



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**TOURISM IN SOUTH WESTERN ETHIOPIA  
(THE CASE OF THE MURSI PEOPLE OF  
SOUTH OMO)**

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(THE CASE OF THE MURSI PEOPLE OF  
SOUTH OMO)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
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**BY**

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(THE CASE OF THE MURSI PEOPLE OF SOUTH OMO)**

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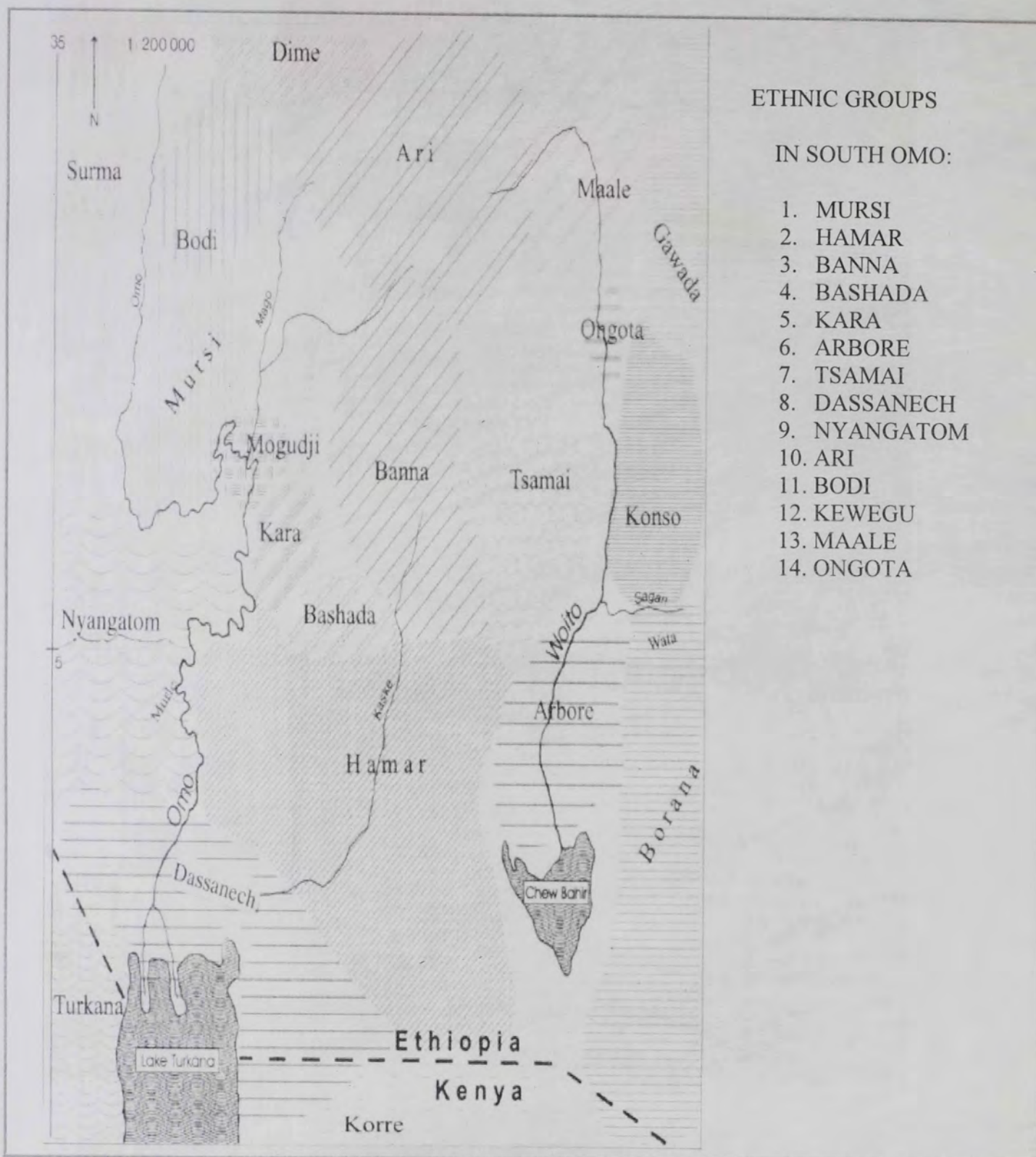
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## ABSTRACT

*This thesis is concerned with the anthropology of tourism in south Omo. Of particular concern are the changes in Mursi life brought about by tourism in south Omo. This thesis aims to show how the Mursi as with other groups of people in southern Ethiopia are undergoing significant changes as a result of their popularity amongst mainly western tourists. The discursively presented attraction of south Omo as an exotic tourist destination is considered and the Mursi have been selected for study not only because of my prior familiarity with Mursi individuals but also because as can be discerned from a wide range of both academic and popular media, the Mursi themselves appear to be the leading human attraction of an 'exoticised' Ethiopia. Perhaps more than other peoples of southern Ethiopia, the Mursi are central to the discourse of primitive and exotic tribalism of 'wildest Africa' that has long dominated the selling of African tourism to the western traveler. For example the lip-plates of Mursi women are a staple of primitivist images in popular tour-guides to Ethiopia but even as existing and ongoing fieldwork is concerned with assessing how both outsiders and the Mursi regard their personal adornments, up till now, no research has as yet addressed how the Mursi themselves perceive outsiders, especially the foreign tourist.*

*A major concern of this thesis is the perception of 'native' by tourists and the perception of tourists by the 'native', and in between the tourist and the 'native' are a range of stakeholders, for example tour operators, local government officials, tour guides and hoteliers whose perceptions of and interactions with both tourist and native are also considered. A major finding of this research is that the Mursi are not passive under the impact of foreign tourism but are themselves actively engaged in exploiting their changing circumstances. I have observed both 'negative' and 'positive' changes in the lives of the Mursi, which may well be seen differently by others, but what is undeniable is that it is no longer possible to imagine or see the Mursi as confined to the discourses of tribal anthropology (Ababio, 2006 pers comm.) where they remain in some remote area at the mercy of a hostile environment and perpetually engaged in inter-tribal conflict which may occasionally be interrupted by some foreign anthropologist or intrepid photo-hungry tourist. The Mursi themselves have developed in their ideas and understanding of the wider world, including their own perception of the nature of foreigners. Some Mursi have themselves traveled abroad whilst others have taken up more or less permanent residence in Jinka town. These kinds of changes also represent fundamental challenges to the tribalist tourism of southern Ethiopia which likewise tends to depict the Mursi and other peoples of south Omo as objects impacted upon by others; as lost peoples, dwelling in some remote, timeless, relative isolation, more or less unchanged by either secular (government) or sacred (missionary) intervention. In the light of the limitations of this research enumerated towards the end of the thesis, an outline of prospects for future research is set out.*

**Map2: Ethnographic Map of South Omo**



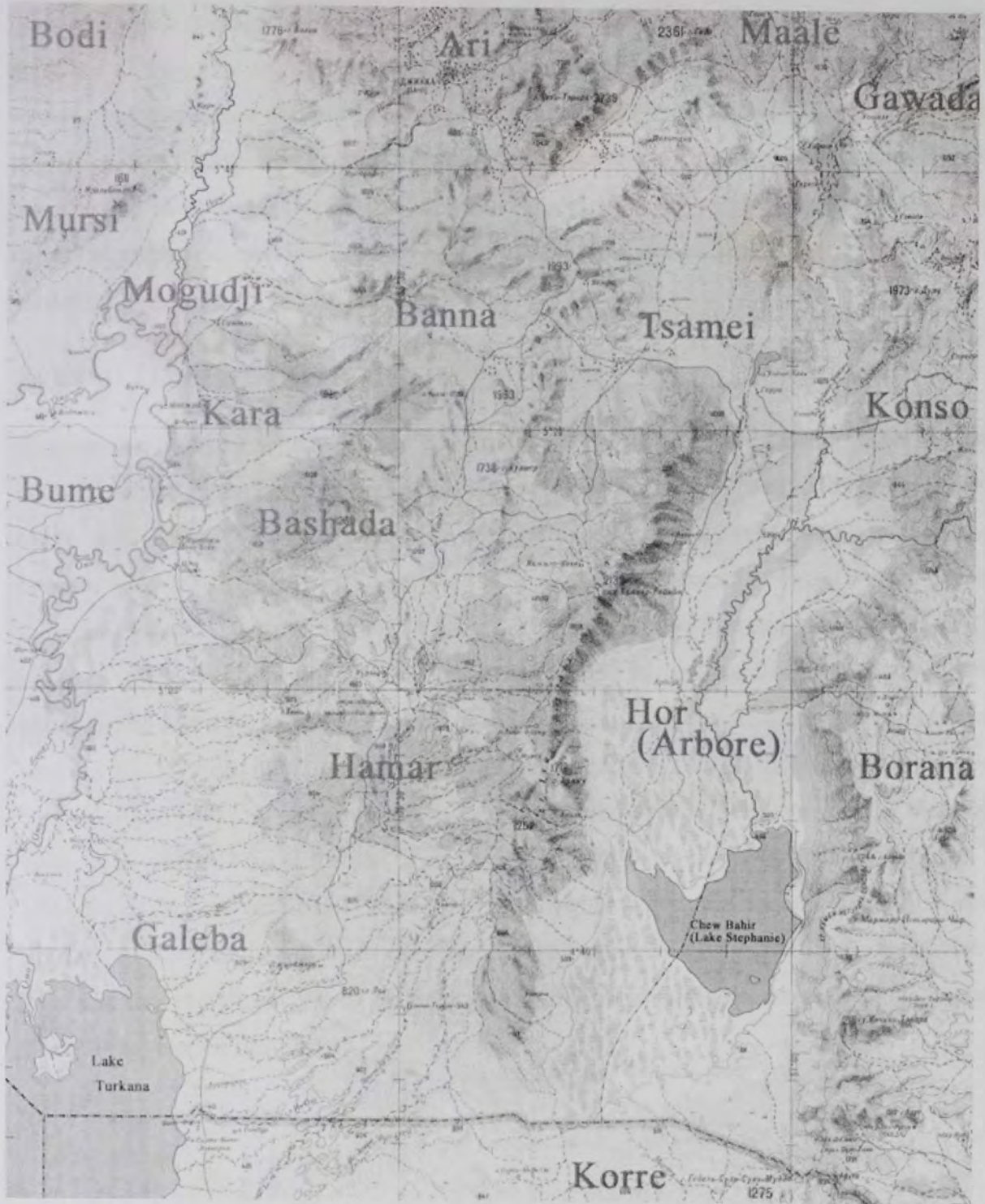
**ETHNIC GROUPS**

**IN SOUTH OMO:**

1. MURSI
2. HAMAR
3. BANNA
4. BASHADA
5. KARA
6. ARBORE
7. TSAMAI
8. DASSANECH
9. NYANGATOM
10. ARI
11. BODI
12. KEWEGU
13. MAALE
14. ONGOTA

(Source: [http://www.Uni-mainz.de/organisationen/SORC/research/map\\_diversity.html](http://www.Uni-mainz.de/organisationen/SORC/research/map_diversity.html))

Map 3: Geographic Map of South Omo



(Source: [http://www.Uni-mainz.de/organisationen/SORC/research/map\\_diversity.html](http://www.Uni-mainz.de/organisationen/SORC/research/map_diversity.html))

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides brief information about the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, methodology, significance of the study, background of the study area and rationale for selection of the study area. Nowadays, it is widely agreed that tourism is a leading global industry that carries significant and complex social, economic, and environmental implications. Tourism is an increasingly important economic activity and is viewed by many as an engine of growth and job creation in both developed and especially developing economies (Smith, 1989). It is by far the most extensive service industry, which earns foreign exchange because tourism imports visitors to consume goods and services locally.

### **1.1 CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The tourism industry is seen to help government to spread 'development' to other regions of the country, where manufacturing industries have not yet been established. Government agencies at every level down to small towns have adopted a progressively more active role in the use of tourism as a development tool (Smith, 1989). Yet, that is exactly where we are faced with a dilemma; aware of various studies (Valley, 1990; Hart, 2006) that demonstrate that development contrary to its openly declared intension means in fact the maintenance of the gap between rich and poor, how are we to understand the paradox of Ethiopia, one of the world's poorest countries seeking to develop its potentially rich tourist attractions to the possible detriment of those 'primitive' and 'exotic' groups such as the Mursi, who despite being among the chief objects of tourism in south Omo, Ethiopia, tend to receive the least benefits from the tourism industry (Ababio, 2006 pers comm). In addition to this, tourism even as a nascent industry in south Omo appears to be effecting change more rapidly and dramatically in the lives of peoples like the Mursi so that tourism may well be undermining the very basis of its existence - the exotic 'tribes' of underdeveloped Ethiopia.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

According to Matheson & Wall, (1982:1), "Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside the normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs". With the creation of tourism, various interactions are set up between the tourists and their hosts, which at the outset are facilitated by a range of stakeholders, such as tour companies, tour guides, local authorities etc. Because of the magnitude of the tourist industries, the variety of motivations and expectations held by tourists themselves, and the diversity of cultural responses to tourist arrivals, it is impossible to draw an exact or indeed final measurement on the merits and demerits of tourism. The major stimulus for the development of tourism is economic. Tourism is seen to bring capital investments, infrastructure development, increased government revenue, new employment and entrepreneurial activity (Smith, 1989: 5-6).

Once again it is important to emphasize that we cannot generalize that all the socio-cultural impacts of tourism are positive, or, indeed negative. Before reflecting on the consequences of tourism - in this case - in southern Ethiopia, we can begin from three related perspectives: By examining the nature of the world of tourist advertising as well as the nature of the tourist himself and the objects of his/her tour encounter. Second, we can consider those elements of the host society experiencing change due to tourism. Thirdly, we can examine the cultural changes that are due to the influence of tourists (Shaw and Williams, 1994: 84). Much of the established literature holds that tourists bring with them positive and negative impacts with seemingly more emphasis on the negative. At tourist destinations, tourists interact with local residents and the outcome of their relationships is usually accompanied by changes in the host individuals and host community's quality of life, value systems, labor division, family relationships, attitudes, behavioral patterns and ceremonies.

Some of the negative socio-cultural impact of tourism are: Increase in crime rates, gambling, disruption of traditional kinship and community bonds, changes in the role of women, age grades, changes in demographic structure, language change, prostitution, health changes (AIDS, other STD's) and the erosion or disappearance of indigenous culture under the impacts of

commercialization (Shaw and Williams, 1994: 84). Based on such considerations we can ask: who will benefit from the development of tourism in south Omo and to what extent? The foreign tourist at one end, the object of his/her tour-the "primitive" on the other end or all those in between, for example the tour companies, the Ethiopian government, local entrepreneur, hotel and construction business elites, foreign researchers, anthropologists, and guides? These are important guiding questions which are nevertheless of secondary interest in my approach to 'the anthropology of tourism in southwest Ethiopia a field, which has recently attracted increased anthropological attention (see, for example: [www.uni-Mainz.de/organisation/SORC/](http://www.uni-Mainz.de/organisation/SORC/))

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The general objective of this thesis is to:

Consider the role of individuals, institutions and organizations in-between the tourist and the native.

#### **1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the reasons tourists come to south Omo.
2. To understand how the tourist sees the 'native' and how the 'native' sees the tourist.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

My primary research interest is in the foreign tourist who it appears is increasingly seeking the wild, exotic even underdeveloped places that offer relief for a decedent over-mechanized west.

The key questions here are:

1. What are the kinds of tourist advertising discourses that bring tourists to southern Ethiopia?
2. In relation to how does the tourist see the 'native'?

These questions are counterbalanced by asking:

3. How do the 'native' see the tourist and
4. How do the tourists affect economically, culturally and environmentally the natives?

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

1. Contribution to the relatively virgin field of the anthropology of tourism in south Omo.
2. This study could provide data that will make for a more balanced relationship between the tourist and the native. At present it appears that the advantages are stacked in favor of the tourist, foreign tour operators and business as well as local business elites.
3. The study could provide information for museums and other institutional bodies that are engaged in teaching the public environmental and other issues relating to sustainable development.

### **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

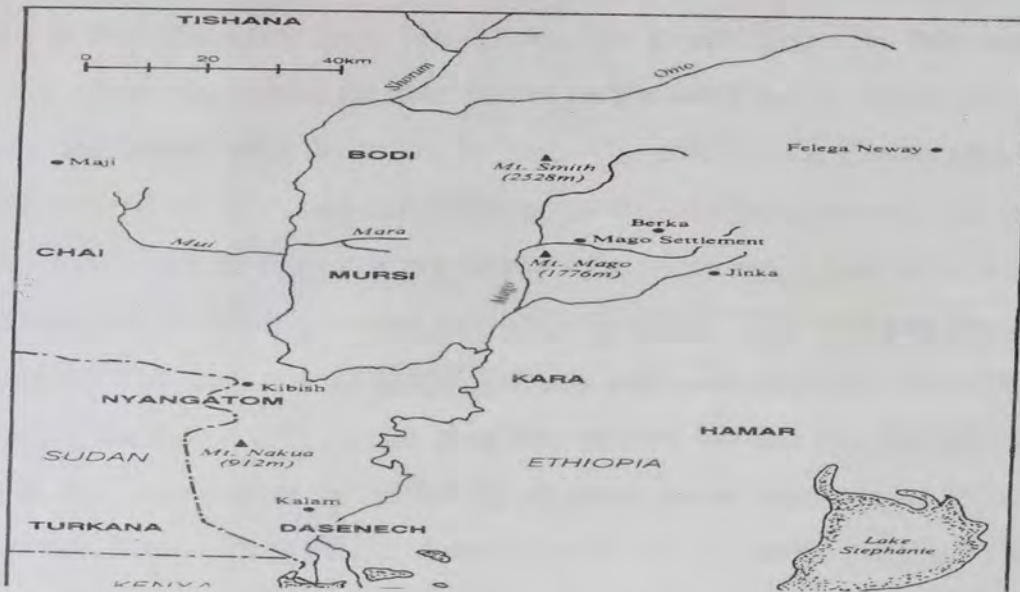
The method employed here was largely qualitative. I made three field trips to Mursi, especially to Maganto village. The fieldwork was done from the middle of August to the end of November, 2006.

**Participant observation:** in different villages of Mursi I have observed the interaction of the tourists with the local people and the representation of the locals to the tourist and above all I have observed the actual social environment of the local people. Diary and field notes were kept and I also undertook in-depth interviews with six key-informants. The key-informants were selected out of twenty- one informants due to their contact to the researcher and their extensive knowledge about the topic under study. I conducted interviews with seventy-three tourists at the beginning of August up to the end of December, 2006. Most of the interviews were held at the South Omo Research Center (SORC) in Jinka town which is found to be a good place to get the tourists and to conduct interviews.

