

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF CULTURAL BROKERS AS TOUR  
GUIDES: THE CASE OF LALIBELA, NORTHERN WOLLO**

**TESFAYE BELAY**

**ATHESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
ANTHROPOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Addis Ababa University**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**JANUARY, 2017**

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**Tesfaye Belay**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Getachew Senishaw (Phd), for his invaluable guidance and advice, encouragement and polite treatment. Without his endless support, this study would not have been completed. He has spent countless hours reading my work and has never shown me impatience and despair. Next, my deepest appreciation goes to local tour guides of Lalibela who participated in my fieldwork as data sources. Especially Moges Abebe, the chairman of foreign tourists guides, Hayimanot, the secretary of the association, Abraham coordinator of the association, Ato Fasil, expert of the information desk of tourism bureau, Deacon Maregu, the secretary of domestic tourists guide. I am deeply indebted to these individuals for their cooperation in allowing and providing me with all the required data.

I also want to express my sincere thanks to the Department of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University for accepting me in the program and providing me with all the academic and financial requirements. I am also grateful to thank ARCCH for giving me the opportunity for learning. I would also like to express my thanks to my classmates especially Yerosen Mesfin, Solomon Debebe and Wogayehu who had consulted me with regard to the topic of study. I am also indebted full for all who were on the side of me during the research endeavor.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AMTTWA=Ad Medhane Alem Tourist Trade Work Association

ARSOVA=Amhara Regional State Organization of Voluntary Association

ARSTCPDB=Amhara Regional State Tourism, Culture and Parks Development  
Bureau

AYTWO=Abune Yosef Trade Work Organization

DSLTO=Debre Sina Lodge Tourist Organization

DTGAL=Domestic Tourists Guiding Association in and around Saint Lalibela

EFTGA=European Federation of Tourist Guide Association

FTGAL=Foreign Tourists Guiding Association in Lalibela

ICOMOS=International Council on Monuments and Sites

LDCTB=Lasta District Culture and Tourism Bureau

TATTWE=Tadyos Amba Tourist Trade Works Enterprise

TGAL= Tourist Guiding Association in and around Lalibela

TSSRAL=Tourists Supportive Services Rendering Association in Lalibela

WFTGA=World Federation of Tourist Guide Association

## **ABSTRACT**

*This study has aimed to understand the roles of tour guides in the tourism industry in Lalibela. Specifically, an attempt has been made; to investigate how the local guides conceptualize tour guiding, the interpretive strategies of the local guides, and their awareness about tourists' cultural differences and their general knowledge about tourists' attractions. The study has also extended in identifying challenges that local tour guides experience in their endeavor and finding out strategies employed by local tour guides to interpret tourist attractions. To address these issues, data have been collected through interview, survey questionnaire, participant observation and Focused Group Discussion. Both the interview and FGD data have been first transcribed and then including the data collected through survey questionnaire analyzed and categorized thematically. Then, descriptive and thematic analysis has been employed in the analysis stage of the study to describe, interpret and explain the data. The data has been analyzed in relation with concepts, theory and literatures discussed in the literature review.*

*The study findings have showed that five types of local tour guides associations found in Lalibela. Cultural mediations: mediation of access, mediation of information and mediation of encounters; leadership and safety; ambassador; sales representatives; education and promotion; and safeguarding of heritages are the major roles of local guides as identified in the study. The local guides underlined the importance of multi disciplinary knowledge in the case of Lalibela so as to properly address different questions raised by tourists. As a result, religious, historical, geographical, architectural, geological and archeological knowledge, and language ability, cultural awareness and good code of ethics have been found as major requirements for local tour guides of Lalibela.*

*The findings have showed that local tour guides of Lalibela apply more or less same interpretive strategies in the introductory part: they highlights the three kingdoms such as the Axumite, the Zagwe and the Gonderian. However they devote more time for the Zagwe dynasty especially on the history of Lalibela. The findings have further depicted that tour guides have experienced language and culture related problems in their tour guiding practice. The findings of the study have displayed several challenges of local guides of Lalibela encompassing seasonality of the business, unavailability of training so as to overcome their language problems, and upgrade their competency in multi-disciplinary skills and knowledge with regard to the nature of tourists' attractions. Furthermore the expansion of group visit and signboards are stated by the local guides as problems, which threaten their earnings. Various types of training including on-job-training related to destination knowledge, language skills and cultural differences have been recommended for the development of local tour guides profession. Finally, conducting a large scale survey research on the other aspects of tour guides has been indicated as an area of further study.*

*In general, some of the roles uncovered in this study are also mentioned and others are either overlooked or implicitly stated in the models of tour guiding described in the study. However, unlike the models of tour guides discussed so far in this study not only the services offered by tour guides are the focus of study. A wide range of issues related with local tour guides as mentioned above are investigated. The study has clearly revealed as local guides of Lalibela are cultural brokers too.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

If there are two persons and groups of persons from different life experiences and different cultures, then it is likely to be difficult for them to understand and communicate with each other. In order to assist in transactions between persons and groups, the concept of ‘broker’ may be used to describe the position of intermediary and interpreter. (Geertz, 1960; Pi sunyer, 1973 ;Wolf, 1956). Those persons who learn enough of two cultural traditions, and of the ethnic and social features, which separate groups, and spend a good deal of their time in attempting to bridge these differences may be referred to as “culture-brokers.” Thus cultural brokers may serve as intermediaries’ at the most basic level—bridging the cultural gaps by communicating differences and similarities between cultures.

The term cultural broker was first coined by anthropologists who observed that certain individuals acted as middlemen, negotiators, and brokers between colonial governments and the societies they ruled. Different definitions of cultural brokerage have evolved over time. One definition states that cultural brokerage is the act of bridging, linking, and mediating between persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict and producing change (Geertz, 1960; Jezewski, 1990). A cultural broker is defined as a go-between, one who advocates on behalf of another individual or group (Jezewski and Sotnik, 2001).

Cultural brokers are usually thought to have especial skills in adapting easily to a new situation, and taking advantage of their brokerage position in order to elevate their own status and economic position. Traders and politicians have been “ culture brokers for centuries, but they have recently been joined by many others in the more complicated, international, pluralistic, cosmopolitan contemporary societies which have so much more elaborate systems of communication and transportation than ever before. Guides are among the new “cultural brokers.” Guides must both interpret the culture which they represent, and also understand the tourists from another culture (Geertz, 1960; Wolf, 1956). Tourism has grown rapidly in recent decades and become the largest global industry, at least in terms of paid-up capital and

employment opportunities (Lickorish, 1997). Both developing and developed countries are paying increasing attention to tourism by seeking to capitalize on its diverse economic, social, cultural and environmental potentials and so bring more revenue to their economy. In relation with the development of tourism, the presence and significance of guides has increased in many locals. Managing the right number and quality of hotel services, airlines seats, tour guides among others are required to meet the growing demand of visitors.

A tourist guide is the most prominent practitioners of interpretation in the tourism industry. He/she escorts visitors and interprets the natural and cultural heritage of an area in the language of their choice. Normally, he/she possesses a specific area qualification usually issued and recognized by the appropriate authority (Magablih, 1999). He/she is a major participant in the communication process and an efficient link between tourist destinations and tourists. In fact, as a national 'ambassador', he/she is regarded as the best representative of a tourist destination and its culture.

The government and tourist guides overwhelmingly can influence tourists' perception and images about tourist destination areas (Dahles, 2002). More than a mere purveyor of information, the guide can play a significant role in influencing policy with regard to the complex issues raised by mass tourism. However, guiding is not just about giving people facts and figures about a destination. Scholars have recognized the role of guides in conveying information, offering explanations, and developing narratives and it has become a research (App and Wong, 2001; Cohen, 1985; Dahles, 2002; Holloway, 1981; Pearce, 1984).

In fact, tourist guides are front-line staffs who are very much responsible for the overall impression and satisfaction with tour services offered by a destination along the value chain. Tour guide is an important attribute to the success of tour (Geva and Goldman, 1991). Tourist guide is also regarded as an important element in selecting a charter tour<sup>1</sup> (Mossberg, 1995). Owing to my six years work experience in the tourism industry, I could comprehend the paramount impacts of tour guides and multi-facets of their roles in the sector. Being very much

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<sup>1</sup> Charter tour is a kind of package of services offered to a visitor or visitors by a tour company or travel agent including transport services, hotel arrangements, meals and guiding services. In return visitors pay for these package services.

passionate in the tourism industry, frequent visit to Lalibela plus reading of several literatures on the roles of tour guides particularly the role of culture brokerage inspired me to study the different aspects of tour guides. Furthermore, the inscription of Lalibela as world heritage site by UNESCO in 1978 and becoming a place of attraction for almost 90% of tourists flocking to Ethiopia (World Bank, 2006) became additional factors in selecting Lalibela as a case study area. Thus, this paper deals with the current state of tour guides and their roles particularly their culture brokerage in the tourism industry in Lalibela.

## **1.2. Statements of the Problem**

In recent years, the tourism industry in Ethiopia has been witnessed in remarkable growth in several aspects. Enormous studies revealed that the number of both local and foreign tourists visiting the country has been increasing. Tourism has been subsidizing the country's economy in both creating employment opportunities and earning foreign currency. However, the tourism industry is so far not well developed irrespective of the country's enormous tourism potentials.

A number of factors seem to have been intertwinedly accounting for the least development of the country's tourism industry. Recently the government of Ethiopia seems to be awakened for an attempt to overcome this problem in spite of due emphasis merely to some sectoral developments. These involves the development of the hotel industry by launching a new investment policy which encourage investments in hotels, the construction of roads so as to make tourist destination sites accessible to tourists and in investing transportation and communication sectors among others. However, low attention has been given to tour guides in the development of the tourism industry, which implies that the role of tour guides in the sector has been engulfed by a number of factors including meager recognition to the sector by the government.

Concomitantly the efforts tour guides can exert in the development of the tourism sector is obvious that are underrated by the academicians, and by other concerned bodies in the country. Indeed review of several literatures depict that tour guides are powerful actors or agents who can kill /cure the tourism industry. These studies also put tour guides in the fore front position of all factors for the development of the sector. Tour guides act as a bridge between the host and tourists. The performance of tour guides at tourism destinations affects visitors' satisfaction by

inducing a good or bad memory in the mind of tourists which in return determine the likelihood of tourists returning. Tour guides also play a significant role in image of the destination by determining what aspects of the host culture they are exposed to tourist and by hiding information which can creates bad image of the destinations in the minds of tourists.

Considering these multifaceted tour guide roles and gaining particular importance of the job of a tour guide as a bridge actor between different cultures (Salazar, 2005) within the process of globalization, lack of adequate researches on tour guide roles and performances irrespective of their endeavor for development of the sector in the world in general and in Ethiopia in particular have been mentioned several times in older and more recent literatures. Even if the tourism industry has been growing in the last decades, and tour guides have probably been existing since the first areas of travel, tour guiding has not been in the focus of research (Black and Weiler, 2005). This is more problematic in Ethiopia in particular. It is rather described as a dearth of empirical research in this field (Black and Weiler, 2005). In Ethiopia in general and the study area Lalibela in particular there is the tendency of considering the task of tour guides not professional in a sense that it does not require special skill, knowledge and training. Thus, it is timely for research about the roles of tour guides in Ethiopian context and its professionalism.

As far as studies especially on the roles of tour guides is concerned, in Ethiopia in general and Lalibela, the area of this study, very limited researches in the tourism sector has been conducted. Even the researches undertaken so far are mainly targeted on tourists' satisfaction, harmonization of heritage conservation and heritage tourism, factors which account for the least development of tourism industry of the country and the number of tourists visiting the country regardless of tour guides roles and interpretive strategies and awareness about tourists cultural differences.

I had attempted to explore researches done on this area. Only a few works related with study are found. Some graduate students from Addis Ababa University in the faculty of social sciences and language studies have written their PhD and MA theses on different aspects of tourism, by applying different theories relevant to their fields of study. For example Adem (2008) has conducted his research on ecotourism emphasizing the potentials of alternative options for sustainable use of natural resources in Abijata-Shala National Park. Chernet (2008) has also

described the ecological features of mountain ecosystem with unique features of cultural landscape, diverse natural resources and cultural heritages of Adwa using community based tourism model. Likewise Kebede (2010) has studied the contribution of geospatial approach in ecotourism to effective decision making and environmental development. On the other hand Shegaw and Temesgen have also conducted researches in Lalibela in their partial fulfillment of their doctorate degrees. Temesgen's (2013) research was on harmonization of heritage tourism and heritage conservation whereas Shegaw's (2015) dissertation was on discourse analysis of tour guiding communication. His dissertation mainly focused on a specific aspect of the language competency of local guides. Hence, researches on the roles of tour guides in the tourism industry can be said minimal both at the national level in general and local level in particular. This revealed as research is necessary to triangulate the models formulated about the roles of tour guides by social scientists whether can be applied to tour guides in the case of Ethiopia, especially local guides in Lalibela. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to fill this gap.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to carry out anthropological study on cultural brokers as tour guides in Lalibela.

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

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To investigate roles and interpretive strategies employed by tour guides of Lalibela in explaining heritages;
- To examine local guides' awareness about tourists' cultural differences and their competency in the study area;
- To assess destination-related knowledge of local guides of Lalibela;
- To assess visitors' views about the issues of safety, impressions and experiences in the study area
- To investigate challenges of tour guides in the study area

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

I hope this study will have its own contribution to the field of anthropology, related areas of study and the country. Firstly, insight in to the tour guides will contribute to our understanding of these phenomena. The job of tour guides still perceived as straight forward, which does not require special skill and knowledge but this study tries to reveal the complex nature of the job. Secondly, generating knowledge of tour guides roles especially mediating/culture brokerage may create a framework to facilitate the improvement of skills and knowledge of tour guides in the tourism industry. Thirdly, the study is expected to produce suggestions for policy regarding licensing, training and monitoring of tour guides in the tourism industry. Meager research is conducted on the roles of tour guides in the tourism industry in the overall academic spheres in the world in general and Ethiopia in particular. Thus, the study somehow will have its own contribute in reducing this research gap.

## **1.5. Research Methodology**

The study was conducted through both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative methods of research involve the collection and analysis of qualitative information rather than numerical data. The method tends to collect a great deal of rich information about relatively a few cases which typical of qualitative research. For the purpose of this research paper both approaches were suitable as it enable the writer to gather reliable and valid data about the topic, which helps to get an in depth knowledge and understanding (Bernard, 2006).The data were collected with the help of a multiple methods. The tools employed to collect the bulk of the data were semi-structured interview, questionnaires, participant observations and Focused Group Discussion (FGD). Case study was employed to supplement the other methods. I had decided to use multiple methods of data collection to minimize the weakness of a single approach and to enhance the validity and reliability of data.

### **1.5.1. Data Collection Methods**

#### **1.5.1.1. Primary Data**

##### **1.5.1.1.1. Interview**

The main research technique used in this study was semi-structured interviews. The method was chosen because it gives the chance of seeking clarification and explanations (Finn *et al.*, 2000). It

also allows the researcher to have control over the line of questioning depending on what needs to be known (Creswell, 2009) and it enables the researcher to focus on new insights as they occur during the course of research unlike in structured interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). In-depth or semi-structured interviews also encourage capturing respondents' perceptions in their own words, a very desirable strategy in qualitative data collection (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). In semi-structured or in depth interviews, the interviewer does not follow a rigid form, which means it provides some freedom for the interviewees. As the result of the aforementioned factors, I found semi-structured interview more advantageous rather than the structured interview.

Interview was used to collect data on a wide range of issues from key informants including tour guides and experts working in the district tourism bureau of Lalibela. Then, based on the principles of purposive sampling, selected local tour guides were interviewed and recorded using tape recorder to get data about tour guides' view on: the multifaceted roles of local tour guides, including mediation or interpretation, culture brokerage, representativeness of the host culture. Interview was also used to apprehend local guides' views about their job and perceptions of tour guides in the local context. With regard to interpretive strategies employed by local guides, various sentiments held by dwellers of Lalibela about tour guides, tourism and the role of tour guides in promotion of tourism in the town, cultural products and in the dynamic process of some aspects of traditional practices in the town, the data were gathered through interview. Furthermore tour guides were asked about their life experiences, motives, expectations and the actual reality since their engagement in guiding occupation, their measurement of tour guiding including both satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects, challenges and barriers in the guiding industry and, as a tour guide, their efforts in safeguarding heritages, and promoting and developing tourism in Lalibela.

For interview nine local tour guides from different batches including the only female guide were selected. The interviewees were selected by taking work experiences, personality, willingness and gender representation in to consideration. In order to keep confidentiality of the interviewees, they are coded as Gn, where 'G' stands for 'guide' and 'n' for numbers one to nine that indicates the order of the interview. Thus, G1 refers to 'guide one' who was interviewed during interview one; G2 refers to 'guide two' who was interviewed during interview two, etc.

#### **1.5.1.1.2. Participant Observation**

Field notes can be gathered through observing as an observer during the process of interviews and even outside the interview setting (Creswell, 2009). Observation has its own advantages because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to record information at a natural setting. Observation assisted me to observe the actual interactions and conversations between local tour guides and visitors. Furthermore, it helped me to apprehend how visitors were handled and managed by the local guides and to synthesize what local guides and visitors expressed during the interview sessions and in the survey with the actual guiding practices including local guides and visitors' conversations.

Participant observation was used to collect data including the interpretive skills and knowledge of local tour guides about the history and culture of the host. This is because of fact that the knowledge and some roles of guides could be understood if and only if the researcher immerses him/herself in the actual visitor and local guide's conversations. For instance, so as to comprehend and analyze how the tour guides treat and respond to questions of visitors, it may necessitate the researcher to immerse in him/herself in communicative dialogues. Participant observation also enabled me to explore the knowledge of tour guides about the historical, cultural and natural heritages of the area apart from the interpretive strategies employed by them. Furthermore, it was used to comprehend how tour guides construct meanings about the symbols both inside and outside the churches and their awareness about tourists' cultural differences and their treatment on the basis of their interests.

#### **1.5.1.1.3. Focus Group Discussions**

A focus group discussion is a qualitative data collection method in which one or two researchers and several participants meet as a group to discuss a given research topic (Kidder and Fine, 1987). The technique inherently allows observation of group dynamics, discussion, and firsthand insights into the respondents' behaviors, attitudes, language, etc (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Focus groups are a gathering of 8 to 12 people who share some characteristics relevant to the evaluation (Patton, 1990). A principal advantage of focus groups is that they yield a large amount of information over a relatively short period of time. They are also effective for accessing a broad range of views on a specific topic, as opposed to achieving group consensus. In this study, I had intended to conduct lots of focused group discussions-with tour guides and

different stakeholders. However due to coordination problem and reluctances of some of the discussants', only few that is three FGDs with local tour guides and two FGDs with various stakeholders were held. The problems especially FGDs with different stakeholders mainly emanated from time inconveniency. Since the stakeholders were engaged in different activities, it was very challenging to arrange convenient time to all of them. In spite of these constraints, the focused group discussions, which were held with the local guides assisted me: to investigate common roles and interpretive strategies employed by tour guides; to explore challenges of tour guides, and their perspectives about the role of tour guides in the transformation of some cultural practices and local customs in Lalibela; and to understand their stand about alternative solutions so as to address the challenges of tour guides including their interpretive or communicative problem among others. Focused Group Discussions that embraced various stakeholders in the tourism industry such as representatives of local tour guides, religious leaders, experts from the district tourism and culture bureau and elders or representatives of the community, enabled the researcher to triangulate various ideas of the participants about the impacts of tourism i.e. both positive and negative impacts and their conceptions about local tour guides behaviors and roles. The discussion had also enriched me a wider range of views, which can be used to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and promote tourism in and around Lalibela as well as the issues raised by the discussants, may be taken as feedback to revise the recruitment criteria and devise curriculum for tour guides training.

#### **1.5.1.1.4. Survey**

The study also exploited quantitative data through the administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire included both open and close-ended questions for tour guides but it was only close-ended for visitors since their duration in the town is too short. The questionnaire was distributed to samples of tour guides and visitors. It was developed to assess the research problems such as demographic characteristics, socio-economic characteristics, roles and challenges of tour guides, view of visitors about local tour guides and the overall tourism industry in Lalibela, the interpretive strategies and perceptions of local guides about their tasks.

Despite the fact that there are five types of tour guides in and around Lalibela, Foreign Tourists' Guiding Association (FTGA) and Domestic Tourists' Guiding Associations (DTGA) were the main focuses of this study. The total numbers of FTGA and DTGA during the research period

were 90 and 16 respectively. For undertaking this research, forty-four and eight local tour guides for foreign and domestic tourists' respectively were selected as respondents through representative probability sampling technique. To ensure the same chance of selection for each individual respondent, I employed a conventional formula usually used by anthropologists in determining sample size population in their survey.

$$\text{Sample size}(S) = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{C^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where,  $X^2$  = the chi-square value (3.841) for 1<sup>0</sup> of freedom at 95% probability level;  
 $N$  = the population size

$P$  = the population parameter of a variable ( $P = 0.5$ );

$C$  = the confidence interval chosen ( $C = 0.05$ ) .

Therefore, the sample size required for guides of foreign tourist was computed as:

$$S = \frac{(3.841)(90)(1-0.5)}{(0.05^2)(89) + (3.841)^2(0.5)(1-0.5)} \approx 44$$

The sample size required for guides of domestic tourist was computed as:

$$S = \frac{(3.841)(16)(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2(15) + (3.841)^2(0.5)(1-0.5)} \approx 8$$

However foreign visitors were selected through purposive sampling. In purposive or judgmental sampling, someone decide the purpose he/she want informants to serve, and he/she goes out to find someone (Bernard, 2006). Therefore, the samples were selected and their size was determined based up on the following assumptions;

1. Concerns related to cost are also considered in determining the sample size.
2. The languages spoken by both foreign and domestic visitors were considered i.e. English for foreign and Amharic for domestic tourists were mandatory

3. Willingness and duration of visitors were considered

Generally for about seventy five visitors' .i.e. both domestic and foreign visitors' questionnaires were distributed. However of seventy five questionnaires, only sixty six of them were returned.

#### **1.5.1.1.5. Case Study**

Case study was employed to narrate the life of tour guides including their success and challenges while they are in this work. Case study is used as “creating complex explanations and interpretations in form of narrative story about particular people (Yin, 1989). The case of certain tour guides involving junior, senior and the merely female guide in both DTGAL AND FTGAL were investigated by taking in to consideration time and financial constraints. I think the studies depicted the whole life of tour guides operating in Lalibela including the challenges and success throughout their stay in the work, their main roles in tour guiding, their awareness about tourists' cultural differences, the interpretive strategies employed by tour guides, their economic success, their position in the society including their status, the likelihood for entry to this work among others. Thus, case study helped me to delve mainly the life history of local tour guides in the tourism industry.

#### **1.5.1.2. Secondary Data**

The secondary data obtained from different published and unpublished documents include academic literature and methodology books, journals, periodicals, archives and other official statistical information, policy documents and other organizational reports.

#### **1.5.2. Data Analysis Methods**

Data analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place. It is also a process of explaining and trying to make sense of the data received and reducing it to meaningful accounts (Bernard, 2006). In this study, the main methods of data analysis include thematic and descriptive analysis.

