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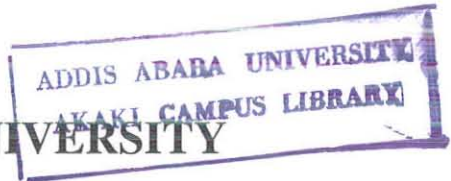
**Assessing Community Based Ecotourism Among Guji
Oromo Pastoral Community in Nechsar National Park,
Southern Ethiopia**

A Thesis Submitted to College of Development Studies of Addis
Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism and Development.

Tamagn Woyesa

June, 2013

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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Oromo Pastoral Community in Nechsar National Park,
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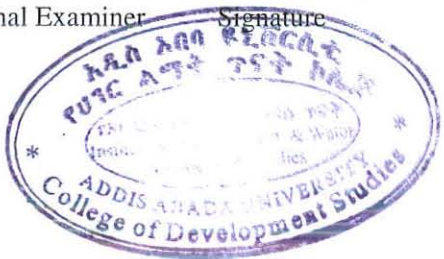
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work. It has not been presented nor submitted to any institution for any purpose. I also declare that the resources and the sources used in the thesis are quoted, cited and acknowledged in the text and in the references.

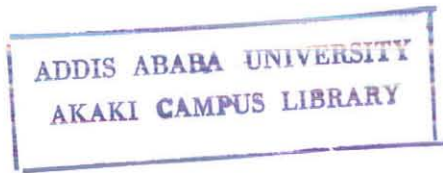
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This Thesis has been submitted for the partial fulfillment of Master of Degree in Tourism and Development with approval of Addis Ababa University Advisor and Examiners.

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Acronyms

APEE: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

CBET: Community-Based Ecotourism

CI: Conservation International

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

EFDREPA: the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Environmental Protection Authority

EWCO/A: Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

ICDPs: Conservation and Development Projects

IDS: Institute of Development Studies

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

MOFED: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

NINR: Norwegian Institute for Nature Research

PATTEC: Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign

SNNPRS: Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State

TIES: the International Ecotourism Society

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNEP: United Nation Environmental Program

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

WCPA: World Commission on Protected Areas

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

NB: - () numbers inside the bracket represents e number of informants in chapter four discussion part. Example; (5) represents the view of five informants.

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Abstract

A study was carried-out to assess the possibility of community based ecotourism in Nechsar National Park among Guji pastoral community in Southern Ethiopia. To this end, data was collected through interview, focus group discussion and from written sources. The collected data was analyzed using qualitative approaches. The study results show that the park is in critical conditions as previous conservation effort didn't bear any significant improvement to neither the community nor biodiversity resources. Various ecological crises are vividly observed in the park. The pastoral Guji community residing within the park is completely dependent on Nechsar National Park resources as main source of livelihoods such as pasture and water for their livestock; and has never been part of government conservation efforts. The study identified that the previous attempt made to achieve conservation in Nechsar National Park based on traditional top-down approach recognizes Guji Pastoral community as a threat to conservation. There are challenges of implementing community based ecotourism in the park as far as the Guji community is concerned. As a result the community has never been part of government conservation and tourism based benefit in the park. The effect in community eroded sense of ownership and developed negative perception towards the park activities. In addition the research suggests the need of incorporating intangible cultural resources of Guji community which can be used as an asset for conservation and tourism attraction adding on already identified traditional (natural) attractions in Nechsar National Park. The study recommended the implementation of community based ecotourism in Nechsar National Park recognizing Guji community as active part of the conservation effort in and around the park. It also argues the possibility of enhancing protected area conservation through community based conservation to guarantee sustainability.

Key Words: Community Based Ecotourism, Conservation, Protected area, Stakeholder, Community, and Settlement.

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Back Ground

Tourism is one of the largest and the fastest growing industry in the world; and now makes up such a large part of the world's gross national product which surpasses 1 trillion US\$ international tourism receipts in 2011 (UNWTO, 2012). In the same report tourism accounts 30% of total world export service and 6% of total export of goods and services. Nowadays, tourist arrival reach more than 983 million in 2011 and the figure is expected to rise up to 1.6 billion by the year 2020 (Ibid). This rapid growth has both positive and negative impacts on environment and people. There is a growing concern of increasing significance of tourism industry related with environment and values of local communities in the host region. It was this concern that led to the birth of the notion of sustainable tourism in search for alternative options for mass tourism. Sustainable tourism is aimed to produce economic enterprises that contribute for development and local livelihood of the community with protecting indigenous culture and environment (Simpson, 2007).

As an alternative options ecotourism, community based tourism and community based ecotourism tourism come forefront in the last few decades (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). Ecotourism is mainly focus on conserving the natural environment, educating the visitors who are interested in wilderness and pristine areas about sustainability; whereas CBET is less business oriented and local involvement is higher and ensures benefit to the local community (Sefrin, 2012). Leksakundilok (2004) made a distinction between Community Based Tourism (CBT) and Community Based Ecotourism Tourism (CBET). CBET is ecotourism enterprises owned and managed by the community; and involves nature conservation, which improves the lives of its member (Sefrin, 2012).

Therefore, CBET is tourism mainly dominated by the community management and which focuses on travel to an area with natural attractions and contributes to environmental conservation and local livelihoods. While CBET is defined as any tourism business which is owned and/or managed by communities and aimed at delivering wider benefit to the wider community (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). However, community based tourism and CBET are

interchangeably used occasionally. In CBET, community is the main actor in planning, implementation and decision making in ecotourism business while the benefit assumed from the ecotourism enterprise is to improve the local livelihood (Sproule, 1996).

CBET prevent leakages of benefits out of the destination by creating local employment and enhancing sustainable development with reconciling wildlife conservation with economic development (Jones, 2005). According to UNEP (2002) CBET is expected to meet the following principles; contribute for the conservation of biodiversity and sustain the well being of local people. Khananal and Babar (2007) also suggested that CBET should direct revenues to the conservation and management of natural and protected areas to make the region as an eco-destination by reducing the negative impact of nature and culture that damage destination. Communities understand that protecting the environment generates income from the visitors as a result visitors began to arrive to experience the community culture and the environment protected by the community (Lumpkin, 1998). Achieving the benefits of locals require the use of local labor, locally produced goods, and services and infrastructure and necessary policies from government (Simpson, 2007).

As far as Ethiopia is concerned, international tourist arrival is growing though tourism in general and sustainable tourism (CBET and ecotourism) in particular is not matured enough. According to UNWTO (2009), Ethiopia accounts a share of 0.7% of all African international tourist arrivals and 1.2% of international tourist receipts. Hence, there is a need for Ethiopia to engage in appropriate tourism development, like sustainable tourism as the country is endowed with diverse natural and cultural tourism resources to improve local livelihood. Sustainable tourism and conservation can be achieved only when communities' benefit from the tourism (Tosun, 2000 cited in Bith 2011). For example, conservation (protected) areas are expected to meet the need of communities to carry out successful conservation by involving local community in tourism and conservation. Moreover, Kiss (2004) outlined that CBET provides the linkage between conservation and livelihood to attain sustainability in which he emphasized the very link between conservation, community and tourism for sustainable development.

In Ethiopia, there have to be linking the conservation initiatives in protected areas¹ with local community livelihood to ensure sustainability through CBET or community based conservation. Ethiopia as one of the richest country in biodiversity is believed to be the result of diverse ecological set up of the country ranging from 1110 meter below sea level at Kobar sink in Afar depression to 4620 meter above sea level at Ras Dashen. Having described the potentials of Ethiopia in terms of biodiversity ranging from Afro-montane climate at high altitude to Dallol depression, the GEF Portfolio Identification Document pointed out the problem of grazing and settlement, fuel wood and charcoal among others are serious concern for the decline of original forest cover in the country (EFDREPA, 2011). Lowland is a source of conflict in land use for livelihood and grazing on the on hand and wildlife management on the other. Whereas highland is facing agricultural land expansion and fuel wood consumption stressing pressure on wildlife habitats (Shibru, 1994). As a result, Ethiopia has lost and losing natural vegetation and wild animals more than its neighbors (Greer, 1999).

Even though, government of Ethiopia recognizes the importance of ecotourism development in the country and providing consultancy service to ecotourism developers, the contribution of ecotourism is insignificant in the country (Adem, 2008). In protected areas, gazetting is essential to specify areas allowed for human action and areas exclusive to wildlife. However, in Ethiopia among National parks only Semein Mountains National park and Awash National Park are properly gazzetted while the remaining are prone to various crisis (Shibru, 1994; Adem, 2008). Consequently, the current conservation effort has facing challenges due to environmental degradation related with man-made and natural disasters (Bonine, and Dalzen, 2003 cited in Fasil ,2009). Like most of protected areas in Ethiopia, Nechsar National Park is facing customary problem like running without the participation of the surrounding community (Guji in this research). Nechsar National Park (NNP here after) is endowed with varieties of biodiversity resources, but still under threat of human pressure from surrounding communities. The pressure is associated with Guji community as pastoral in need of grazing land for years and very recently as farmers in need of cultivation land. Though the Kore people inhabit adjacent to the park and pushing in, their influence is insignificant compared to Guji “encroachment”.

¹ In this research protected areas or conservation area implies National park.

Many studies in NNP revealed that the establishment of the park was based on the old or conventional top-down conservation approach without consulting the surrounding communities and tolerating their livelihood. However, the park authorities and officials in Gamogofa Zone reject the offences by calling the communities as let comers. This research was looking for the possibility of CBET linking with community based conservation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Sbele (2005) involving community in sustainable tourism not only empower and improve the local communities but also result in the sense of belongingness and ownership of the resource which in turn led to conservation and developments in the locality. Especially important in the case of tourism in protected areas because the local people are heavily affected by environmental degradation in their surroundings. The Ethiopian tourism policy (2009) is also give due consideration of using tourism as a means of poverty reduction by involving communities in development plan.

In the case of NNP where mainly inhabited by two communities; Guji (pastoralists who lives with in the park) and Kore (very adjacent to the park as farmers) are believed to be challenge for the park conservation objective. The problem is more complex regarding the Guji community which is the subject of the study. Guji live inside the park territory as agro-pastoral that made the demarcation of the park territory very difficult since 1970s (MOA, 1988). Since the establishment of the park, resettlement as the only solution had been tried at least three times but ended in failures. In earlier times, Guji took brutal retaliation against the innocent animals blaming the animals as cause of their eviction. As a result park and the community see each other in suspicion where the community feel deprived from the right to use park resource as the main livelihood. Park-community conflict is the result of securing conservation in one hand and maintain traditional livelihood on the other. Moreover the park is facing expansion of agricultural activities (new for Guji) in addition to traditional pastoral way of life. This development together with population increase resulted in deforestation and degradation of forest cover and dwindling of wildlife species.

Pastoral Guji now successfully established permanent settlement in few parts of NNP while the park management is getting weaker and unable to manage activities in the park. Today, the park management body is not in a place to conduct sustainable conservation with the involvement of communities. In CBET awareness creation, empowerment of the local community related with conservation is essential with the cooperation of stakeholders; like NGOs, government agencies and community etc (WWF, 2011). Despite all these prevailing problems, NNP has no Management Plan to carry out effective conservation. The park is also running with poor infrastructure, weak linkage with concerned bodies to boost conservation, deforestation and decline of wildlife resources. The present development associated with Guji community in NNP made the problem more complex than before as deterioration continue.

The “classical conservation” paradigm perceives that community is a threat to biodiversity conservation, thus dislocating the community out of the conservation area is the preferred solution (Pimbert and Pretty 1995). It has been this paradigm in place to achieve conservation in NNP where its success is being questioned. As a result, Guji community has not yet been part of government conservation in NNP rather seen as threat for the park existence; hence, the community is marginalized from any park related planning and decision making which made them antagonistic towards any park development.

Most of the previous studies focus on biological diversity and natural setting of the park as well as issue of resettlement with little emphasis on CBET point of view. For example Abiyot in 2009 and Asabe in 2011 studied the issue of resettlement and local livelihood where as Clark in 2011 and many others studied deeply the natural (biodiversity) resources of NNP. Consequently this thesis devoted to the issue of community based conservation which is tool for achieving CBET. Since the previous proposed solution related with the communities in the park has failed and the park is at the edge of losing its conservation objective, the real intention of this work was to study obstacles of implementing CBET in the study area and possibilities of its application. And also to see the need of community based conservation and development simultaneously to encourage locals for the development activity.

The study was tried to answer questions like:-

- Is achieving local livelihood and conservation possible in NNP?
- Can ecotourism and community development attainable simultaneously while Guji residing inside in the park

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective: - The overall objective of the research is to assess the development of community based ecotourism in NNP in relation to the Guji Oromo pastoral community.

Specific Objectives:-

- ❖ To assess the possibility of linking community based conservation and developments in NNP.
- ❖ To examine the challenges of implementing CBET development in NNP.
- ❖ To analyze ways of engaging community in the tourism development decision-making process and park resource management.

1.4 Research questions

- ❖ What are the major challenges hindering the development of CBET in NNP?
- ❖ Can tourism bring community based conservation in the park?
- ❖ Is it possible to implement CBET in protected area while human being resides within the park?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study may provide information about the concept, purpose and significance of CBET. For the local community who are probably unaware of the concept, it will be a means of augment their livelihoods by participating community in planning and decision making. For government, the study may serve as springboard to implement what is clearly stated in the tourism policy of Ethiopia, whose main idea is to improve the life of local community by promoting tourism. It may also serve as a new conceptual base for researchers who intend to study in the area in the same problem. The study findings highlight important issues for those who are in need of it (stakeholders) and probably fill the knowledge gap or studies exist in NNP.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study mainly centered on the assessment of community based ecotourism development while community still living within in the park. The community implies those Guji Oromo geographically dwell in NNP only. As a result the analysis made, conclusion drawn and recommendation given are specific to the subject of the study area and population.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

One of the limitations of this study was that the research has been conducted between January and March which was dry season in NNP. Because of the weather condition most Guji left the Nechsar plains and confined to Talkie and Sermale valley, hence few cattle and human presence were visible on Nechsar plains. It means unlike summer the impact of huge cattle presence and human-wildlife conflict was not intense on the plains during this period to observe perfectly.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Key Terminologies

- **National Park:** protected natural area of land and/or sea, designated to protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations.
- **Ecotourism:** responsible travel to natural areas that protects the environment and provides local people with sustainable well-beings.
- **Community based Tourism:** Any tourism business owned and managed by communities and aimed at delivering wider benefit to the wider community.
- **Community based Ecotourism:** It is similar to community based tourism but need to be only an ecotourism initiative managed by communities and aimed at delivering wider benefit to the wider community.
- **Community based Conservation:** Conservation of critical resources for improvement of social and economic welfare of the community combining conservation and development simultaneously.

1.9 Organization of the study

The thesis is organized in to five chapters to make it as sequential as possible in flow of ideas and concepts beginning from background to ending in recommendations. The first chapter is about background of the study, which includes sub-topics like statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and operational definitions. The second chapter describes review of related literature, where different studies reviewed related with ecotourism, community based ecotourism and conservation. The third chapter is to deal with methodology of the study that illustrates the study area and design of the study in which the method of data collection, analysis and interpretation described. The fourth chapter is about results and discussions focused on community background, challenges, park people relation and other issues, while the final chapter makes overall conclusion and recommendations based on the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Sustainable Tourism

According to Allan and Espinoza (2004) tourism is shifted to a new dimension against the traditional mass tourism. This new concept of tourism is most of the time said to be alternative tourism which is broadly defined as “forms of tourism that set out to be consistent with natural, social and community values which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences”. Nature tourism is one of alternative tourism which is simply tourism based on natural areas (Nature Conservancy, 2005). It is also conceptualized that “tourism in natural settings” which includes adventure, nature-based, wildlife and ecotourism, etc (Moore and Dowling, 2002 cited in Allan and Espinoza, 2004). Nature based tourism is a growing source of revenue for the management of Protected Areas. Therefore, comprehensive tourism policies, strategic planning, and community involvement in nature-based tourism development is required to ensure sustainable use of natural resources with maximum benefits remaining in the local communities (CI, accessed from www.conservation.org).

The concept of sustainable tourism is an alternative and a reaction to the effect of mass tourism. Ecotourism has come for need of new tourism development model as a result of the issue of sustainable development debate in the 1990s. Then onwards various forms of sustainable tourism concepts began to challenge the status of ecotourism as the only sustainable tourism model like agro tourism, community-based tourism, cultural or ethnic tourism, farm tourism, green tourism, indigenous tourism, nature tourism, responsible tourism, rural tourism² etc (Sefrin, 2012). There are four basic elements very essential for the concept of sustainable tourism; holistic planning and strategy formulation, preservation of essential ecological processes, protection of human heritage and biodiversity, and sustained productivity over the long term for future generations (Bramwell and Lane, 1993 cited in Dallen and Kathy, 1999).

² UN World Tourism Organization recognizes all these forms as ‘sustainable tourism’ taking ‘ecotourism’ as one of its sub-forms.

Thus, sustainable tourism takes in to account environmental, socio-cultural realities to maximize conservation and benefits to the community (UNEP, 2002). Sustainable tourism is also use of environmental resources that help conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and provide socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders (Ibid). In summary, the growing concern for the impact of mass tourism and the changing demand of tourists for novel experiences are the reason for the new alternative form of tourism development. Therefore, it is possible to say that the emergence of the concept of CBET is arising from the need of alternative tourism for the existing mass tourism. Before dealing with CBET it is better to define the concept of community and community participation.

2.2 Community and Community Participation

Community has been defined based on different concepts and disciplines. The English word community is based on two ancient words; the Latin “*communitas*” meaning common; and the older Greek “*biocenosis*”, which is an ecological term meaning “a group of integrated and interdependent plants and animals”. Currently, the word community has two interpretations. The first one is more recently developed possess social ideals of solidarity, sharing, and consensus. The second and commonly used is refers to actual groupings of people based on affinity (common characteristics, ethnicity, age gender etc) or through geography (Boyce and Lysack, 2000). Community is also characterized as set of population groups live in a specific conditions together in organization and of social and cultural cohesion. Wisansing(n.d) stated that community in context of tourism is defined based on geographic point of view as a body of people living in the same locality. However, he recommended the need of approaching community in comprehensive or multifaceted nature apart from viewing in geographic sense alone. As Hulme and Murphree (1999) local society is usually considered as community and this has fostered ideas about community-based conservation and community conservation. For the purpose of this research community implies group of people in specified geographic area who share the same language, ethnic origin and history³.

³ In this research community refers to Guji Oromo who reside in geographic region of NNP, they are Oromo ethnically and speak Oromiffa, share the same history different from other Oromo groups and Gujis' elsewhere in relation to NNP.