Interviews and informal discussions were made with eight tour operators in Addis Ababa and two local tour-operators and three hoteliers in Jinka, three anthropologists who made their studies in south Omo, several tour guides (from Addis Ababa and local) and drivers, government officials as well as with civil servants and three local persons who have lived in the area for more than 70 years. In order to assess the socio-economic impacts of tourism both structured and unstructured interviews were made with a total of sixty local people in the three villages of Mursi (Maganto, Mackki and Moizo).

**Focus group discussions (FGDs):** I have organized three focus group discussion sessions with the Mursi. The aims were to test research ideas and also to gain insights into the Mursi perceptions and views of tourists and tourism. The participants of the focus group discussions were grouped in to 6 to10 individuals. Two of the sessions were conducted with elders (male) and the remaining discussion was held with the youngsters (both male and female) who are not married. The researcher controlled the over all process and the translator acted as a facilitator. I also accessed various documents from the Central Tourism Commission in Addis Ababa, South Omo Tourism Hotels and Parks Office and from the South Omo Research Center.

## 1.7 BACK-GROUND OF THE STUDY AREA: SOCIO- ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS



(Map1: Source: Turton, 1995:7)

The Mursi in fact do not refer to themselves as 'Mursi' but as 'Mun' (Plural) or 'Muni' (Singular). They live in southwestern Ethiopia in the Lower Omo Valley in an oblong-shaped territory of about six miles which is north of Lake Turkana. Mursi land is bounded by the River Omo in the West and South, by the River Mago in the East and South, and by the River Mara to the north. As far as some of their neighbouring groups are concerned, those with whom the Mursi have the least peaceable relations are the Bodi (to the north) whom the Mursi consider their mortal enemies and the Nyangatom in the south (Turton, 1973). According to my elderly informants:

The first men who lived in the current Mursi land were known as *Kaissa*. However, they do not know exactly from where these people came. The general consensus is that the Mursi came from the direction of Bench-Majji in the Northwest crossing the River Omo. According to oral tradition, once upon a time the river doll (Omo) was full and, the Mursi could not cross the river. Then the chief discussed with the elders and made rituals to send one messenger to perform

a miracle. The messenger while he was walking into the river was turned into a trunk and the river separated in two. The messenger, who turned into a big trunk, is still believed to be alive. The Mursi together with their domestic animals were able to cross the River Omo. The divided river joined again after they crossed. Those Mursi who crossed the river met the people called *Kaissa*. During that time only few people were living in the land. The chief of the *Kaissa* asked the strangers 'where they came from?' The guests showed him directions from where they came. They gave the new people sweet grain. The sweet grain amazed them; and the new arrivals asked 'what was that sweet thing?' They were told that it was sorghum. The chief told the people that they were to be accepted as guests. The chief of the *Kaissa* told the new chief that 'you are few and you may take small land', but the new chief replied that we are many; we are accompanied by *juhaye*, *ku.norte*, *bumaye* (the greater moieties of the Mursi) (Part of the oral history of the Mursi told by the elders Legolege, Betongya, Mulu and Hailu, October, 2006, Maganto Village).

According to Turton (1995:5) the topography of Mursi country "...consists essentially of volcanic upland, raising steadily from less than 500m above sea level at the Omo to altitudes of over 1000m along the Dara range, which forms the water shade between the Omo and its tributary, the Mago. Apart from the higher slopes of their range, the whole of the territory occupied by the Mursi lies below 1,000m." In terms of population size, in the year 1970 during his two years of fieldwork, Turton estimated the number of the Mursi was 4-5 thousand. Again as he estimated in 1995 the population showed an increment to 5-6 thousands. However, the data obtained from the Zonal office in Jinka, from the 1994 Population and Housing Census, the Mursi have a population of more than 18, 500 people.

Table 1: Population and Housing Census in Mursi

| <b>SALAMAGO</b> | <b>MALE</b> | <b>FEMALE</b> | <b>BOTH SEXES</b> | <b>NO.OF HOUSEHOLDS</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>9039</b> | <b>9584</b>   | <b>18622</b>      | <b>4836</b>             |
| Ganchere        | 593         | 625           | 1218              | 321                     |
| Gacha           | 256         | 248           | 505               | 137                     |
| Demegero        | 1201        | 1327          | 2527              | 660                     |
| Deme utsa       | 916         | 942           | 1858              | 468                     |
| Erkaducha       | 326         | 338           | 664               | 217                     |
| Demegarfa       | 506         | 587           | 1092              | 359                     |
| Omo hanna       | 1423        | 1554          | 2977              | 757                     |
| Nurmasheka      | 440         | 443           | 883               | 235                     |
| Gura            | 946         | 1005          | 1951              | 505                     |
| Giyodakuba      | 217         | 290           | 507               | 142                     |
| Hailuha         | 469         | 515           | 984               | 244                     |
| Bongozo         | 827         | 808           | 1635              | 331                     |
| Dara            | 919         | 902           | 1821              | 460                     |

(Source: 1994 Population and Housing Census)

As to linguistic classification Turton (1973:23) notes that the Mursi's cultural and linguistic affiliation lie predominantly with the people who inhabit the plains to the south-west of the Ethiopian plateau and whose territories span the border between Ethiopia and Sudan. The Tirmaga (sing. Trim) and Chi (sing. Chahi). The Mursi, as well as neighbouring groups such as the Bodi, Kwegu, and Muguji fit into the Surma branch who is all Nilo Saharan language speakers. With regard to religion, the Mursi believe in 'Tumu' (literally translated as sky) who created them. In addition to their traditional religion, some Mursi have been converted to Protestantism. This started in about 1988 through the Society of International Missionaries (SIM) who established a station in the Mursi village called Mackki.

With regard to subsistence, the Mursi economies depend on both livestock-herding and crop cultivation (mixed agriculture). According to Turton (1973: 9), the Mursi depend on three main types of subsistence, which make a vital contribution to the economy: These are: flood-retreat cultivation at the Omo River, rain-fed cultivation in the bush belt, and cattle herding in the wooded grasslands above 500m. They also keep goats and sheep, but in small numbers. The Mursi do not use their cattle for tilling the land. As an alternative, they make openings in the earth by means of stick or other iron-made tools from the Ari or Jinka market. The main crops

cultivated by the Mursi are sorghum, though some maize is also grown, together with cowpeas, beans and squash. Crop cultivation is first and foremost the duty of women, whereas men are mainly accountable for herding.

Anthropologist David Turton has classified the Mursi by their means of subsistence as 'pastoralists' showing that crop cultivation contributes little to their diet. The greater part of their survival necessities are from their herds upon which they depend for nutritious milk and blood. Apart from providing the main diet, cattle are particularly important to the Mursi as a form of insurance against crop failures by being exchanged for grain. The cattle are the prides of the Mursi. The richness of a person is revealed by the number of cattle he owns, cattle which are often used as a payment of bride-wealth and sacrifice in some rituals (Turton 1973:9-10).

Table 2: The seasonal events and subsistence activities of Mursi:

| Bergu interval | English Month | Mursi Season | Activities  |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---|
| 1.             | August/Sept.  | Teligia      | Omo reaches maximum level, storage of rain-fed harvest  |
| 2.             | Sept/Oct.     | Loru         | Omo level recedes, preparation of plots for flood cultivation; burning of grass in Elma Valley. |
| 3              | Oct/Nov.      | Su           | Small rains; planting at Omo; cattle to Elma  |
| 4              | Nov/Dec.      | Su           | Weeding at Omo  |
| 5              | Dec/Jan.      | Su           | Bird-Scaring at Omo; burning of rain-fed cultivation areas                                      |
| 6              | Jan/Feb       | Su           | Harvest at Omo, burning of rain-fed cultivation areas   |
| 7              | Feb/March     | Oi yoi       | Storage of flood crops  |
| 8              | March/April   | Oi yoi       | Women move to rain-fed cultivation areas  |
| 9              | April/May     | Oi yoi       | Weeding   |
| 10             | May/June      | Oi yoi       | Bird-Scaring  |
| 11             | June/July     | Oi yoi       | Harvesting  |
| 12             | July/August   | Telegia      | Drying and threshing of rain-fed harvest  |

(Source: Turton, 1973:10)

## 1.8 RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The people of south Omo became part of the Ethiopian Empire under emperor Minilek II (Abbink, 2002:155), people who had long been perceived as 'primitive' and 'exotic'. Tsega-ab (2005:3) has written that "Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the south west periphery of Ethiopia, notably the region of south Omo was not known to the outside world. Even the course of Omo River stayed obscured up until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century". Since the 1950s, foreign anthropologists have started to conduct research on the people of southwest Ethiopia. Among those researchers, the Germans were the first and later on came Japanese, Americans, British, and French. From the 1950s up to recent time researchers from different disciplines have studied the different ethnic groups of the region and the dissemination of their findings in both scholarly and popular outlets such as films have probably played a significant role in the representation of the south Omo as a primary tourist destination for 'wild' and 'exotic tribes'.

"These 'exotic' people are now the subject of ethnography and tourism...this in turn has allowed the incursion of ultra-modern influences into the 'exotic' land and infiltration of cultural elements from the exotic land to the ultra-modern world. Glaring instances are tourists and ethnographers who follow the dressing the décor styles of the region and for bond friendship with locals as per local custom. In the region, the locals are also creatively commercializing their customs such as, songs, dances, rituals and ceremonies to get the most out of 'photo tourism' " (Tsega-ab, 2005:2).

Among others, the Mursi ethnic group of south Omo has been researched and the ethnographic findings are accessible at national and international level. In addition to the seminal publications and films of David Turton, a British anthropologist who has worked with the Mursi since the early 1970s, the tourist media especially, the world-famous Lonely planet Guides and The Bradat Travel Guide to Ethiopia, have played a significant role in employing images and discourses about the Mursi - for example their nakedness, scars and famous lip-plates - that have made them the leading human attraction amongst all the exotic 'tribes' of south Omo. This as well as my prior familiarity with Mursi individuals led me to select the Mursi for my research interests in the anthropology of tourism.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM

Nash (1981:2) quotes 18<sup>th</sup> century writer Boyer who suggested that the idea of tourism first emerged in the western world in the 18<sup>th</sup> century embodied in the form of a young, wealthy, English gentleman traveling abroad. The manifest purpose of the young man's "tour" was educational, along with a considerable amount of what we would nowadays call 'sightseeing', but a variety of other motives and practices were involved. According to Pi-Sunyer (1981:271) "Tourism is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon. Its origins are to be found in the economic and social transformations that changed the lives of broad sectors of the population of the industrialized West; changes that not only altered the structure of work and employment, but also patterns of consumption and leisure."

In spite of the frequent use of the term "tourism", it does not have a precise definition, because there is no clear differentiation between travelers who are tourists and those who are not (Smith, 1989:5). As Sindiga (1999:10) has noted, different groups of people perceive tourism in different ways. To governments, tourism means economic related activities. To industry, it means promotion, arrivals, departures, and length of stay, receipts, and so on. To religious groups, tourism evokes a sense of pilgrimage, spiritual research, and universal brotherhood. To objects of the tourist (i.e. the host communities) tourism may arouse the idea of intrusion or invasion, whilst to the tourist themselves tourism means an escape from daily routines, indulgence in leisure pursuits, rest and relaxation, education, experiencing other cultures and so on.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the term "tourist" is derived from 'tour', meaning '... a journey at which one returns to the starting point, a circular trip usually for business, pleasure or education during which an itinerary is usually planned (Webster's Dictionary: 1961:2417). Likewise, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the tourist as 'one who makes a tour or tours; especially one who does this for recreation; one who travels for pleasure or culture, visiting a number of places for their objects of interests, scenery or the like'. These definitions indicate that a tourist is one who 'travelers for pleasure' and shows the essential feature of tourism i.e. returning to the point of departure.

With the growth of international travel in recent years, it has become necessary to operationalize the term 'tourist' for statistical purposes, so that in 1963, the United Nations sponsored a conference on travel and tourism in Rome. The conference recommended definitions of "visitor" and "tourists". For statistical purposes the term "visitor" describes any person visiting a country other than that in he/she has his/her usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited. This definition covers:

1. The Tourists: Temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings:
  - a. Leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, sport);
  - b. Business, family, mission, meeting.
2. Excursionists: These are visitors staying in a country less than 24 hours, includes day-trippers and people on cruises (Cohen, 1974:529-30).

Although she admits that it is difficult to define tourism, Smith classified it among leisure-time activities: 'in general a tourist is a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change'. Accordingly, Cohen (1974:533) defined a tourist as a voluntary, temporary traveler, traveling in the expectation of pleasure from novelty and chance experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round-trip.

## **2.1 TYPES OF TOURISM**

There is no single typology of tourism that can fit the many possible cases that exist in reality. Tourism may be rural or national, nature-based or cultural. A classification could proceed along themes such as architectural tourism, theme park tourism, adventure tourism, sun-and- sex, tourism, religious pilgrimage tourism and so on. According to Pearce (1994:12), tourism typologies have been based on a variety of dominant features, which includes: type of tourists, duration of the trip, group size, organizer of the trip, types of tourist destination, and types of accommodation and modes of transport. Smith (1989:4-5) also proposed the five-fold typology of tourism. All of these typologies more or less can be found in south Omo Ethiopia. The five typologies are believed to be single out any of the characteristics mentioned in the above as follows:

1. **Ethnic Tourism:** Is a kind of tourism that is marketed to the public in terms of the peculiarity of indigenous and often exotic or better still exoticised peoples. Destination activities inspire tourism that includes visits to native homes and village, observation of dances and ceremonies. This typology of tourism is set up in south Omo where there are more than 16 ethnic groups with different cultures and languages that are said to have existed relatively unchanged for as long as any one can remember.

2. **Cultural Tourism:** This typology of tourism more or less looks like ethnic tourism, includes the “strange”, “picturesque” or “local color”, a vestige of a vanishing life-style that lies within human memory with “old style” homespun fabrics, horse or ox-drawn carts and plows, and hand rather than machine-made crafts. The tourist who come to south Omo are especially keen to see the strange things they have read about: the ‘bull-jumping’ in Hamar, and the ‘Donga’ (stick-fight) in Mursi, Music festivals, traditional markets of south Omo.

3. **Historical Tourism:** Refers to the Museum-Cathedral tour that stresses the glories of the past. Tourism in northern Ethiopia is primarily of this sort. Historical tourism tends to attract many education-oriented visitors, and tourism is facilitated because the targets are often in cities. In south Omo case, there are tourists who come to visit historical places in the Lower Omo Valley but cultural tourism remains predominant.

4. **Environmental Tourism:** This type of tourism (nowadays called eco-tourism) is similar to ethnic tourism, attracting tourists to remote areas. Environmental tourism is primarily to natural resorts often with an expressed educational aim to educated people on ecological relationships and ecological sustainability. In south Omo, the National parks (Mago and Omo currently owned by African Parks) are destinations for environmental tourism.

5. **Recreational Tourism:** This is often sand, sea, and sex promoted by beautiful color pictures that make you want to be “there”.

Even if the above typologies of tourists have their limitations, they have some advantages. They are useful indicators of the diversity of tourists, their demands and consumption. The second advantage is the typologies provide the reason behind why tourists are attracted to specific

destinations. Finally, it provides the information about the impacts of host-guest interactions on the destinations (Shaw and Williams, 1994: 74-75).

## **2.2 TOURISM IN ETHIOPIA AND SOUTH OMO**

Travel to Ethiopia has a long even if legendary history. For example, the ancient Greek writer Homer, in his Epic the Iliad wrote the following “Zeus went yesterday to Oceanus to the blameless Ethiopians for rest and all the Gods followed him” (Kebede, 1999:5). That is to say, even the Gods as represented by Zeus, traveled to a perfect - dare it be said, even - Utopian Ethiopia. In recorded history the strong socio-economic relationships between the ancient Axumite kingdom of Ethiopia with the ancient kingdom of Egypt, Greece, Rome, etc. pushed the explorers, navigators, merchants, hunter, missionaries and diplomats to undertake travels to Ethiopia. During that period merchants dominated traveling and were the sources of all types of information to their nations concerning political and other socio-economic issues.

In early Ethiopian history, the wars between Muslims and Christians forced many people to leave their places and migrate to other countries. In this way many of Mohammedans entered Ethiopia and Ethiopian Christians also went abroad. This resulted in ‘religious tourism’ by travelers to Mecca and Jerusalem. The fifteenth century was the opening introduction of Ethiopia to the Europeans. Europeans did not know much about Ethiopia until the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese missionaries, such as Radrigo de Lioma came to live Ethiopia. After the Portuguese missionaries, Piatro in 1432 from France, Michael Desiderio in 1432 and Aulonio Marsiniz in 1453 from Italy came to Ethiopia. From the visitors a Portuguese missionary who traveled through net Ethiopia and visited very historical sites was Francisco Alvarez. He was the first visitor who managed to produce a coherent report about Ethiopia to Europeans in 1920 (Aylew, 1998:5-6).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ethiopia made an effort towards, ‘modernization’, such as telephone, banks, hotels, post office, modern roads, and a railway. Although historically Ethiopia is a land of immense tourism resources and great potential, until recently, little emphasis was given to the sector. Ethiopia’s share of the African countries profit from global tourism is insignificant. In East Africa the share of Ethiopia is negligible relative to that of Kenya, Uganda,

and Tanzania. Based on the information of the World Tourism Organization in year 2001 and estimates made by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission, about 95million tourists visited all courtiers of the world. Out of this 29 million or 5% of the tourists visited Africa. Out of which only 156,327 came to Ethiopia-a country with considerable potential and ample endowment of exotic natural and man-made tourist attractions.

During Emperor Haile Selassie's rule tourism as an industry was given greater attention. The first tourist organization office was launched in 1961 and latter on this office was transferred to the Ministry of Information (Kebede, 1999:5). In 1969 the UN reported that international tourist arrival in Ethiopia was on the increase. According to the report, the number of tourist arrivals increased from 19,215 in 1963 to 38,696 in a year 1966. And a greater number of visitors in those years came from Europe. After the revolution of 1974 when the Derge came to power, the government of Ethiopia made various declarations in relation to developing the tourism sector. Besides, the absence of peace and stability internally and externally coupled with the regime, the non-independent structuring of tourism did not give the sector freedom to achieve the proposed goals. All these factors constituted to the negative image from international tourism (Ayalew, 1998:81).

Following the overthrow of the military regime renewed consideration was given to the industry. From that time on the number of international tourists has increased. This is due to changes in economic policy, which has allowed the expansion of the private sector to work side by side with the state. In addition to this, relative peace and social stability has allowed tourists to travel all over Ethiopia (Ayalew, 1998:105-106). The greater number of tourists now visiting Ethiopia coincides with a greater number of publications and media images selling an exoticised Ethiopia to the world. For example, on the inside cover of a current popular tourist guide to Ethiopia entitled: *Ethiopia: A Tourist Paradise*, authors Amin and Willetts (2001) declare that "Ethiopia is a land of *wonder* and *enchantment*" thus evoking tropes from Western fairy-tales which every westerner is intimately familiar with.

