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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**  
**TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIALS, CHALLENGES, AND  
OPPORTUNITIES OF OROMO CULTURAL CENTER FOR TOURISM  
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

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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 DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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Development**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CONTENT                                                   | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....                                    | I    |
| LIST OF FIGURES .....                                     | VI   |
| ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....                          | VII  |
| ABSTRACT .....                                            | VIII |
| <br><b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>                      |      |
| 1.1 Background to the Study.....                          | 1    |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem.....                         | 4    |
| 1.3 Research Questions.....                               | 5    |
| 1.4 Objectives of the Study.....                          | 5    |
| 1.5 Significance of the Study.....                        | 6    |
| 1.6 Delimitation of the Study.....                        | 7    |
| 1.7 Limitation of the Study.....                          | 7    |
| 1.8 Structure of the Thesis.....                          | 7    |
| <br><b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>                 |      |
| 2.1 Tourism Product .....                                 | 8    |
| 2.2 Tourism Product Development.....                      | 13   |
| 2.3 Tourism Product Development Potentials .....          | 16   |
| 2.4 Tourism Product Development Strategy.....             | 19   |
| 2.5 Tourism Product Development in Ethiopian Context..... | 22   |
| 2.6 Challenges to Tourism Product Development.....        | 26   |
| 2.7 Opportunities of Tourism Product Development.....     | 29   |

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 2.8 Conceptual Framework ..... | 32 |
|--------------------------------|----|

## **Chapter Three: Research Methods**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 3.1 Research Design.....          | 33 |
| 3.2 Data Collection.....          | 34 |
| 3.2.1 Primary Data Sources.....   | 34 |
| 3.2.2 Secondary Data Sources..... | 37 |
| 3.3 Method of Data Analysis.....  | 37 |
| 3.4 Ethical Considerations.....   | 38 |

## **Chapter Four: Description of Oromo Cultural Center**

|                                                  |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.1 Overview of Oromo Cultural Center.....       | 40 |
| 4.2 Sections of Oromo Cultural Center.....       | 41 |
| 4.2.1 Oromia Museum.....                         | 41 |
| 4.2.2 Oromo Art and Theatre Center.....          | 42 |
| 4.2.3 Knowledge and Information Center.....      | 43 |
| 4.2.4 Oromo Study Center.....                    | 44 |
| 4.3 The Gada System.....                         | 44 |
| 4.4 The Irecha Celebration.....                  | 48 |
| 4.5 Statues, Reliefs, and Mixed Media Works..... | 49 |

## **Chapter Five: Tourism Product Development Potentials of Oromo Cultural Center**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 5.1 MICE Tourism Development..... | 53 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

|                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.2 Incorporation in the City Tour Package of Addis Ababa..... | 54 |
| 5.3 Standard Food and Beverage Service.....                    | 54 |
| 5.4 Souvenir Shops.....                                        | 55 |
| 5.5 Exhibitions.....                                           | 56 |
| 5.6 Marketing, Promotion and Technological Inputs.....         | 57 |
| 5.6.1 Marketing and Promotion.....                             | 57 |
| 5.6.2 Website and Database Management System.....              | 58 |
| 5.7 Platform for Stakeholders.....                             | 59 |
| 5.8 Demand of Visitors.....                                    | 61 |

## **Chapter Six: Challenges to Oromo Cultural Center for Tourism Product Development**

|                                                                          |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 6.1 Lack of Awareness about Tourism Product Development.....             | 62 |
| 6.2 Financial Constraints.....                                           | 63 |
| i. Lack of Budget to Finance Tourism Products.....                       | 63 |
| ii. Improper Utilization of Budget.....                                  | 63 |
| 6.3 Lack of Skilled and Qualified Manpower.....                          | 64 |
| 6.4 Absence of Tour Guiding Service and Interpretation of Heritages..... | 65 |
| 6.5 Loose Interdepartmental Connection.....                              | 66 |
| 6.6 Susceptibility to Theft .....                                        | 66 |