The McGraw-Hill's Dictionary (2005) defines participation as taking part in an event or activity. While community participation is to denote that "intended beneficiaries are encouraged to take matters into their own hands, to participate in their own development through mobilizing their own resources, defining their own needs, and making their own decisions about how to meet them"(Stone, 1989). Various terms, such as community development, public participation, and community empowerment have been used to show community participation in local affairs. In terms of tourism planning point of view (Haywood 1988 cited in Okazaki, 2008) defines community participation as a process of involving all stakeholders (local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people, and planners) in such way that decision-making is shared.

Community participation can vary from manipulative to self-mobilization; that is passive versus active participation. If the participation of the community is passive the benefit is going to be indirect and limited to job creation. While, active participation of the community ensures their involvement in planning and management of tourism resources and protects their community interest (Andrade, 2008). On the other hand, active participation means that the communities are involved in the planning and management of tourism activities and get involved in decision making processes to safeguard their interests and resources.

Therefore based on the above descriptions, various forms of tourism differ in level of community participation in development initiatives. For instance, International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that protects the environment and provides local people with sustainable well-beings. In the same way, CBET takes the social dimension further and strength the role of community in the tourism activities. That is why the WWF (2001) defined CBET as a form of tourism "where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community." However, the difference between ecotourism and CBET is still visible. According to Kontogeorgopoulos (2005) the concept of CBET is aimed at differentiating ecotourism which is simply occurring in natural areas and ecotourism focus mainly on the need and interest of the local community.

Therefore, the core principle of CBET derives from the concept of community development, a small scale locally oriented and holistic approach to economic growth and social change where community is the main actor in planning, implementation and decision making in ecotourism business (Sproule, 1996).

2.3 Benefits of Community Based Ecotourism

It is believed that conservation of natural resource without community participation is unsuccessful which was proved during the earlier mass tourism period. As laid down by Lumpkin (1998) CBET improves the welfare of the community and enhance participation and ownership of the tourism resources. CBET provides collective benefit to the local communities since it contributes to the community financial development which in turn produces development of community services like schools, clinics as well as employment in the CBET enterprises and microenterprises (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009).

Furthermore, CBET empower the local communities to use and manage the land and resources appropriately, and equip with skills of developing themselves. In addition, adopting CBET is a way of achieving sustainable development. To this end the (APEC, 2010) adopted that good practice in CBET contributes to each of the 'three pillars of sustainability' of delivering social, environmental and economic benefits. Since it originates from local or regional to national level, CBET is a means of sustainability based on the assumption that each community has unique attractions whether is people heritage, tangible or intangible resources or culture. If it is based on this premise, tourism not only enhances economy of the community but also preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the community (Satarat, 2010). In addition CBET has to be socially and environmentally responsible. As a social enterprise, it is not driven by the need to maximize profits but primarily to help the community (Calanog, etal, 2012).

As Timothy (1999) the goal of community development is also political; that means encouraging sovereignty and autonomy, decision making power, local participation and community control over the initiation and direction of development projects. Economically, it ensures sustainable and rewarding employment with relatively equitable income distribution since it is owned by the community rather than outside business. Moreover, it enhances conservation and sustainable use of natural resource and the community should accept that the

gain communities earning are as a result of their dependence on the resources (Yaman and Mohd, 2004). Below one empirical evidence is identified to shows the success of CBET in developing countries.

Case1. Case Study from Fiji

In 1988, four clans of the Bouma people in Fiji established the Bouma National Heritage Park and their own CBET enterprises with the assistance of New Zealand government. This community based ecotourism enterprises won many international awards and celebrated as one of the great success stories of CBET in the Pacific. Though the CBET brought economic gains, the earlier stage of park administration was based on formal western based institution with little consideration of informal indigenous values of the community which threatened social capital and political empowerment. This relatively successful initiative proved that CBET need to acknowledge traditional values of the society in administration and tourism business unless it causes sense of anomie, resulting in jealousy, mistrust and internal conflict (Farrelly, 2011).

2.4 Protected Areas and Conservation

2.4.1 Protected Area

Protected area is an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means (IUCN, 1994). OAU(1968) in article III(d) use the term “Conservation area” which means any protected natural resource area, whether it be a strict natural reserve⁴, a national park or a special reserve.

⁴ In Article II(1) Strict Nature Reserve is an area under state control “While throughout which any form of hunting or fishing, any undertaking connected with forestry, agriculture or mining, any grazing, any excavation or prospecting, drilling, construction, any work tending to alter the configuration of the soil or the character of the vegetation, any water pollution and, generally, any act likely to harm or disturb the fauna of flora, including introduction of zoological or botanical species, whether indigenous or imported, wild or domesticated, are strictly forbidden(OAU,1968)’’

In Article II (2) of the OAU, National Park is:-

Areas exclusively set aside for the propagation, protection, conservation and management of vegetation and wild animals as well as for the protection of sites, land-spaces or geological formations of particular scientific or aesthetic value, for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public; and in which the killing, hunting and capture of animals and the destruction or collection of plants are prohibited except for scientific and management purposes and on the condition that such measures are taken under the direction or control of the competent authority(OAU,1968, p.3).

IUCN further classified protected areas in six-category system based on the extent to which human involvement or development is allowed. According to this classification the first category is the most conservative and almost completely free from human intervention or development, where as the last category is tolerant toward integrated development and conservation. In another word the first category faces least human impact while the category VI faces the most (IUCN, 1994). National park is designated under CATEGORY II as protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. IUCN describe national park as Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, and recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible (Ibid).

Protected area system in Ethiopia is the product of IUCN classification based on strict conservation principle though progressive regulations are now emerging. In Ethiopia two import proclamations to govern conservation area has been passed. These are Proclamation NO.541/2007, a proclamation to provide for the Development, Conservation and Utilization of wildlife and, a proclamation to provide for the establishment of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (proclamation No.575/2008) (EWCA, n.d). Proclamation NO. 541/2007 Art. 2-(8) define "national park" mean an area designated to conserve wildlife and associated natural resources to preserve the scenic and scientific value of the area which may includes lakes and other aquatic areas (Ibid.p.28). While (Regulation No.163/2008), prohibit any human activity like grazing, agriculture, bee keeping or honey harvest with in the park.

2.4.2 Conflict in protected area

Conflicts between wildlife and people, particularly those who share the immediate boundaries with protected areas, are common phenomenon all over the world (Shemwetta and Kideghesho, 2000). Nature conservation in Africa have been based on western notions brought to the continent during colonial era(Assebe, 2012) where protected area management is primarily based on the interest of the nation while people living adjacent to the protected area is subject to restrictive laws. Conservation without the consent of the local community creates negative perception towards wildlife and other protection categories which may result in conflict (De Boer and Baquete, 1998). Conflict in protected area is the result of diverse interests, goals and aspirations that individuals or groups within legally established and secluded environments have, which all too often resulted in either positive or negative impacts on the use value of the area (Andrew-Essien and Bisong, 2009).

As far as the overall conflict between “people and parks” or between human needs and conservation is concerned, human-wildlife conflict perhaps accounts the dominant place. As a result the attitude of local people toward wildlife is essential for effective conservation (NINR, 2011). The main cause of human-wildlife conflict is the result of increasing human population and competition with wildlife for the same declining living spaces and resources (FAO, 2009). Conflicts appear when the actions of humans or wildlife have an adverse impact upon the other (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource, 2008). Another factor in precipitating the conflict in protected areas is the feeling of marginalization, loss of source of livelihood and lack of concern from the park authorities. Difference in objectives towards the protected area has also contribution to the prevailing conflict. Example, the objectives behind conservation project is to conserve natural resources for long-term use, where as the concern of the communities of protected areas is the need to have a means of livelihood for survival (Andrew-Essien and Bisong, 2009).

Conflict between communities and protected area is also manifested in the form of claiming ownership of protected area. The claim of ownership sometimes result in violence reaction and counter action; Example, armed clash in Khao Yai National Park in Thailand (Ibid.p.124). In many developing countries human-wildlife conflict is a serious obstacle for the implementation of conservation objectives and management of protected areas. Human-induced problems

facing wildlife are land-use conflict, habitat destruction of the wildlife, blockage of migratory corridors and wildlife exploitation. Whereas wildlife related problems to local communities as a result of conservation are, marginalizing the local people, denying people access to traditional and legitimate rights, risk to human life through attack by wild animals and disease transmission that creates the perception that conservation is liability for local community (Shemwetta, and Kideghesho, 2000; Nishizaki, 2004; NINR, 2011).

2.5 Integrating community development and Conservation

Before going to see the likely integration of conservation, development and community based ecotourism, it is better to see their very concept independently. Conservation is an effort to maintain and use natural resources wisely in an attempt to ensure that those resources will be available for future generations (Yarrow, 2009). Whereas, the World Development Report (1992) defined development as the improvement of man and his living conditions which include improvement in the standard of living, healthcare, infrastructure etc. However, the key point is to decide on the right ways of conservation and development perspective. The concern is that should conservation carried out in expense of community development or community development should be achieved in expense of conservation?. It is also asked that if conservation and development can be achieved simultaneously with equal treatment (Andrew-Essien and Bisong, 2009). Pimbert and Pretty (1995) described that the traditional conservation see community or locals as a threat to biodiversity conservation, as a result the old approach was failed to ensure the conservation objectives and led to a new paradigm shift in conservation.

The “old” conventional conservation is based in the western concept of wildlife conservation which emphasizes in the notion of pristine ecosystems without taking the interest of locals in to account (Nishizaki, 2004). Because of the above stated reasons the so called community-based conservation (CBC) since 1980s has emerged which is participatory in its approach to attain conservation and community development simultaneously (Hulme and Murphree, 1999; Andrew-Essien and Bisong, 2009). Community-based conservation as voluntary initiatives involving locals either for the maintenance of habitats, the preservation of species, or the conservation of critical resources, and another outcome is improvement of social and economic welfare” (Little, 1994 cited in Kumar et al., 2011). In general and more precisely Community-

based conservation⁵ (CBC), is a means of achieving integrated conservation and development considering both concepts as complementarities rather than two antagonistic parties with recognition of human livelihood and conservation (Brown, 2002; Kumar et al., 2011).

Community based conservation is often said people oriented approaches (FAO.2007) which incorporates simultaneous interest of people and nature with verities of activities like integrated conservation and development, primary environmental care and collaborative management. Common objectives shared by all community-based conservation initiatives are, involvement of local knowledge and traditional values in conservation of biodiversity, foster socio economic development with biodiversity conservation, and decentralize power from the center to grass root level in the community in terms of management (Brown 2002). ICDPs(Integrating Conservation and Development Projects) are advocating conservation by creating opportunities of alternative income sources and socio-economic development to the community (Po-Hsin Lai and Nepal, 2006). To ensure sustainable conservation the protected area managers have to have full information regarding the socio-economic condition of the community, and protected areas has to contribute for the conservation of cultural and biological diversity (FAO, 2007).

Since the major objective of ICDPs is to reduce the pressure on a protected area through generating benefit to communities, it has at least three strategies to achieve the objectives. The first strategy is focus on strengthening park management through research which could be possible through development of park management plans and other related issues. Creating buffer zone can be put under this strategy which is sometimes taken as a protective band of land that encircles the protected areas (Gilmour and Van San, 1999; Po-Hsin Lai and Nepal, 2006; Kummar et al., 2011). In buffer zones certain limited exploitation of resources and activities are allowed like research and tourism (Gilmour and Van San, 1999). Compensation and substitution is considered as the second main strategy of ICDPs aimed to help those people who has no or few alternative means of livelihood apart from exploiting natural resources in the park (Po-Hsin and Nepal, 2006).

⁵ Some literatures use the term community based resource management (CBNRM) which recognizes that local communities are often best placed to conserve natural resources, as long as they stand to gain more than they lose from doing so(Elliot and Sumba, 2011)

Compensating economic losses of the community due to park establishment, to ensure alternative resources as substitute, and provide alternative means of income in place of already existing source of income in monetary or other means is also the strategy of ICDPs (Abbot et al., 1990). Substitute targets on specific resources, for example, if a park area was formerly used as a source of fuel wood, outside the boundaries might provide an adequate substitute. In cases where substitutes are not possible, ICDPs may provide alternatives access to new ways of earning a living in the form of direct employment, low-interest loans, improved access to markets, new skills training, etc (Abbot et al., 1990; Brown, 2002; Po-Hsin and Nepal, 2006). Finally the ICDPs give heavy emphasis to local social and economic development of communities along protected area boundaries through poverty alleviation and community development activities (Po-Hsin Lai and Nepal, 2006).

In order to materialize the objective of ICDPs, scholars in the field recommended the desired management approach relative to previous system on the ground. There are three types of protected area management based on the level of community involvement. First Unrestricted co-management that allows a comprehensive participation of communities in protected area management. Secondly, restricted co-management which restricts community involvement in certain areas. Above all, the Non-participatory management isolates communities from participation in management where most management decisions are taken by protected area authorities at central offices (IUCN, 2002). Community-based conservation reverses top-down approaches focusing on the need of community involvement in conservation (Kumar et al., 2011).

The attitude of local community towards the conservation area is a determinant factor for the successes of conservation. To this end, preparing ways to improve and establishing strong relationship with the community should be the priority to achieve sustainable conservation (Furze et al. 1996). Good knowledge of the attitude of local people is base for strengthening relationship with the protected areas which could be used as an input for policy and management action as well as future success (Weladji et al., 2003). Among five principles and guidelines adopted by WWF and IUCN/WCPA, the first one recognizes the contribution of local people for the maintenance of many of the earth's most fragile ecosystems, through their traditional sustainable resource use practices and culture-based respect for nature. Therefore, the

local communities should be accepted as equal partners in the development and implementation of conservation strategies that affect in the establishment and management of protected areas (Eagles, 2002). When tourism guarantee the desired benefit to local communities, development and conservation goals of sustainable tourism is more likely to achieve (Tosun, 2000 cited in Bith 2011).

2.5.1 Conservation and relation with Community Based Ecotourism

For long period of time protected areas become a place where conservation of biodiversity take place without considering the needs of local community which is termed as a traditional-top down approach to protected area. Protected area conservation is sometimes named “fortress Conservation” or fences and fine approach (Brown, 2002). Michel and Jules (1995) described that the traditional conservation see community or locals as a threat to biodiversity conservation. The main difference between classical approach and community based conservation is that the later recognizes social and ecological systems as complimentary (Abbot et al., 1990).

There are three widely accepted conservation paradigms. The first is said to be classical approach which view local people as threat to conservation effort. Second, the Populist approach who advocates involvement and empowerment of locals as an important agent for sustainable biodiversity conservation. Finally the Neo-liberal approach identifies market failures, weak institutional arrangement are the main reason for the failure of conservation objectives and believes that the failure can be solved through market mechanism. The paradigm shift in conservation led to the birth of so called “New Conservation” which is trying to harmonize development and conservation as complimentary rather than conflicting parties (Blaike and Jeanrenaud, 1997; Brown, 2002).

According to Brown (2002), “New conservation” can be put in to effect in three ways and all of them share the same view about involvement of communities, ideas about empowerment, and assumption about sustainability but with different strategies. First, Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), has been in effect since 1980s assuming direct and indirect⁶

⁶ No linkage between livelihood and conservation leads to the application of classical conservation in protected areas. Whereas indirect linkage between conservation and development

linkage between biodiversity conservation and the community (Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000 cited by Brown, 2002; Damian, 2005). Even though, it is community oriented, implementation in protected area remains conservation based. Secondly, Community based conservation, which based on populist paradigm or bottom up approach. The problem is that it views community as a homogenous and simple group (fail to recognize the complex nature of communities). Finally, Wildlife Utilization projects which has taken root since 1990s assuming the relation as a direct linkage and based its approach on neo-liberal ideology. In spite of the theoretical description of ICDPs, its application and effective local participation is sometimes difficult as well as empowerment is not as simple as said.

Conservation, tourism and development are not independent of each other rather they are strongly connected and communities living adjacent to the tourist destination are an integral part of this relationship. Environment is a corner stone for ecotourism development where the participation of people is required (Keyser, 2002). These mean, the issue of CBET cannot escape the alternative strategies of conservation explained on the above topics (from classical conservation to new conservation). WWF(2001) stated that any tourism project both in planning and implementation should incorporate all stakeholders like the local community and tourism enterprises, within and outside protected areas and the communication should be clear and transparent among the participants. In view of conservation theory and practice, CBET is recognized as *a form of community based natural resource management (CBNRM), a popular choice of activities in an enterprise-based strategy for biodiversity conservation, and a common element in integrated conservation and development projects (ICDP)* (Kiss,2004.p.232).

Besides the economic benefit CBET provides for the community, it is become a popular tool for biodiversity conservation by improving local attitude toward conservation and natural resource (Andrade, 2008). Since, CBET provides the linkage between conservation and livelihood to attain sustainability, it is mandatory for effective tourism planning and implementation (Kiss, 2004; Bith, 2011). In principle, a community-based approach to ecotourism recognizes the need of promoting both the quality of life of people and the conservation of resources (Scheyvens.

refers to crating alternative means of livelihood for people in place of biodiversity resource .Direct linkage mean creating dependent relation between biodiversity and people who benefit directly from biodiversity and intern people engage in conservation activities (Salafsky and Wollenberg,2000 cited by Brown,2002).

1999). The relationship between CBET and community based conservation is visible worldwide, consequently most international conservation organizations sponsor community based ecotourism projects (Kiss, 2004).

2.6 Strategies Required for Community Based ecotourism

In order to minimize the environmental impact of tourism and guarantee the conservation of natural resources; capacity building and fostering collaborative management of CBET and establishing environmental societies in the community is required. To see the true nature of CBET, community should be empowered in terms of, psychological, social, political, and economic means (Scheyvens, 1999). Based on the idea of Friedman (1992), Scheyvens (1999) make out four types of interrelated community empowerment: psychological⁷, social, political and economic. Even if four of them are equally important, economic and political empowerments are an immediate priority as far as this research is concerned. Political empowerment denotes that the communities are fairly represented in ecotourism business and their voice is heard, while economic empowerment is about the community's economic gain from ecotourism.

To empower the ownership of local community, CBET is expected to involve communities in planning and design of policies as well as developing community investment in economic system is highly needed. Scheyvens(1999) recommended that Community- based approaches to ecotourism need to recognize the significance of social aspects of tourism experience beyond merely emphasizing on environmental and economic impacts. Further, the WWF (2001) suggested measures can be taken to improve the performance of CBET. These are; - managing impact to reduce the environmental impact and achieve the benefit for locals, providing technical support, obtaining the support of visitors and tour operators, and monitoring performances and ensuring sustainability.