In southern Ethiopia, the establishment of a tourism bureau in south Omo is a recent phenomenon. According to the records of the Zonal tourism office, the tourism bureau at Jinka was established in 1990 under the Trade, Industry and Transport Office. In the year 2006 the tourism bureau was renamed Tourism, Parks and Hotels Desk with five staff members (head, tourism expert, data collector and one inspector). As compared with the other parts of Ethiopia, especially with the North Ethiopia, infrastructures are not yet well developed in south Omo. Road transport is the most commonly used transportation but there are visitors who are using the Ethiopia Airlines service four times a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday). As well as hoteliers in Jinka who rent cars illegally, other transport is supplied by tour operators and travel agencies based in Addis Ababa, including the National Tour Operator NTO. In spite of, or perhaps even because of this limitation in transport infrastructure south Omo retains its allure for the tourist. In the introduction to the lavishly produced two volume work *Ethiopia: The Peoples of the Omo Valley*, Silvester notes that “the lower Omo valley is still a lost world” (p.4) which moreover is the “wildest in Africa” (*ibid*). This is but a part of the advertising discourse about south Omo which has brought larger numbers of visitors in recent years. This as well as the increasing number of tour operators to the area and new hotel accommodation. According to the report of the Tourism Parks and Hotels Desk, a total number of 27,202 tourists visited south Omo from the year 2004-2006.

## 2.2.1 THE NATURAL AND HUMAN ATTRACTIONS

To tourists in Ethiopia, the Omo Valley with diverse cultural and natural heritages is one of the major attractions in Ethiopia. The attractions include the wildlife in Mago National Park and Omo Park (currently owned by African Parks), the Chew Bahir Game Reserve and its great variety of ethnic cultures in a relatively small area. Currently tourism in south Omo is focused on the beautiful scenery and indigenous cultures. Other tourist attractions to be developed will be the hot springs of Chew Bahir as well as the world-famous pale-ontological and archeological sites in the lower Omo valley.

Table3: Natural and Human attractions of south Omo

| No. | Name of attractions                               | Woredas   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1   | Ethnic Groups                                     | 6 woredas                                       |
| 2   | Mago National Park                                | Bakogazer,<br>Salamago, Benna-<br>Tsemay, Hamar |
| 3   | Chelbi wild life reserve                          | Hamar   |
| 4   | Tamma wild life Reserve                           | Salamago  |
| 5   | Murle Control hunting Area                        | Hamar   |
| 6   | Wulshet Control Hunting Area                      | Salamago  |
| 7   | Omo Valley  | Salamago, Kuraz                                 |
| 8   | Weitto Valley                                     | Hamar   |
| 9   | Omo Archaeology and place of Anthropology         | Kuraz   |
| 10  | Kibbish Archaeology and place of Anthropology     | Kuraz   |
| 11  | Fejiji Archaeology and place of Anthropology      | Hamar   |
| 12  | Mursi Ausino Archeology and place of Anthropology | Salamago  |
| 13  | Maki Hot Spring                                   | Salamago  |
| 14  | Chew bahir Hot Spring                             | Hamar   |
| 15  | Nikulan Hot Spring                                | Kuraz   |
| 16  | Elil bay Hot Spring                               | Kuraz   |
| 17  | Caves   | Gelila, Bako Gazer                              |
| 18  | Lake Chew bahir                                   | Hamar   |
| 19  | Lake Rudolf (partially)                           | Kuraz   |
| 20  | Omo Park (partially)                              | Kuraz   |
| 21  | The different Rivers, Mountains Plains            | Kuraz   |

(Source: Tourism, Parks and Hotels Desk office in Jinka)

### **2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM SECTOR, TOUR-OPERATORS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

Tourism bureau officials in Jinka told me that the current benefit from tourism to the Zonal government as well as to the community is insignificant. The income share from the tourism sector can not altering to the status of the Zonal tourism bureau or creating the opportunities for the local people to improve their 'living conditions'. In relation to this, Million (2000:21) found that in the Lower Omo Valley, the share of financial benefits from tourism to local peoples is likewise insignificant. Many of them must be content to earn money from being photographed and/or from selling curios to tourists. When we look at the wildlife, the total income of a single safari is estimated between \$30,000-50,000. From this amount, a good proportion goes to the hunting operator and to the regional government in from of hunting revenue fees. However, the local communities do not get any of the quota payment and in relation to the Mursi they themselves have been discouraged from their traditional hunting by organizations in south Omo such as African Parks. As Million (2000:23), noted the distribution of revenues collected from hunting in 1996, 20% allocated to the local community, but the share of the local communities are distributed when they enter into an agreement with the agricultural bureau to fully participated in the process of implementing wildlife conservation objectives.

### **2.4 THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF TOURISM**

As stated by Palmer (2001:301-2), the legitimating of tourism as a suitable topic for anthropological enquiry has grown steadily since Nuenz's pioneering study. This has resulted in the emergence of several key academic debates about the subject, in both journal articles and textbook form. Anthropologists have not accepted tourism as an anthropological subject for many years. Why then have anthropologists only recently found tourism of scholarly interest? Nash (1881:1) gives the following answers:

1. The anthropologists considered themselves as field workers and so do not want to be identified with tourists in any way.
2. The subject may invoke a frivolous area of culture (enjoyment/play) that they would not wish to be associated with.

3. Tourism may be thought of as something modern and anthropology is still widely conceived as dealing with the 'traditional'.
4. Anthropologists are simply unaware of the extent of tourism in the societies in which they carry out their studies.

In addition to this, Nash also sets forth some points that justify tourism as a subject of anthropology:

1. Since tourism involves travel, it also involves contact between cultures and sub cultures, an area of concern to the increasing numbers anthropologists who pursue investigations of acculturation or development.
2. Tourism is widespread in and across human societies.
3. Tourism currently is contributing to the transformation of classical anthropological territory, namely, the pre-industrial world.

According to Graburn (1983:9-15) the anthropology of tourism has concentrated on two main areas. First, the study of tourism and the nature of tourism itself and second, the study of the social, cultural and economic impact of tourism on host societies and populations; with the relationship between cultural contact and economic impacts of tourism on host societies and populations; with the relationship between cultural contact and cultural change being the primary focus for attention. Indeed, Valene Smith's (1989) influential text *Host and Guests* contains a variety of anthropological case studies concerning the impact of tourism on the host communities.

In its simplest form tourism is a series of transactions between the host communities and the tourists. While in its broadest sense, it involves cross-cultural relations between people who serve the tourists or the 'intermediaries' or the 'brokers' such as travel agent, the tour operators, the hotel manager, tour guide and so on. The anthropologists can view tourism as resulting from the intersection of the histories of two or more cultures or sub-cultures. Seen in this way, it becomes a process of involving the generation of tourists, their travel, and their subsequent encounter implies transactions between tourists, their agents, and hosts which affect the people and the cultures involved. The touristic encounter may give rise to touristic system the development of

which is subject to a variety of forces not only in the partner cultures or subcultures, but also in the system beyond (Nash, 1981:462).

Nuenz, one of the first social scientists to apply anthropological research techniques to the field of tourism (1989:270-78) states that, the holistic and comparative approaches of anthropology are also applicable to analyses of tourism. The methods and theories that the anthropologists use in empirical field research, participant observation, obtaining information from a representative range of individuals and specialized data from key-informants and all the ethnographic routine also apply to study tourism at the community level, except tourists, are the infrequent or regular visitors or part-time residents of the community under study. The study of tourism further involves understanding of patterns of interaction between local residents, the intermediaries and individual tourists or groups of tourists.

## **CHAPTER THREE: FACTORS AFFECTING TOURIST-NATIVE INTERACTIONS**

In this section an attempt has been made to discuss the interaction between tourists and the Mursi people of south Omo.

### **3.1 PROFILE OF THE TOURISTS AND THE PURPOSES OF THEIR VISITS TO MURSI LAND**

This sub-section will show the economic, social and gender aspects of the interviewed tourists; based on the results of the questionnaire consecutively it will discuss the extent of the visit and the motive behind their visits to south Omo as a whole and Mursi area in particular.

During my three month field stay, a total of 73 tourists completed a detailed questionnaire. From the total 41 were men and the remainder were women. The majority were from Europe, with the remainder coming from the US and Japan. Specifically two tourists came from Southern Africa (it is worth noting here that the Southern Africans were white Southern Africans from Zimbabwe) two from Israel and two from New Zealand. I did not come across any black African tourists but did see and meet at the Museum in Jinka, least three groups of Ethiopian tourists from America. Overall, it may be said that, most likely more male tourists visited the area than female tourists. In age classification, 13 of the interviewed tourists were at the age of 21-30, 29 were the age category 31-40 and 13 were the age categories of 41-50, 18 found that beyond 50.

By marital status 21 were married, 48 were single, 3 were divorced and 1 was widowed. This shows that those who do not have families have more opportunity to travel than those who are married. Concerning type of employment, 63 were employed, 4 were retired and 6 were students. From the questionnaire results tourists who visited south Omo have college education, or currently joined collages. When we look at their traveling experience most of them have traveled worldwide. In terms of the length of time, tourists spend in south Omo, about 40 tourists spend on the average 2-6 days, 59 tourists spend 7-11 days, 3 spend 12-17 days, only one tourist spend one month. Generally, tourists spend on average 10- 14 days vacationing period in the south Omo as a whole.

Regarding the motive of the tourists who visit south Omo, Hoven (1997:1) has suggested that a major attraction are the various tribes who are known for their “practices of scarification and hairstyling as well as inserting clay plates in their under lips.” The Mursi in particular are famous for their lip plates and one illustration of this in Amin and Willetts’ (2001) *Ethiopia: A tourist paradise* (p114) is fairly typical in most if not all tourist guide media to Ethiopia. According to the questionnaire and interview with tourists concerning the purpose of their visit to Ethiopia, they are grouped in to two: The first group came to Ethiopia either to visit the historical sites of the northern like, Laiebela or Axum, and the second group came to visit 'tribal' people of south Omo, especially the Hamar, Kara and the Mursi. Among the tourists, 3 visitors said even though they were interested to visit nature especially wildlife's and birds in Mago Park; they could not get a chance to watch big animals as much as they want. Four of the visitors came to Ethiopia to visit friends and relatives in Ethiopia. One visitor said that he came to the area for work at Omo Park which is currently owned by African Parks.

Moreover, this research attempted to obtain different views from government officials in the sector, tour operators and guides, and anthropologists in south Omo on motive of the tourists who travel to south Omo. The responses of officials regarding the motive of the tourists who visit south Omo can be grouped in to three:

1. Cultural ceremonies and local markets.
2. Ethnic groups and diverse way of traditional life.
3. Nature (wild animals and birds) at the National parks.

However, the interviewed personnel indicated different views, most of them pointed out that the tourists come to south Omo to see the ethnic groups, especially the Mursi and the Hamar who are popular on the tourist media. The information from the tourists as well as different officials show that the types of tourist who came to south Omo can be categorized under Smith's typology of tourists i.e., 'cultural -tourists' types who seem to be the dominant group in south Omo.

Regarding the perceptions of the tourists on their trips to different destinations of south Omo, the tourists response varies based on the sum total of the interactions they have with the 'intermediaries' (guides, the accommodations and transportations facilities) or the contact they

Two overlapping pages of text, likely from a book or manuscript, are visible. The text is extremely faint and illegible due to the low resolution and high contrast of the scan. The pages are set against a dark, textured background, possibly the inner cover of a book. The right page is slightly offset to the right and top relative to the left page.

have with the native people at the destination. The major factors that shape the interaction and experiences of the tourists in different parts of south Omo may be set out as follows.

1. The role of media in tourism to Mursi land in south Omo
2. The Mursi self-image vs. the exposition for the tourists.
3. The role of tour guides, mediation between locals and tourists
4. Transportation facilities and communication.

### **3.2 THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN TOURISM TO MURSI LAND IN SOUTH OMO**

When we look at south Omo, it is the home for more than 16 ethnic groups. Each of these groups has their own distinct language and culture. But not all of them are in the list of tourist attraction sites. Among different ethnic groups, the Hamar, Mursi, Kara, Benna, Dassench, Nayagatom, Tsemay, , Beshada are well advertised in a tourist media sources and known to the outside world. On the other hand, the Maale and the Ari groups, which are larger in population and currently using the 'Western clothing', did not get significant attention by the business people who operate tourism and participate in the promotion activity.

Even if the motivation of the tourists to visit south Omo varies from one individual to the other, the roles of the existing tourist Media have greater impacts in pushing the tourists to specific destinations. Seventy-three tourists who have visited to different places in south Omo clearly explained this. Among the seventy-three tourists who responded to the questionnaire regarding the places they have been touring, sixty tourists said that they visited the Mursi, Hamar, Benna, Bashada, Kara, Dassench, Nyangatom and Tsamay groups of south Omo, ten of the tourists had the chance to visit one of the Ari village, three responded that it was impossible to go to Mursi because of the rain. No one among the seventy-three tourists had the chance to see the Maale group of south Omo who are not mentioned by the travel guidebooks. In addition to this the researcher was told by tourists who were visiting the ethnographic museum of Jinka, that they were surprised at the existence of the Maale group, which is not mentioned in any one of the travel guidebooks that they had with them.

From the aforementioned pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups, the Mursi are perhaps the best known ethnic group in relation to tourist attractions in the south Omo. The discourses and images of the Mursi in the media is undoubtedly a major pull factor in attracting many travelers to Mursi land. According to Turton (2004:5) "During the last ten years, increasing numbers of European and North American tourists have made their way in to this area attracted by the image presented to them in tourists brochures of one of the last 'wildernesses' in Africa, inhabited by wild animals, naked warriors and women with stretched lips"

The interviews with five managers who run tour operations in Addis Ababa, local guides in Jinka, guides and drivers from Addis, regarding programs of tours to different destinations of south Omo, show that, most of the tourists preferred to see the Mursi ethnic group first in their trips and the other groups after. Ten guides (from Jinka and Addis Ababa) responded that the tourists are told about the Mursi as 'aggressive' or the difficulty of transport to Mursi land. However, tourists do not want to give up their trip to Mursi land. Indeed these very factors may be part of the tourist attraction to Mursi land and the Mursi themselves.

Mitku is 27 and a local guide in Jinka who worked for the last fifteen years and who claims that he has good relationships with the tourists. He expressed his view in the following way, "I observed many times quarrel between the tourists and their drivers from Addis especially during the rainy season due to the impassable road to Mursi villages. During the rainy season when you try to tell the tourists that they cannot go to the Mursi area, they would become angry I remember an incident when, an American visitor did not agree with his driver and sent the driver back to Addis and walked with me for six hours to one of the nearest Mursi village Mackki. Look now we heard about the Waito River and the bridge that connects Jinka and Konso is broken. I am expecting that the tourists will be taking a direct flight from Addis to Hanna Mursi that they can land there. I know the main interests of the tourists they come to south Omo to visit Mursi."

Further more, Ato Solomon Tesfaye is a driver from *Horizon Ethiopia Tour and Travel* who used to travel many years with the tourists explained, what he encountered as follows, "Yesterday a friend of mine planned to take couples to Mursi village and as you know it was raining the whole night in Jinka. So that he explained to his customer politely that he cannot drive to the Mursi

villages. The woman would not listen to him and became angry, and then she was shouting at my friend and ordered him return back to Konso. She did not let my friend to try again or to see other villages. This couple returned back to Arba Minch with out visiting other groups."

The Modern tourist establishment and a variety of the agents working in its sector, produce a wide range of tourist images of native people, explicitly intended for the attraction, purchased by tourists. The major examples of such an information sources are: travel guidebook, post cards, brochures, posters, documentary films and an electronic media. The questionnaire results from the tourists, who visited the different places of south Omo shows this clearly. The seventy-three tourists responded that, either on the pre-visit or on the destinations a complete absence of self-representation of the native people of south Omo about their culture. Among the 73 tourists who filled the questionnaires, 60 responded that the sources of the information about south Omo was from travel guide books, internet, brushers, documentary films, local as well as guides from Addis Ababa and rest said from relatives and friends who have been to the place.

Historically the current media representation of images of the ethnic groups of south Omo including the Mursi to the general public of Ethiopia and the tourist, produced by different out side producers such as travelers, private tour operators, government bodies, historians, ethnographers, anthropologists, photographers and documentary filmmakers to the area. A detailed analysis of images created by the range of information sources about the people of south Omo is outside the scope of this paper. However, the quotations below, intended to show how the Mursi represented in various Media and how the tourists will sort to take the contradicting messages during their travel to the area.

The tradition of stereotyping images of the Mursi through printed media goes back to 1896 to an Italian Geographical society's Expedition to Mursi land, it was translated by David Turton and quoted in his article about the first European visitors to Mursi land indicated, "Living in the country that has been up to now unknown both to the white man and the surrounding blacks, it is easy to understand why their way of life has remained little different from that of animals. The women are deformed and ugly and quite naked except for a narrow piece of skin around their waists. Some have holes in their ears and lower lip into which they put wooden discs reaching a

diameter or five or six centimeters. This savage tribe has detestable tendencies and bestial habits” (Turton, 2004:6).

Moreover, the author of the book *Vanishing Africa* during his stay for three weeks in south Omo, depicted the Mursi in a traveling dairy as follows, “---The Mursi see our arrival they surrounded us, and began to touch us and asking for little gifts. Seeing them, rough, long-suffering faces attached to long muscular and necked bodies. The odour of their skin was wild, almost animal” (2004:16). Furthermore, the most available travel guidebook on the hands of the tourists who are traveling to south Omo is *Lonely Planet* and the *Bradat* travel guidebooks, which advertised Mursi as follows, “All in all, depending on where one draws the line, as many as two-dozen different tribes occupy south Omo, some numbering tens of thousands, other no more than 500, each one of them culturally unique. The most renowned of the Omotic-speakers are the Mursi, famed for their practice of inserting large clay plated behind the lower lips of their women” (Lonely Planet, 2006:505).

On the other hand, Bradat guide book, describes the Mursi, "The most celebrated resident of south Omo are undoubtedly the Mursi, distinctive group of pastoralists who number about 5,000, and whose territory is more or less bounded by the Omo River to the west and the Mago River to the East. The subjects of several television documentaries, as well as Leslie Wood head's a Box full of sprits, the Mursi are best known for one admittedly very quickly item of decoration the famous lip-plate"(2000:500). According to Palmer (2000:2), “Focusing attention on a desire for familiarity and strangeness is a key strategy used by the actors involved in disseminating tourist information when they are formulating their own images of a destination. This strategy can in turn act to heighten or lessen the desire for particular experiences whilst on holiday.”