## **Chapter Seven: Opportunities for Tourism Product Development at Oromo Cultural Center**

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| 7.1 Growth of Domestic Tourism..... | 68 |
|-------------------------------------|----|

|                                                                          |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 7.2 Distinctiveness and Strategic Location of Oromo Cultural Center..... | 69        |
| 7.3 Cultural Policy of Ethiopia.....                                     | 70        |
| <b>Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations</b>                     |           |
| 8.1 Conclusion.....                                                      | 72        |
| 8.2 Recommendations.....                                                 | 73        |
| <b>References.....</b>                                                   | <b>76</b> |
| <b>Appendices.....</b>                                                   | <b>85</b> |
| Appendix 1: Interview Guideline.....                                     | 85        |
| Appendix 2: Checklist for Focus Group Discussion.....                    | 88        |
| <b>Declaration.....</b>                                                  | <b>90</b> |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|                                                                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Figure 1:</b> Conceptual Framework of the Study.....                                       | 32 |
| <b>Figure 2:</b> Front View of Oromo Cultural Center.....                                     | 40 |
| <b>Figure 3:</b> Theatrical Poster Promoting a Theatre Held in Art and Theatre Centre.....    | 42 |
| <b>Figure 4:</b> The Library Section of the Knowledge and Information Center.....             | 43 |
| <b>Figure 5:</b> The Stairs of Oromo Cultural Center.....                                     | 45 |
| <b>Figure 6:</b> The Statue of Aba Gada and Hada Gola.....                                    | 46 |
| <b>Figure 7:</b> Reliefs Showing the First Five Stages of the Gada System.....                | 47 |
| <b>Figure 8:</b> A Cluster of Sculptures that Describes Irecha Celebration.....               | 48 |
| <b>Figure 9:</b> A Relief Work that Shows Traditional Attire Wore by Wollega Oromo Women..... | 50 |
| <b>Figure 10:</b> Mixed Media Work of Cultural Utensils.....                                  | 51 |
| <b>Figure 11:</b> Mixed Media Work that Shows Gugsii.....                                     | 52 |

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

|               |                                                                   |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ASA</b>    | American Sociological Association                                 |
| <b>CSA</b>    | Central Statistical Agency                                        |
| <b>ETOA</b>   | Ethiopian Tour Operators Association                              |
| <b>GDP</b>    | Gross Domestic Product                                            |
| <b>ICOMOS</b> | International Council on Monuments and Sites                      |
| <b>ILO</b>    | International Labor Organization                                  |
| <b>MICE</b>   | Meeting Incentives and Conference Tourism                         |
| <b>MoCT</b>   | Ministry of Culture and Tourism                                   |
| <b>MoFA</b>   | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                       |
| <b>OCC</b>    | Oromo Cultural Center                                             |
| <b>OCTB</b>   | Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau                                 |
| <b>UNECA</b>  | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa                     |
| <b>UNEP</b>   | United Nations Environmental Program                              |
| <b>UNESCO</b> | United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization |
| <b>UNWTO</b>  | United Nations World Tourism Organization                         |
| <b>WEF</b>    | World Economic Forum                                              |
| <b>WTTC</b>   | World Travel and Tourism Council                                  |

## ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this study was to find out potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center (OCC) for tourism product development. Hence, an attempt has been made to identify potentials over which tourism product development can be enhanced, challenges that act as impediments, and opportunities that promote tourism product development at OCC. To achieve this objective, data have been collected by using observation, key informant interview, and focus group discussion with selected informants working at OCC and Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau. Then after, collected data have been analyzed by transcribing, then reading and re-reading the transcribed material, and then using thematic analysis techniques based on, categories that emanated from the research objectives. Likewise, the analyzed data has been discussed in the context of prevailing literature. As revealed in the study findings, OCC has untapped potential for tourism product development that includes: MICE tourism development, incorporation in the city tour package of Addis Ababa, standard food and beverage service, souvenir shops, and exhibitions, marketing promotion and technological inputs like website design and database management system development, availability of concerned stakeholders, and demand of visitors. Conversely, lack of awareness about tourism product development, financial constraints, lack of skilled manpower, absence of tour guiding service and interpretation of heritages, loose interdepartmental connection and threat of theft have been identified as the major challenges hindering tourism product development in the cultural center. Then after, growth of domestic tourism, distinctive presence and strategic location of OCC, and cultural policy of Ethiopia that promotes the growth and preservation of indigenous cultures are deemed important opportunities for tourism product development at OCC. And lastly, conducting a research based on tourism product development, MICE tourism development, reviewing the existing marketing and promotion strategies, training manpower, working harmoniously with the concerned stakeholders, and a careful examination of opportunities present in order to best utilize resources were implications drawn for future intervention.*

**Key Words:** *Tourism Product, Tourism Product Development, Potentials, Challenges, and Opportunities, Oromo Cultural Center, Addis Ababa*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Tourism has evidently become one of the most rapidly growing industries in the world. The tourism industry is among the leading in terms of employment creation and income generation around the world (Macintosh and Goeldner 2005:26).

An ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development. Tourism has boosted virtually uninterrupted growth over time, despite occasional shocks, demonstrating the sector's strength and resilience. International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000, and 1186 million in 2015. Likewise, international tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide have surged from US\$ 2 billion in 1950 to US\$ 104 billion in 1980, US\$ 495 billion in 2000, and US\$ 1260 billion in 2015 (UNWTO 2016).

The travel and tourism sector is expected to grow faster than the wider economy and many other industries. It is anticipated to support over 370 million jobs by 2026. Such a strong growth will require tourism destinations across the world to provide environments that are conducive to business development. It will require effective coordination between public institutions and the private sector around the world (WTTC 2016).

International tourist arrivals worldwide are expected to increase by 3.3% a year between 2010 and 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to UNWTO's long-term forecast report "Tourism Towards 2030" (UNWTO 2016).

According to Timothy (1997), countries develop and promote their tourism resources with a view to reap the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental benefits that can be derived from tourism development. Tourism is used as an economic justification for heritage

preservation. Tourism also serves to preserve artifacts found in many parts of the world; indeed historical artifacts and their association have always been one of the tourism industry's most marketable commodities.

Tourism like any other industry needs to be strategically and sustainably developed in order to unleash its potential and positive impacts. A nation's cultural heritage is a national good. But due to its age, sensitivity, and demand for preservation, tourism can be both of great risk and opportunity. The risk is that the commercial benefits to be derived from tourism may create pressure for its unsustainable exploitation in ways that may create irreparable damage to these public goods. The opportunity, on the other hand, of recognizing and allowing for the commercial exploitation of cultural assets is to create an economic interest in and financial flow from the cultural assets which may be used among other things to ensure its sustainability (World Bank 2006).

As Kotler (2001:15) notes, "product is any offering that can satisfy a need or want of customers. It may consist of one or a combination of components, including, physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information and ideas".

According to Balaure (2005), as a result of the process of including a lot of various elements in several combinations (attraction elements and services) alongside with, accessibility and amenities every tourism product is unique.

A tourism product is fundamentally a complex experience not a simple, objective commodity and that tourism product development must be an integrated process involving information, services, transportation, accommodation, and attraction (Pearce 1989).

According to Taleb (2013), the process of tourism development necessitates official support for the sector since it involves a range of different agencies typically government, at different levels, the private sector and the communities in which tourism takes place. Development needs to be coordinated and integrated so that all links in the chain fit and are in balance with each other.

In many countries of the world, responsible governments, conscious of the prime importance of their cultural heritages, have identified and designated archaeological sites, artifacts, material culture, and architectural monuments as a public property. And yet, in many third world

countries, it hasn't yet drowned on some governments that the restoration and preservation of their cultural property by way of developing their products is important, let alone useful and financially beneficial (Robert et al. 2001:84).

A destination cannot realize its full potential unless the range and quality of its tourism product offering meet the needs and expectations of tourists. Its tourism products are the foundation for a destination's tourism sector operation. Their attributes are communicated to the prospective customer through marketing communications. The identification of products to be developed and the ways these are marketed is based on the "market: product" matching principle. Market and product research is used to identify the potentially most productive features to be developed. Destination marketing then communicates these products to the marketplace. The destination cannot realize its optimal benefits from tourism without its attractions and facilities being actively and creatively marketed (Taleb 2013).

According to World Bank (2006), the Ethiopian government vision for tourism is that it becomes a strategy tool to transform the image of the country. Increased focus on tourism can be a very powerful tool to change international perceptions and images. Tourism has proven its worth as a rehabilitator of image in so many post conflict countries and in Ethiopia's case, tourism has a particularly important role in changing the outlook of the country.