##### **1.5.2.1. Thematic Analysis**

In thematic analysis the data is classified in to different categories based on the nature of research questions and response of the respondents'. In employing thematic analysis, I have been following the necessary steps of data analysis. First, the audio and the interview data were transcribed so as to transform the tape recorded data in to a textual form. Following the stage of

transcription, the task of coding which refers to the process of reading and re-reading the transcripts and notes have been done and an attempt have been made to reflect on themes and to understand the data. In coding stage of the data analysis, the research questions (presented both in interview and questionnaire) were considered as the main categories and themes of data. Common answers were merged and presented as one dimension of the given concept of tour guide. Once ideas developed from the interconnected categories and themes, I described and explained the data in line with the theories, concepts and information presented in the literature review.

#### **1.5.2.2. Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive analysis involves understanding quantitative data through graphic displays, through tables, and through summary statistics. It is about the data you have in hand (Bernard, 2006). In descriptive analysis, few and selected numerical data were organized into tables and charts and the results were described and explained based on the nature of the data.

#### **1.5.2.3. Conversation Analysis**

Conversation analysis here is used to refer the communicative dialogues between the local guides and visitors during the tour guiding endeavor. It helped me to capture the feelings of both local guides and visitors and understand some of the roles of local guides including their role of education, disseminating information, brokerage among others.

### **1.5. 3.Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Various procedures have been employed in order to check the reliability of the instruments used in this study. The interview and survey questionnaire items were developed based on the specific objectives of the research. The interview and survey questions as much as possible were prepared based on the objectives of the research, which in turn enhance the validity of the data collected. To do so the research questions were given to my advisor and to some of my friends who are PhD and MA students so as to check the compatibility of the research objectives and questions. The purpose of this validation was to check whether the content of the interview and survey questions were relevant in addressing the research questions and to check the clarity of the questions. Following the comments of the experts, I have made some modifications on the interview questions. Besides, the same questions were included in the interview and

questionnaire items to triangulate the responses of the local tour guides and visitors. Furthermore, repeating the same interview items to different interviewees has also been done to maximize the validity of the interview data. Nine interviewees were asked the same questions to reflect their belief towards the issue.

Concerning whether the data collected is reliable, an attempt was also made to evaluate the observations made and interviews conducted are consistent. In the case of qualitative approach since the procedure of measuring processes is an interpretive process, several measures have been applied to assure reliable results. First, the interview questions were put and worded the same for every individual participating. In addition, the author tried to not influence the answers by commenting or reacting in a way that might manipulated the responses. Furthermore, the interview was recorded in order to be transcribed and reread several times, as well as quoted in the thesis.

#### **1.5.4. Selection of the Study Area**

The data obtained from Ministry of Culture and Tourism reveals that Lalibela has been prominent tourist destination site in Ethiopia. Congruent to the number of tourists, tour guides has been increasing in the area. Therefore, Lalibela is chosen as the study area since I found that there is enormous number of tour guides in the town and in one or another ways the livelihood of the overwhelming residents in and around the town has been closely tied with tourism. As the report of World Bank reveals almost 90% of tourists arriving in Ethiopia do not depart the country without visiting Lalibela (World Bank, 2006).

#### **1.6. Ethical Considerations**

The ethics of research concern the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in relation to the participants of the research or those who are affected by the research. Since research in the real world inevitably deals with people and the things that affect them, ethical issues are important aspects of research (Bernard, 2006). Especially, in qualitative research where the researcher may intrude into private and sensitive issues, and may create some kind of discomfort to the research participants, people may not feel at ease when they are recorded. Thus, observing the actual tour guiding practice and interpretive strategies and recording the interview required me to get permission from local tour guides and tourists. Once the letter of collaboration from Addis

Ababa University, Social Anthropology Department has been granted, participants have been approached hierarchically. First, the district culture and tourism office has been contacted. After their consent was secured, the information desk and the ticket office and the guide association have been contacted. Finally, local tour guides revealed their consent for interview and recording as well as observation of the actual guiding practices. They have also agreed to fill the survey questionnaire items. I was also able to convince visitors to collaborate me in filling survey questionnaires by approaching and informing them the aim of the study. I could do this by going to different hotels in the town of Lalibela and distributing the questionnaires to tourists during their break time after lunch. To do so first I had to get the consent of the hotel owners or managers.

Besides, this study has maintained the principles of research and ensured the participants' rights in terms of the following issues. Both tour guides and tourists were informed that participation in the study is on a voluntary basis. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were assured at all times. Participants were also offered the right not to answer sensitive questions and questions that were personal. They were also informed to withdraw from the participation at any time if they want to do so. And finally, both tour guides and tourists were informed that the purpose of the study is a prerequisite for the researcher to carry out the research project to fulfill Master degree requirements.

### **1.7. Fieldwork Experiences**

The fieldwork was carried out in and around Lalibela, a town about 685 kms due North Addis Ababa, from February 1 up to March 20, 2008, for a total duration of about 50 days. Before commencing survey to the area, I satisfactorily established rapport with local tour guides with the help of the district culture and tourism bureau deputy administrator and information desk expert. Helped by the developed rapport to gain my informants' consent and confidence, I began to collect data through the tools well armed at hand such as questionnaire and interview checklists, participant observations and focused group discussions. However, this does not mean that the rapid assessment of the whole local tour guides was not without any resistance. Some suspiciously saw my presence in the area for their personal reasons.

It is natural for anthropologists to face challenges while conducting fieldwork in their study area. What actually experienced was not far from this fact. The major difficulty faced was the feeling of suspicions and reluctance to give information among some informants. At first, it seems disappointing to see the reaction from some of the local guides and who were skeptical to give any information. Their suspicion emanated from misunderstandings that they perceive these researches as inspections to investigate their weakness especially during interview and participant observation. Most of them were asking me the following questions; why do you undertake this research?

Hence, I persuaded to assure them that my work has got nothing to do with any government undertaking, i.e. no other interest is attached to it rather than academic purpose. With the help of my letter of introduction from the university and the help of the information desk expert, at the end, I was able to gain their willingness to create intensive interactions. Some of the local tour guides I contacted remain to be friends and very helpful to get into another friends in the field. As the extent of further exploring the objectives of the study increase, the difficulties of interaction reduced and anxieties eased. At the beginning, it was also challenging to know and decide the appropriate places where enormous tourists were found so as to fill the survey questionnaires. However gradually some of the members of tourist guides associations advised and pointed out me about how to fill visitors' questionnaires and famous hotels where large number of tourists found. There were different responses from visitors; most of them were willing and collaborative to fill the questionnaires but few of them were reluctant to do so.

However, my field experience was not exclusively of anxiety and pain; rather once I wane their skepticism with the people whom I contacted; they turned to be friendly. I was able to understand so many behaviors of tour guides. As a remark, it should be noted that due to the broad scope of the study as well as the short duration of survey at fieldwork this study should be taken as more of the generalized presentation of the subject matter than a perfect presentation of facts and events.

### **1.8. Organization of the Study**

This study is organized with seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that devotes in providing general background, statement of the problem, research methods and objectives,

significance and scope of the study, validity and reliability instruments, ethical considerations and field work experiences. In the second chapter, empirical and theoretical works related to this study are reviewed. Chapter three presents background of the study area. In chapter four the types and roles of local guides associations are discussed. Chapter five deal with the interpretive strategies employed by local guides to explain heritages in tourist destinations areas of Lalibela. In this chapter destination-related knowledge of local guides and their awareness about tourists' cultural differences are also discussed. Chapter six is devoted for impacts of tourism on the local community, visitors' views on issues ties with tourism attractions and challenges of local guides. Chapter seven is the final part where major findings of the study are summarized and conclusions, and recommendations are drawn.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. The Concepts of Cultural Brokers and Tour Guides**

##### **2.1.1. The Concept of Cultural Broker**

Broker in this context is used to refer to the position of middleman and interpreter. The concepts of brokers and cultural brokers have been often changing with the shift of the focus of interest among the social scientists and thereby in anthropology. Cultural broker was used to connote various things in different time contexts. During the period of colonization, cultural brokers implied certain individuals who negotiate between colonial governments and the societies they ruled. Cultural brokers as defined by Wolf are individuals who act as middleman between community-oriented groups in the community and those who work in the institution of the government (Wolf, 1956). With the advent of tourism as a critical economic sector, cultural brokers are mainly used to refer to tour guides who have crucial roles in the host-guest relationships. Cultural brokers have a paramount role in the development of the tourism industry in interpreting cultures by being middleman for visitors and the local host.

It is mainly tied with the period of decolonization and the modernization and the transactional theories in the 1950s and 1960s, the concept of broker appears in anthropology. Transactionalists pay more attention to economic relations or the formal elements of cultural brokerage and entrepreneur. However, there have been the rise and decline of interest in brokerage in the discipline of anthropology.

Though broker for long had been the focus of study in the discipline of anthropology, brokers and brokerage became a great concern among anthropologists during the period of decolonization in connection with a paradigm shift against functionalism and structural-functionalism that mainly concern on maintaining the existing status quo (Gluckman, Mitchell, and Barnes, 1949). In this historical perspective, the concept of cultural broker embarked in anthropology mainly to connote social change (Press, 1969).

Of several forms of cultural brokers, tour guiding is the prominent one as we saw early the course of its historical development. Hence, tour guiding has become an area of research activity for the past years following the development of the tourism industry. Cohen was pioneer in describing and explaining the origin and evolution of the role of tour guide and also making it a matter of scientific attention (Robotic, 2010). Subsequently, tour guides and guiding professionalism became subjects of study in wider contexts. Various names are also entitled with tour guides including tour leaders, tour managers, tour escorts, local guides, docents and interpreters (Hu, 2007).

Tour guiding is subjected to several definitions and interpretations because of its complex nature. For example, due to a diversity of functions undertake by tour guides, Cruz stated that it difficult to identify a single definition of tour guiding (Cruz, 1999). The underlying facts behind the arguments are; some guides are self-employed, create their own tour in other words they organize tour by themselves; others are employed by the travel industry and undertake the tours organized by them while others are employed by corporations or organizations. In this aspect, it is vivid to verify somehow the complexity and diversified but interwoven transactions made by tour guides.

In examining various paradigms of tour guiding, tour guides therefore, can be regarded as individuals who direct and lead groups of visitors within a town, museum or any other place of interest. Thus, guides are thought in rendering precise and right information about tourists' attractions and related information (Cruz, 1999). These definitions point out that a tour guide is responsible for directing and leading tourists on a tour.

Despite the existence of many definitions of tour guide, the most accepted and widely used definition is provided by the International Association of Tour Managers and the European Federation of Tourist Guide Association (EFTGA, 1998). The association defines tour guide as:

*a person; who guides groups or individual visitors from abroad or from the home country around the monuments, sites and museums of a city or region; interpret in an inspiring and entertaining*

*manner, in the language of the visitor's choice, including the cultural and natural heritage and environment (EFTGA, 1998).*

## **2.2. Theoretical Model**

Regarding the roles of tour guides, the four quadrant model formulated by Cohen (1985) is often described as the underpinnings in the subsequent study of tour guides functions. This model encompasses four major tour guide functions: instrumental roles (organization and management), social role (leadership in social interaction), interactionary roles (mediation) and communicative role (information dissemination). This study has adopted mainly Cohen's model believing that it better explains the roles of local guides of Lalibela despite variation to somehow from his model since it is too service oriented; in other words it mainly targeted on the roles expected by tourists, the tourism sector or authorities.

Bras' model (Bras, 2000) that tour guides also concern for the welfare of their clients and not necessarily abide to the rules of government and tour operators seems to be compatible to some extent with the functions of local guides in Lalibela. It is hardly to accept that tour guides invariably perform neutral role in the host and guest relations and in the tourism industry. They have been observed while intervening and constraining the tourism activities, which in turn implies that tour guides sometimes are agents, who act as buffer between the host community and visitors. Here it should be noted that tour guides not always interpret the already existing culture but also construct and commodify or change the host culture in form of commodity. They also regulate appropriate behavior and the formal procedures that tourists should follow at tourists' attractions (Enderson, 2001). Pond has suggested five roles for modern tourist guides. According to her, guides must play important roles as leader, educator, public relations representative, host, and as conduit (Pond, 1993). According to her these five roles are interrelated. However, in this study it is believed that tour guides have also mediating roles that might be overlooked or implicitly stated by Pond.

The model formulated by Zhang and Chow identified sixteen roles of tour guides (Zhang and Chow, 2004); whereas Black and Weiler have noticed ten roles of tour guides (Black and Weiler, 2005). However the question here is whether these roles of tour guides so far discussed by the

scholars' can be compromised with roles of local guides in the context of Lalibela. For instance, this study couldn't verify sixteen roles among the local guides in Lalibela as stated by Zhang and Chow. Thus, the function of tour guides should be looked from broader angle. This means the functions might vary among tour guides who reside in different countries but also among tour guides, who share the same boundary. For instance, in this study company representative, one of the roles of tour guides as stated by Black, is not part of local guides' roles in the case of Lalibela.

From Cohen, Enderson and Pond theories, we can comprehend that guides have different roles such as the role of cultural broker/mediator, facilitator, leaders and agents. These theories are more on functions of tour guides. As far as the interpretive strategies of local guides are concerned, the study has adopted the hermeneutic inquiry and symbolic anthropology so as to thoroughly examine the interpretive strategies employed by local guides of Lalibela. Concomitantly in the study, the various views held by hermeneutic theorists with regard to the techniques of interpretation have been examined. Therefore, the study has attempted to examine these theories so as to frame this research in Lalibela, northern Wollo.

### **2.3. Roles of Tour guides and Visitors' Expectations**

Though limited in their extents, researches conducted on the roles of tour guides revealed as the functions of tour guides are dynamic, which means that they have been shifting from the time of the Greek Empire till the tour guides we meet nowadays. For instance the earlier functions of tour guides were mainly directing the way or protecting a group. However in due course of time the functions of tour guides have been changed and extended (Black and Weiler, 2005).

Mediating role/culture brokerage, which is also the main focus of this paper, was identified as important role of tour guides. Here, mediating or culture brokerage can be seen in a wider context as the study of Schmidt on the roles of tour guides revealed (Schmidt, 1979). Mediating in the guest-host relation can refer the act of tour guides as buffer in reducing culture shock that can be flare up when the two formerly unknown people meet. In this respect the role of mediating can be assessed in maintaining group solidarity. Choosing which attractions need to

disclosed for visiting and which need to be hidden and managing (controlling) tourists are also another functions of tourists that had been given equally importance (Schmidt, 1979).

Several roles and sub-roles of tour guides had been identified by Holloway. Interpreting the culture of the host (the role of culture broker); correcting the behavior of visitors (the role of teacher and instructor); controlling and managing group interaction (the role of social catalyst); the roles of missionary and ambassador; entertainer and the group leader and conduit are the major roles of tour guides as underlined by Holloway (Holloway, 1981). Holloway also added the roles of the interpreter, information giver, motivator, catalyst, navigator and cultural broker on the basis of the previous percepts and research of Schmidt.

Tour guides are also role models in a sense that they could influence tourists to behave in appropriate way that doesn't counter the norms of the local host (Weiler and Davis, 1993). However, Weiler and Davis (1993) gave less emphasis to the role of group leading. Similarly Weiler and Davis encompassed in their theory the role of social catalysts in group interactions after their study in a specific group of tour guides working within the industry of ecotourism in Australia. Further study on the roles of tour guides by Pond indicated that tour guides functions or roles includes disseminating information, controlling visitors , teaching history, representing the place or the area being visited and directing tourists as many as possible sites (Pond, 1993).

A case study on tour guides, mainly trekking tour guides in Nepal revealed that the central roles of a tour guide in the area were managing tours, creating awareness about the environment and protecting the safety of visitors. Tour organizer, facilitator, and the role of being an interpreter of the sites and role model for tourists to behave properly without disturbing nature are also pointed out (Black and Weiler, 2005).

Based on the research conducted on Yogyakarta, a city on the island of Java in Indonesia, Salazar stated that tour guides offer information and interpret cultural products when they meet tourists (Salazar, 2005). Furthermore they create cultural images and play the role of facilitator. The seller role of tour guides is also equally emphasized. Salazar gave more weight to the roles of entrepreneurs who attempt to earn money on selling knowledge, access, contacts or other

services. Tour guides can also play the roles of cultural broker, translator or interpreter of cultural differences (Salazar, 2005).

The research conducted by Scherle and Nonnenmann in Morocco revealed intercultural mediators or mediation of diverse cultures as an important roles of tour guides (Scherle and Nonnenmann, 2008).The results pointed out that tour guide nowadays should be seen as buffer standing between foreign and the own culture without being committed to any other than the own. This has been described as special identity compared with a cosmopolitan (Scherle and Nonnenmann, 2008).

Visitors have different expectations and parameters of satisfaction. This is related with their background, nationality, sex, age and other associated factors. Thus, especially during mass or group visits tour guides should be conscious in balancing the interests of members of the group since tour guides address multiple stake holders simultaneously. For instance some visitors give priority for their safety and health. However, others needs are mainly tied with their interests in specific subject matter, their intellectual capabilities and their background (Weiler and Ham, 2002). Employers on the other hand to lift up their profit margins and enhance visitor satisfaction expect the guide to provide high-quality service to visitors (Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993).

As various studies showed among several factors that could influence visitors' satisfaction, the roles of tour guides can be put at the forefront position in this regard. For instance, the skills of tour guides such as information dissemination capability, and interaction with the group and organization skills were cited as factors that could determine visitors' satisfaction and expectations. The knowledge on the place, highlighting of the objects and skills as a cultural broker were also mentioned as factors which have equally importance in influencing visitors' satisfactions (Hughes, 1991).

Linear relationships between expectations and satisfaction have been observed. This is in other words tourists' satisfaction will be higher if their expectations are met. However, the lower tourists' satisfaction will be if the gap between expectation and satisfaction is higher (Hughes, 1991). The same results were connected to the role of the tour guide. If tourists could find the better performance of tour guides, the higher will be the overall satisfaction on the tour. The

same is true in the flipside of it, which means if the performance of tour guide is worse; the lower will be tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, it is stated that tour guides play a crucial role within the measurements on satisfaction (Hughes, 1991).

## **2.4. Challenges of Tour Guides**

Tour guides roles have been encumbered by several challenges emanated from both within their guiding endeavor and from their operating context. Internally guides may have personal limitations of skills, knowledge about destinations, competences, etc. Externally, they are subjected to rules and regulations of their areas of operations and their employers and interests of their clients. They are also buffer in between their employers and visitors caught with pleasing both of them (Dahles, 2002; Dritsas, 2006). The followings are the major challenges of tour guides as reviewed in several literatures.

### **2.4.1. Lack of Training**

Several researches revealed that lack of training is a critical problem in guiding profession. For instance a research conducted in Malawi indicated that inadequate training adversely affects tour guiding practices. The response of tour guides in the area under discussion showed that in spite of its importance, accessing formal training was very challenging for them (Ap and Wong, 2001). Of several factors that contributed to the deficiencies in tour guiding profession in Malawi, lack of institutions providing basic tour guiding training was considered as the prominent one. It was very challenging for guides to attain the required formal skills in the absence of institutions that offer such trainings. Further study by Ap and Wong on Hong Kong illustrates the extent of the problem (Ap and Wong, 2001). In their study they were able to identify that there was neither training opportunities nor training courses for new entrants in guiding endeavor.

### **2.4.2. Demand-Supply Equation**

Here demand-supply equation connotes the congruency of the number of tour guides and visitors in the areas of operations or tourists destinations. In some areas the number of local guides may appear greater vis-à-vis the number of tourists visiting tourists' destinations. In this case all guides will not have equal opportunity in making business. Trained tour guides will be given the

priority where as non-professional guides will be relegated by the authority in charge of the tourism sector (Adam, 1997). In the contrary if the number of visitors surpasses vis-à-vis the demand of trained tour guides, the likelihood of ill-trained tour guides to engage in guiding profession or tourism business rises. Hence, interaction between the control regime and demand –supply equation of trained manpower affects the working of tour guides. For example in India, the demand-supply equation is very different for different regions. In northern regions the supply of tour guides appears to exceed the demand; whereas in other regions demand far exceeds the supply. Therefore, in northern region, guiding without a proper license is generally perceived as a threat (Adam, 1997).

### **2.4.3. Professionalism**

This concerns competency or skill and ethics expected of a professional guide need to have in delivering services for his/her clients. Researches' conducted so far has clearly depicted that lack of professionalism can hamper the function of tour guides. For instance, the research conducted in Malawi revealed that lack of professionalism was a major challenge amongst tour guides especially in Salima and Nkhatabay as compared to Mangochi and Mulanje where some guides were properly trained (AP and Wong, 2001). The research thereby revealed that tour guides are required to have good knowledge of tourism products, good interpersonal skills that include proficiency in various languages and ability and willingness to offer quality standards of services (AP and Wong, 2001).

### **2.4.4. Management of Tourist Experiences**

Unlike the earlier period of mass tourism in modern tourism that tourists expect personalized services, it is very challenging for tour guides to manage and fulfill such diverse tourists' interests (Chowdhary and Prakash, 2010). The researcher believes that tourists need a variety of options and alternatives of attractions with regards to fulfilling their expectation. Therefore, there is a need to apprehend tourists' cultural differences and thereby interests and treating them based on these differences.

#### **2.4.5. Seasonality of the Tourism Business**

Tourism is a seasonal industry in a sense that the numbers of tourists at a destination fluctuate throughout the years (Page, 2007). This nature of the tourism industry as underlined by tour guides brings forward both the good and bad things in as far as tour guides profession is concerned. In other words during off-peak period tourism brings the bad things, which means tour guides experience low business and this affects their day to day life as the overwhelming them merely rely on guiding as a source of income. Therefore, survival alone tourism is very challenging for tour guides (Page, 2007).

Tied with the off-peak period of tourism, as researches indicate it is usual to observe bad practices among few tour guides. Forcing visitors to buy things, stealing tourists' valuables, charging tourists extremely high prices are also among major challenges that turndown the profession of tour guiding (Page, 2007).

To sum up as the reviewed literatures revealed tour guides have been entitled with various names and the concepts of brokers and cultural brokers have been implying different things in different time contexts. The roles of tour guides are dynamics and switch depending on the changing interests of visitors. Though tour guides have several roles and sub-roles as indicated in the reviewed literature, they are interwoven and synergic. Tour guides have been conducting their tasks encumbered with various challenges.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

#### **3.1. Geographical Location and Settings**

##### **3.1.1. Geographical Location**

Lalibela, which is the capital of the Lasta district, is also one of the renowned historical sites in Ethiopia. Lalibela is also the center of the three types of rock-hewn churches such as monolithic, semi-monolithic and cave churches. The eleven rock-hewn churches of Lalibela are located at the heart of Lasta. The churches made it an important center of tourist destination. Similarly, the surrounding rock-hewn churches of Lalibela receive considerable number of tourists' i.e. domestic and foreign visitors throughout the year. Most of domestic tourists visit these churches in connection with religious celebrations at these churches thereby they arrive in Lalibela before the day of Christmas celebration.

##### **3.1.2. Geographical Settings**

The ancient capital city of the Zagwe dynasty, Roha (now Lalibela) is situated 685 km north of Addis Ababa via Gashena and 625 km via Kulmesk. The total area of Lalibela town is estimated to be around 166 km<sup>2</sup>. The town is structured in to two urban and one rural kebele administrative units. Lalibela town is bordered by the lasta Woreda. The Lasta Woreda in return is bordered to the North by Waghimera zone (Gazigibla woreda), to the south by Meket Woreda, to the East by Gidan Woreda, and to the West by Bugna Woreda (Lasta Woreda Communication Office, 2011).