Information provisions from these tourist Media have greater influence in shaping of the experience of travelers to different destination of south Omo. The interviews and discussions with the tourists who have been to different destinations of south Omo reflect this. The interview results about the post and on- trip visit experience in south Omo, shows both positive as well as negative answers. Almost all the interviewed tourists say that they are disappointed with the contact made with the Mursi at different villages. Even if the interviewed tourists had short

visiting time in Mursi, they described the Mursi as 'aggressive', 'demanding' and 'backward', sharing the same views the images of the Mursi in different medias and the local guides. The following points were taken from the discussion made with a tourist.

A French medical doctor whose age is 45 and married. He agreed to talk with me in English from the 16 groups, who were traveling with him, expressed his feeling including the groups as follows,

"From Jinka we decided to see Mursi tribe; the tribe whom we thought that they substitute all the tribal peoples of Lower Omo region and popular in our home advertisements. After 8 hours drive on a muddy road, thanks to our driver from Addis, we arrived at Mursi village. In our stay for 15 minutes we experienced continues begging for gifts and photo-money. We were curious and asking several questions regarding their cultures but none of the Mursi is interested in our questions. They perceived our presence as if to distribute the money! They were nagging at us to take pictures. We took pictures. Thanks to our driver who distributed the used plastic water containers, which created a good reason to escape from the Mursi land."

A Spanish archeologist 31 years old, single also indicates his notion, in different way, "My desire to be in the south Omo is to go beyond what I heard from the local guides in Jinka and the Internet back home. I do not want to take pictures of the Mursi tribe in front of the hotels or who come to Saturday market in Jinka. I would like to see all the tribe in their daily life, especially the Mursi. It would have been helped me to bring a good memory with me."

An Italian architect, aged 58, married who was traveling with other four female tourists explained her view as follows, "The Native people of south Omo asked us for everything. It left us to be tired and weak!"

An American 70 year old whose residence is in California, divorced and used to work as banker and was traveling by himself. He was not carried photo camera rather he preferred to observe all events with his eyes explained his experience as follows, "Visiting south Omo was fantastic but a bit commercialized culture, especially the Mursi."

A British lawyer, aged 30, married, expressed her feeling as follows, "I did not expect so much begging and it was very disappointing. The Mursi was difficult to deal with, they have very aggressive begging. In Hamar we saw the Bull-jumping, it was fascinating. People were nice to talk and we asked many questions."

A Spanish office Manager 36 year old, currently living in England expressed her experience after the trip to Mursi as follows, "After paying all the travel expenses we had bad time in Mursi. The Mursi people were a bit scary. I hope we (mentioning the four tourists) will have good time in Hamar."

A German business man aged 37, whose main interest to come to Ethiopia was to visit the tribes of south Omo and their ways of living, explained his feeling as follows, "My only complaint is, it is hard to experience the real life of the tribe's, especially the Mursi tribe. I do not like the Mursi organized themselves to the touristic visit. They were too much artificial and you get little knowledge from the visit apart from the picture."

A Polish lawyer whose age is 33 was traveling with his girlfriend and visited south Omo before three years explained his feeling in the following way, "I hoped to be able to see the local people in their normal, daily life, which was to some extent the case with Hamar people but in the case of Mursi who resist to their village were like staged photo sessions."

A New Zealander, retired man 65 years old expressed the following, "I and my wife went to buy the morning bread from the bread shop. The two young Mursi men grabbed my wife and asked her to take pictures, we tried to explain that, we did not bring our camera with us, and they did not listen to us. They were too aggressive!"

The conversation with an Israeli computer software engineer, 28 years of age, whom I interviewed in Jinka Museum explained his view as follows, "While I was coming from Arba Minch tribal music festivals, I came on Isuzu car with the Mursi. I read somewhere in the Internet about the Mursi's aggressiveness. Yes it was right they are aggressive as I thought! They were not talking with other passengers on the truck. I gave a tissue paper to a Mursi women who had running nose, she did not say thank you."

The images of the Mursi men and women on post cards and posters more or less symbolize the same image what are mentioned above. The post card images of the Mursi men and women have greater influence when the tourist taking pictures. I observed in the field the quarrels between two young villagers and two elderly Italian tourists who came with video camera and selected specific body parts, especially the eyes or the pierced lips or body scars. Latter on the two young men told me that they hate photoflashes (those could not differentiate it was video camera) on specific parts of their bodies. However to protect the action from the tourists the two boys asked 10,-ETB per pictures, the tourists were happy to pay the amount.

It clearly shows that, the Mursi as well as other natives of south Omo have become the subject of gross commercialization and commoditization by the tourism industry. The misrepresented pictures of the native population's real social and cultural settings and the descriptions written at the back page of the postcard become popularized. The native people of south Omo do not differentiate the purpose of those photographers and the tourists in their locality, and are helpless to protect themselves from being photographed and the marketing of their own images. The discussion with the two officials from the Culture and Information Bureau in Jinka revealed that, they cannot control those tour operators to the area as well as hoteliers who take the local people pictures with out the knowledge of the people and use for advertising their business.

In relation to this, during my initial visits to the Mursi, I also observed the conversations of Mursi elders and a German journalist Andreas (I do not recall last name) who worked for a magazine in his homeland. He came to the Omo apparently to ascertain the *real* meaning attached to the pictures of the various ceremonially decorated 'tribes'; pictures which were taken, by a colleague Hans Silvester who is said to have known the people of the Lower Omo Valley for the last 20 years. Indeed, in the introduction to Vol II of Silvester's two volume work on the peoples of the Omo valley (cited earlier) it is written (my emphasis) that Silvester has "captured his subjects by photographing them *precisely* as they are..." This statement may be deliberately ambiguous, for in what sense are the subjects of photographs captured 'precisely' when a photograph is but one, fleeting (often self-conscious) moment of a non-static individual. After Andreas showed those pictures to the Mursi elders and youngsters of different villagers, all of the Mursi who saw those pictures responded to the journalist, that most probably those pictures were made by one of the

tourists to the area and that they are all 'Mursi-tourist photos'. However this response did not seem to satisfy Andreas (see sample pictures in Appendix 3: A &B).

The above conversations and discussions show that, the representations of the media not only miss-represent the Mursi people but also shape the interactions and perceptions of the tourist the local people. As it was mentioned in the preceding sections, most of the interviewed tourists who come to the Mursi village do not spend more than 20-30 minutes in different villages of Mursi. According to my observation, when tourists reach to the Maganto village, from the moment they jump out from the car they have fearful face, most of them do not want to shake the hands of the Mursi who are curious to touch outsiders, especially the young girls who are confused with the 'Western' costumes of the white visitors whether they are female or male. From the above mentioned interviews the experience of the tourists who come to Mursi-land with a pre-condition of the 'exotic bubble' from the available information sources (media, general public and local guides in Jinka) which led them to face 'strangeness' and 'friendlessness' and come with bad perceptions in the study area.

### **3.3 THE MURSI SELF-IMAGE VS. EXPOSITION FOR TOURISTS**

This sub section will illustrate the Mursi representation to the tourists and the different social reality, which is found in their day-to-day life. The field observation that has been undertaken by the researcher shows, how the Mursi differently exhibit themselves to the tourist oppose with the real social settings. Except the arrivals of the white visitors in the villages, the Mursi were living in harmony and peace. Each of family members in their house hold actively participant in the daily routine, from young children up to old man and women. The women have their own separate world than the men who are staying with the herds. The focus group discussions as well as observation of the daily life of both Mursi men and women confirms that, their appearance to the tourists satisfy the tourists' preconceived perception than they actual appear in real life situation. They manipulate the tourists by making themselves as 'exotic' and 'savage' to fulfill the expectations the tourist is only to get money for photographing.

A total of twenty young interviewed villagers from Maganto and Mackki having similar view on body 'beautifications' by young men and wearing of lip-plate by their woman are vitals to get a camera shot from their white visitors. According to Ulrege Sabakoro, a young married man who is famous in 'Donga' (stick fight) song, told me the following, "When the tourist cars come to this village, we put on different things, we put our favorite cow decoration around our head, we put black head cover on our front head and big feather, we smeared on our body with different colors. We smeared our body until we look like Zebra! This is how the tourist likes to see us! And this is the only way we get money from the photographs." (see Appendix4: fig.1, 2&3).

In addition to this, the five Mursi old women also assured the significance of wearing lip-plate at the tourist arrivals. Moraplecy Duramara whose age is 75 and the first wife told me her feelings as follows," The tourists are not interested on us; they are interested in taking the pictures of young girls. If your young daughters did not wear their 'Debi' (lip-plate) how can the tourists like to take pictures? We the old women who stopped wearing debi do not get photo money from the tourist. At the tourist arrivals our daughters are running after the tourists and we should stay at home waiting for them return with money."

From discussion the Mursi has believed that their appearance to the tourists play greater role in getting cash income. On the other hand, when we look at the interview with the tourists who have been to south Omo the 'tourstic' behaviours of the Mursi highly affected their perceptions. Those interviewed tourists could not experience the real Mursi cultures. The behaviors what the Mursi presented to the tourists were considered as the main factors that the tourists could not stay in the Mursi villages not more than 10-20 minutes.

Mulu Archaye and Legolege Golegomeri are Mursi elders and key informants also explained to me that, decorating body by smearing with different colors has existed for long tradition but it different from the present condition that the youngsters are practicing to get the money from tourists'. According to my informants, the Mursi men decorate themselves with different colors when they go to 'Donga' (stick fight), which usually they played once a year, and to chase away sickness. I got a chance to observe in the village when the Mursi men (the married) were doing the ritual to cure sickness early in the morning and smearing the 'Debie' (white chalk) on the

faces of the members of the family. The elders believe the practice that the sickness will be chased out being frightened by the painted faces of the people.

When we look at the social reality of wearing of lip-plates by Mursi women, which attracts many of the tourists to Mursi land, who have contradicting views. On this issue and the significance of putting lip-plates, Turton (2004:4-5) pointed out, the social reality of wearing lip-plate by Mursi women as an expression of female adulthood. Lip-plate forms are the identity marker of the Mursi among their closest neighboring groups such as the Bodi and the Quegu. Latosky on her article on the lip-plate of the Mursi women (2006:374) explained the function of lip-plate for the Mursi women, "When a Mursi girl has reached puberty, she will have her lip cut and a small wooden stick inserted, giving her a new identity. She becomes a basani, an age-set in Mursi that indicates a girl's passage from girl hood to womanhood."

The Mursi woman in the real social setting wears her lip-plate when they serve the daily porridge to their husband while he seat with his friends (see, Appendix: 4: fig4). The following interview with the Mursi old man whose age is around 80 and the chief of Turko village, shows about the practice of wearing lip-plates, "I can not tell you when our women started to wear lip-plate, we inherited from our grand-parents, and my mother was wearing lip-plate. In those past days the women with no lip-plate were not consider as 'beautiful' and woman could not get a husband. When the girl gets the right lip-plate, the young boy gives cows to her father and paying his bride wealth, he obtains his wife. While you are seating with your friends under the tree shade, your wife grinding and grinding and get ready meal. Then she puts on her lip-plate and serves you the food. When you have a guest, your wife boils coffee; she puts on her lip-plate and gives you and your visitors the coffee she prepared. The guest who sits besides you talk about your wife, and talk about the beautiful woman who served them the coffee. He asks weather the woman is Turko (mentioning his name) wife?' So it is beautiful to have such a wife. That is all what I can tell you."

When we look at the above discussions and personal observations wearing of lip-plates by Mursi women has fullest meaning and social reality to the Mursi women. On the other hand, advertisement and the image made on the lip-plates by different tourist media which creates different views to the tourists or the general public of Ethiopia to see the Mursi as 'backward' and 'undeveloped'.

### **3.4 THE ROLE OF GUIDES IN INTERACTION BETWEEN LOCALS AND TOURISTS**

According to McDonnell (2000:1) little has been written on the role of the tour guides in transferring cultural understanding of the tourists to the native population in most cases. Although the impression of culture that the tourists have to the locals has greater contribution in shaping the tourist interaction with the local people, the tour guide operation is likely to influence the level of satisfaction the tourist obtain from their tour experience. Geva and Goldman (1991:180), in their studies of Tourism in Israel pointed out that, "Tourists traveling to Europe and United States found that, the guide was the single most important factor in tour satisfaction by fostering social interactions." This seems to have great implication in the case of this research site.

When we analyze the social relationships of the native of south Omo and the tourists during the visit, the guides from Addis or Jinka have carried it out. The interview with the 73 tourists regarding the question they raise for explanation about the native culture at visited destinations revealed this fact. Sixty-six tourists were responded that the explanation of the native culture of south Omo made by the tourist guide or drivers whom they got from the tour operators in Addis Ababa, and the rest were said that the local guides from Jinka explained to them the native culture of south Omo. From the responses of the above mentioned tourists, it can clearly be understood that, the relationship between the tourists and the natives has been manipulated by the guides and drivers. And the guide was an important factor during their visit and they corrupt the native culture either for benefit or lack of knowledge (see: Appendix 4:fig6).

Pearce and Bulter (1981:63) states that "tourists are hungry to learn things, it's one of the main reasons they travel". This shows that, the tourists should find a guide who is familiar with and knowledgeable on all aspects of the host culture and who has some understanding of the culture of the guest to fulfill the demand from the tourist. In the case of the south Omo, the guides are from Addis Ababa and lack detailed understanding of the function and structure of cultures.

When we look at the interviews with fifteen guides from Addis and seven local guides from Jinka, regarding the 'formal' touring knowledge, five of the guides who accompanied the tourists from Addis and two local guides from Jinka attended one week training in Awaasa, the rest did not attend the 'formal' training for tour guiding. In particular, the knowledge of the host language that gives greater access to the host culture is not used by the interview guides from Addis and the local guides from Jinka who responded that, they don't speak anyone of the languages of the native properly. These shows the guides could not understand the way of life of the Mursi and their neighboring groups. Even though there were guides who know little about the area and the people, their experiences is obtained from the tourist guide materials as mentioned above and traveling experience they have for many years to the region.

Due to the mentioned factors those guides who accompanied the tourists to the Mursi people of south Omo have the difficulty of communications when they deal with the hosts and describe their cultures at the destination. As a result of this, it is usual to encounter a distortion of facts and guides who do not have detailed knowledge about the culture of the areas do fabrication of their own stories. Fabricated stories as if it was genuine or representing the local peoples explained by the guides to tourists. If the guides were native it would help the tourist to have accurate information. In the duration of my stay in Jinka Museum working as curator I had a chance to learn how the local guides are dishonest to the tourists, saying 'I am from Hamar or Mursi or from Ari and say I came here from tourist guides school. In fact they are not at all. I also observed in many occasions the tourists who had limited time in south Omo run here and there, were consulting me or other anthropologists in the area searching for 'honest' local guides who could explain the native culture 'very' well. It is rare that the tourist get guides who are responding to their demands and give the needed information.

At some stage in the field stay I also got a chance to examine a guide from Jinka who explained and introduced to his Italian guest the young Mursi man (Bechaye Mulu) whom I know very well working as a policeman in the village and has only one wife. But the guide told the visitors that, the policeman was the chief of the village and married 8 women. Moreover, some young villagers told me that, some guides usually tell the Mursi men to take off their clothes during the photo session to get extra money and an artificial Donga (stick fight) was asked for the tourists observed by the researcher.

Although those guides are playing greater role in mediating the native and the tourists and in facilitating the trips in south Omo, the discussion with Mursi from different villages, and two Hamar men in Jinka town revealed that, their attitude towards the tourist guides were unconstructive. The Hamar men told me that they have started to use the local guides to solve the problems. The Mursi key-informants with whom I made discussions do not like the 'Kuchumbai' (High-Landers) guides, mainly those guides who come from Jinka to their village. They explained that, the Mursi developed hatred and miss-trust towards the guide who comes to their villages. Their main reasons were that guides and driver who accompany the tourists are believed to be the ones who are blocking the economic benefits that the locals could get from the tourists and their weak ability to understand the locals during their visit.

In addition to this, Beyakoro a Mursi women whom I met in Jinka and know her for long time told me the following case, "You know my boy? Showing her 6 or 7 years old boy with her fingers, I went to visit to Jinka prison house to visit Bergha (mentioning a Mursi prisoner name), one of the guide from Jinka who dyed his hair with red color stolen my boy and went to the Orit hotel and told the haranchi (white visitors) my boy as if his own boy and had picture with him. He took all the money for himself with out giving a cent to my boy!" Her husband and two young married Mursi men who were sharing our discussion also indicated the local guides as the most troublemakers in their relationships with the white visitors.

As an example I quoted what Argawalo Bichena, a Mursi elder told me: "We get money form tourists. I like tourists. But they only give us 2,-ETB per photo. I think the tourist guide told them to give us not more than two birr. Otherwise who else could tell to the tourist not to pay us more

than two birr? That is why we often quarrel with tourist guides." In this case, it is usual to observe the quarrels between the local guides and the disappointed Mursi in their village or in one of Jinka hotels on their way to market or in search of tourists. I observed when the Mursi responding their disappointment with fighting, by showing their guns or sometimes taking away the property of the visitors.

The relationships of the tour guides with the natives led the natives to show unusual behaviours towards the visitors in the study area. The discussion with Bartwie and Oligulu Mursi young men from Mackki village indicated the following, "Couples of months ago the tourist car came to Mackki, they were taking our pictures, we asked them to give us 10,-ETB per image and the guide who came from Jinka told them not to pay us a penny. While they were walking to the car with out paying us we snatched their camera and hand language disappeared to the bushes. When the tourists come with out Kuchumbai guide (highlander guide) they give us up to 50,-ETB per photo." Relative to other groups in south Omo, the Mursi seem to bear the brunt of negative images. I have heard some of the guide present more negative images of the Mursi to tourists than they present of their neighboring groups.

Further more, a tourist guide from *Sora Tour Operators* based in Addis Ababa, negatively expressed his notion to the Mursi as follows, "Mursi means baboons! You should have camera at your back to control them. They are thief! I do not like them! The Hamar are shy and sociable. The Arbore think that they are superior to all the tribes of south Omo. I would like to cancel the trip to Mursi if it is not for tourists. But my visitors like to go to Mursi. They are aggressive. I like the Hamar. First of all the Mursi are not beautiful! I do not want to be there." Such biased understandings by the guides, about the local peoples have a negative impact on the native-tourist interaction and hinder the inter-cultural communication.

### **3.5 TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES**

Historically the existence of south Omo was obscured to the outside world before the arrivals of Emperor Minilik's troops to the area. The roads and types of transportation have hindered the contact between outside visitors and the native people of south Omo. However, the notion of 'periphery' to the region has been changed image to the area due to the increasing number of the

foreign travelers with their own reasons. From the seventy-three interviewed tourist, thirty-six of them showed the expensiveness of traveling to south Omo than traveling to the other sites in Ethiopia, especially to the Northern historical sites in which the tourists have various types of transportation and communication facilities.

