Accordingly, a total of one hundred and forty five samples were selected and asked to fill the questionnaire on convenience base. A sample size of one hundred and forty five households was enough to attain the objectives of the study. Furthermore, the researcher could not add more households because of scarce resources at hand (finance and time). Out of the total 145 purposefully disseminated questionnaires, only 135 were properly collected and 130 were computed and analyzed. The researcher could not collect the remaining ten because of mainly respondents' problems and five were discarded since they were not properly answered and filled.

Table 1: The response rate of the questionnaire

Variables	Number	Percentage (%)
Unreturned questionnaires	10	7%
Rejected questionnaires	5	3%
Useful questionnaires	130	90%
Total	145	100%

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

Once the relevant data for the study was collected, the next step was analyzing it using different methods. After reviewing and counting the filled questionnaires, the number of returned, unreturned, valid and invalid questionnaires were identified. Then valid quantitative data were coded, entered, processed and analyzed using the software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). During the analysis process, for Likert scale questions, values were assigned ranging from (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral, (4) agree to (5) strongly agree. Whereas, for questions with 'Yes' or 'No' alternatives 1 (one) and 2 (two) were the values of 'Yes' and 'No' respectively. The statistical analysis applied includes mainly descriptive statistics such as cross tabulation, explore, ratio, frequency, Percentage, Mean and others. The results were presented using narration, pictures, tables, and charts.

Similarly, the qualitative data obtained from questionnaires, key informant interviews, non participant observation and review of documents were analyzed and presented using narration, pictures and tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the previous chapters the research background, problem statements, related documents, research method, and other crucial elements of the research are discussed in detail. Therefore, this chapter focuses on discussing the research findings of the study to answer the research questions and provide conclusion and recommendations.

4.1 Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents

4.1.1 Sampled household characteristics

The Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents of the questionnaire are shown in the table below.

Table 2: Cross tabulation showing the socio demographic background of respondents

Occupation	Gender of respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Agriculture	7	0	7
Hotel employee	17	4	21
Souvenir selling	10	2	12
Tour guide	13	0	13
Tour operation	1	0	1
Church employee	6	0	6
Hotel trade	3	1	4
civil servant	25	4	29
Other	23	14	37
Total	105	25	130

Source: the researcher's own survey 2012/2013

The respondents of this research questionnaire were Lalibela town local communities. As it can clearly be observed from the data in table 2 above, out of the sample size 130 surveyed about 105 (81%) were male while the remaining 25(19%) were female respondents.

With regard to respondents' occupation, they were from different professional areas. It includes agriculture 7(5.4%), hotel employees 21(16.2%), souvenir sellers 12(9.2%), tour guides 13(10%), tour operators 1(0.8%), church administration employees and priests 6 (4.6%), hotel owners 4 (3.1%), civil servants 29 (22.3%) and others 37 (28.5%). 'Civil servants' here includes people who work in different sectors of the government offices whereas, the 'others' includes students, Supermarket employees, nongovernmental organization employees, laundry workers, micro and small organization members, police and security, small shopkeepers, weavers, bar employees, electronics operators, Internet service providers, private employees, retired peoples, health officers, Airport employees, taxi drivers, private consultants, Ethiopian Airline employees, and those who have no formal job.

4.2 Community awareness and capacity building on religious tourism

The awareness of the local community on tourism in general and religious tourism in particular and capacity building activities conducted by different organizations to build the overall capacity of the community, are to be discussed below as basic elements of religious tourism development.

4.2.1 Community awareness on religious tourism

The awareness level of the local community on tourism and its benefits was assessed and is discussed as follows. According to the survey, the majority of the respondents have sufficient knowhow on tourism and or religious tourism with a mean value of $M = 4.14$. Though most of the respondents replied as they have sufficient knowhow on tourism and its all round benefits, most interviewed key informants from different sectors like LTACTD and ESTDP raised community's lack of knowledge on tourism as one of the challenges of religious tourism development in the study area.

It has often been pointed out that knowledge is a fundamental factor for the future development of firms and society in general. Knowledge and competences are important factors because knowledge and competencies are a precondition for maintaining or obtaining a competitive advantage (Jensen, 2003). However, according to some other respondents and researcher's observation, not only the local community, but also tourism investors, administration officials, and the so called experts working in different tourism sectors, and even guides lack basic understanding on tourism in general and religious tourism in particular. As per the views of

Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Department (LTACTD) staffs, most people of the town working in different governmental and private organizations understand tourism as *'just a source of money'*. And other aspects of tourism mainly socio cultural, and environmental benefits and costs are not known or denied attention. As a result of this and other reasons, tourism could not generate the expected amount of multidimensional benefit to the local community, the town of Lalibela and the country. Most interviewees and respondents also believed that good understanding and behavioral change on tourism could be a key to solve any challenges that the sector would face in its progress. Therefore, they suggested education and frequent training on tourism for the local community, tour guides and administrative peoples as a solution.

4.2.2 Awareness implementation

Updated awareness and its proper implementation into the real world day to day activities add the quality of work performed. It is more worthy especially in travel and tourism industry and its principles as the industry is more complex, dynamic, sensitive, perishable, and seasonal in nature. Table 3 below shows the tendency of the local community in implementing the awareness they have or shared in their life.

Table 3: Mean showing the attitude of respondents on awareness implementation

Variable	Relative agreement	Frequency	Percent
I put all the awareness on tourism or Religious Tourism given from government into practice.	Strongly disagree	10	7.7
	Disagree	18	13.8
	Neutral	17	13.1
	Agree	55	42.3
	Strongly agree	30	23.1
	Total	130	100.0
	Mean		

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

As it can clearly be observed from the data in the table above, the mean value which measures the relative agreement levels of the respondents is $M = 3.59$. The mean value $M = 3.59$ means a higher proportion of the respondents implements their experiences, knowledge and information they shared in practice. As it can be observed from the table above, 7.7% and 13.8% of the

respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively where as the larger proportions of the respondents said strongly agree (23.1%) and agree (42.3%) and the remaining 13.1% were neutral. Thus, though the community had limited awareness and information on tourism, they were willing and ready to implement their knowledge and experiences.

4.2.3 Community capacity building undertaken

Community capacity building is widely acknowledged as an important tourism development strategy. Building capacity of communities to effectively address problematic issues and planning of community development is often required to analyze the current status of community development with respect to tourism development. Community capacity building is a necessary ingredient for success of community development. Thus, tourism development and building the capacity for local communities need to progress hand in hand. Community capacity building programs help underdeveloped communities to improve their ability to participate in the tourism decision-making processes. They encourage community involvement, and provide the kits that enable them to do so (Raik, 2002; Aref and Redzuan, 2009).

A. Awareness programs

Table 4: Provision of awareness creating programs on religious tourism expressed using mean

Variable	Relative Agreement	Frequency	Percent
There is awareness program given by different bodies on tourism in general and Religious tourism in particular.	Strongly disagree	30	23.1
	Disagree	24	18.5
	Neutral	34	26.2
	Agree	34	26.2
	Strongly agree	8	6.2
	Total	130	100.0
	Mean		

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Table 4 above depicts whether capacity building programs like awareness creating activities and others were provided by governmental or nongovernmental organizations to the local community so as to build their financial, technical and awareness limitations. As shown in the table above, the mean value is $M = 2.74$. Though 26.2% of the respondents were neutral, the mean value 2.74 which is below the average three (3) indicates that most respondents had no chance to get awareness creating seminars or trainings. In other words 23.1% and 18.5% of the respondents

were strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively but only 6.2% were strongly agreed and 26.2% were agreed.

In fact, here we cannot deny the big figure 26.2% proportion of respondents who were agreed with the statement as they had a chance to participate in awareness creating programs. But according to the information from the LTACTD and ESTDP, so far training on tourism issues was given to those people who directly work in the tourism principal sectors. That means for those hotel employees, tour guides, souvenir sellers, handcraft workers and so on. Since the respondents of the survey were also from the tourism principal sectors, those people who agreed perhaps were from those areas. Generally speaking, according to the survey there was obviously lack of awareness creating programs or projects purposefully designed to address the general community. As per the interviewee trainings could have been provided by governmental bodies like LTACTD, Lalibela Town Technical and Vocational Training Center (LTTVTC), invited tourism professionals or any other Nongovernmental organizations like ESTDP.

As agreed by many researchers, awareness creation and general capacity building activities are the main tools of local community empowerment and development (Raik, 2002; Aref and Redzuan, 2009). However, these two keys that are important for the general development of the community as well as the country are totally neglected in most developing countries. As said by most interviewed key informants, there is a lack of awareness creating training for local communities. Here below is the direct English version of one of the respondents' view on awareness of the local community and absence of awareness creating programs and trainings. *"Everybody may tell you about tourists but none of them can define it properly. All of the people may talk about the benefit of tourists for their day to day life system however it is difficult to hear about the different ways of generating income from tourism. These and other facts are the results of lack of overall awareness creating trainings on tourism."*

B. Other community capacity building activities

Community capacity building in tourism development is seen as the capacity of the people in communities to participate in tourism activities. The importance of community capacity building in tourism development is obvious (Cupples, 2005; Ohiorhenuan and Wunker, 1995). Community capacity building plays a central role in tourism development (Raik, 2002). Thus,

'were there any community capacity building activities conducted for organizations, individuals or community so as to develop overall capacity of the local community in the study area?' is the major question to be discussed below.

Table 5: Availability of other community capacity building activities

Variable	Agreement level	Frequency	Percent
Governmental and non Governmental organizations have built my capacity to participate in religious tourism.	Strongly disagree	34	26.2
	Disagree	39	30.0
	Neutral	22	16.9
	Agree	19	14.6
	Strongly agree	16	12.3
	Total	130	100.0
	Mean		

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

As it is already displayed in table 5 above, out of the total respondents, almost 56.2% replied as nobody helped them to participate in religious tourism business. In contrary, almost 27% of the respondents said as governmental and nongovernmental organizations built their capacity financially, technically and morally. The remaining 16.9% were neutral. The mean value $M = 2.57$ proves that most of the community hardly acquire financial and technical support from governmental, nongovernmental or private organizations. In the interview with concerning governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the area, they accepted their weakness on providing training to the mass community on the tourism and related issues.

Community capacity building plays a central role in tourism development. Tourism investors often like to invest in local training and community capacity building as a way of contributing to community development (Aref, et al, 2009). But this was not the case in Lalibela town. Most respondents including the town administrations blame investors, who generate huge profit from tourism in the area, for their poor contribution in the empowerment and development of the local community and the town. According to them, investors in the area participate neither in community capacity building nor in town infrastructural development activities. Though some hotels like Mountain View Hotel said that they are contributing to the development of the local community through arranging aids from different countries such as Belgium, most investors

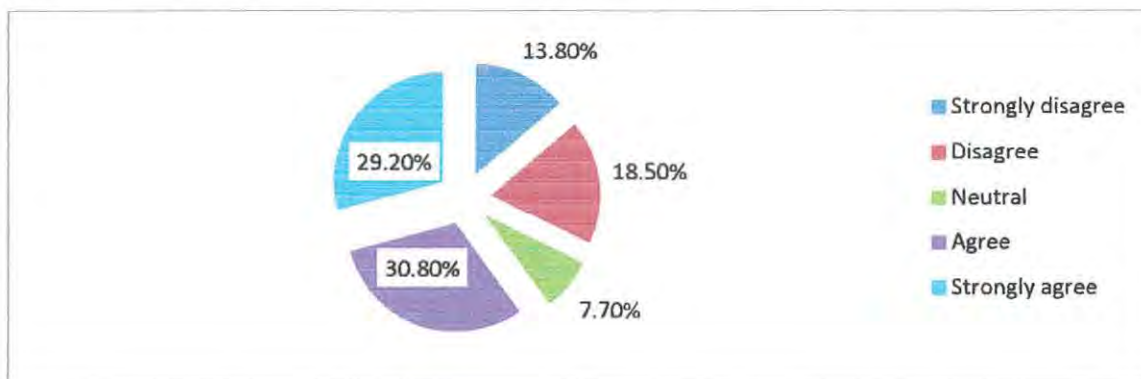
accepted their weakness. Investors also asked the town administration to organize them so that they can contribute to the local community as well as the town over all development.

4.3 Local community participation, dependency and benefit sharing on tourism

4.3.1 Local community participation

A community involved in the planning and implementation of tourism has a more positive attitude, is more supportive and has a better chance of making a profit than those passively ruled or overrun by tourism. One of the core elements of sustainable tourism development is community participation and development (UNESCO, 2012). Therefore, giving the community the chance and the capacity to make decisions on development issues has great influence on the overall success of the development objectives.

Figure 4: The participation of local community on tourism development



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

The figure above shows, the participation level of the local community in the tourism sector in general. The mean value $M = 3.43$ shows that the majority of the respondents participates in tourism development activities whether directly or indirectly. Furthermore, out of the total respondents, 9.2% and 30.8% have strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Whereas 13.8% of the respondents were strongly disagreed and 18.5% have disagreed and the remaining 7.7% were neutral. Hence, according to the survey, a significant number of Lalibela town communities were part of the tourism development.

Similarly, the information from LTACTD confirms that most of the local community was engaged in different tourism activities such as in guiding, hotel services, mule renting, hosting and helping guests, souvenir selling, internet service providing, pottery, handcraft making and selling, metal craft, apiculture, farming, restaurant and bar services, taxi service and so on.

Though, tourism is one of the two major livelihoods of the local community, most of the respondents and organizations stated the local community's participation in planning, decision making and other activities as low and unsatisfactory. It was also proved by LTACTD that the local community's participation on tourism issues and decision making activities is very limited.

As already shown in the table above, a large proportion of the respondents 32.3% were not participants of religious tourism. The cause of poor local community participation in tourism in general and religious tourism in particular as proposed by interviewed informants includes: nature of their job for instance those government employees like civil servants and policemen, lack of enough money, awareness problems or lack of information, lack of place to work, government regulations, bureaucracy, lack of incentives, poor tendency to involve or participate the people in decision making processes and corruption.

Based on the data collected and discussed so far the following solutions to improve low local community participation in religious tourism were drawn these include: creating awareness through continuous training, alleviating administration related problems, creating opportunities for the people to say and decide about issues related to tourism (People first or pro-poor approach).