Ethiopia's cultural heritage is diverse and each form of heritage including religious sites, archaeological findings, festivals, ethnic group cultures, culturally significant urban areas and their preserved buildings, arts and more requires a focused effort to ensure that modern development does not result in the loss of authenticity and value (MoCT 2010).

Oromo Cultural Center is a graceful attraction located in Addis Ababa around a place locally known as Stadium. It is the first of its kind in the country. Oromo Cultural Center is very much suitable for, indeed in need of comprehensive tourism product development scheme in order to benefit more from growth of tourism and increase in international tourist arrivals.

In light of all these, there is no study conducted so far concerning the tourism product development potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center. Thus, this study

would contribute its share to the enhancement and sustainable growth of the cultural center through tourism product development.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A tourism destination needs a good product portfolio strategy to be able to develop tourism and specialize the existing supply of the destination. The portfolio should be based on the existing attractions and resources, but it should also take into account the essential infrastructures, facilities and services needed to make the development come true (Jordi 2006).

In the absence of tourism product development strategies, the result is but increased costs and reduced quality of service that would in turn undercut the ability to deliver an internationally competitive product (Candela 2012). Likewise, despite the huge amount of investment put on it and the state of the art standard it has, quality of service determines the international competitiveness of Oromo Cultural Center. Without a fitting designation of tourism product development strategies, it is apparent that the tourism resources of Oromo Cultural Center will be principally deserted. Gradually, the cultural center will be forced to be left to the margin.

Among the several added factors for the lack of network between foreign and domestic tour operators in Ethiopia, lack of product knowledge about the country is recurrently mentioned (ETOA 2013). This implies that, specific destinations like Oromo Cultural Center are not well known at international scale. This is mainly due to, lack of product development and marketing strategies.

In order to develop tourism products in Oromo Cultural Center, identifying the potentials of the cultural center for tourism product development is compulsory in order to best utilize them based on their availability. In the course of this, there are inevitable challenges that are faced in the process of tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center and conversely, opportunities that must be seized in order to promote tourism product development. Hence, the delivery of a competitive tourism product is the interplay between identification of potentials and examination of challenges and opportunities of a destination for tourism product development. And all this, requires a research.

Tourism product development concept is not yet fully on board in the Ethiopian academics. Speaking of other researchers that attempted to address the issue of tourism product development, Sahle (2011) studied about “Tourism Product Development in Lake Hayek” and Atsbha (2014) studied about “An Assessment of Potential Resources of Tourism Development in Ethiopia: The Case of Dejen Wereda” can be cited.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned studies don’t incorporate the potentials, challenges, and opportunities of cultural tourism product development and how they can be identified, dealt with, and promoted respectively.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

As a study that attempts to explore what is missing behind enhancing growth of tourism through tourism product development strategies in Oromo Cultural Center, the basic questions the research is concerned with and as such formulated are:

- 1: What are the generic tourism potentials of Oromo Cultural Center?
- 2: What are the strategies for converting tourism potentials of Oromo Cultural Center to tourism products?
- 3: What are the hindrances and positive elements to be detected in the course of tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **General Objective**

The main objective of the study was to assess the potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center for tourism product development in order to enhance the tourism competitiveness of the cultural center thereby serving as a benchmark for similar other establishments.

#### **Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study include:

- i. To assess the tourism product development potentials of Oromo Cultural Center
- ii. To identify challenges that can be impediments for tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center
- iii. To examine opportunities Oromo Cultural Center has for tourism product development

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It goes without saying that, understanding the existing potentials, prevailing challenges, and prospective opportunities of a certain destination in the context of tourism product development is useful. Such an understanding helps to minimize unanticipated fluctuations of the tourism business in addition to providing an outlet for gaining an access to devise new forms of products that were previously unforeseen. Hence the study contributes a lot to Oromo Cultural Center on that regard.

The Gada System has been registered by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in November 30, 2016 and there is an ongoing endeavor process to do the same to Irecha Celebration (MoCT 2016). These two intangible heritages have a huge socio-economic significance to Oromo people. Oromo Cultural Center artistically demonstrates the Gada System and Irecha Celebration. Thus, this study can serve as a blueprint in order to optimize the potential of the cultural center to present the heritages amply by way of tourism product development strategies.