A. Role of NGOs; Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) play an ever-increasing role in CBET especially in developing world. NGOs are acting as a facilitator among the CBET activities and competing interests, like between communities and the tourism industry, and

⁷ Psychological empowerment is about improving self-esteem and confidence of the community. This is not an observable problem among Guji Oromo's who are extremely proud of their culture and tradition.

protected area managers and communities, etc (Gasemi and Hamzah, 2011; Kumar et al., 2011). They may also involve in conservation as partner with protected area administration and take charge of government-administered protected areas or provide services to a CBET enterprise or private company in terms of biodiversity conservation and water harvesting, etc (The Nature Conservancy, 2005; Kumar et al., 2011). According to Andrea (2010) NGOs should play a facilitators role; therefore the facilitation provides the instruments, whether material or immaterial form based on what the communities lack for empowerment and self-development of the community. NGOs frequently serve as trainers and sources of relevant technical information and expertise that other institutions involved with ecotourism may not have access to or time to develop. Furthermore, in some special cases NGOs provide services such as tour promotion and organization or lodging, transportation and food services (Ibid).

B. Protected area managers; they are peoples in charge of protected sites often biologists, botanists or wildlife specialists whose job is to protect significant marine and terrestrial sites and managing wildlife populations and maintaining visitor facilities. To set up successful CBET the managers are anticipated to work closely with local people and community leaders, tourism industry, government agencies and other related bodies (IUCN, 2002; The Nature Conservancy, 2005). Protected area managers will not achieve effective management of the areas with technical and financial resources alone without the cooperation of the community (Allendorf et al., 2006).

C. Tourism industry; the tourism industry is one of the most diverse and complex economic sector involving varieties of activities, such as tour operators and travel agents, staff of big hotels and small family lodges, handicraft makers, restaurant owners, tour guides, and all the other people who independently offer goods and services to tourists (Drakopoulou, n.d). For effective CBET, close cooperation of the State, tourism agencies and institutions, the tourism industry, host communities, NGOs and academics are highly recommended (jICA, 2011).

CBET also needs government support for the CBET development. Government should incorporate customary and local resource use, and control systems, as a means of fostering biodiversity conservation (IUCN, 2002). Government bodies include officials from different departments related with CBET planning, development and management (Yaman and Mohd, 2004). These departments may include tourism, natural resources, wildlife and protected areas,

education, community development, finances and transportation. Their main responsibility is providing leadership and infrastructural development based on their national as well as regional and local plan (The Nature Conservancy, 2005).

Supporting Players are consisting of mainly funders and academic institutions. Funders are institutions funding the CBET through loans or grants: financial institutions, including investment corporations; bilateral and multilateral donor agencies such as the World Bank, private investors; venture capital funds such as the NGOs and private banks (WWF, 2006; Odicho, 2010). They engage in organizing seminars and workshop for communities living near protected areas about the virtues of conservation, funding community conservation/development and sustainable use of natural resource (Odicho, 2010). They often engage in studies to carry out, facilities to build, infrastructure to create and people to train. Academic institutions and universities also involve in CBET mainly through planning and rising views on CBET activities. After all, the responsibility for the preservation of biodiversity is not the issues of government alone rather the participation of other stakeholders like supporting players, state, academics and visitors etc (WWF, 2001).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

As described above CBET requires active involvements of all stakeholders. Policies regarding conservation is differ from acknowledging the need of community for resource management to establishing isolated areas of protected land from any human interference. Conservation effort excluding the locals is no longer taken as best approach for biodiversity management. Nowadays it is community based conservation approach taking more acceptance which displace communities neither physically from protected area nor political from policy making (Adams and Hulme, 2001).

Therefore, sustainable environmental management needs to consider the participation of local communities by providing opportunities in management of the park and involving in tourism related activities. Community's activities can be in natural resource development like water management, forest management, wild life management and other tourism business. The objective of CBET in community based conservation approach needs close cooperation of all

stakeholders. Example, the involvement of NGO's in ecotourism project empowers the local community, improves biodiversity conservation or advocacy activities.

JicA(2012) stated that local government units (LGUs) are very important to regulate enterprises at the local level and coordinate efforts to set up CBET enterprises in the locality in cooperation with other organizations. In addition, all stakeholders related with community, environment and wildlife expected to engage in CBET initiatives.

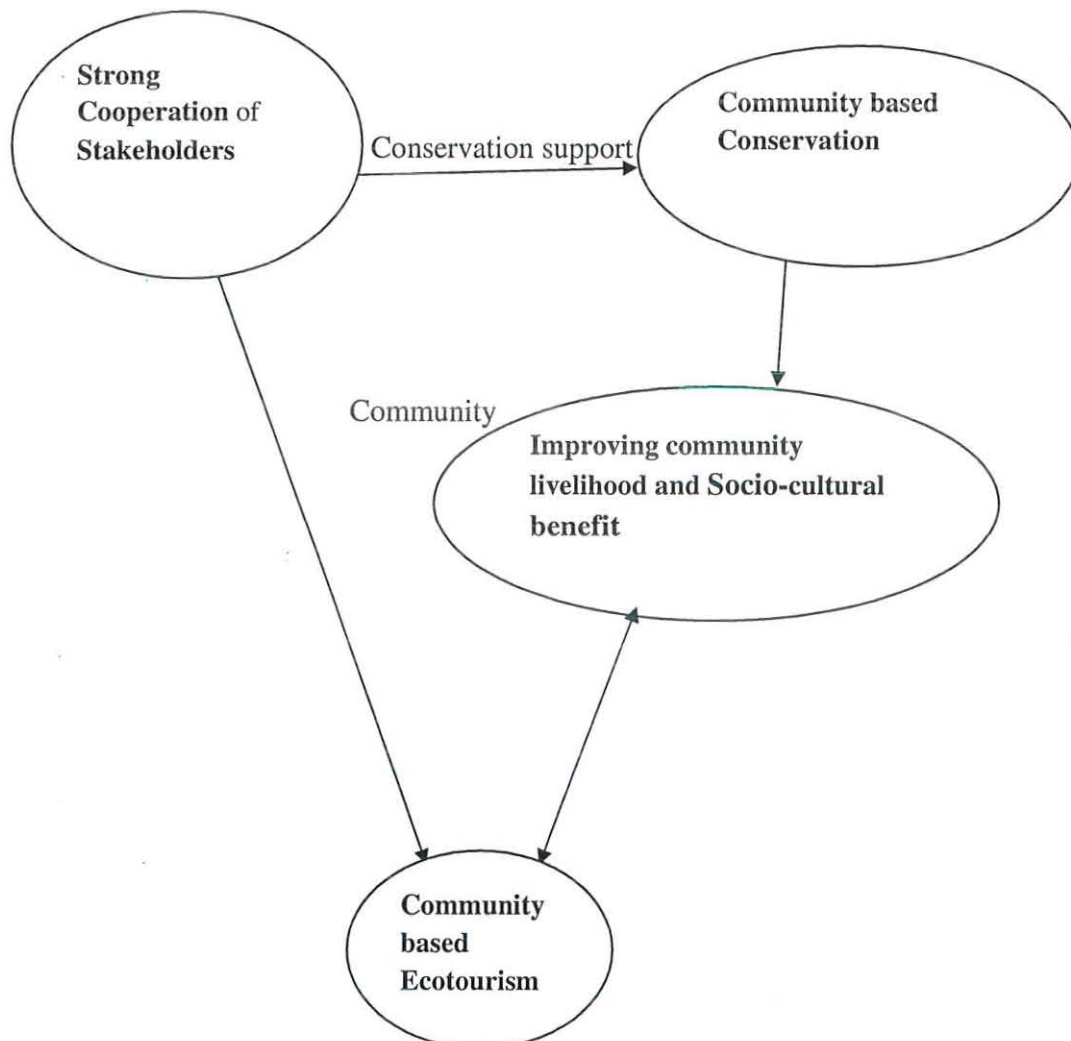


Figure 1. CBET Framework. Successful CBET depend on synchronization between Tourism, Stakeholders cooperation, conservation and community livelihood.

This study is conceptualized that CBET is means of achieving conservation by involving communities in community based conservation activities and natural resource management. To this end strong material and technical support from all concerned stakeholder is essential. Consequently CBET can bring an enhancement of local community livelihood, development of indigenous cultural values and sustainable conservation.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the Study Area

3.1.1 Location and Area of the Nechsar National Park

Nechsar National Park (NNP) lies within the floor of the Great Rift Valley (Figure, 2) located between latitudes of $5^{\circ}50'17.7''$ to $6^{\circ}02'11.0''$ N and longitudes $37^{\circ}32'11.1''$ to $37^{\circ}47'21.8''$ E with an elevation ranging between 1108m to 1650m above sea level (Fekadu and Zeleke, 2011).



Figure 2. Map showing the study area (Source: DIIV Consultant, BV, 1996).

NNP is found in the Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR) of Ethiopia, right after the eastern edge of Arba Minch city, at about 510 km and 270 km south of

Addis Ababa and Hawassa respectively. In relative location, the park is bounded to the east by Amaro Mountain, to the west by the city of Arbaminch and to the north and south by Abaya and Chamo Lakes respectively (Ducwort et al., 1992). The proposal to establish national park was first appeared in 1967 but the official year of establishment was in 1974 (Bolton, 1972; Kirubel 1985). The recommended area of the park after the survey was around 700 km² in 1966 (Bolton, 1972; Ministry of Agriculture, 1988). Today the official size of the park is 514 km² of which 436km² of land (85%) and 78 km² (15%) water (Hillman, 1993). NNP is the result of Blowers recommendation to develop five conservation areas in Ethiopia⁸. The park was aimed primarily to provide protection for Swayne's Hartebeest and Burchell's Zebra (Blower, 1971).

According to Assebe (2011) NNP can be divided in to three Zones. The dense forest near Arbaminch city on the western side of the park, which is home for arboreal and source of the forty springs, is designated under the first zone. This zone is main source of fire wood and charcoal for the city and means of income for fire wood collectors. The second zone is the Nechsar plain, which is the core area of the park where most herbivore inhabit, while serving as grazing ground for herds of Guji cattle. The last zone is where most Guji settlement and agricultural land is located along Sermale river up to Amaro Mountain. NNP is home for varieties of species of vegetation, mammalian, avian, reptiles and fish. The main large mammalian groups in NNP are Burchell's Zebra, Grant's Gazelle, lesser kudu, Greater Kudu , Gunther's dikdik , and Hippopotamus(For more, pp.42-446).

3.1.2 Climate

NNP has two dry season and two wet seasons, where the Indian Ocean wind brings rains during March to May whilst the Atlantic Ocean brings rains in September and November wet seasons (Clarrk, 2010). According to Krubel (1985) the rainfall in NNP is usually between 800-1000 mm. The mean annual rainfall for the period 1988-2008 was 822.28-mm, while the peak mean monthly rainfall was in April (159.7mm) and the lowest was in January (32.5 mm) (Workeneh, 2009). November and December are typically the coldest month when temperature decline to 12 C^o, in contrary January and March are the hottest months. Based on 1997-2007 report,

⁸ The remaining four areas are ; Game Reserve in Gambela, Game Reserve in the Sardo-Tendaho areas of Danakil, Marine National Park in Dahlack Island of the Red Sea coast in Eritrea, Controlled hunting areas in the lower Omo.

Workeneh (2009) has drawn that the mean annual maximum temperature is 31.05 C^o and the mean annual minimum temperature is 16.22 C^o in NNP(some sources extend maximum up to 35c^o).

3.1.3 Geomorphology and water bodies of Nechsar National Park

NNP lies in the ecological zone of the Great Rift Valley which is the result of volcanic activity (Hillman, 1993). Besides the landscape of the park, the geothermal spring to the east of the park provide an evidence for the geological and volcanic activity (Clark, 2010). Soil types in most parts of the low laying grassy plains, forest and bush land habitats are black cotton in color whereas the rugged mountainous parts have brown calcareous loam soil derived from volcanic rock. Part of the rift valley Lakes of Abaya and Chamo has been included under the NNP. Lake Abaya out of totally 1160km², about 55km of its shoreline is included under the park where as 41 km of lake Chamo (8.5%) is part of the park territory. The other smaller water bodies include Lake Haro Ropi (Lake for Hippopotamus in Affan Oromo), Kulfo river flows the western side of the park for about 15 km before ending in Lake Chamo. The Sermale which is very important river for Guji, flows in the eastern portion of the park and joins the Mio River.

3.1.4 Population of the study area

The study was carried out in NNP among Guji Oromo pastoral community who live within the park territory. Nechsar mean white grass in Amharic to refer the striking Pale yellow color of the plain grass (Ducworth et al., 1990). Guji call the white grass in Affan Oromo as *Marga addi*. On the other hand, Guji refer their settlement of Nechsar as Irgaansa or Ganda Irgaansa which mean land between two water bodies; Lake Chamo and Lake Abaya. The physical landscape of NNP is under SNNP government while the Guji oromo community residing within the park is administered under Oromia regional government.

In fact Gujji Oromo is found in both the Oromia and the Southern Nation and Nationalities of states. The Guji Oromo in the study implies those Guji's who live in the regional state of the Southern Nation, Nationalities and people of Ethiopia, particularly pastoral communities within the NNP. The official name of the village posted in Talkie village is read as Oromia Regional State, Borena Zone Administration in Galana Woreda Irgaansa Kebele. Scattered Guji settlements in Irgaansa village are Gode, Arda Gudina, Sullula, Mado, and Dhache.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

The qualitative research design was employed for this study. The need of choosing qualitative design was to study things in their natural setting, interpret phenomena and getting in touch with everyday social events (Lincoln, 2000 cited in Ospina 2004). Non- Probability sampling has used by which those selected were believed to be well informed about the problem. Particularly, purposive sampling was employed because respondents were chosen purposefully who were believed to have the required information like community elders, park and government officials etc. The most common sources of qualitative data include *interviews*, *observations*, and secondary data were used (Patton, 2002).

3.3 Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

Both primary and secondary data sources were employed for the study. The primary data was obtained through face to face interview with informants in the site, field observations and focus group discussion. Secondary data was collected from written materials and other sources. The nature of qualitative research requires data collection up to the point of saturation. Data saturation happens when the researcher faces no longer new information as continued collecting from the respondents (Simon, 2011). The point of saturation for the research was occurred by interviewing 40 individuals in Nechsar Guji village. In addition eleven interviews were conducted outside Guji village with government officials and experts. There was also three focus group discussion conducted in the same village. Since Guji is a homogenous society sharing almost similar view in case of NNP, the stated numbers of interviewees were found sufficient in addition to focus group discussion.

3.3.1 Source of Data

A. Primary Data

Interview was the main instrument used to collect primary data. Interviewees were peaked through "Snowball" manner starting from interview with anyone in the community to the most needed individuals or groups until the point of saturation achieved. The semi-structured interview was also carried out with the community members', government and park officials as well as experts.

At the community level 40 individuals who have had daily practices, experiences and attachment with the park were interviewed with semi-structured interview. Key informant interview was held with five community elders where as the remaining informants were interviewed in market place, farm land and while pasturing their livestock using semi-structured interview. Other Key informants were the park chief warden, two government officials from Gamogofa Zone, and two EWCA experts, whereas one communication officer from Oromia Regional State and one official from Oromia forest and wildlife enterprise were interviewed. In addition, out of six experts in NNP four of them contributed for the interview as well as five scouts. In-depth interview was employed to collect information from key informants on the issues and concerns of CBET, historical relationship of Guji and the park, conservation of wildlife, the future fate of the community and the park etc. Interview with the community members and focus group discussions held in the village were also deal with mainly in areas mentioned above.

Focus group discussion

According to Flowerdew and Martin (2005), focus groups can obtain opinions and experiences from a group of people in a more natural setting and allow more interaction between the researcher and participants. For the purpose of this study focus group discussion was applied in Guji village mainly with pastoralists and; participants for focus group discussion would be selected in cognizant to age, roles in the community, participation in the issues and activities associated with the NNP. Three focus groups were identified with six members each; two focus group discussions with elders and one group with youth. Focus group with women and girls was unsuccessful because it was difficult to arrange focus group with woman as they reluctant to take part in. May be due to cultural reason girls were not free to carry out discussion with someone else in their own will especially in translation. In addition, fear of researcher identity as some of them did in interview when many members were not in a position to offer genuine information freely. As a result the researcher carried out informal interview and discussions in Guji hut having coffee and traveling on feet to market or Arbaminch using boat to verify the formal responses.

Observation

Direct observation and site visits were made to supplement data from key informants. To observe events in the field the researcher stayed in the field (Guji village) while taking field notes in issues stated above.

Secondary Data: - Secondary data includes, park documents and other records or documents were used as the source of data. Secondary data was mainly obtained from EWCA library where previous researches, magazine, report and articles well reserved. In addition documents in Institute of Ethiopian Studies contributed for secondary data source in this research as well. Web sources like articles, researches and journals were equally important to accomplish the study.

3.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In spite of the chosen methodology, data analysis is the process of inferring meaning from data gathered. To this end, unlike the quantitative, qualitative research usually analyze data throughout the study (Simon, 2011). Here, thematic analysis was used in reducing large sum of qualitative data in to themes and patterns for analysis. Dey(2005) described that in qualitative research data can be classified as belonging to a particular group and comparison with observation do not belong to this group.

Qualitative data from households and stakeholders was summarized into specific themes and patterns on the issue of tourism, and conservation in NNP. The sort out information in categories they belong given meaning to those data obtained from primary and secondary sources through thematic organization that allows comparison between components of the same category and between categories. It means, obtained data was organized by questions in order to identify consistencies and difference. Example; the response for the first question obtained from all respondents. The organized formations were categorized in theme before giving meaning. For instance, one of the questions says; what is your concern in NNP? The response categorization based on their concern can be reduction of cultivation land size, loss of pasture land, disease transmission from wildlife, eviction (categories) etc. In another case, the main problem in most protected areas of developing countries is human-wildlife conflict which can

be categorized in relation to wildlife loss, wildlife attack on domestic animals and crop, disease transmission etc.

The response in each questions were compared with in the same categories and across categories. Finally, summarized and meaning given to the text (interpretation of the result).

3.4 Profile of Respondents

Sometimes in social sciences research characteristics of respondents have significant impact in explaining their views about the problem. In this part characteristic of respondents in view of age, sex, education, occupation of 40 community member, three focus group and 11 interviewees of experts and officials stated.

Table.1 Profile of respondents

Gender	Marital Status		Occupation
Male 35	Single	3	5 students 1 Kebele official, 1 agriculture extension worker and 28 agro-pastoral
	Married	32	
Female 5	Single	1	1teacher and 4 housewives
	Married	4	

There were only 5 females interviewed because females were reluctant to take part in interview upholding the patriarchal culture of the community which restrains them to act independently. Marriage is one of the most important social institutions in human life which may influence respondents view. Out of 40 respondents 36 of them got married which mean most of them carry responsibility in the family. The responsibility in the family and community level may affect the response given. Since the community culture appreciates early marriage and polygamy, majority of the respondents have already got married. In addition, based on the profile in table above it is possible to understand that most of the community livelihood is depend on the natural resource of NNP. The out most majority 28 out of 40 informants led their lives based on traditional pastoralism and agriculture in few areas that shows their live is total relay on natural resources in NNP.