4.3.2 Dependency on tourism and religious tourism

Table 6: Dependency level of local community on religious tourism business

Variables	Relative Agreement									
	S.D.		D.		Nu.		A.		S.A.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am entirely dependent on tourism activities in the town.	33	25.4	27	20.8	12	9.2	31	23.8	27	20.8
	Number									130
	Mean									2.94

Note: S.D -Strongly Disagree, D- Disagree, Nu.- Neutral, A - Agree, S.A. - Strongly Agree

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

On the table 6 above, the respondents' relative agreement on tourism industry is clearly shown. Based on the survey, 25.4% of the respondents were strongly disagreed, and 20.8% of the total

respondents were disagreed whereas the remaining respondents 20.8%, 23.8%, 9.2% were strongly agreed, agreed and neutral respectively. The mean value, $M= 2.94$, summarizes that almost half of the total respondents replied as they were dependent on tourism, while the remaining respondents were not.

However, according to most key informants including LTACTD and ESTDP, and some respondents, approximately 80% - 90% of the town communities were directly or indirectly dependent on the tourism sector. Here below is the direct speech of the Lalibela Town Culture and Tourism Department director: *"As everybody can see North Wollo area is arid which has limited rainfall annually; the area is geographically not suitable for agriculture; Lalibela is neither trade center nor trade route. Because of these and other reasons I can say that Lalibela is a town which could not survive without tourism."*

According to the information obtained from LTACTD, 2747 - 3000 locals were directly working in different tourism sectors. That means, these people and their family are dependent on tourism industry. Moreover, based on the data from Saint Lalibela Monastery Administration (SLMA), more than 800 priests, *Deacons*, Monks and Nuns with 2-3 families were directly dependent on the income from tourism. Not only by formally working in different tourism sectors but also through illegal hassling and begging lots of the local community generate income and lead their life as well as their family. Generally, based on the information from key informants, except some civil servants who earn their income only from the government, almost all other local communities were directly or indirectly dependent on tourism.

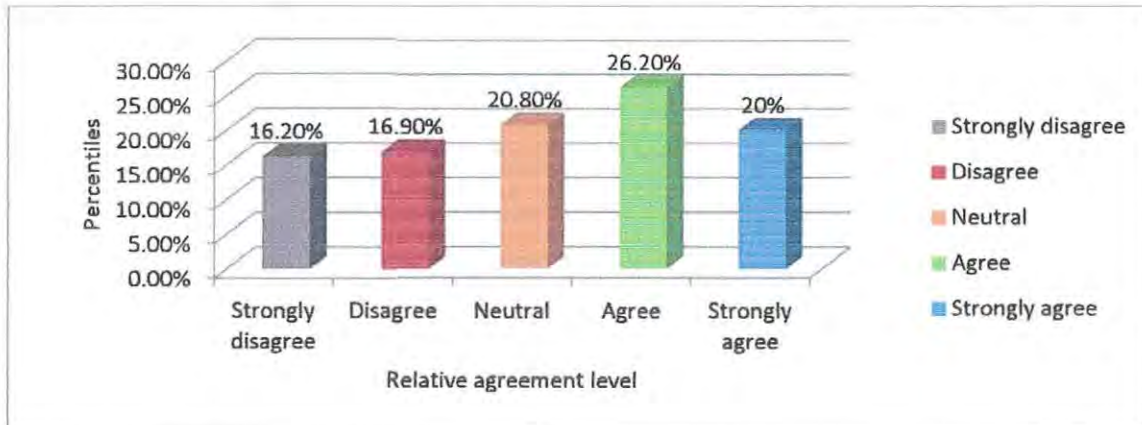
However, as proved from the respondents, interviewed key informants, and the researcher's own observation most of the community had no hint or idea on whether they are actually dependent on tourism or not. As a result, they denied respect to tourism and tourists; they did not conserve religious tourism heritages and values. Moreover, most of the local community perceives that *'the beneficiaries of tourism are those who have direct contact with tourists like guides, hotels and others'*.

4.3.3 Community based nature of religious tourism

In figure 5 below, the relative agreement levels of the respondents on the community based nature of religious tourism in Lalibela town is displayed. Of the total respondents, 16.2% and

16.9% were strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Whereas relatively higher proportion of the respondents 26% were agreed and the remaining 20% were strongly agreed. The remaining 20.8% were neutral perhaps because they do not know what community based tourism or religious tourism mean. The mean value, $M = 3.17$, refers that the higher proportion of the respondents supports the idea which says '*tourism or religious tourism in Lalibela is community based and participatory*'.

Figure 5: Attitude of the local community on community based nature of religious tourism



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Though the mean $M = 3.17$ is greater than the average 3, the total number of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed were only 46% whereas the remaining 55% were disagreed, strongly disagreed and neutral and out of the 55%, 20% were neutral. Therefore, it was difficult to decide on whether religious tourism was a community based on a time of the study or not. Nevertheless, some of the key informants, and respondents reflected their view as '*tourism in general in Lalibela town is not a community based rather it is the sector for a few rich people like guides, hoteliers, priests and their family*'.

4.3.4 Improvement in standard of living

Table 7 below shows the relative agreement level of respondents on the variable which assesses the improvement in the standard of living of the local community because of tourism or religious tourism. Hence, among the total respondents, 17.7% and 30.8% were strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, whereas 22.3% and 16.9 % were agreed and strongly agreed correspondingly, and the remaining 12.3% were neutral. On the other hand the mean value, $M =$

2.90, means shows the larger proportion respondents' disagreement on the statement which says 'I have shown a clear improvement in my life or standard of living after joining the tourism business'. In other words, it means tourism did not bring improvement in the standard of living of the majority respondents. Though the number of respondents who said 'tourism did nothing' for my life is greater, 39.2% of the respondents who said 'tourism changed my life' are undeniable.

Table 7: The mean showing the role of religious tourism in improving the standard of living of the local community

Variable	Relative agreement	Frequency	Percent
I have shown a clear improvement in my standard of living after joining tourism business.	Strongly disagree	23	17.7
	Disagree	40	30.8
	Neutral	16	12.3
	Agree	29	22.3
	Strongly agree	22	16.9
	Total	130	100.0
	Mean		

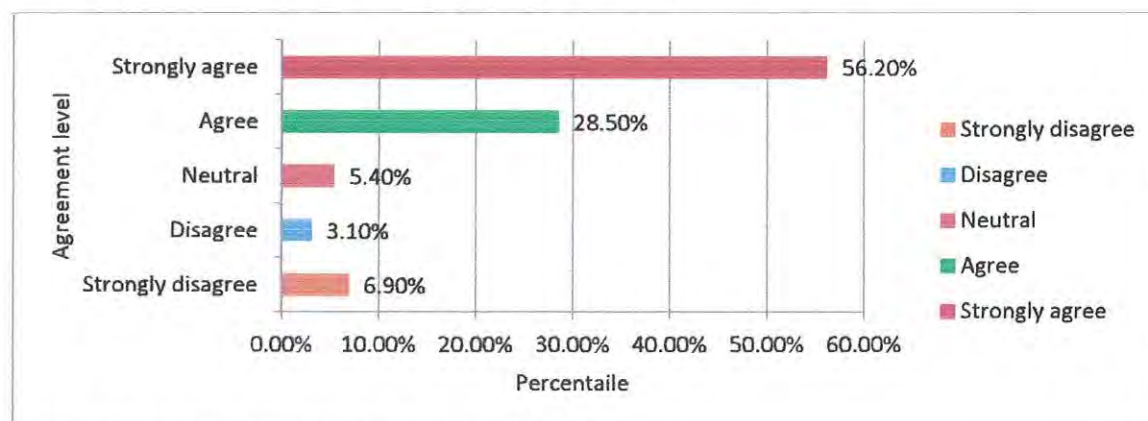
Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

As discussed above, though the majority of the local community participate in tourism (see figure 4), they were not that much beneficiaries and the sector was not bringing radical change in their life. According to the researcher's observation this was mainly because most of the local communities were engaged in the small businesses like small shops, *Tela bet*, coffee house, *Teg bet* and others which have less profit and did not directly related to the interest of tourists.

4.3.5 Economic benefit of participatory religious tourism

As shown in the figure below, out of the total respondents, 84.7% recognized the economic, environmental and socio cultural benefit of participatory religious tourism by 28.5% and 56.2% of agree and strongly agree relative agreement levels, respectively. Very little number of the respondents (10%) stated their disagreement with strongly disagree (6.9%) and disagree (3.1%) relative agreement and 5.4% of the respondents did not express their agreement or disagreement. The mean value, $M = 4.24$, also declared that almost all respondents were familiar with the multidimensional benefits of community based religious tourism.

Figure 6: Relative economic benefit of participatory religious tourism



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Therefore, it can be concluded that if done well, participatory religious tourism has a better economic benefit than other means of livelihood in the town of Lalibela. Some of these benefits include: income, job opportunity, foreign exchange and so on. The following table, the one obtained from LTACTD, shows the number of domestic and international tourist arrivals and receipts.

Table 8: Five years international and domestic tourist arrival and receipts in Lalibela town

Years	Domestic tourist	International Tourist	Total	Income receipts from domestic tourists in Birr	Income receipts from international tourists in Birr	Total income
2008	6784	21641	28425	4857344	37936673	42794017
2009	8445	23597	32042	6046620	41365541	47412161
2010	10875	25225	36100	7772602	45819050	53591652
2011	14149	35169	49318	10161284	67129869	77291153
2012	15492	35437	50929	11190562	83314011	94504573
*2013	6666	15246	21912	64053720	16020397.8	80074117.8
Total	62411	156315	218726	104082132	291585541.8	395667673.8

Source: LTACTD, 2013

* Only for six months

As displayed in table 8 above, the total number of domestic tourist arrivals showed an increment from 6784 to 15,492 in only the last 5 years. The number of International tourist arrivals also reflected a tangible increase from 21,641 in the year 2008 to 35,437 in the year 2012. When we see the above table tourist receipts columns, receipts from domestic tourists increased from 4,857,344 Birr to 11,190,562 Birr in the last five years from 2008 to 2012. On the other hand international tourist receipts in Lalibela town also showed a rise from 37,936,673 Birr to 83,314,011 Birr in the same five years length.

Therefore, if tourism is community based, and if there is fair benefit sharing between stakeholders, tourism is crucial for sustainable development and community empowerment. Especially in Lalibela town where religion and religious attributes are major tourist attractions, and other economic activities are not good options, religious tourism is the best means of destination development and local community empowerment.

4.3.6 Perceptions on importance of participation in tourism development

Table 9: Perception of the community on their participation in religious tourism development and problem alleviation

Variable	Relative agreement	Frequency	Percent
I believe that local community should participate in Religious tourism development and minimization of problems that affect the progress.	Strongly disagree	4	3.1
	Disagree	6	4.6
	Neutral	12	9.2
	Agree	29	22.3
	Strongly agree	79	60.8
	Total	130	100.0
	<i>Mean</i>		

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

As shown in table 9, 60.8% of the total respondents strongly agreed that the local community should participate in the religious tourism development and problem alleviation activities. Similarly, 22.3% of the respondents agreed that there should be active participation of the local community in any tourism development activities undertaken in the area. The remaining very few proportions of the respondents 3.1%, 4.6% and 9.2% were strongly disagreed, disagreed and neutral respectively. Moreover, the calculated mean value, $M = 4.33$, indicates that the highest proportion of the respondents believed that the local community should participate in the religious tourism development and minimization of problems that affect the progress of development.

4.4 Barriers of local community participation and possible solutions

Here, the barriers that influenced the local communities from participating in religious tourism business and possible solutions proposed by respondents and key informants are to be discussed below.

4.4.1 Barriers of local community participation

There are lots of barriers that hindered local community from fully participating in any affairs of tourism or religious tourism development. Table 10 below summarizes some of these hindrances which were assigned in the choice of the questionnaire.

Table 10: Summary of barriers of local community participation

Variable	Frequency		Percentage		Mean
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Lack of government consent	22	108	16.9	83.1	1.83
Centralization of public administration	23	107	17.7	82.3	1.82
Elite domination	17	113	13.1	86.9	1.87
Lack of communication and understanding between government and community	25	105	19.2	80.8	1.81
Low level of awareness	66	64	50.8	49.2	1.49
Group Mean					1.76

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Earlier in this chapter, figure 4, the respondents' participation on religious tourism and tourism was assessed, participants and nonparticipants were identified and root causes were observed. Thus, here further barriers are to be explored and discussed.

4.4.2 Administration related barriers

Barriers of local community participation related with administration include lack of government attention, centralization of public administration and lack of communication and understanding between the administration and the community.

A. Lack of government consent - As shown in table 10 above, only 16.9% respondents recognized lack of attention from the government as one of the barriers that hindered their participation in any tourism issues. Whereas, the majority of the respondents which measures around 83.1% did not consider lack of government consent as a barrier or they were active participants. As the mean value, $M= 1.83$, is above 1.5 it holds that lack of government consent was not a barrier for a large number of respondents.

B. Centralized public administration - Centralization of the public administration could be both a problem and an opportunity. In the case of Ethiopia, there are federal

government and regional governments which have their own authority and responsibility. Generally speaking the administration system of the country is decentralized but it may or may not work in the entire regions and zones of the country. Table 10 above shows the reply of the local community on the issue that focus on centralization of the public administration and its problems on local community participation. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents 82.3% answered 'No' whereas the remaining 17.7% said 'Yes'. That means, the majority did not assume centralization of the public administration as an obstacle for local community participation or the administration is not centralized. The mean value, $M = 1.82$ also summarizes that centralized administration was not an influential factor responsible for limited local community participation.

C. Lack of communication and understanding between government and community

- Cooperation and communication between the local community and the administration lead to effective development in any development area. In the case of Lalibela town, out of the total respondents 19.2% stated their conformity on disagreement between the government and local community as the factor for the limited participation of the community. And the remaining large portion of the respondents 80.8% were against the idea stated above (See table 10).

4.4.3 Elite domination

Elite domination or dependency on elites influences the participation of illiterate community. As it can be clearly observed in table 10 above, out of the total respondents, 13.1% replied 'Yes' while 86.9% of the respondents replied 'No'. From the result of the survey, it could be understood that elite domination was one of the factors that hindered the local community from participating in tourism sector but it was not that much influential.

4.4.4 Low level of awareness

Commonly, awareness is one of the most basic things in the smooth development of any business including tourism. In the survey, the researcher has tried to identify whether lack of awareness is the reason for the unsatisfactory participation and limited benefit sharing status of the local community or not. Accordingly, table 10 above shows that, 50.8% of the respondents believe that their low level of awareness on tourism was one of the numerous factors that limited their participation level in the religious tourism development process. On the other side, 49.2% of the

respondents never accepted lack of awareness as a cause for their limited participation in the sector. The mean value $M = 1.49$ which is below the average 1.5 strengthened the idea that the limited awareness of the local community in tourism in general and religious tourism in particular lead to inadequate participation of the local community (See table 10).

