

**Assessing Tourism Product Development: The Case of Mekelle
City, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia**

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



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November, 2013

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As thesis research advisor, I hereby certify that I have read and evaluated the thesis entitled "Assessing Tourism Product Development: The Case of Mekelle City, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia" prepared under my guidance by Daniel Alemshet and recommended that it be submitted as fulfilling the thesis requirement.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled “Assessing Tourism Product Development in Mekelle city” has been submitted to Addis Ababa University College of Development Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in Tourism and Development is my authentic work has not been presented for a Degree in any other University. All resources used have been genuinely acknowledged.

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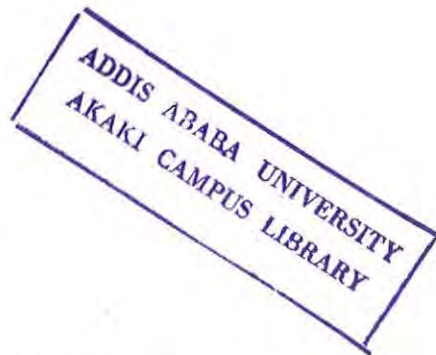
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study will not have any product without the invaluable and imperative guides, consultancies and unreserved assistances of my advisor, Dr. Mulugeta Feseha, Associate Professor. Hence, I would like to express my special gratitude to Dr. Mulugeta whose intellectual advice, guidance and regular discussions were very valuable and inspiring starting from the process of proposal writing, research undertaking and thesis write up.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Aksum University for providing me the opportunity to follow up my graduate study. I need to offer my special thanks to officers of Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency, Mekelle Tourism Cluster, Messebo Cement Factory, Mesfin Industrial Engineering, Ashogoda Wind Power, Managers and owners of Tourism Enterprises, Mekelle University Heritage and Conservation Department, and Visitors who provided me with all the necessary data and special treatment in the time of data collection.

My special thanks goes to these individuals: Yonas Bogale for providing me necessarily materials, Eyasu Araya , Nebyat Takele, and Belay Dargie for helping me during the process of data collection. My special thanks also goes to Hiluf Berhe, Belay Taddese, Samuel Siraj, Henok Alemayoh and Kaleab Belachew who helped me by editing my works.

I will be mistaken if I don't give my heartfelt thanks to my families especially to my father, Alemshet G/Sellasia, my Mother, Ayehush Araya and to my brothers and sisters for their unrelenting encouragement and love, affection and special treatment not only for this work but also in my entire life.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFFORT	Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray, Ethiopia
ETC	European Travel Commotion
MOCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
MIE	Mesfin Industrial Engineering, Ethiopia
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations, Ethiopia
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
TPD	Tourism Product Development
TPLF	Tigray People Liberation Front, Ethiopia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nation's World Tourism Organization

ABSTRACT

Assessing Tourism Product Development: The Case of Mekelle City, Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia

By: Daniel Alemshet

Assessing tourism product development in this study is mainly undertaken to understand the existing products, facilitate product diversification, and for improvement of tourism products. Tourism product is all about visitors experience from the existing products and services, activities, and attractions. The main objective of this study is to assess the tourism product development of Mekelle city in order to come up with diversified tourism products so as to improve visitor experiences in the city. To achieve this objective the study has employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as stratified sampling technique throughout the research study. And the data collection instruments employed includes both primary data and secondary data. The collected data from questionnaires were analyzed through SPSS version 16 using descriptive statistics and frequencies, while the qualitative data from the concerned bodies and the data obtained through observation were analyzed using descriptive and interpretive methods. The major findings of the study show that Mekelle city has high tourism potential. However, the tourism product development activity is very weak. This is attributed to the problems that attractions are not data based, not mapped, and packaged. Even the two popular attractions, Atse Yohannes IV Museum and Addi Haki Martyr's statue, have very little tourism product development. The accessibility to most attractions and the quality of product and service given by Mekelle city's tourism cluster and tourism business providers is poor and not adequate for visitor's experience as well as for better tourism development of the city. Though there are huge opportunities like the attractions, being the capital city of the regional state but there are also challenges that need to be minimized through different techniques such as weak coordination among the key Stakeholders, less trained man power and inadequate finance and others. Therefore, for better tourism development of the city, the concerned bodies should have to participate in all wings of the industry.

Key words; Assessing, Tourism, Tourism Product, Tourism Product Development, Mekelle

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is associated with the activities of traveling for recreational, leisure, business and other purposes. At present time, tourism has become one of the biggest economic sector in the developed and developing countries. Because of this, the dynamic industry has created different opportunities for millions of people. In 2011, the number of international tourists traveled in the world reached 982 million an increase by 4.6% compared to that of 2010 and a predicted growth to be between 3% and 4% in 2012 (UNWTO, 2011).

The availability of diverse tourism attraction resources around the world have donated to the triumph of the tourism sector since the end of WWII (Bramwell, 1998). This happened due to tourism product development. Tourism product development seeks to facilitate product diversification, development or improvement of tourism products. Tourism product is all about visitor service, activity, attraction or an experience.

Sharma (2007) described that tourism industry is not a single or part of simply visiting destination. It is the combination of destination with transportation, accommodation, infrastructure facilities. Tourism product development is necessary because visitors are sensitive and they expect different factors when visiting a destination such as; the availability and diversity of attractions, availability of accommodations, safety, and other facilities (Binyam, 2012). It is the prerequisite for tourism development by making the resources ready for presentation and interpretation (Smith, 1994). Modification of the existing tourism product and inventory of new tourism product are important elements in tourism product development.

In Ethiopia, tourism is becoming a promising industry starting from the imperial at the end of the 1960s (Ayalew, 2009) and after its tourist attraction began to be reorganized domestically as well as internationally. The potential tourism attractions are diverse cultural resources including: rock-hewn churches, built mosques, monolithic monuments, palaces, battle fields, paintings, tombs of kings, traditional music, and fossils which, witness Ethiopia as the cradle of human being, inscriptions; and diverse agro-climatic zones, rift valleys and highland- lowland; and various wild lives and vegetations which constitute its unique natural resources.

The sum of these mosaic attractions and the number of UNESCO registered sites makes Ethiopia the leading country in Africa in this regard. Tigray region located in the northern most tip of Ethiopia is, generally named as the “open air museum” of the country (Yemane & Yonas, 2012). The name is given to describe its untapped natural, cultural and historical tourism resources.

Despite the diverse potentials of the primary tourist attractions of the country, its receipts and arrival is much lower compared to other African countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa and others due to less tourism supply provision (Makeda ,2006; Yabibal, 2010). Further, in the years of 2010-2011,

“Ethiopia’s competitiveness ranking, in the comprehensive assessment of competitiveness in travel and tourism by the World Economic Forum fell from 118th to 119th out of the 139 participating countries. Even within Africa and Middle East region, Ethiopia’s position was three-quarters way down the list when countries were ranked in terms of their competitiveness” (MOCT, 2009).

The quality of product is now a prominent issue because it is argued that a competition between places for economic development is becoming increasingly fierce in the global economy

(Brawell, 1998). Therefore, to make these primary attractions and tourism facilities more competitive and beneficial, the stake-holders should identify the tourism resources, and seek to develop them into tourism products. Tourism product development seeks to support in the maintenance, development and enhancement of the tourism product.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tourism product development is the sum total of interpretation and presentation of attractions such as (natural, paleontological, cultural, historical and archeological) with standard service (e.g., accommodation, restaurants, shops, visitor information, tour and travel operations, money exchange, medical facilities, postal services, etc.) and transportation facilities. For this reason implementation and effective development of all these elements have a potential to bring repetitive business for tourism destinations. However, Ethiopia's tourism product development lacks integration and coordination of all the tourism pillars (Mulugeta, 2012). The same is true to Mekelle city; its tourism product development is low.

Tigray tourism attractions are plenty and it is called the "open air museum" of Ethiopia and the attractions are clustered based on their distribution. These are: Axum cluster, Wukro cluster, Gheraelta cluster, Raya and Azebo cluster and Mekelle cluster which is the focus of this study. As Tesfay (2010) has tried to mention despite the improper management and idle of the resources, Mekelle cluster has high potential to become a renowned tourist destination. For the reasons mentioned above the tourism attractions in the city has failed to bring economic developments.

So far, different researchers have conducted research in the city of Mekelle. However, the conducted research has been restricted to either the history of the city or heritage management. Hence, tourism product development is among unexplored areas in Mekelle city. Mekelle is the capital city of Tigray regional state, one of the aged regional capital cities of the contemporary Ethiopia, its location near to the north Historic Route, make her the spring board to travel to

these gigantic tourism resources, and the variety tourism resources owing within can make the city as one tourist destination in Ethiopia.

However, the city's tourism bureau and Tigray Regional Government have failed to cluster all the potential tourism products/ resources in the city. There is also a little effort done by these pertinent bodies in data-basing and mapping of the tourism resources; changing resource in to tourism products; re-establishing and modifying the existing products; promoting and encouraging stakeholder participation in the development of tourism products; which are the very important aspects of tourism product development. To these fact tourism resources by themselves are not enough to attract tourists if not handled, packaged and promoted. The presence of the natural, cultural and historical, archeological tourism resources together with developing tourism facilities and services of the city can attract visitors if appropriate product development is carried out.

There are activities that need to be appreciated, such as the expansion of infrastructural tourism development in the city including: expansion of hotels, restaurants, airport, and others by the city's administration and private investors, though not yet at standard level and purposefully done for tourism service. Lastly, World international travelers' are increasing from time to time and expected to reach more than 1.6 billion in 2020. The future of tourism continues to be promising globally (Charles & Goeldner, 2009) and in Ethiopia as well (MOCT, 2009). Therefore, to have credible share from this promising sector, the study will reveal out the potential tourism resource of Mekelle city to enhance its tourism products and will demonstrate the required tourism product development process for the city's resources.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General objective

The main objective of the study is to assess tourism product development of Mekelle city in order to come up with diversified tourism products so as to improve visitor experiences in the city.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives;

- ❖ To scrutinize the existing tourism products of Mekelle city.
- ❖ To identify the potential tourism resources of Mekelle city that can additionally be used for tourism product development.
- ❖ To identify the opportunities and challenges for tourism product development in the city.
- ❖ To propose ways of improving tourism product development of Mekelle city.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to identify potential tourism resources and products of the city and enhance the tourism products, the study has formulated the following basic research questions:

1. What are the existing tourism products of Mekelle city?
2. Are the existing tourism products good enough to meet visitors' experiences?
3. What tourism resources of the city can additionally be used for tourism product development?
4. What are the existing opportunities and challenges in tourism product development of the city?
5. What should be done for better tourism product development of the city?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will avail the resources that are not so far used for tourism development and will contribute in preserving the attractions that are on the way of being damaged. This study will also add value in building the image of Mekelle destination through identification of the tourism potentials that can serve as promotional model to the city. Moreover, it will support the infrastructural tourism development of the city as the study identifies the present status that could serve as a basis for the future.

Further, the study helps to visitor's inflow to the city by improving its tourism products. The research will help in creating awareness to all stakeholders about the importance of the potential resources of the city as well as the existing products which are useful for economic development. Beyond these, the study will help students and researchers who want further investigate on the area.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study is conducted in Mekelle city and designed to cover only to scrutinizing the existing tourism products of the city, to identify its potential tourism resources for tourism product development, to identify the opportunities and challenges for tourism product development in the city and to propose ways of improving tourism product development of Mekelle city. The study didn't look into every aspects of tourism attractions / resources of the city rather selective based on their priority to their touristic value.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Tourism product development is among the new concept in Ethiopian tourism development. Hence, the study faced difficulty to cite relevant prior research done particularly on the study area. In addition to this, the study faced some difficulties in gathering primary data. In collecting primary data, it was difficult to gain accurate information from every visitor, tourism enterprises, tourism officers and the community. Some of them they didn't want to tell totally. And some others they don't want to tell what they feel and what they are doing frankly. The sample taken from tourism business, visitors, and community was not very large. As a result it might be difficult to generalize the outcome.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

- **Tourism product development:** it is a process of developing new tourism product and improves the existing ones for further improvement of tourism products (Smith, 1996; Komppula, 2001; Lessley & Richard, 2005).
- **Tourism product:** Tourism products described in this study are the tangible and intangible products and services which are the determining factors for adding value to visitor's experience (Smith, 1996; Sharma, 2007; Maraf, 2009).
- **Natural tourism resources:** is one kind of tourism resources created naturally such as mountains, rivers, water fall, climate etc ((Mary & Sidney,1992; Roger,1997; Turtureanu,2001; Marafa,2009; Charles & Goeldner,2009; Mulugeta, 2012).
- **Cultural and historical tourism resources:** are resources related to tangible heritages such as museums, palace, and intangible heritages festivals, for instance (Roger, 1997; Turtureanu, 2001; Marafa, 2009; Mulugeta, 2012).

- **Archeological tourism resources:** are resources that have evidence which explain human past activities (Mary & Sidney, 1992; Charles & Goeldner, 2009).
- **Facilities and services:** are other kind of tourism resources which are useful for travel experience such as accommodation, accessibility, recreation centers, hospitality, furniture's etc(Jennifer, &David, 2010).
- **Packages:** selling the products and services features (accommodation, transportation, attractions etc) to customers (Mitchell, 2005; Lessley & Richard, 2005).

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. In the first chapter, background of the research area, followed by the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives to be achieved, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and; operational definition of terms and layout of the paper are presented. In chapter two, studies related to the study area and the frame of reference supported with literature review are presented and thoroughly discussed. The third chapter presents, study area description and methodology, methodological process of sampling, data collection and analysis. Chapter four presents descriptive summary of the empirical data collected together with detailed analysis, results and discussion. Finally, chapter five discloses conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the background literature necessary for tourism product development. Here reviewed are literature related to the topics of tourism and its nature, tourism product and its concept, tourism product in urban cities, tourism product characteristics, tourism product feasibility, tourism product development insight into the tourism pillars, stakeholder collaboration in tourism product development, tourism product and experience development and product development and marketing. It finally describes the conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 Tourism and its Nature

Most people associated tourism with visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, and having a good time (Roger, 1997). In this particular time, visitors may spend their leisure time engaging in various sports, sunbathing, talking, and singing, taking rides, touring, reading, or simply enjoying the environment. Further, others also connect the subject with people who are participating in a convention, a business conference, or some other kind of business (Charles & Goeldner, 2009).

Because of the broad nature of the subject, scholars describe tourism with different words. However, the most responsible world organization UNWTO's defined tourism as "...is the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes."

Tourism is the worldwide travel, hotels, transportation, and all other components that including promotion, with combination of activities facilities, accommodations, eating and drinking

establishments, shops, entertainment, activity, and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are traveling away from their homes serve the needs and wants of travelers (UNWTO, 2011).

2.2 Tourism Product and its Concept

Different scholars have defined and described the concept of product and tourism product in many ways. Tourism Products are any tangible and intangible items that the producer decides to inform customers to have the product in order to satisfy their want and need. Tourism product can be defined as collection of services, activities, attractions and experiences. Maraf (2009) described products as any offerings that can satisfy a need or want of consumers. He described products to consist of one or a combination of the following components including; physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information and ideas. In marketing principle, a product is anything that can be offered the tangible, physical, and intangible, non physical, to the market that might satisfy a want or need (Sharma, 2007). As Kotler (1984) defined, product is “anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need that includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organization, and ideas”.

A tourism product is the sum total of the physical and psychological satisfaction of tourists which are offered during their traveling to the destination till they get back to their homeland.

Middleton and Clarke (1973) argue that the tourist product means customer value, which is;

“The perceived benefits provided to meet the customer’s needs and wants, quality of service received, and the value for money and further they conceptualized tourism products as a bundle of activities, services, and benefits that constitute the entire

tourism experience. Five components of the bundle were proposed: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, images, and price'' (cited in Meng, 2006 p 22).

Tourism product is not only the matter of developing destination; it is a matter of combination of many elements in meeting the needs and wants of tourists. Smith (1994) proposed five elements of tourism products, namely, physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement. He described each element as follows;

- Physical plant is a site of a natural and cultural resource and physical environment which includes weather and infrastructure design etc.
- Services add value to the physical plant or are values designed to meet the needs and wants of tourists.
- Hospitality is a kind of "enhanced services" or "something extra" that can be offered to the customers. It relates to the welcoming or style with which the task is performed.
- Freedom of choice refers to the traveler's need for an acceptable range of options to make the experience satisfactory. It varies depending on the purpose of travel and how they choose to travel.
- Involvement is participation by consumers and a combination of the four of the above elements.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (n,d), the level of product is seen into three levels which include: *formal product* which the tourist believes one is buying; the *core product* which the tourist is actually buying; and the *augmented product* which is the combination of core product and any other value-added features and benefits related to the product.