Lalibela is surrounded by high plateaus and mountains. In this attractive town, many of the houses are very small, circular, made of stone, and with conical thatched roofs. The town is also partitioned in to different local names such as Geterge, Shimbirima, Adebabay (square), Worqidingay, Sebatu Woira (Seven Olives), Sheket, May Dagim, Chifrigochi, AbayWuha, Dedeqi, Kok Mender and World Vision to mention but a few. Lalibela and its surroundings have moderate mean annual temperature i.e. 18 °c. and the mean annual rainfall is 750 mm. Wide ranges of plant and animal species are found in these geographic and environmental settings of Lalibela and its surroundings. Considerable numbers of seasonal and non-seasonal rivers, swamps and springs are also found in and around Lalibela.

### 3.1. Map of Lalibela



Figure 3.1. Shows different administrative places of Lalibela and the areas where the research is undertaken

Churches or places of worship in around Lalibela are established in the area including up lands and caves that seems not easily accessible for people. In accessibility of the area quite related with the types of churches. For instance, in the case of “*Gedam*” in accessible areas are preferable where as “*Debir*” churches are built close to settlement areas.

### 3.2. Population

The total populations of the Lasta Woreda are 118,185, who have been resided in 21 kebeles. Of these, 58,648 are males while the remaining 59,537 are females (Last Woreda Communication Office Report, 2011), whereas the whole population of Lalibela town is roughly 34,000 (Lalibela Town Communication Bureau Report, 2008). Due to rugged mountainous land scape, the population is unevenly distributed in varying geographical setting. The overwhelming of the population in the Lasta Woreda dwells in rural areas. Amharic is the dominant language spoken by the dwellers of the town and its surroundings. In a similar way the Orthodox Tewahido Christianity is the dominant religion in the Lasta district and hence in the town (Central Statistics Agency (CSA) Report, 2007).

### 3.3. Economy

Agriculture is the backbone of the town, as around 54% of the residents depend on it. Mixed farmings that is animal husbandry and agriculture are the main economic activities. However, the variability of the rainfall affects crop production. Environmental degradation and soil fertility also pose great challenge on agricultural products (Amhara Livelihood Zone Reports, 2005).

Wheat, teff, maize, barley, finger millet, bean, peas and *nugg* are among the cereals and pulses grow in and around Lalibela, mainly for household consumption.

The main live stocks reared by inhabitants of Lalibela and its surroundings are Cattle, sheep and goats and equines. Shoats and cattle sales are the main source of cash income for the middle and better off households. The sales of shoats are described as the biggest source of income for middle and wealthier groups. Eggs and butter are also animal products, which are sold by farmers. In a similar way honey sale also constitute the major source of income for both middle and higher class of the society (Amhara Livelihood Zone Reports, 2005). Now days the role of the tourism sector is also paramount and has becoming an integral part of the economy.

### **3.4. Infrastructure**

Poor road net works characterized the surrounding kebeles of Lalibela. Likewise, Public transportation is underdeveloped sector in and around Lalibela town. Only five of rock churches are accessible using vehicles (Lasta Woreda Communication Office, 2011). However, Lalibela town by far has better road networks and has an international airport. In Lalibela there are many hotels including international hotels. In the peak tourist seasons, especially during Christmas and Epiphany the hotels and restaurants are usually appear to be crowded.

### **3.5. The Origin of the Agaw People**

The original area of the Agaw people is thought to be Lasta and Wag areas. However, now days the Agaw peoples are found dispersed in many areas of the country. For instance, the Agaws are widely distributed to Agaw Midir in Gojjam ; Dembya in Begemidir and Halhal Bogos in Eritrea (Sergew, 1972). They have been entitled different names in various regions. For examples,the agaws are called Qimant in Gonder, in Wollo they are called Wag, in Gojjam - Agaw (Awi) and in Eritrea - Blen. Their language 'Agaw ' categorized under the Cushitic language family.

#### **3. 5.1. The Historical Background of the Zagwe Dynasty**

An inscription published in a book entitled *The Christian Topography* that was written by the traveler Cosmos Indicopleustes is regarded as the major account of the Agaw people. According to Cosmas, the Agaw area was an important trade route for the Aksumite trade with gold producing western regions of the country (Sergew, 1972). During the reign of Kaleb, the Agaws

were working in the Axumite state as protectorates of merchants passing to the western parts of the country. Though they appeared as an integral part of the kingdom, from the available evidences it is evident that the Agaws were in continuous resistance to the southward expansion of the Kingdom long before the reign of Kaleb.

### **3.5.2. The Zagwe Dynasty**

The middle of the twelfth century was marked by the reappearance of a new political center in what is today Lalibela, in the Agaw interior of Wag and Lasta, under a new Christian ruling house called the Zagwe dynasty. The decline of the Axumite political power due to both internal and external factors gave the way for the rise of the Zagwe dynasty.

The Agaws had long been included within the Axumite Empire. In addition to serving the Axumite kingdom in securing the trade routes and merchants, the Agaws were also serving as soldiers and functionaries of the kingdom (Sergew, 1972). The Zagwe dynasty was founded by Mera Tekle Haimanot or Merara, who was serving as general of the last Axumite king. Mera Tekle Haimanot had also married Dil Ne" ad's daughter, which gave him the opportunity to penetrate in the Axumite ruling circles and take power (Sergew, 1972).

There are uncertainties regarding how long the dynasty remained in power. However, it is believed that the dynasty ruled till 1270 (Sergew, 1972). Yimrehane Kiristos, Harbe, Lalibela and Ne'akuto Le'ab who simultaneously entitled the title of kings and priests were famous among the Zagwe kings (Mengistu, 2004). Their commitment to the construction of rock-hewn churches together with their devotion to religion of the Orthodox Christianity might be the possible reasons for their popularity.

The tradition and the technology of constructing rock-hewn churches reached climax during the Zagwe dynasty. This tradition of building churches is thought to be embarked by Yimrehane Kiristos (Sergew, 1972). He built a cave church, which is called by his name Yimrehane Kiristos. The church is built under a huge cave in densely forested site called Wegre Sehin (Mengistu, 2004). The church is located at the distance of 42 km from the Lalibela town. Lalibela, who is the son of Jan Seyoum and successor of king Harbe was the famous monarch of

the Zagwe dynasty (Sergew, 1972). Lalibela is mainly remembered in his eleven rock hewn churches which still stand in the heart of the town. The churches revealed the great advancement in architectural technology in the period under discussion. Ne'akuto Le' ab who is the nephew and successor of emperor Lalibela was credited in concluding the construction of the church of Asheten Mariam (Mengistu, 2004).

### **3.6. The Religion of Christianity in Lalibela**

Beginning from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the religion of Christianity made its way to the regions of Ethiopia. Frementius or the latter Abba Selma, who was initially working at the court of Ezana was credited for the introduction of Christianity to the kingdom (Sergew, 1972). Frementius first baptized king Ezana in to the religion of Christianity. However, it is believed that Christianity might have been long practiced in Ethiopia before the conversion of Ezana or before the time of Frumentius, since the religion was practiced by merchants who came from the Roman Empire and reside in Axum and the port of Adulis (Sergew, 1972).

Even though Christianity was made state religion during the reign of king Ezana, large scale expansion of the religion including Lasta or Lalibela was undertaken by the nine saints during the reign of Kaleb and his son Gebre Meskel (Sergew, 1972). The nine saints who came to the regions of Ethiopia during the 6<sup>th</sup> century had also introduced the tradition of monasticism. Kaleb's reign was marked by major progress in the spread of the Christian religion among the Agaws in the present district of Wag and Lasta.

### **3.7. The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela**

According to several sources, these rock-hewn churches located at the heart of Lalibela town were built during the reign of king Lalibela. Lalibela ruled over Ethiopia from the eleventh to the mid-thirteenth centuries, following the shift of power southward after the collapse of the Aksumite Empire. According to the *Gedle*, or Acts of Lalibela, Lalibela had built the churches to teach his people symbolically the religion of Christianity. He built the churches with the help of both men and angels. These marvelous and spectacular rock-hewn churches were built in an attempt to bring the second Jerusalem or a replica of Jerusalem by king Lalibela in the 12th century (Mengistu, 2004).

The architectural features of the churches are very amazing but difficult to understand easily. Of these three types of churches, the monolithic rock-hewn churches are the most amazing and surprise many visitors as these churches are completely freestanding, separated from the surrounding rock and attached to the main rock only at the base.

There are eleven churches in total, which are divided into three clusters separated by the Jordan River<sup>2</sup>. The first group of six churches Bete Medihane Alem, Bete Mariam, Bete Meskel and Bete Denagil, the twin churches of Bete-Mikael lies north of the Jordan. While the second group of churches such as Bete Amanuel, Bete Merkorios, Bete Abba Libanos and Bete Gebriel-Rufael are located south of the Jordan River. The second group of churches symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem. The third cluster contains only one giant monolithic rock-hewn church called *Bete Giorgis*, which is situated to the southwest of both the first and the second group of churches. In almost all the churches there is a wide open space where people can pray, attend ceremonies and listen to preaching.

### **3.8. Other Types of Heritages in and around Lalibela**

Besides the churches, the ecclesiastical objects, the religious and cultural practices constitute an important part of the local community and traditional way of life.

#### **3.8.1. Ecclesiastical Objects**

Ecclesiastical objects ranging from processional crosses, bells, chandeliers of gold and silver, priestly vestment and robes, to church paintings, icons, scrolls and manuscripts forms an intrinsic part of the churches and the religious practices. Many date to the period of the churches themselves including King Lalibela's hand cross and prayer stick.

#### **3.8.2. Religious Rites and Pilgrimage**

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 site. However, 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.

### **3.8.3. Vernacular Heritage and the Town**

A distinctive feature of Lalibela is the existence of traditional historic houses (*tukuls*) in the vicinity of the churches and in the neighboring residential areas. These are usually round two-storey structures with a solid outside staircase leading to the upper floor, built of irregular rubble bedded in clay mortar with conical and traditionally thatched roofs.

### **3.8.4. Cultural Landscape and Practices**

Like in many other places there is a shifting focus towards understanding Lalibela as a cultural landscape. A number of questions remain unexplored in terms of the historical significance of the surrounding landscape of the churches. Many religious and cultural festivals have been carried out throughout the year possession sense full schedule.

Easter can be taken as one of the religious and cultural festivals. It denotes the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is celebrated by Christianity faith followers all over the world. Especially in Ethiopia and specifically in Lalibela Ester is celebrated colorfully since different events take place including God Friday, Saturday market, Kidame Sure and the main event ester itself.

God Friday is the commemoration of the suspending of Jesus Christ by Jewish. All of the properties of the church, movable heritages such as icons, manuscripts, and different types of crosses are taken out and put in the form of exhibition. The people move from a church to churches. They do bowing at each church repetitively until the funeral celebration of Jesus Christ take place. On the very early Saturday, priests in group go door to door to proclaim congratulation in saying "Jesus is inspected and assured for as he is not sinner rather devil is thrown to the heal". The priests allocate bundle of long grass locally named Ketema for each household. The people prepare these grasses in circular form and tie on their head, which is a

sign for Easter eve. The other wonderful thing is Sunday market. The market is full of chickens, goats, sheep, egg, fruits, butter and the like to prepare feast food. It is common to fast from the night of God Friday to down of Sunday.

In the meantime youngsters in group make ready themselves to participate in traditional festivals locally named Gettie, Eshiwlaie and Gebeta. Gettie is a kind of game performed by youngsters. Cactus, locally named qul-qual is put up on a selected area at a limited distance. A Javelin is ready and people make a group to do so. Each group throws the Javelin at the targeted cactus or qul-qual. A group, which inserts the pin of the javelin, will be the winner of the game. The members of the winner group are invited to sit on the back of the members of the defeated group. In the meanwhile songs are sung. The game is thus to commemorate the pain of Jesus Christ.

Eshiwlaie is also the other kind of play. The play is performed by girls. Regarding to the procedure of playing, firstly rope made of leather will be prepared and fastened on the branch of long and strong tree. The girls then sit on the rope and pushed by their friends by making turns and sing a song, which commemorate the pain of Jesus Christ. Gebetta is indoor game that is performed by both male and female. Jiraf-girfia is performed by young boys by whipping each other. It is celebrated colorfully as remembrance of Jesus Christ that he displayed his power for his apostles at mount Debre-Tabor. Jiraf-girfia is carried out every 23<sup>rd</sup> of August in pair and requires strong stand, readiness and courage.

These tangible and intangible cultural heritages, therefore intertwinedly made Lalibela the premier tourist attraction center in the country. Among nine world-heritage sites in Ethiopia, the rock-hewn churches are the flagship heritage-as-tourism destination, attracting roughly 90% of Ethiopia's leisure tourists (World Bank, 2006). The tourism industry, therefore has created a wide range of employment opportunity for inhabitants of the town. This in turn made the livelihood of the overwhelming dwellers of the town either directly or indirectly dependent on the tourism industry. They generate their income by engaging in different activities that are linked with the tourism sector. For instance the local guides are among part of the society who benefit from the tourism sector by rendering guiding services for tourists. In Lalibela, for example different guide

associations that entitled several roles and provide different types of services are established. These associations and the roles of local guides have been discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **TYPES AND ROLES OF LOCAL TOUR GUIDES' ASSOCIATIONS IN LALIBELA**

#### **4. 1. Types of Local Tour Guides Associations**

Formerly there was a belief in Lalibela to associate local guides with people who can speak foreign languages especially English and simply follow the footsteps of tourists. Such sentiment for long had been held that many people assume themselves as guides merely for speaking foreign language especially English. Ultimately people embark on to realize the concept of local guide that it is a professional work, which requires special training like any other professions. In line with this, professional guides began to distinguish themselves from non-professional and unlicensed local guides who dwell in the area under discussion. There is also the rise in awareness among the local guides that the works of guides are so complex that there is often a switch in roles of guides depending on the shifting of tourists' desires. Thus there was a need to organize in association. In doing so different guides associations were founded embedded in their roles. Different authors have identified various categories of tour guides (Collins, 2000; Cruz, 1999; Hu, 2007; Mancini, 2000). Some like Hu (2007) and Cruz (1999) have classified tour guides based on the geographical boundaries in which tour guiding operations are conducted while others such as Mancini (2000) and Collins (2000) put emphasis on the required qualifications, abilities and type of activities performed. Consistent with the aforementioned criteria such as abilities, qualification and type of activities for categorization of tour guides, the local tour guides associations in Lalibela were flourished. Then five types of tour guides have been identified in Lalibela including domestic and foreign tourist guides, docent or museum guides, guides who offer caring and trekking services. Hence, there is a need to apprehend that these guiding services are the underlying factors behind the establishment of guiding associations in Lalibela.

##### **4.1.1. Saint Lalibela and its Surroundings Tourists' Guiding Association (TGAL)**

This association embraces professional tour guides who are advanced in their education vis-à-vis the other associations mentioned so far and assumed to be qualified to interpret the historical and cultural heritages of the area. The association (TGAL) further classified in two associations such

as Domestic Tourists' Guiding Association in and around Saint Lalibela (DTGAL) and Foreign Tourists' Guiding Association in and around Saint Lalibela (FTGAL).

#### **4.1.1.1. Domestic Tourists' Guiding Association in and around Saint Lalibela (DTGAL)**

This association was organized having received recognition from the Micro, Small Trade and Industry Enterprise of the Lalibela Town Administration in 2003. The members of the association are merely fifteen. Regarding the underlying factors behind the establishment of this association, the forefront was creating employment opportunity for those who could not qualify to guide foreign tourists. In other words those who fail the accreditation examination, which is set by the Amhara Regional State Tourism, Culture, and Parks Development Bureau (ARSTCPDB) for guide of foreign tourists, as an alternative, were made to join DTGAL. However this action is condemned by some local guides by refuting that recruiting guides for domestic tourists from those that are not qualify to guide foreign tourists demotes the status of guides. This can also be regarded as an attempt of overlooking domestic tourists as if language is the mere criteria for local guiding. The DTGAL has yet no written rules and regulations. The requirements needed to be members of DTGAL as the secretary of the association said, are: training in tourism and related fields of study such as reception and front office; having good ethics including free from any kind of drug abuse; skills of disseminating write information about the rock-hewn churches and culture of the community to tourists; dwelling in and around Lalibela at least two years and above; and being a good role model for others.

The association was set up with the aim of promoting tourist attractions in and around Lalibela, enhancing domestic tourists and creating employment opportunities for youths of the town. The members of the association generate income from tourists in two ways such as through escort guides and privately. This is when tourists come to Lalibela through tour agents or escort guides, each member of the association take his/her turns otherwise the members can create the chance in their own efforts or individually by establishing direct link with visitors. So as to simplify it when tourists come through escort guides, the local tour guides earn money from tourists by keeping their turn. However, no need to keep turn by the local tour guides if they call for tourists by creating direct link with them individually. The local guides charge domestic tourist 150 birr if their number is less than four, and if their number lies between 5 and 20, tourists have to pay

250 birr and if they exceed 20 they are obliged to pay 300 birr. A guide is expected to pay for the association 10 and 20 ETB from the incomes of 150 and 250 birr respectively.

#### **4.1.1.2. Foreign Tourists' Guiding Association in and around Saint Lalibela (FTGAL)**

This association was officially setup having got recognition from the Amhara Regional State Organization of Voluntary Association in 1996. The association exists prior to the 1960s but not as such strong. One hundred thirty two members had been registered under the association but due to several reasons, some of the members had abandoned the association and a few of them begun to work individually. Thus, according to the chairman of the association, the members yet are approximately in between 90 and 100. Surprisingly there is only a female guide in FTGAL. The only female guide whom I interviewed in several occasions particularly regarding the causes for females misrepresentation in tour guiding, has articulated the reasons that encumber women's involvement in tour guiding.

It is unusual to see women guide in Lalibela, because for long have been firmly held belief that guiding is masculine activity, and thereby females have been grown up under the shadow of such sentiment. She underlined that things are difficult for females that they setback confidence associated with the strange of such guiding services by females. Females also have deficiency or shortcomings of creating networks in the tourism business, as she depicts that, this and other challenges have been hampering their involvement in local guiding. She remembers the occasions that there were only three females, who seat for the accreditation examination set by the regional tourism bureau for local guiding. However, of the exam seated, she was the only female passed the qualification examination. In the history of guiding in Lalibela prior to her, there were merely two females who engaged in guiding, but now one of them is living abroad and the other has been working hired by travel agency in Addis Ababa.

The minimum requirement needed to be the member of the association is diploma in tour guiding and competency in foreign languages such as English, French, and Germany to mention but a few. The earnings of the members are in to two ways such as privately earned business and by taking turns in the case of escort guides. Privately earned business means when a guide brought tourists to Lalibela by his/her individual effort or if a tourist/tourists come by creating direct

contact with a guide: in this case no need to keep turn and a guide charge tourists for his guiding services. However when a tourist/ tourists come through escort guides, the members make a business by taking turns. The association charge tourists 350 birr if they are four and less than it otherwise they are requested to pay 500 birr if they exceed the stated number. The local guides portrayed that the likelihood of making a business is seasonal; in a sense that during a peak time (roughly from September to February), they may have the chance of getting turns at least three times in a month but during the off-peak period mainly from May to September even a chance of making a business might not be created in a month. This association is relatively a strong association vis-à-vis the other associations at least it has highly organized structure and its own office. Realizing seasonality of tourism business, the association has been engaged in other alternative sources of incomes, for instance it has been providing internet, secretary, photo copy and cafeteria services.

**Figure 4.1: St. Lalibela and its Surrounding Foreign Tourist Guide Association Office**



Source: Field Survey; 2/4/2016

#### **4.1.2. Museum Guides**

Museum guides as their name implies are docent guides whose work is confined in the museum of the church, which means they deliver guiding services to tourists concerning movable tangible heritages in the museum. There are hired by the church institution and the whole members of the association are nine. They are permanent workers of the museum and paid monthly by the church. The salary of the guides' lies within the range of 2600 birr, the maximum one to 1500

birr, the minimum salary acquired by museum guides. The amount of salary paid for museum guides doesn't rely on their educational qualification rather it depends on their experience. With regard to special area of study, some of the museum guides have diploma in tour guiding, few of them have Bachelor degree in several fields of study and but few of them have only religious education. The latter group of guides was formerly serving the churches as diacons. The museum guides have articulated that they have been rendered short term trainings in tour guiding in some occasions by the institution of the church.

#### **4.1.3. Tourists Supportive Service Delivering Association of Saint Lalibela (TSSDAL)**

This is also a type of guides' association that was founded by embracing sixty members in 1996. The members of this association are not professional. They are not trained in guiding and have the least competency in guiding, that is why they have been engaging in activities which require low educational preparation and thereby professionalism. The association was set up with the aim of rendering caring/safety service to tourists on voluntary bases. They provide physical support for elderly and disabled tourists and carry their shoes and other materials while they travel from church-to-churches. The overwhelming members (50%) of the association are ex-soldiers. The association has also created employment opportunity for people who live with HIV/AIDS and for disabled people. Now the members of the association are 80 and 30 of them are women. With regard to the fee, the association has no fixed standard for charging tourists rather the fee relies on willingness of tourists. However from the existing trend, the charge is approximately between 150-300 birr for a single tour. Like DTGAL and FTGAL, the association pays tax for government which is roughly 100birr annually per individual. It has its own administrative structure which is consisted of five organs namely chairman, secretary, administrator, cashier and a member. In line with this, the association carries out election for new administrative members every two years. As the researcher could apprehend during the field stay and observation, the members of the association gather and perch around the northern part of Bethe Medhane Alem that as soon as tourists arrive there, leaders of the association request tourists if they desire to get such caring services.

#### **4.1.4. Trekking Associations**

As the name implies this association render trekking services for tourists. There are about four community based Trekking Associations organized by the Lasta District Culture and Tourism Bureau (LDCTB). These community based trekking associations, which are legally recognized by the District Bureau, are: Debre Sina Lodge Tourist Organization (DLTO); Tadyos Amba Tourist Trade Works (TATTW); Abune Yosef Trade work Organization (AYTWO); Ad Medhane Alem Tourist Trade Work Association (AMTTWA).The name of these associations are closely tied with tourist attractions in and around Lalibela.

DLTO which encompass 400 members was established in 2000.The operational area of the organization is at a place called Genete Mariam. Though TATTW was set up in 2001, the exact number of the members of the association as the researcher attempted to investigate is not clearly known. As the name implies its operational area is around Tadyos Amba, which is characterized by mythical, mountainous land of contrasts. Abune Yosef Trade work Organization was founded in 2003 and the whole members of it are 144.The association actively involve around the monastery of Abune Yosef. Ad Medhanialem Tourist Trade Work was founded in 2000: similar to TATTW, the exact number of the members of the association is not known as the tourist promotion expert of Lasta Woreda stated.