To summarize, in the above discussions though the magnitude may vary, we understood that all those mentioned above were obstacles of local community participation in religious tourism development. To bring to mind they were lack of government consent, centralization of public administration, lack of communication and understanding between government and community, elite domination, and low level of awareness. Furthermore, based on the information from the participants and interviewed key informants, lack of information, lack of tendency to involve and participate the people in planning, processing, and implementing development activities, weak church administration, and drug and alcoholism were hindrances that influenced greatly the participation of the local community from participating in different religious tourism and general tourism issues.

4.5 Possible solutions

In the town where religious tourism is its lifeblood, the local communities' role in the development of the sector is unquestionable. However, as shown in the above discussions the local community participation in Lalibela town religious tourism development was not at its satisfactory level. For instance, in figure 4 above, 40% of the total respondents were not participating in the religious or other types of tourism. But if all of the community had a chance to participate in religious tourism, its development could have been more than a word.

Based on the survey conducted via questionnaire and interview, the participation of the local community was generally graded as low. The reasons for the limited participation of the local community mentioned by key informants and respondents are already discussed. Thus, here below the proposed solutions are to be discussed. Tourism in general is community dependent in nature more than any other sectors. As a result, to the maximum effort everybody should participate and benefit from it. The reasons for the need of the whole community participation includes: almost all of the tourism resources including religious treasures are on the hands of the local community; in one or other way tourists need local's help; tourist - host relationship is one of the most determining factors for tourists' destination selection and locals are the guardians of

heritages. Therefore, if communities are not participatory and beneficiary, the tourism development will be highly wounded.

As per the survey, though there were lots of problems hindering the local communities' participation, they were willing and ready to be part of the development. Therefore, in order to increase the local community participation in tourism business and assist its development progress, the under mentioned solutions are forwarded on the basis of the data gained from respondents.

- Appropriate attention should be given to the religious tourism sector even more than other types of tourism and sectors in the area;
- Creating awareness of the local community on religious tourism in particular and tourism in general through continuous training and awareness creating activities;
- Involving the local community in every tourism related decision making processes and make them beneficiary;
- Avoid corruption particularly nepotism in the church and governmental administration areas;
- Organize, support and supervise the young generation who want to participate in religious or other type of tourism;
- A cooperative effort from everybody to make tourism more effective as tourism is the backbone of the town and the community;
- Accountability and transparency of government leaders;
- Free discussion and communication on tourism issues among all stakeholders;
- Opening tourism colleges and university to expand knowledge in the mind of the local community;
- Tourism in Lalibela should follow pro poor strategy;
- Organizing the young people in small and micro tourism organizations;
- Creating a conducive environment for locals to participate in religious tourism;
- Education plus experience should be considered and reduce dependency on elites only.

4.6 Religious heritage conservation

Most researchers accept that heritage is something linked to the past that it represents some sort of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations both in terms of cultural

traditions and physical artifacts. Heritage is what elements of the past a society wishes to keep. This shows that heritage is selective to some cultural and natural artifacts. Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to the future generation. Heritages are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They are our touchstones, our points of reference and identity. Ethiopia is rich in natural and cultural heritages. And most of them are religious cultural heritages. Out of these countless tangible and intangible heritages of the country, Nine of them are registered in the World Heritage List (WHL). However, the conservation status of most natural and cultural heritages in the country is shocking. One of the most famous Ethiopian world heritage sites is the Rock-Hewn churches of Lalibela (Jokilehto, 2005; Russell, 2007).

In table 11 below the surveyed and publicized data on the attitude of the local community on the religious heritages of Lalibela town; their conservation status; the participation of the local community on the heritage conservation processes and other minor ideas are displayed.

Table 11: State of Religious heritages conservation

Variables	Relative Agreement										M
	S.D.		D.		Nu.		A.		S.A.		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Religious Heritages are well protected in Lalibela.	28	21.5	31	23.8	16	12.3	35	26.9	20	15.4	2.91
I participate in heritage conservation activities.	10	7.7	28	21.5	11	8.5	47	36.2	34	26.2	3.52
I have a sense of ownership for Heritages in Lalibela	4	3.1	6	4.6	5	3.8	33	25.4	82	63.1	4.41
I believe that local community should participate in heritage conservation.	4	3.1	3	2.3	-	-	27	20.8	96	73.8	4.60

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

4.6.1 Religious heritages conservation status

Table 11 above shows the attitude of the local community on the conservation status of tangible and intangible heritages in and around Lalibela town. Accordingly, 21.5% and 23.8% of the total respondents were strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. In contrary, the idea which says

the religious heritages of Lalibela are well protected and conserved was supported by 26.9% agreed and 15.4% strongly agreed respondents. The remaining 12.3% were neither agreed nor disagreed. The mean value $M = 2.91$ reflects the attitude of the majority of the respondents who did not support the idea raised. Therefore, it could be concluded that most of the respondents did not think that heritages of Lalibela were properly conserved.

The LTACTD also accepted the presence of heritage conservation problems in the town which is caused by theft, erosion, flooding, lack of treasure house and other man-made and natural disasters. Though the department conduct heritage inventory once in two years, monthly inspection and yearly control in 118 different churches in and around the town, heritages are still in big threat. The shelter built five years ago by the European Union (EU) and UNESCO has become one of the most dangerous threats for the rock-hewn churches. As the LTACTD and the SLMA the temporary shelter of the rock hewn churches may damage the churches in two different ways. First, the fall of the roof of the shelter at any time might lead to complete collapse of the churches and second, pillars of the shelter which were made up of metal that rusts could change the composition of the rock and further leads to fragmentation of the rock.

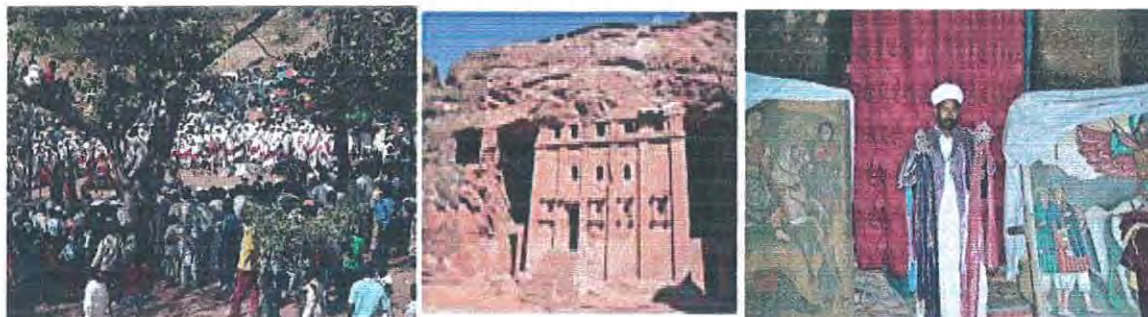
4.6.2 Community participation in heritage conservation

Local community participation in heritage conservation was also assessed in table 11 above. Accordingly, 7.7% and 8.5 % of the local community responded strongly disagree and disagree respectively. The majorities of the respondents were agreed 36.2% and strongly agreed (26.2%). The mean value $M = 3.52$ confirms that the majority of the respondents were participants and willing to participate in religious heritage conservation activities.

4.6.3 Sense of ownership for Heritages

Out of the total respondents, the majority answered that they feel a sense of ownership for heritages of the town. This idea is supported by the data from table 11 of which 63.1% and 25.4% of the respondents answered strongly agree and agree respectively whereas, only 3.1% and 4.6% of the respondents responded strongly disagree and disagree and 3.8% were neutral. The mean value, 4.41%, confirms the almost all of the respondents feel a sense of ownership.

Figure 7: Few of most precious religious heritages of Lalibela town



Source: Researcher's photo, 2013

4.6.4 Attitude of the local community on conserving heritage

As shown in table 11 above, 73.8% and 20.8% of the total respondents were strongly agreed and agreed respectively. The smallest shares of the respondents were strongly disagreed (3.1%) and disagreed (2.3%). Hence, from the data mentioned it could be understood that almost all of the respondents believe that everybody who lives in the town has a responsibility to participate in heritage conservation activities.

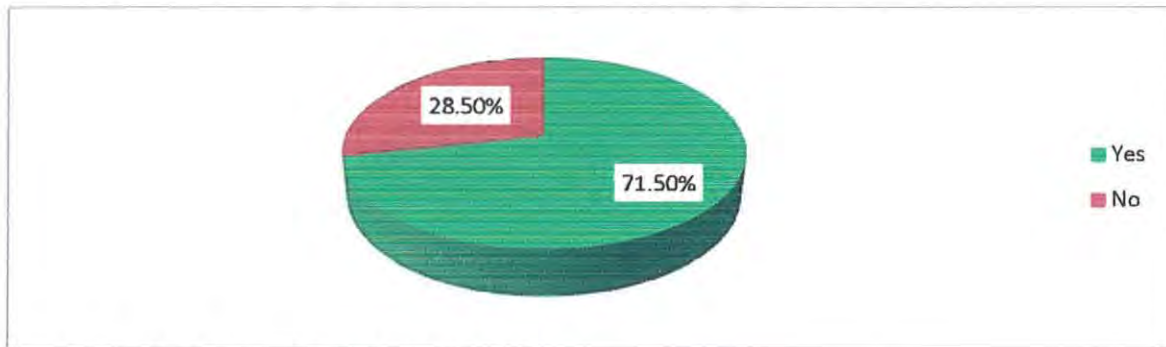
4.7 Beneficiaries and benefits of religious tourism in Lalibela town

4.7.1 Beneficiaries of religious tourism

Tourism in general and religious tourism in particular has a multiple social, economic, ecological, and cultural benefits in the destination area as well as in the country level. It also creates job opportunity, initiates investment, generates foreign exchange, and brings huge revenue in the forms of tax (UNWTO, 2009). As a result, international and domestic tourism combine to generate up to 10% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and often a higher share in many small nations and developing countries (IATA, 2012).

Tourism has of immense value to the individuals, the state and the nation at large. In the very arid areas like Lalibela, where other means of livelihood is hardly possible, tourism has significant value. Religious tourism as a separate type of tourism has numerous benefits. Some of them includes preservation of cultural heritages both religious and non religious, appreciates religious and cultural diversity, income for the surrounding community who are guardians of the heritages, and so on.

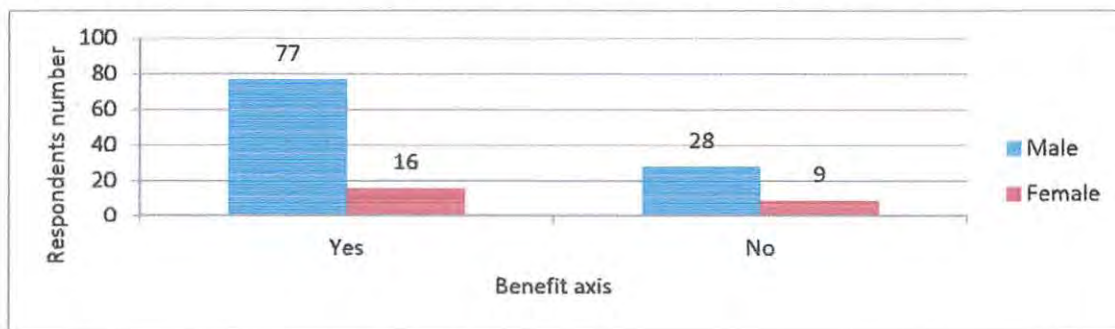
Figure 8: Beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of religious tourism



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

As clearly shown in figure 10 above, out of the total respondents, 71.50% were beneficiaries of religious tourism development whether directly or indirectly. The remaining 28.50% were not beneficiaries of tourism. This means simply religious tourism is benefiting the majority of the local community.

Figure 9: Cross tabulation between gender and beneficiaries of religious tourism



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Using cross tabulation, frequency SPSS, the researcher has tried to see the relationship between gender and beneficiaries of tourism. As it can be observed in the figure 11, out of the total 25 female respondents, 16 had the chance to share from the fruits of tourism whereas 9 were not. From males side total respondents were 105 and 77 were beneficiaries of tourism while 28 were not. Here, the percentage is 73% male to 64% female and the ratio is 1.14062 which is not significant. That means there is no significant relationship between gender and tourism beneficiaries in the study area.

4.7.2 Benefits of religious tourism in Lalibela town

Benefit sharing status of the respondents was already discussed in figure 10. Thus, out of the total 130 (100%) respondents (93)71.5% were beneficiaries and the remaining 37 (28.5%) were not. In table 12 below, the beneficiaries (93) respondents only are used to analyze the benefits that the local community has obtained from tourism in general and religious tourism in particular. Though, religious tourism has multiple benefits, the local community of the study area has got income, job opportunity, water supply, road infrastructure, electric power, educational opportunity and others.

Table 12: Summary of benefits of religious tourism in Lalibela town

Variable	Yes		No		Total		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Income	42	45.1	51	54.9	93	100	1.55
Job opportunity	50	53.7	43	46.3	93	100	1.46
Water supply	41	44.0	52	56.0	93	100	1.56
Road infrastructures	30	32.2	63	67.8	93	100	1.68
Electric power	41	44.0	52	56.0	93	100	1.56
Schools and colleges	22	23.6	71	76.4	93	100	1.76
Group mean							1.6

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Generally, group mean in table 12 above, 1.6 implies that most variables mentioned in the table are not the only ways local communities benefited from tourism. Even though, infrastructures in general might be the outcomes of tourism, it may be accomplished by governmental or nongovernmental bodies and that most probably influenced the group mean.

4.7.3 Income

Tourism generates different types of income for a community: business income, wage earnings, share earnings, rates and levies. Direct spending by visitors has a positive impact on business profitability and employment growth. The money that is then circulated and re-spent in the economy is often referred to as indirect spending or the multiplier effect. The expectations and needs of visitors can often lead to the creation of new businesses and commercial activities. This

builds a more diverse economic base and reduces reliance on one or two traditional industries, which is often the case in rural communities. For example, International tourists spent USD 919 billion on local airfares, accommodation, meals, shopping, goods and attractions in 2010 (UNWTO, 2011).

Income is one of the most common benefits of religious tourism in most tourist destinations. Table 12 above shows that out of the total 93 (100%) beneficiary respondents, 45.1% directly generated income from religious tourism whereas 54.9% were not able to generate income but they were still beneficiaries in other ways.

4.7.4 Employment (Job opportunity)

Tourism is a labor intensive industry and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are many opportunities for employment for young people and for people interested in part time or casual work. While some of the jobs require skilled employees, there are also opportunities for people less skilled and who lack formal qualifications (IATA, 2012).