2.3 Tourism Product in Urban Centers or Cities

Literature classify the typology of tourism as urban tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism, nature based tourism, conference tourism and others. Urban tourism is one of the most influential industries not only rising income but also many regeneration projects (Deborah, Tony, & Bruce, 2008). Cities all over the world make special efforts to attract foreign tourists (Christopher, 2002). Cities in general and heritage cities in particular host yearly a large proportion of the world's tourists and become the principal economic activity and cities economic development (Van, Costa & Gotti, 1999). It has been clearly known that mix visitors (overnight visitors) and excursionists (day visitors) spend much more on cities (Chang, Simon, & Corinne, 1996). Urban centers could host the following tourism products and resources summarized as in the below table;

Table 1: Potential Urban Tourism Products and Resources

Cultural Facilities	Physical Characteristics	Secondary Elements	Sport Facilities	Socio-Cultural Features	Amusement Facilities	Additional Elements
Museums & Art Galleries	Historical Street Pattern	Accommodation	Indoor and Outdoor	Liveliness of the Place	Night Clubs	Accessibility
Theaters and Cinemas	Interesting Buildings	Catering	-	Language	Casinos and Bingo Halls	Transportation and Parking Tourist
Concert Halls	Ancients Monuments and Statues	Facilities	-	Local Customs and Costumes	Organized	Information (maps, signs, guides)
Convention Centers	Parks and Green Areas	Shopping	-	Cultural Heritage	Events	
Other Visitor Attractions	Waterfronts (Harbor, Canal, River)	Markets	-	Friendliness	Festivals	
			-	Security		

Sources: from Judith Ruetsche, 2006

2.4 Tourism Product Characteristics

Tourism products have their own unique characteristics (Muhcina, 2008). Muhcina summarized the unique and common features of tourism products as; tourism product is performed by different services suppliers; tourism product depends on time factor; it needs a good coordination among all stakeholders; tourism products are not mobile from place to place; attraction elements of tourism product differ from place to place or country to country; tourism product assures tourists' satisfaction; and tourism products and services are seasonal and perishable.

Tourism products are not constant. Any product life cycle goes with stages of growth, maturity, saturation and decline in the market (Jenny, Chris & Charlie, 2007). Therefore, tourism product development needs continuous assessment and development (Dorothy et al., 2012). To have continuity, the tourist products need advances on, innovation of new products and modifications of existing products (Komppula, 2001). Komppula (2001) has also demonstrated that, improvements to an existing product and launching it to a new market can produce new product to the customer.

Kotler and Armstrong (n'd) distinguish the factors that can lead for the success as well as failure of any product. The factor that can lead for the success of product includes developing unique superior product– high quality, new features; highest value in use, well-defined product concept prior to development, careful definition and assessment of the target market, product requirements, product benefits and replaced old one by new-product development process while, the factors for the failure of products include market size overestimated, poor product design, incorrect positioning, price too high, costs of product development higher than expected, and competitors fight back harder than expected.

Tourism product development feasibility should consider market analysis, understanding the world travel trends, visitors' experiences and analysis of other destination products (Raymond, n'd). Tourism product development process underpins after deep planning and operation is made to proceed (Dorothy et al., 2012). As any product development, the development of tourist attractions, activities facilities and other product developments must first and for most be in line with Market (WNWTO, 2011). Taking in to consideration of the development of services based on customer perception and market needs makes imperative for a new-tourism product

development (Komppula, 2001). The next step to develop tourism product after market analysis is assessing the potential of tourism product (Kalahari, 2002).

2.5 Tourism Product Development

Definition: Product development is the process which involves scientific investigation of regional resources, packaging and marketing them and deciding the right tourism businesses, markets and products to develop (Lessley & Richard, 2005). It is not only the development of the physical part of the destination but also includes the service delivered to make wise choice of tourism products (Smith, 1996). Kotler & Armstrong (n,d) described tourism product development as something that deals with original products development, product improvements and product modifications. Importantly, product development increase attractiveness to tourists (Sharma, 2007) and improves the profitability of tourism businesses by increasing the number of products and services available for tourists (Dorothy et al., 2012). Hence, it is important in improving the economy and the overall offer and experiences of a region or a country. The tourist product development can be seen in terms of the attraction, accessibility and accommodation (Turtureanu, 2012).

a. Attractions: Attractions are those natural and human-made features and events that stimulate people to visit a destination (Smith, 1996). They are the first things considered when choosing a destination and are the reason people travel (David et al.2004). Attractions are diverse and they can be natural, cultural, historical, religious, industrial etc and they generally can be thought as tangible and intangible attractions as describe; *Cultural:* sites and areas of archaeological interest, historical buildings and monuments, places of historical significance, museums, modern culture, political and educational institutions, religious institutions; *Traditions:* national festivals,

arts and handicrafts, music, folklore, native life and customs; *Industrial*: can give experiences with its products, production process and its historical back ground; Natural: *scenic*, national parks, wildlife, flora and fauna, beach resorts, mountain resorts; Entertainments: participation and viewing sports, amusement and recreation parks, cinemas and theatres, night life and cuisine *other*: climate, health resorts or spas, unique characteristics not available elsewhere (Mary & Sidney,1992; Roger,1997; Turtureanu,2001; Marafa,2009; Charles & Goeldner,2009; Mulugeta, 2012).

b. Accommodation: Accommodation and hospitality are the key sub-sectors within the tourism economy or industry. Visitors require overnight accommodation during their journey through stay in a destination, while spending usually contributing to tourism development significantly (Jennifer, & David, 2010). Indeed, it is generally the case that accommodation facilities are provided mostly on a commercial basis. Private tourism facilities, second homes, timeshare and visiting friends and relatives also represent an important sub-sector of tourist venture (James, 2003). Tourism accommodation is a sub-sector of the international hospitality industry the provision constituting bed-and-breakfasts, self-catering apartments, home exchanges and camping, as well as transport-based accommodation, such as cruise liners or train accommodation and more than the tangible elements; it is also concerned with meeting guests' needs and expectations that might be incidental to the overall tourism experience (Lesley, & Richard, 2005).

c. Accessibility: Accessibility is facility that help to reach to the attraction's location and accommodations by the help of roads, railway, airports, etc where and other facilities that complement the attractions (Mitchell, 2005). Accessibility is not only linked to problems related to whether it is possible to gain physical access to the accommodation facilities, but to whether

it is easy to use and enjoy the tourist resources present on the territory where the facilities are located (Jennifer & David, 2010). Accessibility, being a broad sense, includes tourism supply accessibility, tourism legislation and transportation accessibilities (Stefania et al., 2004). To accommodate the special needs of customers, the structures comprising the area's system of attractions must have the accessibility features that will allow their case use by everyone (David et al., 2004).

d. Facility and Services: tourism service and facilities are enormous. In addition to the attractions, there are facilities and services needed for travel experiences. As Komppula (2001) described site and facilities; materials: guides, books, maps; operations: controlled functions and activities that attract and or accommodate people are influential needs to consider together to product development. The tourism facilities and services are constructed primarily to support visitation and visitor activities including airports, railroads, roads, drives, parking lots, parks, marinas and dock facilities, bus and train station facilities, resorts, hotels, motels, restaurants, shopping centers, places of entertainment, museums, stores, and similar structures (Jennifer, &David, 2010).

2.6 Principles and Ways of Tourism Product Development

Tourism product development is not an easy task that needs into account the following major variables in the process as explained by UNWTO (2011) as economic factors, technological factor, political factor, demographic factor, and globalization vs. localization, socio-environment awareness, living and working environments, search for authentic experiences, marketing and safety of travel.

According to UNWTO tourism product development should follow the key principles like respecting the natural and socio-cultural environments by not damaging these in any way; should be firmly based on market trends and tastes; governments' role is like dissemination of information and facilitating and supporting their realization by the private sector or communities etc; consultation, coordination and collaboration are bywords in tourism product development.

According to Kotler et al. (2001) the first actual step in the new-service development is the idea generation, which can be systematic search of new ideas, then follows screening product ideas, determine the feasibility and potential profit implication, set up new service or product concept, commercialization then finally implementation. New tourism product development requires modifying of the existing product and inventory of new product to catch up the customer's needs and wants (Komppula, 2001) summarized as follows;

Table 2: New tourist product strategy matrix for identifying growth opportunity

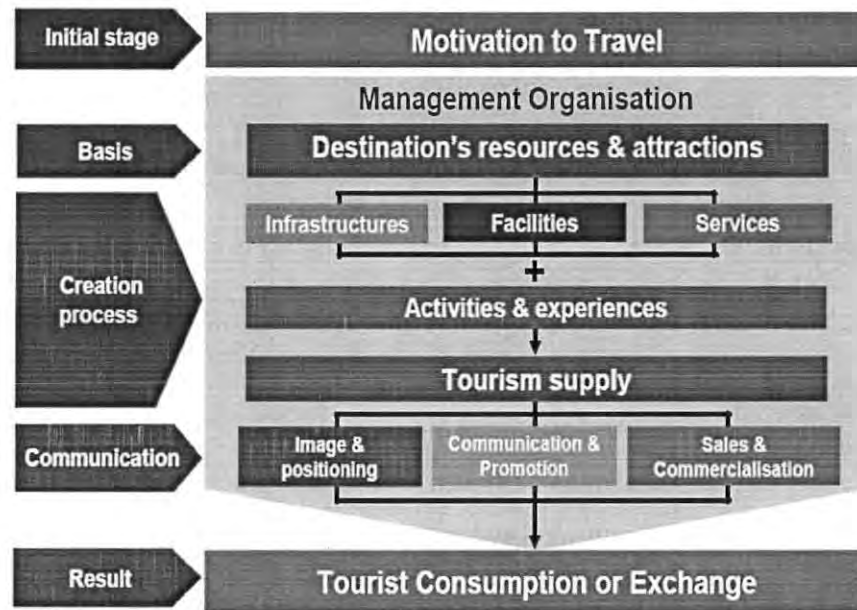
	Market	
Offerings	Existing market/current customer	New market / new customer
Existing product	Market penetration; modification to existing product for present market	Market development ; reposition present product to attract new market
New product	Service development ;introduce new product to present market	Diversification; launch of new product to new market

Sources: from Komppula, (2001)

Tourism product development is a process of long journey to reach in to the final result. Masip (2006) shows the key elements needed in product creation process and presented these as follows. According to him presented in the picture below *initial stage* means existence of a motivation to travel; *Basis refers to the* resources and attractions in a destination; *Creation process*: refers to the existence or creation of infrastructures, facilities, services and development

of specific activities or experiences. *Communication* refers to once tourism supply created, there will be functional and emotional benefits that can be communicated to markets and target audiences through the creation of an image and the correct positioning; and *Result* refers to the consumption of tourism products in a destination.

Figure 1: Key elements needed in product creation process



Source: from Masip, (2006)

Long process tourism product development is a purposefully done to increase the diversification of tourism products. Simith (1994) generalized the process beginning from the inputs to the experience in the table shown below

Table 3: Tourism production function

Primary Inputs (Resources)	→ Intermediate Inputs (Facilities)	→ Intermediate Outputs (Services)	→ Final Outputs (Experiences)
Land	Parks	Park interpretation	Recreation
Labor	Resorts	Guide services	Social
Water	Transportation modes	Cultural performances	contacts
Agricultural produce	Museums	Souvenirs	Education
Fuel	Craft shops	Conventions	Relaxation
Building materials	Craft shops	Performances	Memories
Capital	Convention centers	Accommodations	Business
	Hotels	Meals and drinks	contacts
	Restaurants	Festivals & events	
	Rental car fleets		

Sources: from Smith, (1994)

Smith (1994) uses three facilitators to change from one step to another. These are the *manufacturing* that changes from primary inputs into intermediate inputs; the *managerial expertise* are those that can change from intermediate inputs to intermediate outputs; and then the *customers* will be the final evaluators of the experience.

2.7 Stakeholders Collaboration in Tourism Product Development

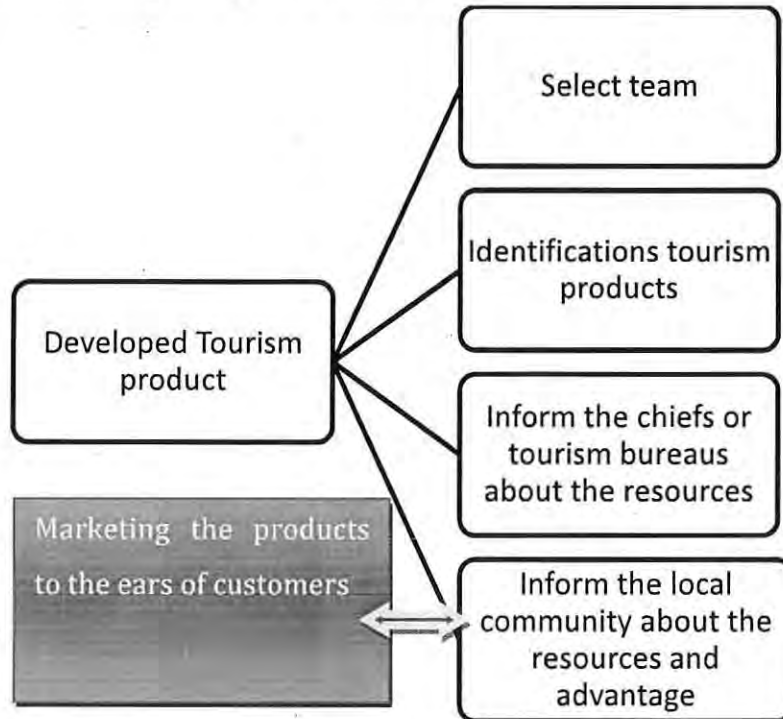
This study refers “Stakeholders” to mean the community, governments, public and private institutions who are involved directly or indirectly in the sector. The key stakeholders in tourism are identified by different literature as those sectors who are involved in accommodation and catering services, tour operator and tour guide, transportation facilities and government and private institutions and the community (Judith & Mbaiwa, 2011; Jakarat, 2012). Collaboration among the key players of the sector in tourism product development is the fundamental ingredient in tourism development (Ellise & Brigit, 1999).

Community has a psycho cultural dimension which includes a community sentiment which implies shared communal values, convictions and goals with regards to human interaction with nature, the supernatural, time and other people (Mazibuko, 2000). As cited in Mazibuko (2000), Paul (1987) described community participation as an active process by which beneficiary client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish. By considering this the heritage site manager's crucial task is to involve the local community to increase the quality of planning and reduce the likelihood of conflict, to ensure that sound plans remain intact over time, increase the community's ownership of its heritage through education and other awareness creating campaigns, and to enhance the community's trust in heritage management (Camp and Cross, 2012).

The development of tourism in communal areas and the involvement of the stake-holders in tourism can encourage many indispensable national, regional and local objectives (Judith R., 2006). These include faster economic growth in the regions, improved welfare and equity, empowerment of local people, improved resource conservation by local people, and finally, diversification of the respective tourism product (Ashley & Garland, 1994). Further they listed out approaches on how community can involve in tourism development. For example a private investor could obtain concession from the government to operate a tourist facility in a communal area; a private investor could voluntarily decide to share some revenue with the community from a tourist enterprise developed on communal land; a private investor and a community could collaborate in the form of a profit-sharing joint venture; the community has entitlements to profits or lease payments, and may or may not be closely involved in the management; the community could decide to develop its communal resources for tourism purposes through its

own community enterprise. Camp and Cross (2012) summarizes the way stake-holders can participating in tourism product development as follows;

Figure 2: stake-holders participation in tourism product development from top to the down



Source: modified from Camp and Cross, (2012)

2.8 Tourism Product and Visitor’s Experience

Tourism products are the basis for satisfaction and experience of visitors by providing product diversification including high standard of customer service (Judith, 2009). Product development is the pre-request for satisfying tourists changing demands and insuring the long term profitability of the industry (Smith, 1994). A tourism product is a combination of many components including physical good, services events etc that contribute to the satisfaction of travelers and visitors (Marafa, 2009).

The core component of the tourist product, the service concept, consists of the idea of what kind of value the customer expects and how to create the prerequisites for this experience (Komppula,

2005). According to Ruzic et al. (2012) "Satisfaction refers to the award that visitors get from the use of the product and that coincides with expectations". Tourism experience is difficult to understand because it is mostly associated with individual consumer (Meng, 2006). The success of the tourism product depends on how well the whole experience content was designed, packed, and delivered to the tourists (Smith, 1994).

In addition, Sharma (2007) defined tourism product as "the real heritage tourism product is the experience". Tourist experience is important for successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Huh, 2002). Destination managers and tour operators should have to understand what the tourists regard as the components of a high quality tourism experience and that depends on certain characteristics of the tourist product offered, such as transportation, accommodation, gastronomy, attractiveness and cost of the service (Meng, 2006)

Tourists want something different from their daily lives (Sharma, 2007). Because most visitors come from modern cities, the experience of spending time in a small town or a rural area is attractive and meaningful to them. According to Uriely (2005) cited in Meng (2006) conceptualized tourist experience should be viewed as;

"A reconsideration of the distinctiveness of tourism from everyday life experiences; a shift from homogenizing portrayals of the tourist as a general type to pluralizing depictions that capture the multiplicity of the experience; a shift of focus from the displayed objects provided by the industry to the subjective negotiation of meanings as a determinant of the experience; and a movement from contradictory and decisive academic discourse, which conceptualizes the experience in terms of absolute truths, toward relative and complementary interpretations".