Table. 2 Ages profile of Respondents

Age in years	Frequency	Remark
18-20	15	
29-45	20	
46-70	5	Key Informants
Total	40	

Table. 3 Educational profile of Respondents

	Frequency	Remark
Degree	No	
Diploma	1	
Certificate	1	Female
Primary(1-8)	10	
Secondary school(9-12)	7	
Illiterate	31	
Total	40	

Age and Educational level of the respondents are two of the most important characteristics to understand the view of community since it determines the maturity level of respondents to some extent. The working age group range from 18 to 46 contributed the lion share for the interview because they have active day to day attachment with the park as farmers and pastoral. It is these groups carry out most development activities in the park and participate well in time of conflict and cooperation as well. Those specified in range 46-70 were mainly community elders who have had long years of historical connection with park, representative of the community to negotiate in time of conflict with neighboring community and park administration etc.

In terms of education, Guji community is almost uneducated because the history of education is very recent in the park where grade 1-5 School has opened only in 2009. For long, Guj as pastoral remain illiterate since mobile schools not introduced but recently it is improving associated with the development of permanent settlement. There is only one female who completed grade 10 in Guji community staying away from NNP for years for education purpose. In the same way the educational, age and other social characteristics of participants of focus group discussion share similar experiences since the community is almost homogenous. Whereas, 11 interviewed experts and officials' profiles was stated in discussion chapter simultaneously.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Brief History of Guji Oromo in Nechsar National Park

Guji Oromo are pastorals who have been settled within NNP and have become isolated from the main body of Guji Oromo 40 km to the east (Greer, 1999). According to informants, Guji Oromo elsewhere is divided into four tribal groups namely *Uraga, Aladu, Mati and Okku*. Mati and Okku tribes are mainly populated in Bore and Kibremengist while *Aladu* and *Uraga* are the main Guji Oromo groups settled in NNP. On the other hand, Guji elders said that there is no single family or individual from Mati tribe and only one family from *Okku* tribe reside in NNP. Guji in NNP are further divided into clans and family headed by their respective clan chiefs. These are mainly, *Bala, Obbitu, Analtu, Woyisittu, Dhantu, Darartu, Masintu* etc. It is surprising to see each and every Guji identifies the identity of their relatives in which tribe, clan or family he/she belongs. The way Guji greets their own clan is different from greeting across other clan. More surprising is that Guji identifies each other clan based on the way they wear jewelers and sometimes hair style. Having seen any cattle, sheep or goat in the market or grazing field, it is easy for Guji to identify the cattle is belong to *Balla or obbitu* clan (they have recognized symbol for each clan in the ear or other body part of their cattle).

Guji elsewhere meets in Me'a Bokko around Gedeo (Dilla) in each eight years to attend transition of power in Gada system (political and social organization of the Oromo). However, the seat of Guji Gada is Hagere Mariam or Bule Horra in Affan Oromo. The government of Gada in Hagere Mariam appoints its representative to Nechsar Guji called Murra. Murra or a group of elders' carryout activities assigned by Gada in NNP but when serious issues arises the Murra may refer cases to Hagere Mariam. Everyone in the community adhere to any order from Gada in Hagere Mariam or Murra in NNP. Though majority of Guji are now protestant Christian, they accept the word of Gada as divine voice. Ignorance of the traditional system of Guji has deteriorating conditions in NNP. That is why, Farrelly (2011) underlined that acknowledging the role of informal institution for conservation and tourism is the pillar of achieving CBET.

One of the issues associated with Guji is where were they? And how they came to being in NNP? According to Getachew (2007) the history of Guji living in the Nechsar region dated back to 16th century. It means that the arrival of Guji in the park was coincided with the Oromo population movement of the 16th century which has no historical or oral record to proof this argument. There is also another argument that sees Guji as an encroacher and reduces their presence to 1990s, argue that when the Socialist government overthrown by the EPRDF and Guji use this vacuum in central government as an opportunity to settle in NNP. According to Abiyot (2009), the park management recognizes the presence of Guji long before 1990s but as any pastoral community staying for only short season and leave to other areas. One of my informant whom I interviewed in Arbaminch (Feb, 2013) recognizes the existence of Guji not only in and around Arbaminch but also along the way from Arbaminch to Elgo and Wozeqa in 1960s. In addition, there are lot of information to prove Guji presence in 1960s and 1970s.

Government officials (2 officials interviewed) in Gamo Gofa Zone view that Guji came to the area after the declaration of the region as NNP in 1974. Local government official in the office of Tourism and Government Communication told that *“there was no one in Nechsar to claim and complained about park establishment and no evidence of human presence in the area in 1970s* (January, 20, 2013). However, officials believe that Guji as pastoral used to come to the region seasonally but never established permanent settlement in the park except new experience since 1990s. Nevertheless, the response based on focus group discussion and interview shows Guji Oromo has slightly different stand in this regard.

Guji elders claim their presence in Nechsar back to Emperor Menelik and little before him saying *“our fathers even paid tribute to Menelik while they live in Bonke and Gandulo . We ourselves remember paying tribute to Asfa Mezo who was land lord in Amaro as representative of Emperor Haile Selassie. The tax collector during this time was said to be Chiqa Qoro”*(Abba Abire and Abba Nigusse, March 1, 2013). According to the elders Guji paid tribute to the imperial regime in two places depending on where they settled. Initially, those settled in Bonke and Gandulo were paying to imperial authority in Chench (oldest city in Gamo Gofa highland) whereas those in Irgaansa(Nechsar Plain) to Dilla and Hagre Mariam but latter both Guji groups were included under Amaro Kelle. However, it is difficult to verify as pastoral community who were moving here and there paid tax as equal as settled community before 1950s.

Guji informants claim that they used for pasture today's city of Arbaminch in Cheechaa (a sub-town of Arbaminch now called Shecha) and Siqalla, now Sikela (Getachewu,2007; Abiyot,2009). Guji present evidence to the name of Channo Dorga⁹ (10km on the way from Arbaminch to Addis Ababa) to their long time presence in the region as they claim the village was named after Dorga Done a prominent Guji elder. Literally, Arbaminch mean forty springs from which the city acquired the present name. Nevertheless, my Guji informant in Sulula village defended the name as originally from Guji influence whose evidence is that today's reverine forest and so called forty springs was habitat for Arbba (Elephant) and Defersa (Bufalo). As a result, Guji identify this place by the name *Arbba* or *Badda Arba*_(Forest for Elephant). However, due to the foundation of Arbaminch city and the resulted significance of spring (Minch in Amharic) to the city pulled the name towards Arbaminch from Bada Arbba. The view of Bada Arba or Arba is not well known even among majority of Guji informants with the exception of very few aged people. Actually, various sources written in the park show the existence of Elephant (Arba), African Buffalo and Rhinoceros in the very beginning but now these species were extinct.

Most arguments recognize the presence of Guji in the area during park establishment but their difference lie on whether the community was permanent settler or temporary dwellers. The wildlife survey carried out and recommendation given in 1960E.C, made the need of park establishment mandatory in Nechsar plain mainly because this area was "unspoiled and practically uninhabited by man, these plains abound in wildlife". According to MOA (1988) the area had very little human settlement along the periphery except few inhabitants around the park and few pastorals periodically encroaching in to the park. Bolton (1970) reported his observation that thousands of cattle's grazing in Nechsar plain and creating serious habitat degradation in 1969 and 1970.

The argument of this research is that the issue of conservation is abandoned in NNP in favor of dilemma sometimes political. Moreover, the value of traditional system and institutions is not yet assumed recognition for conservation and achieving CBET. For example, the Gamogofa administration sees the case of Guji as territorial aggrandizement rather than a threat to

⁹. Channo is a village under Arbaminch Zuria Woreda Administration. It has three Kebeles(district) named Channo Chalbbaa, Channo Dorga and Channo Mile.

biodiversity conservation while the Oromia Regional state is appreciating Guji to secure permanent settlement in the park without any care for the very objective of national park. Understanding the situation broadly is very helpful for effective conservation and enhancement of local livelihood through CBET. Little attention has been given to accommodate the local livelihood and conservation. As a result degradation of the park resources is very visible such as decline of wildlife, expansion of agriculture and deforestation which requires urgent implementation of community based ecotourism.

4.1.1 Nechsar National Park after 1980

Stafford and Telfor (1992) based on the visit of Bolton in 1969 and 1970, confirmed that thousands of cattle were being grazed in Nechsar plain causing severe degradation. In 1974 during park establishment, there were only few settlers in NNP where only temporary Guji hut and permanent villages on the eastern hills were seen on the slope of Amaro mountain (Kirubel, 1985). According to 27 interviewed Guji informants, these settlements were in Bonke hill, Wallo (Bada Gagura), Gada Bonke, Dache, Handarako, Talke(Golbo)¹⁰. Wallo is located around Arbaminch Airport still inhabited by Guji Oromo. Nechsar Guji identifies wallo by the name Bada Gagura mean forest for bee keeping in Oromiffa where Guji used to keep bee (*Gagura*) for honey production.

In 1982 the then government of Ethiopia resettled Guji out of the NNP mainly to Odoo Darba. However, this move was accompanied by force, thus it is connoted as evection by Guji informants and some sources. Hillman in 1988 as advisor of EWCO describing the necessity of resettlement in Action plan outlined that *'Resettlement of people from Nechsar National Park has proved difficult, necessitating the use of force, and incursion still occur (p.3)*. Assabe (2011) explained that the Guji were moved to Odoo Darba [some 15km to the east] where no road and medical center, as a result thousands of cattle and many people died. Actually, the problem of road and medical centre is not only confined to Odoo Darba but anywhere in the Park. When Guji loose the main park territory mean not losing their medical centre or any infrastructure rather pasture land. After the 'resettlement' (eviction), NNP was free from grazing.

¹⁰ Fro location of settlements see Nechsar National Map in chapter three under study area.

Nonetheless, during this time Guji still habited in the eastern side of the park along Sermale river valley while burning large areas of wild life habitat in dry season and grazing their livestock in the park besides some incidence of poaching (Stafford and Telfer, 1992).

The 1990 observation of Stafford after the resettlement reveled that problems associated with Guji had been resolved with the exception of small number of cattle less than ten across Nechsar plain was seen. The only human presence observed in NNP were those coming from Amaro crossing the park daily in large number to Arbaminch City. There were also small group of people in eastern side of the park in hot spring for healthy reason staying for few days but causing no damage. In addition, two small markets were occasionally held on the west side of Sermale river and near the hot spring (Stafford, 1990). However, the eviction created tension and ill-felling towards the park authority making park areas towards the north difficult to visit and patrol (Example, toward Haroo Ropi). In this period under observation by Stafford the most damaging was fuel-wood collection that would be transported for sell in Arbaminch city, home consumption and construction.

In 1991 the Derg regime was overthrown by the EPRDF, this critical event created a political vacuum in the centre and resulted in turmoil for brief period (Shibru, 1995). The political instability was an opportunity for Guji to return back to where they had been evicted and took brutal action against the wildlife, considering wildlife as a cause of their eviction (Abiyot, 2009). In Ethiopia, between 1991 and 1992, wild animals were indiscriminately hunted, forests were destroyed, and settlements were established in protected areas (Shibru, 1995). It means the revenge against protected area was a common occurrence in immediate days of the EPRDF takeover of power from Derg led government. As Nishizaki (2004), the communities evicted from in and around Senkelle sanctuary used the instability in the central government to return back quickly, and posed heavy damage to the property of sanctuary, and resettled themselves within the sanctuary. Since the previous government action deprived the access of local community to their traditional source of livelihood elsewhere in protected areas of Ethiopia based on the concept of traditional top-down approach for conservation, created prolonged antagonism towards protected area in the country.

The ERDF period brought the NNP administration in to the government of SNNP from 1991-2004. The EPRDF period is known by three important developments. The first one is the era of National Parks Rehabilitation in Southern Ethiopia Project (NPRSEP) immediately after 1991 when the European Union offered to fund wildlife conservation project that value €16 million. Its objective was to rehabilitate three national parks in southern part of Ethiopia: Nechsar, Omo and Mago national parks (Tadesse, 2004). It is new phase of resettlement question in new government but not the focus of this study. The second one is competition of claim over Park territory among two Regional states; Regional States of Oromia and SNNP (Assabe, 2011). It means conservation comes secondary in favor of territorial need. Then onward the Oromia region has been accused of favoring Guji settlement and undermining conservation effort by some officials. While the SNNP is challenged giving over emphasis to wildlife issues under estimating the need of local community and the very nature of human entitlement. The third development was transition of NNP administration to Dutch based African park Company (2004-2008) which has been criticized by some as protectionist. The transitions was on private-public partnership basis, mean that the park remains the public property under the state while its management run by private conservation organization or African Park.

Gazetting NNP was the primary concern of African Park; as a result responsibility of resettling the communities in the park was given to the state. In 2004, the state resettled the Guji communities who reside in the core areas of the park to Odoo Darba, Abulo Alfacho and other neighboring areas of the park. However, the Guji once again returned back and settled in an immediate vicinity of the core area but not yet entered the plain. In October, 2008, the African Park Network announced its withdrawal from NNP. It means a contractual obligation stipulated by APF for the government to resettle the Guji, would not be carried out (<http://www.conservationrefugees.org>). Since 2008, the park administration has transferred to Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA). This research argue that this period marked the beginning of the weakest ever administration in NNP where number of wildlife dwindling, deforestation and farming expanding in alarming rate, the communities around the park and park administration see each other in suspicion etc.

4.2 Settlement in Nechsar National Park

Today Guji is transforming from Transhumance Pastoralism to establishing permanent Settlement in Irgaansa Kebele (*Ganda Irgansa as Guji* to denote the whole settlement in NNP). Based on observation, interview and focus group discussion carried out, this research argues that the need of establishing strong settlement on agricultural base is very recent event, not more than 10 years (see, p.49-50). Nowadays, Guji Oromo reside in two main villages (Kebele) in and around NNP, viz. Oddu Darba and Irgaansa Kebele (*Ganda*). Since Oddu Darba is out of the traditional park boundary (15Km to the north east) not important for this research. Irgaansa Kebele (*Ganda Irgansa as Guji*) is to denote the whole settlement in NNP. According to the village source, Irgaansa village is further divided in to two main Zones (sub-villages); First, Talkie (*Golbo*) contains small settlements but posing greater pressure on Nechsar plain are Gode, Arda Gudina, Sullula, Mado, and Dache. The second sub Zone is named Hitu, confined to north of Nechsar plains with no or little influence on the park. The total population of the park is estimated 4000-5000. (see NNP map in p.26 for settlements described below).

Telkie (Golbo): is the site of Guji kebele administration (*Bulchiinsa Ganda Irgaansa* in Afan Oromo) where the main agriculture land located. Locally Talkie is named *Golbo* which mean a land between two hills namely, Gashe hill towards the Amaro border, and Sama'alo west of Talkie. Talkie area has been cultivated by Guji since 1980s (Staford, 1990) and the Kore people before even this period. The Guji from Sulula, Gode, Ardagudina and even from the remote Hittu and Darba are using Talkie as their farm land along Sermule river valley. Guji, especially elders not prefer to live in Talkie because, it is found in the frontier with Amaro ethnic group. As Guji informants (4 elders interviewed), "*Talkie is found in gorge where the Amaro people used to attack us from the top of the hill, as result for defensive purpose Guji prefer to reside areas near to the core area of the park as their main dwelling site*". So it is difficult to find settled elders in Talkie apart from visiting for market purpose twice in a week while Ardagudina and other scattered settlements near the Nechar plains are preferred for residence.

Talkie hosts market twice in a week (Tuesday and Friday) where Guji exchange milk and milk products with agricultural products (particularly Cocco or false banana) with Amaro neighbors. Guji from Zedo in Arbaminch Zuria woreda, Wallo or Bada Gagura around Arbaminch air port,

traders from Gidicho Island in Abaya Lake and Qorga from Mirab Abaya Woreda, and many other groups of people attend the market.

Ardagudina: Guji also established permanent village in Ardagudina, which is an undulated land at the top of the Haroresa ridge and preferred site for living for Guji. It is 15 minute walk from Ardagudina to the Nechsar Plains while minimum of 3¹/₂ hour from Talkie. It is the preferred site for settlement where Guji community is hoping to transfer their village sit from Talkie to Ardagudina. Nowadays, forest cleaning, deforestation and building of permanent homes are underway in Ardagudin. In addition, the only primary School from 1-5 for the whole Irgaansa Kebel, and one private clinic (in hut) are found here.

Gode, Datche, and Maddo

Gode is located at the tip of Harroressa ridge around Watchole south west of Ardagudina. The Guji claim that the land of Watchole where Gode located is the legal boundary between the park and community. As it was observed the settlement in Gode has been extending to the Nechsar plain and creating pressure on the plain. **Datche** settlement is part of Nechsar plain north east of Dagabule extending from Lake Abaya to Haroresa ridge, where lots of Zebra and Grante's Gazzele feed. In dry season number of household not exceed 70 where as the pressure is intense in summer. **Maddo** is also found within the Datche territory immediately down the slop of Harroressa ridge from Ardagudan. In dry season (December to March) there are few households in Datche, where as in Maddo every hut is free of human presence as observed. However, during summer or any time rain begins Guji return with their cattle from Sulula, Talkie and other parts back especially to Datche and Maddo.

In conclusion, need of establishing permanent settlement around the core areas (Nechsar Plains) of the park is creating the future fate of conservation difficult. For the defensive purpose and need of grass for their livestock, Guji is abandoning their settlements around Sermale valley for agriculture and moving toward the core area of the park for permanent settlement. This new development of land use change and settlement in NNP requires new conservation strategic intervention to contain the likely ecological crisis in the form of community based conservation.



Fig.3. Talkie village (Author Survey)

4.3 Potentials Resources of CBET in Nechsar National Park

The NNP has diverse natural and cultural resources that can be used as an eco-destination. The Natural and cultural potential of NNP is described in the following topics. In the coming topic cultural resource potentials is to refer only Guji Oromo culture in NNP.

4.3.1 Natural attractions of Nechsar National Park

i. Vegetation

Nechsar National Park lie within the Somali-Masai Regional Center of Endemism, an area of 1.9 million km² covering most part of east Africa between Tanzania and Northern Ethiopia (Ducworth e tal,.1992; Clark, 2010). The park is endowed with 800-100 varieties of plant species. Four/ may be five major types of vegetation can be identified in NNP.

First, the Somali –Masai Acacia –Commiphora deciduous bush land and thicket. It is the largest habitat or dominant vegetation type of the park in size and rich in animal species composition

(Duckworth, et al.1992). Secondly, the Somali-Masai Edaphic grassland, covers large part of Nechsar plains (Kirubel, 1985; Duckworth, et al.,1992). The Grassland covers about 270km², extending from Degabule in the West to the Harre hills in the east and from Dache in the north down to the course of Mio river in the south(Duckworth et al,1992). It is the potential grazing land of the park where zebra and gazelle as well as critically endangered Swayne's hartebeests entirely depend on this habitat.