Tourism is a labor-intensive industry and creates more job opportunities, encouraging young people to stay in local communities. As shown in table 12, 53.7% of the total 93 (100%) respondents who were beneficial of religious tourism, had got job opportunity in different tourism sectors of the area. Though the remaining 46.3% were not lucky to get job opportunity in tourism sectors or had different job, but still they were beneficiaries of religious tourism perhaps in other ways.

According to the information obtained from LTACTD, there were more than 695 tourism sectors operating in the town. These all tourism business sectors created direct job opportunity for more than 2747 individuals. These people were employed in hotels, cafes, restaurants, souvenir shops, guiding, and other small and micro tourism organizations. When we see the gender involvement, out of the total number of people who has got job opportunity in the tourism sectors, 1039 were males and 722 were females.

As per the data obtained from LTACTD, there were more than 695 different tourism related sectors operating in the town. These all sectors created direct job opportunity for around 3000 individuals in the area. For instance, more than 29 hotels operate in the town. These hotels

created job opportunity for a significant proportion of the local community (508). As per information obtained from different hotels out of the total employees almost 98% were from the Lalibela town and its surrounding areas. Other tourist service sectors or institutions include Restaurants, Cafes, Guides, Mule rent, Tourist supportive, Domestic tourist guides, Taxi rent, Souvenir shop, Handicraft production and sale, Guesthouse, Bar and Nightclubs, Saint Lalibela Monastery administration office, Lodges and other services.

Table 13: Tourist service institutions and job opportunities created

No.	Name of the institution	No. of institutions	Job opportunities created	Gender involvement		
				Male	Female	Total
1	Hotels	29	508	218	290	508
2	Restaurants	26	190	41	149	190
3	Cafes	17	53	12	42	53
4	Guides	1	116	114	2	116
5	Mule rent	1	376	371	5	376
6	Tourist supportive	1	65	60	5	65
7	Domestic tourist guides	1	25	25	0	25
8	Taxi Rent	17	50	50	0	50
9	Souvenir shop	56	56	32	24	56
10	Handicraft production and sell	207	207	82	125	207
11	Bar and Night clubs	23	71	15	56	71
12	Guest house	9	26	12	14	26
13	Other services	2	4	3	1	3
14	Lalibela church administration office	1	800			800
15	Lodge	1	13	4	9	13
Total		695	2747	1039	722	2747

Source: Lalibela town Administration culture and tourism department

4.7.5 Water Supply

Growth in tourism can stimulate new and expanded community facilities and infrastructure initiatives, such as the improvement of retail, restaurant and entertainment options, transport services, education and sport facilities. These and others increase the quality of life for the community, which may not otherwise warrant the improvement, based on the residential population alone (<http://www.tourismexcellence.com.au/Growing-Destinations/Benefits-of-Tourism.html>).

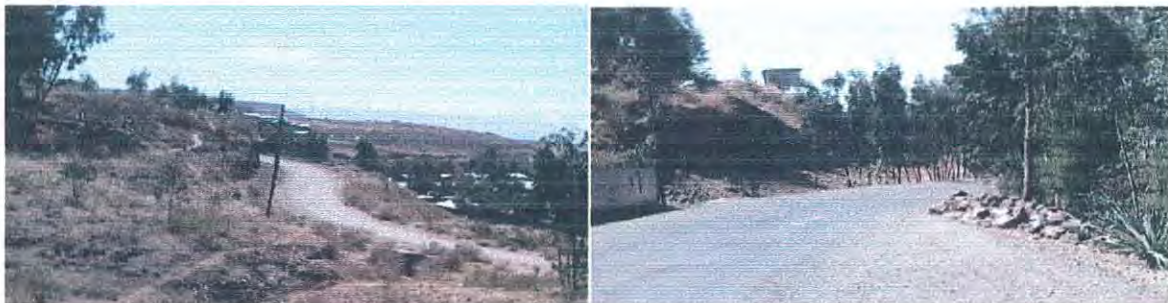
Infrastructural supply is indirect benefits the community of a given tourist destination enjoys as a result of tourism development. Out of these infrastructural supplies that facilitate tourism development and improves the life standard of the local community, water supply was the one and the most crucial. Based on table 12, 44% of the respondents agreed that religious tourism has brought better water supply to the area. However, the majority 56% did not agree with this idea (See table 12). According to them, tourism did not bring improvement in the water supply of the town because it has lots of problems like shortage of water supply, lacks of frequent services, unfair distribution and seasonal service.

4.7.6 Road infrastructure

As displayed in table 12, 32.2% of the total respondents believe that religious tourism development has brought road infrastructure improvement in their area. However, the largest proportion of the respondents 67.8% said that the road infrastructure of the Lalibela town was very poor and they did not enjoy any benefit related to road infrastructures.

In fact, the issue of road infrastructure was also clearly observed by the researcher. According to the observation and interviews conducted with different stakeholders, road infrastructure in Lalibela town was very poor and need to be improved. From the very early 11th century up to these days, Lalibela is a very rural type area because of its poor road facilities. For instance, the road from *Gashena* to Lalibela was poorly structured raff rough. In the town itself most roads were not asphalted or properly designed as a result they were not suitable to ride or walk.

Figure 10: The road infrastructure of Lalibela town



Source: Photos by the researcher, 2013

Not only road infrastructure but also there was lack of transportation service both to and within the town. In the town there was no regular taxi service to move from hotel to airport or vice

versa. Even there were only few direct flights from Addis Ababa to Lalibela and the bus transport from Addis Ababa to Lalibela and vice versa lack regularity and reliability and mostly had lots of stopover.

4.7.7 Electric power

Now a day's Electric power has become one of the most important elements of life. As part of the infrastructural improvement which might come because of tourism development, electric light is one of the benefits communities of the destination area enjoyed. In the case of Lalibela, 44% respondents believed that religious tourism enabled them to get electric power in the area while 56% of the respondents did not think so. During the survey, though there was an interruption of power, the researcher did not see any trouble related to electric power (See table 12).

4.7.8 Educational opportunity

Education is a key for problems. Primary and Secondary schools, Colleges and Universities are main educational centers in Ethiopia. As shown in table 12 out of 93 (100 %) beneficial respondents, 23.6%, said 'Yes' for the variable while 76.4 said 'No'. This means the majority of the local communities were not satisfied with the number of educational centers in the town. Though there are 2 elementary, 1 secondary and 1 preparatory schools and 1 technical and vocational training center, it was not enough for an increasing number of the local community. Furthermore, respondents noticed the following additional benefits of religious tourism in particular and tourism in general. It generates income for the government in the form of tax collected from tourism sectors, causes multicultural understanding, preservation, rehabilitation and improvement of heritages and contributes to development and conservation of culture.

4.7.9 The way to maximize the benefit and beneficiaries

So far the benefits and beneficiaries of religious tourism development in the study area were discussed. As one of the major concerns of this study, 'how to increase those benefits of religious tourism?' was one of the questions provided to the respondents. Accordingly, the following mechanisms or techniques were forwarded based on the data collected:

- Promoting the local community participation in any tourism development activities that means applying 'bottom - up approach';
- Developing sustainable religious tourism;

- Integrate the private and public sectors for sustainable development;
- Encouraging domestic tourism;
- Infrastructural improvement;
- Conservation and preservation of tangible as well as intangible heritages;
- Creating additional tourist products and developing more religious festivals;
- Advertisement and promotion of religious tourism resources;
- Creating linkage between different sectors of economy mainly agriculture and tourism.

4.8 Reasons for limited benefit sharing

In figure 10 above, tourism or religious tourism beneficiary and non beneficiary respondents were identified. Accordingly, out of the total 130 (100%) respondents only 37 (28.5%) non beneficiary respondents are the points of discussion in this section.

Table 14: Reasons for not benefiting from religious tourism

Variable	Yes		No		Total		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lack of interest	3	8.1	34	91.9	37	100	1.92
Absence of government permit	7	18.9	30	81.1	37	100	1.81
Lack of support from the administration	18	48.6	19	51.4	37	100	1.51
Lack of enough money	4	10.8	33	89.2	37	100	1.89
Shortage of the required knowledge	8	21.6	29	78.4	37	100	1.78
Group mean							1.8

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

The group mean, 1.8, reveals that those variables mentioned in table 14 above are just some of the causes of respondents' limited benefit sharing from tourism in general. That means other unidentified causes are there which needs further study.

4.8.1 Lack of interest

As it is clearly shown in the above table, out of the total 37 (100%) non beneficiary respondents, only 8.1% were not beneficiary of religious tourism because they were not interested while 91.9% were not beneficiary perhaps because of other reasons.

4.8.2 Absence of governmental permit

Absences of government permit or governmental regulations were reasons for 18.9% of the total 37 (100%) non beneficiary respondents whereas the majority of the respondents 81.1% did not consider lack of governmental permits as a cause of their limited benefit from the tourism industry.

4.8.3 Lack of support from the administration

Lack of governmental support and motivation both morally and financially was the cause of the large amount of respondents 48.6% whereas 51.4% respondents' reason was not related with governmental support and motivation.

4.8.4 Lack of enough money

Table 14 above shows that 10.8% of the total respondents had no chance to get benefit from tourism because of lack of enough money. While money and related factors were not the reasons for the largest share of the respondents 89.2. Hence, money could be one of the factors but not the determinant and the only.

4.8.5 Shortage of the required knowledge

As shown in the table above, 21.6% of the total respondents said that shortage of sufficient knowhow on the concept of tourism was the causes of our limited benefits from the sector. Whereas the majority 78.4% had no problem related with knowledge and understanding but perhaps other things like lack of money, governmental limitation, absence of governmental support and lack of interest on the industry influenced their beneficial status.

4.9 Opportunities and Challenges of religious tourism development

Lalibela town has lots of religious tourism resources which enabled the destination to be one of the most important tourist destinations in Ethiopia as well as in the world. However, Lalibela had also some other challenges or problems that affected the proper utilization of those tourism potentials. Hereafter, different religious tourism potentials or opportunities and challenges or problems of the study area are to be discussed.

4.9.1 Opportunities or potentials

I. The Rock hewn churches of Lalibela and other churches nearby

The rock hewn churches of Lalibela and other churches nearby are most precious heritage of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church; most important religious tourism resources of the town and the country.

Rock hewn churches of Lalibela

The rock hewn churches of Lalibela, one of the world heritages of the country, are the most important religious, cultural and historical centers of the country. These churches are unique and active religious centers and home to numerous spiritual, cultural and natural heritages.

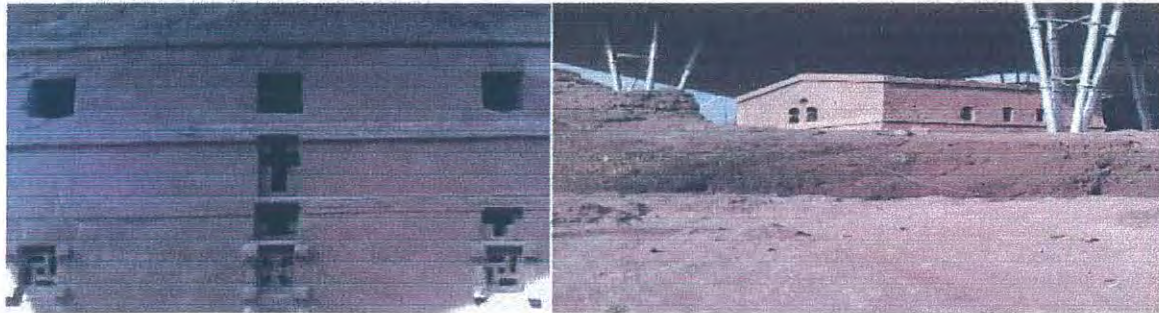
Lalibela Rock Hewn churches are grouped into three basing the river called Jordan. The first group north of Jordan River comprises six churches; Bete Medihane Alem, Bete Maryam, Bete Meskel, Bete Denagil, Bete Debre Sina and Bete Golgota. This group of churches symbolizes the Earthly Jerusalem. The second group of churches symbolizing the heavenly Jerusalem, located East of Jordan River comprises east to West Bete Amanuel, Bete Merkorios, Bete Abba Libanos and Bete Gebriel-Rufael. The third groups constitute setting lonely, Bete Giyorgis. Here below is the glimpse of those amazing rock hewn churches.

Figure 11: Bete Medhane Alem from two different directions



Source: The researcher's photo, 2013

Figure 12: Bete Maryam (windows and top view)



Source: The researcher's photo, 2013

The churches of Lalibela are unique in many ways. They were carved with their architectural elements out of the living solid rock, without joining any piece of stone together. Their refined architectural and aesthetic expressions seem superhuman. They are still places of active and living worship more than 850 years after they were built. More than many other monuments in the world, they constitute a living link with the past. Each one of the churches is different in style and has its own unique features. Four of them are strictly monolithic in structure and have no resemblance with others of their kind in the whole world. They are completely free standing, attached to the rock at the base only. These monolithic churches are Bete Medhanealem, Bete Mariam, Bete Amanuel and Bete Giorgis.