The expert has described that it is only the two associations namely Abune Yosef Trade work Organization and Debresina Lodge Tourist Organizations that are actively working jointly with Tesfa Community Trekking. Tesfa Community Trekking was founded for the purpose of rendering trekking services for tourists jointly with the local community in tourist destination areas. The works of these trekking associations are so complex that they render a wide range of services including non guiding services for tourists. The associations encompass not solely guides' rather large members of the community who provides non guiding services. It is through Tesfa Community Trekking, these community based associations create contacts with tourists. There is division of labor among the members of the association: some of them render guiding services and animal transportation, where as others serve as cooker, leader, cashier, tour organizer and guards. A tourist has to pay 2188 birr per day for a package of services that are under discussions. Then the income generated is allocated among the members that 330 birr for guides, 940birr for launch services, 270 birr for promotion/ booking, and 648birr for community

including those who supply animal transport. Tourists have to pay 2242 birr if their numbers exceed one. Accordingly the money collected is allocated among the members that 350 birr for guides, 304 for promotion/ booking, 940 for lunch service and 648 for community including transportation services.

#### **4.2. Recruitment Criteria's for Local Guides: Domestic and Foreign Tourists Guides**

The Amhara Regional State Tourism, Culture and Parks Development Bureau under the authority given by the proclamation, set a rule regarding recruitment of local guides operating in the region. The rule is prepared for those who desire to work as local guide for domestic and foreign tourists. The objectives of the rule are: recruiting qualified candidates who can guide tourists in the developed and the newly developing tourist destination sites; ensuring transparency and accountability in the recruitment process of local guides; demarcating clearly the tasks of different bodies involved in the registration, filtration and examination process of local guides

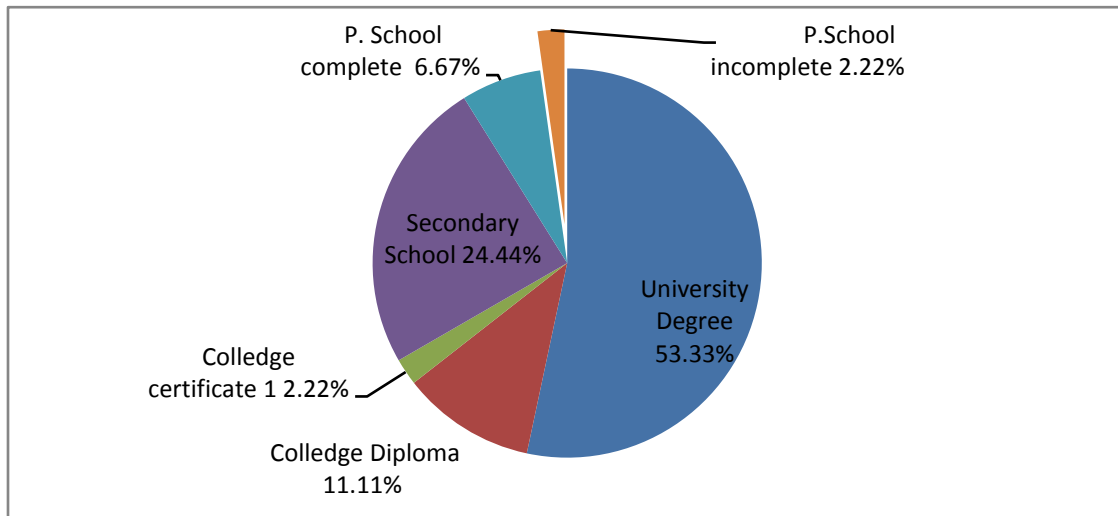
Different criteria's are set for domestic and foreign tourists' guides by the regional tourism bureau. According to the criteria's set by the tourism bureau, the behavior of guides is also given due emphasis that is the local person who aspire to be domestic guide should be free from drug addiction and willingness to work in accordance with the direction given by the district tourism bureau is mandatory. Educational preparation is also included in the recruitment criteria. Completion of at least grade ten educations and passing the accreditation examination prepared by the district tourism bureau at tourist destination is compulsory to be domestic tourists' guides

The Amhara Regional State Culture, Tourism, Parks and Development Bureau have put peculiar requirements for foreign tourists' guides. Unlike domestic tourists guides, foreign tourists guides are required to be certified or trained in tour guiding from any recognized institutions at least for a year and above it in the following fields of study such as History, Heritage Management, Tourism Management, Hotel Management, Geography, Biology, Geology, Anthropology, English, Environmental Studies, Heritage Conservation, Wildlife Ecotourism, Journalism and Communication, Forestry and Sociology. Dwelling at the place of tourist destinations sites for at least two years, free from addiction and willingness to work as member of the association in the tourist destination sites are mandatory to be foreign tourists guides (Manual of the Amhara

Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureau, 2004). See Appendices III for further information. Regarding the recruitment criteria for foreign tourists' guides, foreign tourists guide is accessible for considerable number of people who are graduated in the stated fields of study. However, here it should be noted that in Lalibela the major tourists' attractions are cultural and historical heritages. However, in line with this some of the disciplines regarded in the recruitment criteria by the regional tourism bureau seem irrelevant. Similarly, some important fields of study that should be included in the requirement criteria with regard to the nature of tourists' attractions sites in the study area have been overlooked. Rather the local guides of Lalibela require distinct skills so as to interpret and explain these cultural, historical and natural heritages. Owing to the nature of the heritages in Lalibela, for instance the multi-faceted features of the rock-hewn churches, the local guides require various skills and knowledge of variant disciplines unlike specific fields of study stated by the regional tourism bureau. If we pick out one of the fields of study stated in the manual for illustration, for instance English, this by itself is not appropriate. This is because how a local guide who trained in this foreign language for example can explain and interpret properly the historical, architectural and geological features of the rock-hewn churches. Indeed a guide who trained in English language might not face communication problem; however undoubtedly, he/she lacks appropriate knowledge in history, architectural, geological and other aspects of the rock-hewn churches.

In the field survey, incompatibility is observed between the actual fields of preparation of the local guides and what is stated in the documents of recruitment set by the Regional Tourism Bureau. The survey data displays that there are some guides who train in economics, law, accounting and natural sciences and other fields that are not listed in the document or manual of recruitment. Indeed most of foreign tourists' guides are degree holders that meet the standards of recruitment that is at least trained for two years. Regarding level of education of both domestic and foreign tourists guides (See the Figure 4.2 below).

Figure 4.2. Educational Status of Local Guides: Domestic and Foreign Tourists Guides



Sources: Field Survey; 31/3/2016

As indicated in Figure 4.2, twenty four (53%) of the local guides had received the University Degree, five (12%) had college diploma and one (2%) had college certificate. Eleven (24%) and three (7%) of them had completed their secondary and primary schools education respectively. One (2%) of them had not completed their primary school education. As the above educational survey data of local guides' revealed guiding is professional work that requires its own special training. Though trained in various fields of study, 53% of local guides have university degree that has slightly changed the old belief that guiding requires no special training. As the interviewees depicted till few years ago in Lalibela, guides were labeled by the community as illiterate and deviants for exhibiting behavior which run counter to the norms of the community.

Recently, formerly held attitudes of the residents towards local guides as illiterate and thereby the profession as the grass root work has been changing mainly due to following the involvement of educated people in the guiding realm as the chairman of foreign tourists guides said. Disparity in educational level of local guides also indicates variations among the local guides in the quality and types of services they render to tourists. Surprisingly, the local guides at the lower levels of education as the field survey revealed are senior guides. In the contrary considerable numbers of newly joined or junior guides are university graduates. Educational status and seniority of local guides are negatively correlated in the case of Lalibela. That is as seniority or experience increases, the likelihood of educational status or levels of the local guides get decreases. As the

researcher comprehends from the interview, the prime cause for such negative correlations between experiences and educational status is access of education that has been created at different period of time that local guides engage in the work. For instance senior guides had limited educational access in several fields of study during the time they set off guiding. Whereas the new entrants (junior guides) have wide range of educational opportunities in whatever fields of study they wish to join. Now days in Lalibela there are considerable number of young graduates in different fields of study, who use guiding as an alternative source of income.

Considering work experience other than guiding, some of the local guides were engaged in teaching, working in government offices, and private works among others before they embark on guiding. Others have no work experience prior to guiding and still few of them have been simultaneously engaged in different works including barberry and personal business besides guiding. Some of them had received no special training for guiding, but most of them said that they had taken on job trainings in their own efforts. To prepare for guiding, all foreign tourists' guides had studied a foreign language, and all of them claimed to speak English. Nine wrote that they spoke two foreign languages either English and Germany or English and French. Only two of them speak three languages such as English, French and Germany. Thus the lists of languages spoken by these guides are English, French and Germany. However, there was no indication of ability to communicate in these languages, and in my experience the level of competence in English, for example, were quite mixed with a few individuals having real command, a wider group who could make themselves understood and some who could communicate only haltingly.

### **4.3. Roles of Tour Guides**

With regard to the numbers of roles ascribed to tour guides there is no consensus among scholars. For instance, Zhang and Chow (2004) in general have noted down no less than 16 particular roles ascribed to guides. Whereas Black and Weiler (2005) have noticed 10 roles of tour guides. However, this study has used the four quadrant model of Cohen for examining the roles of local guides in Lalibela. However, the study depicted that the role of tour guides is contextual and always in switching. It varies not alone across the countries but within a given country and regions depending on the nature and types of tourists' attractions. Though the authors under discussions numerically have identified the roles of tour guides having reviewed and analyzed several literatures, this does not mean that all tour guides irrespective of their nationality and scenes of their operation have entitled same roles. For instance, this study has investigated the following roles of tour guides.

### **4.3.1. Mediating/Culture Brokerage**

Most authors who paid their attention to this topic agree that guides act as mediators who give tourists the access to attractions, information and knowledge (*gatekeepers*), as well as motivate, manage and supervise host-guest interactions (Cohen, 1985; Holloway, 1981; Pond, 1993; Rabotic, 2010). The role of mediating by local guides of Lalibela has been identified through survey questionnaires, interviews and observations by the researcher. Consistent with the reviewed literatures, the data findings indicated that the local guides in Lalibela mediate access, information and somewhat they are social catalyst.

#### **4.3.1.1. Mediating Access**

Local guides mediate access to attractions. Customers, in this case tourist perceive mediation as useful when they expect difficulties in locating specific attractions (the lack of signalization, attraction dislocation, undeveloped infrastructure etc). Both guides and visitors respondents were asked in the interview and survey visitors and guides self-completed questionnaires about the roles of local guides in Lalibela. The responses implied that one of the key mediating roles of local guides is mediating access to attractions. Some respondents stated that a tour guide should be able to act as a bridge between two cultures and as people-to-people ambassador i.e. the host community and tourists. By mediating access, tour guides should facilitate not only physical access, but also insights in to the local culture, and ultimately, enable visitors to observe and experience cultural differences and connect them with the places visited. The extract taken from interview2 explains this more.

*(.....we tour guides i.e. local guides of Lalibela offer package of services to tourists, including facilitation of access to attractions embracing informing them about itinerary of peculiar cultural attractions that ought to be visited, arranging the time of visit, accomplishing the necessary steps and requirements for visiting and leading them to the places of attractions.....)(Interview with G2, on13/4/2016)*

Thus, mediating of access is one aspect of guiding services offered by the local guides of Lalibela. This is a fact assured through observation by the researcher. Since the majority of tourists have first experience of visiting Lalibela, it is important to show tourist attractions and overcome barriers so as to physically visit tourists' attractions. It is also equally important to give insights for tourists about the most important tourists' attractions that need to be visited. What makes the roles of Lalibela local guides peculiar from tour guides in some part of the world is that they are interwoven as packages of services instead of being rendered as a separate service.

#### **4.3.1.2. Mediating Information**

Mediating information is a form of cognitive brokerage, which means creating understandings among tourists about the place to be visited. It is also a service aimed at making it easier for tourists to comprehend the destination they are staying at. Guides provide different kinds of information on attractions and the basic form of this mediation is narration about a concrete topic or subject.

Wide ranges of information are mediated by the local guides of Lalibela. The responses of the respondents' coupled with field observations shows that wide ranges of information is mediated by the local guides including the town of Lalibela, cultural peculiarities to be visited, the scenery of Lalibela, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela that set off from the history of Ethiopia to Bethel-Giorgies, which marks the end of visit regarding site of the churches. Signs, symbols and sculptures of the churches; the types and quality hotels in terms of rendering quality services including meals; the custom, culture and livelihood of the community and appropriate and non appropriate behaviors, which means things not allowed to do while visiting the churches among others are also information mediated by the local guides of Lalibela.

As some of the guides depicted in the interview, mediation of information by the local guides of Lalibela is presented as follow:

*I organize what tourists want to experience, I tell them where they can find best dish, traditional dances, sometimes I take them to the villages*

*of the community during a city tour (Interview with Guide 1, on 22/4/2016).*

Guide one is the chairman of foreign tourists guiding association and has been in guiding profession for the last thirteen years. The response of G1 displayed that local guides not only mediate tourists' attractions but they render a wide range of information to tourists, which is thought to be crucial for both tourists and local guides. However, this does not mean that all local guides of Lalibela offer same types of information's to tourists. It varies depending on the types of information visitors need to acquire and the degree of information a guide has about the topic/issue of discussion. For instance, all local guides of Lalibela might not have same information about hotels or restaurants of the town that provide quality services to tourists. To do so either they have to be customer of these hotels or restaurants or ought to have reliable source of information. Therefore, mediating of information relies on the types of information at hand.

*Beginning from the air port ( Lalibela air port) all- over the journey to the hotels where booked tourists in, as local guides, we explain every things of their interest including the scenario along the roads, peculiar attractions to be visited, the schedule of visiting, the culture and customs of the residents'. And during the afternoon session we interpret to them about the rock-hewn churches underlying the percepts of biblical implications (Extract from interview2 (G2), on 22/4/2016).*

Guide two has passed through the profession of guiding in the last twelve years. Before guiding he had been working as teacher in and around Lalibela for long years. From his interview one can deduce that local guides guiding services begins from the air port and tourists can acquire all types of information from them ranging from the general information about the town of Lalibela to the rock-hewn churches which demand multi-disciplinary skills.

*I welcome tourists; give them any kind of information with regard to the social and economic lives of the community and about the activities in the town of Lalibela. I sometime tell them where they acquire better services*

*and answer any questions from tourists (Interview with Guide5, held on 24/4/2016).*

Guide five has been in guiding profession since the last five years. Since he is born in Lalibela G5 has all rounded information about the town. That is why he stated that we local guides of Lalibela answer any questions raised by tourists and inform them where they can acquire better services mainly with regard to hotel services.

#### **4.3.1.3. Mediating Social Boundaries/Encounters**

In this study mediating social boundaries or the role of social catalyst refers to the role of local guides in helping visitors to understand and accept local customs and to show visitors how to behave in a manner that does not run counter to the appropriate local norms and ways of thinking. This notion was well substantiated through successive observations by the researcher. For example, during my first tour visit of the rock-hewn churches with G1, I had observed that the guide reminded visitors at the gate of Bete-Medhane Alem, where visiting of the churches begins as *“here you should take off your shoes and it is forbidden to perpetrate including chewing gum and clamoring inside the church”*. The extract taken from the record of conversations between the local guide and visitors’ during the second observation at Bete-Medhane Alem further elicit and illuminates the encountering role of local guides as follows.

1. *G - Here you are not allowed to get in*
2. *T-Why?*
3. *G-this is because the sacred place or the temple of the Ark of Covenant*
4. *G-Here snapping photo is not allowed!!*
5. *T-Ok!! I will not snap photos*

Note: G stands for Guide where as T stands for Tourists

Thus the extracts from the conversations apparently displays how the local guides induce and create awareness about acceptable and non acceptable norms or behaviors among the visitors. In so doing they ease barriers of communication between the hosts and visitors. Consequently one can envisioned what would be the consequences if visitors had get in the temple of the ark of covenant. It is possible to visualize the violent reactions from the church community including

priests. As the result of which miscommunication and conflicts might be flared- up in the church compound and thereby visiting would be interrupted. So there is a need to understand this role of local guides in bridging cultural differences between the hosts and guests (visitors) as one of the underlying factors for smoothly accomplishment of visiting.

#### **4.3.2. Educator**

In line with the stance of Robotic (2010), in this study education implies for the roles of tour guides in disseminating the right and required information which can fill the information gap of tourists. Therefore this demands the need to have knowledge in many aspects of the destination area. The guides' way of doing their job revealed that they provide information and to a great extent educate tourists. I could percipient and apprehend in the field observation the guides' role of education from one-to-one communications or dialogue between the guides and tourists as follows.

- 1. G-Bete-Medhane Alem has 72 monolithic pillars*
- 2. T-Oh! Oh! Oh! By referring his Japanese guide book*
- 3. G-The pillars inside the church are 38 while the outside pillars are 34 and totally there are 72 pillars; that represent the 72 disciples of Jesus Christ*
- 4. T-No the outside pillars are 28 by pointing out the numbers stated in the guide book*
- 5. G-No what is stated in the book is not correct, each symbols of the church has biblical connotation*
- 6. T-OK! By correcting what was written in the book*

The guides' role of education can also be further illustrated from the guide-visitor dialogue at Bete-Mariam as follows.

- 1. G-This is Bete-Mariam, the first work of Lalibela*
- 2. T-OH! Swastika by pointing out his finger to one of the windows of Bete-Mariam*
- 3. G-No! No! This is not Swastika, if you look the structure of Swastika it is in cock-wise direction where as this cross is in anti-clock wise direction, which symbolizes the 33 years when Jesus taught his disciples in all directions*

The extracts taken from one-to-one conversations between visitors and guides show how tourists gather information before their advent to Lalibela and some of them are misinformed by foreign writers, the Japanese guide book is a good example for this. Therefore, tour guides have responsibility in correcting and educating misinformed tourists as the guide corrected the Japanese visitor by providing the right information about the number of the exterior pillars of Bete-Medhane Alem. If the guide would have not been there, the Japanese visitor had been misinformed by the Japanese guide book. Therefore by the presence of the local guide he was corrected, as the result of which, perhaps the Japanese visitor in return correct other Japanese that might be misinformed in reading the same Japanese guide book.

Education is the most indispensable role of tour guides as concur with Holloway (1981), who also considers a guide's role as educator to be the most important one. The role of tour guides as educators is also described by many theorists including Cohen and Pond. From the conversation one can apprehend that how much religious knowledge is important, the local guide has explained and corrected the Japanese visitor by offering religious interpretation about the symbol of the 72 pillars that helped him to easily convince the visitor. Guide two corrected the American visitor by providing symbolic interpretation about the so called Swastika, in the phrase that is "Swastika is in a clock-wise direction where as the cross in the window of Bete-Mariam is in anti-clock wise direction". Besides "Swastika is a phenomena during the early twentieth century when the Nazi ascend to power in Germany but this cross was curved in the 12<sup>th</sup>.century" (Interview of G2, 5/5/2016). Here it should be noted that historical knowledge is also equally important as religious and other knowledge of destinations for the local guides of Lalibela. If guide two hadn't have knowledge about the history of the churches, he wouldn't have been correcting the American tourist.

#### **4.3.3. The Role of Ambassador (Lalibela)**

Tours guides' role is very complex that it includes a lot of activities within which are factors that help improve the good image of a destination (Zhang and Chow, 2004). There are also different roles that are performed by tour guides. The study has identified the role that helps build good image of the destination from the perspective of tour guides and the tourists under study. Tour guides of Lalibela were asked in both interview and survey questionnaire about the kinds of roles they entitled with. The interview and survey data indicated that the utmost tour guides depicted

the role of ambassador as one of the roles they are ascribed. They highlighted that during a tour they explain and promote to tourists not only explicitly available heritages but hardly stated signs including the background and history of the churches, meanings of words, signs, symbols and other things that deemed to be of great importance. In line with this one of foreign tourists guide verbalized the role of ambassador as follows:

*We escort tourists to different places of tourists' attractions and thoroughly explain various things situated all along their ways during tours. Furthermore, we interpret words, customs and traditions of the community, while telling them history, symbols and signs of the rock-hewn churches and also attending to their questions (Interview of G4, on 27/4/2016)*

“The role of showing and interpreting local cultural heritages, living culture and cultural identity of community at destination described as part of the “ambassador’s responsibility” of contemporary guides” (Yu et al, 2001). Consistent with the stance of Yu, the local guides of Lalibela, therefore can be ascribed the role of ambassador as the results of self-completed visitors survey clearly revealed. Cohen supposed to state implicitly the ambassador role of tour guides in the concept embedded in interactionary role, focusing on representation of the area to the followers. In a similar way under the survey questionnaire, tourists were also asked to express their attitudes about kinds of roles the local guides of Lalibela are entitled with. The utmost of them had indicated the role of ambassador is part within which the package of services offered by local guides. That is forty seven of them have revealed their consensus to the role of ambassador, however five of them have hardly expressed their consensus.

#### **4.3.4. Leadership and Safety**

Leadership is concerned with dynamic interaction between a leader and followers which leads to an acceptance of leader-follower roles by group members (Jordan, 1996). Of all local guides who were asked in the interviews and self-completed survey questionnaires about their roles, plenty of the interviewees had disclosed that one of the roles in guiding is to lead tourists on a tour. In the self-completed survey questionnaire, some of the local guides wrote leadership as one of their role. Some visitors had also substantiated the view of local guides that leadership is one of

the roles of local guides in Lalibela. The interviewees verbalized that they lead and direct group of tourists to places of interest. For instance, one guide clearly stated that he often escorts tourists as leader to Yimrehane Kirstos, Asheten Mariam, and other places of visitors' interest including the scenery for fixed period of time. He also underlined that it was his duty to lead the way, provide safety and security and solve any problems related to the tour, which arose during the course of travelling.

The way through which these duties are discharged by a tour guide affects the tourists' perception of the guide as well as the destination. The researcher had also realized during the field observation that local guides care tourists. For instance, in their visits, I saw some local guides who closely support specially elderly and disabled visitors. Furthermore, the whole guides whom the researcher accompanied during field observation, never depart Bete-Medhane Alem without informing tourists about the slippery nature of the gate. Therefore tourists' safety is central concern of local guides. The execution of leadership role of tour guide has the potential to make the experience of tourists interesting or not. This is linked to what Howard *et al.*, (2001) describe as instrumental and social roles in the guiding leadership realm.

#### **4.3.5. Sales Representatives (Entrepreneurship)**

Tour guides act as representatives of the destination community in business transactions between the host community and tourists. Hu and Modlin *et al.*, separately confirm that representation is in form of sales representatives and destination representatives (Hu, 2007; Modlin *et al.*, 2011). This study revealed that all tour guides help to promote tourism through the way they facilitate transactions between tourists and the local community. It was evident that tour guides isolate and concentrate on issues that help pull more visitors to a destination. They promote the material culture and negotiate the marketing transaction between the local community and visitors to reach consensus. Guide two (G2) clearly articulated the percepts by underlining their functions as entrepreneurs, in a sense that they create market opportunities to those engaged in different business activities in and around the town of Lalibela. This is by promoting and even leading tourists to the place if it is necessary. He also stated that as much as possible tour guides take tourists to places that arouse tourists' interest during a tour. This includes extending time of

interesting activities and taking tourists to the villages to sample out local drinks such as “Tej”<sup>2</sup> and ‘Saturday market’ where tourists can shop local products including traditional “sora”<sup>3</sup> clothes. The researcher observed that during guides-tourists interaction, tour guides deliver services in order to satisfy tourists and imprint good memory among tourists. Through the process of making bookings, tour guides provide good information about the destination that has the potential to arouse interest of the potential visitor. In so doing, it is believed that the local guides of Lalibela have been tremendously contributing to tourism marketing and promotion.