Wooded grassland can be the third vegetation type which is found in most areas next to the bush and grassland on rugged mountainous area including top of the hills and on some low lying area and/or depressions. It provides both browse and grazing, supporting most of the wild animals in the reserve (Burchelle zebra, Greater kudu) especially during the dry season (Fekadu and Zeleke, 2011). Fourth, Herbaceous fresh water swamp and aquatic vegetation. This category of vegetation confined to Kulfo River swamps at its mouth in Lake Chamo inside the park and marginal vegetations of the two lakes (Abaya and Chamo) supporting different lake shore plant species(Ibid). Finally, the Ground Water Forest and Riverine Forest Vegetation, includes thick forest of the ground-water forest, Kulfo Riverine forest and associated bush land. The tallest forest occurs along, the riverine banks and in the forty spring areas (Clark, 2010). The riverine forest and evergreen groundwater forest in the western edge supports an exceptionally diverse range of species; includes big trees, which have closed canopy of natural forest. The forest is closely associated with the series of freshwater springs, known as "Arba Minch", meaning "Forty Springs". NNP has got all these scenic beauties but know in danger of losing it significance given the present rate of degradation associated with human encroachment.



Fig.4. Ground Water Forest in Forty Spring as viewed from Paradise Lodge (Source: Author)

II. Nechsar Plain

One of the spectacular unique land cover in the park is the plain feature which extend towards the east to the foot hills of Amaro Mountain approximately cover an area of 270 km². This is the major grazing habitat for wild animals such as Burchell's zebra, Greater kudu, Grantee's Gazelle and the endemic species of Swayne's hartebeest. It scenic beauty especially in summer season is very attractive for hiking. In addition, the 'bridge of God' which is an isthmus separates the two lakes also an authentic setup of natural beauty. It is a land between two lakes where the two lakes are situated 4.2 km apart with elevation difference of 61m.

iii Lakes

Lake Abaya and Chamo are the two largest rift valley lakes, portion of the lakes fall inside the park. Lake Abaya is the largest rift valley lakes in Ethiopia approximately 55km of its shorelines is part of the park. The sediments carried by rivers from highlands protect sunlight penetration and affect phytoplankton production in the lake thus it has relatively low productive while Lake Chamo being characterized as Eutrophic Lake and supports a high density of large crocodiles ,with a particular concentration of them at the beach known as "crocodile market". The lakes host the largest hippo population in Ethiopia and abundant fish including Nile perch and lakeshores areas are also an interesting component of the great biodiversity of the park (Nechsar National Park Report to EWCA, 2012). If the proposed ferry rides for tourist from Dilla to NNP in 1967 via Lake Abaya was implemented, it should have provided an amazing experience in addition to flora, fauna and the scenic splendor of the park (Ministry of Agriculture, 1980).

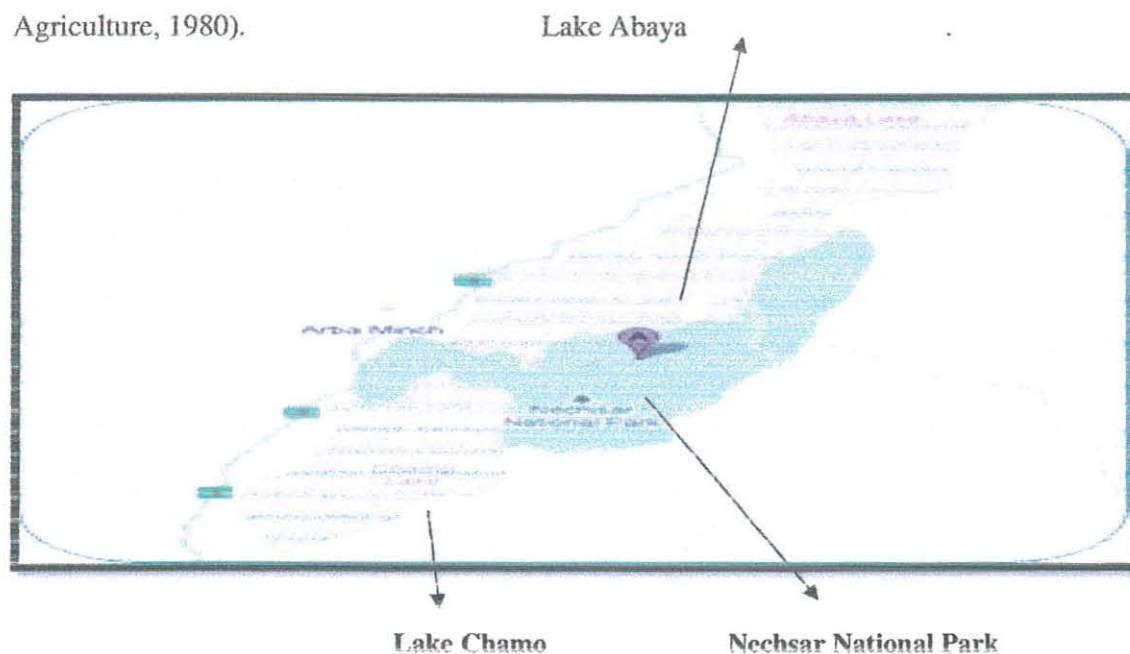


Fig.5. Source: <https://maps.google.com.et/maps?hl=en&clien>

IV. Crocodile Market

Located on northern Lake Chamo, its name is derived from the large population of Nile crocodile (endemic for Africa). Along with crocodile population, it is also the best site to view hippo herds and flock of birds (pelicans, lesser flamingo and other water related birds) of the country.

V. Hot springs: Located in eastern part of the park. The hot water flows from the foot of Mome hill (part of Amaro Mountain). It is considered by locals as having a healing effect of diseases and frequently used by local peoples of Amaro, Guji and residents of Arbaminch city. It has potential significance of upgrading to sauna bath for tourists as well. It would be attractive and sustainable if Guji Oromo engaged in this business having upgrading the status like Masai community does in Masai Mara National Reserve (Hellen Nukuria, April, 20, 2013).

VI. Hikes: Wonderful hikes can be undertaken along all sorts of routes, along many of the central steep hillsides and plains in the park. To this end, there are five camping sites for visitors but it needed to be more. The potential could be cultural camp site in Guji village which might be completely owned and led by the community. There is also possibility of ferry ride along the lakes from Dilla up to Nechsar (Guji) with wonderful experience which could be owned and run by Guji.

VII. Fauna

NNP is the home of varieties of species of mammalian, avian, reptiles and fish. It is estimated that 332 species of birds, and 84 species of mammals from which four of them are endemic to the nation found in the park. According to the park source, the major mammalian groups in NNP include, Burchell's Zebra , Grant's Gazelle, lesser kudu, Greater Kudu, Gunther's dikdik, Anubis baboon, Colobus monkey, and Hippopotamus. There are six endemic mammals have been identified in the park; Swayne's Hartebeest, White footed Rat, Ethiopian grass mouse, Mahomet's mouse, Crocidura Pheura and Scottish Hairy Bat (Kirubel, 1985). Spotted hyena, mountain reedbuck, black-backed jackal, side striped jackal, golden jackal, Defassa waterbuck, bushbuck, klipspringer, warthog and bush pig are still present and lions, Leopards, and cheetah are occasionally seen.

The small mammals are about 22-23 species and an estimated between 315-400 species of bird, of which 2 species are endemic to Ethiopia but famous, is NechSar Nightjar.

4.3.2 Cultural Resources of NNP

People inhabited in and around NNP are rich in tangible and intangible cultural resources which can be attractive for tourists. Here, the focus is mainly intangible cultural resources of the Guji Oromo people who reside in the park. They have attractive culture of traditional clothes, traditionally home-made utensils which could be potential source of souvenirs, living style and others are to mention a few. Here the focus is only on very attractive cultural music and dancing as potential tourism resource.

I. Cultural Music and Dancing as Potential source of CBET

Traditional music and dancing can be carried out in wedding, pasturing their cattle, ritual purpose, and other occasions. Most of them are conducted mainly among a group of young boys on the one side and girls on the other. Few of the music ceremony take 10-24 hours each.

Qoqqe is cultural music carried out mainly in summer season, which takes one week (7days in a week and 24hrs in a day) beginning in one village and ends in the neighboring village. The host collects butter, honey, and other food items for guests who will stay for one week. The music ceremony starts only after the blessing of local elders. The objective is to honor *Graaginbo* (like spiritual teacher), unless the occurrences of disaster is likely in the community.

Dokko, is a music ceremony carried out by girls during harvest or time of collecting grass for hut. Like qoqqe, the hosts prepare all necessary requirements and announce the deadline of Dokko to all girls in the village. Girls prepare their cloth and keep themselves in their respective residence. When the deadline arrives adults bring girls to the place of Dokko because it is unethical girls to come to Dokke alone. Then Dokko continue for 24hrs in each day without any tiresome.

Weedduu looni, it is the song herders sing as the cattle are teeming in line grazing on their way to the kraal or fold (Abiyot, 2009). It is also about giving praise for cattle, takes place mainly where the household has beautiful girls not yet married. Neighboring young boys enter to the compound of this household via cattle fold first and come to the residence with dancing.

If the family of the household allows the girls to join the song, girls' come out and other girls from the whole village join the ceremony. Then dancing continues from 7:00 PM clock in the evening to 6:00 am in the morning. There is allotted time for girls and boys (boys only listen when girls sing and vice versa).

In the same way the duration of music and dancing ceremony regarding wedding is depend on the way or process of marriage come to being. Based on the marriage criteria music and its ceremony are divided in to three. **Kadhdha**;- it is a marriage ceremony can be held after prolonged process of fulfilling the requirement of traditional marriage conditions. Initially a boy identifies a girl with whom he in love with, then he tells only to his father as he has got girl to marry. Following this, his father alone goes to the family of that girl without any pervious announcement to her family. Because things he may see in his way, what is happening in residence of girl's family determine the success of marriage.

Example, if his father sees someone carrying water or pasturing cattle in his way to girl's family mean a sign of good future of the couple. When father arrives in the family of a girl, if she was at sleep mean a bad fortune and that is the end of their marriage ambition. Whereas a girl is preparing coffee at the time of his arrival is good news, so they arrange deadline to come back with elders. This type of marriage has lots of preconditions and it may take more than 2years. Before exactly one week to the weeding, music and dancing starts for 24 in a day without tiresome and ends at the last day of the week around 4:00pm (10LT). It is may seems difficult for human being to dance and sing for 24hours a day and 7 days in a week but Guji does.

Haawadi, is the second type of marriage which can be arranged only with the good will of a bride and groom. This marriage needs reconciliation between the two families, since carried out without wedding and upholding cultural values. Four days after reconciliation, music to begin for 1day or 24hrs only unlike khadhdha. Finally, marriage by rapping has no good status as the two; as a result no music or dancing is allowed at all.

Hospitality of Guji Oromo

Guji is very hospitable people especially for those who eat and drink with them. Guji believe that anyone who eat and drink even once with their member, mean then onwards this man is the member of their family regardless of his background.

They have culture of washing feet of new comer to their village whatsoever the objective of his arrival is. *Illmomma*¹¹ is the main evidence, by which they acquire poor neighboring ethnic groups (mainly Amaro) as their children and give them portion of their livestock as the new member of their family. According to my Kenyan colleague from Masai, the tradition of Illmomma also exists in Masai community.

In summary, these mentioned above are at least evidence but there are lots of Guji socio-cultural intangible resources worth mentioned and need to be part of the tourism resources of NNP. Biodiversity and physical attractions of NNP for ecotourism development is an exposed fact. However, to accommodate the natural potentials of the park in to the very principle of sustainability, the inclusion of human or cultural aspects of the communities affecting the park is required. The community under study has got a lot of traditional input for authentic cultural attractions capable of diversifying the need of tourism industry apart from relying only in the notion of wilderness alone. Communities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda shares similar story with Guji living within the park, but others especially Kenyans are using indigenous culture as input for CBET as case study in the coming topic shows(p.65).

4.4 Farming in Nechsar National Park

The notion here is based on the fact that pastoralism is compatible with wildlife conservation relative to agriculture. The research argues that Guji is transforming towards agricultural way of life very recently since 2005, and this convert is serious concern for future wildlife conservation in NNP which needs intervention.

Kirubel(1985) observed the existence of temporary Guji residence in Nechsar plain while permanent villages on the eastern hills were seen on the slope of Amaro mountain. Temporary settlers are not in a position to carry out sedentary agriculture. Permanent settlers on the slope of Amaro Mountain were likely to be Amore people (Kore) who were agriculturalist during that time. According to Stafford (1990), Guji Oromo was also later started farming along Sermale river valley.

¹¹ Illmomma is different from Gudiffecha because Gudifecha is acquiring from the very childhood where as Illmomma is acquiring anyone who is unable to sustain his life, for whom Guji give cattle and right to be family.

In the beginning as 15 informants told, farming was regarded as a work of poor people who had few numbers of cattle. These poor Gujis' used to cultivate land across Sermale river while the wealth remain in Nechsar plain as pastoral. Agricultural products had brought about by Amaro people in exchange (bartering) of milk and milk products. The main meal item of the time was "Petele"; it was prepared from cattle blood having sacked at the neck of cattle alive. The sacked blood could be cooked like powder. Butter preserved for long time looking yellow color could also used as food. They said that there was no shortage of milk or milk products to seek another meal source in earlier time of Guji in NNP.

Guji understand the importance of crop cultivation and began to engage in huge scale since 2003. Especially after 2008 when both presidents of Oromia regional state and SNNP settled issues politically, the move towards establishing permanent settlement intensified. It was also since 2008 Guji began to construct home, milling machine, school and other means of permanent settlement began. Nowadays, every Guji household in Irgaansa Kebele owns farm land around Sermale valley with effective supervision from kebele administration. Nonetheless, out of the Sermale valley the Kebele administration has no control of land distribution, whoever can clean forest and declare its own plot of land. Blower (1971) to show the scale of deforestation in 1960s said that in Ethiopia by customary law, if a man cleared a patch of forest, the land was his own. This expression still works in NNP outside the fertile Sermale valley.

Nowadays, Guji cultivate products mainly Maize, and banana, mango and avocado to some extent, as well as false banana (enset) rarely. But still their main source of livelihood is cattle, sheep, goat, and donkey (the significance of donkey is increasing since its introduction in recent years). There are only two mule has observed which has come to Irgaansa to experiment if it is compatible with the environment; whereas no single horse is found in Irgaansa Kebele.

In Conclusion, it is to argue that agriculture is very recent phenomena in Guji life which may make things worse in NNP. Unchecked expansion of settlement without any technical and environmental training support from either of the two regional states or NGOs left the fate of NNP in position of uncertainty.

Therefore, Guji in state of change, which mean they are no more nomads rather a transhumant¹² pastoral approaching to establish strong settlement. Hence, it is high time to think of community based conservation and CBET before it is too late. Pastoralism is to some extent compatible with wildlife conservation where as agriculture intensifies human wild conflict because it can not fit with maintaining wildlife (ODI, 1999). Since Guji is becoming agriculturalists, it is not difficult to predict the future. In Kenya for example, the less threatened-protected areas are in arid and semi – arid parts of the country and surrounded by pastoralists as compared to agricultural settlement (Kiringe and Okello,2007). Therefore this study believes that the transformation of Guji from pastoralism to agricultural economy in NNP is serious threat to biodiversity conservation.

4.5 Culture and Conservation

Yaofeng,etal.,(2009) based on the Tibetans culture have examined the contribution of indigenous culture for conservation. Guji has some necessary culture to endure conservation as recorded in some studies. Guji believe that killing wildlife invoke severe infliction on his family, clans and offspring. In addition, hunting wildlife for food is a sign of poverty and sometimes results in marginalization in social interaction in cases of marriage arrangement, rituals, and rites of transition (Assabe, 2011). However, the belief in infliction sometimes associated with hunting is only confined to few species which has identified characteristics as discussed in pp.59-60 of this research.

Guji has conservation means to adopt with changing environmental situation of change in water and grass for their livestock. Example; *Belessa*, is conserving water for their livestock in dry season mainly in Sarmale river valley. One or two households dig hole for watering livestock and the hole is washed minimum once in a week through *Bole* to prevent contamination. *Diribba* is another way of water conservation around Nechsar plain having returned back from Sarmale area in summer season. They store rain and flood water in the big hole between March to May rainy season. This water in the hole is mainly used for human and livestock drink which stay around human settlement. Guji return to Nechsar plain only if Diriba is filled with water.

¹² A transhumant pastoralist is those type of pastorals who are not nomadic, which instead maintain permanent settlement, but who do not move their livestock seasonally in order to exploit areas away from their permanent settlement. The entire village rarely moves with the herders(Halcrow,1989 cited in Jacobs and Schloeder,1993)

As a result, they check the water holes beginning of April if the rain fall begins. After December when Diriba begins to dry and tick infestation increases on the plain the Guji return back to Sermale valley once again and vice verse.

Traditionally, to prevent drought and shortage of water and grass for pasture, Guji elders carry out Judo like game called *Harrousa or Boku* at the hill top annually in September and October. Moreover, in the ceremony at *Koba Mountain*¹³, Gada representatives curse part of the forest cover or vegetation for the reason researcher not find exactly. In the cursed land no one is allowed to pasture, to collect any kind of wood and let the area as reserved. It is a good tradition of conservation despite the cultural objective is not for conservation. **Dhabayu**; Guji also has got the tradition of Dhabayu which is very similar to Erecha where they praise god to ensure sustainable environment for their children and livestock.

In summary, Guji has the tradition of water and forest conservation for the sake of cultural reasons. For sustainable conservation in NNP upgrading already existing indigenous knowledge of conservation is advisable. This new conception is the underlying precondition for the development of community based ecotourism. In spite of having the potential of indigenous conservation, there is no attempt by Guji to conserve wildlife in NNP and also no attempt by any institution or government body to initiate community based conservation observed. Therefore, given present ecological crisis, it is possible to conclude that despite indigenous knowledge Guji has weak recode of conservation and low level of awareness to that matter. In this case Guji elders blame the youth for abandoning cultural values of conserving wildlife and becoming antagonistic to wild animals.

4.6 Challenges of Implementing Community Based Ecotourism in NNP

So far the major challenges of NNP have been fire, poaching, illegal fishing, overgrazing, removal of wood for fuel and construction, cultivation, unlawful entry and ticks. These problems are still persisting even adding more problems. For the purpose of this research, the main challenges NNP is facing to implement CBET are analyzed below.

¹³ There is no Mountain named Koba up to the knowledge of researcher. It is a place where cursing and traditional Judo occur.

4.6.1 Challenges of Range Management, Demarcation and Legal Status of NNP

According to the ministry of Agriculture and other earlier sources indicate that the proposed size of NNP was around 700km² (Ministry of Agriculture, 1980). Nowadays the official size of the park is 514km² and even very smaller than official size as Guji community. According to this research, there is no consensus among Guji and Oromia region in one side and SNNP and EWCA on the other regarding the exact size of the park. The African Park Network¹⁴ provided temporary solution by demarcating the Dache area and the Haroresa Ridge as the boundary between the park and Guji until the political solution arrive from the centre (see NNP map in, p.25). Guji has a documented evidence of this demarcation while the park has no copy of the agreement.