Figure 13: Bet Gabriel Rufael



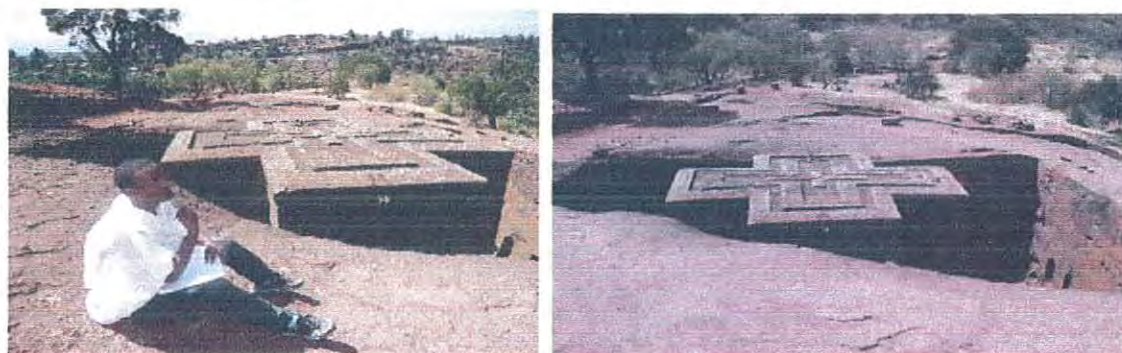
Source: The researcher's photo, 2013

Table 15: Summary of ancient rock-hewn churches in and around Lalibela

	Church	Location		Churches	Locations
1	Bete Medhane Alem	Lalibela	13	Asheten Mariam	>>
2	Bete Mariam	>>	14	Genete Mariam	>>
3	Bete Amanuel	>>	15	Emekinna Medhane Alem	>>
4	Bete Giorgis	>>	16	Emekina Lideta Mariam	>>
5	Bete Meskel	>>	17	Bilbaba Goirgis	Northwest of Lalibela
6	Bete Danagel	>>	18	Bilbala Kirkos	>>
7	Bete Golgotha	>>	19	Sarzina Mikael	>>
8	Bete Debre Sinai	>>	20	Arbatu Ensessa	>>
9	Bete Gabriel	>>	21	Yimrehane Kirstos	>>
10	Bete Merkorios	>>	22	Kenkenit Mikael	North of Lalibela
11	Bete Abba Libanos	>>	23	Abune Yoseph	Northeast of Lalibela
12	Ne'akuto Le'ab	Southeast of Lalibela	24	Tirkuza KidancMihret	>>

Source: Mengistu, 2004

Figure 14: Bete Giyorgis



Source: The researcher's photo, 2013

II. Other churches around Lalibela town

Besides the rock hewn churches of Lalibela, there are plenty of rock hewn and traditional Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido churches in about 20-50 kilometers distance from the town. These all churches have religious value and can be considered as the center of religious pilgrimage. These churches are also known for their ample heritages, festivals and history. Some

of these churches around Lalibela include Asetan Maryam, Yimrehane Kiristos, Arbatu Ensessa, Bilbila Chirkos, Bilbila Giyorgis, Ne'akuto Le'ab, Geneta Maryam, Machina Maryam and others.

These all facts and figures made the town of Lalibela and its surroundings very important religious tourism center. Specifically, Lalibela, a world heritage site, undoubtedly ranks among the greatest religious and historical sites in the Christian world.

In table 16 below the attitudes of the community on religious tourism resources was measured. Accordingly, almost all of the respondents 114 (87.7%) consider the rock hewn churches of Lalibela and other churches nearby as a very important religious tourism development potentials of the area. While very few 16 (12.3%) of the respondents had no idea about rock hewn churches as religious tourism resources.

Table 16 mean showing attitude of respondents on religious tourism potentials of Lalibela town

Variable	Yes		No		Total		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
The Rock hewn churches of Lalibela and other churches nearby	114	87.7	16	12.3	130	100.0	1.12
Heritages in the churches	81	62.3	49	37.7	130	100.0	1.38
The welcoming people of the area	66	50.8	64	49.2	130	100.0	1.49
The sufficient infrastructures	26	20.0	104	80.0	130	100.0	1.80
The familiarity of the site	56	43.1	74	56.9	130	100.0	1.57
Religious festivals	80	61.5	50	38.5	130	100.0	1.38
<i>Group mean</i>							1.456

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

The group mean, 1.45, in the table above, shows that most of the local community recognized those mentioned elements as religious tourism potentials of Lalibela town.

III. Tangible and Intangible heritages in the churches

As it is clearly shown in the above table, out of the total respondents, 62.3% which was the majority accepted tangible and intangible; moveable and immovable heritages in each of the rock hewn churches of Lalibela as the big opportunity for religious tourism development. However,

37.7% of the total respondents never considered these heritages as potential for further religious tourism development in the area. According to Elene (2010) and researcher's observation, a wealth of ecclesiastical objects forms an intrinsic part of the churches and the religious practices, ranging from processional crosses, bells, chandeliers of gold and silver, priestly vestment and robes, to church paintings, icons, scrolls and manuscripts most of them date to the period of the churches themselves, such as King Lalibela's hand cross and prayer stick.

Table 17: List of Registered Saint Lalibela monastery tangible heritages

No.	The rock hewn churches	Old parchments	Other religious heritages	Total
1	Bet Mariam	76	135	214
2	Bet Medehanialem	86	70	156
3	Bet Golegota	89	89	178
4	Bet Meskel	12	12	24
5	Bet Denagel	5	7	12
6	Bet Gabriel Rufael	45	27	72
7	Bet Amanuel	53	36	89
8	Bet Merkorios	33	24	57
9	Bet Aba Libanos	41	24	65
10	Bet Georgis	51	45	96

Source: Lalibela Town Culture and Tourism Department (LTACTD)

IV. Welcoming people of the town

The people of Lalibela are very interesting, sociable and welcoming in that it does have a positive effect on the tourists flow. However, as shown in table 16 above, only 50.8% of the total respondents accredited warm welcome of the local community as an opportunity to develop religious tourism in the study area. The other big proportion of the respondents 49.2% did not think that welcoming people of the area have an effect on the tourist's destination preference. According to them, as far as rock hewn churches are there, there will be a high tourist flow whether there is a warm welcome from the community side or not.

V. Sufficient infrastructures

Infrastructure could be one and major input for better development of any type of tourism if it is properly designed and able to satisfy tourists' interest. However, as shown in table 16, in the case of Lalibela town the biggest proportion of the respondents 80% said that there is no sufficient infrastructure in Lalibela town and it could not be considered as potential of religious tourism development in Lalibela town. The remaining 20% of the respondents answered as infrastructure is one of the religious tourism development opportunities of the town.

VI. Fame of the site

The rock hewn churches of Lalibela, the world heritage and most important religious pilgrimage site for the Christian people of Ethiopia and the world, are well known even abroad since the 15th century. This famousness of the site could be one opportunity for religious tourism development in the study area. Based on the survey conducted, 43.1% of the respondents answered 'Yes' for the variable, 'is the familiarity of the Lalibela town both nationally and internationally the potential for religious tourism development in the area?', while the majority 56.9% of the respondents answered 'No'. This figure and the mean value $M = 1.57$ tells that the highest section of the respondents did not consider the image of the town as an important input for religious tourism development (See table 16).

The town of Lalibela was the second capital of the country during the Zagwe Dynasty and the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela are exceptionally fine examples of a long-established Ethiopian building tradition. It is one of the early twelve registered world heritage sites of the world. It was registered by the World Heritage Committee in September 1978 (unesco.org). This world heritage according to many researchers is unique in its architecture, paintings and styles and undoubtedly it ranks among the greatest religious and historical sites in the Christian world. The World heritage status of the site has contributed to a sense of shared global responsibility for its conservation and to socio-economic development through the use of heritage as a tourism resource.

VII. Religious festivals

As shown in table 16, most respondents (61.5%) accepted religious festivals as crucial religious tourism development potentials. The other 38.5% of the respondents did not understand the opportunity of religious festivals for better religious tourism development in the study area.

Figure 15: Warm and colorful religious festivals in Lalibela town



Source: The researcher's photo, 2013

Festival means simply special occasion. It can be religious, public holidays, commercial or other. In Ethiopia, there are many colorful festivals, which are tourists' interest. Lalibela town is well known as the home of Christian pilgrims. Thousands of pilgrims arrive every year to celebrate Christmas, Epiphany and Easter from every corner of Ethiopia and across the world (Mengistu, 2005). During these holidays Christians and other tourists from different parts of the world flow towards Lalibela to be part of the celebration and to share blessings of the area. Furthermore, as per the SLMA, there are many more religious festivals or holidays in the town which could be an additional means of tourist flow and religious tourism development if they could have been properly managed. These religious holidays include:

- *Kidus Yohannis* (Ethiopian New year): on *Meskerem* 01st E.C (September 11/12)
- *Meskel* (Finding of the True Cross): on *Maskaram* 17th E.C (27th September)
- *Lidet* (Ethiopian Christmas): on *Tahsas* 29th E.C (7th January)
- *Timket* (Epiphany): on *Tir* 11th E.C (19th January)
- *Sibrete Atsm* (Feast of St. Georgis): on *Tir* 18th E.C (January 26)
- Death of St. Mary: Tir 21st E.C
- *Debre Zeit*
- *Siklet* (crucifixion of Jesus Christ)
- *Fasika* (Easter)
- *Ginbot Lideta* (The birth of Mary): *Ginbot* 01st E.C (May 9)
- *Sene Mikael* (feast of Saint Lalibela): on *Sene* 12th E.C (June 20)
- *Ashendiye*: *Nehase* 16-21th E.C (August)

Suggestions were provided by key informants to develop all religious holidays besides the major and famous ones. According to them, developing all religious festivals would enable the town to attract a high number of domestic and international tourists that in return leads to greater economic return to the town as well as the country.

VIII. Tourists' rewarding word of mouth

More than seventeen domestic and international tourists were interviewed in the survey. These domestic and international tourists were from different parts of the country and the world respectively. For instance some of the international tourists were from Australia, China, Peru, Germany, Belgium, France, and Spain. Those all international and domestic tourists were asked about their feelings on the rock hewn churches and other tangible and intangible heritages they visited. And all of them were delighted about what they have seen. Some of the expressions of tourists about Lalibela and its surrounding are coated below:

'Excellent - history and age of the sites is incredible'; 'Very impressive - intricate one of the best religious ancient place'; 'Fascinating - still 'yet to be discovered'; 'It is exiting - because that is a site in activity and it is a very concentrate area in a small place.'; 'It is very beautiful place to see, very good experience,'; 'It is the second most beautiful religious site of the world only next to Jerusalem.'; 'Magnificent site'; 'The finest in Africa'; 'Equal to Egypt'; 'Architecturally different in Africa'.

IX. Story of Lalibela as a second Jerusalem

Legend states that perhaps king Lalibela was making a deliberate attempt to create a New Jerusalem on African soil, accessible to all Ethiopians that the Orthodox Christians saved from traveling long distances to Jerusalem. In the town of Lalibela, and in each church, everything has biblical implications. What is found in the holy city, Jerusalem is symbolically found in Lalibela town. That is the other reason why Lalibela is mostly called as 'Second Jerusalem'. The Christian community also believes that King Lalibela built those rock hewn churches in order to create the second Jerusalem. In Lalibela town, besides other facts, the names of various places are related to the Holy land of Jerusalem. Some of these areas include:

- Jordan - a seasonal stream that flows from northeast to south west between the first and the second group churches.

- The Mount of Olives (Debre Zeit) - The hill above the first group churches.
- The Tomb of Adam (Qeranio) - a cross hewn from huge blocks of stone which stands in front of the western face of Bete Golgotha.
- Bethlehem - the conic shaped shrine found at the center of the second group churches.
- Bithania - a small plateau in the eastern side of St. Gabriel church.
- Mount Sinai and Golgotha - the twin rock hewn churches in the first group. (Mengistu, 2004)

Furthermore, some of the churches of Lalibela have symbolic representation which shows the similarities between Jerusalem of Palestine and Lalibela of Ethiopia. For instance, Bete Mariam represents Gethesemane; Bete Medhane Alem represents the tent of the Ark of the covenant; Bete Golgotha - The Holy Sculpture; Bete Giorgis - the Ark of Noah; Bete Gabriel - The Road to Heaven; Bete Libanos - Cherubim supports the Throne of God; Bete Amanuel - Heavenly Jerusalem (Mengistu, 2004). Therefore, the Lalibela town as the second Jerusalem could be one and a big opportunity to propagate the town and the country in other parts of the world.

4.10 Challenges or Problems of religious tourism development

Table 18: The summary of problems or challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town

Variable	Yes		No		Total		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Heritage trafficking/theft of heritage	48	36.9	82	63.1	130	100	1.63
Lack of Local community involvement	69	53.1	61	46.9	130	100	1.47
Illicit drug trafficking	38	29.2	92	70.8	130	100	1.71
Bars and Night clubs	62	47.7	68	52.3	130	100	1.52
Rich people domination	68	52.3	62	47.7	130	100	1.48
Lack of town planning	37	28.5	93	71.5	130	100	1.72
Poor waste disposition and management	54	41.5	76	58.5	130	100	1.58
Limited community participation in heritage conservation	46	35.4	84	64.6	130	100	1.65
Lack of Attention from the Administration	46	35.4	84	64.6	130	100	1.65
Lack of religious festivals management	27	20.8	103	79.2	130	100	1.79
Lack of infrastructure	76	58.5	54	41.5	130	100	1.42
Group mean							1.6

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2012 and 2013

Problems or challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town incorporate theft of heritages, lack of infrastructure, illicit drug trafficking, and others mentioned in table 18 above.

4.10.1 Theft of heritages

As shown in the table above, 36.9% of the total respondents agreed that heritage trafficking by both residents and tourists was one of the major challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town. Whereas the largest part of the respondents 63.1% believed that heritage trafficking or theft was not influencing religious tourism development of the study area. The Mean value $M = 1.63$ which is above 1.5 the average of the total shows that theft and theft were not troubling problem that hindered religious tourism development in Lalibela town. The town police officer, vice Inspector Kassahun Sitotaw (the head of the office), said that heritage theft and theft was not conducted since 1997. He gave the credit to the local community for being cooperative and helpful to safeguard the world heritages. The officer added that the security of the town was in a very good condition that tourists could enjoy visiting the town. However there was rumor from the local community as there is no system to control priests and *Deacons* that there is no assurance on the safety of tangible movable heritages.

4.10.2 Lack of Local community involvement

As clearly displayed on the table above, 53.1% of the respondents which was the majority considered limited local community participation as a challenge for further religious tourism development. On the other hand the remaining proportion of the respondents 46.9% did not accept limited local community involvement in the tourism business as a problem. The mean value, $M = 1.47$ also summarizes the attitude of the local community that limited local community participation in religious tourism can hamper its development.

4.10.3 Illicit drug trafficking

Illicit drug trafficking in the 'holy town' was the other major challenge for religious tourism development according to 29.2% of the total respondents. Table 18 above also shows that 70.8% of the respondents which mean the majority did not believe that illicit drug trafficking is a big deal that influenced religious tourism development. The mean value $M = 1.71$ here reflected that the largest fraction of the respondents were against the idea '*there is illicit drug trafficking*'.

4.10.4 Other religiously prohibited activities

As shown in the above table, 47.7% of the total respondents agreed that non religious activities like night clubs and prostitution in the 'holy town' were the major challenges of religious tourism. Whereas, a little greater number of respondents 52.3% did not take religiously prohibited activities as a problem for religious tourism development in Lalibela town. The mean value, $M = 1.52$, is also testimony of the fact.