#### **4.3.6. Safeguarding**

In this study, safeguarding tends to refer the roles of local guides in ensuring the viability of these historical and cultural heritages. From FTGAL, one guide reported that “we are mobile guards”; and another underlined that;”the earnings of the guides relied on the existence of these heritages.” A DTGAL guide reported that “we closely watch every movement of tourists during their visits in the churches apart from interpretation and dissemination of information to them and we inform them about things that are regarded as offenses by the inhabitants and the church community. The chairman of FTGAL articulated that it is difficult to accept all tourists come for the same purpose of visiting; some of them might have hidden objectives, so it is crucial to closely watch out their activities. He further substantiated the case that how much they have been actively involved in conservation of their heritages in eliciting the 65,000 birr, the association had bankrolled for promotion and safeguarding of “Ashendiye.”<sup>4</sup> The role of safeguarding is a new insight in this study. The local guides of Lalibela therefore not only have the role of mediating/culture brokerage but they equally play vital role in safeguarding these historical and cultural heritages including the rock-hewn churches. From the phrase “mobile guards” one can apprehend that the local guides above all closely watch church-to-churches movements of tourists and protect the heritages from any damages and steal. The tour guide is in a potentially influential position to modify and correct visitor behavior to ensure that it is responsible and contributes to sensitive attitudes to heritages.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Tej ‘is one of Ethiopian traditional alcoholic drinks especially Lalibela is known in its local ‘Tej ‘ houses

<sup>3</sup> Sora is a well known traditional song, which is sung by men. Furthermore it refers the traditional cloth that is put on by men.

<sup>4</sup> Ashendiye is a festival performed by girls and celebrated every August 22<sup>nd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding safeguarding, Cohen (1985) didn't incorporate in his model the issue of conservation or resource management by the local guides. Conservation or resource management focus contains two roles: "motivator" (the modification of tourist behavior and impacts on-site) and "environmental interpreter" (the understanding and appreciation of environmental issues to facilitate responsible tourist behaviors in the long term) (Weiler and Davis, 1993).

To summarize, as far as the roles of local guides is concerned in this study about seven roles of tour guides have been identified in the context of Lalibela. The study revealed a great disparity from Zhang and Chow (2004) and Black and Weiler (2005) with regard to the numbers of roles identified. Zhang and Chow investigated sixteen roles where as Black and Weiler scrutinized ten roles of tour guides. In consistent with Cohen's Four Quadrant Model, in this study the local guides of Lalibela roughly exhibit instrumental roles (organization and management), social role (fostering social interaction), interactionary (facilitation of encounters with the host population), and communicative roles (information dissemination). It should be noted that some of the findings in this study were implicitly stated in Cohen's four quadrant model. The finding is somehow consistent with the model of Pond. However, of the five roles of tour guides described by Pond, their mediating roles ,which is the main finding of this study either has been overlooked or implicitly stated by Pond. Indeed consistent with her view, these roles of tour guides though stated separately are interwoven and synergistic. The researcher also believes that the roles of tour guides are contextual.

In their mediating endeavor i.e. mediating of access, mediating of information and mediating of social boundaries, knowledge about the local culture is crucial. Knowledge about the local culture is also significant for the local guides so as to properly perform the rest of their roles including the role of education, representatives of the region, leadership and safety and sales representatives. Once knowledge about the local culture is acquired, the way this knowledge is mediated to visitors is equally important. As a result the local guides should employ their own interpretive strategies so as to explain the local cultures including the rock-hewn churches to visitors based on their interests. Here awareness about tourists' cultural differences is important for the local guides so as to identify tourists' interests and meet their expectations. With regard to the interpretive strategies of local guides, their knowledge about the local culture and awareness about tourists' cultural differences, the detail of discussion is presented in chapter five.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES, DESTINATION RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF TOURISTS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

#### **5.1. Interpretive Strategies**

In this study, the interpretive strategies are used to describe the topic or issues that are discussed by the local guides and the way they present and explain the topic of discussions for visitors. Interpretation is not a matter of following mechanical rules. Rather it is a craft or art involving the combination of range of skills including intuition. Part of the aim of interpretation is to understand the text (Schleiermacher, 1998). The goal of interpretation is to uncover the meanings of the content in the text or spell out implicit or unstated presupposition, implications or meanings (Schleiermacher, 1998). For this purpose the researcher has conducted observation with seven local tour guides. Based on the observation, the researcher has attempted to dismantle the issues to be discussed and the way the guides present and interpret them in to the following topics: The introductory part, the rock-hewn churches and city tours.

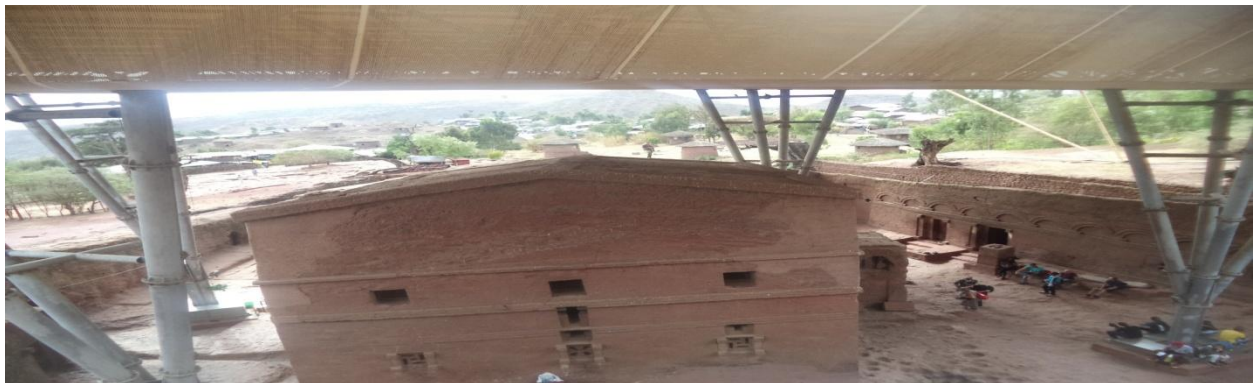
##### **5.1.1. Introduction**

The introductory part sets off by greetings: the guides welcome tourists to the holy place of Lalibela. Then the local guides provide brief description about the history of Ethiopia i.e. the three dynasties in Ethiopia: the Axumite, the Zagwe and the Gonderian. By highlighting the Axumite period, they proceed to the Zagwe dynasty. They discuss the history of the Zagwe dynasty including the 11 kings who reign the dynasty, especially the four kings who simultaneously entitled the status of king and priest such as Yimrehane, Gebremariam, Ne'akuto Le'ab and Lalibela.

The detail of the discussions in the introductory part is devoted to Lalibela. The major issues to be discussed here are the birth and the rise of Lalibela, the process of acquisition of scenes where these churches are founded by Lalibela, the reason why Lalibela had aspired to build these churches, the reign of Lalibela and the time that he embarked on to build the churches. As I had attempted to analyze from the field observations, these are more or less same styles of presentation adopted by the utmost local guides of Lalibela.

As far as the major themes of the heritages or tourist attractions are concerned, the rock-hewn churches are the central focuses of discussion and interpretation. Some local guides begin by explaining about the three types of rock-hewn churches in Ethiopia such as monolithic, semi monolithic and cave churches where as others start from the five types of rock-hewn churches in the world and by underlining as four of them found merely in Ethiopia. With the exception of one guide, all guides whom I interviewed and with whom made observation indicated about the existence of 11 rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, which are categorized in to three groups such as the northern, and the southern groups and Bete-Georgies as the third group. But a guide from DTGAL held a very distinctive view. He disclosed his stance that “there are only ten rock-hewn churches, which is stated as eleven by other guides and people is absolutely wrong and need to be improvised.” He continued to render evidence for his stance that “these rock-hewn churches symbolize the ten-commandments and if you count their number they are ten but others count the twin churches such as Bete-Golgota and Bete-Debre Sina that share the same roof and wall as two but this is wrong.” He also cited the ten blind arcades on Bete-Mesqel facing south as symbols and evidence of the ten churches of Lalibela (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Bete-Mariam and Bete-Meskel, facing the northern wall of Bete-Mariam



Source: Field survey; 6/4/2016

The Guide from DTGAL interprets the number of rock-hewn churches in different ways unlike the utmost guides. Indeed interpretation is not a matter of following mechanical rules, as Schleiermacher said (Schleiermacher, 1998); rather it is a craft or art involving the combination of range of skills including intuition. If it is simply following mechanical rule, all guides could have the same perception about the rock-hewn churches; since interpretation is an art, the guides differ in their skills and understandings of the symbolic and contextual interpretation of the

number of the churches. Simultaneously, the guide for domestic tourists seems obsessed to understand the intention of Lalibela for building the churches. As he said Lalibela built the churches to symbolize the testimony in the Bible. He interprets some of the symbols in the churches as we saw earlier as evident for this (see figure 5.1). Hence it can be said that the guide for domestic tourists realize the need to understand the intention of the author in this case Lalibela so as to vividly understand the text, here the objects or churches concur to the views of Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher, 1998). However the utmost guides seems prefer to interpret the number of churches without going to analyze the intention of Lalibela in concurrent with Gadamer's (1990) stance that no need to penetrate in the mind of the author in order to understand the text in this case the churches. Here it is important to note that culture is like a text, with many layers as Geertz (1960) explained. This implies that so as to properly understand the text, there is a need to read the whole text. The same is true in the case of the churches. This is because so as to understand the symbolic representation of the churches, there is a need to understand their biblical connotation instead of simply counting them.

The visit of the rock-hewn churches begins from the northern group of churches that includes Bete-Medhane Alem, Bete-Mariam, Bete-Mesquel, Bete-Denagil and Bete-Mikael (the twin churches such as Debre-Sina and Bete-Golgota). One of the guide from DTGAL, reported that these group of churches are symbolized by cross of Jesus Christ in his crucifixion at Qeranio; Bete-Medhane Alem in his forehead, Bete-Mariam in his chest, Bete-Denagil in his left hand, Bete-Mesquel in his right hand and Bete-Mikael in his legs accordingly. During my observation I had confirmed that almost the whole local guides set off their guiding activities from Bete-Medhane Alem and proceed to Bete-Mariam, Bete-Mesquel, Bete-Denagil, and Bete-Mikael accordingly. I had followed the footsteps of local guides in the field observation both as visitor and researcher so as to investigate the compatibility in the focus of interest and meaning construction (interpretation) among the local guides in each church as follows.

With regard to the symbolic representation of the first or the northern group of churches, the guide from domestic tourists articulated that these groups of churches are symbolic representation of God in his crucifixion. Symbol is anything—an action, a practice, an object, a pattern of sounds, a cremation ceremony, the gathering together of people to share a meal— that is a vehicle of meaning. The goal of interpretive analysis is to spell out the implicit or unstated

presuppositions, implications, or “meanings” (the goals, values, and pictures of the world) that make this or that action, practice, object, or pattern of sounds intelligible to members of some culture ( Geertz,1973). In this case the northern group of churches is symbols of objects that are situated in east-west and north-south directions in a similar fashion to the cross. They represent God’s forehead, chest, and his left and right hands during his crucifixion. However, this is stated implicitly that up to the role of the local guides to interpret effectively their symbolic implications. That was why after reviewing the multiple definitions of the word “culture,” in this case the churches that can be regarded as material cultures, Geertz deduce his own position:

*The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical. But this pro- noun cement, a doctrine in a clause, demands itself some explication (Geertz, 1973:5)*

Therefore interpretation as Geertz stated is not an experimental science in search for law rather it is an art of searching meaning. In the case of the northern group of the rock-hewn churches, no need of looking for law by the local guides: their main task should be making thick description, the concept which I borrowed from Geertz (1973). As Geertz stated thick description implies for the process of spelling out or searching context dependent meaning of something. In line with the notion of thick description, I think the role of local guides should be spelling out the meaning of the northern group of churches under discussions for tourists.

### **5.1.2. The Rock-Hewn Churches (The Major Themes of Interpretations)**

Local guides were asked during the observation; why do they start their interpretation from Bete-Medhane Alem, and why not they begin for example, from Bete-Giorgies, the last work of Lalibela. They had responded in different ways: some of them stated that since Bete-Medhane

Alem is proximal to the ticket office and the main gate of the churches; others explained as it is logical to start from the northern/first group of churches, which are assumed to be Lalibela's first work and still others stated that the visit will be exciting for tourists to end with Bete-Giyorgies, the last and the most marvelous and adorning work of Lalibela. This also helps them to create suspense among tourists. And still others depicted that snapping picture or photos of Bete-Giyorgies during the afternoon, when the visit of churches begin is not convenient, rather the sun set is preferable time. This entails the techniques of guiding adopted by the local guides so as to make the tour exciting and induce a memorable experience among tourists. Thus, consistent with the concepts and definitions of tour guide in the reviewed literatures, a guide is one who knows very well about the local destination for tourists as underlined by the local guides in the phrase "the sun set" is convenient time for visiting Bete-Giyorgies.

The guides' begin their interpretation about Bete-Medhane Alem from its exterior part. They portray about its external features especially its pillars. As one of the guides put it in words; Bete-Medhane Alem has 72 pillars, 34 in the outside and 38 of them inside of it that represent the 72 disciples of Jesus Christ that belong to his 120 family. Having explained about the greatness' of Bete-Medhane Alem of all rock-hewn churches and its rectangular shape, the guides' escort tourists to the interior part of the church by remarking them to take off their shoes. The central part of discussions in the interior of the churches are the two row of windows, its basilica interior plan with a nave, five aisles and eight bays, the three empty graves symbolizes Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, biblical fathers, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Gospel written in Ge'ez, Arabic and Hebrew scripts and the famous Lalibela cross known as Afro Aygeba.

Some of the local guides whom I accompanied during the observation describe about the symbolic connotation associated with the round shape and the basilica plan of the interior part of Bete-Medhane Alem. For instance, guide five (G5) linked the round shape with symbol of the universe and the basilica plan as example of east-west orientation of the church. Some of the guides describe in detail where as others simply highlights about how this church was constructed. For instance, some of them describe as three primitive tools were used by Lalibela for construction of Bete-Medhane and the span of time taken for completion of the churches including the church under discussion. In relation with this I had observed when visitors interrogates guide fifth (G5), the number of workers employed by Lalibela for construction of

the church. The guide had stated the two types of scholarly belief with regard to its construction by referring ‘Gedle Lalibela’ or the hagiography of Lalibela: the one is a belief that Lalibela had employed 4000 workers and the other is a belief that Lalibela constructed the churches with the help of angels during the midnight. In ‘Gedle Lalibela’, the angels were symbolized by white birds. There are also local guides who explain for visitors a trapezoid shaped courtyard where “Beza kulu”<sup>5</sup> is celebrated and its symbolic representation and still there are guides who explain details of activities in their ways from Bete-Medhane Alem to Bete-Marriam. For example, I had realized that some local guides depict for tourists about the fastening people: who seat, take a dish and chant together inside the compound of Bete-Marriam after rogation.

I could observe while local guides were using various techniques so as to deepen visitors understandings about the church and the symbols associated with it. Some of the local guides open the discussions for visitors, for instance Guide five (G5) started his explanation about how the church (Bete-Medhane Alem) was constructed by forwarding the following question to visitors“: what do you think, was it from the window or the door Lalibela begun to build this church?”

Visitors pointed out their assumptions: some of them said that Lalibela begun to establish Bete-Medhane Alem from the window where as others claimed from the door by putting forth their hypothesis. Then the guide summarized the discussion by giving his explanation. Thus, some of the guides are participatory of their clients in their presentations and discussions. A considerable number of local guides whom I had accompanied during the field observation were using both verbal and non verbal communications including body gestures and sign languages so as to enhance visitors understanding and still I saw some of them were writing on their hands to explain some variables that are difficult for them to explain verbally. I could realize that these sign languages: body gestures and other techniques were used mainly when there was difficulty of communications between the local guides and the visitors mainly emanated from language barrier. It was also observed by the researcher while the local guides pauses their interpretation so as to respond to visitors’ questions and give enough time for visitors to take pictures of the churches.

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<sup>5</sup> Beza-Kulu is colorful religious song and celebration which is held for commemoration of Christmas and the holiday of Lalibela. It is colorfully celebrated starting from the eve of Christmas and the celebration continues till the morning time of the holiday.

Regarding the techniques of guiding, the chairman of FTGAL puts his opinion as follows.

*I do not think there is a precise technique of guiding, in a sense that clearly set regulations for how to handle tourists. Guiding should be observed from both the perspectives of the guide and guided, since every person is different from every other in character; personality and attitude as the behavior of tourists from various nationals differ. As an experienced guide in the tourism business in Lalibela, I can tell you my own opinion but not a precise technique for guiding. It is based on over 12 years of contacts with tourists (Interview of G1, on February 21, 2016).*

As far as the major requirements of guiding is concerned, the chairman give due emphasis for knowledge of basic skills and guides' personality. Knowledge of basic skills refers knowledge of tourists' destinations or attractions where one operates, historically and culturally; knowledge of the languages one can properly communicate with visitors; and knowledge of tourists' cultural differences, including their interests, the history, geography and national characteristics of them

Guides personality is mainly related with the behavior of guide in handling tourists and guiding profession required. For instance, as a guide you have to talk and explain everything what tourists ask you. A guide should be patient and polite and treat tourists equally where ever they come from. Guides need also have attractive personality-good dressing, politeness and keep his/her personal hygiene, and be a kind of story teller i.e. one who can turn a simple tale into a captivating adventure. Furthermore, a guide should be punctual, arrive on time before tourists at a place of tourists attractions.

Having completed their visit at Bete-Medhane Alem, the local guides escort tourists to Bete-Marriam. The visit embarks on from its exterior part including the history, structure and biblical interpretation of the church. It is obvious that the whole guides describe for visitors as Bete-Marriam was the first work of Lalibela and had incurred him protracted time of construction. The various cross style windows, which line up in three rows including swastika and the rectangular

pool found in the floor of the surrounding courtyard are the central themes of discussions by the guides with regard to the exterior part of Bete-Mariam. They deepen visitors understanding in interpreting the underlying symbolic connotation embedded with these cross style windows and rectangular pool. With regard to the distinctive feature of Bete-Mariam vis-à-vis the other churches, Guide seven elaborated it as follows;” it’s surrounded fence, three doors, each of which has two pillars and floors, and has its own holy water pool”. He added that Bete-Mariam is the most adorned and favorite church of king Lalibela.”

This implies that the local guides have equipped with the necessary knowledge about the distinctive features of the rock-hewn churches and their interpretation about each of the churches has taken these differences in to consideration. Indeed there were also guides whom I observed that didn’t give due coverage and emphasis for the topic under discussion.

The guides escort visitors to Bete-Meskel carved in to the northern wall of Bete-Mariam, before they make their way to the interior part of the latter church. This is because the proximity of Bete-Meskel to the exterior part of Bete-Mariam than its interior part. Having completed the visit of Bete-Meskel, the guides made their way to the interior of Bete-Mariam, where I found a large number of pictures, sculptures and hence symbols than any other churches. They devote their considerable time in the interior part of Bete-Mariam so as to interpret the section in relation with dozen of symbols con-fined in it. That is why I prefer to call the local guides of Lalibela “Symbol Specialist”, in consistent with Ooi (2002), who in the same way described tour guides as “a symbol specialist” they offer explanations of hardly available signs. They deepen visitors understanding by interpreting the underlying concepts embedded in the symbols, which means they made explicit the unstated suppositions or hardly available signs. The skill of symbolic interpretation as the utmost guides said enabled them to credulous visitors from any confusion of the churches.

The upcoming visit is Bete Qidus Mikael: it is twin churches separated by a wall, east of which is Golgota and to the west is Debre Sina. Debre Sina is situated in the gate of the church, from which the local guides resume their interpretation. It has covered pillar like Bete-Mariam and many carefully carved pillars in the interior. Golgota is symbolic grave or tomb of Jesus. Women are not allowed to get in Golgota. Even though Bete-Denagel is among the first group of churches, it doesn’t receive the attentions of both guides and visitors. This is because it is visible

that externally Bete-Denagel is not as marvelous as the utmost churches to draw the attention of both visitors and guides. That is why local guides prefer to interpret it lastly.

The southern group churches unfortunately were not accessible for visitors during the field work for the purpose of conservation works on Bete-Gebriel. The guides simply verbalized the group of churches under this category and the sequence and chain of visit. Thus the hierarchy of the visit is as follows; Bete-Gebriel-Meriqorios-Amanuel-Abalibanos. These groups of churches as explained by the guides were built next to the first group; however G4 has a very different view. He articulated by citing historians and architects as follow.

*The southern group churches are the first works of Lalibela. This group of churches were initially constructed by Lalibela not to offer religious function rather they were serving as palace, court house and host for foreign guests; this is evident that if you look at their structures they do not look like churches (Interview of G4, held on 24/4/2016)*

Here it should be noted that consensus should be reached among the local guides since they have been disseminating distinct information for tourists. This in return might cause confusion and distrusts among tourists and distortion of the history of the churches. As a researcher I attribute the cause mainly for lack of the local guide book that can be used as the main reference material and partially for limited training in particular for variation of perceptions among the local guides with regard to some facts of the churches.

The visit of the rock-hewn churches ended at the last group of the church i.e. Bete-Giorgies. A considerable number of local guides along their way from the second group of churches to Bete-Giorgies describe about things which draw the attentions of both local guides and visitors. For instance, I had observed while they articulate the ruined villages, traditional school of deacons and the stone bell along the way to Bete-Giorgies.

Figure 5.2: While the guide was portraying the function of the stone bell for visitors along the way to Bete Giorgies



Source:

Source: Field survey; 4/4/2016

### 5.1.3. City Tours

Having completed the visit of Bete-Giorgies, if tourists are interested, the local guides render them city tour services. They escort them to the villages of the community and depict their village's life, traditional night clubs, and Saturday market and souvenir shops among others.

The rough chart of the local guides function is presented in the following way:

### **Tourists↔Guides↔Community**

As indicated in the chart, tourists aspire to see the village life, cultural ceremonies such as 'Ashendiye' and 'Sora', traditional night clubs, and the social life of the community. They may wish to take photograph and purchase some souvenirs. To accomplish these goals in the two days, the average days which tourists spend in Lalibela, they need the help of local guide, one who know to connect tourists with the local attractions. The community on the other hand, needs to have an intermediary who assists them in translating and bringing tourists to their village life, traditional night clubs, Saturday markets and souvenirs. These tour guides or cultural brokers

have therefore prominent role in the development of tourism in Lalibela and the culture of the community and have great impact for tourism of the society in the town

## **5.2. Destination-Related Knowledge**

Destination-related knowledge in this study refers to the awareness and understandings that a local tour guide ought to have about the history of the Zagwe dynasty: the three types of churches in and around Lalibela; the architectural, geological and archeological features of the churches; the religious practices and biblical concepts which are tied with the signs, symbols, sculptures etc which are found both in the interior and exterior parts of the rock hewn churches of Lalibela; and the culture of the community. By religious knowledge, I mean the understandings that the local tour guides have about the symbolic association between the Bible and distinct parts of the rock hewn churches. This is because, the associated parts of the rock-hewn churches such as pillars, windows, paintings, pictures, sculptures, and other treasures and instruments embedded in the interior and exterior parts of the churches connote religious or biblical underpinnings.