In addition to that, the study attempts to investigate the main departments of Oromo Cultural Center, persisting problems that hinder tourism product development there and the underlying factors behind those themes. Consequently, with the approaches it proposes to address the issue, it is perceptible for the cultural center to better build up its tourism product development potentials and skim the associated benefits.

Furthermore, with the specific challenges it detects and opportunities it insights, the study also suggests how to curb the pitfalls of the former and widen the benefits of the latter. So that Oromo Cultural Center would have a steady tourism product development oriented growth.

Lastly, since Oromo Cultural Center is the only of its kind in Ethiopia that promotes Oromo culture in its entirety, with the findings of the study; one can derive policy-significance issues.

The study can also serve as a reference for prospective researchers since no study is conducted so far in the cultural center.

## **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

Even though the study is designed to assess the potentials, challenges, and opportunities of tourism product development, its feasibility is tailor made for and duly limited to Oromo Cultural Center.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

Tourism product development basically is one of the componential elements and/or prerequisites for an accelerated growth of tourism in a given destination that is followed by a series of successive interdisciplinary activities like management and implementation. Yet, the study solely reflects from the point of view of product development alone.

## **1.8 Structure of the Thesis**

The study has eight chapters. In the first chapter background to the study, followed by statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives to be achieved, significance, delimitation and limitation of the study as well as structure of the thesis is presented. In chapter two a thorough literature review of the study is discussed and theoretical and a conceptual framework is drawn. Chapter three contains methods of the study including the research design, method of data collection, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations of the study. The fourth chapter describes Oromo Cultural Center in its entirety. Chapter five entails about tourism product developmental potentials of Oromo Cultural Center. In chapter six challenges of Oromo Cultural Center for tourism product development is discussed. And, chapter seven presents the opportunities for tourism product development at Oromo Cultural Center. Finally, chapter eight discloses the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Tourism Product**

There can be no denying that tourism is a major global economic force. Hardly a day goes by without a new pronouncement about the wise significance of the world's largest industry. International tourism has grown substantially in recent decades with technological improvements, rising living standards and broader process of globalization leading to rapid increases in visitor numbers (Pender 2012).

Tourism is a phenomenon that comprises a college of producing and consuming moments, which implies the simultaneity there is in the production and consumption of tourism products (Kotler 2006).

From the standpoint of a potential customer considering any form of tourist visit, the product may be defined as a bundle or package of tangible and intangible components based on, activity at a destination. The package is perceived by the tourist as an experience available at a price (Middleton and Clarke 2001:69).

A product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a need or want. It includes physical objects, services, places, organizations and ideas (Kotler 1996). There are various definitions of what constitutes the destination product and designations exist at a number of different geographical levels. Planning and marketing may not be coordinated and the destination is multi-sold and not just used by tourists, which means that they can be consumed simultaneously by many visitors and residents until the carrying capacity is saturated (Christou 2005).

The range of attractions and activities that fall under the umbrella term of "tourism products" is extensive, covering natural features, historical and cultural heritage, the built environment, and the people of the destination themselves. A natural feature such as a waterfall or reef, a demonstration of traditional music and dance, and a theme park all fall within the umbrella term

of tourism products; as do activities such as tour excursions, mountain biking, sailing or participating in the preparation of a local dish or a traditional handicraft (WTTC 2013).

Unlike other industries which have their own distinct products or services, tourism usually contains multiple products or services, and these often involve the co-operation of several suppliers. For example, a vacation package may include services provided by travel agents, airlines, hotels, restaurants and other related services (Christou 2005).

Many locations are now actively developing their tangible and intangible cultural assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism market place, and to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalization (Pender 2012).

The tourism product can be described and examined according to two criteria: heterogeneity and plurality. We name by heterogeneity the list of different goods and services which compound the tourism product, and by plurality we name the diversity of the list among tourists, which ultimately defines the different types of tourism (Candela 2012).

The objective of a service provider is to meet customer expectations better than its competitors. Likewise, an attraction/hospitality product can be seen on four levels, namely: the core product, the facilitating product, the supporting product, and the augmented product (Zeithmal and Bitner 2000).

The most basic level is the core product which answers the question, what is the visitor really buying? It is the benefits and not the features of the product. The benefits provided in tourism product are essentially intangible and highly subjective attributes such as, new experiences, excitement, nostalgia, status of being seen as fashionable, the company of others, romance, solitude, or peace and quiet. Typically the core needs of customers do not change quickly and all competitors are aiming at theses same basic customer needs (Christou 2005:85).