However, according to key informants and researcher's observation, activities against religious doctrine of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) like prostitution and night clubs are dangerously increasing. Moreover, most of those nightclubs were not culturally representative of the area. As a result, most of the youth were losing their identity and became careless on their own heritages, culture and traditions. This could further lead to theft and theft of heritages or distraction of heritages. Thus, the mentioned and other anti religious dogma activities were major challenges of religious tourism development in the 'holy town' of Lalibela. Furthermore, according to the information obtained from LTACTD, in the year 2013 there were 23 traditional and modern Bars or night clubs in the town. Some of those Bars like *Torpedo Teji Bet* were traditional and reflective of the areas' culture whereas most were very European in style and home of prostitution and drug transfer. Names of some bars and groceries in the town include Mekane Leilt Grocery, Bet, Dahilak Grocery, Tizita Grocery and so on (See table 19 below for further information).

Table 19: Bars and other nightlife in Lalibela town

No.	Name of the Bar	Location	Address
1	Mekane Leilt Grocery	Shimbrima	0923356787
2	Dahilak Grocery	Adebabay	0913368241
3	Yeabfire Grocery	Chifrigoch	0910072553
4	Peer Godana Grocery	Shimbrima	0913088381
5	Hermela Grocery	Dedek	0921190162
6	Etagegn Grocery	Adebabay	0910124917
7	Tizita Grocery	Chifrigoch	0333360253
8	Mountain Grocery	Komishen	0913253372
9	Begena Grocery	Shimbirema	0925876013
10	Millinium Grocery	Adebabay	0913769466
11	Lalibela Grocery	Adebabay	0920183412

Source: LTACTD, 2013

4.10.5 Monopolization of the sector by few rich people

As shown in table 18 above, the majority of the respondents 52.3%, believed that domination of a few rich people in the town's tourism industry with only limited participation of the mass

community influenced the further development of religious tourism. The remaining proportion of the respondents 47.7% were against the idea which says monopolization of tourism sectors by few rich and influential people affected religious tourism development. Therefore, it could be concluded that few rich people domination or limited mass community involvement in the business activity and decision making processes deteriorated religious tourism development.

4.10.6 Lack of town plan

Based on the data displayed in table 18, 28.5% of the respondents, think that lack of Lalibela town plan affected religious tourism development. While the larger proportion of the respondents 71.5% did not relate absence of town plan with religious tourism development. The mean value $M = 1.72$ which is closer to two the maximum value representing 'No' further strengthened the information mentioned above.

As per the information obtained via interview from the town administration municipality office, the town has master plan but the master plan itself was not complete and had no Local Development Plan (LDP). This could affect most development projects takes place in the town and overall control system. Furthermore, absence of town plan might influence the heritages which are very basic scene for religious tourism development.

4.10.7 Lack of waste management

Out of the total respondents 41.5% accepted that poor waste disposition and management in Lalibela town as a big challenge of religious tourism development. Whereas a little majority 58.5% respondents were sure that the town was tidy and there was no problem related with sanitation of the town or they did not consider lack of sanitation as a challenge for religious tourism development. The problem of waste management was also observed during the researcher's own observation; there were lots of dirty, smelly and disgusting areas in the town. Moreover, most of these areas were nearby the most precious heritages of the town, the country as well as the world. Poor waste management issue was also raised by some interviewed tourists as a big problem and as it should be solved.

The town administration municipality head *Deacon* Tesfaye Seyifu during interview said that the municipality was trying its best in cooperation with other governmental and nongovernmental

organizations as well as the community to create and maintain clean and attractive Lalibela town. According to the officer the municipality had built 16 public toilets and has a plan to build 15 more public toilets. Nevertheless researcher has observed when people excrete here and there even very near to the holy site; discarding their solid and liquid waste where ever they want and so on. Above and beyond, there were no thrush beans along the main streets of the town; hardly any solid waste depositing big boxes; no participation of the richer investors in cleaning and maintaining the hygiene of the town.

4.10.8 Lack of religious festivals management

As shown in table 18 above, only 20.8% of the respondents confirmed the existence of the problem on managing religious festivals and considered it as a challenge for religious tourism development while, the remaining majority did not.

On a global scale festivals and events with a strong cultural component are substantially increasing in numbers. Festivals in general represent one of the fastest growing types of tourist attractions in all over the world. The economic and social implications associated with them are substantial. Like other tourism activities, festivals have increasingly been identified and developed as important tourist attractions within destination areas (Hinch, 1993). Though festivals have multi dimensional benefits in terms of creating cross cultural understanding and generating huge economic return, unless properly managed and controlled with no doubt they would have costs. The costs would be greater if the festivals are related to irreplaceable heritages. Therefore, as said by some interviewed key informants, besides developing religious festivals proper management should be there. The other question was 'who is going to manage festivals?' Most key informants believe that the community themselves should be the planner and manager of their festivals because that would enable them benefited from that specific sector. They also suggested formulation of small and micro organizations separately organized to manage festivals which could operate under the SLMA and or LTAFTD.

4.10.9 Lack of heritage conservation projects

As discussed in the previous sections, religious heritages of the study area are endangered because of theft, soil degradation, flooding and other reasons. Heritage conservation projects

might be one of the solutions however the researcher could not get any heritage conservation and other related projects in the study area during the survey. As per table 18 above, 35.4% declared absence of projects working on heritage conservation and limited local community participation in heritage conservation as one of the challenges in the religious tourism development of Lalibela town. Whereas the larger proportion of the respondents 64.6% did never consider the issue as a problem in the religious tourism development processes

4.10.10 Lack of attention from the administration side

As per the survey conducted and displayed in table 18, lack of attention from the government for religious tourism was a challenge only in the views of 35.4% of the total respondents. But for those 64.6% of the respondents absence of attention from the government or administration was not a problem that might limit the development of religious tourism in the town. Though most of the respondents did not consider lack of administration attention to the tourism sector and related matters as a challenge, the researcher believes that as major economic sector tourism in general and religious tourism in particular could have been given priority in every activity of the town administration but that was not the reality.

4.10.11 Lack of infrastructure

Table 18 above also displayed the attitude of the respondents on limited infrastructures as a challenge of religious tourism development. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents 58.5% stated shortage of infrastructure as a big challenge where as 41.5% of the total respondents did not. The mean value, $M = 1.42$, also announced the fact.

4.10.12 Seasonality

Tourism industry is seasonal in its very nature where there may be high tourist flow in one time and the opposite in other times. This seasonality nature of the industry which mean both off or low and peak or high season could be considered as both opportunity and challenge. For instance low or off season can be an opportunity because during this time tourism destinations get themselves recovered from problems, employees will get a chance to take training and improvement and so on. At the same time since during the off season the number of tourists gets smaller and smaller in number, it leads to lower income for tourism business sectors and the

government itself as well as high employee turnover. The opposite is true during peak season there will be high income and job opportunity at the same time there will be distraction of resources, degradation of quality of the services and so on.

As per the information obtained via survey, one of the challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town was seasonality. According to key informants the flow of tourists is high on the major festival days of the year. That means during the remaining very vast portion of the year the town kept silent and starved as the town is highly tourist dependent. The above case where seasonality could be both an opportunity and a challenge does not work in Lalibela as well as in Ethiopia and it is only challenge because the country and the town were hosting guests below their capacity. For example, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) report of 2009, the total number of international tourists visited Ethiopia did not exceed 427,286 which is almost nothing compared with Spain which welcomed more than 52.2 million tourists (UNWTO, 2010) during the same year.

Though very recently, the flow of tourists in the destination become all year round except a bit decline during June, July and August it is still below the town capacity. Some interviewed tourists and investors suggested development of all religious and cultural festivals as a tool to minimize seasonality and better develop religious tourism for the general development of the community, the town and the country besides other efforts.

4.10.13 Hassling and Begging

Hassling means annoy continually or chronically. Most interviewed tourists, tourism professionals and respondents stated hassling as one of the most chronic challenges of religious tourism development in the study area. Most youth and kids of the area try hard to get help from the tourists through asking sponsorship for travel or education in Ethiopia or abroad. Although most were not genuine, some stories might be sadly true. This is called scams and rip-offs. *'Though hassling is common in the historic circle, it reaches at its climax when you reach at Lalibela town'* one international tourist said.

Most respondents of this study considered scamming and rip-offs as normal and all agreed as hassling could be avoided. Lalibela town police office was trying its best to control hassling though success seemed far away.

Many travelers find begging they encounter as one of the most distrusting aspects of travel in developing countries. Begging is common in all parts of Ethiopia and mostly tourists are targeted (Phillips and Carillet, 2009). Begging was also common in Lalibela town as one of the most important tourist destinations. Saint Lalibela Monastery Administration (SLMA) organized a compound to settle and help old and helpless peoples. Though the project highly reduced the problem, begging remained one of the most common challenges of tourism development in the town.

4.10.14 Entrance fee

Most heritages in the world has entrance fee that mostly used for conservation of the heritages themselves. Based on most interviewed guides and foreign tourists the entrance fee of Lalibela modified since December 2012 from 350 Birr to 50 USD (United States Dollar) which is approximately 915 Birr was unfair and could influence the future development of religious tourism. According to SLMA, the increase in the entrance fee was decided reasonably based on the study conducted by the Tourism Council (TC) of the town. The Secretariat of SLMA, *Likesiyuman Mengistu Worku* justified the core reasons behind more than two times increase in entrance fee as follows:

- *The 50 USD entrance fee is for the eleven rock hewn churches and the museum. Most tourists treat Saint Lalibela monastery as a single and simple church but the monastery is not one and simple instead a complex of more than eleven beautiful monolithic, semi monolithic and cave churches. Any single church around Lalibela town charged each international tourist with entrance fee of 100 to 150 Birr. For instance Asheten Maryam 100 Birr, Ne'akuto Le'ab 100 Birr, Yimrhane Kiristos 150 Birr and so on. When you calculate eleven churches with even one hundred Birr only it will be more than one thousand birr. Therefore we think that the fee is fair.*

- *Furthermore, there are more than 800 people working and living under the monastery administration. The monastery also has a project that helps and provides shelter for those disables and elders left with nobody to care for. Thus, the administration needs more money to strengthen its projects.*

Though the monastery administration justified their reasons as mentioned above, some tourists keep resisting the entrance fee and even some others refrain from visiting the site. The comments of two tourists on increase in entrance fee are directly copied from feedback books and quoted below.

I came to Lalibela to see the rock hewn churches. My guide book published in 2012 stated that the entrance was USD 21. I was shocked to find that this had increased by over 100% to fifty USD. I consider this to be pure profiteering. I have traveled the world in the last 40 years and have never had to pay so much to see monuments. I refused to pay this price and will be leaving negative reviews of this town on internet and in magazines. I shall also collect petition my government to stop contributing funds to the preservation of these churches.if they charge so much let them preserve themselves.

Anonymous tourist

The price increase to 50USD is a legal theft!! You will see how the number of tourists will decrease in the next future! We will send a number of emails on this issue.

Fulvia Stacul, Italy

4.10.15 Other challenges

Besides those mentioned above, stakeholders from different areas of tourism including those local communities and tourists identified the following additional challenges of religious tourism development in Lalibela town. These include corruption, limited community involvement, lack of clear buffer and core zone delimitation and management, buffer zone constructions and settlements, degradation of religious values, poor treatment of tourists, overcharging, the landscape, acculturation, lack of roadside signs, etc. Moreover, the following additional challenges of religious tourism development are identified in the data gathering process:

- Lack of knowhow on tourism from the community as well as the administration;
- Lack of communication, understanding and cooperation between the town administration, local community and the church administration;
- Lack of promotion of the destination via media like billboards, magazines, newspapers, etc.;
- Insufficient support to the development projects like ESTDP from the local community and administration;
- Lack of integrated engagement among tourist related private, public and nongovernmental institutions;
- Extreme addiction of the local youth to drug, alcoholism, and prostitution;
- Buildings around the church affecting the church environment;
- Lack of schedule of mass where tourists can attend.

4.11 Proposed Solutions for better religious tourism development

All respondents of this study, namely hoteliers, hotel managers, tour guides, tourists, government representatives, church peoples and the local community were asked to suggest solutions that would help the proper religious tourism development. According to most respondents, if religious tourism has to be better developed in Lalibela town, all problems mentioned above and others should be properly addressed by the efforts of the community, the government, the church and nongovernmental development agents. Some of the solutions include better infrastructural development; keeping the town clean, neatly and attractive; high and continues control to illicit drug trafficking; continuous advertisement and promotion; proper attention to heritage conservation and protection; high quality guest treatment with no begging and hassling; creating sense of ownership for heritages in the mind of the youth; developing and managing religious festivals; Increasing the community participation in tourism related planning, decision making and implementing; controlling cultural degradation and avoiding identity crisis via training. Furthermore, the following are additional solutions forwarded to solve the challenges mentioned above:

- Placing skilled and trained professionals in the administration areas like town administration, LTACTD and others so that proper attention could be given to tourism and heritage conservation by the government and the local community;

- Cooperation Free discussion and forum for problems and solutions between stakeholders towards religious tourism development;
- Control on architectural style, height and number of buildings in the town specifically around the monastery;
- Maintaining the live religious atmosphere of the monastery and the town through using some religious song, schedules of mass service, architectural styles of buildings;
- Put land signs, direction indicators and billboards that provide all the necessary information about the town, the site, rules and regulations, restaurants, hotels, and so on;
- Entrance fee should be fair. Mainly LTACTD officials, tour guides and tourists resisted entrance fee increment and said '*entrance fee issue should be solved as soon as possible - the church administration should not only focus on entrance fee rather they can participate in other huge tourism businesses opportunities. The focus should be on maximizing the average length of stay of tourists which is only 2 days*';
- There should be fair and balanced benefit sharing between all stakeholders;
- Participatory religious tourism development programs should be developed;
- Awareness should be created and developed on tourism and its characteristics, cultural and religious heritage conservation and customer care among the priests, administration and local community;

4.12 Efforts to solve problems or challenges

The other question raised by the researcher to the local community respondents and other stakeholders was 'what are you doing to solve problems and bring change in the religious tourism of the area?' and most respondents answered 'nothing'. Some others replied as they are working in different tourism businesses like coffee shops, souvenir selling and handicraft making that would help religious tourism move one step forward. Very few were involved in creating and spreading awareness, tree plantation, waste management, providing satisfactory services employed in different tourism sectors like hotels and so on.

Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP) - a pro-poor nongovernmental project, was working to enhance the quality and quantity of tourism products and services so as to increase the volume of tourists and foreign exchange earnings to the country while creating

job opportunity and alleviating poverty in destination was working in the country level and particularly in Lalibela town with five years plan. ESTDP was trying to construct lots of infrastructures like road and water supply. Hotel service improvement, market diversification, promotion, and institutional capacity building were other emphasis of the project. However it seemed ambition only because though the project has left less than two years only, no one could see tangible things done during the researcher's survey.

4.13 Religious tourism for sustainable development

Sustainable development meets the needs of present tourists and hosts while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (UNWTO, 2009).