As Hoven (1994:14) stated and the interviews with the tourists confirmed, all the range of foreign tourists who visit the south Omo make use of one of the 'Addis- Ababa-based' tour operators by 4WD or renting cars from Jinka either from the legalized NTO (National Tour Operator) or illegally from hotel owners who currently have been processing their license from the Zonal, Tourism, Parks and Hotel bureau to start local tour operations. The rest of travel made up of backpackers who use the public transport or truck transport and rare vacationing people who visit friends and relatives with their own means of travel. The backpackers are generally young tourists who traveling usually by themselves and use cheap accommodations and transport facilities.

Due to the scarcity of transportation and the high transportation cost from the illegal and legal organizations in the sector, the tourists who visit south Omo are required to organize themselves into groups to visit different places. Among the interviewed tourists the Spanish, French and Italian tourists who were traveling 10-16 in *Green Land* tour operator told me that they did not know each other before the trip, however; they came from the same residential locality or nationality. Only two married couples from Britain and an American tourist had a chance to make their tour by themselves.

From this, we can say that the mode of the transportation in south Omo give the tourists less opportunity they do in the Northern part of Ethiopia. It is understandable that walking gives the tourist the freedom to see the sight individually and to perceive the culture in detail manner. The interview with an Israeli teacher, 30 years old and back packer whom I met while he was visiting the south Omo Research Center's ethnographic museum, indicated his trip to North Ethiopia as I mentioned, "I and my friend first went to Lalibela. When I compare it with Jinka, I found that, it was easier to communicate to the locals to get pack animals in a trip. Nevertheless, everyone were competing each other to accompany you to the places, it was easier to hire animals and the

price we paid was sound. The person from whom we rented the donkeys toured us for three days, he was from the area and familiar with the places and he showed us how to roast barely.”

Even though the group visits to various parts of south Omo gave the opportunity to tourist to see many areas with in shorter vacationing period; the tourists at the destinations have no opportunity to test the native culture by themselves. In addition, I observed that touring with peers or with others influence and shape unique relationship and restrain the behaviour of the tourists who visit the Mursi village. When we compare the Mursi location with other parts of south Omo, during the rainy season it is impossible to reach Mursi land with the available 4WD. In addition to this, the bumpy and seasonal road, the unavailability of local markets in the area do not attract the businessmen to take tourists to Mursi land with the Isuzu cars which are the vital public transport in the region.

During the absence of tourists, it is strange to see any cars in Mursi villages, except the SIM missionary cars that live in Mackki village, and the infrequent visit of the government officials, occasional visit from anthropologists, African parks cars that pass through the main roads of the Mursi villages. If the Mursi want to come to Jinka (the Zonal town) for market or several reasons, they have to walk for two or three days or they should wait the whole day for a big truck which comes from Hanna woreda once a week and pay 20,-ETB per person for the service.

The interview with the government officials also confirmed the periodic absence of communication with the Mursi woreda like other woredas in south Omo. The interviews with the Zonal tourism sectors and the culture bureau officials’ show that, the inaccessibility to the Mursi and the Lower Omo are the main reasons for their inability to control the activities of tourists in the area. The culture bureau officials explained that sometimes they catch smuggled artifacts, which are national heritages by the illegal tourists who come from Kenya to Lower Omo valley.

In addition to this, during field stay in Mursi village, I had an opportunity to observe the difficulty of communication that the villagers in reaching the government officials to report the sudden epidemic that terrified the Mursi. During my third visit to the village, Legolege, the Maganto Police commander informed me about the mangiest epidemic breakout, which killed the large number of the Mursi in different villages until they got help from medical team from the

Jinka Zonal Hospital. In this regard, lack of transportation and communication facilities in the area not only hinder the development of tourism industry but also the over all social, cultural, economic and political development in the region, and influence the social well-being of the local people.

### **3.6 THE TOURIST- NATIVE INTERACTION**

The general understanding is that tourism involves a social and cultural contact between the tourists and the people at destination. With regards to this, Huziker (1994:10) defined tourism as the sum total of the relations and phenomenon, which result from traveling and visiting an area by non-residents. On the other hand Przeclawski (1998:95-96), regard tourism as "The sum of the phenomena pertaining to spatial mobility, connected with a voluntary, temporary change of place, the rhythm of life and involving personal contact with visited natural, cultural or social environments. From the above definitions and assumptions one can understand that tourism is a social phenomenon, which creates the social ties between the tourists led trip organizers, the guides and the local communities. In this way, the trip of tourists to the different parts of the world is not free from the 'intermediaries' who play a great role in the contact between the tourists and the community at the areas of destination, which promotes inter-cultural and sub-cultural communications.

The interviews and discussions with the seventy-three tourists regarding the general interactions they have with the native people of south Omo were identified as 'short' and 'little' conversations. While tourists were comparing the durations of the contact they have in terms of the ethnic groups, better contact was experienced with the Hamar and Banna ethnic groups than the Mursi villagers of south Omo. When we look at the kind of contact the tourists had during their trips to different places of south Omo, the tourists' involved in one of the following events:

Table 4: The types of interactions the tourist has in south Omo

| Types of interactions  | Number of tourists |
|--|--------------------|
| Buying of artifacts, directly from the native, the local markets of Benna and Hamar.                                     | 50                 |
| Buying of artifacts from the souvenirs.  | 23                 |
| Tasting of the native foods, in Ari and Benna villages.  | 2                  |
| Attend the bull jumping, prepared for the tourists in one of the Hamar or Benna villages.                                | 30                 |
| Bringing gifts such as school materials, toys, candies, T-shirts, beads, razorblades, and used plastic water containers. | 67                 |
| Taking pictures of the natives   | 70                 |

(Source: Interviews results from the 73 tourists).

From the table, one clearly understands that the relationships the tourists have with their host community in different destinations of south Omo and in Mursi, mostly experienced when the native sells the artifacts and the visitors take photographs or distributing their small gifts to the native. regarding sharing of foods, the tourists eat their own food or they have a cook from the tour operators from Addis Ababa. The tour operators based in Addis Ababa warned of dangers of eating with locals. Further more, the tourist who had a chance to eat in one of the hotel in Jinka think that 'injera' (bread made out of teff) as local food. According to Nabyo, Nagbu and Beyokori, young unmarried Mursi girls, sometimes tourists come to their houses during mealtime but the tourists are interested to take photo when the Mursi eat 'tilla' sorghum porridge or pretending as if they taste the food for having photo with the Mursi.

According to Van den Berghe (1980:379) who studied behavior between the visitors and visited of the Cuzco of Peru which is characterized by 'suspicion', 'distrusts', and 'hatred', more or less parallel conditions were found in the study of the interactions between the tourists and the Mursi people of south Omo, which is full of 'stress' and lacks the usual host-guest interactions. The personal observations on the tourists- native interactions in one of the Mursi village Maganto that is visited by the majority of tourists clearly shows the interactions between the tourist and the local people.

Sudden tourist car arrivals to the Mursi village were altering the daily life in to stress and chaotic but not more than 10-20 minutes. The women in a family busy in grinding sorghum for the daily meal or the for local beer preparation, left the grinding stone for a while and were busy in searching for their lip-plates and extra costume such as, the cooking pot, a basket full of sorghum, a bunch of dried Maize or Sorghum, or a pumpkin or a wild fruit. All women who pierced their lips wore the lip-plate and put on the additional costume on their head, or the wild fruits on their ears or on their pierced lip.

The young boys run here and there in search for colorful soils to decorate themselves, and decorate themselves with white chalk and yellow mineral rock, which is available in the surrounding. If this is not available they use ashes. Everybody try to get an attention of the tourists' face. The youngsters and children's touch the tourists with curiosity, asking for small gifts and shout for 'latica' (the empty highland bottle), 'milachi' (razor blade), 'caramelle' (candy). The woman put their artifacts such as lip-plates, and iron made bracelets on the hands of the tourists and asks weather the tourists like it to buy it or not.

The Mursi women usually display their half naked body as a 'modeling' and show the tourists, and shout again and again saying 'boto' 'boto' (photo), or show with their hands to their visitors who seemed not to understand their demand for pictures. The tourists select the young boys and girls who attract them and take pictures as much as they need or shot with the video cameras on the body of the Mursi who stand in front of them. The last minutes before the tourist departure are characterized by fights between the guides and the Mursi who usually count the flash from the camera of tourists and demand the equal amount. As I observed a group of Spanish and the Italian couples who decided to stay one day longer in the village, different from the usual visitors who leave immediately, spend extra amount of money, which is liked by the villagers. Their reason for the stay one night in the village was for filming more 'exotic' events with their video cameras. Those visitors observed while they ask to see the 'artificial' 'Donga' (stick- fight), the blood drinking session (the main diet of the Mursi men who stays live with herds), or when the women do body scarification with razor blade or knife which, in Mursi the woman usually does the scars, the men has slight scarifications than the women.

In relation to the interaction with the tourists, focus group discussions made with ten Mursi elders from the Maganto village. The elders shared similar views and explained that, they cannot be aware of those 'white' visitors who traveled long ways to their village do not like to stay after they took pictures. As an example, Haiwha kebele representative Zinabu Dorba who was participating in the discussion expressed his view with wonder like this, "Those old foreigners are good to us. They take photo and give our young girls two or three birr. In our village we do not quarrel with the guides or take the property of the tourist. But I cannot understand the reason why they return so quickly after traveling the long distances and pay huge amount of money only to see us! We want to see them to stay longer as they do it in our 'Donga' (stick-fight) or dancing ceremony." The interviewed elders highly interested to have interactions form the tourists who spend his/her money and come long ways to see them. Moreover, the discussions with ten young girls whom I met them in a tree shadow while they were waiting the tourists' car arrival have similar feeling with the elders. They told me that, it is impossible to share food or drinks with the tourists who always come to their village with the photo camera and busy in taking photographs.

Differential cases pointed out by different visitors to the region, indicates how the interaction between the tourists and the locals especially the Mursi, is affected. This can be investigated from the discussions of the visitors and the locals. The tourists, first of all come to the area with the information they obtained from the outside forces including the media and the operating organizations and the guides. The information from such sources could easily be manipulated and corrupted which affect the interactions and reluctance of tourists to share food and drink with the locals affect the promoting of the interaction. The begging of locals for money also seems to discourage the interaction. This can lead to negative impression.

Generally interviews and discussions show that, the relationships between the tourists and the Mursi people of south Omo have created miss-understandings between the local people and their visitors. The native people understand tourists come for short to take their pictures than a guest who come to understand the culture of the locals. As Abink wrote the relationship between the Suri people of south Omo with the tourists and quoted by Turton (2004:5), the interaction of the Mursi and the tourists has similar condition, i.e. "Confrontation" than a normal social interaction.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM (ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL) IN SOUTH OMO**

As it stated in the work of Burns (1999:15), it is not an easy task to think tourism separately and to make generalization on the socio-economic impacts on society. It is part of the broader process of 'modernization' that causes the specific impact on tourism and tourists on culture. Parallel circumstances also presented on the study of the existing impacts of tourism in the Mursi people of south Omo, because of their present-day incorporation to the Ethiopian state and the unavailability of the base data that shows the community before and after tourism activities, which make the study difficult to see an entire and all-inclusive analysis on the impacts of tourism. For that reason, this chapter includes different views to assess the impacts of tourism in the study area i.e. south Omo in general and the Mursi in particular.

### **4.1 ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF TOURISM**

Van den Berghe (1989:10) in his book 'Quest for the other', that is concerned with ethnic tourism in Chiapas Mexico makes observations about the relationships between tourists and local people. He elaborates six main characteristics for tourist-host interactions. He says tourism have the following advantages, but also disadvantages for the host communities:

- 1 Creating Jobs
- 2 Improving balance of payments
- 3 Capital investment and infrastructure development
- 4 Increase of government revenues
- 5 Stimulation of employment
- 6 Entrepreneurial

#### **A. Creating Jobs in the area**

When we look at the economical benefits of tourism in the area, tourism generates different jobs particularly for the young people. Tourism provided informal jobs and wages to the people who participates in the tourism sector. From the beneficiaries' point of view, tourism creates income

to the local guides, which helps them to improve the living standard of many youngsters in Jinka. Tourism also helps to create jobs a number of people who are working in more than four big hotels and in a number of small hotels and in newly opened lodges outside Jinka town. However, these facilities are not owned by the native peoples. The only income source for the natives is the sell of artifacts and a payment for photographs. Other than these, the natives are not generating much amount of income, which could improve their living standards. More beneficiaries from the sector seem to be the individuals and organizations that are engaged in the service sectors related to tourism.

### B. Creating Income for the museum

The South Omo Research Center established in Jinka town and officially opened on March 2001. The Center has an ethnographic museum and able to collect and displays materials objects of more than ten ethnic groups as well as an ethnographic films. Since its opening it has been visited by the general public and the tourists from different countries around the world. The South Omo Research Center tourist information records indicate that in year 2006 more than three thousands foreign tourist visited the Center. Since October 2006 center increased its entrance fees from 10 to 20, -ETB per person from the visitors and currently the center offered employment opportunity for 17 persons, who belong to local groups.

Table: 5 Number of employed persons in South Omo Research Center (SORC) based on the types jobs they are engaged in.

| <b>Job Description</b> | <b>Total Workers</b> |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Curator                | 1                    |
| Secretary              | 1                    |
| Museum attendant       | 2                    |
| Foreman                | 4                    |
| Reception              | 1                    |
| Guard                  | 3                    |
| Kitchen staff          | 3                    |
| Museum cleaner         | 2                    |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>17</b>            |

### C. Provides a new market for the Ari women

Some Ari women get income from the tourists by selling their Bartsi (locally made wall paintings). Anthropologists Sophia Tubovile has started the project from the South Omo Research Center. The center supported the project by creating a good environment for painting in the holidays along with providing space to build a small house to display and sell their paintings and postcards next to the center. The project created a small amount of monthly income for nine women who earned their living by selling firewood and locally made alcohol 'arqie'. The women run the business and the researcher helps them to create further income by promotion work as well as making successful exhibitions in Addis Ababa and abroad. This can be one of the cases regarding the importance of tourism in the income generation activities.

### D. Creating an income for the government

Generally, tourism helps the regional government by providing revenues, which are collected, from private tour operators and the car rental by NTO and car entrance fee from the parks. The South Omo Tourism, Parks and Hotel Desk in Jinka have given the following income for the government through tourists. It was gathered from Hoteliers, Mago Park, and the Jinka Municipality:

Table 6: The flow of tourists in south Omo and revenues earned

| Year          | Tourists    |              | Income collected in Birr |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|               | Ethiopian   | Foreigners   |                          |
| 2004          | 1,949       | 1930         | 3595,307                 |
| 2005          | 3075        | 7367         | 1,288,915                |
| 2006          | 3,222       | 9,659        | 1,505,381                |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>8246</b> | <b>18956</b> | <b>6,389,603</b>         |

(Source: Tourism, Parks and Hotel Desk, December, 2006)

The interviews with the government officials who are concerned with tourism, from the above stated amount of income the greater amount goes to the private organization and the regional government absorbs the rest. The Zonal government only gets small proportions of the above stated income i.e., from the car entrance fee by Municipality of Jinka town. This benefit is not helping the Zonal government to achieve plan that is proposed to achieve the infrastructural 'development', such as roads, pump water and a health station to the local community. Besides, tourism stimulated capital investments in south Omo from investors or by outsiders or foreign investors who have started to open local tour operators, souvenirs lodge and hotels and restaurants. There are also two private investors working their licenses to get an eco-tourism lodge in different parts of south Omo. One Italian investor has already started eco-tourism lodge in one of the Ari village and will be finishing the restaurant building in the new Ethiopian Millennium.

The impact of tourism will not be uniform, it will vary widely within and between communities; taking this sixty villagers in Maganto village have been interviewed in Mursi to measure their economic gains from tourism. The villagers measured their economic benefits from tourists based on the tangible benefit from the tourists, through the cash income. According to the villagers, the community generally gets cash income from the tourists by three different ways: selling their pictures, selling small artifacts and the car entrance fee of different villages. In addition to this occasional visit from the tourist, photographers and journalists generate an income during 'Donga' (stick) fights. According to my key- informants Hailu and Legolege, Donga (stick fight) is normally undertaken once a year time during the rainy season. All sex and gender come to the village which is selected to prepare Donga. As Hailu tries to explain it, "Dong for us just looks like 'Jinka's Saturday market' because it gathers all Mursi in to one place." Donga has its own rule. It has songs which praises the Donga hero. The one who won the fight considered as a hero. It is also a place where men can select out his future wife as well as the women testifies the future husband. The prices for items sold to the tourists as follows:

Table 7: Economic benefits from tourism in terms of Items and price.

| Item                                       | Price in Birr                        |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Pictures                                   | 2, -ETB per picture                  |
| Debie (lip-plate made out of clay)         | 10, -ETB                             |
| Lalanga (iron-made bracelets)              | 5, -ETB                              |
| Garchu (hand –woven basket)                | 50-200, -ETB, depending on the sizes |
| Say (skirt made out of leather)            | 300-1000, -ETB                       |
| Backacha (milk container made out of wood) | 10-20, -ETB                          |
| Car entrance fee to the village            | 50, -ETB per car                     |

(Source: Interview with the 60 Mursi villagers in Maganto, Mackki and Moizo as well as focus group discussion in Maganto)

Even if the income by tourism is only small, the Mursi informants stated the following benefits:

A. **Food security:** Mursi households are vulnerable to draught as rainfalls are highly variable. The small amounts of casual income from tourism reduce the vulnerability of drought. According to the elders the money from the tourists decreases the exchange of cattle for grain at time of crop failure. The cash income earned from tourism is often used for purchasing grains particularly in dry years from Jinka or Ari markets.

B. **Payment of bride-wealth:** According key-informants, in Mursi the young men has to pay 36 to 38 cattle and one automatic rifle to the bride's father to get his future wife. The money from the tourist's is seen by the young men with whom I made an interview to help them in buying additional stocks and to pay their bride-wealth. By that way, the money helps to shorten the duration of marriage for Mursi men, as they can attain necessary cattle faster with the help of money from tourism. According to Bulachobri Mulu, one of the key-informants witness that the money from the tourist photo and selling of some artifacts helped him to buy calves which added to his payment to the bride wealth and soon he can take a girl from Mackki village.

C. **Other security:** The money from tourists helps to buy medicine for livestock, to take sick family members to Jinka Hospital as well as to buy agricultural tools. According to key informants Legolege and Betongya, in former times the Mursi are forced to wait until they get help from the government side. This was what I observed in months of October and November

2006 when the meningitis epidemic killed many lives in Mursi. One of my informants Bulachobri Mulu and other three Mursi young school boys went to Jinka Hospital and survived. Latter on they told me that they used the money from the tourists to pay for transportation and the hospital.