To this end, all interviewed (40) informants claim that the exact boundary is what they signed with the African Park despite officials in SNNP call the agreement as “ temporary”. To denote this demarcation one scout said *“African park left its legacy and the problem not to be solved forever”*, his idea is also strongly shared by EWCA and other officials’ apart from Oromia Region. The other recent development related with the park size was, informal demarcation made by Ato Shiferawu Shigute and ex-president Abba Dulla Gamada (president of SNNP and Oromia Regiona respectively) in 2008. According to 2 EWCA experts, the presidents agreement was equally complicated the problem as African park’s offensive demarcation out of their mandate.

Leaders of the two regional states approved the African park boundary with some modification and preconditions. All the park workers (8 informants) and EWCA agree that the presidents’ demarcation was political and has nothing to do with conservation and management of protected areas. As far as the present situation is observed, it is obvious that the boundary set by the presidents was not aimed at enhancing community based conservation or ecotourism rather to calm the expected crisis. Scientifically to achieve effective conservation it is mandatory to predict the minimum size of habitat for species survival (Range). Therefore, understanding the behavior of different species is very essential because some species are more sensitive to habitat loses than others (Melissa.etal, 2013).

¹⁴ African Park Network was Dutch private company administered NNP from 2004- 2008 .

Factors affecting minimum area requirements vary with species. These factors are depend on landscape factors such as the quality of non habitat portion of the landscape and the pattern (fragmentation) of habitat destruction as well as species characteristics such as reproductive rate and rate of emigration(Fahrig cited, 2001 cited in Melissa, 2003). Studies show that reproductive rate has the most effect on the amount of habitat needed for population persistence, followed by the rate of emigration.

The general principle of wildlife range reveals that species with low reproductive rates and species exposed to extinctions requires more habitats, than species with high reproductive rates. Based on this principle, one wildlife expert in NNP recommend the need of extending size of the park taking the rate of Swayne's Hartebeest's way to extinction and current reproductive rate is concerned. In addition, he justifies that any wildlife needs the breeding, reproductive and feeding sites to sustain. It mean that these three sites are occupied by domestic animals and human in NNP, thus the herbivores (Swaynees) flee their site and face carnivores out of the reach of human intervention because of limited range size(which mean herbivores and carnivores cannot sustain in the same range). In contrary Bourn and Blench (1999) depict that since wildlife is fugitive and some species migrates outside the delimited areas of park boundary, the solution is only lie on involving community participation on wildlife management. More than anything wildlife and environmental conservation is not the concern of certain regional states rather global and Tran-boundary. Example, Gambela National Park is conserving the endemic white eared Kob species but its range is both in Ethiopia and south Sudan. Duckworth (1973) affirmed that white-eared Kob move between Gambella and the Sudan depends on seasonal variation. In other word, the states need to look after jointly any actions against the very existence of this species in both countries.

The NNP chief warden takes moderate position saying whatever the size of the park; the important thing is legally accepted body of the park based on the study of wildlife ecological monitoring experts and scientists as well as community experts. It is only after this type of scientific study the park can be divided along zones for human, livestock and wildlife and other services. All respondents' in NNP (10) and Gamogofa Zone Tourism office agree that the main problem arise, because NNP has no legal status unlike Semien Mountains National park to carry out community and ecotourism development.

However, in Kenya three quarter of large mammals spent part of the year outside the protected area in spite of having gazetted parks (Bourn and Blench, 1999). Hence the solution still lies in awareness creation and participating communities in wildlife and other sector of natural resource management. However, it is obvious that lack of legal status of NNP prevented the park administration to design management plan and community works etc.

4.6.2 Human Wildlife Conflict

Since livestock herding and agriculture is the main source of income and livelihood in developing countries, human-wildlife conflict is more experienced in the region for natural resource consumption which brought wildlife under serious threat (Boer and Baquete, 1999). Human wildlife contests begin when livestock try to win food and water against the will of wildlife in NNP. Deforestation for settlement and agricultural purposes together with hunting created serious obstacle for wildlife population and their habitat in NNP (Wokeneh, 2009). Though the cause is not yet clearly known, some wildlife species are declining in number. Since the objective of establishing NNP was primarily to conserve Swayne's Hartebeest, it has given due attention in the discussion.

A. Dwindling of Wildlife

Even though NNP is primarily established to conserve the endemic Swayne's Hartebeest (Duckworth, etal.1990), it is in for front leading to extinction. Therefore its case is the main focus of this topic. In 1974, 90 individuals Swayne's Hartebeest were tans located to NNP (Lealem, 1974). However there is no evidence of follow up for how the trans-located individuals were integrated to the original inhabitants. Key informant Abba Abire in Guji challenged that the trans-located were not more than 15 as he had observed while experts brought the Swayne's Hartebeest in 1974. He added that the number of Swayne's Hartebeest were more than Grant's gazelle before the arrival of new Swayne's' in NNP. Three Guji informants believe that the trans-located Hartebeest brought with them diseases and left many original species to death. They also refer the four remnants are the original Hartebeest survived (Jan, 2013 census reduced the number of Swayne to 4 individuals).

Majority of local respondents (28) argue that the present deterioration of Swayne's Hartebeest population is the result of two main causes. First, the removal of Guji from the centre of the park, which mean before their removal Carnivores fear to reach the Nechsar plain since Guji protect their livestock. As a result herbivores (Swayne's and others) live simultaneously with livestock without being hunted. But now a day, Guji left the plain and herbivores faced carnivores being defense less. Unlike other herbivores, Swayne's hartebeest fear approaching human being to escape carnivores while others like Grants Gazelle and Zebra retreat to Guji settlement pasturing with livestock. The Second reason is the prevalence of tick in NNP where unlike other species Swayne's Hartebeest is not capable to resist tick infection (4 experts in the park also believe). Guji elders assume "*in dry season we used to set fire to control tick infection and to secure fresh grass in summer which is now labeled as illegal*". The result is high prevalence of tick and dwindling of Swayne's Hartebeest. In general, Guji Oromo informants defend that Grants Gazelle, and Zebra are in good number because their proximity to human being.

The conception in the park is different from what the community argues. Five interviewed members of the park examined issues associated with carnivores in a way that carnivores have existed in the park for long time but the very recent development is might be immigration from other areas due to deforestation and loss of forest cover in neighboring areas. However, still the argument of park expert is related with range size.

They challenge that, Carnivores inhabit in forested areas of the park while herbivores prefer the grassland in Nechsar plain; mean the range of these two species is different. Since livestock and human being affect the Nechsar plain, herbivores particularly Swayne's Hartebeest leave the plain to forested area to escape where carnivores habit. In addition Swayne's Hartebeest cannot identify the safest place to its kids, because of this the Swayne's and their kids are venerable to carnivores attack. Their conclusion is that unlike earlier days the range of two species is now mixing. In case of mixing herbivores which fear to approach human being become in trouble to sustain. Morris (1967) cited in Ducworth et al.1992, observed more number of Swayne's hartebeests than Zebra, 104 and 96 respectively. But the January wildlife census shows only 4 individual hartebeests and 1032 Zebra respectively. Based on various source the park revealed the status of Swayne's hartebeest from 1967- 2011.

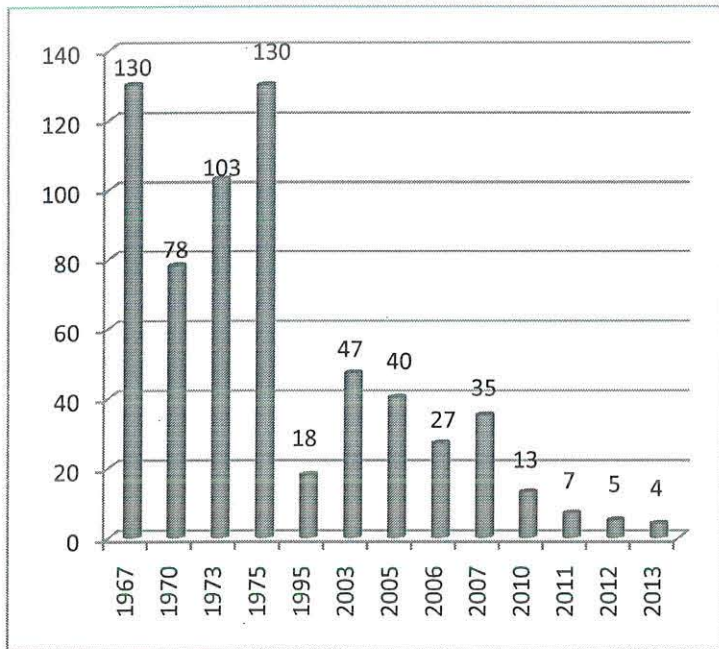


Fig.6 Status of Swayne's Hartebeest in Nechsar National Park

NNP has lost 43 out of 47 individuals of Swayne's Hartebeest since 2003. If Guji practice poaching as few park members says, there is no cultural or ritual significance of hunting Swayne's Hartebeest selectively as this research bare. But Guji has the tradition of hunting big game which had been extinct like Elephant. There might be some sort of ecological deformation or disease has been spread (needs scientific investigation). If it is not contained soon, NNP is due to lose its very objective of foundation after few years later.

According to the park sources and observation, Crocodile and Hippopotamus are also waning. The breeding site of Crocodile is mainly confined to the confluence where Kulfu River joins Lake Chamo. Construction in Arbaminch airport and in other upper stream areas together with forest degradation, Kulfo river transports huge materials from upper course. Consequently, at the mouth of Kulfu river the confluence is filled with sand and soil like delta where crocodile used to reproduce. As a result the crocodile may have changed habitat to suitable place or dwindling. As compared to previous population, the number of Crocodile is few to see even in crocodile market¹⁵. The case of Hippopotamus is also related with man-made habitat

¹⁵ Crocodile Market is a place where crocodiles being seen naturally. While Crocodile farm is for captive breeding.

destruction. The decline of Crocodile and Hippo has little or nothing to do with Guji community. It is reported that with the exception of recent development leopard is among diminishing species where as the remaining species are kept in good status.

B. Disease Transmission

This topic is based on the view that disease and tick transmission from domestic animal to wildlife is one of the rationales of resettlement and wildlife decline in NNP. Whenever wildlife and domestic animals share the same space, there is a high risk of disease transmission one to another (Bourn and Blench, 1999). Many wildlife diseases are the result of “spill over” from domestic animals in to wildlife or vice verse (Gibbon, 2009 cited in Afewerk, 2011). The problem facing both wildlife and domestic animal in NNP is tick infection where grazing of domestic animal in Nechsar plain is capable of transmitting disease to either side . There was an incidence of Rabies and Anthrax in NNP in 1988 and 1994 respectively (Afewerk, 2010). It is possible to control ticks on cattle through acaricides(a substance that kills mites and ticks) where as wildlife maintain ticks which is difficult to control(Griotenuis,1995). In NNP the case is more sever because even domestic animals are not well protected despite some intervention from Oromia region and NGOs.

Four Wildlife experts interviewed in NNP were not sure about the source of tick in the park. But see the presence of huge cattle population on the plain as the cause of widespread tick infestation. Experts’ state, species like Bucrabelle Zebra and Grants Gazelle are resistance to tick infestation where as Swayne’s Hartebeest (kid) is very weak to sustain in park due to prevalence of tick. Nevertheless, studies carried out in Uganda reported no mortality in-wildlife as effect of tick or tick-born disease. Transmission is not only confined to domestic animals, Wildlife also transmits disease to domestic animals like malignant catarrhal fever which is transmitted by wildebeest calves in the calving season (Bourn and Blench, 1999).

In summary, Pastorals minimize the disease effect through mobility escaping the seasonal nature of some infection like Guji does in NNP. Now Guji community is establishing permanent settlement avoiding mobility; thus it requires serious involvement to deter disease effect in either side. In permanent settlement, the relation between wildlife and domestic animal is permanent throughout the year, thus the transmission of disease and decline of wildlife species

become inevitable. Human-wildlife conflict is evident in NNP which is costing wildlife and livestock and resulted in antagonistic perception towards the park. Therefore, to make conservation effective it is advisable engaging communities in wildlife based economic gains in the form of CBET and conservation.

4.6.2.1 Perception of Guji towards Wildlife in NNP

The incidence of poaching has been reported in Nechsar even before the declaration of the region as national park (Blower, 1969; Bolton, 1971; Kirubel, 1985). Asebe (2011) stated that Guji traditionally never kill wildlife, if someone kill, the killers would be 'uprooted' and faces generational discontinuity which is punishment from god (can't give birth of Child then onward) and encounter social discrimination. Conversely, the park still talks about the incidence of poaching but recognize its decline compared to previous records. I agree that traditional belief of killing wildlife brings god's punishment and social prejudice in Guji still exist but restricted to only few species and circumstances. Guji tradition forbids killing warthog and pig, because it is believed that these two species owned by and carry evil spirit.

The tradition also prohibits killing very special Kudu which is the blessed one. Its special feature is the presence of cup or grass on its head (not visible to anyone except for some Guji). The killer of this Kudu needs an immediate repent in huge religious ceremony with animal scarifies unless to die. If the repent is accepted by god, this man will be blessed and act as a witch from then on. On the contrary the tradition used to appreciate hunting of big games like Elephant, lion and Rhino for cultural purpose and the hunter assume the honorary title called *Midda*. Except lion, Elephant and Rhino had been extinct from the park may be attributed to this culture. Elephant hunters used to acquire the title of *Abba Guracha* while Lion hunters to take *Abba Dalacha*. When these heroes pass away, the traditional funeral ceremony used to take five days to their honor.

In contrary the tradition had welcoming features for wildlife especially to Grants gazelle and Kudu. Domesticating Kudu has believed to be important to prevent cattle from disease infection and human being from disaster. Nonetheless, Guji elders say this tradition has been banned due to pressures related with the park. Guji also acknowledge the presence of cattle in Nechsar plain or grassland is very important for wildlife, because cattle disperse tick from tall grasses in turn

weak herbivores like Swayne's Hartebeest graze without serious difficulties of tick presence (needs scientific inquiry). As observed poaching is not serious problem in NNP rather overgrazing, expansion of settlement and agricultural land account the most. Despite Guji normally do not appreciate hunting most wild animals, youths sometimes abuse the tradition and there is also growing perception in community that wildlife is a cause for eviction and loss of livelihood.

4.6.5 Livelihood Needs in Nechsar National Park

Guji pastorals use lake Chamo and lake Abaya (Abbayya Gurraattii and Abayya Diimtuu in Guji respectively) for watering their livestock. They believe Abayya Gurratti has medicinal value for livestock. Guji believes these lakes particularly Chamo has the power to clean infection because of its salty nature. *Bolee*, a white salty soil in Tabala around the hot spring is also supposed to have medicinal value for cattle. I have observed when Guji livestock compete to lick *Bolee* around Tabala despite the park against the move. Another watering site is the Sermale river especially during summer season. Even in summer Guji water its livestock in Lake Chamo or Abaya at least once in month to prevent occurrence of disease as they perceive.

According to Guji informants and Abiyot(2009), almost all Guji have two houses, one in and around Nechsar plain for rainy summer called *mana gannaa* whilst shelter beyond Haroresa ridge and Sermale valley for dry winter season known as *mana bonaa*. Accordingly watering, grazing and pressure on wildlife in NNP vary with seasonal meandering. In another word, Guji stay away from the plains in dry season and return back in summer. That is why the park and officials in Gamogofa Zone asks what is the reason of returning back to the plain if they sustain in severe dry season away from the park? Guji answer that in dry season, Nechsar plain is full of tick and almost complete loss of grass in dry weather. Whereas in summer Sermale valley is under threat of malaria and tsetse fly besides water logging and flood. In addition the park is a land for cultivation, honey production and other livelihood source (see p.49).

The problem is unchecked rate of growth in human and cattle population, as well as agriculture that make the future of NNP unstable. The partial census result in January,2013 shows 730 household head and 1001 house wives have been counted. Guji is polygamous society having at least five children in single household connote at least 5000 population in Irgaansa.

In 2010 the total number of livestock in 9 villages of Gamo-Gofa Zone around NNP was 16,734, where as 21,320 only in single Irgaansa village (Fikadu and Zeleke, 2011). NNP scouts (5) estimate more than 50,000 livestock population but no documented data has been given in Telkie(seat of Guji village) for researcher. The estimation was by considering minimum of 50 to maximum of 1000 cattle (Abba Shana're in Gode has this number) per capita in Irgaansa. According to village administration source there are 27,500 cattle has taken injection offered by PATTEC, in January, 2013. In other word the main cattle reserve in “Gatira” area away from the village not yet counted. It is difficult to predict good future unless some alternative economic means well-matched with protected areas seek out. The alternative should be CBET as far as this research is concerned. In summary:-

Table 4; Total number of Human population in Irgaansa from woreda office, 2010

S/N	Name of Kebeles	Household		Family		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Irgaansa	569	41	-	-	610

Source: Fekadu and Zeleke(2011).

Table: 5 Unfinished Census result obtained from Agriculture extension Worker

S/N	Name of Kebeles	Household		Family		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
1	Irgaansa	730	1001	-	-	1731

Source: Ongoing census from Agriculture extension office in Irgaansa Kebele(Jan,18,2013)

4.6.6 Park-People relation

NNP is may be one of the weakest park administrations in Ethiopia. Ministry of agriculture proposed a management plan for 700km² sized Park in 1970s (MOA, 1980). Nowadays the park has no management plan for 514Km² and not yet gazetted for 39 years of establishment. Park workers complain that “since the park has no legal status, it is difficult for us to take legal action against any misappropriation”.

In addition, the park is not well organized and has got stable administration not yet except for some brief periods. There have been six chief wardens and one scout as chief warden served the park since 2005 alone. The present vast experienced chief warden Abraham is only 2 months in NNP when this research was undergoing. The park has got only six experts (Bsc graduated) categorized as 1biologist, 1tourism, 2wildlife, and 2community experts. The surprising is with all these problems, the park now has only 33 scouts because 35 scouts have been reduced after the evacuation of African parks. As a result Wildlife commentator Flack (2011) articulated that the public/private partnership agreement entered for takeover of NNP was a real breakthrough for persisted problems whilst the evacuation of African park was a serious blow to the wildlife and wildlife habitat in the country.

The relation between Guji and park is something requires due consideration. Since the 1982 “eviction” the tension heightened the ill feeling towards the park (Stafford, 1990; Abiyot, 2009; Asebe, 2011). According to Guji informants (40) the park and government officials do not care about the people rather they give over emphasis to wildlife. At the same time there is no single official from the park or government comes to the community to discuss issues related with the park. Government officials only came in time of conflict related with grazing or cultivation with neighboring ethnic group, apart from this instance no one remember where they are. They say we conserve the wildlife and forests only because we need it to sustain for our cultural purpose. In contrary one informant said *“why do I care for wildlife if I cannot get any benefit from them, there is no infrastructure provided by the park, they always consider us alien and see wildlife more valuable than our people”*.