2.9 Product Development and Marketing

The way how a given destination or commercial tourism organization develops and promotes is the principal factor for making solid development. Marketing and promotion are the central part of the triumph of tourism (Jakarta, 2013). Once the product is developed, then the product have to be marketed in the way that stimulates interest, desire, and action to purchase through promotional activities such as word of mouth, internet, social networking, sites, Media, spread of communication media by visitors, and using marketing tools like signage (UNWTO, 2012). Promotional and marketing campaigns require in-depth knowledge of who they are intended for, so as to plan an adequate strategy and avoid waste. In fact, having a marketing orientation means identifying and, at times, anticipating the customers' needs in order to offer a fully satisfying product (David, Dontatella, Roberta, & Alessandra, 2004).

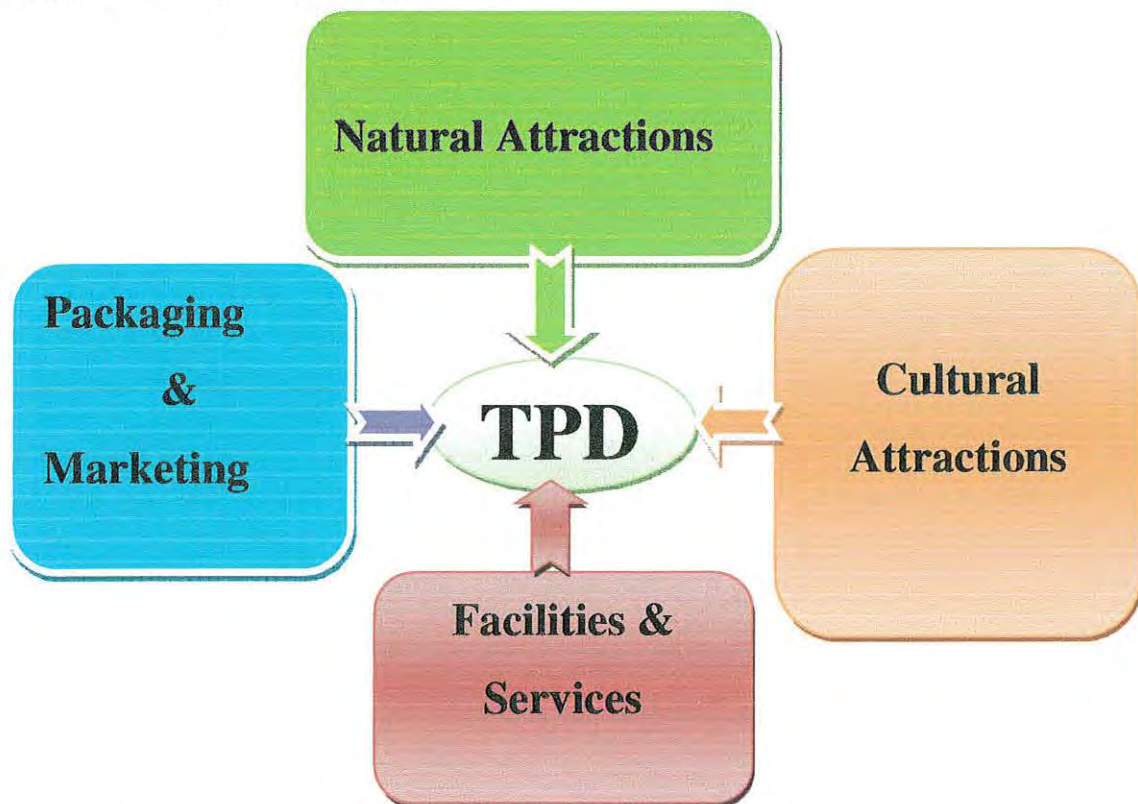
Marketing tourism product is designed based on targeting, segmentation and poisoning and then developing positive messages about their product through promotion channels of tour operators, guide books, media, certification scheme, consumer and trade fairs, internet retailers and consumer organization (Paolo & Giulia, 2005). Marketing tourism products can be done significantly through growth and influence of social media, growth in internet access and bandwidth, an advertizing revolution and increased influence of partnership (Jakarta, 2013). The process of building a brand begins with a clear understanding of what the consumer's desire from a particular product or service. A good brand attributes are: attractive; supported by all stakeholders, consistent with destinations positioning, conveys excitement and quality, express the destination's personality, memorable, simple, and unique (Jakarta, 2012).

2.10 Package Tour of Tourism Products

According to Lessley & Richard (2005) tourism products are nothing unless they are packaged, changed into tourism product and implemented to advance socio-economic development. Packaging is only one step in product development. Packaging includes a broader range of the product and service features such as accommodation, attractions, transportation, entertainments and ability to experience local cultures with their price (Mitchell, 2005).

2.11 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 3: Conceptual framework



Source: the study's framework supported with literature review

CHAPTER THREE

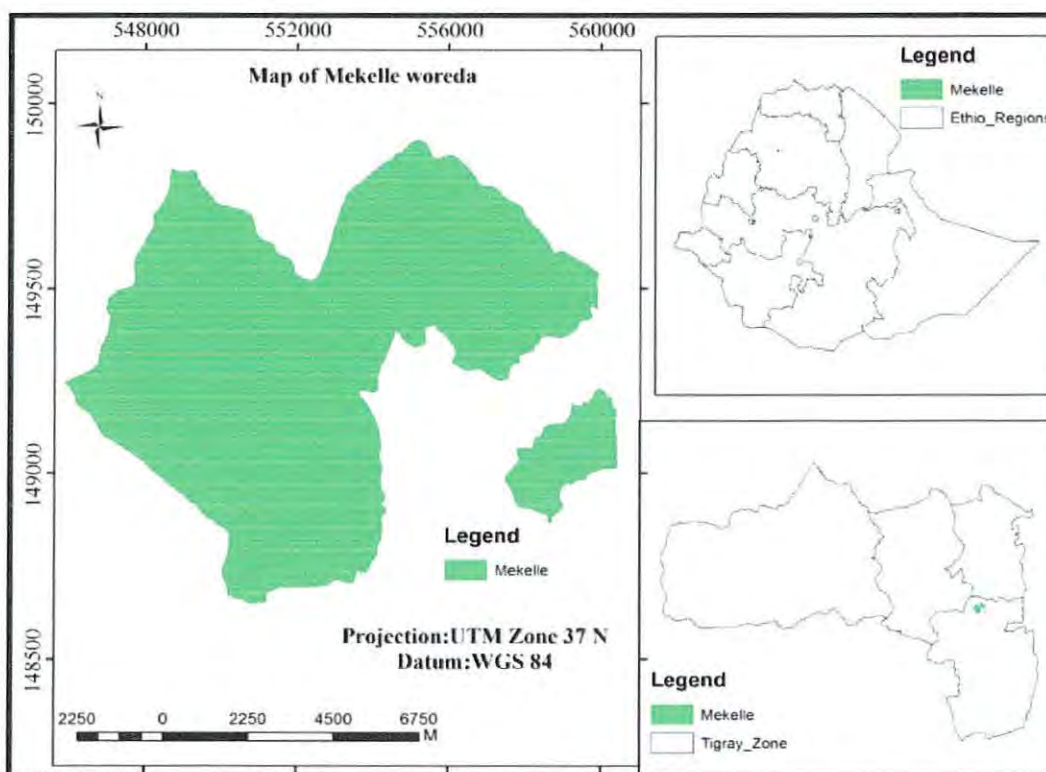
STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter deals with the study area description, and the methodology of the study followed.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Mekelle, which is the capital city of Tigray regional State. The city is commonly known as *Semenawit kokob* to mean star of the north, is located in Northern Ethiopia, some 780 Km from the capital city, Addis Ababa.

Figure 4: Boundary of the study area



Sources: the researcher Map, 2013

It is one of the largest cities in Ethiopia, covering an area of more than 3500 hectares. The word Mekelle is an indigenous word to the region which means divided. The city was established

officially by Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889), the former known Ethiopian emperor. Though initially the city was confined to a limited area, nowadays it is expanding in all directions; North wards to the high lands of Messebo; South wards to Debri plains and Qelamino; West wards to Serawat and Adi'ha; while East wards to Quiha and Aynalem. Geographically, the city is located at latitude and longitude of $13^{\circ} 29' N$ $39^{\circ} 28' E$ / $13.483^{\circ} N$ $39.467^{\circ} E$ coordinates with an elevation of 2084 m above sea level ([http:// tools.wmflabs.org](http://tools.wmflabs.org)).

Topography, Rainfall and Climate

According to Yahannes and Tsegay (2007), the land form of the city is classified in to four categories namely: flat to gently sloping, gently sloping to rolling, sloping to moderately steep and steeply to very steeply sloping type.

The city is situated in a semi –arid area and its rainfall is characterized by bio-modal type rainfall where the maximum and minimum rainfall occurs in summer and autumn respectively. The mean annual rainfall is 579 mm where as the highest rainfall occurs in August, 222.7 mm, and the lowest in December, 0.8mm. The mean annual temperature of the city is 17.60C that ranges between 15.00C, December, and 200C, June (Yohannes and Tsegay, 1993; Tesfay, 2010). October to March is the period with high speed winds that blowup the dust and soil in the city. Whereas the average wind speed of the city is 3m/s per year, the daily and monthly maximum wind speeds are 14m/s and 5m/s respectively.

Socio -Economic Background

Mekelle city served as the administrative or capital city of Ethiopia from 1872 to 1889 and afterwards for many administrators of the region as well as for the current administrative system.

Based on figures from the reports of Central Statistical Agency of 2007, the city has an estimated total population of 215,914 of which 104,925 are male and 110,989 are female. Currently, the population of the city is growing fast with current population growth estimated to be more than 300,000.

It is one of the country's principal economic and educational centers. Presently, there are rapid and expanding socio-economic developments such as, infrastructural development, universities and colleges, firms, hospitals, schools, electric city, water supply, telecommunication service etc. Most of the populations of the city depend on trade, micro and small scale institutions, public service, agriculture and etc. Administratively, it has stood as a special zone, on its own right, divided into two administrative *woredas*, northern and southern dividing in to sub cities and *kebeles*.

3.2 Research Design

To meet the research objectives, the researcher has employed both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. This research has used both exploratory and descriptive designs. Exploratory design was employed to investigate the overall tourism product development in the city using interview, direct observation, and focus group discussions, while descriptive research using structured and semi-structured questionnaires and related literature reviews.

3.2.1 Sampling and Sampling Technique

In the same manner that a study site was selected, it was important to select the sample size population of the study area to get the appropriate information, as well. Selecting sample

population of the study helped to predict the unknown, to draw generalization to the population, and to make the research finding economical and accurate (Chakraworthy, 2006).

3.2.2 Target Population of the Study

The target populations of the study area were taken from the main tourism players of the city which includes; the tourism business providers, tourism officers, key informants, and local community as well as visitors or tourists. The information that were taken from the tourism business subjects were those who were related with tourism and travel such as, tour operators and tour guides, hotel owners, restaurants, bars, cafeterias, pensions, etc. Currently, there are around 1110 tourism and tourism related business established in the city (Yemane & Yonas, 2012).

3.2.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique

The study used the formula shown below to find out the target population from the total population involved in tourism business. Using the formula $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha^2)}$ (where n represents the sample size, 'N' = the total population, 1110 and α = the confidence interval at 0.05) from the target population involved in tourism enterprises of the city, a sample size of $n = \frac{1110}{1 + 1110(0.05^2)} = 294$ was calculated (Israel, 2009). However, this research only used 100 sample sizes out of the 294 because of shortage of time, budget constraint and distance of the study area. In selecting 100 out of 1110 target population, stratified sampling was used. Hence, cafeterias, bars, and restaurants constitute the first stratum; hotels and pensions forming the second stratum and tour operators and guides and souvenir shops and handicraft as the third stratum. From each of the strata, sample was drawn using systematic random sampling. In Mekelle tourism cluster there are 10 officers and the study was able to use all of them. An additional 41 sample size was taken

based on convenience and agreement from the visitors that came to visit the city, until the information gathered from which reached saturation.

3.2.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Both primary and secondary sources of data have been collected using different data collection instruments. The primary sources of data have been collected by semi structured and snowball interviews, personal observation, and using materials like GPS and Camera. The data collected from Mekelle cluster tourism officers, and visitors was through questionnaires, whereas that from representatives of community, who were near to the attractions, tourism business providers as well as from the government officers, was through focus group discussion and interview.

a. Semi structured questionnaires

This instrument was used as one means of extracting information from Mekelle cluster tourism officers, and visitors. The questionnaires given to Mekelle cluster tourism officers was all about what tourism potentials the city has and related to the existing tourism product development of the city. While, that to visitors was intended to assess more about their experience that they had gotten from the existed tourism product of the city. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher himself and assigned enumerators who had good experience. The questionnaires were distributed to Mekelle cluster tourism officers in their respective work place while to the visitors it was given where ever they were met by the enumerator and researcher.

b. Focus group discussion

Further, the study has used FGD as one means of gaining information from the local communities who were near to the resources, tourism enterprises, and religious leaders of the

selected sites as well as from other institutions which were considered important in relation to tourism based on the experience they had.

Figure 5: Focus group discussion in sites



Photo: by the researcher, March, 2013

The discussion was employed to gather data about their understanding of tourism, their participation in tourism product development and the quality product and service given by the enterprise. The figure shows a discussion with the local communities who live near to attractions.

c. Semi structured and snowball interview

Most of the interviewed people were tourism experts, key informants, managers and owners of tourism business and others related to the field of tourism. To initiate the semi structured interview, leading questions were provided to them and then further questions were asked based on their answers for the former ones. Whereas in the snowball interview individuals were asked certain questions and allowed to indicate another who knew the question very well. Hence, it was possible to further collect data pointed by the interviewee. The overall contents of the interview were about tourism of the city and its trends, about the product and service delivered by tourism enterprises, the potentialities the city has, history and values of resources that was considered to be developed in to tourism product and the challenges and opportunities for product development of the city. Eight institutions, both officials of government and non government structures were interviewed.

Interviewed governmental officials were Tigray culture and tourism agency, Mekelle cluster tourism bureau, Chairman of the department of Heritage and Conservation of Mekelle University, institute of Paleoenvironment and heritage conservation case manager, Mekelle University, Expert in department earth science of Mekelle University, *Atse* Yohannes IV Museum coordinator, and Hawelti Martyrs' statue coordinator. Among nongovernmental structures were religious leaders, local communities closest to sites, managers and owners of tourism enterprises of the city and domestic and foreign visitors.

e. Personal observation

In addition to the above, direct observation of the attractions, tourism enterprise, and other facilities and service were made in order to crosscheck the information collected through questionnaires, FGD and interviews. During observation the altitudinal, latitudinal and longitudinal axis of the attractions was registered, while photos of the sites were shot, to make the resources as visible with accurate information and description.

In addition to the primary sources, secondary data were collected from books, journals, reports, research articles, thesis, documents, brochures, annual magazines release from Tigray culture and Tourism agency as well as from Mekelle cluster tourism office, from statistics bulletins and internet.

3.2.5 Data analysis

The raw data collected for the purpose of this study was analyzed to find out its results. The ways of data analysis were different for quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data was kept in a systematic and coherent way and was narrated to represent the actual information

needed and were analyzed through interpretative and descriptive account of the data. While the data collected from questionnaires was not directly analyzed rather follows a kind of procedures of statistics and analyzed through SPSS software version 16. The analyzed data was presented using descriptive statistics of frequencies and tabulated into tables with its description.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The journey of the scientific methodology of data analysis and discussion are part of the research process to reach at some conclusion. Therefore, this chapter deals with the interpretation and discussion of data collected from the study's respondents as well as the study observation. The first part of the study discusses about the general characteristics of the respondents, while the second part deals with the analysis, results and discussion of the data of the study corresponding to the basic research questions.

4.1 General Profile of the Respondents

All respondents were very close to and concerned for the sector, making the entire collected information relevant to the study. The survey of the respondent's demographic characteristics; gender, age, marital status, educational back ground and their position or profession are included in this section in order to describe respondents' profile.