Most key informants strongly believe that religious tourism if it is community based and controlled properly can be an effective means of local community empowerment, religious heritage conservation and sustainable development of the study area. According to Mr. Solomon from ESTDP, religious tourism is an inevitable development approach in the destination area like Lalibela. Religion or spirituality is just more than a way of life in a society of Lalibela. Although the theme is very sensitive, if it is handled very carefully, it will be very easier to mobilize the community for the betterment of their life and sustainability of the area. As per most key informants' view, religious tourism in Lalibela has the following advantages and disadvantages which should be considered in the development plan.

Advantages

- Ease of creating a sense of belongingness to the preservation of the cultural and historical heritages;
- The possibility of exploiting the opportunities from the sector while fulfilling one's responsibilities voluntarily;
- Foreign currency can be injected;
- Assure the conservation and preservation of religious properties and heritages

- Generate income for heritage conservation;
- Enable sharing of culture and tradition with peoples from different parts of the world;
- Enhance knowledge and creativity of people;
- It is easy to promote and conduct;
- It helps the locals to maintain the religious values and heritages;
- There are lots of business areas in the sector to engage the community.

Disadvantages

- Being sensitive in its nature, it could be easily biased by some group who have hidden personal agenda,
- The people may remain dependent on others potentials if they are not allowed to participate to their skills and abilities,
- Few people may benefit out of the process at the expense of many (the poor)
- If it is not properly controlled, it may damage religious heritages and religious environment.
- Degradation of spiritual values of the church and people (acculturation)

Therefore, it is agreed that since, the main tourist attraction of the destination are highly linked with religious elements, community based religious tourism could be an effective means of religious heritage conservation, community empowerment and sustainable development. However, as mentioned by most respondents, there should be proper plan, management, and activity framework made by cooperative effort of local community, administrations, tourism business sectors the monastery administration and other stakeholders unless, the costs could be hugely destructive and irreplaceable.

Since the history of religions in Ethiopia is almost similar to the history of the country, religions are wealthy in terms of tangible and intangible heritages. Especially the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church despite many distractions the church faced in different times is the most significant in terms of heritages and history. Besides Christianity and Islam, the footprints of Judaism and traditional African beliefs can be explored in Ethiopia. Some of the attributes suitable for religious tourism development in Ethiopia include colorful annual festivals, churches, monasteries, mosques, shrines, dances, songs, paintings dressings and other spiritual elements of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC), Islam and Judaism.

Lalibela, a town 700 km far from Addis Ababa, is a religious village and replica of Jerusalem. The rock-hewn churches of Lalibela are places of worship and amongst the most significant places of pilgrimage for believers of the EOTC and other tourists. The Ethiopian Christmas (*Genna*) and the Epiphany (*Timket*) constitute the most important festivals of the place and these attract large numbers of people each year. Besides these and other festivals, the town has much more potential for religious tourism development. The eleven world heritage rock hewn churches together with enormous ecclesiastical materials in it, welcoming Christian people, the overall religious environment of the holy town, the nickname of the town as the second Jerusalem and the surrounding churches are some of the opportunities of the site for better religious tourism development. Furthermore, the tangible and intangible dimensions of the religion contribute to the significance of the town as a sacred or religious tourism development site. However, these all mentioned and others are just resources and potentials which need to be converted into products and marketed via intensive promotion using books, publications, billboards, audiovisual media and other mechanisms. Therefore, these mentioned opportunities could be properly utilized through frequent promotion, marketing and management of the destination.

On the opposite side, in the discussion section the challenges or problems highly influencing religious tourism development in the Christian holy town of Ethiopia were identified and discussed. Some of them includes begging, hassling, limited infrastructure, expansion of religiously prohibited activities like illicit drug trafficking, prostitution, and night clubs, limited community participation in decision making, theft and degradation of heritages, and lack of good governance. Furthermore, tourism and/or religious tourism development was facing the following additional challenges: lack of linkage between different economic sectors; lack of

awareness in the local community and administration; lack of cooperation among stakeholders of tourism in the town like the town administration, hoteliers, local farmers, tour guides, the monastery administration and others.

Those mentioned above and other problems or challenges were affecting tourism in general and religious tourism in particular of the study area directly or indirectly. Therefore, appropriate measures to avoid or minimize those mentioned and other problems or challenges are inevitable if religious tourism has to be better developed. Some suggested solutions were creating good administration, conserving religious heritages and culture, involving local community in the decision making process, appreciating tourism investment, developing rules and regulations for the visitors, readjusting entrance fee, developing the culture of communication among stakeholders, and so on.

Community is the healer and the killer of any development activity. Most development activities which did not involve and consider locals failed to achieve their objectives. Local community participation in development decision making activities could be more successful if it is assisted with good general knowledge about the sector. However, most of the communities of Lalibela town were not equipped with all the necessary knowledge especially in the field of tourism. Most probably due to lack of awareness, knowhow and other reasons like administration problems, participation of local community on tourism development decision making activities was not satisfactory. The subjects of this study advised local community involvement in any tourism development issues for better and successful religious tourism development in Lalibela town.

Heritages are representatives of a community that enables to depict the lifestyles of the past, the present and the future generation. Most of the respondents of this study stated as the religious heritages of the town were not properly conserved and secured. As mentioned in the discussion section, despite the efforts of LTACTD theft, soil erosion and flooding were some of the threats of irreplaceable religious heritages of the study area. Here religious tourism development could serve as one of the tools for religious heritage conservation as it generates revenue which can be used for the construction of new museums or treasure houses, management of drainage systems, control of flooding and strengthening security system.

As discussed in the previous sections, though tourism has multiple benefits that could change the whole world, it is also dangerous and might lead to destruction of countless natural and cultural resources and environment. For that matter, whenever tourism development is included in the policy, its negative impacts also should be taken into consideration. Therefore, questions of policy makers here must include how to bring sustainable development in the development area through tourism? Which type of tourism is to develop with reference to the potentials of the area and the benefits that type of tourism will bring to the destination, and so on. Accordingly, more sustainable type of tourism which benefit all the stakeholders without devastating the resources that will help the future generation to fulfill their needs and wants is the most wanted one. In other words, tourism that has much economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefit with a minimal cost is more preferable. Thus, based on the features of religious tourism, the resources available, and its socio cultural, economic and environmental significances, religious tourism is identified as more sustainable and appropriate development agent than any other types of tourism in the study area. However, alike any other types of tourism, unless proper control mechanisms are established and applied, religious based tourism might lead to deterioration of priceless heritages, culture, and environment.

To conclude, in the discussion section, it has been stated that Lalibela town has ample religious tourism resources; there are problems or challenges that affect religious tourism development; the town is dependent on tourism; there is high and increasing number of tourist arrival in the town; religious tourism is community based, more sustainable, and less seasonal in nature. Therefore, if problems are minimized or alleviated, opportunities are utilized and some promotion and management strategies are designed and implemented under the local community control, religious tourism can be a tool for religious heritage conservation, local community empowerment and finally sustainable development at the town and the country level.

5.2. Recommendations

Depending on the findings of the study and realities observed, the researcher forwarded the following valuable recommendations.

- In the survey discussion section, it was observed that one of the problems affecting religious tourism development has been lack of sufficient knowledge from the local community and the administration side on the sector. Awareness problems hamper the community's participation in the sector and makes benefit sharing unfair. Limited awareness also influences decisions made by administrations. Therefore, as awareness is the key to achieve sustainable development, the first and most important focus of the government or any other stakeholders should be on creating awareness of the local community and the administrative staffs on tourism in general and religious tourism in particular through continuous training and capacity building. Building the capacity of the local community in different dimensions will further empower them to be part and parcel of any development activity.
- The other major challenge of religious tourism development in Lalibela town was inadequate infrastructure. Though infrastructures such as road network, water supply, electric power, telecommunication, transportation system and others are important inputs in any type of tourism development, almost all mentioned infrastructures in the town were not adequately constructed and distributed. Especially road problem was more than others. Therefore, the government or administration of the town, or any other concerned body should give urgent emphasis and fulfill all the infrastructural inquires mainly road and transportation both to and within.
- Heritages are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration, points of reference and identity. Heritages are also important tourist attractions which generate foreign exchange. However, in Lalibela town, heritages both tangible and intangible were in big trouble because of lack of treasure houses, theft, lack of clear control system, flooding and erosion. Thus, for better religious tourism development in the area, everybody including governmental and nongovernmental organizations, investors, tourists and local community should stand together against heritage theft and degradation. A clear system

of heritage control should be established, flooding and erosion should be managed by planting trees in the surrounding area, appropriate treasure houses or museums should be established.

- As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the biggest challenge of religious tourism development lies on the town administration. The administration has limited capacity in terms of material and trained human power; there is limited or no communication, cooperation and integrity between the administration and other stakeholders; there is corruption (Nepotism); and lack of attention to the tourism sector from the administration. Therefore, in order to develop religious tourism and finally bring sustainable development in the town and the country, the administration should equip itself with all the necessary resources; corruption should be avoided through introduction of transparency and accountability system; there should be forum for discussion between all stakeholders annually, biannually or quarterly that issues can be solved, and cooperation and integrity can be created; the administration of the town should also give appropriate emphasis to the tourism sector that all other development plans, activities and projects consider tourism in general and religious tourism in particular.
- Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors as it has considerable potential in linking different economic sectors and serving as a catalyst that minimizes economic leakage and creates market for other sectors of the economy. Since there is lack of linkage between different sectors of the economy in Lalibela town, the administration mainly Lalibela town culture and tourism department should create linkage between different sectors mainly agriculture and tourism. In order to create linkage between different sectors the administration may organize youth into small and micro organizations that produce agricultural products in a modern way (agro-farms) and linking them with hotels and restaurants of the town so that a large number of youth and other community can get job opportunity and high dependency on tourism can be reduced.
- As it was discussed so many times, because of its rich religious tourism resources, Lalibela town is the most fundamental destination for religious tourism development. However, those resources were not yet properly identified and promoted except the rock

hewn churches and very few festivals. Even those few promotions were seasonal, and focus on historical, archaeological, cultural, and architectural aspects of the churches with very little or no emphasis on the religious aspects, ecclesiastical objects and as a holy town. Therefore, Lalibela town should be promoted frequently and correctly with great emphasis on the religious atmospheres using new mottos like, Lalibela as a religious paradise, as the second Jerusalem, as a holy town, as home of year round religious hot and colorful festivals and so on. At the same time, all the identified religious tourism resources or opportunities of the town should be converted into products and promoted using booklets, books, billboards, magazines, newsletters, newspapers and words of mouth.

- Festivals or special occasions are very important tourist attractions. In Lalibela, religious festivals like Christmas (*Lidet*) and Epiphany (*Timket*) are very famous but not the only religious holidays. Other religious holidays like *Kidus Yohanis* (Ethiopian New year), *Sibrete Atsm* (Feast of St. Georgis), *Debre Zeit*, *Siklet* (the crucifixion of Jesus Christ), *fasika* (Easter), *Meskel* (Finding of the true Cross) *Ginbot Lideta* (the birth of Virgin Mary), *Sene Mikayel* (the feast of Saint Lalibela), *Ashendiye* (The rise of Saint Mary) and others should be properly developed and promoted.
- Information is power for every development and lifeblood for tourism destinations. Signage is one way of delivering information to guests in most tourism destinations. But, in the town of Lalibela which can be called as 'an open air religious museum', no one could see direction signs, description of the site, billboards with rules and regulations and so on. Thus, Lalibela Town Administration Culture and Tourism Department should work on providing free information access to tourists via billboards, banners, roadside signs, landmarks and others containing all the necessary information.
- Though minimized with the efforts of police and the Saint Lalibela Monastery Administration, begging and hassling are still big problems of religious tourism development in the study area. As a result, cooperative effort of all stakeholders should be forwarded to avoid the problem from the root. Some of the mechanisms could be providing vocational training and organizing the youth in small and micro organizations

to work in different business areas like Car Parking, Shoe keeping, modern farming and so on.

- Expansion of activities against the religious dogma, like prostitution, drug trafficking, and imitation of foreign culture become big threats of religious tourism development in the 'holy town'. So that, the local community especially the youth should maintain their identity, refrain from prostitution and drug trafficking. The town police office and the monastery administration should also avoid these activities through lessons punishments.
- There are resistances from tourists and tour guides on the rise of entrance fee to USD 50 by SLMA. This rise may reduce the length of stay of tourists, the number of tourist flow, and the overall business activity around the site because cost of living is one of the criteria of tourists' choice of destination. So that, the monastery administration should think on modifying the entrance fee of foreign tourists and work on setting just entrance fee for domestic visitors; participating in different economical activities; minimizing seasonality and maximizing the length of stay of tourists through developing festivals and activities.
- There are critics on the service quality and quantity of hotels especially during peak season. At the same time, some tour guides are accused with tip soliciting and providing wrong or contradicting information. Thus, tour guides should act ethically and equip themselves with all the necessary knowledge. Hotels should provide quality service, the administration also should invite investors and create conducive environment for hotel investment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire in English

**Addis Ababa University
College of Development Studies
Centre for Environment and Development
Program of Tourism and Development**

Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia

Questionnaire for Local community

Dear respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to study the '*Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia.*' The information you provide will be used as part of a Master thesis research being conducted by Berhanu Esubalew and supervised by **J. Tribhuvan (PhD)**, college of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University. The information gathered will be used solely for academic consumption. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated and is of great importance. **Thank you for your cooperation in advance!**

Instruction

- Please do not write your name
- Please make a check mark (✓) to your responses
- You can give more than one answer for a given question.

Part one: Personal Profile

1. Sex: Male Female

2. What is your major means of livelihood?

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tour operation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Souvenir selling | <input type="checkbox"/> Church employee | |

If other, please specify _____

Part Two:

The statements listed below are all related to community participation in heritage conservation decision making and income sharing in religious tourism activities in Lalibela town. In each statement you are expected to rate from a scale of one to five. **A score of five indicates that you strongly agree with the statement, and a score of one indicates that you strongly disagree.**

NB.

1= Strongly disagree(SD)

2= Disagree (D)

3= Unknown (U)

4= Agree (A)

5= Strongly agree (SA)

No	I. Community Awareness, Capacity building, Involvement and benefit Sharing	1 SD	2 D	3 U	4 A	5 SA
1	I know about Tourism (Religious Tourism) and its benefits.					
2	There is awareness program given by different bodies on tourism in general and Religious tourism in particular.					
3	Governmental and non Governmental organizations has built my capacity to participate in RT.					
4	I put all the awareness on tourism or Religious Tourism given from government in to practice.					
5	I am participating in Tourism development					
6	I am entirely dependent on tourism activities in the town.					
7	I believe that tourism in the Lalibela Town is community based and participatory.					
8	I have shown a clear improvement in my standard of living after joining tourism business.					
9	If done well, Participatory Religious Tourism has better economic benefit than other means of livelihood in the Town.					
10	I believe that local community should participate in Religious tourism development and minimization of problems that affect the progress.					