**D. Payment of household and beauty decoration:** The women get money from tourists by selling their pictures and small artifacts. The money helps them to buy: household utensils such as plastic water containers (Jeri cans), iron-made pots, spices (salt, pepper); while the young girls purchase beads and iron-made bracelets for decoration.

**E. To tackle water scarcity:** The village assigned an old man to collect money form cars as entrance fee to their villages. They plan with this collective income to dig additional water wheels to get water for their cattle in time of draught. The interviewed elders said that, they got this idea of saving the communal money after they participated in the workshop, which was prepared by the South Omo Research Center in the month of December 2005.

The interviews result with the seventy-three tourists and the Zonal government officials, the Mursi villages as well as the Mago National Park get huge number of visitors. Although the area has retained greater flows of tourists, the benefits to the local from tourism are insignificant. This can be clearly seen from the underdeveloped road, as well as the lack of other facilities such as the unavailability of veterinary services and a health center, in sufficient water wheels and markets which are the prioritized needs by the interviewed villagers. The bigger economic benefits go either to hoteliers, private tour operators, the Ethiopian Airlines who charges (560,- ETB for Ethiopians and 1000,-ETB for foreigners), or to the regional government and leaving the local populations only with small benefits, from selling pictures and cultural items.

#### **4.2 DIFFERENCES IN THE DIVISION OF ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES**

Observing the involvement in tourism the youth are active participants in the sector. In Mursi active groups are, young girls who wear lip-plates and young herdsmen. Old people do not participate in tourism activities such as taking photos and this don't have any economic advantages. This was clearly explained by old Mursi women and old men with whom I made interviews. Moreover, the observations on the participation of the villages in tourism are

dependent on how far they are located from the Zonal town, Jinka. The villages near by Jinka which are accessible by road get lots of visitors, while the villages which are located to the south parts of Mursi like, Dara and Bongoso that are inaccessible by the tourists' cars do not gain the above mentioned economic advantages. This fact can be clearly understood in the interview made with Turko Legolege, an elder and the chief of the Dara village. He explained that his people are beneficiaries neither from the tourists nor from the government due to their location. The current efforts from the government to build new houses for formal schooling and health stations as well as the mobile schoolhouses built by USAID/PACT Ethiopia were directly related to the tourists' visit. The discussion and personal observations reveal that, tourism creates benefit big gaps between the youth and the old people and the villagers which are accessed by the tourists' cars and those which are not.

### **4.3 COMMERCIALIZATION AND THE STAGED AUTHENTICITY OF CULTURE**

Based up on results of the interviews with local people government officials, hoteliers in Jinka, local guides and anthropologist specialized in south Omo, this section will present the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in south Omo generally and the study area particularly. Some tourism activities focused around local culture can help strengthen pride in traditions. According to key-informants (Mulu, Legolege and Hailu), other Ethiopians consider the Mursi people as 'backward'. But since the visit of the tourists as well as other foreigners to Mursi-land the people get more attention than before. Tourism gives power to the Mursi by creating the self-esteem to be included in the Ethiopia state.

However, tourism can turn local cultures into commodities when religious rituals, traditional ethnic rites and festivals are reduced and sanitized to conform to tourist expectations. Once a destination is sold as a tourism product, and the tourism demand for souvenirs, arts, entertainment and other commodities begins to exert influence, basic changes in human values may occur. Sacred sites and objects may not be respected when they are perceived as goods to trade (UNEP, 2002). According to key informants as well as observation from the field shows, extra costume, body decoration, additional decoration of material objects, an artificial 'Donga' (stick-fight) in Mursi and 'bull-jumping' in Hamar; which are mainly for the tourist are created

'commoditization' of the native culture. Strecker (1995:205) indicated that, "Bull-Jumping, is the "Hamar rite of passage'. The Hamar young man unless he does bull-jumping he can't call 'bargo' (luck) for his family. The young man lack of 'bargo' signifies that, he is 'immature', 'deficient' or generally 'sexually unclean'. If a young men want to become 'clean' and 'acceptable' members of the society he has to purify himself by performing the bull-jumping" that is mainly for the tourists are created 'commoditization' of the native culture.

The interview results with three anthropologists from south Omo, Ivo Strecker, Jean Lydall and Sophia Tubovil, shows that due to the arrivals of tourists to the area the 'commercialization' of the native culture has been increasing. According to Jean Lydall (2006, pers comm.) "In Hamar, where there are markets, people make artifacts to sell, and where they also dress up for tourist photos; it is becoming the custom now to look for tourists to attend artificially staged 'leap across the cattle' rituals in exchange for money. Otherwise, life goes on as usual. Tourism is not an important source of income but rather like a lottery which can sometimes bring a windfall. For the Mursi on Bulat Hill (referring to those Mursi who have recently started to live in Jinka) tourism is becoming a livelihood, but they are exception"

In confirmation of Lydal's observation, I have seen an interesting entrepreneurial dimension among the Mursi, where, for example, an individual who has just had money for a photo of his decorated face will disappear and quickly re-emerge with a new decoration unrecognized by the tourist who had previously taken his photograph. In this kind of interaction it is likely that to the tourist all the Mursi look the same and the Mursi cleverly use this to their advantage to extract as much money as possible from any one tourist. In relation to this entrepreneurial staging of culture, I should relate the occasion in Maganto village when a male Spanish tourist refused to pay a Mursi friend for a photograph in which the Mursi wanted me to join in pose. The Mursi replied that he did not want any money for the photograph and that he simply wished me to be in the photo with him and that the tourist should promise to send us a copy of the photo. The tourist promised to send the photo and so we exchanged addresses but thus far no photo has been sent to me.

The interactions of the tourists with the local people which have brought the commercialization of the native culture which created a new phenomenon in south Omo. The interviews with the government officials show that, even if it is good to get a large sum of money from the tourists and visitors in the area, the local community develop commercialization of its cultural ceremonies to other people who are not tourists and interested to deal with the culture. These situations often observe with the journalists and other people who come from the regional offices to the area. On November 2006, I met sixteen groups who came from the Culture and Heritage bureau from Addis Ababa. Their aim was in collaborations with the Zonal culture bureau to document the cultural heritage of the groups of south Omo. They also raised the issue in relation to their activities. As the teams who have been to different places of the pastoralists and agro pastoralists' area explained it, it was difficult to access the information from the local people. Even if they could get a chance to attend the native festivals such as bull jumping, they were asked to pay the same amount of money as the tourist pay. They said the native have been communicating with outsiders in terms of money. This shows that, the impossibility for government and other institutions to document cultures with out paying the high prices of tourists.

#### **4.3.1 DEPENDENCE ON TOURIST MONEY**

Even if most of the interviewed Mursi villagers do not like to speak about negative impacts of tourism, the observations from the field as well as other interviews show that tourism has created dependency attitude from the local people of south Omo. Two government officials, Ato Demo and Ato Sintayehu who are form Benna and Hamar pointed out that, the issue of dependency during interviews. They said that, in relation to tourists in south Omo and their visit to the markets in Benna and Hamar, some villagers have started to walk the long way from their homesteads to the markets decorated in the 'tourist' way and collect the 'photo' money from the visitors. The officials also raised the current flows of the young Mursi men and women to Jinka has been creating problem, those Mursi standing in front of the hotels compound creates difficulty for the visitors as well as to the Mursi who are miss- treated by the hotels owners and their guards and the local guides. Offensive behaviours are usually observed from the people who live in Jinka town towards Mursi visitors to the town. This was clearly observed from the hotel

and room service that the Mursi only get from Abebe Woldeargaye Hotel which is located near to the market area (see: Appendix:4 fig5).

Because of the increasing number of tourists in Mursi, three villages are constructed on the way to Mago National Park. These constructions have been changed from the seasonal to permanent villages. This makes the villagers to live a sedentary life in some seasons, which makes dependant on the tourists' money; tourism is a livelihood for those villagers. An interview with Oligidange a Mursi elder in Addis Ababa shows that, especially during the dry seasons (su so), which is common to the other villagers to cultivate in Alma River, those people who live near to the bridge (deldela villagers) wait tourists and use the money to buy grains from Ari and Jinka markets. As a result of the increase number of tourists constructions of houses have increased than before in this area.

Besides this village far away from the Zonal town Jinka 30- 40Kms and makes the villagers often to come to Jinka when they hear information of tourists' arrival to Jinka. In November 2006, I saw thirty Mursi villagers form 'shambal' or 'diledella' arrived in Jinka. This was the biggest number I saw since I know Jinka for more than five years. I made an interview with the village chief Shambal to know the reason, he responded for my question that, due to unexpected rains the number of tourists who come to the village decreased that was the reason for all those Mursi came to Jinka (see: Appendix: 4fig7).

For the period I have been in Maganto village, I was observing the Mursi young girls who were sitting in the tree shade and wait the tourists' cars. The informal discussions with five young men who have joined the informal education by USAID/ PACT Ethiopia, shows that sometimes they leave their herds and wait the tourists' cars on the main roads or when the tourist's car arrives to our village they leave the school and go to the tourists. In addition to this, two teachers from Dime, Ato Onyo and Ato Amagu who have been teaching in the USAID mobile school in Mangato village more than two years explained that, sudden tourist car arrivals to Maganto village disturb the normal learning process. The students usually leave the class and follow the tourists to get photograph money. In the peak tourist seasons (November, December and January) attracts youngsters to come to the school but they thorough away the school materials and return

back when the number of visitors decreases (see Appendix 4 fig8).

All the discussions and observations show that, tourist and tourism activities in the area make the local community to be dependant on tourist money and change the normal way of living conditions as it was not before.

#### **4.3.2 GROWTH IN ALCOHOLISM**

From the discussion and personal observations made the consumption of a local alcoholic drink (arqie) has been increasing in south Omo. Currently, the use of arqie (locally made liquor) has been observed in festivals of the native peoples such as in the marriage, mourning and other rituals ceremony in several parts of south Omo. The coming of new markets, the opening of small drinking houses and traders by an outsider and the public transportations in some areas could create an easy accessibility of the drinks. When we look at the conditions of the Mursi there are no markets in the area, however, the discussion with the key-informants Legolege and Betongya, the use of arqie have been practicing by the villagers. The elders told me that, especially the Mursi who are living after the bridge and near to Jinka are practicing this act. This was observed the event while I was visiting the 'shamble' village which is around 30-40 Km from Jinka in the month October 2006 the drunken Mursi young men fighting badly and brought about a more chaotic atmosphere.

Further more, I saw five young men from the village where I have been, were preparing themselves for three days journey to bring arqie from Jinka market. The interviewed elder also agreed that on the main sources of the money to buy the alcohol drink was from the tourists. From the observations I found that the liquor creates undesirable behaviour from the young men who seemed do not want to respect the elders. Moreover, the newly spreading habits by the men are creating unhappy moment to the visitors in the villages. For example, the drunken young men rush to their gun towards the tourist drivers by asking extra money. They beg for everything and fight each other. Besides this, the discussion with the tourists guides clearly shows that their visits the Mursi villages which are constructed to create an accessible to the visitors during the wet seasons, was impossible in the afternoon due to the drunken behaviour of the Mursi Men.

According to Sophia Tubovil who has been working with the Maale people of south Omo for six years and has contact with the tourists who visit the South Omo Research Center ethnographic museum, it is hard to see the positive impacts of tourism in south Omo. I quoted the conversation as follows: " At the moment I can nearly only see the bad impacts. People spending their money from the pictures for drinks and have to stand in front of the tourists, who come for a short time, take pictures and go. There is no discussion and contacts between locals and tourists. The locals see it only as a kind of getting 'fast money for pictures."

#### **4.3.3 INTER GENERATION CONFLICT AND BEGGING**

Tourism has brought undesirable behaviour to south Omo and to Mursi. The key informants accuse the young male and female villagers for their 'troublesome' activities during the tourist's arrival. The elders said that those youngsters disturb and ask too much and show unwanted behaviours towards tourists, which create bad moment to the tourists during visiting. These elders said that the elders do not prefer these acts from the youngsters' however, the youngsters do not want to listen what their elders tell. The interview made with Professor Ivo Strecker, an anthropologist, also shows the undesirable activities by those young people creating the generations in to two. The youngsters who run after the tourists' and the old people who live in their normal social settings. As he said "people incorporate tourism in their social life i.e. in Hamar tourist's finance and offered the leap over the cattle but the local divided into those who rush to meet tourists and those who keep a distance.

Furthermore, among the interviewed tourists, fifteen tourists raised this issue and explained that, they were asked two or three times by the young Mursi men who had gun to stop before reaching in to the village and they had to make pictures and pay. All the interviewed tourists shared a general view that they are bored in all destination of south Omo because of 'too much asking' for small gifts such as an empty plastic water bottles, candy and pen and all their trip belongings from the local people which was too much and not expected by them on the pre-visit of south Omo.

In addition to this, the discussion with three outsiders, W/o Yeshe Gebyehu, Ato Mankule Seme and Hansallaqa Gabehu who was born and up brought in different places of south Omo know the local people more than 70 years. Ato Demo Bezabhi and Ato Mamomo Mala and W/o Kassetch, who are from the local people and currently working in governmental offices in Jinka, raised the seriousness of the issue. The increase of the undesirable behaviors from the native which is directly related to the increasing flow of tourists in the area and their contacts with foreigners who come with small gifts which are not fitting with the needs of the area makes small children's who follow their cattle to leave their cattle and come up-to the main roads to ask these small gifts and the visitors have started to give everything to make the children's happy, some times they give the used tooth brush or the used blade. These persons agreed on that these activities were not seen before in the native cultures. Generally, these activities can be observed by some one who makes traveling either with the public transport or with the other vehicles from Arba Minch to Jinka to observe the small children who show different actions to stress out that it leads children and young people to begging instead of working and ask gifts.

#### **4.3.4 SEX TOURISM**

The interviews with government officials, hoteliers in Jinka, local guides, guides from Addis Ababa and Sago, Benna men who lives in Hamar revealed that, sex tourism has been increasing in the Hamar village, Turimi, which is visited by tourists. The two Hamar man told me that, the existing problem is not only affecting the woman but also their young men who has started greater attitude to 'sleep' with 'white' woman which unusual in the local community before.

Ato Demo Bezabhi culture and information bureau official in south Omo and is from Benna ethnic group explained the increase like this, " When I was in grade 12 I read 'Evangadi' a book named by the Hamar name which literary means 'Night dance party' by Fikermarkos Desta. This book together with his three novels were originally written in Amharic and officially translated to English in a year 2004 which is entitled as "The Land of The Yellow Bull". The author described 'evangadi' as a place where sexual intercourse is common and frequent. However, evangadi has different meaning for us (mentioning Beena, Kara and Hamar), 'Ivan' means night and 'gadi' means dancing. The function of the evening dance is enjoyment and not sexual intercourse. All

age groups and sexes are allowed to come and participate in this dance. Besides, 'evangadi' gives the freedom to the young people to know each other through the dance and creates secret moment to those fiancés to do what they would like to with out the knowledge of their parents. It is like in towns where boyfriends and girlfriends meet and enjoy themselves in a cafeteria. In my assumption that beginning with this book on, we have started to see attitudinal changes from those who read or heard about the book .Now they are looking at as pastoralists with the writer's view. At that time we complained but no one reacted. I know those foreign anthropologists married to the local people but the tourists are doing this in different forms. The tourists see 'evangadi' (dancing) in a wrong way, so that, HIV infection is increasing in Turimi (Hamar). In my understanding this book is the main cause for what is happening in the area."

On the other hand, Ato Ephrem Gezahge the manger of the Orit Hotel and the Tribal touch tour operator who has been working in Jinka for the last twenty years mentioned another view on the spreading of sex tourism in Turimi. According to him, the guides and the drivers are the main drives for sexual intercourse. He explained his view as follows, "It is the fault of the drivers and guides who come from Addis Ababa. The guides and drivers who think that, they have done fever by providing Hamar women to this activity. Due to this, those local guides who are joined to work with me have started to refuse to take extra tent during trips especially when they travel with female tourists. They would like to be in one tent with them."

#### **4.3.5 ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES**

The interviews made with the culture bureau and tourism bureau officials and police men show that, in relation to the activities of tourism in south Omo illegal activities such as theft, illegal car rental services and act of tour operators have been increasing. Due to this they are not able to control the illegal activities, and from the tour operators and illegal local guides who create tense moments in the area. The culture bureau officials and Ato Dage said that, "Even if the tour operators bring legal visitors to south Omo, they do illegal activities. Currently, those tour operators who come to Jinka town take pictures of people of the ethnic groups with out the knowledge of the native and put on their car and coming to the area doing the activities even with out the knowledge of the people leave with their cars" In addition to this Ato Mamo Mala

Tourism Parks and Hotels Desk an acting Head explained the situation as follows, "From the past up to the present day the activities of tourism end up in the hands of the local guides. None of the tour operators or the tourists came to our office to ask our professional help. We can not stop the illegal activities"

The illegality of tourism activities in south Omo also affects the organizations that run their business in the area. The seriousness of the illegality activities clearly explained by Ato Worku Sintayehu Manager of the NTO (National Tour Operators) as follows, "As we all know tourism is 'a peaceful industry' but the activities that we have observed in Jinka are illegal. Our office provides legal services, we provide quality cars and charge a fixed rate of 118 USD per 100Km, and pay 15% VAT to the government. Due to illegal car rental services from the hoteliers our business is not successfully. It is not that we do not like completion, but those people who rent bad quality cars do not have fixed prices and they use the local guides to spread rumors that, we charge more than they take. The responses of the Tourism Parks and Hotels Desk officials on the existing problems are not satisfactory. Those officials are not professionals and take the issue as personal that is why the mentioned illegal activities have been increasing. Our office sends seven local guides to the regional town Awassa to attend two weeks training by the hotels and tourism desk. However, after the guides got the training the bureau did not follow up their activities. Thus, they still don't behave towards the tourists.

Presently, the owners of two hoteliers in Jinka processing their licenses from the Tourism Bureau, but those local tour operators do not employ workers on a permanent basis, instead of this they employ the government drivers and illegal guides on daily basis or simply undertaking the job by themselves with out professional knowledge. They do not want to give job opportunities to the locals or paying the amount of tax to the government. They would like to monopolize the business. These activities oppose the idea of tourism, i.e., tourism should be 'labor intensive'. Some tourists to come to our office after their trip and forwarded their complain that the amount they paid for a car was too much and that their personal belongings were stolen by guides from those local tour operators. After their trip they also did not get any chance to complain to the car owners." Similar reports from tourists on illegal activities have been increasing, the two police officials, Sagen Mandefero and Abebaw told me that, with in two

weeks they found two bags one full of Korean money and the other bags with trip equipments. They also said that due to the increase of 'white' visitors to Jinka town, young people from the neighboring towns such as Arba Minch, Wolyta and Konso come to Jinka to profit from tourism.