As it can be seen from the table 4 below, out of the 10 respondents of Mekelle tourism cluster officers who provided information, all of them were males, the majority of which were middle aged. The largest age groups, 60%, of the respondents were from 31-45 years old, followed by the group aged 18-30 years, 30%, and only 10% were above 45. Most, 60%, of the respondents were married, whereas 30% of the respondents were single and 10 % were divorced. In terms of the level of education, 100 % of the respondents had BA degrees. All the respondents have their own field of specialization and working position. Out of the 10 respondents 20% were assigned as history experts, 20% were marketing experts, 10% were cultural experts, 20% were tourism

management experts, 10% were coordinators of the cluster and 10% experts in information tourism center. However out of these only two of them were professionals from tourism discipline.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of the respondents Mekelle cluster officers

Sex of respondents			Marital status of respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Martial S.	Frequency	Percentage
Male	10	100.0	Single	3	30.0
			Married	6	60.0
			Divorced	1	10.0
			Total	10	100.0
Age of respondents			Educational background of the respondents		
Age range	Frequency	Percentage	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	3	30.0	BA or BSC	10	100
above 45	1	10.0	Total	10	100.0
Total	10	100.0			

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

In addition, table 5 below shows, out of the 41 respondents 56.1% of the visitors were males and the rest 43.9% were females. The largest age groups of the respondents were above 45 years old followed by the age group of 31-45, 31.7 %, and the least, 22%, were in the age range of 18-30. Regarding marital status of the respondents, 51.2% were married followed by single 31.7%, where as 12% of the respondents were divorced and 4.9 % were widowed. In terms of educational status, 46. 3% of the respondents had MA and above degrees, 34.1% had BA or BSC, 4.9% were certified diploma and the rest 14.6 % were at primary level.

Table 5: Demographic characteristics of the respondents visitors'

Sex of the respondents			Marital status of respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	56.1	Single	13	31.7
Female	18	43.9	Married	21	51.2
Total	41	100.0	Divorced	5	12.2
			Widowed	2	4.9
			Total	41	100.0
Age of the respondents			Educational back ground of the respondents		
Age range	Frequency	Percentage	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	9	22.0	Primary-High school	6	14.6
31-45	13	31.7	Diploma Holder	2	4.9
above 45	19	46.3	BA/BSC holder	14	34.1
Total	41	100.0	MA/MSc and above	19	46.3
			Total	41	100.0

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

4.2 Assessing Tourism Product Development of Mekelle City

In this topic the study is going to present the existing tourism product and will see if they are adequate for visitor's experiences of the city, as well as the potential tourism resources of the city that can additionally be used for tourism product development.

4.2.1 Identification of the Existing Tourism Products

To assess existing tourism enterprises and attractions of Mekelle city, a questionnaire was distributed to Mekelle tourism cluster officers. The respondents replied that, the existing tourism enterprises of the city are those who involved in tour operators and tour guides, hotels and catering services, restaurants, cafeterias, bars and entertainments. In addition to that, the respondents replied that the existing tourism attractions in use of the city are *Atse Yohannes IV* Museum and *Addi Haqi* Martyrs Monuments presented as follows;

1. *Atse* Yohannes IV Palace and Museum

It is believed that Mekelle is called the city of two competitive castles. Because, the city has served as a capital city of Ethiopia during the period of Emperor Yohannes IV and afterwards the capital of Tigray for many administrators of the region till the present. During these successive years the city has possessed palaces such as *Atse* or emperor Yohannes IV palace. Emperor Yohannes IV palace, located at the center of Mekelle city, is one of the oldest historical and cultural palaces in modern Ethiopia. The palace is situated at 13.49657⁰ latitude and 39.47667⁰ longitude and lies at the elevation of 2081m above sea level. The palace's architectural building is a rectangular shape that was built when the emperor made Mekelle the capital city of Ethiopia (1872-1889).

Figure 6: Photographic view of Atse Yohannes IV Museum and his Throne



Photo: taken from a friend's

throne room (Tesfay, 2010).

In the compound of the palace, there is a museum called *Atse* Yohannes IV Museum. The Museum has five main gates and seven major rooms. The permanent exhibition of the museum is organized in three rooms; these are the Banquet hall, the royal room and the

All these have different architectural designs as well as hold different treasures such as the Emperor's throne, royal bed, ceremonial dress, rifles and many other valuable historical collections. In addition to the collection of treasures, the surrounding environment of the Palace

and Museum sounds very nice. Closet to the palace, there are fountain, *Atse* Yohannes hotel, and nice green cafeterias. Particularly, in the evening taking rest around the museum is entertaining.

Currently, *Atse* Yohannes IV Museum is under reconstruction. The different collections are stored in four temporary rooms. In the first room, collection of *Raesi* and Nobilities; second room, collection of Emperor Yohannes IV; third room, Tigray Cultural Collections, and in the last room, collection of Church Heritages and Treasures were stored. The collections are not situated in such a way to attract visitors. They have poor explanation, no electronic guides in case the tourist wants to guide by themselves. The attraction is not open to media and has no written books, promotion as well as poor signage as the respondents replied. The museum is situated closest to the palace, therefore, related to this security visitors aren't allowed to take photos in and around the museum. In addition to these, it has visible administration problem that the museum and palace are administered by different bodies; the palace, though it belongs to tourism, is administered by Federal Government while the museums by Mekelle Tourism Cluster.

ii. *Addi Haqi* Martyrs Monument

Tigrayan People Liberation Front (TPLF) has erected a memorial statue for the martyrs who died fighting for the liberation of Ethiopia from the *Derg*, a dictator military junta, who ruled Ethiopia for 17 years. This statue is in Mekelle city locally called as Hawelti which is located at 13.49010⁰ latitude and 39.45853⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2120m above sea level. The memorial statue is established on 263 hectare and has a lot of attractions or tourism resources. Among these the tower of Hawelti, military museum, conference hall, cafeterias, foot ball area, and the collection of different armaments used during war are displayed in the compound.

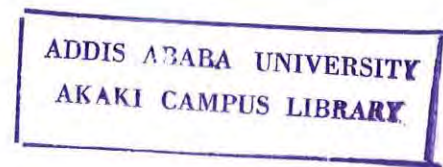
Foundation of the tower is done with jagged to describe the then social- political environment of the society. The tower's length (51 m.) implies that the mission and objectives of the TPLF was so long and bright in its future, and the four footings of the monument also indicate the struggle began in different areas and later joined together in one (Tesfay, 2010).

Figure 7: Photographic view of Addi Haqi Martyrs



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

In both sides of the tower, there are statues that show the victims and victory of the war. The other attraction within the Martyrs statue is the military Museum that depicts the objects that are usually related to the military and political history of TPLF.



To the East of the museum there are a lot of remnants of war armaments captured from the *Derg* army as well as those collected the fighters used in the war. The Martyrs statue also includes a world class conference center, can hold more than 2500 people, with all its facilities. In addition to these, according to the statue's coordinator at present time more than 37 different trees are growing now and in the near future the area will become home for different birds, and animals.

Though the site has high potential to be visited by visitors, the existing tourism products in the Martyrs statue are very scanty. For instance, it lacks accommodation services, signage that displays its values, internet service, prepared stores for solid trash, promotion and marketing activities. The same too the *Atse* Yohannes Palace and Museum, this site has also administration problem.

As the data shows from interviewee people, focus group discussions and the study's observation, and from city's tourism officers, the attractions in use as well as the destination services given by the tourism enterprise didn't make the city as known destination. They agreed that, the existing tourism attractions are not data based well and mapped and are not changed in to tourism products, are not well interpreted and presented to catch the eyes of visitors, has no access maps and itineraries which visitors can guide, poor or absence promotional tools in the attractions such as signage, and no billboards that shows the sites, and written books that explain and tell the city's attractions. This was also supported by visitors experience as was depicted during pre-trip experiences, en-route trip experiences, on site trip experience, and after trip experiences as presented below.

4.2.2 Analysis of Visitors Experience from the Existing Tourism Product of the City

According to the visitors who come to see the city's tourist attractions, 58.5% of them were motivated to come to the city to see its cultural attractions. As explained by Seyed et al. (2012) arts and culture of any countries are the most important factors to promote international tourism and attracting international travelers while 14.6% of them were motivated to see the natural attractions and visiting families and relatives respectively and the rest 12.2% were motivated by tourism business.

A visitor experience depends on certain characteristics of the tourist product offered, such as transportation, accommodation, gastronomy, attractiveness and cost of the service (Pizam et al., 1978; Tahir, Meltem, & Şafa, 2010). Visitor experience consideration is crucial in tourism product development. Without visitor's consideration; it is hard to talk about tourism industry. As Pujarikrishnaiah (2012) explained "the tourism industry exists for the tourists only if it offers

optimum satisfaction to the tourists”. So here the study was able to analyze the visitors experience in the city to assess and describe its tourism product as follows;

Table 6: Visitor's opinion related to pre- trip experience

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Experienced traveling to other destinations within and outside Ethiopia	41	Yes	31	75.5
		No	10	24.5
Find easily accessible information related to the destination before you travel	41	Yes	21	46.3
		No	22	53.7

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

Pre -trip experience is visitors' experience that he/she got before traveling to a destination that could be about accessibility, accommodation and attractions. As it can be seen from table 6, out of the 41 respondents 75.5% of visitors replied they had previous experience on some parts of Ethiopia's destinations as well as international. Many of the respondents, 53.7 %, responded that they didn't get easily accessible information related to Mekelle destination before they traveled as the others experienced. They explained that they got the information about the city from friends, tour operators and tour guides in Addis Ababa explaining that they can use Mekelle city as a transition to the historical sites and they can visit the museums within the city. Therefore, anyone who has planned a trip would appreciate the importance of having some idea of what they plan to see and do at their destination which is determinant for the selection of destination in different mass Medias (Raymond, n. d).

Table 7: Visitor's opinion related en-route- trip experience

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternative s	Frequency	Percentage
Did you get transportation facilities from and to the destinations	41	Yes	18	43.9
		No	23	56.1
Did you receive high services from tourism business enterprises in transit from and to the destination	41	Yes	10	24.4
		No	31	75.6

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

En-route experience is an experience of visitors that they got while traveling from and to the destinations. As table 7 depicts, out of the 41 respondents 56.1% didn't get easy transportation facilities from and to the sites. As the visitors responded, it was hard to get tour buses or other choices, the one we used was expensive but with poor service.

In addition to the above, 75.6 % of the respondents didn't receive high services from the tourism business enterprises. As they responded visitors are new to the area and they didn't know anything how to get accommodation or to the sites. The city tourism information center has two hour lunch time so they closed their office. The tour guides didn't insist the visitors to know something about; rather the visitors ask them the something they want to know. Moreover, they are not good ethical and it is somewhat difficult to find out the right information from them. Sometimes they give the visitors a false or clashed information as well as their English is so fragmented.

Table 8: Visitor's opinion related to on site -trip experience

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
All the sites you have seen are well interpreted and designed to attract you/visitors	41	Yes	8	19.5
		No	33	80.5
Did you get high quality of accommodation services at destination	41	Yes	13	21.7
		No	28	68.3
The variety of activities, entertainment or places in the destination makes you entertained	41	Yes	13	21.7
		No	28	68.3
Have you had pleasant interaction/ communication with local community and the service personnel at the destination?	41	Yes	20	49.8
		No	21	51.2

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

On site experience is an experience acquired during visiting the attractions or the destination. As table 8 reveals, out of the 41 respondents 80 % of the respondents responded that the attractions they saw were not well interpreted as well as made ready to catch the eyes of visitors. Their feedback is that designing, interpreting and presenting of the sites are one means of giving cheerful experience. They further explained the infrastructure facilities have not well expanded to all sites and attractions and availability of written books, tourism map, and rules /fees of the attraction sites written on visible places were lacking.

As it can be seen in table 8 most of the respondents, 68.9 % responded that their experience related to the accommodation service didn't make them joyful. As they described, accommodation and catering services didn't have recreation centers like: swimming pool; their menus is not diversified, there was misplacement of service centers, poor internet service or none, absences of elevators for disabled tourists, unhygienic service, less hospitality, lack of hot water, less quality of restaurants, bad construction of waste pipes within the hotels; and the cafeterias, restaurants and pension were not up-to the standard. At the same time, the interviewee from tourism officers of Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency, about the quality of product and service given by tourism business, responded that the actual product and service were not up to quality and sufficient to trigger visitor's excitement. Provision of high quality, innovative tourism products and experiences, coupled with delivery of excellent customer services, are essential to enhance visitor's experiences (Rosemary& Betty, 2005; Robert, 2009).

Visitor experience not only deals with attraction, infrastructure and accommodation but also it deals with interaction among the visitors and the local communities at the destination (UNWTO, 2011). More than half of the respondents, 51.2 % responded that their interaction among the visitors and the local communities at the destination was not so good. They further describe that if visitors ask them something about the area, culture, or any event they don't tell you freely because of the language deficiencies.

Table 9: Visitor's opinion related to after trip experience

Parameters	No o Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Feeling a sense of life-enrichment after the vacation	41	Yes	17	39
		No	24	61
From the whole vocation you have gotten good felling	41	Yes	13	21.7
		NO	28	68.3

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

Visitors after they reached their final destination, they get back home with some sort of experience from what they have seen. It is better if visitors feel excited from what they have experienced, because they can share it to others. As table 9 indicated, 61% of the visitors didn't feel sense of life-enrichment after the vacation, more than 68.3 % of which didn't get good feeling. This happened because of the reasons and challenges they faced as explained above.

4.2.3 Potential Tourism Resources of the City that can additionally be used for Tourism Product Development

The central point for a new tourism product development is based on the customer or visitors needs and wants. Visitors or customers are important drivers of new product and new service development (Tahir, Meltem & Şafak, 2010). The world travel trend is increasing from time to time as described in the review of literature section. Similarly, data collected from Mekelle tourism cluster officers showed that the number of travelers in Mekelle city is increasing but with poor experience as stated above. This happened because of the less tourism products offered by the city. However, it doesn't mean that Mekelle city has nothing to offer in terms of tourism resources rather these resources or products are not identified, developed and standardized.

Table 10: Mekelle cluster officer's opinion about the city's tourism attractions offer.

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Mekelle city can offer more tourist attractions beyond the developed ones.	10	Yes	10	100
		No	-	-

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As table 10 depicts, all of the respondents 100% claimed that Mekelle city has more potential of natural, cultural, historical and archeological tourism resources that need to be developed to tourism products. With the help of the respondents, the study come up with the city's potential tourism resources that can additionally be used for tourism product development so as to enhance its tourist products as summarized in table 11 below. All the tourism potentials of the city, as described below, together with the existing can make the city one of the best tourist destinations in Ethiopia if deficiencies in all spears or in all wings are minimized. The study tried to locate these attractions in the map of the city, presented the value of the attractions or resources, and has come with Northing and Easting coordination of the attractions and photos.

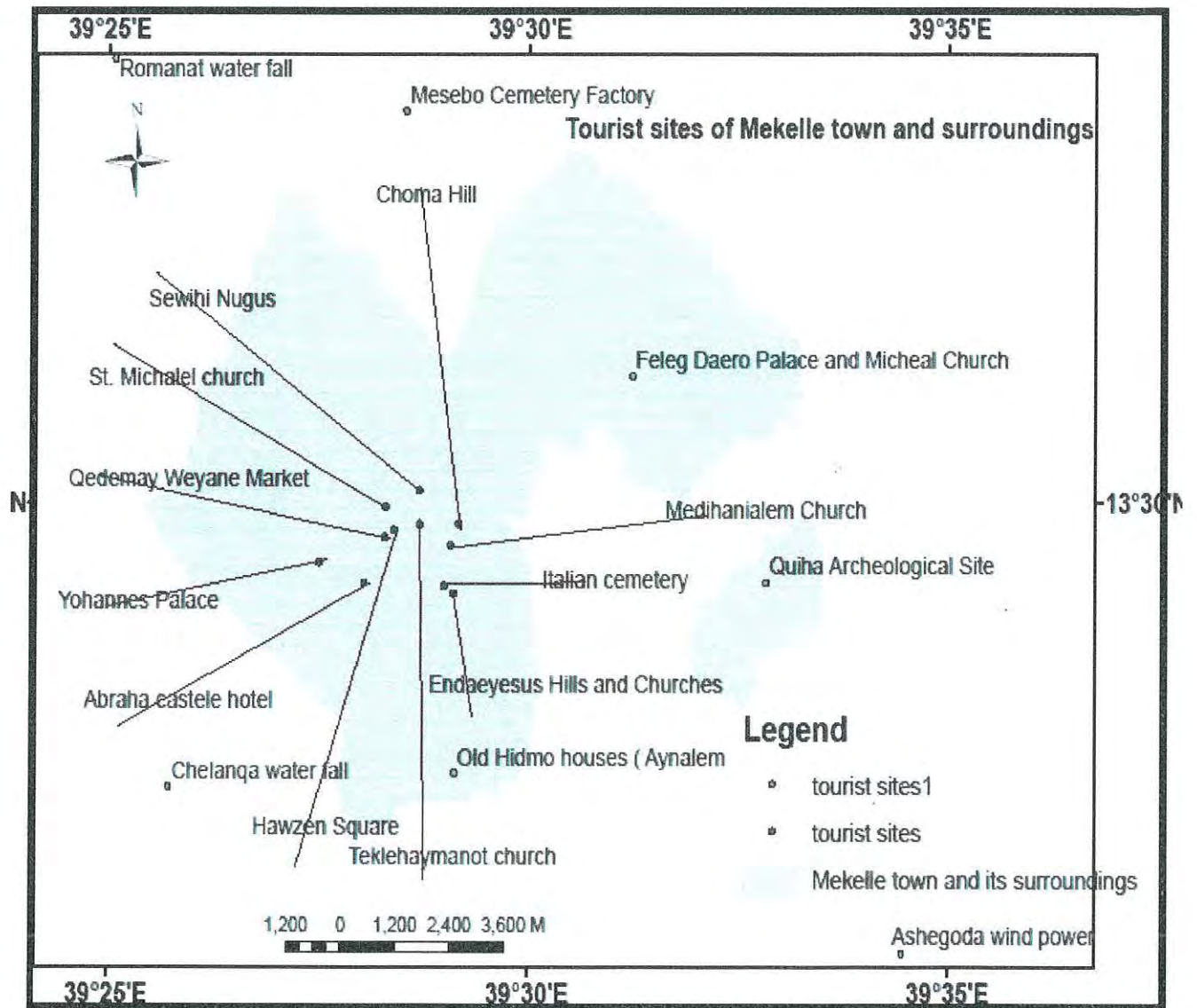
Table 11: Potential tourism resources of Mekelle city that can additionally be used for tourism product development

Natural tourism resources	Cultural and Historical tourism resources	Archeological tourism resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Landscape and scenery attractions ❖ Waterfalls; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chel' Anqua and • Romanant ❖ Rivers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eilla and • Qelamino 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The cultural landscape of Enda'Eyesus combines; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle field of Mekelle Siege, • church, • Italian cemetery • Chomoa hill, • Mekelle university ❖ Feleg Da'ero palace ❖ Abraha Castle hotel ❖ Qedamay Weyane Market ❖ Hidmo, ancient building houses ❖ Religious worship places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Medihanialem church ✓ Teklehaimanot church ✓ St. Michael church and the church's museum ✓ St. Mary church ✓ The churches near to the water falls • Living cultural religious celebrations such as; Ashenda, Timket, Epiphany, Meskel, the finding true cross ❖ Industrial tourism resources such as MIE, MSF and Ashegoda wind farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Quhia archeological site

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As it can be seen in the figure below, the attractions are positioned in the map of the city that shows both existing attractions as well as the potential tourism resources that can additionally be used for tourism product of the city.