II. Barrier Assessment and Possible solutions

1. What barrier hinders you to participate in any affairs of Religious tourism development past and present, if any?

- Lack of government consent
- Centralization of public administration
- Lack of communication and understanding between government and community
- Elite domination
- Low level of awareness

If there are other barriers, please specify _____

2. What do you think are the possible solutions for the barriers in the question No. 1? Please mention it.

3. Please give generalization on the participation of you and the other local community on any tourism development activity.

No	III. Religious Heritage Conservation	1 SD	2 D	3 U	4 A	5 SA
1	Religious Heritages are well protected in Lalibela.					
2	I participate in heritage conservation activities.					
3	I have a sense of ownership for Heritages in Lalibela					
4	I believe that local community should participate in heritage conservation.					

IV. Benefit Assessment questions

1. Are you beneficial of tourism sector in Lalibela?

- Yes No

2. If you have said 'yes' for question No. 1, what kind of benefit you have got?

- Income
- Job opportunity
- Water supply
- Road infrastructures
- Electric power
- Schools and colleges

If any other please mention _____

3. If you have said 'No' for question No. 1, what is/are the reason behind?

- Because you are not interested
- The government didn't allow you
- The administration didn't support you
- You don't have enough budgets
- You don't have the required knowledge

If any other please mention _____

V. Prospects and challenge Assessment

1. What are the potentials of Lalibela for Religious tourism development?

- The Rock hewn churches of Lalibela and other churches nearby
- The heritages in the Churches
- The welcoming people of the area
- The sufficient infrastructures
- The familiarity of the site
- Religious festivals

If any other please mention

2. What are the problems that are affecting religious tourism development in Lalibela?

- Theft and Taft of heritages
- Lack of Local community involvement
- Elicit trafficking
- None religious activities in the holy town like Bars
- Monopolization of the sector by some rich people only
- Religious festivals mismanagement
- Lack of town plan
- Inappropriate waste management
- Lack of heritage conservation projects that engaged the local community
- Lack of Attention from the Administration
- Lack of infrastructure

If there are other or additional challenges, please specify

3. As a stakeholder, what are you doing to solve the problems stated in the question No. 2 and what other community you think should do? Please mention.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation!!

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in Amharic

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የሀገር ልማት ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የቱሪዝም እና ልማት ትምህርት ክፍል

የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም እድገት መልካም አጋጣሚዎች እና ተግዳሮቶች በላሊበላ ከተማ፣ አማራ ክልል፣ ኢትዮጵያ

ውድ የጥናቱ ተሳታፊዎች፣

የዚህ መጠይቅ አላማ የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም እድገት በላሊበላ ከተማ ያሉትን መልካም አጋጣሚዎች፣ ጥቅሞች፣ ተግዳሮቶች እና የማህበረሰቡን ተሳትፎ ለማጥናት ነው። እርስዎ የሚሰጡት መረጃ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሀገር ልማት ጥናት ኮሌጅ ስር የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ማሟያቸውን ለሚሰሩት ለአቶ ብርሀኑ አሰባለው አንደ ዋና ግብአት ሆኖ ያገለግላል። መረጃውም ለትምህርት አገልግሎት ብቻ የሚውል ሲሆን ለጥናቱ መሳካት ለሚያደርጉት ትብብር ከወዲሁ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

የጥናቱ ተሳታፊዎች፣ የላሊበላ ከተማ ነዋሪዎች

ማስታወሻ፡

- ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም
- ለሚሰጡት ምላሽ የቲክ (✓) ምልክት ያድርጉ
- ለአያዳንዱ ጥያቄ ከአንድ በላይ መልስ መስጠት ይቻላል።

ክፍል አንድ፡ አጠቃላይ ግለሰባዊ መረጃ

1. ያታ ወንድ ሴት

2. በምን ስራ አራሰዎን (እና ቤተሰብዎን) ያስተዳድራሉ?

- በግብርና በአስጎብኘነት(ጋይድነት) በሆቴል ንግድ
- በሆቴል መስተንግዶ በቱር አፕሬሽን
- በየገጸበረከት ዕቃ ሽያጭ በቤተክርስቲያን አገልግሎት

ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱ _____

ክፍል ሁለት፡ ሀ

ከዚህ በታች በተመለከተው ሰንጠረዥ የተቀመጡት ሀሳቦች የእርስዎን የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም ግንዛቤ፣ የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም በላሊበላ ከተማ ያሉትን መልካም አጋጣሚዎች፣ ተግዳሮቶች እና የማህበረሰቡን ግንዛቤ፣ ተሳትፎ እና ተጠቃሚነትን የሚለኩ ናቸው። እያዳንዱን አረፍተ ነገር ካለው እውነት ጋር በማነፃፀር ከአንድ እስከ አምስት ባሉ ነጥቦች ይመዘኑ። በእርስዎ ምዘና አምስት ነጥብ በነገሩ በጣም መስማማታዎን፣ አንድ ነጥብ ደግሞ በጣም አለመስማማታዎን ይጠቁማል።

ማስታወሻ፡

1. = በጣም አልስማማም (በአ)

ሌላ ካለ እባክዎን ይጻፉ _____

2. ከላይ በጥያቄ ቁጥር 1 ላይ ለተገለጸው/ጹት ችግር/ሮች መፍትሄ ምን ይመስልዎታል?

3. በማንኛውም አይነት የቱሪዝም ልማት ጉዳይ የእርስዎ እና የሌሎች የማህበረሰቡ አባላት ተሳትፎን በተመለከተ ጠቅላላ ያለ አስተያየት ካለዎት ቢገልጹልኝ?

ተቁ	የቅርሶች ጥበቃ ና የማህበረሰቡ ተሳትፎ	1 (በአ)	2 (አ)	3 (እአ)	4 (አ)	5 (በአ)
1	በላሊበላ ከተማ የሚገኙ ቅርሶች በአግባቡ ተጠብቀዋል።					
2	በሀይማኖት ቅርሶች ጥበቃ ውስጥ የራሴን አስተዋጽኦ እያበረከትኩ ነው።					
3	የሀይማኖት ቅርሶችን እንደ ራሴ ሀብት እቆጥራለሁ።					
4	የላሊበላ ከተማ እና አካባቢው ማህበረሰብ በቅርስ ጥበቃ ውስጥ መሳተፍ አለበት ብዬ አምናለሁ።					

ሐ. የጥቅም ምዘና ዳሰሳ ጥያቄዎች

1. በላሊበላ ከተማ ባለው የቱሪዝም ልማት ተጠቃሚ ነዎት?

አዎ አይደለሁም

2. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 1 መልስዎ :አዎ: ከሆነ ምን ምን አይነት ጥቅሞች አይገኙ ነው?

- የአለት ገቢ
- የሰራ እድል
- የውሀ አቅርቦት
- የመንገድ መሰረተ ልማት
- የመብራት አቅርቦት
- ትምህርት ቤቶችና ኮሌጆች

ሌላ ካለ እባክዎን ይግለጹ

3. ለጥያቄ ቁጥር 1 መልስዎ :አይደለም: ከሆነ ምክንያቱ ምንድን ነው?

- ፍላጎት ስለሌለዎ
- መንግስት ስላልፈቀደልዎ /ስለ ከለከለዎ/
- ከአስተዳደሩ ተገቢ የሆነ ድጋፍ ስላላገኙ

- በቂ የሆነ ገንዘብ ስለሌለዎ
- ተገቢ የሆነ እውቀት ስለሌለዎ/የእውቀት ማነስ/

ሌላ ካለ አባክዎን ይግለጹ _____

መ. የላሊበላን የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም አቅም እና ተያያዥ ችግሮች ለማወቅ የሚያስችሉ የዳሰሳ ጥያቄዎች

1. የላሊበላ ከተማ የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝምን ለማሳደግ የሚያስችል ምን ምን አቅም አላት ብለው ያስባሉ?

- የላሊበላ ውቅር አብያተ ክርስቲያናት እና በአካባቢው ያሉ ሌሎች ታሪካዊ አድባራት
- በአብያተ-ክርስቲያናቱ ውስጥ ያሉ ቅርሶች
- እንግዳ ተቀባዩ የላሊበላ ህዝብ
- በቂ የሆኑ መሰረተ ልማቶች
- የከተማው አለማቀፍ ታዋቂነት
- አመታዊ ሀይማኖታዊ በዓላት

ሌላ ካለ አባክዎን ይግለጹ _____

2. በላሊበላ ከተማ የሀይማኖት ቱሪዝም እድገት ተግዳሮቶች ናቸው ብለው የሚያስቧቸው ምን ምን ናቸው?

- የሀይማኖታዊ ቅርሶች ዘረፋ እና ስርቆት
- ውሱን የማህበረሰብ ተሳትፎ
- የእጽ አዘዋዋሪነት እና ተጠቃሚነት መጨመር
- የጭፈራ ቤቶች እና ሴተኛ አዳሪነት መስፋፋት
- የቱሪዝም ልማቱ በጥቂት ሀብታሞች ላይ ብቻ የተመሰረተ መሆን
- ሀይማኖታዊ በዓላትን በአግባቡ መቆጣጠር አለመቻል
- የከተማ ፕላን አለመኖር
- አላግባብ ቆሻሻን ማስወገድ
- ማህበረሰቡን ያማከለ የቅርሶች ጥበቃ መርሀ-ግብር አለመኖር
- የአካባቢው አስተዳደር ለቱሪዝም ልማቱ ትኩረት መንፈግ/አለመስጠት/
- የመሰረተ ልማቶች አጥረት

ሌሎች ካሉ አባክዎን ይግለጹ _____

3. እንደ አንድ የባለድርሻ አካል እርስዎ ከላይ በጥያቄ ቁጥር 2 የተጠቀሱትን ችግሮች ለመፍታት ምን እየሰሩኑ? ለሌላው ማህበረሰብ ምን መልዕክት አለዎ? አባክዎን ይግለጹ::

ለዚህ ጥናት መሳካት ላደረጉት ትብብር ሁሉ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ::

Appendix 3: Semi structured interview questions

Addis Ababa University
College of Development Studies
Centre for Environment and Development
Program of Tourism and Development

Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia

The purpose of this interview is to study the '*Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia*'. The information you provide will be used as part of a Master thesis research being conducted by Berhanu Esubalew and supervised by **J. Tribhuvan (PhD)**, college of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University. The information gathered will be used solely for academic consumption. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated and is of great importance.

Respondents: Experts and officials from

- Lalibela town Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau

Interview Checklist for Experts and Officials

- **Potentials Assessment**

1. What are the major potentials of Lalibela for Religious tourism development (Resources, Religious festivals, Infrastructure, Society, Administration, etc.)?
2. How many hotels, tour guides, tour operation companies, museums, etc., are there in the town and their standard? Any other infrastructures?
3. How is the worldwide status of the town, and your relationship with different funding, companies, and Conservation and maintenance projects?

- **Benefit assessment**

4. Would you state the direct and indirect benefits of thus all potentials [**Economical**(income, job opportunity, foreign exchange,...), **Social**(infrastructural development, Living standard), **Cultural** (Protection and preservation of culture, Heritage), etc.,]?
5. How much income you collected from tourism in the last five years?
6. What do you think are the mechanisms to maintain and double the benefits of all those potentials?

- **Problem Assessment**

7. Please state challenges of tourism in general and religious tourism development in particular in Lalibela town (Event Management, local community related, Infrastructure etc.,)?
8. How many night clubs are there in the town and what do you think about their impact on the sight as a religious tourism destination?
9. What do you think are the causes of this all problems or challenges?

10. Do you have any measures taken before or planned to solve those challenges?
11. What possible measurements do you think should be taken in order to develop religious tourism as a means of local community empowerment?

- **Local community involvement**

12. What are the major means of local community livelihood?
13. How is the local community involvement in the entire tourism activities?
14. In what specific tourism activities the local communities are participating?
15. How do you rate the amount of income the local community obtains from tourism sector? Did you give training or plan to give training on Tourism for Local community? and is it effective?
16. What are the success/failure factors for the local community participation in religious tourism development?
17. How to involve the local community in the religious tourism activities more intensively? What do you think about using Religious tourism as a means of local community empowerment and sustainable development of the area of Lalibela?
18. What do you think the possible advantages and pitfalls of the local community based religious tourism development?
19. Do you think that Community Based Religious Tourism (CBRT) is an effective means of religious heritage conservation and sustainable development?
20. Finally anything you want to add?

Respondents:

- **Managers of Hotels in Lalibela town.**
- **Tour operation companies in Lalibela town.**

1. How do you rate the benefits you obtain from tourism?
2. Who are your employees? Locals or from other areas?
3. How much do you pay annually in the form of tax?
4. What do you think about the contribution of religious sites (Lalibela) as a means of tourism development?

Respondents: Tourists (Both Domestic and International)

1. Do you have experience of Religious sites in other countries before?
2. How do you rate Lalibela with other religious sites of the world?
3. What are the problems do you think hinder Lalibela town from being effective religious tourism development? Problems you observe here?
4. What do you think are the solutions based on other country experiences?

Thank you very much for your cooperation !

Appendix 4: Non participatory observation check list

**Addis Ababa University
College of Development Studies
Centre for Environment and Development
Program of Tourism and Development**

Religious tourism development: the case of Lalibela town, Amhara region, Ethiopia

None Participant Observation Checklist

No	Items	Observed	Not Observed
1	Local communities' awareness for Tourism and its economic, environmental and social significance.		
2	Community involvement in Religious tourism and Heritage conservation.		
3	Town administration Culture and tourism officials' knowhow about Religious tourism.		
4	Religious Heritage Conservation Projects by NGO or others.		
5	Active and strong administration(Governmental) support for Religious Tourism Development (RTD)		
6	Economic reward from Religious tourism		
7	Fair tourism benefit sharing between the stakeholders		
8	Night clubs, Elicit trafficking, and others which affect the religious atmosphere of the area.		
9	Local communities' welcoming behavior.		
10	Well protected religious sites and Colorful festivals		
11	Well protected, Managed and organized Religious Heritages museums.		
12	Lack of adequate Infrastructures.		
13	Adequate skilled man power in the area of tourism in the town.		