Both visitors and guides in the self-completed surveys were asked to rate on the knowledge of local guides about the culture, history and the rock-hewn churches on scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Strongly agree was rated by 19 (46%) tour guides, agree rated by 18 (44%) tour guides, 2 (5%) of them were neutral and 2 (5%) of them rated on disagreement. The responses of visitors survey revealed that 16 (40%) of them rated strongly agree, 20 (50%) of them rated agree, 2 (5%) of them were neutral and 2 (5%) of them rated strongly disagree. Visitors were also asked in the self-completed survey to rate the performance of local guides on the scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor). Accordingly the result shows that 14 (28%) of them rated guides performance excellent, 22 (44%) of them rated very well, 11 (22%) and 3 (6%) of them rated medium and poor respectively.

The responses of both visitors and local guides in the self-completed survey about the performance of local guides more or less reveal as the utmost local guides' performance is good. However, I found somehow incongruity between local guides and visitors responses and the researcher observation with regard to local guides' performances. This is perhaps due to the

incompatibility between what local guides responded about their performance in the self-completed survey and their actual performance and the refrain of the majority of visitors from providing genuine responses with regard to the actual performance of local guides. The observation illustrates that the competency of the local guides in some aspects of knowledge is underrated. I could also uncover these problems in one or other ways as implicitly stated by the local guides.

The researcher had also somehow tried to comprehend and highlight the knowledge of some of the local guides about the history of Ethiopia, which is also the focus of tourists' attention from the record of one-to-one communication or conversation. For instance, the following dialogue between the local guide and visitor is taken to illustrate the case more:

- 1. T-Do you know Menilk II was collaborator of Italy before his coronation as emperor of Ethiopia*
- 2. G-By the way there are two contradictory ideas about why Menilik failed to expel Italians in the aftermath of Adwa.....after long silence*
- 3. G-After long silence, do you know it was Haile Sellassie who was coroneted as emperor of Ethiopia following Menilik's death*
- 4. T-NO! NO! Menilik designated Lij Iyasu, his daughter's son, as heir to the throne while he was sick.....thus Iyasu ruled his country and then the period of diarchy followed after Iyasu.*

We can apprehend from the conversation that tourists have knowledge about the history of Ethiopia from the phrase "Menilk II was collaborator of Italy" and "Menilik designated Iyasu as the heir to the throne and the period of diarchy". In the contrary the guide had mistaken in saying "it was Haile SellassieI who became emperor after the death of Menilik. Thus, the guide neither trained in history nor took courses of history. It was a shame for the guide to say 'no' rather he preferred involvement in the conversation as if he trained in history or well studied it. Here there are some disparity between the researcher observation, and visitors' survey and the findings of guides' survey about the guides' role performance. It seems a slogan of the utmost local guides of Lalibela that it is a shame to say "I don't know" to any interrogation of tourists. The response of the aforementioned guide also pertains in the underlying belief of the local guides. That was why he didn't refrain from being part of the conversation as if he knew well the history of

Ethiopia since silence is a shame. Knowledge of history, if possible multi-disciplinary knowledge is so essential for the local guides of Lalibela.

With regard to destination related knowledge, local guides were asked in the interview and survey questionnaire about their response if tourists ask them questions that are strange or they never know. Considerable interviewees' said that they never say no: this is because "a great shame" for the guide to say "no" according to the law of guiding. In the self-completed guides' survey questionnaire, thirty one of them responded that they do not say "no" where as the remaining nine of them stated that they do say "yes." With regard to their response, the subsequent question of the researcher was "how do you respond to their question if you don't say no." As interviewee three (G3) verbalized it:

*It is unethical in the law of guiding to say I don't know, so I will forward the questions for the visitors themselves to give their opinions and then based on the clues received from visitors I will respond to their questions (Interview of G3, held on 17/4/2016).*

Most of the interviewees responded that if they are asked questions that they do not know, firstly they request tourists to give time so as to ask other guides, elderly or religious fathers and then respond to them. Other's stance is inducing their philosophical orientation, which is literally near to the right answers.

As far as my knowledge about the rule of guiding is concerned, I couldn't uncover the law of guiding as the local guides stated it is wrong to say "I don't know." However the researcher is skeptical of the local guides' belief or stances. I would rather prefer to say "I don't know" instead of constructing and disseminating information which distorts history as the local guide stated in the phrase that "it was Haile SellassieI ascended to the throne after the death of emperor MenelikII."

The local guides were asked about the most challenging questions from visitors. The response of the respondents put in words as follows:

*Most tourists frequently asked me about the authenticity of the churches that is if they were constructed by king Lalibela why not this knowledge yet continued (Interview of G5, on4/5/2016)*

With regard to tourists' interrogation as stated above from the extracts of local guides interviews, it should be noted that local guides have been obsessed with providing thorough explanations for a wide range of issues and questions that are raised by tourists but not necessarily linked with the churches. Some of the questions are related with history, for instance in the phrase "why not this tradition of knowledge i.e. the rock-hewn churches yet continued."

*Tourists frequently asked me why did Lalibela constructed these churches here and beneath the earth and how did he knew these rocks were monolith in the absence of technology during his era (Interview of G2, held on 2/5/2016)*

Some of the questions raised by tourists are related with Geology, as described by G2 in the phrase "how did Lalibela knew as the rocks were monolith in the absence of technology" in the period under discussion

*The most challenging and memorable question that tourists frequently ask me is that the northern and southern group churches are found closer to each other but Bete-Giorgies is located or constructed far from them; why was?(Interview of G4, held on 3/5/2016)*

Some of the questions are so complex that they need thorough examination, for instance what was the intention of Lalibela in dismantling the rock-hewn churches and detaching Bete-Giorgies in particular from the rest of them as stated by guide four. Therefore, some of the questions, for instance, the last one can be answered by intuition and the utmost of them are linked with distinct fields of study that they remark the need to train and qualify local guides in several fields of study and multi-disciplinary skills accordingly.

### **5.2.1. Sources of Destination-Related Knowledge**

In this study sources of knowledge is to refer to how the local guides of Lalibela have been acquainted with knowledge about tourists' destinations including the rock-hewn churches, the symbols and sculptures which are related with biblical concepts, the architectural, archeological and geological knowledge's underlying the philosophical orientation of the churches. The local guides were requested to state discourses of tourists' attractions in and around Lalibela. Books, experiences, senior guides, observations, elders and religious leaders, trainings, inscriptions on the churches and visitors' feedback were the most frequently mentioned sources of knowledge by the local guides in the interview and guides' self-completed survey.

The reading material which had been read by the guides to prepare them for their work was also requested in the interview and questionnaire. Tabulation of these readings reveals the importance of domestic source of knowledge about their own country or area. The most frequently mentioned source in guides survey questionnaire is indeed of local origin, a book entitled “Gedle Lalibela” or hagiography of Lalibela, written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by king Lalibela and edited in the 15<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Atse Zeriyaqob. Books written by Afe-memihir Alebachew Reta and Mengistu Gobeze are also frequently mentioned local sources of knowledge. The most frequently mentioned non-local or foreign sources of knowledge are the books written by the two foreign visitors such as Graham Hancock’s(1997)“The Sign and the Seal” and Francisco Alvarez’s(1970) “Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia”.

The studies by authors well-known to international scholars such as Bidder (1959), Findlay (1944), Gerster (1970), Hecht (1972), Pankhrust (1960) and Graham (2001) are neither available nor known by most local guides in Lalibela. Indeed there are also guides who do not know the works of Francisco Alvarez as they responded in survey questionnaire. However, most of the local guides know the works of Alvarez as they wrote in the survey questionnaire in his witness about the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. Historians frequently cite Francisco Alvarez, an early sixteenth century Portuguese traveler, and as the first foreign observer to have recorded his descriptions of the churches of Lalibela. After describing all of the churches in succession, he concluded by saying:

*I am weary of writing more about these buildings, because it seems to me that I shall not be believed if I write more, and because regarding what I have already written they may blame me for untruth, therefore, I swear by God, in Whose power I am, that all that is written is the truth, and there is much more than what I have written, and I have left it that they may not tax me with its being falsehood (cited in Pankhrust,2005:49).*

In the interview with local guides, most of them depicted that some foreign visitors were misinformed by the work of Graham Hancock’s about the authenticity of the rock-hewn churches or in their construction through indigenous knowledge. That is why some of them reflect the idea of Hancock that the rock-hewn churches were constructed by foreigners or the nine templar’s who came from eastern Syria. Hancock interprets the white birds what was

symbolized by angels in the ‘Gedle’ as foreigners. Thus, the guides spell out that they use Hancock’s book merely as supplementary material instead of using it as the main reference material. Apart from the books observations, inscriptions, experiences, trainings, elders and religious fathers are also cited as supplementary sources of information about tourist attractions. The extracts from the interviews demonstrate it more as follows.

*Different types of trainings offered by religious fathers equipped me with the necessary religious and historical knowledge of the churches; experience has also enhanced my knowledge related to destinations (Interview of G1, on7/5/2016).*

Therefore, there is no single source of knowledge as the responses of the local guides revealed. Some of the guides correlate various sources of knowledge, depending on the type of information needed. For instance, for guide one observation and inscriptions are the major sources of knowledge about the rock-hewn churches

*Frequent observations enabled me to correlate the theory or the propositions about the churches that stated in several books with the actual state of the churches. The inscriptions of the churches that are written in different languages also provides me due information (Interview of G2, held on 7/5/2016).*

Guides who know Ge’ez, Sabean and Greek languages and can understand and interpret the metaphors of the churches are more advantageous in acquiring alternative sources of information about the churches as the extract of the above interview illustrates.

*I had learned a lot particularly the techniques of guiding from the senior guides...) (Interview of G4, on7/5/2016).*

The response of G4 implied that experience is the most determinant factor that enables guides to be acquainted with the appropriate techniques of guiding. Thus, it can be said that junior guides including the new entrants in guiding profession may lack the skill of interpretive techniques.

### 5.3. Awareness about Tourists' Cultural Differences

As far as cultural difference is concerned, the interview data revealed that because tourists are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, tour guides need to be aware about the interest of tourists, and able to adjust themselves to fit for the interest of tourists. This is because the relations between a guide and tourist and their stay would not be pleasant unless a guide understand the interest of tourists.

An example of this is given by guide one (G1) who expounded:

*As a tour guide, you have to know as tourists are coming from various corners of the world with different experiences and profession including scientists, engineers, doctors etc. And what does the tourist need, history or photograph? After you know all these, as tour guide you have to equip with the necessary knowledge and just follow the tourist. If you talk without knowing the interest of the tourist, the tourist may not follow you (Interview of G1, held on 9/5/2016).*

Views of the local guides highlights identifying the national of tourists' is an essential requirement for a tour guide in order to understand the cultural differences and interest of tourists. They also underlined the importance of recognizing tourists' cultural difference with regard to the following questions. Question as “*where do tourists come from? And what do they need? Oral information or best places for photographs?*” While taking pictures and listening stories are represented as possible realizations of tour guiding practices either of which can be the choice of tourists, acting as either pathfinder or story teller is ascribed as altering identities for tour guides who are required to be depending on the interest of tourists.

This is in another way tour guides functions or roles can be determined and influenced by the interests of tourists. This is to say tour guides can play the role of story teller or pathfinder for the best view for photo if tourists are interested in snapping photos and the same is true in the other aspects of tour guides roles. In relation to this, G4 and G5 further elaborated their experiences: “*there are some tourists, who appreciate the architectural design, and we have experienced some tourists who left us while we were telling them the history, therefore; it is good to know the*

*interest of the tourists*” (Interview with G4 and G5, held on 11/5/2016). In addition, interviewee four (G4) believes in the importance of asking tourists about their interest or choices of the topics to be discussed whether history, the architecture or religious aspects of the churches in the first few minutes for the effective accomplishment of tour guiding practice.

The local guides whom I had interviewed encapsulated their experience that if tourists look around or turn their face and begun to take pictures, we realize as they are not interested in the topic under discussion and we will take them to the best place for photo. Careful observation and analysis of nonverbal actions of tourists could help tour guides to articulate whether tourists are interested with the information offered by them. For example, eye contact can be considered as specific indicator of tourists’ interest on the information being provided orally. That is to say direct eye gaze can be associated with interest of tourists; whereas averted gaze is associated with tourists’ lack of interest on the tour guiding service being provided.

It is worth noting that, local tour guides of Lalibela associate the interest of tourists with their nationality. An example of this is reported by the extracts taken from interviewees 4 and 6 as follows:

*The interest of tourists depends on their background, for example, the Israelis are more passionate in the architecture of the churches, but the Japanese, the Koreans and the Chinese enjoy wondering around the destination and taking pictures but the Koreans somehow need to listen history. Therefore, for tourists coming from East Asia instead of spending much time in talking the history of the churches, I prefer taking them to the best place for photos. The Americans and Canadians lack patience to listen the history of the churches, hence to some extent, they resemble the Japanese in their shift of attention towards pictures taking. Instead of listening your history, they need to be listened and prefer to tell you about themselves. And they are proud of themselves (extract from interview 4 held on 27/4/2016).*

*Tourists exhibit different behaviors just like their color differences: some of them are calm, while others easily temper; some of them need to comprehend more by asking questions where as others by observation; some of them seem to be more satisfied by listening history, for example Europeans but others like the blacks especially the black Americans attention is drawn by the pictures on the wall of the churches that is why they often raise questions related to it. The educational background of tourists determines their interests apart from differences in their nationality and color. For instance, engineers and architects are more passionate in the architectural design of the churches while tourists whose profession is related with nature are more passionate by the scenery of Lalibela. Accordingly there is a need to understand that not all tourists come to Lalibela for religious purpose (the extract from interview 6 held on 27/4/2016).*

In these pieces of texts, awareness about tourists' background tends to depict as significant requirement for exciting tourist experiences. The term "background" in this text is situated to mean nationality, profession and color which functions as classifying variable for the interest of tourists. In fact, while tourists from Israel categorized as having less interest on the destination related religious information which is provided through verbal interaction, others like, Japanese and Chinese are labeled as having interest on walking and observing around the destination. This reveals that the tourists' cultural background can determine their preferences. For instance, the religion of Israeli Judaism is situated in the Old Testament that propagates Jesus is still un-born. Hence, the biblical interpretation of the rock-hewn churches that is rooted in the New Testament hardly seems acceptable for them.

Interestingly, such differences of tourists' interest could be attributed to the familiarity of the information being provided to the tourists. This means that, the Germans are more familiar in Ethiopian history, and the Israelis know very much about the religion of Ethiopia, this may be because, the destination (rock-hewn churches of Lalibela) is being positioned as second or replica of Jerusalem. In contrast, the Chinese and Japanese lack of interest on the verbal information can be associated to the unfamiliarity of the destination (rock-hewn churches of Lalibela) related information or lack of shared knowledge and unfamiliarity with history. In sum,

whatever the case, some of the tour guides interviewed are found to be aware about the role of understanding the cultural differences of tourists in order to provide effective guiding services. And they held a stance that guiding service should be rendered by taking these differences in to consideration.

On the other hand, some tour guides believe that giving different services and approaching tourists differently based on differences of their culture, language and nationality is unfair and considered as discrimination. Instead they opt to treat equally any questions of tourists related to cultural attractions. As an instance of this, guide one (G1) positioned his stance that “categorization of tourists as domestic and foreign, black and white is irrelevant. And the association is strongly opposing the classification of local guides as domestic and foreign tourists’ guides in line with this sentiment”.

This implies that, although the awareness about cultural differences and interests of tourists have been reported by many of the interviewees as one of the important tour guiding service attributes, there may be some doubts as to whether all local tour guides of Lalibela are able to apply their awareness of cultural differences to their tour guiding functions.

In sum, the interpretive strategy employed by the local tour guides of Lalibela is synonymous. They invariably set off interpretation from the northern group of the rock-hewn churches and ended the visit of the rock-hewn churches at Bete-Giorgies. They use different mechanisms including body gestures and sign languages so as to interpret or explain the heritages for visitors. The outmost local guides have good awareness about tourists’ cultural differences and the associated interests. They could categorize tourists’ behavior and desires on the basis of their nationality. Some of the local guides have general knowledge about tourists’ destinations including the history, the geological, geographical, the architectural and the religious connotations of the heritages. Whereas some of the guides’ knowledge is limited only in one aspect of the heritages may be the historical or the religious aspect of the heritages as attempted to investigate visitors’ attitudes about the local guides’ performance that is discussed in detail in the next chapter. As far as sources of knowledge are concerned, local sources especially the Gedle or hagiography of Lalibela is the main reference material for the local guides of Lalibela.

## CHAPTER SIX

### VISITORS' VIEWS ABOUT ISSUES OF SAFETY, IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF LOCAL GUIDES

#### 6.1. Visitors' Views about Issues of Safety, Impressions and Memorable Experiences

The final section of visitors' survey invited visitors to summarize the security (safety) issues, their memorable experiences, impressions and constraints so as to collect feedback about the roles of local guides in these affairs and take corrective measures. Since considerable numbers of tourists have been visiting Lalibela, only sample of a few tourists were taken for the purpose of this study. For instance, Lalibela world heritage sites received 19,185 tourists, which are merely foreign visitors in 2006 and 61995 visitors in 2013 (Report of Culture and Tourism Bureau of the Town, 2013). However, the researcher couldn't get the data or report of domestic tourists in 2006. As the table below shows a number of both domestic and foreign tourists flocking to Lalibela had been raising in the period between 2006 and 2013. Though thorough attempts were made by the researcher to acquire the data of tourists visiting Lalibela in 2014 and 2015, the attempt bore no fruit. During January and February 2016, the number of foreign and domestic tourists visiting Lalibela world heritage sites were 4,658 (2353 males and 2305 females) and 1,376 (800males and 576 females) respectively.

Table 6.1: Domestic and Foreign Tourists visiting Lalibela from 2006-2013

No	Year	Number of Foreign Tourists	Number of Domestic Tourists	Total
1	2006	19185	-	19185
2	2007	18510	2027	20537
3	2008	21641	6781	28422
4	2009	23597	8445	32042
5	2010	25225	10875	36100
6	2011	35169	14149	49318
7	2012	35437	15492	50934
8	2013	40526	21469	61995

Source: Information Desk of the Lalibela Town Administration Tourism Bureau

As far as the identity of tourists visiting Lalibela is concerned, they have different cultural backgrounds and nationalities (see Table 6.2)

Table 6.2: Top twenty tourist generating countries in 2014/15

No	Countries	Sex			Age Category		
		Male	Female	Total	0-30	31-60	Above 60
1	USA	1801	1912	3713	1028	1560	1109
2	Germany	1556	1536	3092	510	1173	1409
3	France	1466	1490	2956	478	978	1491
4	UK	1131	1188	2319	554	980	785
5	Italy	1035	1080	2115	256	872	987
6	Holland	722	723	1445	188	625	632
7	Belgium	717	676	1393	228	475	690
8	Spain	552	607	1159	134	568	458
9	Israel	504	514	1018	324	362	332
10	Canada	378	410	788	212	299	277
11	Australia	375	391	766	157	256	353
12	Swiss	366	393	759	122	289	348
13	Poland	290	262	552	94	257	201
14	Austria	287	250	537	81	207	288
15	Sweden	249	274	523	101	211	211
16	Japan	255	251	506	99	271	136
17	Norway	204	236	440	90	148	202
18	China	250	174	424	91	251	82
19	Denmark	176	157	333	76	105	152
20	South Africa	139	149	288	56	135	97

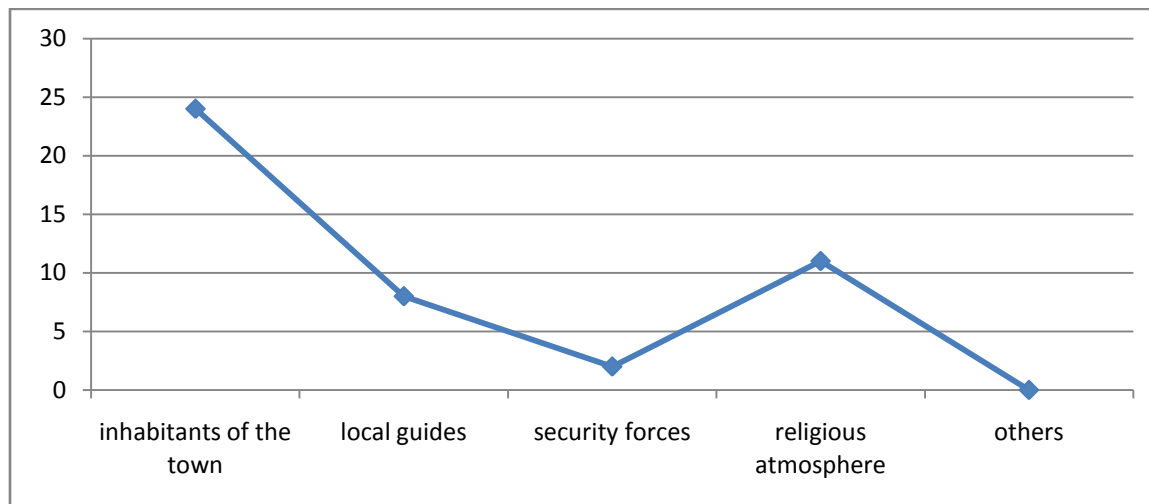
Source: Information Desk of the Lalibela Town Culture and Tourism Bureau

As indicated in Table 6.2 the top ten tourists generating countries in visiting Lalibela are USA, Germany, France, UK, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Israel and Canada respectively. The utmost USA, UK, Spain, Israel, Canada, Poland, Japan, China and South Africa visitors lies in the age of 31-60. The overwhelming of tourists from Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Australia, Swiss, Austria, Norway and Denmark are above the age of 60. Tourists above the age of sixty in the years under discussions arrived at Lalibela mainly from Europe, which implies that Europeans prefer to travel during their retirement age. They are simultaneously very passionate in the history of the rock-hewn churches in consistent with what the local guides reported that Europeans are enthusiastic to history of Lalibela. At the same time this study reveals as the age of tourists' proceeds, the likelihood of their interest to listen history increases.

With regard to the proportion of male and female tourists visiting Lalibela as indicated in the table, in few countries it is more or less balanced. However, in most occasions the numbers of female tourists visiting Lalibela surpassed their male companions. Tourists from USA, Italy, UK, France, Spain and Israeli are good examples for this. Female tourists are more polite and patient in listening the history of the rock-hewn churches as depicted by the local tour guides. In general, females are as equally or even more travelers than their counterparts outside their country of origin. Hence these tourists cultural, sexual and age differences entails the local guides the importance of treating tourists based on their interests. The guides' could identify the major areas of interests on the basis of tourists' nationality, age category and the associated interests. For instance, the Americans are proud of their history and they want to be listened rather than listening about the history of Lalibela. This study reveals that tourists above the age of sixty are enthusiastic to listen the history of Lalibela. In contrast many teenagers and youths lack patience to listen history rather they enjoy by wondering and taking photos.