Figure 8: the Attractions sites in the map of the city



Sources: The Researcher Own Map, 2013

4.2.3.1 The Natural tourism resources

Landscape and scenery attractions

Traveling to the city either from Addis Ababa or Shire Enda'Slassie, the city is situated in the plain area after crossing the attractive natural landscapes. The city is surrounded by attractive landscapes, very pleasant to see either from the city to the landscapes or vis versa such as the landscapes of Enda'Eyesus, Endabagomgam, Emba Arayou, Emba hutsa , Keashum and others. According to Yahannes and Tsegay (2007) the city and surrounding area are classified into four categories as flat to gently sloping, gently sloping to rolling, sloping to moderately steep and steeply to very steeply sloping type, all are equally eye catching natural attractions.

Water Falls

Mekelle has two astonishing waterfalls; Romonant and Chel'Anqua. The two waterfalls are far apart but have similarities.

a. Chel'Anqua water fall

Chel'Anqua Water Fall, so named from Chel'Alnqua, a small village in the district Debri of Enderta, originates from Qalamino/Aynalem located some 7 Km at 13.4522⁰ latitude and 39.42878⁰ longitude and lies at the elevation of 2100 m above sea level.

Figure 9: Photographic view of Chel'Anqua Water Fall in dry season



Photo: by the Researcher, 2013

Past the plan on the way to the district from the city, an incredible valley that flows throughout the year is found; especially at summer it covers a wide area with powerful gorge and a river flowing over it. It flows over a smooth black stones, the arrangement of which has a natural beauty as if it was intentionally built for this purpose.

The last 10 meters to the tip of the valley, after its long journey, catches attention as the water flows uninterruptedly on the giant black stones, watched from a distance seemed to be built without mud and cement, until it falls down the way to the floor spreading attractive whistling sound.

Figure 10: Photographic view of the landscape after Chel'Anqua Water Fall



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

As the picture depicts, the topography after the water falls to the lowest gravity of the river also looks attractive. Therefore, the area can be exploited as tourism destination. The Water fall could be used for recreation, swimming, and well agriculture tourism.

Romanant water fall, found 10 km away from the city located at 13.57463⁰ latitude and 39.41789⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 1888 m above sea level, flows throughout the year. It flows down its way surrounded by black smooth stones, seemed to be created to beautify it, until the valley reaches its terminal and eventually falls down along the gravity.

Figure 11: Photographic view of Romanat Water Fall in dry season

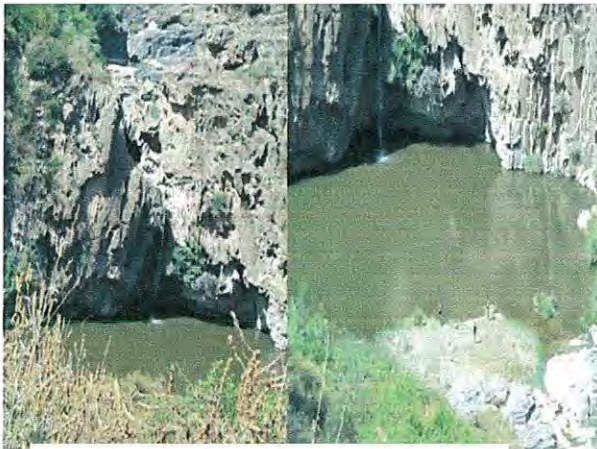


Photo: by the Researcher, 2013

The pattern and topography of the area of the fall is almost similar to that of the Debri's fall. The local people used the water fall as a place for swimming (bath) as well as irrigation.

Optimum investment complemented with skilled man power may enable the establishment of modern swimming pool as well as irrigation.

Rivers

Mekelle and its surrounding have rivers that flow round the year as well as seasonally. Eilala and Qalamino rivers are the famous one.

Figure 12: Photographic view of Eilala River



Photo: by the researcher 2013

As it can be seen in the picture, this is Eilala River that is found closer to Feleg Da'ero Palace. The river flows from the landscapes around Feleg Da'ero and then finally after crossing the plains goes to Romanant water fall while Qalamino River flows from the

landscapes of Aynalem then finally to Chel'Aenqa water fall.

“Eilala and Qalamino rivers that pour from mountain sides lying east of Mekelle rush parallel west bound bordering the city. Eilala, runs north of Mekelle and Qalamino traveling the opposite plunge in to cataracts namely Romonant and Chelkot” (Tesfay, 2010). These rivers actually are the basis for different fauna and flora (when reached at the water falls), agriculture tourism and waterfalls.

4.2.3.2 The Cultural and Historical tourism resources of Mekelle City

a. The Historical and Cultural Landscape of Enda' Eyesus

The name Enda'Eyesus, derived from the name of church called Eyesus, is meant home of Jesus. Enda'Eyesus, which is found East of Mekelle city, is located at 13.48690⁰ latitude and 39.48335⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2251 m above sea level. It is home of a historical church, Italian cemetery, battle field siege, Chomoa New Year and Cross Day celebration site, and Mekelle University. It is believed that the church was built by *Dejjazmach* Dable Eyesus, son of *Raesi* Weldeslassie's sister, in the time of *Raesi* Micheal Shul of Tigray.

During the invasion, the Italians had established a very strong fortress at Enda'Eyesus. However, thanks to Empress Taytu, the Italian fortification at this place was easily defeated once the Ethiopians were able to control the sources of water (Bahru Zewdie, 2002). From this time onwards, the water is known as Mai-Anshti, which means water of the ladies. After Italians and Ethiopians agreed to leave out from the fortress, the Italian fled to Adigrat then to Adwa, where faced final humiliation.

Figure 13. Photographic view of Mai-Anshti



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

Mai-Anshti, as it is depicted in the picture, is bordered in the east by Mekelle University. The water flows round the year and the local people of the city and Mekelle University students come to this place for bath services.

The place is covered by big and dense forests and really nice for bird watching. To avenge the Battle of Adwa, the Italians came for the second time in the first half of 20th century especially in 1935/36 accompanied by well calculated strategies and armaments. At this time, the war was fought in a wider area than the first one. Even though they were successful in defeating the Ethiopian forces and had made a five years misery sojourn in Ethiopia, their compatriots were killed and buried in different parts of the country. Disturbed by this situation, the Italians have started the process of collecting dead bodies of their country's men by the end of the 1960's. According to the guard of the cemetery, the cemetery has been constructed at Enda'Eyesus by the Italian Embassy in 1969/70 for

the deceased bodies collected from Hawzen, Amba'Alage, Maychew and Hintalo Wajirat while the one in Adigrat was built for the rest of the corpse gathered from Shire, Adwa, Axum, and Adigrat after the cemetery of Enda'Eyesus.

Figure 14: Photographic view of the Italian Cemetery

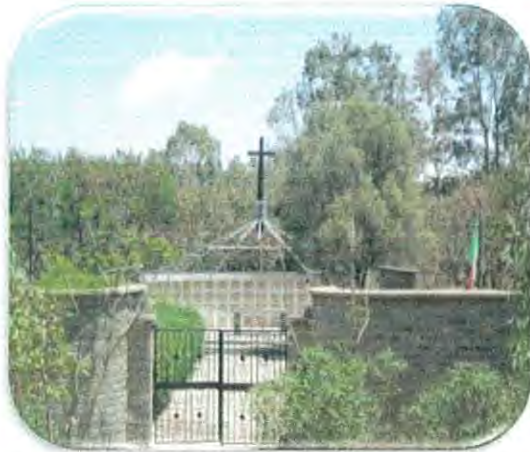


Photo: by the researcher, 2013

The cemetery of Enda'Eyesus has rectangular shape established approximately on 2401 meter square. The cemetery, found at 2234m above sea level, is located at 13.48483⁰ latitude and 039.48520⁰ longitude. The cemetery has a cross sign in the middle to indicate that the soldiers were Christians.

In this cemetery about 548 carcasses were buried, some names of whom, are listed down there, while those whose names were not identified was designated as *cadiuto*. Within Enda'Eyesus Mountain there is a place called Chomoa which is located at 13.49651⁰ latitude and 39.42878⁰ longitude. Chemoa is the other historical place in Enda'Eyesus where a Meskel celebration is colorfully celebrated annually. Meskel was started to be celebrated at Chomoa hill during the time of *Raesi Mengesha Seyom* in 1971/2, believed that the top of this area can represent Debresina, a place of Angles in the Bible.

Mekelle University is one of the 31 secular public Universities in Ethiopia established at Enda'Eyesus in 1993 after the fall of the dictator *Derg* and one of the outcomes of the 17 years of fighting of the Tigray Liberation Front. Within the Arid main campus, located at Enda'Eyesus, Mekelle University has four campuses. The University has seven colleges,

six institutes and 54 departments with many programs under them. The university has served as center of education and research for two decades. The foundation of the university and its environment is attractive for visitors. Therefore; the historical and cultural landscape of Enda'Eyesus has high touristic potential.

b. Feleg Dae'ro Palace, and Abraha Castle Hotel

The two palaces belong to the famous ruler of the region called *Dejjazmach* Abraha Araya. Feleg Da'ero is established some three kms far away from the center of the city located at 13.52129⁰ latitude and 39.52064⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2040 m above sea level. The environs are surrounded by green forests like Fig, locally called *Da'ero*, Eucalypts and other indigenous trees and attractive mountains. The area has high potential for cultural tourism as well as agricultural tourism.

Figure 15: Photographic view of Dejjazmach Abraha palace and St. Michael Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

As the picture depicts there is a building named Abraha palace which probably was built during the time of Emperor Menelik II. The palace is established in an area of 180 square meters. It is 13 meters long from the ground, and had two doors and 19 windows.

The building was ruined for many years, but now some renewals are made. Though at the present time the building is closed, its architectural building is very attractive and has touristic values. The architectural wood works and ceiling makes the building attractive. As to the interviewee people, the building has different rooms, recreation areas, bed rooms for guests and workers and on the top of the ceiling there are different cherished stones representing crown. In addition to these, as it can be seen in the above picture, north east of the palace there is an old aged church called St. Micheal church probably was built during Axumaite period. The churches' architectural designs, architectural buildings of the windows, doors, and the seat replica of the ark of covenant were made up of wood.

Beyond to this cultural tourism, the local people near to the palace cultivate different vegetables such as cabbages, onion, tomato, and fruits etc using water from the river.

Figure16: Photographic view of Abraha Castle Hotel



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

The other history related with Abraha palace is Abraha Castle probably built with the building that is found in Feleg Da'ero. The castle is a majesty and magnificent view of the city. It is believed that the castle was built by Dejjazmach Abraha himself

probably in the 1890s located at 13.48665⁰ latitude and 039.46750⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2102m above sea level.

This Castle has similarity with Emperor Yohannes IV Palace in its architectural design, the landscape where it is built upon, and the location of these buildings which are parallel to each other. Abraha Castle was a former residence of an important lord but now it is serving as a hotel owned by the government. The compound is green with enormous attractions. The castle has twenty four rooms, thirty seven bedrooms that include Suite, French, Single, and Twin beds.

c. Kedamay Weyane Market (The Open Air Market)

During the reign of Emperor Haile Sellasie I (1930-1974), the Tigrian people have revolted against the then administration under Haile-Mariam Reda's leadership. This revolt had controlled Mekelle and Quiha from the emperor's system of administration. However, the Emperor being assisted by the British had retaliated and bombarded the place by British airplanes (Solomon, 2007). It was at this open-air market, Edaga Senuy, which the British Royal Air Force carried out air raids, in support of Emperor Haileselassie, against the peasant mutiny known as the First Woyane Rebellion in the early 1940s. These airplanes had worsened the punishment by bombing and killing about 400-500 civilians in a single market day at Edaga Senuy and some 40, 000 cattle owned by the peoples of Raya were looted" (Solomon, 2007).

Figure 17: Photographic view of the Open Air Market



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

As you can see in the picture, to commemorate the innocent dead civilians, *Raesi Seyoum Mengesha* has placed a symbol of corpse-box in the place. It was also because of this historical event that the market place is called as *Df'eo*, place where people were killed or executed.

The site is located at 13.49432^0 latitude and 039.47154^0 longitude and lies at elevation of 2093m above sea level. Few years ago, the market has got its name as *Kedamay Weyane Market*, to represent the cause of bombardment serving as a major trade activity of the city.

d. Hidmo, the Traditional House Building of Mekelle City

Hidmo, the traditional built house, which is widely found in rural areas of Tigray and rarely found in the towns and cities. Hidmo is usually built from mud, stone masonry and woods. These kinds of house buildings were inherited from pre-Axumaite and Axumaite housing system (Sergew, 1972). These types of house buildings still exist in Mekelle city in few *Qebeles* such as in *Anaylem*, *Addis-Alem*, and *Edaga-Beerai* and the way of building and their architectural design are more or less the same.

Figure 18: View of 'Hidmo' house shows the outside, inside and the ceiling (right to left)



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

This site is found in Aynalem located at 13.4545° latitude and 039.48546° longitude and lies at elevation of 2150m above sea level. As the picture depicts the outside of the houses a beautifully built stone steps are found, leading to the inside of the house.

The interior is painted with white limestone or off white colors made from crashed local limestone, and cow dung. The ceiling is mostly supported by pillars and it is absolutely stunning with hand curved wood arranged in an artistic geometric patterns usually crosses. These types of traditional house buildings have a great tourist attraction values if they are preserved and developed. Their age, ways of construction and paintings makes them unique from the present house building styles.

e. Religious Worship Places, Churches

Mekelle is the home of different spiritual buildings such as churches, monasteries and mosques. The art of music and the different musical instruments used in the churches, art of constructing the churches, replica of the ark of covenant, the materials used for ceremony of the dance like drum, the holy book are topical examples of movable heritages of churches and monasteries which are significant for tourism development (Ayalew, 1992; Mary & Sidney, 1992; Steinecke, 2007). There are lot places of worship in the city; however, the study selected the places of worship based on the priority to touristic values.

i. Medihanialem Church

Medihanialem Church of Mekelle is one of the aged churches in the city. It is located at the coordinates, 13.49299⁰ latitude and 39.48466⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2130m above sea level. According to the church leaders, it is the biggest church in the city in terms of economy, and other service deliveries. The church has served as the city's municipality center before the construction of municipality houses in Mekelle.

Figure 19: Photographic view of Medihanialem Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

The church leaders responded that, the church was established by the order of Emperor Yohannes IV in 1875/6, intentionally to be a monastery. Because of that reason, up to this time women are not allowed to go into the church and for

women's south to Medihanialem church, the emperor built a church called Kidane Mhret Church.

It is believed that the true cross had been rested in the place where the church now is constructed for three months before it went to Gishen Debre Kerbe, where it is situated now, during the reign of king Dawit (r.1380-1412). The architectural building of the church is unique in Ethiopia. It is believed that the architectural building of the churches was adopted from Rome.