#### **4.3.6 IMPACTS ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE LOCAL GUIDES**

Many youths would like to guide tourists around south Omo. But guiding tourists' changes their behaviour. Through interviews made with two hoteliers Ato Ephrem Gezahege and Ato Tefri Kebde who are in good terms with local guides told me, the tourists help many of young local guides with school materials as well as cover their living expenses in Jinka. Moreover, fifteen youth currently got sponsors to continue their education at college level in Addis Ababa. However, the interviews with those persons and some civil servants in Jinka town as well as my personal observation show that, the young guides get a large sum of money without doing any jobs. During the tourist peak season drop outs from school increases, as many pupils want to make 'fast money' as guides. These results in wrong views on the amount of money 'white' people have and in lack of the value for the money they attain with out work. The money they get from tourists also pushes young schoolboys to frequent bars, gambling and chewing chat.

#### **4.3.7 THE BEHAVIOUR OF TOURISTS FROM AN ETHICAL POINT OF VIEW**

In this sub section the study applies the global code of ethics of tourists who are traveling worldwide in dealing with the impacts of tourism, which results from the behaviour of the tourists who visit the people of south Omo. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), in its global codes ethics for tourists in article no.2, stated that, "Tourists activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and in respect for their laws, practices and customs" (1999:1) This principle points out the necessity of respecting the host countries norms and values by the tourists while they are traveling to different parts of the world. If this principle is followed, the concept of 'sustainable' tourism i.e., tourism by the people for the people will be realized in the tourism sector of a host country.

The discussion with seventy-three tourists who have been to the various destinations of south Omo and conducted the interviews with different Mursi villagers regarding their interactions, the responses from both sides regarding the interactions were characterized as 'photo- based' interaction i.e. tourists take pictures and local people sell their pictures. Although, taking pictures has been mentioned as the means of interactions between the tourist and native, the answer from the Mursi key informants show that this interaction was broken frequently by those travelers who are not following the ethics of tourists. The villagers explained that those 'white' visitors always has his or her camera while they were driving to their territories or walking around their villages and take pictures with out their permissions.

Hamar women attending a workshop on tourism at the South Omo Research Center in Jinka in December 2005 stated the same problem. The women complained in a conversation with Anthologist Jean Lydall about tourists taking unwanted photographs: "Tourists should not photograph at the market. They must get our permission first. We don't want tourists cheating us, saying they are shooting the sky, or the camera doesn't work. They should speak to us first, and if agree, we can go away from the market to a place where they can take our photos" (see: South Omo Research Center Newsletter, Vol.1.2006).

Generally, the interviewed Mursi villagers shared the stated view. The Mursi informants explained that, the tourists stop their cars' while they drive through their territories wherever they see them and take pictures of their women, their children and the men who are walking with their herds without their permission. They also said that, those tourists sometimes, after taking the pictures from the roadside and quickly without paying the local people. In the discussions Mursi young men and women explained the that, there are visitors who turn off the flash light of the photo cameras and pretend as if their camera does not work or as if they shoot houses or the landscapes, but instead turn their cameras towards themselves and take people pictures.

From personal observations during my stay in Maganto village, I can tell that several times the tourist's car arrives to the village; tourists jump out of their 4WD and started taking pictures of Mursi women without the permission of them. I observed how the women approached the tourists and tried to negotiate for the price by saying 'boto, boto ten, ten' (10,-ETB per picture).

Afterwards, they told me that they would like to negotiate the price per pictures first before the tourists start their shooting. The women would also like to protect themselves from those tourists who make pictures from particular body parts for example, the pierced lips, ears, the young men eyes the scars of the women and the breast or their small children without their permission and pay those two birr only. Bartwi, Bargha and Oligulu young Mursi villagers from Mackki also told me that they heard that a tourists who took the pictures of naked women and paid her 300,-ETB, but latter on this act from the tourist were highly criticized by the villagers and they did not hear this actions again. They said that, it is usual of the tourists to request young men to take off their clothes during the photo ceremony. And they said as a man they do not mind to take off their clothes but for their woman it is impossible to do this.

Furthermore, guides and drivers from Addis Ababa I interviewed them at Jinka museum shared views about the tourists with whom they have been traveling to different parts of south Omo with them. They said that, their customers prefer to make pictures of necked body of the local people to take off the flashlights of the photo cameras or sometimes do not pay money to the local people. All these 'unnecessary' behaviours have created unpleasant relationships between the Mursi people and guides. Some of those guides tried to teach tourists, but those tourists did not pay any attention to their comments. One driver who worked as a guide told me his experience as follows:

I took two tourists to the nearby Ari villages (Yetnebersh) yesterday. They were taking pictures of people and the landscapes. None of the villagers asked them to pay. Today we drove around Jinka town, when we saw two Mursi women around the Market place, and I was asked by the tourists to stop the car. The tourists were making pictures after pictures of the Mursi women who were buying clothes, and suddenly the Mursi women recognized what was done by the 'ferengi' (white men). They came to collect the money for the photo. After long discussions the tourists paid half of the cash money. While I drove them to the Museum, one of my guests told me that, she forgot to take the camera which doesn't has the flash light and was adjusted to the Mursi trip. As I understood from the conversation, she brought the camera from the pervious day visits to the Ari villages.

I found out that, this traveler filmed with their video cameras in the village that was identified as the photo cameras by most villagers. Further more, those travelers did not consult the villagers before filming or did not pay enough cash money. Hence, the above-mentioned examples reveal that the tourists who travel to Mursi villages as well as to other destinations of south Omo often show behaviour, which is ignoring the 'norm' of the destinations cultures. Because of the unethical behaviour of tourists the relationship between the Mursi people and the tourists has an exploitive nature.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL VIEWS OF TOURISM; STAKE HOLDERS INTERVIEWS**

This section aims to show different categories of persons who have direct and indirect relationships with tourism and the various views on the existing tourism activities and the behaviour of the tourists in the area its impacts as well as the future prospects of the sector in south Omo. The views of those 'intermediary' such as private sector, the managers of ten tour operators eight from Addis and two from Jinka, four hoteliers in Jinka, four local guides and five guides who are working in different tour operators which are based in Addis Ababa, the government officials especially the tourism and culture bureau and the Jinka municipality officials and three anthropologists who know the area very well were interviewed. Finally, the attitude of the local community also presented.

### **5.1 INTERVIEW RESULTS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

Discussions were held with Ato Nigatu Danssa, the Vice Administrator of south Omo, Ato Mamo Mala, an acting head of the Tourism, Parks and Hotel Deck of south Omo, Ato Alemayehu Mleake a literature expert of tourism bureau in Jinka, Ato Israel Melka a mayor of Jinka Municipality and Ato Demo Bezabhie the head of south Omo Zone Information and culture department. The aim of this interview was to assess the views of the officials who have relationships with the topic and to assess their general views of tourism in south Omo.

All the interviewed government officials have good attitude towards tourists and the existing tourism activities in south Omo. They believed that tourism is a short cut in fostering the infrastructures development of the Zonal town, Jinka and the local community in general. Regarding the behaviours of the tourists except the above-mentioned impacts, 'the tourists are legal travelers who come to enjoy either to see the local cultures or the wild life in the Mago or Omo Parks.' The discussion with the above mentioned government officials regarding the future development of tourism activities in the area; they discussed and proposed the following solutions to tackle the existing problem.

### **1. New policy formulation**

There should be a new policy, which makes the Zonal government to retain the benefits from tourism. However, south Omo has greater flows of tourists the major income from the National Parks and the game safari goes to the regional government. The Zonal government gets small economic benefits, which is mentioned in the above section. The Zonal officials currently have started to discuss the issues with the representatives of the regional tourism bureau to formulate new tourism policy that will bring changes towards the current status of tourism in the area. According to the tourism and culture bureau officials, the responses from the regional bureau is found to be positive.

### **2. Budget and training**

The discussion with the officials from the Tourism, Parks and Hotels Desk has mentioned the importance of timely professional training for the staff members and enough amount of budget is necessary to make the office more active in promotion work as well as to control illegal activities from tourism, such as illegal car rental services, illicit of heritages, and an illegal entrance of tour operators in the area.

### **3. The collaborations of the tourism bureau and the culture bureau**

Since its establishments the bureau of Tourism has been working under different departments. This division was made to facilitate the collection of income from the tourism sector. Even if from the year 2007 the Tourism bureau reestablished and named as Tourism, Parks and Hotels Desk of south Omo, the new desk is working under Trade and Industry bureau because of the above-mentioned financial arrangement. According to the officials, the current division between the culture bureau and tourism bureau makes the office not working in collaboration with the Zonal culture bureau. The division between the two interrelated bureaus has greater impacts in the exchange of timely information and obstacles to the Zonal government to take advantage of the tourism sector as much as possible.

#### **4. Establishing Markets to the locals**

The increasing of activities of tourism in south Omo has made illegal movements of artifacts by traders outside local people. These activities are not only harming the local people but also the tourists who are paying huge amount of money for those persons to get locally made artifacts. The establishment of local markets in the areas that do not have markets will benefit the local community to develop their ability and to come and sell their artifacts directly to the tourists.

#### **5. Increasing eco-tourism and responsible tourism in the area**

The interviewed government officials give emphasis on the destruction of the environments by irresponsible tourists to south Omo who make illegal hunting and throw of the used materials. They believe that creating a suitable working environment to private investors who would like to invest on environmental friendly organization in the area will be lessening the problems. The Zonal Municipality official explained that, special tax reduction made to attract those investors to come to the business. The development of eco-tourism and responsible tourism in the area is seen as an important tools both nature and culture development of the local people. Even so, it is important to be aware of the rhetoric of ecotourism or the 'ecotourism bubble' (Carrier and MacLeod, 2005) which often sells destinations and experiences that have been abstracted from their contexts, with consequences that are often negative, especially for the very people whom ecotourism is supposed to have benefited.

### **5.2 INTERVIEW RESULTS WITH TOUR OPERATORS AND HOTELIERS**

The managers of two tour operators in Jinka (Tribal Touch and South Expeditions) and the representatives of eight tour operators who are based in Addis (Galaxy Tour and Travel agency, Horizon Ethiopia Tour and Travel, Experience Ethiopia Tour Operators, Memories Tour P.L.C, Acacia Travel, SORA Tour Operators, Dinkenesh Ethiopia and Hess Travel). Additionally, the Managers of three big hotels in Jinka (the Orit Hotel in Jinka, Goh Hotel and Jinka Resort) interviewed and discussed the issue of tourism in south Omo. For the private sectors who are engaged in the tourism sector is seen as commercial activity, so their main concerns in the future development of tourism is to increase their competitiveness that increases their returns from the activities. They pointed out the following to run tourism in south Omo successfully:

1. Infrastructure development, the road from Arba Minch to Jinka and from Jinka to the local community.
2. Better roads and transport, hotels, campsite, lodge.
3. Increasing of promotion work.
4. Creating job opportunity in the area, especially in the hotel and nutrition sector.
5. Handy craft to be developed.

### 5.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS WITH GUIDES

The local guides, guides and drivers from Addis Ababa share similar view with their employers on the current activities of tourism in south Omo. They responded that they benefited from the tourists and tourism. Since they have different 'customers' it is not easier for the interviewed guides to differentiate the behavioural differences among tourists. As they respond they see 'good' tourists who give attention to local community and help the youth in Jinka town in everything. However, there are also 'bad' visitors who do not like to shake the hands of the local people during travel. Moreover, the discussion with four local guides who have been doing the job for more than ten years regarding the behaviours of the tourists with whom they had contact, they could draw the following behavioural differences. They identify the behaviour of the tourists based on their nationality. Among the nationalities which are identified by the guides, the Spanish tourists have sociable, the Germans are strict and punctual, and the Israeli are sociable and give attention to the native people and like to share foods and drinks. The Americans and the Italian visitors consider as good money provider to the guides for their services. In the future development of the tourism in south Omo, the guides give emphasis on the education of local community that helps the host community to understand the purposes of the tourists visits to the area. As they mention the tourists do not have enough time to travel and see single part of the culture of the local people of south Omo. If the community understands the presence of the tourists they will create good environment both for the tourists and themselves. According to the interviewed guides, the teaching of the community about the purpose of the tourist visit to south Omo has to do with specialized persons from the Zonal tourism bureau, however the condition of the current bureau does not has the ability to do this.

#### 5.4 INTERVIEW RESULTS WITH ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Three anthropologists, Ivo Strecker, Jean Lydal and Sophia Tubovil were interviewed about their views towards tourism in south Omo. According to them the tourists are the people who are traveling to learn about the living conditions in other countries but this activity is very stressful for both the hosts and the native in south Omo. As one of the anthropologist defined tourists, "Those who are well informed beforehand and who regard 'others' positively are pleasant visitors so long as they have enough time and leisure to meet people and see things." The anthropologists also observed behavioural differences among tourists who visit south Omo. Two of the interviewed anthropologists discussed the behavioural differences of the tourists based on the organization of the tourists and pointed the bellows categories:

1. The eco tourists (Individual backpacker) looking for hardships by staying in cheap hotels spending little money which creates bad, image towards them.
2. Organized larger groups walking the usual Ethiopian rural trips to northern and southern Ethiopia, they are equipped and completed with guides.
3. Smaller groups of learned, experienced and relatively rich travelers.

In addition to this, the other anthropologists who have been working in south Omo for more than thirty-five years explained the tourists' behaviours as follows, "Yes, of course there are behavioural differences among the tourist. The aggressive ones like to get things for nothing; perhaps because they have spent so much already getting to their destination, the gentle ones like to give things like caramels, medicine. The friendly ones try to communicate through smiles. The hostile ones just glows." This shows that there are behavioural differences among the tourists who come to south Omo.

The development of tourism in south Omo is accepted by the anthropologists. As they discussed tourism is a phenomenon which has its own driving forces i.e. money and curiosity. People affected by tourism will make the best out of it for their won benefit. For example, the development of tourism activities helped local people find ways of becoming guides or some tourist covers the expenses of the 'bull-jumping'. The responses of the anthropologists on the future developments of tourism in south Omo in points:

1. Strengthen information and education both for the tourists and the community i.e. SORC (South Omo Research Center).
2. Improving hotels and other services like, swimming pool in Jinka.
3. Door should be opened of travel programs and diversity in all places of south Omo.
4. Improve organization (cultural villages and handicrafts cooperatives).

## **5.5 OVERALL ATTITUDE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TOWARDS TOURISM**

According to John (1992:665), the principal attitudes of residents towards tourism are likely to be an important tool for planning and policy formulation. The overall attitude of the thirty interviewed Mursi from the three villages (Maganto, Mackki and Moizo) were positive, they would like to see more tourist arrivals to their villages. The overall positive perceptions of tourism held by the Mursi were expressed with one voice that proclaimed greater opportunities to earn more 'biroscho' - the Ethiopian (birr) Currency.

Furthermore, sixty villagers (from Maganto, Mackki and Moizo) were able to categorize appearance and behavioural differences between tourists. As far as age was concerned, the villagers prefer to see more old tourists who spend more time with them and provide more cash money than the younger visitors. The older visitors were identified as 'Achaley' (nice) and they were said to bring special gifts such as torches, batteries, warm clothes, and watches that are favored by the villagers, especially the youngsters. The young visitors and backpackers were identified as 'Agarsi' (bad), were seen as demanding and ungenerous with their money. The villagers also said that they could not understand those 'poor' backpackers who come to their villages with out enough money and food.

The Mursi also have a classification of foreigners based on hair colour. Generally they seem to prefer tourists with darker hair 'kuchubai' (meaning the highlanders). From my interviews with the Mursi, other black-haired visitors that they identified as 'Japan' were seen to be more generous than those who have 'white' hair - the Ferenji (or blond/white Europeans or Americans) against whom my own hair (described as 'Haranchi' ) was compared. The discussion with the key informants regarding their preferences for Japanese could be seen in the light of the

unprecedented visit of the village chief Betongya Golegemi and his wife to Japan in 2005. Apparently upon their return these Mursi brought back 8,000 ETB and other gifts.

A brief background to this, which I should like to investigate more fully in the future, is that a Japanese film crew came with *Galaxy Travel and Tour Operators* (headed by Ato Awoke Genetu) from Addis Ababa which has been working in south Omo for more than 20 years. The film crew extended an invitation to Betongya Golegemi - chief of Manganto village - and his first wife together with Ato Bahar Kunali a Dizi park warden at the Mago park who speaks both Amharic and Mursi languages. According to Ato Awoke Genetu the head of the tour company who also accompanied the Mursi to Japan, the Japanese film crew organized a workshop for participants from all over the world who were perceived as possessing a 'unique physical appearance'.

Ato Awoke also told me that whilst in Japan he saw live pictures of south Omo, pictures that he believed were transmitted by satellite and whose detail revealed even specific Mursi villages. How this was possible is intriguing and could be followed up in future research. Betongya who traveled to Japan together with his first wife told me that apart from the cold weather, he liked Japan. During their stay for one week he remembered that the Japanese constantly took pictures of him and his lip-pierced wife, but that nonetheless, it was advantageous to come back with lots of money rather than face the typical small-paying tourist who usually pays 2 ETB per picture.

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

In this study there was one overriding general objective and two specific objectives. The overall objective of this research was to assess the role of individuals, institutions and organizations in between the tourists and the native in the case of the Mursi people of south Omo, Ethiopia. In order to answer the specific objectives the following key research questions were raised at the outset of this research. The first question was to identify the factors' (including the world of advertising discourse) that sells southern Ethiopia to the western tourist as a wild and exotic place. The second question was to identify how the tourists see the 'native'. The third question was how the 'natives' perceived the tourist and the fourth question was concerned with various consequences of tourism among the Mursi.

The typology of tourists could be based on a variety of features such as duration of the trip; types of tour organizers, types of tourist destination, types of accommodation and modes of transport, etc. Concerning the purpose of their visit to Ethiopia, tourists come either to visit the historical sites of the Northern Ethiopia, or to visit the different exotic 'tribes' of south Omo. 'Seven tribes in seven days' was an advertising slogan I once heard used in reference to the peoples of south Omo but as far as the Mursi are concerned they seem to be one of the most popular 'tribal' attractions of south Omo. With regard to the consequences of tourism for the Mursi one may conclude that there are both 'positive' and 'negative' though I would once again emphasize that such value judgments depend on who is doing the judging – the locals, tourists, 'tour-guides, anthropologists etc.