The facilitating product is those services and goods that must be present for the guest to experience and use the core product. The physical setting where the service is delivered must be designed to attract, satisfy, and facilitate the interactions between and among customers and employees. It offers an opportunity to convey an image and is critical in forming initial impressions or creating visitor expectations (Zeithmal and Bitner 2000).

The supporting product is not necessary to the core product, but is extra product offered to add value to the core product and help differentiate it from competitors (Kotler 1996). The augmented services combine what is offered with how it is offered and includes the customer participation and interaction with the service organization as well as with other customers. It also includes accessibility and atmosphere. Accessibility is not only location but also, hours of operation. Atmosphere is appreciated through the sensory channels and is designed to make the entire experience pleasurable (Zeithmal and Bitner 2000).

The tourist's activity, from an economic perspective, is expressed by the demand of goods and services in the region of a destination. It is precisely in the destination that, the great part of the tourism activity takes place and where the economic issues of production, employment, localization, quality, etc., arise (Candela 2012). The tourism product is always based on both natural and cultural resources which constitute the territory: nature, landscape, beaches, mountains, historical monuments, heritage, art cities, and local villages are the primary inputs of the tourism product (Smith 1994).

Unlike other items for consumption, tourism is not a single, tangible product. The tourism product is composite in nature and includes tangible and intangible aspects. There are three distinct tourism products: the tourism experience, the place product, and tourism products. The tourism experience (the macro-level product) comprises all that the tourist sees, uses and experiences as part of their tourist encounter. The place product is the tourist destination as the point of consumption of certain components of the tourism experience. Finally, the tourism products refer to the individual products such as accommodation, attractions, restaurants and souvenirs (O'Fallon 1994:78-79).

Product synergies refer to the shared use of facilities and resources by tourism and other activities. A common benefit often claimed for tourism is that it relies upon and contributes to infrastructure that can then be used for other activities (Hall and Mitchell 2000).

Marketing Synergies are ways of using tourism to create a broader awareness of other aspects of the region (Holmefjord 2000). Market synergies category recognizes that tourists can be additional customers for other products and services (Hall and Mitchell 2000).

Consumption of the tourist product is non-rival. Tourism related purchases generally grant the tourist a right to use a particular product as opposed to the right to own it. Therefore, the sales to and consumption of these goods by the tourist does not diminish the availability of “stock” over time. Moreover, the product may be “multi-consumed” by more than one individual or group at a time; thus a tourist is not always purchasing exclusive rights to use a good. Even though the same product is being consumed simultaneously, the individual consumers (tourists) may perceive that they are using unique or different products because they are emphasizing different characteristics (O'Fallon 1994).

According to ILO (2012), a tourism product is the set of assets and services that are organized around one or more attractions in order to meet the needs of visitors. Key ingredients of a tourism product consist of:

Attractions – these are the “raw materials” of the tourism product and are part of the territory where the business is located.

Facilities and services – tourist facilities refer to the infrastructures, equipment and services that make the tourism activity possible. The tourist enjoys the attractions and does so in a safe environment.

Accessibility – this facilitates visitors to access the tourist destination, including infrastructure, transport, and communication services.

According to Smith (1994), the tourism product consists of five elements:

- i. The physical plant – the core of any tourism product is the physical plant: a site, natural resource, or facility such as a waterfall, wildlife, or resort.
- ii. Service – the design and provision of a physical plant, however, is only the beginning. The physical plant requires the input of services to make it useful for tourists. In this context, "service" refers to the performance of specific tasks required to meet the needs of tourists.
- iii. Hospitality – hospitality is the attitude or style in which the task is performed. Hospitality is more difficult to assess and manage than service because it is more subjective than service.

- iv. Freedom of choice – refers to the necessity that the traveler has some acceptable range of options in order for the experience to be satisfactory.
- v. Involvement – a feature of many service products is the fact that consumers participate, in some degree, in the delivery of services.

The basis for successful participation by consumers in producing tourism product is the combination of an acceptable physical plant, good service, hospitality and freedom of choice. These elements set the stage for physical, intellectual and/or emotional involvement in tourism service (Smith 1994).