The church is the museum of many tangible and intangible heritages such as the replica of Ark covenant, music instruments, vestments etc and the annually and monthly festivals. The church compound is green and many aged forests are protected in the church. East of the church there is a river which contributes for the church attraction. The river is in the compound of the church and becomes a source of various indigenous plants of forests. The forests become the home of many animals and birds.

ii. Chel'Anqua Selassie Church

The church leaders believed that Chel'Anqua Selassie Church was built probably in the late 18th or early 19th century. It is located at the coordinates, 13.4522⁰ latitude and 39.42878⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2100 m above sea level. This church is found east of the Chel'anqa water fall, in its environs of the church there is water flows round the year which makes the compound of the church green. In addition to the natural values, the church is known for its cultural and historical significance. The church is well-known for its amazing paintings, manuscripts, church and ecclesiastical treasures as well as royal treasures. The church is warehouse of several artifacts donated by different

kings and international travelers like the famous 19th century traveler Henry Salt, donated artifacts to *Raesi Woldelessie* of Tigray (Yemane &Yonas, 2012).

Figure 20: Photographic view Chel'anqua Slassie Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

In addition to these, the church leaders believed that the church was a home for travels and adventures in Abyssinia for many years. The church is also the site where the Ethiopian famous king's, Emperor Tewodros, Itege (Empress) Turnesh died shortly

after the Emperor had committed suicide refusing surrender to the British army (Yemane &Yonas, 2012) and other burial masses.

iii. St. Michael Romanant Church

Near to the Romanat water fall, there is a church called Debre St. Michael Romanant Church. It is located at the coordinates, 13.57463^0 latitude and 39.41789^0 longitude and lies at elevation of 1888m above sea level. It is believed that the name Romanant is derived from the name of a tree, Romanant.

Figure 21. Photographic view of Debre St. Michiel Romanant Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

Right in the main gate there are bells, holy water and dense forest. The forest is a home for different animals and birds. According to people near to the site and church leaders there are various wild animals within the church

compound and its environs like hyena, leopard, ape, fox, and snake and from the birds such as wild chicken, guinea fowl etc. In addition to the natural values, the church has three Arcs /Tabots/ historical books and crosses. The paintings and architectural design of the church is so attractive to see.

iv. Debre Amin Abune Teklehaimanot Church

It is believed that Debre Amin Abune Tekle Haimanot church was founded by Emperor Yohannes IV in 1875/6. The church is located at 13.4965⁰ latitude and 39.47847⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2101m above sea level. In this church it is also believed that the true cross has rested for few months in the place where the church constructed now before it was passing from Jerusalem to Gishen Mariam . The church has three gates and as one enters the church via the southern gates there are old aged huge trees such as olives, junipers, etc, that are indigenous. The intensity of the trees makes the church a perfect religious place to rest and pray so peacefully.

Figure 22: Photographic view of Debre Amin Abune Teklehaimanot Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

In the church compound, there are two buildings; named Saint Gabriel the archangel and Abune Teklehaymanot church. The first and the older one is a circular in shape have a lot of medieval period paintings. The second one is called Abune Teklehaymanot church and this modern building was completed in 1994.

The same to the former one, the church have different paintings. In addition to these, the church owns different types of religious manuscripts around forty three holy books that were written on parchment and bound by wooden covers. There is a church bell, made of one metal, hung by twisted wire from a horizontal pole and struck by a flint, which calls the faithful and the clergy for prayer.

v. St. Michael church

St. Micheal Cathedral church is one of the oldest churches in Mekelle city founded in 1975/6 and inaugurated in 1977/8 by the then bishop of the region, *Abune Yohannes*. The church is located at 13.49133^0 latitude and 39.46697^0 longitude and lies at elevation of 2081m above sea level. The church has rectangular shape with six wooden doors and 12 windows. St. Michael Cathedral has potential touristic values. According to the church ladders the church is unique in that it has three cohabiting Arks (*Tabots*) or sanctuary

places. These are St. Micheal in t/he center, Abune Selema on the right side and Abraha We' Atsbaha in the left side of the church.

In addition to this, the architectural design of the building, the forests within the church premises, theological collage and the Museum of *Abune* Yohannes are also the other attractions of the church. Throughout Tigray region there are around five governmental and nongovernmental museums. Three of them are found in Mekelle city. Besides, *Atse* Yohannes and the Military Museums, the other museum is called Mekelle Debre Selam Arch Angle Michael Church *Abune* Yohannes Museum which is found to the East of St. Michael church.

Figure 23: Photographic view St. Michael Church, the Museum and Tower Bell



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

The museums contain a collection of different religious books written in different languages and different items including overseas and Ethiopian currency of Emperor Haile Slassie I. The other attractive area in the church is the tower bell which has six floors located to the west of the church. The architectural buildings of the tower -bell, paintings of the apostles on the ladders from the floor, the windows, the stages to the top, and the two microphones makes the tower bell attractive.

vi. **Kidst Mariam Church or St. Marry Gugusa**

Ras Gugusa St. Marry church is located at 13.49936⁰ latitude and 39.471761⁰ longitude and lies at the elevation of 2083 m above sea level. This church is associated with *Raesi* Gugusa's vision of building a church who laid down the church's foundation in January 1921. Kidst Mariam church has completely octagonal shape.

Figure 24: Photographic view of Kidist Mariam Church



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

When one enters through the first main gate, the southern direction, to the left side, there are kindergarten and an elementary school, baptizing room, a bell which weight about ten quintals, used in the time of pray or and funereal ceremony and in the Eastern part, there is the tomb of *Raesi* Gugusa.

The church yard is covered by different trees largely Olive, Junipers etc. The architectural building of the church is unique. The design of the church is similar to its external octagonal walls. The other interesting touristic value of the church are the fine detail of an attractive architectural building, attractive paintings, such as nine saints, St. Marry with her child, the works of Apostles, the pictures of Abune' Gebre Menfes Kidus, and etc and the surrounding rooms and ceiling are decorated with different types of spiritual paintings and mirrors. The church also has a wide collection of very old parchment manuscripts and crosses.

f. The Living Cultural Festivals

Festivals and special events are most important components of tourism industry (Romila C., 2010). In our country, particularly in Tigray region, there are many religious festivities which tumble down from one generation to the other. The wonderful festivities celebrated annually in Mekelle city are Ashenda, Meskel, and Timket. Religious carnivals have different socio-economic and historic importance in the local communities' daily lives and are the back bones of tourism development (Roger, 1997).

I. Ashenda Festivity

Mekelle is considered to be the best place on the carnival of *Ashenda*. *Ashenda* is a matchless Tigraian traditional festival which takes place in mid-August at the end of a fasting called *filseta*. It is the only festival dedicated to girls and young women. This celebration has got its name *Ashenda* from the name of a tall grass that girls put on around their waists as embellishment. The young women and girls wear traditional white cotton clothes called *Tilifi*. *Tilfi* is a traditional clothe produced by weavers from cotton and is decorated with amazing embroidery from the neck to toe in front of the dress. The girls also adorn themselves with array of beautiful jewelry.

The girls first gather at a common place and they go from house to house singing, dancing and playing with their drums to deliver their good wish to the house owners. The house owners will in turn give them money, food and drinks and other items they have for their cultural shows. This is a continual process which starts in the morning and goes to the afternoon session for at least seven or more days. These ladies also stop and play at the center of quarters to just have fun among each other.

Figure 25: Photographic view of Ashenda festivity



Photo; by the researcher, 2013

During this time they don't need anybody to give them money or anything else, they rather are doing it for their personal gratification. There are different songs and singing poems, anthems, and singing styles used at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the festivities. The closing session of *Ashenda*

festival is impressive and quite memorable.

At this time, girls from different corner of the city come together in a specific place to play, dance, and sing for extended hours until sunset. This time, the young boys join them like addressees than active players.

ii. Meskel Festivity, the finding of the True Cross

Meskel is a Christian festival celebrated annually on 27 September in a very colorful way. The festival is one of the most colorful festivals celebrated in Ethiopia for more than 1600 years. The feast commemorates the discovery of the cross upon which Jesus was crucified, by the Empress Eleni, the mother of Constantine the Great (Walelign, 2007).

In Mekelle, the finding of the true cross is celebrated in a very colorful way at the end of the rain season in the place called Sewhi Nugus which is located at 13.50220⁰ latitude and 039.47837⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2063 m above sea level. According to the interviewed church leaders, on the eve of *Meskel*, selected people who are organized by churches they go to the place and they carry tall torch made of branches tied together

with yellow daises of *Meskel* flowers, placed at the top. In the day, all Christians go in the early morning to the place and until the bonfire is lit they perform lots of chanting and *shibsheba* (movement of hand and legs) and fasting publicly which are connected to *Meskel* festivity lead by the religious leaders. In the mid of the morning the branches will get gathered together in front of the compound gate and ignite to symbolizes the action of the Empress. After the bonfire is completed, people go home after making a cross in their front head from the ash of the bonfires.

iii. *Timket*, Epiphany Festivity

It is believed that, Tigray is the first to accept Christianity in the horn of Africa and it has lent the legacy of *Timket* celebration to the other parts of Ethiopia. *Timket* in Mekelle and anywhere in Ethiopia is a two or three days of celebration.

Figure 26: Photographic view of Timeket festival



Sources: taken from a friend's album

All churches of Mekelle during the two days of celebration, starting from the eve of the day (called *ketera*), high priests and faithful congregation take the sacred *Arks/Tabots/* to the baptism place, called *Sewhi Nugus* and stay there overnight.

The *Arks/Tabots/* are carried only by priests as seen in the picture, never by the congregation, are cloaked in rich brocades and carried high above the priests' heads in the midst of thousands of celebrating followers. The crowd led by the priests and deacons

highlights the occasion by singing, clapping hands and dancing. All the followers are led in to the nearby water pool, whose water is blessed by the Pop of the regional state with an old cross. The head priest takes great pleasure in splashing water at every one. It is a Joyous moment with huge crowded and smiles around. Priests or *Deacons*' in great number splash the blessed water over the crowd. In the second day, all *Tabots* are paraded back to the respective churches accompanied by much singing, chanting and *shibsheba* except St. Micheal's *Tabot* which parades back in the following day.

g. Industrial Tourism Resources

Visitors go to a city because of the whole package that is offered to a tourist including industries (Van et al., 1995). Mekelle at present accommodates many small and big industries. From the big industries, the study selected three industries, two of which are from the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) industries while the other one is the newly introduced technology, wind farm power. There are a lot of small and big industries in the city but the study has selected the following for their touristic value.

i. Mesfin Industrial Engineering

Mesfin Industrial Engineering (MIE) was established in 1993 as the engineering wing of EFFORT with the capital of Birr 7 million located at 13.50169⁰ latitude and 39.48539⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2110m above sea level. As to the higher officials of the organization, MIE is mainly engaged in the manufacturing of such as liquid and dry cargo bodies, trailers, semi-trailers and etc. It is also engaged in electromechanical erection and installation works. MIE is not only a well-equipped establishment, but also

well-organized and staffed with highly educated, experienced, highly trained and skilled personnel as well.

Figure 27: Photographic view of Mesfin Industrial Engineering



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

The industry is highly associated with tourism products and services. A lot of business owners travel to Mekelle to get a service for their, either, broken machine or erection of something from different corners of the city as well as the country.

A lot of people's movement is there and, in the way, they get not only technical experience from the service providers but also experience the destination as well.

ii. Messebo Cement Factory

According to interviewee of the staff, the establishment of the construction of the MCF began in February 1997 and was completed at the end of the 1999 at a cost of 1.5 billion Birr. The plant is located at 13.56593^0 latitude and 39.47560^0 longitude, some 7 km north ward of Mekelle city. The factory is established on the road that leads to Shire Enda'Selassie at elevation of 2010 m. above sea level. The main production of the factory is Cement; an important ingredient in concrete locking together the sand and gravel constituents in an inert matrix. Cement is one of the principal building and construction materials in building and construction sectors. Further, they responded that,

the annual capacity of the plant can reach more than 900,000 tones with a globally competitive quality.

Figure 28: Photographic view of Messebo Cement Factory



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

In addition to the product offer to the market, the touristic value of the factory is established on the foot of the mountain, the raw material used for cement production is brought from the mountain, a little bit far away from its foundation. To transform the selected soil from the top of the mountain to the factory there are stretched pumps. At the top of the mountain the trucks adds the soil to the stretched pumps and through the machine connected it transports the soil from the top to the lower, where the factory is found. The factory is working day and night to meet the demand of the society. In the night time light gets scattered to the mountain which is seen from each corners of the city and adds values for the sites attractiveness.

iii. Ashegoda Wind Farm Power

Ethiopia hydro Electric power is the fastest growing industry and becoming the promising industry in gaining foreign exchange by exporting its power to the neighboring countries (<http://www.newscientist.com>). Side by side to the hydro Electric power, another sustainable source of Electric power, wind power, is under construction in

Mekelle, Adama and Aysha. In October, 2010 the first wind turbine tower farm project in Ethiopia has been erected in Ashegoda located some thirty kilometers from the city at 13.42409⁰ latitude and 39.4756⁰ longitude. The farm is erected on the way of the road that leads to Afar regional state and lies at the elevation of about 2300-2532 m above sea level. It is suitable for wind power as the place is very windy.

Figure 29: Photographic view of Ashegoda Wind Power (the two and three wings)



Photo: by the researcher, 2013

According to the interviewed staffs, Vergnet Groupe, the French Company, is constructing Ethiopia's first wind farm, the 120 Megawatt Ashegoda Wind Farm in Mekelle. The company erects eighty four turbines with around 210 million Euro, out of which thirty have two wings and each produces 1 megawatt while the rest fifty four have three wings each producing 1.67 Megawatt. The length of wind power that has two wings is 70 meter and that has three is 80 meter.

Averagely, the turbine can produce power at nine revolutions per minute with a speed of 3 meters per second. And at twenty three revolutions with the speed of fifteen meter per second can produce one full Megawatt. The area has very interesting touristic values for tourism development. The foundation of the tower, its height, and the way it produces energy, the sounds of the wind oscillating the wings all together makes the place very

attractive. While it was established it didn't displace farmers from their farmland and has not affected any man-made and natural resources. This is one typical example of sustainable tourism, the most attention given at present time (Eugenio, 2006).

4.2.3.3 Quiha Archeological quarry tourism resources

It is believed that Quiha is one of the oldest towns in Ethiopia, currently found within Mekelle administration. The town is established on the main road that leads to Addis Ababa. It is believed that, Quhia is an ancient site as that of Yeha, Metera, Ger'alta, and Hawzen of ancient Ethiopian towns. As evidence to this is there are archeological quarry sites 5 km away north of the city i.e, king's house or palace and church but was ruined, which could be by either Yodit or during war time with Ahmed Gragh as according to study respondents. The site is located at 13.48483⁰ latitude and 039.54715⁰ longitude and lies at elevation of 2222 m above sea level. As the picture depicts which is an ordinary digging by the farmers there is basement of ancient house. In addition to this, there are many pillars of stones and visible temples as good indicators.

Figure 30: Photographic view of Quhia Archeological Quarry Site

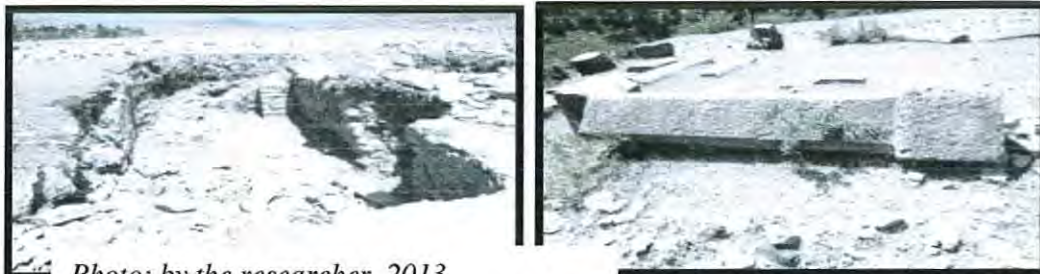


Photo: by the researcher, 2013

At present time Mekelle tourism bureau has been trying to look into it and create awareness on the local communities not to farm the surrounding area, though not yet excavated and studied.

4.3 The Opportunities and Challenges to Develop Tourism Product Development in Mekelle City

In this sub topic the study is going to look into the city's opportunities for tourism product development and the bottlenecks existing for tourism product development.

4.3.1 The Opportunities for Tourism Product Development in Mekelle City

The city has high tourism potential of natural, cultural and historical, archeological tourism resources as mentioned above. Mekelle tourism cluster used only very few types of attractions for tourism development of the city. As table below depicts out of the 12 respondents, 90% of them agreed with the available potential tourism resources of the city as an opportunity for tourism product development. Together the existing once and the others the study has identified can additionally be used for tourism product development which can make the city best tourist destination.