Regarding to the issue of safety, firstly they were asked whether their visit and stay in Lalibela was safe and the subsequent question was to rate on the scale, list of factors that made their visit and stay safe ( see figure 6. 1)

Figure 6.1: Factors related to Safety Issues



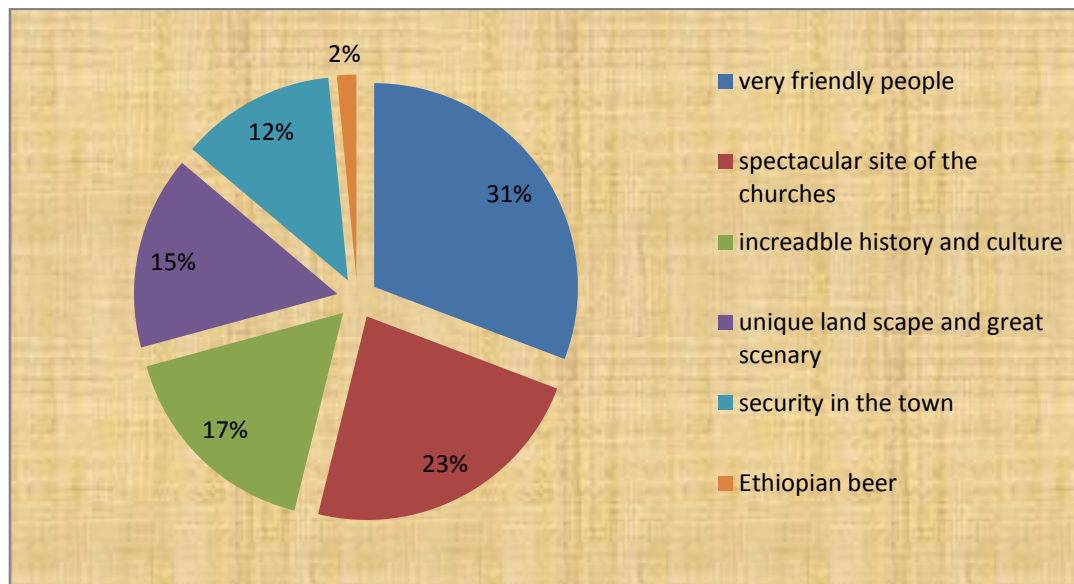
In the survey questionnaire, 52 tourists responded that their stay in Lalibela was safe, however only two of them indicated as their stay was unsafe. Regarding to tourists whose visit and stay was safe, as Figure 6.1 indicates the role of the inhabitants of the town was tremendous because tourists develop a sense of safety mainly due to the role played by the dwellers of the town. In fact during the field stay and observation, I could ascertain how hospitable and friendly the people of the town are. As indicated in the figure, 24(46%) of visitors stated that their sense of safety is created mainly by the local people, which is by far larger than the roles played by other factors. I had frequently watched while tourists were walking and enjoying unformidably in the town during the night. Therefore tourists' responses concur with the views of the local guides and the researcher observation with regard to the safety issue. Religious atmosphere in the town is rated by 11(21%) tourists in producing a sense of freedom and security among them. However, in this study, the role of the local tour guides in ensuring the safety of tourists is found to be insignificant as indicated in the figure, only 8(15%) of visitors give credit for local guides in creating a sense of safety. Three (6 %) of visitors depicted that their sense of safety is created by the security force in the town. Six (12%) of tourists attributed the issue of safety to the combination of the aforementioned factors.

Related to attractions, visitors were also asked to rate on the scale the most exciting aspects of the rock-hewn churches. Sixty six of the informants responded to the question. Accordingly 18 (27%) of the respondents rated the history of the rock-hewn churches as the most astonishing

aspects of the churches, 16 (24%) of visitors were amazed by the authenticity or the construction of the churches by indigenous knowledge, 19 (29%) of visitors recognize and insist that the architectural design of the churches, 8 (12%) of them impressed by paintings both in the exterior and interior parts of the churches. Three (5%) of the respondents valued equally the history, architecture, authenticity and pictures of the churches in holding their attention. Two (3%) of visitors mentioned other factors including the spectacular site of the churches and locations as the most attracting aspects of the churches. The complaints were about the expensivity of lot of things in the town encompassing entrance fee, poor road networks, limited accommodation, and amenities. Children's in the town who bother tourists with request for money; and vendors who are impolitely insistent that made tourists feel cheated in a market system without fixed prices, or that craft work is being mass produced, in a small way, with sorry results.

It is also postulated by the local guides as some children of the town are more concerned to material possession instead of spiritual life; they are attempting to make profit off tourists by bothering them. This is an offensive act on visitors. Some tourists have also commented that local guides charge them too much money; some of them have no good personality, hygiene and skill of presentation. For instance, one of the tourists in the survey questionnaire attempted to highlight his thought about some of the criteria's that needed to be embraced in recruitment of tour guides as follows." Guides need to have good personal hygiene and presentation i.e. clean cloths and nobody odor. There were also tourists who complain the performance of some local guides as articulated by them in the survey that the tour guides in other parts of Ethiopia, for instance in Addis Ababa, Gondar and Axum are much better in their performance than here in Lalibela. Some of visitors hadn't used tour guides as they depicted the reason as follows "No need of seeking local guides rather we devised to visit in our own since the entrance fee for visiting the churches is too expensive and also the local guides charge you too much money."

Figure 6.2: Factors that induce memorable experiences among tourists



As indicated in Figure 6.2, 20(31%) of tourists responded that their memorable experiences in the town is created by very friendly people of the town. The spectacular site of the churches (23%), the incredible history and culture (17%) have also been mentioned as crucial aspects of the heritages that envisioned tourists' visit. The unique land scape and great scenery (15%) and security factor (12%) are also described by tourists in imprinting their visit. Nearly, 2% of tourists depicted other factors that are not related with the aim of the study in making their visit indelible. Surprisingly none of the visitors has mentioned the role of local guides in making their visit memorable. The responses of visitors indicate that all tourists are not equally attracted by the same factors related to tourists' destination. Some give more emphasis for security and history where as others give value scenery and cultural aspects. This perhaps emanated from differences in human behaviors. The response also denotes a lot of works have remained to be accomplished by any concerned bodies or stakeholders in the tourism industry of Lalibela in fostering the roles of local guides in the process of enhancement of tourists' memorable experiences. It also entails the need to train the local guides on the significance and techniques of guiding for imprinting and instigating tourists so as to come back.

### 6.3. Challenges of Local Guides

Different challenges are experienced by the local guides. Some of these are related to the different roles and skills they are entitled with. First of all, a tour guide needs to learn all the time. It is important to extend the knowledge with updated information all the time. Tour guides need to be confident in answering any questions emanated from tourists. To do so they have to prepare lots of information. As one guide had narrated: “You have to always read and update yourself as encyclopedia, this is because in the period of globalization things are recurrently changing and so the interest of tourists”. Perhaps, this is due to in the period of globalization tourists’ hands information down than ever before. Thus, there is a need often to equip with information so as to easily respond to questions that are frequently raised by tourists. Tourists should not be ahead of local guides concerning to information and knowledge about tourists attractions and hence to local cultures within which the guides have been grown up.

Another challenge that was equally underlined is the fact of meeting new people all over the time. These are people who have various interests. This may be taken as a good opportunity by some in sharing experience but for other guides it is very challenging. Furthermore, every tour is different from another. So it is unpredictable what is going to happen. At the same time, most of the individuals put quite high expectations on themselves. The main goal is the creation of a memorable experience. For instance, guide six (G6) put his experience with regard to inducing memorable experience among visitors as follows:

*My goal is to create a great experience and a good tour, tell interesting things, getting guests attention, be there for them and giving a holistic experience (delivering all types of information, which are important for tourists). It doesn't matter why they are satisfied as long as they are (Interview of G6, held on 24/4/2016).*

Adapting the information to the desire of the guests is another challenge, because groups are very different. As mentioned in the literatures so far discussed tourists might not value equally same things. For instance the Americans and the Japanese are not much concerned with history as the Germans do and the Israeli give due emphasis for the architectural skills. The blacks are mainly

drawn by paintings of the rock-hewn churches. Thus, failures in providing relevant information in accordance with tourists' preferences may result in bad tourist experiences. In other words tourists' might return holding negative image about tourists' attractions or destinations.

Lack of adequate training in fostering their capacity is also one of the issues that seek attentions as replied by the local guides in the self completed survey questionnaire and interview. Local guides were asked by the researcher "Do the Regional or the District Culture and Tourism Bureau prepare you short or long term trainings within a certain time intervals to enhance your capacity?" The interviewees responded that they have yet been receiving support with regard to training neither from the regional or the district bureau. For instance, some of the interviewees state the extent of the problem as follows.

*Though tour guiding is a profession which requires deep understandings, the support given from the government is so limited that impedance our professional skill. To end this, the association in collaboration with the exchange, the Belgium Volunteer Organization had attempted to provide trainings for its members by identifying core areas of interests among local guides including history, architecture, and geology among others(.....)(Interview of G1, on 15/4/2016).*

This implies that there is lack of support from the government for the local guides in enhancing their skills though the profession demands special skills as underlined by G1 in the phrase " *deep understandings*" and also " *various aspects of knowledge and skills including history, architecture, geology etc.*"

*One of the major challenges for the local guides of Lalibela is deficiency of competency in various languages due to lack of institutions of language training and training program and absence of any concerned bodies that can take the initiatives and responsibility so as to this end. I don't remember any training rendered for the guides in the last twelve years of my work experience as tour guide. Hence, this has been shifting our earnings towards*

*escort guides that tourists are obliged to prefer them since they can speak their languages fluently (Interview of G9, held on 28/4/2016).*

The local guides of Lalibela have been losing their earnings due to language barriers and escort guides have been using such advantages over the local guides as the glorious opportunity to lift up their profits. However apart from interest conflicts, here the most crucial question is do escort guides construct and disseminate information about the rock-hewn churches vividly as the local guides of Lalibela do?

The development and expansion of group visit by foreign tourists had been mentioned by some of the interviewees as a catastrophe in diminishing earnings of the local guides. This is formerly tourists were visiting the rock-hewn churches separately or in small group. However, following issuing of fixed entrance fee by the Local Guides Association, tourists begun to visit the churches in large group. To explain it clearly tourists are charged 250 birr if their numbers are less than five, where as they pay 350 birr if they exceed five but the maximum limit is not stated. For instance, if the total number of the group is 20, they pay 350 birr and the contribution of each member of the group can be equated as  $350/20=17.50$  Birr. Thus, here it is obvious for everyone that the latter option is profitable for tourists. That was why they opt this as an option. In the contrary it hurts local guides' earnings. The extract taken from interview one demonstrates this as follow:

*Our earnings was better before the advent of visiting in large group but things begun to run in the opposite way when plenty of tourists set off flocking to Lalibela so as to avoid large amount of fee which is paid for local guides (Interview of G1, on15/4/2016).*

This is related to the amount of money paid by foreign tourists to local guides. According to the document prepared by the FTGAL, under supervision of the regional and the district tourism bureaus, foreign tourists are obliged to pay 350 birr for the local guide if their numbers are less than 5 but are requested to pay 500 birr if they exceed three. Thus, foreign tourists beginning from four but whose maximum limit is not mentioned pay equal amount of money as stated above for the local guide. However, in the view of G1 this has encouraged large group visit and entails the needs to improvise the rule.

Lack of appropriate supervision, the hawkers, illegal guides (Awakabi), lack of well organized information office, seasonality of guiding businesses, difficulty of creating network with visitors mainly the problem of junior guides and gender misrepresentation are also the last but not the least constraints of local guides as stated by the interviewees. As the problem of creating network with visitors verbalized by guide seven (G7), the most challenging thing for the newly entrant (junior) guides is that the difficulty to compete with senior guides since the latter's have monopolized the guides-visitors network and thereby the business.

As far as guides- visitors' network is concerned, local guides were asked both through interview and survey questionnaire about the mechanisms through which they create contacts with tourists. Twenty one of them has described that they create contact with tourists while they come in and around the churches of Lalibela, nine of them wrote that their contact with visitors are created through the third person i.e. other guides and travel agents, fifteen of them form contacts with tourists through internet and telephone where as others mentioned different ways of building relations with visitors encompassing at their office, through visitors and by employing all of the mechanisms mentioned so far.

During the field observation and interview, I could realize that much of the local guides were waiting for their turn and watching out tourists by wondering here and there around the ticket office of Lalibela. I had been observing while tourists come to the ticket office without escort, the local guides approach and request them whether they need professional guide. Some of the interviewees have responded that their contact with most of visitors is through other tourists who had already visited and served by them. They depicted that if tourists satisfy by your guiding service, you can develop a good reputation. As the result of which they recommend you to the third party including their family or friends after returning to their country, and give your telephone or email address to them. Thus what is expected from the local guide is delivering quality guiding service for tourists so as to imprint their visits. In the case of privately created business, the fee for the local guide is not fixed rather will be set or determined by the guide-visitor negotiations.

Tourism is a seasonal industry such that tourists' arrivals at a destination fluctuate with times of the year (Page, 2007). Tour guides affirmed that the seasonal nature of the industry brings forward both the good and bad things in as far as the profession is concerned. Tour guides

emphasized that during off-peak period they experience low business and this affects their day to day life as most of them rely on guiding as a source of income. Survival based on tour guiding alone is difficult to be achieved especially considering the fact that tourism is seasonal and usually restricted to six months of operations (Prakash *et al.*, 2010). During low season, about 50% of tour guides expressed concern over some of the unethical practices by some people who pretend to be tour guides. In line with Prakash *et al* view, this study has investigated that some of the local guides in Lalibela have been simultaneously engaged in several business so as to cope up with low seasonality of tourism business.

The local guides had also articulated that practices such as requesting tourists' money and forcing visitors to buy things by "awakabis" are some of challenges that turndown the profession of tour guiding. The local guides stated that some "awakabis" who pretend to be tour guides offer distorted information to tourists with the aim of getting profits from tourists and this is suggested to be enhanced by lack of identification of tour guides outside the compound of the rock-hewn churches. It was observed that a tour guide could easily be recognized since over 90% local guides who were asked during the research could produce valid identification card. However, the problem is lack of uniform as the local guides confirmed that such material was not produced for them. This concurs with Cimacio *et al.*, (2009) who said that sometimes the safety of the tourists could be threatened by individuals who might deceive tourists in the destination and could lead to bad tourists' experience. It was further established that tour guides were not associated with good image. Tour guides confided that local residents were not respecting them because of the profession they are in. They were entitled with various nicknames such as 'duriye'<sup>6</sup>, and 'Awakabi'<sup>7</sup>. It was believed that disgusting names pull tour guides down and therefore negatively affecting provision of required services to tourists.

The study has uncovered that guiding is dominated by male individuals. This was manifested through responses from tour guides and tourists recommendation at the end of the questionnaire. Some of the guides, especially the merely female guide accord that unavailability of female

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<sup>6</sup>Duriye is someone who is regarded as idle and tarnish

<sup>7</sup>Awakabi is also same as Duriye but Awakabi pretends to be local guide

guides provides a deficiency in satisfying tourists' experiences. For example, some female tourists commented that they had expectations of interacting with female guides; unfortunately, they were dismayed to find no female guides to escort them during the tour. From the sentiments, it was deduced that tourists have the desire to be serviced by female guides as well in addition to males; however, they were left with no options but to be handled by male guides. The misrepresentation was arguably, therefore, thought to be influenced by the bad perceptions people have about female tour guides and lack of effort by private and public sectors in promoting tour guiding as a formal profession.

Some of the local guides are not comfortable by such large number of signboards that were made by the Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP) since they considered them as the major constraints in reducing their earnings. These signboards are so great that they are situated along every corners and ways to the churches. That is why the local guides regarded them as a threat to their business. For example, one of the guides verbalized the problem as follows:” Following the construction of signboards’ a few tourists begun to visit the churches without using guides since they have taken away the functions of the guides in showing the directions of the heritages and highlighting them.” However, as a researcher viewing such signboards as a major threat by few of the local guides is much exaggerated. I don’t think these signboards are major obstacles for local guides since they don’t offer detail information about the rock-hewn churches to the extent of taking away the tasks of the local guides. Rather the signboards ease the tasks of local guides by providing certain information for tourists. Therefore the problem is perhaps created due to misunderstandings and misconceptions these few local guides have developed to such signboards.

Figure 6.3: One of the signboards high lightening the religious ceremonies and scenes they are performed



Source: Field Survey; 18/5/2016

The utmost guides had depicted lack of intimacy as one of the challenge of local guides, as the result of which they fail to set up the habit of sharing experience so as to tackle any difficulties emanated from tourists' interrogation. Guides were asked in the interview and survey questionnaire whether they have developed a culture of sharing experiences. Different responses were given. Some of them stated that such kind of transparency has never created among the guides; the association itself is not as such strong to take the initiative in creating this environment. Junior guides have complained that each of the members is striving to maximize his/her personal profit by narrating his/her own history about the churches. History should be under quotation here since it is rather fabricated story by many local guides. Others portrayed that since some of the local guides are assigned at the air port and hotels and others come around the office seldom when they have no work. Thus, the likelihood of getting each other is very low and so sharing of information and experience. A guide from FTGAL responded that:

*I may sometimes share information informally with my intimate guides but at the association level I do not have such experience; this is mainly owing to wrongly held attitudes cultivated among the guides that seeking clarification from other guides is considered as humiliating and at the same time there is no also a habit of respect among the local guides (Interview of G3, held on 21/4/2016).*

To conclude the chapter, residents of the town depicted both the positive and the negative aspects of tourism and its impact on the town. Polygamy, prostitution, drug trafficking, the erosion of firmly established norms and religious belief and there by the holiness of the town were cited by the community representatives as the adverse effects of tourism. The representatives have equally stated the positive aspect of tourism in creating enormous employment opportunity for the dwellers of the town. The outmost tourists were felt safe during their visit of the rock-hewn churches and stay at the town. The hospitability of the inhabitants of the town takes the lion share in creating a sense of safety among visitors. The role of local guides in this aspect as the study reveals is very minimal. The hospitability of the inhabitants of the town, the spectacular site of the churches, the scenery of Lalibela and the architectural design of the churches were described as the outmost factors which induced and imprinted memorable experiences among visitors. Local guides of Lalibela have been facing dozens of problems in their endeavor. Limited training, group visit, unpredictability of tourists' interests, seasonality of tourism business, and lack of the habit of experience sharing among the local guides were some of the challenges depicted by the local guides of Lalibela.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1. CONCLUSION**

The study has addressed the research gap with regard to the roles of tour guides in Ethiopia in general and Lalibela in particular. In consistent with the reviewed literatures and the theoretical models, the study vividly revealed that tour guiding is very complex in nature. Due to the aspect of complexity, it is not easy to settle for one universal definition that could encompass all aspects tour guiding and thereby cultural brokers. From the study one can apprehend that it is difficult to list exactly the number of roles played by tour guides, since guides' role is dynamic, synergic and contextual. The role played by tour guides changes with the shifting interests or demands of visitors. Therefore as Zhang and Chow (2004) and Black and Weiler (2005) identified, it is not as such easy to list the roles that can be applied at the universal level to all tour guides.

Pertinent to the reviewed literatures which entail the religion of tour guides which they adhere to mainly relies on the religion of the community in which they have been grown up and the types of heritages they are interpreting too, the whole tour guides of Lalibela are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. Therefore, the prevalence of the Orthodox Christianity in the area and its dominancy in the region since their forefathers or its introduction is the major attributing factor.

Though the roles appeared to be interwoven and synergetic, the local guides of Lalibela deliver various functions for visitors. Mediation/ culture brokerage such as mediating access, mediating information and mediating encounters; educators, leadership and safety; ambassador, sales representatives and safeguarding are the forefront roles of tour guides in Lalibela as the findings of the study indicated. The insight gained from this research with regard to mediating/culture brokerage is pertinent with the literatures reviewed that dismantle cultural mediation in to three sub-categories: mediating access, mediating information, and mediating encounter. Hence, the guides in Lalibela are tour leader, tour escort, or tour conductor. They travel with tour group, arrange accommodations, meals, transportations, and other travel-related services during the tour. They are not only the leader of the travel group but also a travel director, a friend or advisor of group traveler, and a performer.

As far as the sequences of visiting the rock-hewn churches are concerned, the local guides in Lalibela use more or less same techniques. However, there is no consensus among the local guides on some historical facts and biblical connotation of the churches and the associated symbols. Indeed such differences are expected since interpretation is not a mechanical rule or experimental science in search of law rather it is an art, which require a wide range of skills. The local guides view the rock-hewn churches from various perspectives. Some of the local guides held a stance that, the southern group of churches was the first built churches while others have firm believes in the flip side of it that Lalibela begun to construct his churches from the northern group that is from Bete-Mariam. Similarly some of the guides count the churches as ten where as the others extend them to eleven. The majority of the local guides named one of the cross style window of Bete-Mariam as swastika but few of the guides held strong stance that it is wrong to symbolize this window by swastika because swastika is in a clock-wise direction where as the symbol on the window is in anti-clockwise direction. Furthermore they substantiate their argument that this crossly designed window was curved in the 12<sup>th</sup> century where as swastika begun to be used as emblem of the Nazi Party in Germany beginning from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Therefore, the local guides interpret some of the concepts in the bible in different ways. Despite the researcher believe like the hermeneutic theorists and interpretive anthropologists that interpretation is an art and up to the skill of the local guide to interpret the symbols associated with the heritages, there is a need to reach common consensus as far as some aspects of the heritages is concerned. This is because depending on local tour guides stances and perceptions; visitors have been acquiring different types of information on same churches and symbols curved on them. Unavailability of same guide book that can be used by all guides coupled with lack of training and appropriate recruitment criteria perhaps are also the other factors for disparity of conceptions among the local guides on the same things.

One important thing to note here is that the local guides' awareness about tourists' cultural differences. The local tour guides could outline vividly the behavior and desire of tourists in taking in to account visitors background, nationality, color, age and religions. Therefore the outmost of the local guides deliver services for tourists by considering this disparity among their clients so as to create good tourist experiences. Thus, the local guide's awareness about tourists'

cultural differences can be extended and taken as a feedback for the future works either by the Regional/District Culture and Tourism Bureau or at the national level the Ministry of Culture and Tourism which is aimed at rendering services and enhancing tourists by taking such tourists' cultural differences.

In the process of enabling the local guides to provide proper services for their clients, there is a need to address the challenges faced by them. It was seen that such challenges were induced by many factors both within and outside the guiding realm. Results were derived from analysis of experiences by tour guides and tourists. Several factors were identified. It was ascertained that tour guides roles can either break or build a repute of a destination. That is why there was an emphasis to exert much attention on the role of tour guides in the tourism industry. Other findings revealed that tour guiding challenges if left unattended can darken the growing image of a destination. Hence there is an urgent need to address these challenges to foster guiding professionalism.

Harmonization of the tourism business or industry and the conservation or safeguarding of the cultural heritages seeks due emphasis. The tourism business tied with the existence and sustainability of the heritages. Tourism brings not only the good things but can cause the bad things or experiences. The case of Lalibela is a good example for this. Following the advent of tourism in Lalibela, it is apparent that the livelihoods of the overwhelming residents have been linked with tourism, the culture of the community have been promoted, Lalibela became the center of pilgrims, and the town has showed remarkable developments in infrastructure among others. In the flip side of it, with the advent of tourism, the initial cause for the establishment of the town that was creating a second Jerusalem in Lalibela has been eroded. Drug abuse, polygamy and prostitutions were introduced and have been expanded. Tied with the introduction of the new cultures by tourists, the hair and dressing styles of the youth including local guides have been changed that counter the firmly established tradition and norms of the community.

Local guides' orientation about any interrogation of tourists that it is a shame to say "I don't know" needs attention at brink. This is owing to the fact that it may distort the genuinity of the information which is disseminated by the local guides and thereby impair the tourism business.

The local guides would rather devise different strategies including fabricating story which is slightly close to the right answer instead of saying “I don’t know “. This seems a stance held by the utmost guides as if the word of God. The local guides quote the law of tour guides as the reason for their argument. However the researcher couldn’t identify the so called the law of guiding as stated by the local guides.