The interaction of the tourists and the local people of south Omo are mediated by different factors. As it was pointed out by different visitors to the region, factors such as the tourist media's representations of the native to the tourists, the role of the tour guides and transportation play important roles in shaping the perceptions and experiences of tourists towards the Mursi. The tourists, first of all come to the area with the information they obtained from the media, information which is often replicated by tour guides who have probably themselves also imbedded aspects of the discourses of the exotic and the primitive. Echoing both the discourses and stereotypes of 'wildest Africa', many tourists even on the briefest of visits have described the Mursi as 'aggressive', 'demanding' as 'thieves' and as 'backward'.

An overall finding of this study is that the relationship between the tourists and the Mursi people of south Omo is often replete with distorted and crude impressions that lead to mutual misunderstanding. The interactions are sometimes strained, stressful and on occasion even chaotic. Such interactions are, naturally, lacking in social decencies or courtesies that might otherwise be expected between hosts and guests. The native peoples understand tourists as those who come for a short time simply to take pictures rather than equal-footed traders or guests who would like to understand local culture. As a result, the Mursi themselves grow in entrepreneurial cunning so as to extract as much profit from the time of their interactions with tourists. In this the Mursi can be seen not only as the hapless objects of the tourist but as active subjects well able to advance their own interests *visa a visa* the tourists.

The advantages of tourism in south Omo go beyond specific groups like the Mursi and, of course, supply far more lucrative revenues for the regional and zonal government in the form of fees and taxes. Tourism in south Omo has also provided waged employment to the people who most directly participate in the tourism business. Incomes are drawn by hoteliers, guides and even for the only local (SORC) museum in Jinka town. Considering the objects of tourism - the local groups - again, Ari women have been able to sell their 'Bartsi' art (locally made wall paintings) to tourists visiting the museum, whilst for the Mursi the cash earned from tourists has helped them to circumvent food and water scarcities as well as tourist money also contributed to the payment of Mursi bride-wealth, payment of household and personal beauty decorations - with these adornments perhaps being used to further extract more money from the photo-hungry tourist!

When we consider the economic benefit from tourism, perhaps the largest slice of the cake goes either to hoteliers, private tour operators, the Ethiopian Airlines or to the regional government leaving the local populations with much smaller dividends. As far as locals are concerned, there are intra-population differences in terms of who gets the bigger crumbs from the tourism table. Young people appear to benefit more than the elders and so too are there more profits for those villages which can be accessed by car. Considering the socio-cultural consequences of tourism, these include the increasing commercialization of native life which as noted earlier has lead to a staged authenticity of culture, dependency on tourist money, growth in alcoholism, some inter-

generational squabbles over money as well as begging and allegations of sex tourism. This research has identified that all stakeholders believe that south Omo has great potential for further development of its natural and cultural tourism. Potential areas for future improvement identified by various stakeholders include: Infrastructural development, especially roads and better accommodation. Suggestions have also been made to strengthen education and information on tourism among local peoples. Another overall finding of this research is that the attitude of the Mursi towards tourism is on the whole encouraging and positive. The Mursi in (Maganto, Mackki and Moizo) villages would like to see larger numbers of visitors. This attitude appears to be mostly related to the tangible economic benefits that these villagers obtain from the tourist. Despite their overall positive attitude toward tourism, the Mursi also told me that the money that they get from the tourist is not enough. Naturally enough, they would like to get what they would determine to be a 'fair' price for their exposure to the tourist.

#### **6.1 FIELD EXPERIENCE, LIMITATIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

In order to investigate tourism in southwestern Ethiopia, I selected the Mursi people of south Omo. One of the main reasons for choosing Maganto/Hailwha village among the different villages in Mursi was its accessibility to tourists as well as the fact that it was where I was able to secure the services of an Amharic speaker (translator). I first saw Mursi land in 2005 on a visit to my colleague Shauna Latosky who was collecting her field data in Mackki (another Mursi village) on Mursi women and the significance of their lip-plates. I recall being impressed by the beautiful landscape of south Omo and of the ways of living of the Mursi people which was totally different from what I saw in Jinka town. This encounter as well as Shauna's invitation of the Mursi to the South Omo Research Center gave me a chance to get to know some of them personally and to develop good relationships.

The field work was conducted in three phases for a total of two and half months (the middle of August 2006 to end of November 2006). The first phase (by the middle of August 2006). This time I traveled with the German Journalist Andréas to different villages of Mursi which gave the opportunity to select the research site and to get acquainted with some persons, especially my host father and key-informants, Legolege, Mulu Archaye, my translator Hailu and the three Mursi

police men in Maganto village: Olibisen Gone, Olibisen Golegemaeri and Bechaye Mulu with out these people this research would not have been possible. The policemen told me that for my second trip it was advisable to bring a support letter from the Zonal office.

Before I began my field research, I went to the Zonal Administrative Office at Jinka and explained to them the purpose of my field study with a letter of support from the Dept of SOSA. I received the official letter of support after three days. The second phase (beginning September to end of November) was devoted to intensive interviews and participant observation. I observed the Mursi ways of life, especially their social settings which helped me to compare the kinds of contact the Mursi have with tourists. I was observing the interactions between the tourists and the locals and each day recording the interviews with key-informants, translating and preparing other interviews for subsequent days.

During the second field trip I arrived in Maganto village after a fight between the Mursi and the Bodi (the neighboring groups). Everything was quiet and the villagers except the three policemen had left their usual residences. I also observed that the women built a hut different from the normal hut to protect small children from the bullets of the Bodi. The first day I spent the night at the police station and at sunrise Legolege the police commander (my host father) and some Mursi men came back with the herds to the village. Thereafter, Olibisen Gone (policeman) took me on a 1 hour walk to the new village. There I met my translator Hailu. It took me one week to adjust ar. I during that time I faced feelings of anxiety and irritation.

My acquaintance with Ato Hailu Dinku who worked with me as my translator for the entire duration of the field facilitated introductions with various people. Even though the elders and the youngsters were forthcoming with information they constantly asked me the same questions "Will you write and tell the tourists to pay us more than two birr per photo?" Or questioning the usefulness of the outcome of my field stay. Some youngsters who observed my interaction with the tourists seemed to think that I came to Mursi land as a kind of guide and I was sometimes asked to bargain with the tourists for photo money.

At the beginning I met and visited people through Haliu, gradually extending my contact networks. I found Mursi young boys who joined the informal school and who can speak Amharic. It also gave me a chance to participate in the school's learning process and to build friendship with boys especially with Bulachobri and Olibul. It gave a chance to compare the interviews that I got from the elders. Gradually, I felt comfortable and all the people recognized me and they stopped giving me several identities. I got a chance to attend a public meeting in Maganto village. The final short trip to Mursi (on December) was taken because I lost the pictures that I took in Mursi. This last field trip was helpful to remedy to some extent the information gaps of previous field trips and to attempt to triangulate my data.

My personal lack of knowledge of the Mursi language was one of the barriers in undertaking this study. Having male translators was not enough to access the Mursi women and their own social realities sometimes quite different to the herd-tending males. But I built female friendships and after the women identified my role I got the chance to stay with one host family. Through these continuous interactions with them in their daily lives, I was grinding, fetching water, cooking and eating with them. This helped me to see their interactions with tourists more closely and it also allowed me to permit them to attend some of my interviews with tourists.

Furthermore, because south Omo gets visitors from different parts of the non-English speaking world I faced problems communicating with visitors who preferred to speak in their native tongues of, for example, French and Spanish. In future research this limitation could of course be remedied by the employment of the necessary translators. Another prospect for future research is to consider the relationship between private organizations such as African Parks (working in south Omo) and the Mursi. I employed employees of African Parks during my field work and was once assisted by getting a ride in one of their off-road vehicles. Still further research-based interaction with African Parks was not possible when they learnt that I was an anthropologist.

There has been some controversy between African Parks and the Mursi in terms of African Parks restricting the Mursi from hunting animals in their lands (La Tosky 2006 pers comm). African Parks appear to be involved in developing big-game hunting tourism so that the apparent conflict between their kind of tourism and the photo-tourism of the Mursi is an interesting topic for future

research. Another prospect for future research in Mursi land is the relationship between the Mursi and various missionaries who have been seeking to convert them to Christianity. As with employees of African Parks, missionaries in south Omo appear to be reluctant to engage researchers but still research efforts can and should be made to this end.

Another limitation faced in this research is that, it was not possible to obtain written documents on tourism in south Omo from the existing government tourism office as well as from hotels in the area. I tried to remedy this shortcoming through discussions and interviews with the relevant government officials as well as with the owners of the organizations who have a direct interest in tourism in south Omo. The anthropology of tourism is a burgeoning area of interest in the discipline as a whole and fieldwork in Africa - where tourism is currently a growth industry - promises substantial contribution to this significant sub-discipline. It is my modest hope that my own research in Ethiopia may represent the beginnings of one African contribution to the anthropology of tourism.

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## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF KEY-INFORMANTS

Out of the 21 informants the following were selected because I worked most closely with them.

| No. | Name                  | Types of relationships | Age       | Remark   |
|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------|--|
|     | Leogolege Samagari    | Host Father            | Around 60 | Police Commander in Maganto village and a 'peace father' (slaughtering goats during fights between Mursi and Bodi). He is married with four wives. He provided detailed information concerning the culture as well as the overall interactions the Mursi have with the tourists. Since he works with the Zonal government he got a chance to travel different places of south Omo and north Omo. |
|     | Hailu Dinku (Olikori) | Translator             | Around 65 | An elder. He was an Ivory trader with bullets in the Ari highland. The contact gave him to know Amharic language. He married one wife and knowledgeable of the culture. Currently appointed by the government to work as culture and information section at Maganto village.   |
|     | Argawalo Bichena      | informant              | Around 75 | An elder man who has power in public meetings and provided detailed information about the history and culture of Mursi as well as their relations ship with their neighboring groups. He is also collecting the car entrance money from the tourists.  |
|     | Betongya Golegemeri   | informant              | Around 60 | He has vivid memories of the culture. He is a chief of the Maganto village and a brother of Komora Kora (one of the Mursi priest). He is the first person to abroad.   |
|     | Bulacobri Mulu        | friend                 | Around 23 | Unmarried herd boy. Currently he reached at the marriageable age and play Donga. Joined the Informal school in Hailwaha lean to write and write. He has well in explaining things and sharing his knowledge. Generally he was a good friend, photographer during field stay.   |
|     | Bayabay Gysyo         | Host mother            | Around 45 | A second wife. She was born in Moizo and she is good in providing information.   |

## APPENDIX 2: GLOBAL CODES OF ETHICS FOR TOURISM

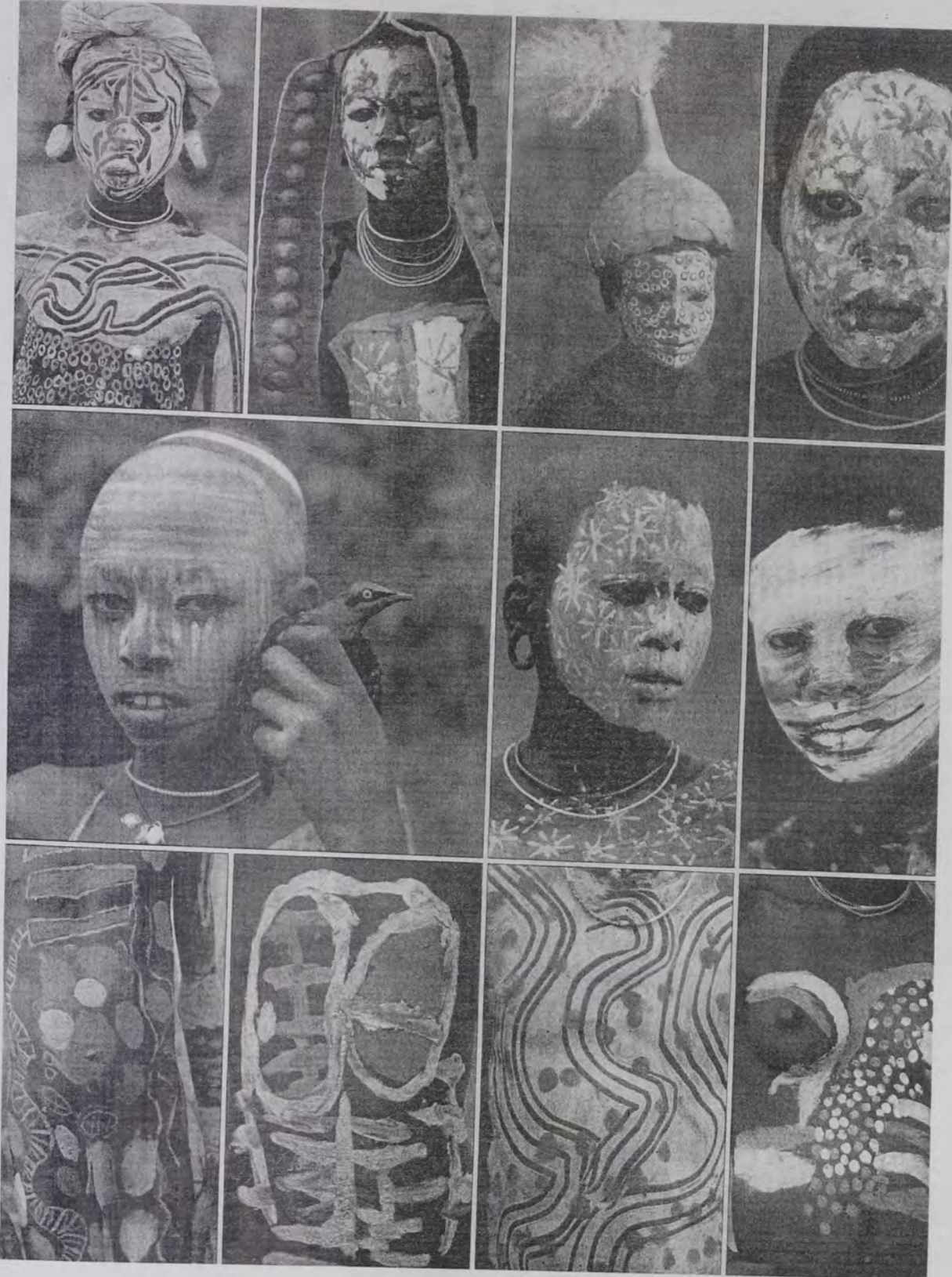
### [Article 1] Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies

1. The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognize their worth;
2. Tourism activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and in respect for their laws, practices and customs;
3. The host communities, on the one hand, and local professionals, on the other, should acquaint themselves with and respect the tourists who visit them and find out about their lifestyles, tastes and expectations; the education and training imparted to professionals contribute to a hospitable welcome;
4. It is the task of the public authorities to provide protection for tourists and visitors and their belongings; they must pay particular attention to the safety of foreign tourists owing to the particular vulnerability they may have; they should facilitate the introduction of specific means of information, prevention, security, insurance and assistance consistent with their needs; any attacks, assaults, kidnappings or threats against tourists or workers in the tourism industry, as well as the willful destruction of tourism facilities or of elements of cultural or natural heritage should be severely condemned and punished in accordance with their respective national laws;
5. When traveling, tourists and visitors should not commit any criminal act or any act considered criminal by the laws of the country visited and abstain from any conduct felt to be offensive or injurious by the local populations, or likely to damage the local environment; they should refrain from all trafficking in illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products and substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national regulations;
6. Tourists and visitors have the responsibility to acquaint themselves, even before their departure, with the characteristics of the countries they are preparing to visit; they must be aware of the health and security risks inherent in any travel outside their usual environment and behave in such a way as to minimize those risks;

Source: World Tourism Organization, 1999

## Appendix: 3.A

A. Photographs of exotic tribal decoration as published in the French *Paris Match* Magazine by Ody (2006) and subtitled: C'est la galerie de portraits de creatures de la terre qui, a chaque generation, inventent du bout des doigts l'aventure de la creativite - Meaning: The portrait gallery of earth creatures who one generation after the other invent from the tip of their fingers the adventure of creativity' These photographs can also be seen in Silvester (2007) Vol II Face and Body Decoration.



### Appendix: 3.B

These and the foregoing pictures were said to have captured the subjects "precisely (Introduction to LeVester, 2007 Vol II) as they are". The reader is invited to reflect on the possible meaning of this ambiguous declaration.



APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE PICTURES



Mursi man situated for tourist picture



Fig2. The Mackki youngsters decorating for pictures



urist singled out the Muris young men  
re



Fig4. Mursi women serving food with her lip-plate

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE PICTURES



Waiting tourist in front of Orit Hotels (Berber, 2006)



Fig6. Two local guides from Jinka were giving order to two Mursi women how to stand for the picture.



The Sambal (dildila) villagers in Jinka



Fig8. The mobile school by USAID/PACT Ethiopia, in Manganto

APPENDIX: 5A: FIELD PICTURES



Bulachobri Mulu (key-informant)  
right



Fig2. To the right Umahhor Dorba (informant)  
to the left my translator Hailu (picture made  
by Bulachobri Mulu).



My friends from Maganto who  
go to Arbaminch Music Festivals.



Fig4. An interview with Bergha (in Jinka)

APPENDEIX: 5B: FIELD PICTURES



My host sisters with their blind  
in Maganto village. (Picture made  
by Mchobri Mulu).



Fig6. The married men in Maganto were  
busy in preparing decoration of their  
cows.



Impossible way of Mursi  
dry season.

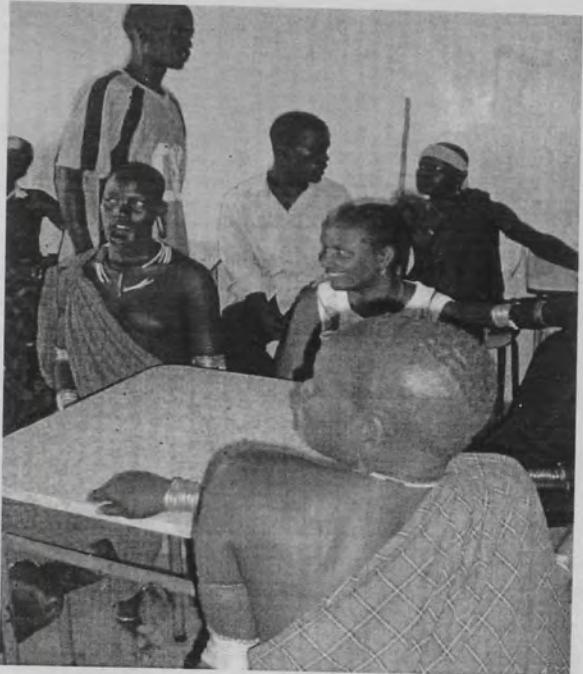
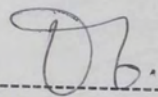


Fig8. Discussions with the youngsters  
from Maganto Village in Jinka.

## DECLARATION

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

Name HANNA GETACHEW

Signature 

Date of submission 15/8/07

Addis Ababa University

August, 2007