Table 12: Mekelle tourism cluster officer's opinion about the opportunity of the city

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Presence of high tourism resources	10	Yes	9	90
		No	1	10
The geographic location of the city	10	Yes	9	90
		No	1	10
Being the capital city of the Tigray regional state	10	Yes	8	80
		No	2	20
The existing and expanding tourism infrastructures	10	Yes	7	70
		No	3	30

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As table 12, reveals 90 % of the respondents responded that the city's location near to the historical route adds values to visitors flow to the city. As to view of respondents the city serves as a spring board for the historic route travelers who want to visit Denakil Depression, one of the active volcano in the world, to the historic route of Tigray rock hewn churches which are more than 120 in number, churches found within the radius of 80 kms. and to Gondar , Bhir Dar and Axum. 80% of the respondents replied that being the capital of Tigray regional state adds values to visitors flow to the city. Being the capital city of the regional state can enable the city to be the center of trade tourism, conference tourism, educational tourism, political tourism and ethnic tourism.

In addition to what is mentioned above, 70% of the respondents replied the existing tourism infrastructure of the city itself could be considered as an opportunity. They responded as an example is, the city has better domestic and international airline flights and is connected with the national and regional cities or towns via road. The existing and expansions accommodation services, hospitals, schools, travel agency, electric city, water supply and telecommunication service, banks and others help the destination as additional inputs for being an attractive of the city. In the coming few years, the city will have railway transportation which will add values for more attractiveness of the city.

4.3.2 The Challenges for Tourism Product Development in Mekelle City

The study reveals out that, Mekelle offers unique and enormous tourism resources though not able to use them to the maximum level owing to so many draw backs. Additionally, the destination service delivered is not enough for visitor's good experiences. The study

finds out the constraints using distributing questionnaires, study's observation, focus group discussion, and snowball interview presented as follows;

Poor stakeholder's coordination and participation related problems

Tourism is not only about attractions, accommodations, transportations and promotion. It is combination of all these together which needs coordination and participation of the entire stake- holders (Sharma, 2007). Tourism is not owned or run by a single person or few people rather it is the commonsense of every stakeholders. To make realization of tourism, strong coordination and involvement of within stakeholders is must.

Table 13: Mekelle tourism cluster officer's opinion about stakeholder coordination

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Less coordination and participation among the stakeholders in tourism development and the activity done to aware them about city's tourism products is poor	10	Agree	10	100
		Disagree	-	-

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As the result notified from the data collected through focus group discussion and interviewee people most people of the city, even the educated ones, don't understand the tourism sector significantly. They thought the sector, though counts many decades, as a new discipline. The awareness about the city's attraction is too limited because of the mobilization of stakeholders into the sector effort by the concerned body constrains it. As all respondents 100% reveal out in table 13 that the most constraining factor for the development of tourism product of the city is because of the less stakeholder's

coordination and participation in tourism product development and the activity done to aware about tourism and its products is too limited.

In fact the Ministry of tourism and culture of Ethiopia has drawn polices and strategies that enable or invite stakeholders to be part of tourism industry (MOCT, 2009). However, implementation at grassroots level is at its infancy level. The key stakeholders (community, governments, and private institutions and NGOs) who are involved and coordinate in accommodation and catering services, tour operators and tour guides, transportation facilities and in other tourism activities are the most determinant factor for tourism development of any destination (Judith & Mbaiwa, 2011).

Administration related problems

Though tourism is sources of foreign exchange, employment and income for the nation as well as the community, the attention given to Mekelle tourism cluster is not persuasive.

Table 14: Mekelle tourism cluster's opinion about administrations related problems

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
The structures of administration, government attention, budget allocation are encouraging.	10	Agree	1	10
		Disagree	9	90

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As the above table reveals, out of the 10 respondents, 90% of them responded as the structure of administration, government attention, and budget allocation's given to the sector are not satisfactory. The interviewed people further explained that the budget given to the sector is still low.

Tourism agency is not treated equal as other bureaus in terms of equipment, finance and attention. Even regional tourism offices of Ethiopia have different governance structure. For example, what they provided as an evidence is that the Amhara Regional Tourism is called Amhara Culture and Tourism Bureau, while the Tigray Regional State is called Tigray Culture and Tourism agency, both having different position and power. Additionally, here with in the region there is administration gap. Tigray Culture and Tourism Agencies are responsible to the Tigray Regional Cabinet while the Zonal Tourism Clusters are responsible to the city's Cabinet. If that is the case, there is a gap between the regional state and the Mekelle tourism cluster.

As related to administration problem, further was gained from interviewee people, some tourism resources of the city have no ownership. This happened because the advantage of the tourism resources and values are not studied and discussed very well. For example, Mai Anshti historical place claims Mekelle University as well tourism cluster of Mekelle but no one is responsible for the site. In addition to this, Italian cemetery though it belongs to Italian but tourism of Mekelle didn't think it as is part of Mekelle tourism cluster. Because they left it as it belongs to Italian. In fact, attractions could be owned by private, government and public. But the ownership should be identified and one should be responsible to care of the site for tourism development.

Skilled man power related problems

If there is trained man power, there is a possibility of identification and valuing of resources, mapping of the resources, change them in tourism products, package the products, implement and know how to generate income from the them (Camp and Cross,

2012; Mulugeta, 2012). However, this is going in opposite way in the city and one can see the evidence from the researcher shot photos of the tourism resources of the city. The city tourism resources are not interpreted, presented and preserved very well. For instance, the way the tourism resources of Kedamay Weyane Market, the ancient house buildings, Hidmo, and Quhia Archeological quarry site presented from right to left respectively and you can see how they are treated and handled can back up the above argument (see figure. 30)

Figure 31: Photographic view of Qedamay Weyane Market, Hidmo house, Quhia archeological

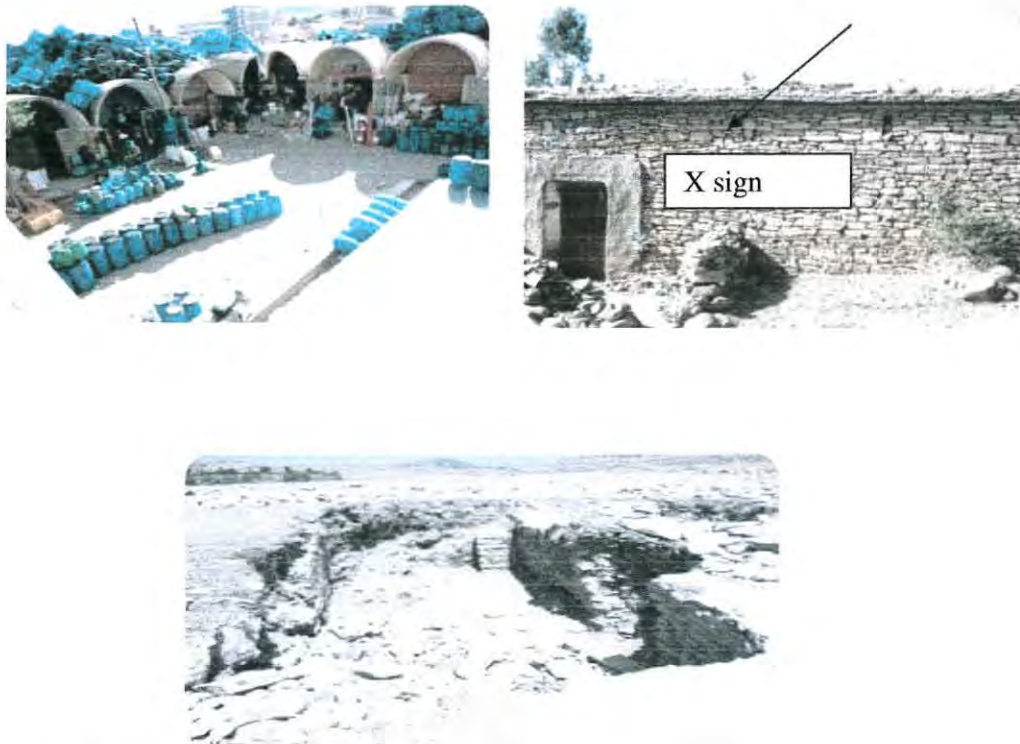


Photo: by the researcher, 2013

Especially, as the above figure depicts, kedamay Weyane Market is not properly handled and changed to tourism product at all. As a result, the attraction site is becoming out of

consideration as a tourist resources, despite the fact that this memorial place is historically very significant. The other site found on the way of destruction is the ancient houses buildings of the city called Hidmo that found in some *kebelles* of the city. The art of building of the houses is quite different from the modern ones. These houses are usually built from amazing stone masonry and have different shapes. However, instead of preserving these houses as a historical site a sign is marked on them suggesting that they are to be demolished for the purpose of road expansion. And the Quiha archeological quarry site is not well identified, preserved, presented and totally not changed to tourism product and has been exposed to sun and rain, for many centuries. In addition to this, the study assured the reality from the concerned body by providing a questioner provides as follows;

Table 15: Mekelle tourism cluster's opinion about skilled man power related problems

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
There is lack of skilled man power in both of the government and private enterprises	10	Agree	9	90
		Disagree	1	10

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As the table 15 indicates, 90% of the respondents responded that the skilled man power in the governmental sector and private enterprises are not well trained and professionals from the discipline. Skilled man power is not only needed to the government officers but also the employees in the private tourism enterprises. As explained by Robert, tourism skills and qualifications must be recognized and must be portable both within and beyond the industry (Robert, 2009).

As the study tried to interview the owners and managers of the tourism enterprises of the city about their level of training, only a few of them responded that the workers of our enterprise have many years of experience; they hold BA degree and Diploma in other fields. They considered them as professionals. However, tourism hospitality is quite different profession; it needs its own journey of education. This influenced directly to the product and service they delivered. The tourism enterprises further interviewed about the quality of their product and service they deliver and very few in number they responded as excellent, however, most of them described as good but required to be excellent. Tourism business should be able to take care of the quality of products and services in order for visitors to have memorable experience (and they are the back bone for the development of tourism industry (Charles & Goeldner, 2009; Pujarikrishnaiah, 2012).

Planning, modifications and additional innovation related problems

As any product characteristics, tourism products also share the same as the product life cycle. As it is obvious that if there is no continuous planning, modifications and additional innovation directly, it means that the business will be ceased, no visitors will come and hard to talk about tourism. The first actual step in the new-service development is the idea generation, which can be systematic search of new ideas, then follows screening product ideas; determine the feasibility and potential profit implication, set up new service or product concept, commercialization then finally implementation (Kotler et al. 2001).

Table 16: Mekelle tourism cluster's opinion about the planning.. related problems

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
There is continuous planning, modifications and additional innovations in tourism in tourism product of the city	10	Agree	2	20
		Disagree	8	80

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As table 16 indicates out of the 100% respondents only 20% of them agreed positively to the statement as there is continuous planning, modifications and additional innovations in tourism product of the city. That means there are almost insignificant activities done with continuous planning, modifications and additional innovation in tourism product of the city. Tourism product development requires modifying of the existing product and inventory of new product to catch up the customer's needs and wants to the end (Komppula, 2001).

Tourism infrastructure facilities and service related problems

Tourism infrastructures such as transportation, accommodation and amenities, tour operators and guide, souvenir shop and handcrafts are principal means for tourism development (Pujarikrishnalal, 2020). Tourism infrastructures facilities are determinant for increasing and decreasing tourist out flows (Charles & Goeldner, 2009). To look into these infrastructural developments of the city, the following questioner were distributed as follows;

Table 17: Mekelle tourism cluster's opinion about the infrastructure facilities related problems

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of standard tourism infrastructure facilities and service in the city such as accommodation, souvenir shops and hand crafts, transportation, utilities, internet, and other furniture's	10	Agree	7	70
		Disagree	3	30

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As table 17 indicates out of the 10 respondents 70% of them responded agreed as tourism infrastructure facilities and service of Mekelle city such as accommodation, souvenir shops and hand crafts, transportation, utilities, internet service and other furniture's are not standardized for efficient tourism product development of the city. As the study respondents replied, particularly accommodation and catering service, and souvenir shops and hand crafts of the city should have to be standard so as to satisfy the visitors and promote the city.

For successful tourism, there must be standard accommodations and transportations that can match the demands of the travelers who arrive in the destination. Hotels must provide the physical facilities, price ranges, locations, and services that meet the expectations, wants, and needs of the travelers (Charles & Goeldner, 2009). Souvenir shops and local handcraft are paramount in promotion of one country's political, cultural, socioeconomic activity, and history of the past as well as the present situation. They are a means of promotional tools and can serve as a good memory for visitors about the destination as well as the country's image (Dorothy et al., 2012; Turtureanu, 2012). Though they have

such significance, in Mekelle the number of Souvenir shops, and hand crafts are not much enough. As it was observed the Souvenir shops and handcraft centers, the locations of which are not easily identifiable, are five in number. They are not well organized, they can't explain them very well and even they don't have a good store house.

The study also interviewed tour operators and guides of the city and responded that there are people who have no working license. These are the people who give inappropriate information to visitors. They justify that though we are not professionals from the sector, at least we have many years of experience in tour operator and guide. Beside to these, the other problem they tried to mention is some of tourism officers themselves are involved in tour operator and guide business illegally. Their responsibility is expected to be facilitators for us; however, some of them have contact with those who are involved illegally and they do the business with them. There is a necessity to develop the professional tourist guides through training and qualifications that help him/her in doing the job as well as for the well-being of the hospitality of the country (Mohammad, 2011).

Furthermore, as the data collected from interviewee people and observed shows the city lacks multi recreational centers such as traditional folklore (Azmar bet) houses, art gallery and music consorts, zoo park, visiting parks, cinema' houses, theater houses, LCD screen television, video games and internet, sport fields like trekking activities, horse riding places, and big cultural centers that shows the activities of the past and present societies. The quality and magnitude of these institutions are an important consideration for attracting and satisfying tourists (Charles & Goeldner, 2009).

Promotion related problems

Promotion is all about creating positive impression on visitors to have good values about the destination. Promotion is a very strong instrument of marketing that presents a dusty as clean and a clean as a dusty. Here we can conceive how much the bad image of the past many decades of Ethiopia still influence the present Ethiopia. If promotion is such a very strong instrument, it is better to work hard on promotion to make the destination world and nationwide known. There are good activities going on and should be appreciate as beginners, but if that is not brought the maximum output level, indirectly that means the promotion done is not enough to be accompanied by tourist out flow.

Table 18: Mekelle tourism cluster's opinion about promotion related problems

Parameters	No of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	percentage
There is enough promotion on the tourism products of the city such as billboards, signage's, brochures, written books, populates	10	Agree	3	30
		Disagree	7	70

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As the table 18 reveals out of the 10 respondents only 30% agreed with the positive sentences of there is enough promotion and marketing conducted on the tourism products of the city. Promotional activity in Mekelle is very poor it is expected to work hard for more betterment. Additionally, the respondents responded that the city's attractions have no signage, billboards and written books that display them. The study observed only at *Atse Yahaness* museum there is very small signage that tells simply the name of the

museum and it is very old. And the other is at Romanat church and water fall but not visible, simply to mention.

Packaging, itineraries and maps related problems

Packaging, development of intermarries and mapping of tourism attractions are prominent aspects of tourism product development.

Table 19: Mekelle tourism officer's opinions about packaging, itineraries and maps of the attractions

Parameters	No of respondents	alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
The attractions are not packaged, and itineraries have and maps done by either the government or any tour operator and guide	10	Agree	9	90
		Disagree	1	10

Sources: the researcher's own survey, 2013

As the above table depicts out, 90% of the respondents agree that the city's attractions are not packaged and didn't have itineraries and map produced either by the tourism bureau of the city or by any tour operators. According to Lessley & Richard (2005) attractions are nothing unless they are packaged, changed into tourism product and implemented to advance socio-economic development. Having understanding the advantages of packaging, itineraries and mapping of the attractions, the study come up with positioned the attractions in the map of the city as depicted out in Figure 8. And recommended proposed package tours and itineraries of the attractions of the city presented together the existing with the identified tourism resources that can additionally be used for tourism product development in chapter 5, see in recommendations part.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Tourism is becoming an important source of economy, mostly interconnecting with visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, and having a good time and participating in a convention, a business conference, or some other kind of business. Thus, to get benefit from the sector, tourism product development is the most essential process which involves not only scientific investigation of the physical part of the destination but also the different services delivered to tourists to choose the products. A tourism product, therefore, includes all visitor experiences of the products and services, activities, and attractions.

The main objective of this study is to assess tourism product development of Mekelle city in order to come up with diversified tourism products so as to improve visitor experiences in the city. To achieve the objective, the study has employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods as well as stratified sampling techniques throughout the study period. The study has taken its sample population from the major tourism stakeholders of the city, i.e.10 respondents from Mekelle cluster tourism office, and 41Visitors have also been participated in the study. The major instruments employed to collect the necessary data are both primary and secondary sources of data. While the collected quantitative essentials have been analyzed through statistical software, SPSS version 16: descriptive statistics and frequencies, the qualitative data are analyzed using descriptive and interpretive methods.

Findings of the study shows that, the existing tourism enterprises of the city are those who are involved in tour operators and tour guides, hotels and catering services, restaurants, cafeterias, bars and entertainments and the existing tourism attractions in use of the city are *Atse* Yohannes IV Museum and Addi Haqi Martyrs Monuments. The attractions in use as well as the destination services given by the tourism enterprise didn't make the city known destination. This also was supported by visitors experience analyzed from the existing tourism products of the city during pre-trip experiences, en-route trip experiences, on site trip experience, and after trip experiences.