The key to successful and sustainable tourism development is careful and integrated planning on a selective basis. The selection should be made on the basis of: targeting the most productive market segments and providing the infrastructure, products, and services to bring maximum benefit to the destination and fulfillment to the visiting tourist (Taleb 2013).

Tourism products have unique characteristics that separate them from other physical goods and other types of services. Tourism products are a collection of tangible and intangible elements; these elements come in the form of all the activities which potential clients participate in during their visit to a particular region or tourism destination, and this collection of several different elements is usually seen as an experience which is available for sale at a certain price (Murphy 2001).

Cultural tourism encompasses the unique features of a place which reflect its culture, history, or environment, and by their experiential nature, promote the rich tapestry of cultural traditions, ethnic backgrounds and landscapes (Copley and Robson 1996).

Richard and Munster (2010:95) defined cultural tourism product as, “by using the cultural tourism resource as basis, anything that can be offered to tourists for participating in cultural tourism to satisfy their cultural needs and wants”.

## **2.2 Tourism Product Development**

Tourism product development is a process whereby the asset of a particular destination is molded to meet the needs of national and international customers. There are two key aspects to tourism product development: it is not an activity undertaken in a vacuum but is part of an extensive and inter-linked process as well as market research, product development, and marketing represent a continuum. The failure to deliver any of these key components will result in the destination under-realizing its potential. The development of tourism products is a part of a large, inter-linked and continuing process and should not be considered in isolation (Judiprakasam 2010).

According to Smith (1994), product development is a prerequisite for satisfying tourists' changing demands and ensuring the long-term profitability of the tourism industry. The planning perspective of product development is in the assertion that, a clear understanding of the nature of the tourism product must be a goal of national and international tourism policy.

At one extreme, tourism product development can be defined as embracing all elements with which the visitor to a destination comes into contact. This includes infrastructure (for example - transport, utilities) the service personnel, places of lodging, attractions and activities, facilities and amenities. At the more focused level, tourism product development can be defined as comprising only those attractions, activities and facilities that are specifically provided for the visitor (Hall 2000).

The generation of tourism product development should be firmly based on market trends and tastes, necessitating sound analysis of the findings of tailored market research, using a "market: product" matching process to target specific products at clearly identified segments (Dandraj 1999). Consultation, coordination and collaboration are bywords in tourism product development. Consultation with all stakeholders: public, private and community. Coordination between: central, regional and local government, with private sector interests, and with community representatives. And collaboration with neighboring tourism administrations to achieve mutual benefit (Prannath 2009).

At the national scale, macro-economic policy frameworks, infrastructure provision and issues of socio-cultural cohesion play a vital role in influencing tourism's development outcomes (Simon

and Ateljevic 2001). Government's role in tourism product development is the identification and dissemination of information about opportunities, planning using designated tourism development areas, and facilitating and supporting their realization by the private sector or communities. Government's role is also likely to include the provision of direct investment/financial support in the form of grant aid or incentives, particularly in undeveloped regions (Prannath 2009). More specifically, local level administrations play a vital role in bringing tourism product development to fruition, and this requires a strong current knowledge of the changing demands of tourists. Destination tourism authorities should have a dedicated tourism product development function which liaises closely with the tourism marketing agency/department (Judiprakasam 2010).

Tourism product development is designed to increase the income in the sector. It involves implementation of a comprehensive plan of action that will guide towards dealing with estimated increase in business over the short, medium, and long terms (ILO 2012).

Product development for tourism businesses has a number of stages or approaches. For many, most time and effort remains focused on maintaining and delivering existing products to current customers. From time to time, existing products and experiences are refined to attract new customers and retain existing customers. Some operators commit to adding new products and experience each year to retain existing customers (Dandraj 1999).

ILO also points out that, "specifically, sustainable tourism product development is understood broadly as those that use resources in an environmentally responsible, socially fair, and economically viable way so that users of the product can meet their current needs without compromising future generations from being able to use the same resources" (2012:110).

Implementation of tourism product development plans requires long term vision, mid-term strategy and planning, and short term action plans, with lead and support responsibility for each task identified. Plans should be monitored and adjusted as necessary on an annual basis (Judiprakasam 2010).