It is understood from communication with Guji, they feel the continuation of NNP as a Park in this condition mean a threat to the community’s livelihood and the very existence of Guji community in the region. Informants (15) remember good days of relationship between park and the community for brief seasons. Despite the fact that African parks regime of park administration advocates resettlement, informants consider those days as period of good communication and relationship, for the reason that African park officials discuss issues overtly with the community in grass root level. For them the period between 1996 and 2004 considered to be the friendliest when Chemere Zewde led the park as chief warden.

As fluent speaker of Affan Oromo, Chemere used to communicate daily with them and provide transportation service for sick individuals and pregnant women when Guji need to go to hospital in Arbaminch. The 2008 administration under Chief Warden Awol who had the same background with Chemere bear in mind as good time for park people relation. Beyond these episodes Guji never want to remember what is park all about; hence the park people relations appear antagonistic in the case of NNP. Therefore, it is possible to summarize that the main obstacle and conflict in management were the lack of trust between the park administrators and Guji and bad relationship between the park and the community.

4.6.7 Difficulty in Accessibility and Infrastructure

The city of Arbaminch is accessible by road and air transport, which is about 32km to Nechsar plain. The early management plan of NNP recommends improvement of 15km road connecting the park to Arbaminch, improvement of 64km tracks within the park, improvement of 60km track from Dilla to Lake Abaya, construction of 32km of road from Kulfo river to Nechsar plains as well as marine transport along two lakes (MOA, 1980). Today in 2013 no single recommendation has been in place except already built Kulfo bridge connecting revrine forest on route to the plains. According to Park workers (4), tourists always complain on the subject of very difficult road to access in to Nechsar plains.

One of the reason Guji Oromo's ghastly attitudes towards the park can be the matter of infrastructure. Guji travel on foot at least full day (2days for Kore people) to reach Arbaminch city unless sleep in wilderness for the next day. Except agricultural products, Guji purchase everything from Arbaminch. However, Guji offended by health related matters to reach hospitals in Arbaminch city. Recently, boat with carrying capacity of 15 people is being used to reach Arbaminch on Abaya Lake, and also some park drivers with their own good will informally assist Guji travelers. Guji sell their livestock mainly in Tore (capital of Galana Woreda), chaffe and Harro(villages in Gdeo Zone) via Amaro having travelled minimum of 2 to 3days. For effective CBET the community needs to be helped to bring their product to market.

Most Guji use Sermale river as the only source of drinking water while some living near Nechsar plain use lake Abya but still both areas require at least an hour travel on foot.

It is likely that Talkie village to have electric power recently because the electricity project aimed to connect Konso special woreda and Amaro passes through Telkie village. My informants in focus group point out the unfulfilled promises made by presidents of Oromia Region and SNNP in 2008. Their promises were, to construct road from Dilla connecting Guji villages, to introduce ferry service, to lay necessary ground for car transportation, and to construct health centre for Guji communities are to mention few. The informants (17) said that these all promises were mere wish intended only to set fire off. In any successful CBET communities are encouraged to develop their own business, government and other stakeholders initiate infrastructural development which results in the sense of ownership of the community due to economic and political empowerment they gain.

Table 6: Number of School in Irgaansa Kebele (Author survey, 2013)

No	Name of Kebeles	School Grade Level		
		1-5	1-8	Satellite
1	Irgaansa	1	No	2 (Hitu and Gode)

Table 7: Number of Health Post in Irgaansa Kebele (Author Survey, 2013)

No	Name of Kebeles	Public Health Extension	Private Health	Water Supply	Remark
1	Irgaansa	1	2 (in Telkie and Ardagudina)	No	In hut

NB: Health centers only exist in name operating in hut with nothing, so it is not to say not exist.

4.6.9 Inadequate Coordination among Stakeholders

For this research the main stakeholders associated with NNP are; Guji community, Gamogofa Zone Administration, Oromia Region, SNNP government, EWCA, NGOs and Educational Institutions. The weight of different levels of government in SNNP and Oromia Regional State has been explained in various topics in brief above. For the reason mentioned, here the status of other stockholders in the park is the concern of discussion.

NGOs have playing prominent role in areas where tourism is enhancing environmental sustainability and local community development which is conceptualized as CBET (Ghasemi and Hamzah, 2011). Nevertheless, this is not the case in NNP since the departure of African Parks in 2008. Both the park administration and Gamogofa zone officials confirmed that there are no NGOs working either in community development or conservation after evacuation of African Parks. The Gamogoffa Zone Culture and Tourism in government communication office disclosed that there have been lots of NGOs come to work with zonal government and park administration but returned back having seen the presence of Guji in the park as difficult to maintain. The incidence of overgrazing, deforestation and poaching by Guji in NNP bring the feeling of waste of money and time among NGOs which could have been spent in other favorable places for conservation.

The best evidence for this reason is a European Union € 4 million Euro plan to set up Wildlife Training Centre in NNP which might have been one of the biggest centers of education for wildlife specialists in East Africa. According to the officials, the rationale for terminating the plan was the “encroachment” of Guji in NNP made the project unworkable. However, an official needs his identity covert said; the basis of ceasing the project was the reluctance of government to give autonomy of the European Union’s objective to accomplish their mission. It means European Union wants to work and donate money via their NGOs while government determined to take money directly in its own hand. This difference between government policy and European Union was the justification behind project failure. In field observation I have observed the NGO named PATTEC working under the supervision of African Union. This NGO was giving injection to Guji livestock in every kebeles to prevent the spread of and cure already infected in trypanosomiasis. After all, there is no single NGO working to enhance CBET or any other conservation issues in NNP.

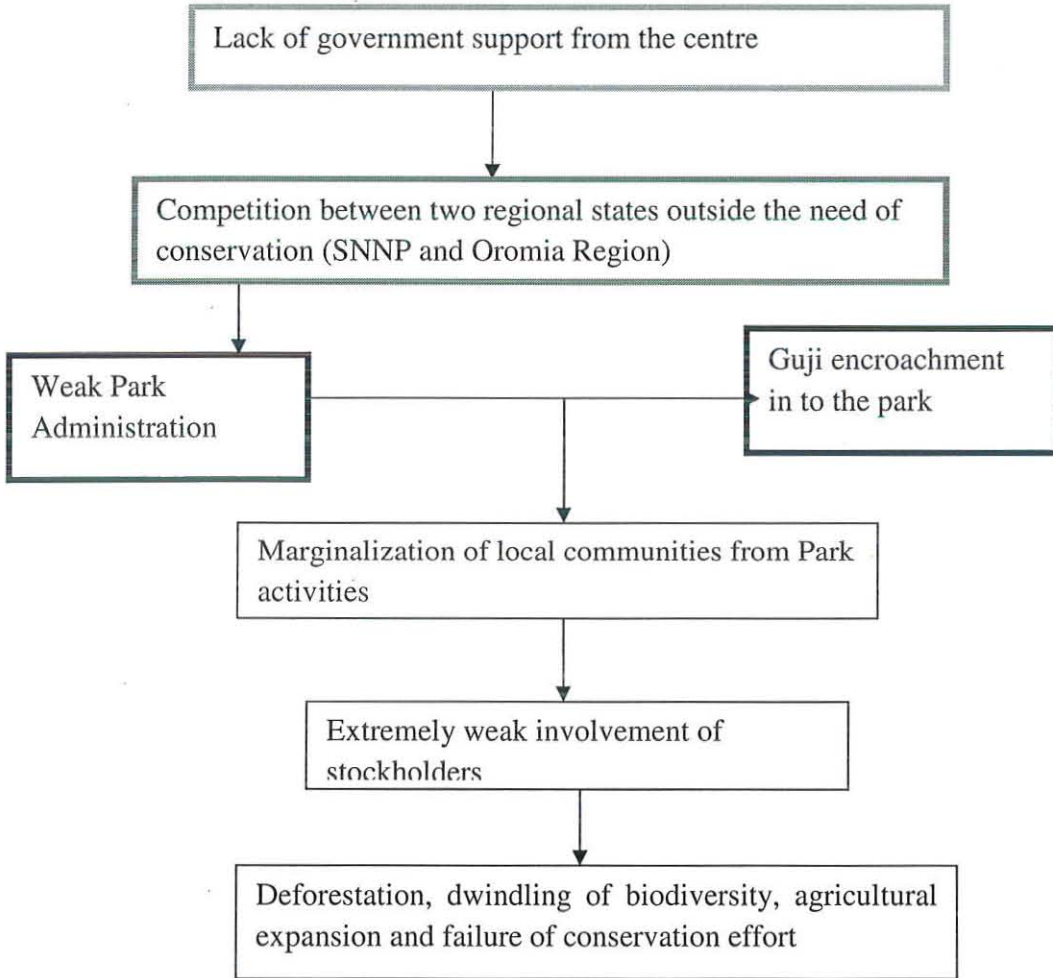
Academic institutions and universities also involve in CBET mainly through planning and rising views on CBET activities as well as undertaking research and providing the required technical skills to ensure sustainability of any conservation schemes (WWF, 2001). NNP is free of educational and research related influence working with the park to solve problems associated with Guji Oromo. For example Arbaminch University has a reputation of water related technology in the country.

But it has nothing to do with NNP in water and environmental conservation as well as community development. The University community development directorate under community development vice president substantiates that “*we have done nothing specific to Nechsar National Park and even we do not have any plan yet designed to work with the park*”; but he described many university projects working in collaboration with Gamogofa zone setting aside the park.

Arbaminch university research directorate has recognized the weakness of not engaging in park matters though both officials question the legal status of the park to engage in community issues especially related with Guji as long as the ongoing dilemma is concerned. Other stakeholders like travel agents are by far away from the community and some even know nothing about Guji, as a result they are not the concern of discussion. All travel agents understand the natural elements in the park and never think the cultural elements or attractions associated with Guji Oromo very adjacent to the Nechsar plain apart from seeing in the side of threat alone. EWCA as main stakeholder taking the responsibility of running NNP in 2008 seems unsuccessful to secure the objective of conservation. It believes that the issue concerning NNP is beyond their capacity and need political solution.

NNP under EWCA management is running by few inexperienced human power, financial problem and problems stated in charts below made one of the weakest administration era. The SNNP government is offering very little assistance to maintain the park. According to the present chief warden who had served in Semein Mountains National park remember the Amhara regional state very differently in the same case. The Amhara Region subsidizes up to 10 million birr for Semeien Mountains National Park by which 18 post sites are operating due to state fund.

In conclusion, an official from Gamogofa zone made clear that if things continue as it is on the ground, NNP would be no more than history given human “encroachment”, deforestation, overgrazing and expansion of agricultural land is concerned. This research also strongly agrees on the point raised by official, and the immediate solution should be enhancing community based conservation. The following diagram summaries the main challenges of NNP and community under study.



F.g.7. Challenges of implementing CBET in Neshsar National Park

4.7 What is being done to solve the problems?

The new administration in NNP divided the problems into five categories based on problems requiring decision. These are problems that can be resolved only with Federal government, two regional governments, the combination of federal and regional governments, Gamogoffa Zone administration, and problems that require the intervention of park office only. Decisions necessitate the intervention of federal and regional government in the issue of human settlements in the park and the possible demarcation or gazettement of the park boundary to obtain legal status.

In this regard the EWCA official says it has directly involved and preparing fertile ground for negotiation between two regional states (SNNP and Oromia). In 2011 experts from EWCA have carried out boundary survey and recommended three alternative maps of NNP. They have been expecting one of the three maps going to be accepted by two regional states (Fekadu and Zeleke, 2011). If the governments fail to reach an agreement as before, EWCA is planning to bring cases to the House of People Representative (HPR) not to lose the remaining biodiversity in NNP. Given the past experience of the two states, EWCA is not likely to succeed unless pressure is mounted on the regional states from the centre. However, it is up to the government to enforce because EWCA has no authority to accomplish it. The solution requires only political commitment from senior government officials (Interview with EWCA wildlife expert, April, 10, 2013).

The new park administration has planned to deal with Gamogoffa zone in security and investment matters. Example; recently Gamogoffa zone has built on the forty spring to resolve water shortage in the city of Arbaminch though the environmental impact assessment shows negative value of the project undertaken. For that matter the discussion is in progress for slight modification to reduce pressures on the forty springs. Arbaminch city administration organizes unemployed youth under union and gives license to establish their own lodge to host tourists in the park without conducting environmental impact assessment of the project. Lack of concern or knowledge among the city administration and zone has created some sort of difficulties to proceed with the plan easily despite it has been solved in the course of discussion. Security issue and controlling illegal fire wood collection from the city of Arbaminch is also the concern given attention by the park administration to deal with Gamogoffa zone and city administration.

Park workers say fire wood collection is turned from means of survival of poor city dwellers in to business in Arbaminch. There are lots of people coming from remote areas of Gamogofa zone to Arbaminch and reside in rented homes purposefully to engage in fire wood collection. Taking the energy cost/tiresome constant, a bunch of fire wood can be sold up to 100 birr which mean productive compared to other daily laborers. In consequence, illegal fire wood collection is not easy to stop soon. Moreover, the emigrant fire wood collectors complicating problem of poor city dwellers who see the collection as means of survival. According to the chief warden, the long term plan is to identify destitute in cooperation with city administration to give legal license for collecting dead woods to the city.

However, the new park administration has not yet get in touch with Guji Oromo community. The administration is looking for demarcated and legally established body of the park whatever the size is. In other word, unless legally established boundary is in place may be in the form of zones (buffer zones), it is accepted that there is no room to design meaningful plan carrying out CBET or conservation. On the other side, Gamogofa zone has only one solution which is “resettlement”. One official indicated that the *“Oromia regional state has no shortage of land to provide effective substitution for Guji to implement resettlement. If shortage does exist, we are ready to afford equivalent substitute land as we did before but they are not in a position to accept”*. He defended the effectiveness of substitute land given in Abulo Alfacho after 1991 though Guji returned back to the park while Kore¹⁶ ethnic group still reside there.

However, the office of government culture and tourism of SNNP has had no plan for NNP since 2004 claiming that the park is not under the authority of the regional state rather to EWCA (interview with expert in Office of park development, April, 25, 2013). Nonetheless, they are concerned of the dwindling of wildlife, expansion of settlement and agriculture in NNP which was in good status when EWCA took mandate from SNNP government. To this end the SNNP office of government culture and tourism has prepared 2014 plan for NNP to discuss with EWCA. Given discussions above, the issue of conservation in NNP remains in outline not yet brought in to the ground. The overall situation in NNP open the way for the conclusion that the previous conservation strategy is unsuccessful and needs new direction to sustain resources.

¹⁶ Kore is an Amaro ethnic farmers previously reside in and adjacent to the park, resettled with their Guji pastoral neighbors to Abulo Alfacho. While Guji returned back to the park, most Kore established permanent settlement there.

4.8 Is Community based ecotourism possible in Nechsar National park?

CBET is a tool to accomplish conservation and livelihood enhancement in particular and attaining sustainable development in general (Kiss, 2004). CBET assures community ownership of tourism business and involves community in every aspect of activities affecting them as well as cultivating the local culture as an input for tourism to realize sustainability (WWF, 2001). Therefore, given these all challenges based on the overall discussions regarding Guji Ormo in NNP, does it possible to materialize the objective of CBET while they are living within the park? Before the answers, there is one case seems very similar to Guji Oromo discussed under (see also, p.12).

The application of this case study is more possible by increasing the size of NNP to accommodate human, livestock and wildlife range and interests. The study of Fikadu and Zeleke (2011) to EWCA recommended three maps concerning NNP. The second map extend the size of the park up to 690km² which is found important by this research to implement CBET in Masai style. Therefore every recommendation considers at least the recommended size. The main research question is that given the overall challenges discussed CBET possible?

4.8.1 Case of Masai Mara National Reserve.

The Masai Mara National Reserve (here after MMNR) covers some 1,510 km² in south-western Kenya. It is the northern-most section of the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, which covers some 25,000 km² in Tanzania and Kenya supporting one of the richest assemblages of wildlife in the world including over 1 million wildebeest, 200 thousand zebra, and many other species (Omondi, 1994). The MMNR conserves big mammals like lion, leopard, African elephant, African buffalo, and Black Rhinoceros in addition to well-known herbivores. In the Savanna rangelands of Mara, traditional pastoralism and agriculture is being practiced (Kiringe and Okello, 2007). The Masai are an indigenous minority group of people who has been considered as marginalized society for long living in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Pastoral Masai has age set system of political organization called “*illoporori*” which is similar to *Gada* system in Oromo. Moreover, Masai has the tradition of adopting people in *Ilmomma* (the same in Guji) ceremony (Hellen, April, 19, 2013). Due to diminishing land size, livestock and hostile climatic conditions, the Masai are looking at tourism as potential mode of earning livelihood

(Ondicho, 2010). The Masai live within the national reserve as Guji does in NNP where the latter not yet involved in tourism business. The following case is based on an exclusive discussion held with Masai community representative Hellen Nkuraiya in Addis Ababa (April, 19-20, 2013).

The MMNR region is experiencing changing culture and land use towards agriculture (pastoralism to sedentary) similar in Guji and thus increasing instances of human-wildlife conflict (Anne.K. Taylor Fund, 2010). To this end, Masai community has been funded by various local and international organization to enhance community based conservation while they are living within the national reserve. As Hellen Nkuraiya, MMNR has been divided in zones exclusive for wildlife and Masai settlement separately. In Masai settlement zone, the community has constructed community lodges from local cheap materials where tourists prefer to stay than star category hotels.

The best experience in the community is *Tepesua Cultural Camp*, which was built by a group of Maasai widows in Manyattas¹⁷/Cottages with unique design set up with the local available materials. While in this camp tourists experience Masai life, culture, traditional dancing and singing in the private setting of the women's village, Zebra while grazing on the plains right from the camp face to face with elephants and lions while traveling with Masai travel guides (Hellen, April, 20,2013; WWW.tepesua.org). Maji Moto and Tepesua are special places in MMNR where the community has come together to improve their livelihood with aid of donor organizations.

Masai also established community organizations named *Enkiteng Lepa* and *Tepesua* to maintain cultural values, ceremonies and traditions, while motivated to eliminate harmful practices in the community. The success of Masai community is attributed to the assistance of international foundations on projects and efforts to improve the future of the people. With the aid of donor agencies, Hellen established the vocational training centre in 2010 at Enkiteng Lepa where widows and girls make school uniforms, shopping bags and school bags, souvenirs which they sell and earn their living.

¹⁷ Masai community made up of several huts enclosed by fence.