The other finding of the study shows that the city is endowed with various potential tourism resources, i.e. natural, cultural, historical, and archeological resources that can be additionally developed to tourism product of the city as summarized in table 11. The study has tried to locate these attractions in the map of the city, presented the value of the attractions or resources, come up with Northing and Easting coordination of the attractions and photos. Besides this, the city has high opportunities for tourism product development. These opportunities are the tourism resources /attractions mentioned, the location of the city, being the capital city of Tigray regional state, and the expansion of tourism infrastructures activities in the city which are very important aspect in tourism product development.

The study reveals that Mekelle offers unique and enormous tourism resources though not able to use them to the maximum level owing to so many drawbacks. Additionally, the destination service delivered is not enough for visitor's good experiences. As described in

4.3.2 the bottlenecks for tourism product development of the city are a lot including: weak coordination and involvement of the key stakeholder's (Government, NGOs, Community, and private enterprises) in the city. The existing bureaucracy, low government attention and budget allocation to the sector are seriously impairing its development. The sector lacks trained man power in both the governmental offices as well as in the tourism businesses. In the city, the activity of continuous planning, modifications and additional innovation in tourism product development is so limited and insignificant. The poor performing tourism business and the existing insufficient tourism infrastructural facilities are also challenging tourism development processes in Mekelle city. The promotion and marketing activities carried out on the tourism products of the city are not worthy enough to make the various resources of the destination known. And for the constraints, active involvement and coordination's of all stakeholders and determining their role in the tourism industry stated as means alleviating the problems, nothing else will be the solution.

Having says all these, the study concludes with a proposal of development of packaging and itineraries which are necessary for tourism product development of the city as follows; the study proposed to categorize the attractions in to five days package tours based on their geographical distribution rather based on their resources categorization. This is because the variety tourism attractions of the city are found in different directions; East, West, North and South of the city. In this package tour and intermarries, the study will not describe the value of the attractions because already described in the above. And the fee for the attractions, car rent, accommodation and security issues are not stated here

because it affects by time and situation of the market just only the paths for the attractions could be;

Day 1;

Morning shift from 8:00 Am to 12: 30 Pm: Visit Abraha castle and its environs, Adihaki Martyrs and St. Michael church.

Lunch: At Abraha Castle Hotel

Afternoon shift from 2:00 Pm to 6:00 Am: Visit Chel'aenqua water fall and the landscape the water flows, its sources Qelamino River, and Chel'anqua Slassie church.

Dinner and night spent: At Abraha Castle Hotel

Day 2;

Moring shift from 8:00 Am to 12: 30 Pm: Visit the historical and cultural landscape of Enda'Eyesus (Choma hill, Italian cemetery, the church, mai Anshti, Mekelle university) Aynalem's old traditional houses, Hidmo,

Lunch: At Axum Hotel

Afternoon shift from 2:00 Pm to 6:00 Am: Visit Qhiha archeological site and Ahegoda wind farm power

Dinner and night spent: At Axum Hotel

Day 3;

Moring shift from 8:00 Am to 12: 30 Pm: Visit Atse Yohannes IV Museum and Palace, Debre Amin Tekehaymanot church, and Medihanialem church,

Lunch: At Atse Yohaness Hotel

Afternoon shift from 2:00 Pm to 6:00 Am: Visit St.Mariam church Gugusa and Qedemay
Weyane Market with including shopping program

Dinner and night spent: At Atse Yohanness Hotel

Day 4;

Moring shift from 8:00 Am to 12: 30 Pm: Visit Mesfin industrial engineering,
Dejjazmach Abraha palace and St. Micheal Church and Eilla River,

Lunch: At Hill Top Hotel

Afternoon shift from 2:00 Pm to 6:00 Am: Visit Mesebo cement factory, Romanant water
fall and the landscape the water flows, and St. Michael Romanant church

Dinner and night spent: At Hill Top Hotel

Day 5;

Moring shift from 8:00 Am to 12: 30 Pm: Visit and observe the living cultural festivals
like the religious celebrations, Ashenda, Meskel and Timket festivals if cultural show
area is established for them, because these living cultural festivals are seasonal.

Lunch: At Axum Hotel

Afternoon shift from 2:00 Pm to 6:00 Am: Visit to experience local cultures, and
shopping

Dinner and night spent: At Axum Hotel

5.2 Recommendations

The development of tourism has a multifaceted advantages such as source of employment, community development, means of preserving natural environment, cultural and historical heritages and means of infrastructural development while entertaining people. Therefore, to make tourism product development of the city realized, the mentioned constraints should be minimized through active involvement of all stakeholders and determining their role in the tourism industry, nothing else will be the solution. Therefore, the study recommends the role of the key stakeholders in tourism product development of the city based on the research finding and conclusion as follows;

i. The government:

Tourism industry is not run by single or two stakeholders rather it is a combination effort of many sectors. Tourism industry may be driven by the private sector; however, tourism destinations are under the influence of various government policies. Governments have a key role to play in providing the enabling environment for tourism to thrive. Therefore, Mekelle tourism cluster agency is expected to work on establishing conditions for tourism to thrive such as through government led policies, plans and laws that guide and regulate the sector for tourism development. These should facilitate and support stockholders to involve in the system. This could be achieved by giving training and create awareness to them that strengthening the sector such as creating and developing positive image on the heritages mentioned above, providing both capital and consultancy incentives particularly for the tourism enterprise, facilitating transport service to all heritage sites, enabling systems that coordinates different institutions, develop training

manuals for tour guides and tour operators, produced package tour, access maps and establish conditions for promoting and marketing the destination through different mechanisms are among the most decisive ones should be maintained.

ii. The private tourism enterprises:

The private sector's role and responsibilities in tourism product development of a city is vital. Tourism enterprises of the city are engaged in the activities of accommodation and catering services, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, tour operators, souvenir shop and handcrafts and in entertainments. The main role of these enterprises should be matching the supply with the demand in order to satisfy the needs and wants of the visitors and then after to generate profit. Therefore, the role of the tourism enterprise of the city in tourism product development could be as follows;

Tour operators and guides:

- ✓ Tour operators and guides should be educated, trained and should be professionals in order to present a clear and honest image about the city without any exaggeration or shrinkage of information.
- ✓ Understand and know the natural, cultural, historical and archeological attractions of the city very well
- ✓ Take the attractions photo and post it in their offices, website and brochures
- ✓ Prepare own packages with consideration of the attraction categories: natural, cultural, historical and archeological.
- ✓ Understands all the destinations map of the attractions

- ✓ Promoting, and selling trips; transporting people from their homes to the destination enabling them to visit attractions.
- ✓ Develop excellent communication with visitors for better sealing of the products and services
- ✓ Ensure that the tour will be enjoyable and as safe as possible
- ✓ Be honest to customers/ visitors
- ✓ Be ethical to customers/ visitors

Hotels and related service giving institutions:

- ✓ Hotels and related service giving institutions should provide standard services in according to their levels: focus on cleanness, bed rooms, service & efficiency and food quality. For successful tourism; there must be standard accommodations that can match the demands of the travelers who arrive in the destination.
- ✓ Cheerful hospitality for in and out visitors or customers
- ✓ Equipped with transportation service, shopping and all service which are necessary
- ✓ Package their product and service
- ✓ Promote and market their services in consideration of the 4 Ps and market segments

Souvenir shops and local handcrafts:

- ✓ As reviews shows that souvenir shops and local handcrafts are a means of promotional tools and can serve as a good memory for visitors about the destination as well as the country's image. Therefore, the owners who are involved in this giving service should be placed or located in the center of the city, their store should be attractive and well designed, they are expected to know and well interpret all of

them. In addition to these, they are expected to package their products and services and promote for the ears of visitors.

iii. The local community (the residents):

The role the local communities play in tourism product development of the city can't be undermined. Their role includes: participate in decision making, understand the value of the attractions or heritages, participate in preservation and conservation of the attractions, be hospitable to visitors, and involve in new tourism enterprises. For example, the residents of the landscape of Enda' Eyesus could be involved in offering service to hikers, and in developing Ecolodge development. In addition to these, residents can be involved in cultural festivals such as Ashnda, Timket, Meskell, Hoyahoye, dancing and the like.

iv. NGO's:

NGOs (nonprofit organizations) has an immense role in the growth of tourism developments by creating projects on establishing health centers, recreation centers, and on preservation and conservations of the different attractions of the city and on other tourism infrastructure developments. In addition to these, they can access funds, provide high quality technical expertise on conservation and preservations of the heritages, deliver capacity building and training for local people, and link local entrepreneurs with the private sector. To sum up, tourism product development could be achieved through the tight coordination, involvement and share role and responsibilities of every stakeholders of the city.

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APPENDIXCES

Appendix 1. Questionnaires for Mekelle tourism cluster officers

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Development Studies

Tourism and Development Program

Dear Respondents!

I am doing thesis in partial fulfillment of Tourism and Development MA Program at Addis Ababa University under College of Development Studies entailed of **tourism product development in Mekelle city**. Mekelle city has high tourism resources potential for tourism development. To make benefit out of the diverse resources, product development is the decisive and promising one. This inspired me to conduct a thesis with a title of Tourism Product Development in Mekelle city. I would appreciate your participation in this questionnaire, which is more about tourism product development of the city. I would like to assure that all the information you will present will be strictly confidential. Your background information and anything you mention will not be given to third party. Since the quality and success of this study depends on your kind and genuine information, please take your time to entirely think about your answers.

Thank you

By Daniel Alemshet

Email daniofaxum@gmail.com

Cell phone 251 913 498 441

Part. 1 Back ground information

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age 18 -30 31-45 above 45
3. Marital status Single Married Divorced Widowed
4. Educational Background
 Certificate Diploma holder BA/BSC holder
 MA/MSc holder PhD holder Not at all
5. Your Position _____

Part 2. Please circle or tick (✓) on the boxes and fill the blanks

1. What types existing attractions are currently in use in Mekelle city

List down the existing natural attractions in use

List down the existing cultural attractions in use

List down the existing historical attractions in use

List down the existing Archeological attractions in use

2. What types of tourism business enterprises are existing in the city?

3. Mekelle city can offers more tourist resources beyond the current in use attractions

a. Yes

b. No

4. If yes for question no 3 list down the

Natural resources

Cultural resources

Historical resources

Archeological resources

5. In what aspects do you think Stakeholder participation and coordination in tourism product development is necessary?

6. The city's potential tourism resources are opportunities for tourism development of the city

a. Yes

b. No

7. The city location near to the historic route add value for her attractiveness

a. Yes

b. No

8. Being the capital city of the Tigray regional state is good chance for tourism product development

a. Yes

b. No

9. The existing and expanding tourism infrastructures

a. Yes

b. No

Part 3. The challenges for tourism product development of the city

Using a scale from 1-5, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided/ don't know, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree please choose and tick (✓) the most suitable response to the Statements on the respective spaces provided.

No	Parameters	1	2	3	4	5
1	Untrained man power in the sector					
2	Lack of standard tourism infrastructure facilities and service in the city such as accommodation, souvenir shops and hand crafts, transportation, utilities, internet, and other furniture's					
3	There is enough promotion on the tourism products of the city					
4	Less coordination and participation among the stakeholders in tourism development and the activity done to aware them about city's tourism product is poor					
5	There is continuous planning and modification and improving of the existing tourism product and additional product innovation,					
6	The structure of administration, government attention and budget allocation are encouraging					
7	The attractions are not packaged, and itineraries have and maps done by either the government or any tour operator and guide					

Appendix 2. Questioner designed to be filled by visitors of the city

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Development Studies

Tourism and Development Program

Dear Respondents!

I am doing thesis in partial fulfillment of my MA degree in Tourism and Development Program at Addis Ababa University under the College of Development Studies entitled “**tourism product development in Mekelle city**”. Mekelle city has high potential for tourism, as it serve as the capital city of Tigray regional state, it is located near to the historic route, the other types of resources owed within, and all these can make the town to be a tourist destination. However, these resources are not properly used and developed. To make benefit out of the diverse resources, product development is the decisive and promising action to undertake. This inspired me to conduct a thesis with a title of tourism product development in Mekelle city. I would appreciate your participation in this questionnaire, which is more about your experience from the existing tourism product of the city. I would like to assure that all the information you will present will be strictly confidential. Your background information and anything you mention will not be given to third party. Since the quality and success of this study depends on your kind and genuine information, please take your time to entirely think about your answers.

Thank you!

Part. 1 Back ground information

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age 18 -30 31-45 above 45
3. Marital status Single Married Divorced Widowed
4. Educational Background
 Primary _High school Diploma holder BA/BSC holder
 MA/MSC holder PhD holder
5. Nationality _____

Part 2. About your experience in the destination

6. What factor motivated you to travel to Mekelle city?

7. Did you get easily information related to the destination area before you traveled?
 Yes No
7.1. If your answer for question number 7 is “No”, how did you come here?

8. Did you get easily access transportation and facilities to undertake your trip easily to the sites?
 Yes No
8.1. If your answer for question number 8 is “No”, how did you go to the sites?

9. Have you got high quality services from tourism business enterprise (tour operators, tour guide, travel agents, accommodation, transport facilities, visitor center staff, etc)?

Yes No

9.1. If your answer for question number 9 is “No”, please mention the problem you faced?

1. Have you seen unique tourism resources here, in the city?

Yes No

10.1. If your answer for number 10 is “yes”, please mention?

2. Do you think that all the sites you have seen are well interpreted and designed for visitors?

Yes No

11.1. If your answer for question number 11 is “No”, specify the missing things

3. Did you get high quality of accommodations and services at the destination?

Yes No

4. Have you found a variety of activities, entertainments or places to choose from the destinations?

Yes No

13.1. If your answer for question number 13 is “Yes” specify in short way

5. Have you had pleasant interaction/communication with the service personnel at the destination?

Yes No

14.1. If your answer for question number 14 is "No" mention the problems you faced?

6. Do you have memorable items to bring back home (photographs, souvenirs, etc.)?

Yes No

15.1. If your answer for question number 15 is "No" why?

7. Have you gotten a good feeling from the vacation?

Yes No

Appendix 3. Check list for focus group discussion

Dear Respondents!

During the past few decades, tourism has become the biggest economic sector in the developed and developing countries. Hence, this dynamic industry has created different opportunities for millions of people. In 2011 the number of international tourists traveled in the world reaches 982 million an increase of 4.6% compared to 2010 and an predictable growth of between 3% and 4% in 2012 (UNWTO, 2011). For the triumph of the sector the availability of diversity tourism attraction resources around the world donated for the success of the sector. However, resources themselves are not enough to attract tourists if not handled packaged and promoted. Visitors consider different aspect in visiting destinations like the well manner of tourist's package. Mekelle city has high potential for tourism, as it serve as the capital city Tigray regional state, its location near to the historic route, the resources owed within, and all these can make the city one of the tourist destination in Ethiopia though not properly used and developed. To make benefit out of the diverse resources, product development is the decisive and promising. This inspired me to conduct a thesis with a title of **Tourism Product Development in Mekelle City**. I would appreciate your participation in this discussion, and I would like you to know that all the information you will provide today will be strictly confidential. Your name and anything you mention will not be given to anyone outside this purpose.

Thank You!

1. What do you know about tourism?
2. What do you know about the importance of tourism? Do you know tourism can preserve the natural, cultural, historical and archeological resources of the city?
3. What are tourism resources? What kind of natural, cultural and historical and archeological resources within the city do you know?
4. What do you know about tourism products? What is the importance of assessing tourism product development and what could be?
5. Is there any attempt by any organization or individual to make you and the people aware of the importance of any tourism resources and participant in tourism product development?
6. How do you evaluate tourism activity in Mekelle city? Do you think that all its natural, cultural historical and archeological resources changed to tourism product?

Appendix 4. Guide line for the semi -structured and snowball

Interview

Part 1.

A. Name of Interviewee: _____

B. Level of Education: _____

C. Experience in years: _____

D. work in: _____

Part 2. General questions

1. Mekelle city is found near to the 120 rock hewn churches within the radius of 80.k.m space and historic route. What advantage can get the city from this?
2. What advantage can get the city by being the capital city of Tigray?
3. Do you think Mekelle tourism sector is activating in the best way?
4. Do you think Mekelle tourism cluster uses the city's potential tourism resources natural, cultural, historical and archeological tourism for tourism development?
5. Do you think that the natural, cultural, and historical resources of the city are fully packaged?
If not why _____
6. Do you believe Mekelle tourism cluster highly works with all stakeholders of the city?
7. What kind of resources you suppose that can be used for attraction in the city?
8. Does the existing tourism infrastructure facilities and service are enough to carry out effective tourism development?

9. Does the promotion and marketing activities conducting is enough?

For tourism enterprises of the city

1. What is the purpose of your business?
2. How do you describe the quality products and services your enterprises offer?
3. In what degree your staff your staff professionalism you can classify?
4. Do you think the quality of product and service you deliver are sufficient for tourist's experience?