In general tour guides lie at the forefront more than any other stakeholders in the tourism industry with regard to the development of the sector as the study unfolds the paramount roles the local guides have been performing in the tourism industry. Tour guides are social catalysis in a sense that they promote the host-guest (the local community-visitors) relations by bridging the cultural differences and communication barriers. This implies that the local guides of Lalibela are also cultural brokers since by mediating the host-visitors interactions, make business. Unlike Cohen’s Four Quadrant Model and the other theories of tour guiding which are mainly services oriented, this study is comprehensive. It has addressed a wide range of issues with regard to tour guides including their knowledge about the culture of the communities in which they are grown up and their awareness about tourists’ cultural differences and interpretive skills.

## **7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following the findings of the study, I propose the following recommendations for curbing the challenges existing in the tour guiding profession:

### **TRAINING**

Lack of training has been described by the local guides of Lalibela as the major challenge in their endeavor. They depicted that neither the Regional nor the District Culture and Tourism Bureau has been preparing or facilitating them training programs at a certain time intervals. The local tour guides underlined indispensability of training programs since tourists’ destinations in Lalibela require multi-disciplinary skills. Indeed as a researcher I could ascertain the importance of delivering training at regular basis for the local guides as training or specialization in one area of study could not qualify them as capable local guides. In order to interpret effectively the heritages of Lalibela, historical, architectural, geological, geographical and biblical knowledge are crucial. Furthermore, the importance of competency in various foreign languages is undeniable.

For tour guides of Lalibela not only required knowledge of the local history, geography and culture rather they need to equip in combined skills and inquiries since tourists raise questions with regard to the rock-hewn churches from various corners including their architectural design and geological formation. Tour leader often deals with a variety of people who have diversified background, nation, age and culture. Consequently, both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are essential for a tour guide. Thus, taking in to consideration these drawbacks of the local guides either the regional or the district culture and tourism bureau need to prepare training programs at the regular basis by identifying core areas of local guides' interests.

### **PUBLICATION OF A GUIDE BOOK**

Owing to incongruity among the local guides of Lalibela on their conception of some historical facts including the local history and history of the churches, it is recommended to prepare a guide book that takes in to account various fields of preparation with respect to the rock-hewn churches. A book can be prepared by various bodies of experts and the initiative can be taken by the district culture and tourism bureau. A book should be utilized by all local guides so as to mitigate variations in their sentiments on some aspects of the rock-hewn churches and disseminate same information to visitors.

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF STRONG TOUR GUIDES' ASSOCIATION**

Here, it should be noted that the existing associations are loosely organized that they are not capable enough to address the interests of their members. First of all there is no one and strongly united local guide association. Instead there are several local guides associations with loose structures and organizations on the basis of their endeavor and striving to meet merely their own interests. Furthermore the existing associations are not as such strong to address the interests of their members including training demands. Since various challenges tour guides face, the establishment of strong local tour guide association would help to channel their grievances, complaints, views and opinions to relevant authorities such as government. Such being the case, information of a local tour guides' association to represent interests of tour guides to government would be as essential remedial action. The creation of a strong association could also be a

breakthrough to render trainings for local tour guides by the association itself without call in anybody.

### **INSPECTION OF TOUR GUIDES**

I could uncover during the field observation and responses of the information desk expert and some of the local guides that the inspection which is carried out by the District Culture and Tourism Bureau is occasionally. Tour guides are supposed to be registered, inspected and given licenses of performance. Inspection would help improve service quality thereby enhancing both tour guides' and destination's image. The inspection will also help to identify the drawbacks of local guides so as to immediately taking action in filling the gap. Furthermore it also stimulates tour guides to strive hard in updating their skills, acquire better inquiry and always to be ready. Thus, in this research regular inspection is recommended.

### **MITIGATING RISKS OF TOURISM**

Lalibela is regarded as a holy place. King Lalibela had erected his churches for such purpose. However, ties with the development and expansion of tourism in Lalibela, some religious variables underlying the belief of the people pave the way to secular practices which have been eroding religiosity of the inhabitants of the town. Therefore, there is a need to mould the tourism industry in a way that does not affect the religious and cultural practices of the inhabitants of the town. To this end strong inspections and follow up can be made by the administration of the town over illegal houses where 'chat' is chewed and night clubs where many illegal activities are conducted. Above all awareness creation programs should be launched mainly among the youths so that they could maintain their culture from being spoiled by a variety of strange things that might be introduced by tourists.

### **ALLEVIATING CHALLENGES OF TOURISTS**

Tourists pointed out wide range of issues that need to be improved in the tourism industry of Lalibela. The poor road networks mainly in the outskirts of the Lalibela town as depicted by tourists should be the major concern of the government if tourists are required to visit the rock-hewn churches situated outside the town. Children who bother tourists along the streets in the town are another headache that needs to be resolved. Protections ought to be given for tourists so

as to move freely in the town. To this end continuous awareness creations programs should be launched either by the town administration or culture and tourism bureau among these children or ‘Awakabi’ who have been disturbing tourists comfort. Quality services from the local guides are other issues that tourists aspire to acquire. First of all tourists’ require local guides’ services in a language they want. To do so language trainings for the local guides should be facilitated by the district culture and tourism bureau. Tourists desire capable local guides who render them good guiding services in a wide range of issues. The Regional or the District Culture and Tourism Bureau or jointly can facilitate multi disciplinary skills training. The great amount of entrance fee, 50 US dollar per person that tourists raise as a major problem, I think need to be improvised too.

### **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Suggestions for research is on the importance to extend this type of study in other setting within Ethiopia where a representative sample could be used to generalize the findings about issues affecting tour guides performance of duties in the tourism industry. Future researches can also interrogate in detail the status of female representation in tour guiding in other setting within Ethiopia and cope up with justification should there be minimal or no female representation in the tour guiding profession. Finally I would recommend comparative research on the roles of tour guides in Lalibela vis-à-vis tour guides in the major tourists’ destination sites in the country.

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## Appendix-I: Questionnaire and Interview Guide Questions and Checklists

### A. Questionnaire for Local Guide

Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, and Survey Questionnaire for M.A Research on: Anthropological Study of Cultural Brokers as Tour Guides: The Case of Lalibela, Northern Wollo. The aim of this study is to uncover the roles of tour guides by examining the tourism industry in Lalibela. Therefore, this survey is targeted to capture the attitudes of the local guides towards their roles in the tourism sector. I very much appreciate your participation in this research, and all of your responses will be treated confidentially.

**Instructions:** For each question, please circle the answer that best applies to you.

#### Part A: Bio data

1. Please indicate your gender

- A. Male    B. Female

2. Did you born in Lalibela

- A. Yes    B. No

3. If your answer is “No” Where did you born?\_\_\_\_\_

4. Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which age group do you belong to?

- A. 15 or Younger    B. 16-19    C. 20-29    D. 30-39  
E. 40-49    F. 50-59    G. 60 or over

6. What is your marital status?

- A. Single    B. Married    C. Divorced  
D. Other (please specify\_\_\_\_\_)

7. Please indicate your religion

- A. Muslim    B. Orthodox Christian    C. Other Christian (please specify\_\_\_\_\_)  
D. Atheist    F. Others (please specify\_\_\_\_\_)

8. What is your highest level of education?

- A. Incomplete Primary    B. Complete Primary    C. Incomplete secondary  
D. Complete secondary    E. University undergraduate    F. Postgraduate

9. What is your current employment status?

- A. Company employed    B. Self-employed    C. working through association

10. How do you start tour guide?

A. By observing others      B. By training      C. Accidentally      D. Other reason

11. If your answer is by other reason what was that\_\_\_\_\_

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12: Do you have license?

A. Yes      B. No

**PART B. your perceptions (attitudes) about communicative skills**

1. How many languages do you speak?

A. Only one      B. Two      C. Tree      D. Above tree

2. If your answer is above two, please list them\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Do you know about interpretive strategies?

A. Yes      B. No

4. If your answer is "Yes" list some of the interpretive strategies what do you know\_\_\_\_\_

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5. Please indicate your own interpretive strategies if you have\_\_\_\_\_

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6. How do you meet tourists (visitors?)

A. In the office      B. By internet      C. Everywhere in Lalibela  
D. Through other guides      E. Through the tourism bureau

F. If other, (please specify\_\_\_\_\_)

**PART C. Your attitudes about your job and your role in tour guide**

1. Do you like your job?

A. yes      B. No

2. If your answer is "No" please specify your reason\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Tour guide is profitable

- A. Strongly disagree      B. Disagree      C. Neutral  
D. Agree      E. Strongly agree

4. If your answer is “disagree” what is your reason\_\_\_\_\_

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5. What kind of service do you provide to visitors?

- A. pathfinder service    B. Hotel arrangement    C. Mentor      D. Mediation service  
E. All kind of information (package of services)    F. If any other (please specify it\_\_\_\_\_)
- 

**PART D. Your attitudes about the knowledge of the heritages**

1. I know very well the history, culture and geography of the rock hewn churches of Lalibela and the town

- A. Strongly disagree    B. disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly agree

2. Where your source of knowledge about the rock hewn churches is/are

- A. Reading different books    B. By experience    C. The former or senior tour guides  
D. Elders of the town    E. others

3. If your answer is others, please list or indicate them\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Do you know “Francisco Alvares?”

- A. Yes      B. No

5. If your answer is “Yes” in which of one of his work do you know?\_\_\_\_\_

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6. What kind of questions do tourists frequently ask you?

- A. About the rock hewn church    B. About the culture of the people    C. Personal question  
D. History of the town    E. Questions out of the heritage    F. Other

7. If your answer is “other” please mention it\_\_\_\_\_

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8. Do tourists believe that the rock hewn churches are constructed by Lalibela or by the Ethiopian themselves?

A. Yes

B. No

9. If your answer is "No" what kind of strategy do you use to convince them \_\_\_\_\_

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10. If tourists ask you questions what you do not know: do you say "I do not know"

A. Yes

B. No

11. If your answer is "No" what do you say \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Do you acquire training by the tourism bureau of Lalibela within a certain time interval or period?

A. Yes

B. No

13. Do tour guides share knowledge or information among themselves?

A. Yes

B. No

14. If your answer is "No" for question no 14 ,what do you think the reason of it \_\_\_\_\_

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15. Do you tell everything to visitors?

A. Yes

B. No

16. If your answer is "No" what is your reason \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.**

**B. Questionnaire for visitors: Foreign Visitors'**

**Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, and Survey Questionnaire for M.A Research on: Anthropological Study of Cultural Brokers as Tour Guides: The Case of Lalibela, Northern Wollo. The aim of this study is to understand how tourists feel about the performance of tour guides. I very much appreciate your participation in this research, and all of your responses will be treated confidentially.**

**Instructions: For each question, please circle the answer that best applies to you.**

**Part A: Bio data**

1. Please indicate your gender

- A. Male                      B. Female

2. Please write your nationality \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where is your current place of residence? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which age group do you belong to?

- A. 15 or Younger      B. 16-19      C. 20-29      D. 30-39

- E. 40-49              F. 50-59      G. 60 or over

5. What is your marital status?

- A. Single                      B. Married                      C. Divorced

D. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

6. Please indicate your religion

- A. Muslim      B. Orthodox Christian      C. Other Christian (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

D. Atheist      E. Others \_\_\_\_\_

7. To which group of visitor do you belong?

- A. Domestic visitor              B. Foreign visitor

**PART B: Your Visit to Lalibela**

1. How did you first hear about Lalibela?

- A. Friends or colleagues      B. Family      C. Newspaper/magazine

D. TV      E. Tour company (tour guides)      F. Internet

G. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**PART C: Your Perception about the tour guides**

1. How would you describe the behavior of tour guide (if you had a tour guide)

- A. Excellent              B. Very good              C. Medium              D. Poor

2. The tour guide accompanying me/us was very hospitable  
 A. Strongly disagree                      B. Disagree                      C. Neutral  
 D. Agree                                      E. Strongly Agree
3. How do you rate the performance of local guide/guides?  
 A. Excellent                      B. Very good                      C. Medium                      D. Poor
4. Tour guides accompanying me/us had very good knowledge about the history, culture and heritages of the town  
 A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree
5. A guide/the guides who helped me/us to visit the heritages of the town knew very well the language of me/us  
 A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree
6. How do you rate the interpretive skill of the local guide/guides?  
 A. Excellent                      B. Very good                      C. Medium                      D. Poor
7. Was the information presented easy to understand?  
 A. Easy to understand    B. Neutral                      C. Difficult to understand
8. The local guide/guides had taken adequate time to explain about the heritages of the town  
 A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree
9. Tour guides had shown us the souvenir shops in the town properly by taking enough time  
 A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree                      E. Strongly Agree
10. Local tour guide/guides treat the questions of tourists very well  
 A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree                      E. Strongly Agree
11. Do you agree in this statement that local tour guide/guides are ambassadors of the town and the community of Lalibela?  
 A. Yes                                      B. No
12. How do you rate the role/s of tour guides?  
 A. They are pathfinders    B. They are mediators    C. They are mentors  
 D. They provide package of services                      E. Others (please specify it\_\_\_\_\_ )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ )

**PART D: Your thoughts about the church and the appeal of the site**

1. What did you like about the rock-hewn church of Lalibela? (Choose all that apply)  
 A. The history                      B. Authenticity                      C. Architectural features

D. Paintings inside the church                      E. Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_)

2. Transportation access to the church is convenient.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

3. There are a variety of shops that offer quality products to visitors.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

4. Generally did you feel safe or unsafe during your stay in Lalibela?

A. Safe                      B. Unsafe

5. If your answer is A, what make you safe?

A. The tour guides    B. The people of the town    C. The police in the town  
D. The religious atmosphere in the town

**PART E: Your impressions**

1. This visit has been a memorable experience for me.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

2. If your visit left a memorable experience, what made it your visit memorable? Please specify it \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. My visit to the rock-hewn church of Lalibela has met my expectations.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

4. I would recommend visiting this church to others.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

5. I would like to visit this church again.

A. Strongly disagree    B. Disagree    C. Neutral    D. Agree    E. Strongly Agree

**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.**

## **Interview Checklist Questions for selected Experts in the Tourism Bureau**

**Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, and Interview Checklist Questions for M.A Research on: Anthropological Study of Cultural Brokers as Tour Guides: The Case of Lalibela, Northern Wollo. The aim of this study is to grasp the views of experts in the culture and tourism bureau of Lalibela about the tourism industry in general and local tour guides in Lalibela in particular. I very much appreciate your participation in this research, and all of your responses will be treated confidentially.**

### **Part A. Positive Impacts of Tourism**

1. Is tour guiding profitable in the case of Lalibela?if yes in what aspects?
2. Do you think tourism has increased the opportunity of employment in the town of Lalibela?
3. Do you think Tourism has increased the quality of life in the town of Lalibela?
4. Do you think Tourism has increased your pride over the rock hewn churches of Lalibela?

### **Part B: Negative impacts of tourism**

5. Do you think Tourism in Lalibela has disturbed your daily life?

If his/her answer is yes, what are the problems?

6. Has tourism introduced adverse practices or cultures to the community?

If yes, can you specify some of these practices or cultures?

If yes, do you think these adverse practices have negatively affected the Community's culture?

7. Have you ever observed a delinquent behavior of tourists either inside or it's vicinity of the rock hewn churches?

If yes, please tell me those behaviors.

8. Do you think Tourism disrupts the peaceful ways of life of the community in the town?
9. Do you think Tourism has increased the crime problem in Lalibela town?
10. Do you think Tourism has increased the level of prostitution in Lalibela town?
11. Do you think most tourists visiting rock hewn church in Lalibela are not considerate of local people?

12. Do you think Tourism has unfairly increased the cost of living in Lalibela town?

**Part C. Informants attitudes about Local Guides**

13. Do you think Local guides have promoted tourism in Lalibela?

14. Do you think Local guides have sufficient knowledge and skill about the rock hewn churches of Lalibela?

15. Do Local guides are respectful of their community and culture?

16. Do you think Local guides are Ambassadors of the residents' of Lalibela?

17. Do you agree Local guides worry merely for their business?

18. Local guides are the major cause for deterioration of the previous culture and tradition in Lalibela. Do you agree?

19. Do you agree that Local guides of Lalibela are very much disciplined?

20. Local guides have no sufficient knowledge on how to harmonize heritage tourism and heritage conservation. Do you agree?

21. It is said that Local guides are model of tourists regarding the norm of the residents' and ethics of the rock hewn churches. Do you agree?

22. What do you at the end suggest local guides to have better knowledge in the heritages as well as properly represent their community?

**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.**

## **Interview Check List Questions for Local Guides**

**Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, and Interview Checklist Questions for M.A Research on: Anthropological Study of Cultural Brokers as Tour Guides: The Case of Lalibela, Northern Wollo. The aim of this study is to grasp the views of local tour guides in a wide range of issues related with their profession and the tourism industry in Lalibela. I very much appreciate your participation in this research, and all of your responses will be treated confidentially**

1. How do you define tour guiding?
2. Age
3. Marital status
4. Experiences
5. The types of works you formerly engaged in
6. Is tour guiding profitable
7. The attitudes of the local community to tour guiding
8. The roles of local tour guides
9. Your Language competency
10. Do you know very well the cultural and historical aspects of the heritages?
11. Your sources of knowledge about the rock-hewn churches
12. Your communicative skills
13. The importance of experience in tour guiding
14. Your strategy of interpretations and explanations of the heritages
15. Challenges of tour guiding
16. Do you offer all any information to visitors?
17. Your role in safeguarding the heritages
18. How do you evaluate of local guides attachments?
19. How do you create contacts with visitors?
20. What would you suggest to promote the competency of local tour guides?
21. Where is your operational area?

22. Do the local guides exchange information among themselves?
23. What are the positive and negative aspects of tourism?
24. Is your relations with visitors long lasting? If so how?
25. Your awareness about tourists cultural differences
26. The most frequently asked questions by tourists

**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation!!**

## Appendix- II: Pictures (Images)

### Vernacular historical houses on the church compound



Source: Author, 4/5/2016

Note: The local guides having completed their visit of the second group of the rock-hewn churches along their way to Bete-Giorgies interpret the remaining vernacular houses to tourists

### While people share meal at Bete-Mariam after praying



Source: Author, 4/5/2016

Note: This photo was captured while one of the local guides was explaining the religious connotation of sharing meal for visitors

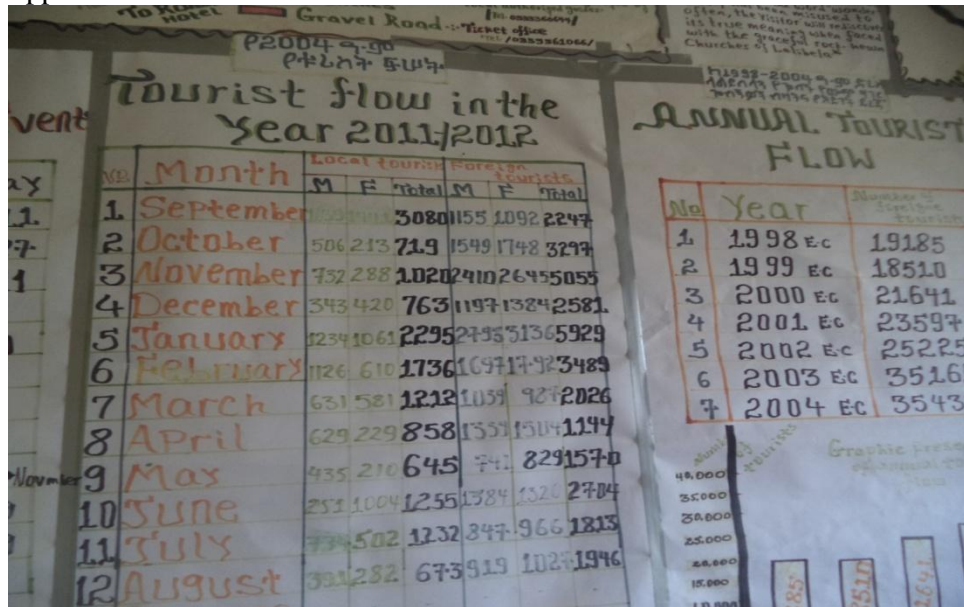
Eastern part of Bete Mariam displaying its very controversial swastika's like shape window



Source: Author, 4/5/2016

Note: This is a very controversial window of Bete-Mariam, which is subjected to different interpretation by the local guides and visitors. Some call it swastika but others say it is wrong to call it swastika

Appendix- IV: Tourists flow in Lalibela in 2011/12



Source: Culture and Tourism Bureau of Lalibela

Appendix-V: Top ten tourists generating countries visiting Lalibela in 2004

**Tourist Generating Countries Top Ten (2004 E.C)**

No	Country	Sex		Total	Age Categories		
		M	F		1-30	31-60	Above 60
1	France	782	783	1565	220	785	560
2	USA	672	765	1437	395	685	357
3	Germany	627	509	1136	210	486	500
4	England	477	433	910	213	399	298
5	Italy	485	386	871	100	409	360
6	Spain	305	338	643	129	418	96
7	Dutch	276	292	568	94	272	202
8	Poland	269	273	542	74	315	153
9	Belgium	250	245	495	138	221	116
10	Israel	227	206	433	124	206	103
	Total	4118	4239	8357	154	1496	1294

Source: Culture and Tourism Bureau of Lalibela

Appendix-VI: The major rock-hewn churches in and around Saint Lalibela

**Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela & its Surrounding**

No	Name of the Church	Built by:-	Year	YM	Entrance Fee	Transfer Cost
1	Lalibela	King Lalibela	1167	-	350\$	
2	Yimerhane Kirsos	King Yimerhane Kirsos	1027	42	150	
3	Arbata Enessa	King Kaleb	518 M	35	50	
4	Bilbala Givorgis	King Kaleb	518 M	32	50	
5	Bilbala Gherkos	King Kaleb	518 M	35	50	
6	Asheton Maryam	King Lalibela started, King Naakuto Laab finished.	1207	7	100	
7	Naakuto Laab	King Naakuto Laab	1207	6	100	
8	Grenete Maryam	King Yikuno Amlak	1207	31	100	
9	Kenkenit Mikael	Monk abba Moses	633-600	14	50	
10	Emekina lidela Maryam	King Gebre Meskel	537 AD	33	50	
11	Emekina Medhane alom	King Gebre Meskel	537 AD	40	50	

Source: Culture and Tourism Bureau of Lalibela

Appendix-VII: Annual Tourists Flow to Lalibela from 1998-2004 E.C

its true meaning when  
with the graceful rock-hewn  
Churches of Lalibela

1998-2004 ዓ.ም. ፊ.ሪ.  
1998-2004 ዓ.ም. ፊ.ሪ.  
1998-2004 ዓ.ም. ፊ.ሪ.

MEKE DISTRICT

the  
12

Rock-  
Lal

Name of  
Church

No	Year	Number of foreign tourists	No of local tourist
1	1998 E.C	19185	—
2	1999 E.C	18510	2027
3	2000 E.C	21641	6782
4	2001 E.C	23597	8445
5	2002 E.C	25225	10875
6	2003 E.C	35169	14149
7	2004 E.C	35437	15493

the  
12

Rock-  
Lal

Name of  
Church

1 Lalib  
2 Yimri  
3 Arbo  
4 Bilb  
5 Bilb  
6 AS  
me

Source: Culture and Tourism Bureau of Lalibela