In Conference held in Addis Ababa on CBET (April,19-20,2013) director of Kenya Tourism board and Moi University Consultant Jacinta Nzokia confirmed the successful CBET project in MMNR involving Masai community and with strong cooperation among the concerned stakeholders (Jacinta Nzokia, April,20, 2013, Addis Ababa). For example, one of the stakeholder non-profit organizations is Anne k. Taylor Fund which supports community education where it sponsor 3 schools totaling over 600 children (Anne K. Taylor Fund, 2010). As a result Masai is being empowered in CBET initiatives by tolerating conservation and local livelihood simultaneously.

4.8.2 The Possibility of Making Guji a Masaai style

As described in successive topics Guji Oromo community's livelihood is exclusively depend on the use of natural resources of the park and its environ. The main livelihood base of the community is cattle keeping that is very important in the social and ritual dimensions of Guji life.

Guji use cattle products in one or another way as source of food, wealth, exchange and cultural values. To this end Guji are almost totally depend on NNP for grazing and pasture especially in summer season. In addition to pasture, NNP is a source of water for Guji and their livestock from Abaya and Chamo lakes besides some smaller water bodies. Further, traditional livestock rearing and beekeeping, very recently cultivation along Sermale valley is the product of park resource; as an effect NNP is becoming source of agricultural products for Guji(see, p.49 and 60). According to the park authorities grazing in Nechsar plain and watering in Chamo Lake is considered as illegal. Whenever authorities tighten the security, the community loses their bases of livelihood and enters in to conflict. In the case of farming, it is not yet come to be the main area of conflict between the park and people since the crop land is located far from the Nechsar plain or wildlife grazing field.

Guji also adhere some places in NNP as spiritual centers/value where traditional religious followers sacrifices for their ancestral spirit. Guji used to be nomads wandering long distance out of NNP in search of water and pasture in time of drought, but today Guji has nowhere to go since almost all neighbors are occupied by permanent settlements. The observation and interview result shows the fear of losing livelihood base is the main concern of the community.

Hence, NNP is left with the only livelihood option for Guji community which needs to be centre of CBET through sustainable conservation.

The established misconception in NNP is that wildlife can be best conserved with the exclusion of community from their traditional land and their only source of livelihood. Though Guji community has an indigenous knowledge system centering on livestock keeping in wilderness together with wildlife, low level of local awareness of natural resource conservation is still visible. In addition the traditional conservation has failed to recognize the livelihood of the community and the indigenous skill of conservation which is not yet come in to effect. The possible ways of achieving CBET in Masai style requires at least the following commitments:-

Government has to recognize that Guji has longstanding relationship with the area and have developed, grazing, extractive, cropping, and water attachment in NNP. The key reason to consider CBET in NNP is to link tourism with Guji community development in the park. The idea is that the community should provide some of the goods and services to tourists, as a result local livelihood and income diversification is to come besides conservation endeavor. Since CBET is an ecotourism enterprises owned and run by locals, it would improve their livelihood through the use of tourism resources in the park and guarantee the take care of those resource.

Overall assumption of ICDPs is that unless the basic needs of people living in and around biodiversity rich areas are met, they will not support conservation efforts (Hughes and Flintan, 2001). To prevent the hostility towards the park, social development activities such as building roads, water supply, schools, and health centers is required. Alternative livelihood options should be identified by providing them with substitute of absolutely natural resource based livelihoods in the form of agro-forestry, weaving, bee-keeping, and vegetable farming, etc. As many studies shown in literature part, because of the direct and indirect benefits communities gain from the park, the locals began to aware the importance of establishing and conserving park and express their will to support conservation.

The solution also could be establishing at least joint management of park resources between community and government while providing capacity building activities. Welcoming the private sector in provision of capacity building activities for local community to improve the use of traditional knowledge is essential.

This in turn may increase participation of locals in planning, designing, and management of CBET enterprises. In addition, there must be rearrangement of organizational structure of the park where various stakeholders participate in planning, advising and implementing park objectives.

Furthermore, policies at local, regional, national levels have a need to take into account the livelihood of the community in the park. This study demonstrates that an approach taking into account all the above factors will contribute strongly to improve livelihoods of local communities and sustainable biodiversity conservation. In addition, the community should be allowed to set up their own conservancies and government need to provide the institutional mechanism at community level and conservancies to get concession rights for lodge and cultural camp development. The conservancies can be like Guji Community Conservancy based on successful CBET models elsewhere. In this type of conservancies the main responsibility of stakeholders need to be provision of technical support for community based wildlife management and CBET micro enterprises.

The challenges in NNP especially related with stakeholder cooperation in line with community based conservation has been unsuccessful or not so far on the table. Whereas MMNR produce the outcome of community based conservation. Nonetheless, MMNR if not completely free of human-wildlife conflict and suspicion with authorities but there is enough room to solve when problem arises. In ICDPs resettlement can be carried out, because one of its strategies is compensation and substitution to help those people who has no or few alternative means of livelihood apart from exploiting natural resources in the park (Po-Hsin and Nepal, 2006). Therefore, resettlement can be an option for Guji community if effective substitution of pasture land and equivalent compensation offered. Given the depth of challenges in resettlement regarding, substitute land, political nature of the problem, and the right of local community to share whatever the benefit assumed from the park, more progressive solution is required for NNP in line with Masai Mara experience. The settlements along Talkie-Sermale valley and settlements in Hitu-Darba could be reserved for Guji to be a site for cultural camp; community lodge and other tourist related service owned and run by the community. It is only possible if settlements are placed far from the limit of Haroresa ridge near the Nechsar plains.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Nehsar National park is a bone of contention between strict conservationist and the local community. The earlier perceive the existence of human in the park as threat for conservation and forward resettlement and dislocation of communities as the only solution for the park. Whereas locals feel that they have been marginalized from century long home and pasture ground because of artificially created park. The strict conservation approach has been carried out with ill preparation and without gaining significant support from the community and other stakeholders. The conservationist is based on the idea that NNP is “wilderness and pristine” ecosystem to conserve biodiversity in its natural seating, while Guji claim NNP is not a “wild” rather “home” or residence and source of livelihood for century.

This research concludes, the notion of conservation so far has born no fruit apart from intensifying already existing problems. Conservation without the consent and participation of communities affected by park establishment in NNP eroded sense of ownership and built negative perception towards any move by government to succeed in conservation effort. The failure to recognize potential of indigenous culture for conservation and sustainable tourism development resulted in diminishing of already known attractions and some of them are in critical situation to recover. Guji community feeling of marginalization, loss of source of livelihood and lack of concern from the park authorities created senseless in case of biodiversity loss.

Participation of different stakeholders are important to succeed in any community based ecotourism project and conservation. However, apart from centrally planned order from EWCA there is no meaningful contribution of NGOs, regional states, educational institution and donor agencies in NNP. Consequently, NNP is running without the required level of infrastructure, man power and legal status which made accomplishment of sustainable conservation mere wish.

EWCA, the responsible body in charge of protected areas of Ethiopia proved to be powerless and unable to perform duties under its jurisdiction. EWCA handed over most cases in NNP to political authorities in the centre asserting cases are beyond its capacity. Those believed to be the owner of stated capacity lacks commitment or desire to stretch their hand in the issue. Hence, in NNP neither CBET consolidating community participation in natural resource management nor traditional conservation through “fine and fence” approach has been successful to rescue biodiversity or local livelihood loss. In addition to stated problems above, weak park administration and lack of trust between community and the park ended up in dwindling of wildlife, alarming rate increase of agricultural land and settlement, deforestation and overall ecological crisis in NNP.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward to minimize the problem assuming Guji is living within the park. It is based on the council of ministers regulation No.163/2008 under management of wildlife conservation areas which guarantees that persons who were inhabitants of wildlife reserve prior to the date of its establishment to continue living within the reserve (EWCA, p.57). It is also based on the principle of community based ecotourism for sustainable development.

Increasing the size of Nechsar national park is worth recommended to diversify function of the park. The increased park size may include part of the Amaro Mountain, increasing shares of Lake Chamo and Abya as well as extending towards the north up to Odoo Darba. To attain CBET function, it is indispensable applying zoning in to different objectives and use of national park. Zoning should be based on UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere program with some modification in order to fit with local conditions. The following Zones are recommended:-

Core Area: - which includes the whole Nechsar plains from Tsebel out Post including hot spring in south up to Hitu in the north. These areas are the main ground for wildebeest and Zebra and need to be exclusive area of wildlife. However in time of severe drought and shortage of pasture, right to grazing for the community has to be respected. **Buffer Zone:** - it is areas surrounding the core areas may include rehabilitation areas where ecological restoration may take place.

Here restriction can be imposed based on rule and regulation with exception of special development activities undertaken to boost the conservation objectives. This area may include the whole Haroresa ridge and settlements very near to Nechsar plains. Finally the **Pastoral Zone** which may includes areas of Talkie and portion of agricultural land in Sermale valley, and territories between the foothills of Haroresa ridge and Amaro mountain as well as adding some territories of the newly proposed (from increased park size) in the north. In the pastoral Zone Guji could set up cultural camps, tents and lodges to host tourists. In any instance the right to watering their livestock has to be ensured in either of the two lakes exclusively (Lake Chamo or Lake Abaya based on studies). It means that CBET should equally consider both biodiversity conservation and local community livelihood.

The park and other concerned bodies should recognize potential of Guji culture for conservation in grass root level. To develop CBET, the local community has to participate in community based wildlife management, environmental protection and natural resource management in general. While the community need to be consulted in planning and implementation of park related policies that requires the re-arrangement of administrative structure to include the community in board or other strata of administration. Moreover, an intensive awareness creation, capacity building and empowerment of the community politically and economically need to be the primary concern. The empowerment calls for the contribution of all stakeholders in any level interested in CBET. Experts from various disciplines should co-ordinate the integrated and feasible range management, disease control and giving required direction based on research. In addition improving level of park staffs in various training and capacity building should be emphasized.

Designing an alternative route is important to diversify income generation. The alternative routes are may be ferry transport from Dilla to NNP and road transport where the community involves in transportation and leisure travel on lakes. The income earned from tourism may discourage emerging agriculture as the main source of livelihood which is not friendly with protected area system. To make CBET full, anthropological study has to be carried out to include intangible culture as an important source of tourist attraction besides traditional potential of NNP.

The last but not the least is the reintroduction of already extinct and new species to the park based on scientific study should be considered. African Park had planned to re-introduce 14 species of wildlife including Rhino, elephant, and buffalo etc. Since wildlife is dwindling other wildlife species compatible with savanna grassland like Ostrich should be trans-located to restore the previous status of NNP.

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Appendix I

Focus Group Discussion Guide for community members

This is research work by Tamagn Woyesa, a student of Tourism and Development in Addis Ababa University. In this study there are seven discussion questions that you are kindly requested to provide your perception and knowledge about tourism and related issues in Nechsar National Park. Your response and identity is anonymous and confidential but it is going to be used only for the study of "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism among Guji pastoral community." I kindly request your cooperation and patience.

Thank You in Advance!

Focus Group Discussion Guide for community members

1. What economic activity do you practice?
2. What do you think of tourism in Nechsar National Park?
3. What are the major concerns related with activities in the park? Or does the Park empowered or disempowered the community?
4. Is there any government agencies and NGOs activity to enhance conservation and tourism development in your villages?
5. What is your attempt to conserve natural resource traditionally?
6. What is your role in planning, development and implementation of any strategies in NNP?
7. What do you need to see the park administration?

Appendix II

This is research work by Tamagn Woyesa, a student of Tourism and Development in Addis Ababa University. In this study there are several semi-structured interview questions that you are kindly requested to provide your perception and knowledge about tourism and related issues in Nechsar National Park. Your response and identity is anonymous and confidential but it is only for the study of "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism among Guji pastoral community." I kindly request your cooperation and patience. **Thank You in Advance!**

Interview guide for the Guji community members

1. What is your livelihood means of earning in Nechsar National Park?
2. What is the concern of the community for the resettlement program and your response to the same case?
3. Does he Park empowered or disempowered the community?
4. How do you see the availability of infrastructure in the locality in terms of House, water, school, clinic, water electricity etc?
5. How do you characterize your community village (park) in terms of natural resources like, Wildlife, forest, marine life, birds, geographic features and other?
6. Do you know any local government/NGOs and educational institutions working for conservation effort or socio-cultural development?
7. Have you ever participated planning, and implementation issues related with development of the community?
8. What do you understand about tourism in NNP and its relation with your community?
9. Does the community participate in their own conservation program aimed at protecting natural resources?
10. What is your recommendation to improve Natural resource conservation strategies and quality of life in the community?

Appendix III

Interview guide for government officials in Gamogofa Zone and regional states

This is research work by Tamagn Woyesa, a student of Tourism and Development in Addis Ababa University. In this study there are several semi-structured interview questions that you are kindly requested to provide your perception and knowledge about tourism and related issues in Nechsar National Park. Your response and identity is anonymous and confidential but it is going to be used only for the study of "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism among Guji pastoral community." I kindly request your cooperation and patience.

Thank You in Advance!

Interview questions

1. How do you see development in Nechsar National Park?
2. What do you think the major challenges of conservation and sustainable local development in NNP?
3. Does the community participate in conservation program aimed at protecting natural resources and enhancing tourism?
4. What is the concern of the community for the resettlement program and your response to the same case?
5. What socio-economic development has been experiencing in the community?
6. How do you see the importance of community based ecotourism in the Park as far as the Guji settlers are concerned?
7. How do you see the level of stakeholder participation for NNP development?
8. Does the community participate in planning and implementation of any activities in the park?
9. What is the future plan of your office to the park and the community?

Appendix III

Interview guide for Arbaminch University

This is research work by Tamagn Woyesa, a student of Tourism and Development in Addis Ababa University. In this study there are several semi-structured interview questions that you are kindly requested to provide your perception and knowledge about tourism and related issues in Nechsar National Park. Your response and identity is anonymous and confidential but it going to be used only for the study of "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism among Guji pastoral community." I kindly request your cooperation and patience.

Thank You in Advance!

Interview Questions

1. What is the area of interest of the university related with conservation?
2. What do you think the major challenges of conservation and sustainable local development in NNP? (Environmental, socio-cultural, and administrative challenges)
3. Please specify areas of your origination's activity on conservation and development of the NNP and for how long it has been working with this regard?
4. Do you think introducing CBET in NNP is appropriate for sustainable community and park development?
5. Do you think community based conservation (ecotourism) can solve the problem in the park while people living inside the park? Please explain your justification?
6. Does your organization have any future plan for regarding Nechsar National Park?

Appendix IV

Interview guide for Park officials (staff) and Experts in EWCA

This is research work by Tamagn Woyesa, a student of Tourism and Development in Addis Ababa University. In this study there are several semi-structured interview questions that you are kindly requested to provide your perception and knowledge about tourism and related issues in Nechsar National Park. Your response and identity is anonymous and confidential but it is going to be used only for the study of "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism among Guji pastoral community." I kindly request your cooperation and patience.

Interview Questions

1. Would you state important natural resources of NNP and its significance for the community and government?
 2. What do you think of major challenges of conservation and sustainable local development in NNP?
 3. Who do you think that the main player in Natural resource Management and conservation in NNP?
 4. Do you think the conservation effort is going in sustainable manner?
 5. Do you think community based conservation is possible in NNP while Guji living inside the park?
 6. What do you think should be done in NNP as far as Guji is concerned?
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Centre for Environment and Development Studies
College of Development Studies

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ለሚመለከተው ሁሉ

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ከሰላምታ



ፊ.የ.ሪ. ገንቦታ (ዶ/ር)

የአካባቢና ልማት ጥናት ማዕከል



ለነጭ ሣር ብሔራዊ ፓርክ አርባ ምንጭ ፣

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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

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ጉዳዩ ፡ - ትብብርን ይመለከታል ፡፡

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ የሀገር ልማት ጥናት ኮሌጅ የቱሪዝምና ልማት ትምህርት ክፍል ተማሪ የሆኑት አቶ ታማኝ ወየሳ በነጭ ሣር ብሔራዊ ፓርክ ላይ ጥናትና ምርምር ሥራን በ“Assessing Community Based Ecotourism in Nechsar National Park”. በሚል ርዕስ ለማክናወን በጠየቁት መሠረት አስፈላጊውን ፎርማሊቲ በማሟላታቸው ምርምራቸውን ለማክናወን የተፈቀደላቸው ስለሆነ ብሔራዊ ፓርኩ አንድ ሥራቸውን የሚከታተል ባለሙያ እንዲመድብ ሆኖ ለሚመደበው ባለሙያ የቀን አበል በተመራማሪው የሚሸፈን እንዲሆን በስምምነቱ የተገለጸ በመሆኑ የሚመለከታቸው አካላት ትብብር እንዲያደርጉላቸው እየጠየቅን፤ ግልባጭ የተደረገላቸው ዳይሬክቶሬቶችም የስምምነቱ 1 ገጽ ኮፒ፣ ለብሔራዊ ፓርኩ የጥናቱን ፕሮፖዛል 1 ጥራዝ ኮፒ በተጨማሪ የተላከ መሆኑን እንገልጻለን ፡፡

ግልባጭ ፣

- ለብሔራዊ ፓርኮችና መጠ/ማስ/ዳይሬክቶሬት
 - ለዱር እንስሳት መኖሪያ አካባቢያቸው ጥናትና ምርምር ዳይሬክቶሬት
 - ለዱር እንስሳት ልማትና ጥበቃ ዳይሬክቶሬት
 - ለዱር እንስሳት አጠቃቀምና ገበያ ማስፋፊያ ዳይሬክቶሬት
- ለአቶ ታማኝ ወየሳ
አዲስ አበባ ፣



ከሰላምታ ጋር

ከሰላም ገ/ትግሣኤ
የኮሌጁ ማኅተም ጥናትና ምርምር ዳይሬክቶሬት



Memorandum of understanding

The agreement is made between Ato Tamagn Woyesa student of Addis Ababa University, College of Development studies Tourism and Development Program (here in after referred as "the researcher") and Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (here in after referred as ("EWCA") to undertake fulfillments of second degree research thesis entitled "Assessing Community Based Ecotourism in Nechsar National Park".

Article 1:- Undertakings of the researcher

- 1.1. The researcher agrees to conduct the study in accordance with the Ethiopian Wildlife law and research guidelines.
- 1.2. The researcher agrees to submit two copies of his research finding, one for the respected park and the other for EWCA.
- 1.3. The researcher will cover perdium for the counter part for his stay within the National park.

Article 2:- Under takings of EWCA

- 1, EWCA grants permission to the researcher to conduct a research on the above mentioned topic in the Nech Sar National park.
- 2, EWCA agrees to provide the necessary support for the researcher.

Article 3:- General

This agreement was signed in Addis Ababa on the 15th Jan, 2013 and shall enter in to force beginning from the date of signature by EWCA and the Researcher.

For EWCA

For Researcher

Sig

[Handwritten Signature]
Kahsay G/tensae
 Wildlife Research & Monitoring
 Director



Sig

[Handwritten Signature]