A priority one should expect is that innovation and product development (or differentiation) should constitute unique selling propositions and a strategy towards gaining new markets (Smith 1994).

According to Murphy (2001), the production and marketing of tourism products is distinct from industrial products and displays specific characteristics which often pose constraints or problems and hence serve as stepping stones for increasing the value of products via innovation. The unused offer cannot be stored; making efficient capacity utilization is one of the big problem areas in tourism. This applies to all tourism services in accommodation, catering, travel agents, attractions, transport systems and all other businesses related to the value chain.

The creation of visitor experience should cover entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist elements and product features. Continuous learning and the acquisition of knowledge from the customer's words is essential (Hjalager 2002).

According to Ansoff (1987), successful tourism development involves the state, the private sector and the location's community since, at its simplest form, tourism represents a temporary increase of the population at the destination chosen. The implications are that: Planning for tourism is essential, the system of planning differs fundamentally from the planning of other economic sectors, and tourism planning needs to be all-embracing, fully coordinated, undertaken over an extended time frame, and constantly monitored and adjusted on a rolling, iterative basis to take account of changing market conditions.

The social aspects of tourism are associated with the provisions, which the tourism makes necessary to be designed based on the needs of various social groups and their interactions with the society and economic processes (Inskeep 1994).

In this regard, one can distinguish such important areas as: tourist needs, motivation, behavioral stereotypes and the impact of tourism on the development of tourist needs structure and the host community, i.e., local people, their needs, the impact of tourism development on their living standards and values, social, and cultural life. It is presented as an important aspect of the contact between tourists and the host side establishment, where the important issues are language, mentality, culture, traditions and the like (Egan 2000).

The three primary stages necessary for destination authorities in establishing the framework for tourism product development are: institutional structures for the planning, development, administration and marketing of tourism, a system of coordination and integration between all levels of government, and with other government agencies whose activities impinge in some way on tourism (for example - transport, public works, education and training), planning system and procedures that provide guidance but, through consultation, encourages innovation and stimulates investment (Hjalager 2002).

New products which offer a special or unique value to the customer are more successful than innovation without the consideration and participation of the client. Hence innovation leads to a higher efficiency and easier realization of aims regarding turnover or profit (Hubner 2002).

The development of cultural tourism product needs to provide the new or innovative products to meet the demand of the tourism market by analyzing the market well. There are two aspects included in the product development. First, redesign the current cultural tourism products. By analyzing the function of current products, the tourism marketers need to eliminate the excess value which can't meet the customers' needs and add the core value on the products. The process of redesigning could maximize the product value by providing additional features. Second, create new cultural tourism products. In order to meet the change of customers' needs, tourism marketers need to create new cultural tourism products that facilitate the needed satisfaction (Mckercher and Du Cros 2002).

Globalization and deregulation have heightened competition. Similar to other fields of economic activity, these market conditions enhance process innovation (networking, reservation and yield management systems etc.) as opposed to product innovation which can be easily imitated by rival competitors (Weiemair and Peter 2002).

### **2.3 Tourism Product Development Potentials**

Tourism is a composite phenomenon and the inventory of its component factors. Therefore, it must go hand in hand with acknowledgement of the general development objectives and characteristics of an area or region under consideration. Especially, since tourism is market

driven, customer satisfaction must be the concern of tourism providers (Sitikantha and Tapan 2001).

Tourism has many characteristics that make it valuable as an agent for development through igniting a destination's potential. As a crosscutting sector, it stimulates productive capacities from trade and the creation of jobs linked to the tourism value chain. In particular, it thrives on assets, such as the natural environment, a rich cultural heritage and plentiful human resources, which often give developing countries a comparative advantage (WTTC 2010).

Basically, the potentials of tourism product development are felt in a nation socially, environmentally, and economically. At the society's level, the benefits cut across peasants, artisans and even professionals irrespective of gender, race or age bracket. Environmentally, tourism has the potentials to conserve the natural environment, preserve antiquities, historical monuments and traditional behaviors such as culture, food, language, heritage, arts and crafts. And, economically, tourism has the potential of creating wealth capable of stimulating both domestic and foreign earnings of any nation from direct activities or associated businesses (Kester 2003).

As the tourism sector is closely linked with the processing industries, agriculture, and the service sector, broad multiplier effects come into play and promote the local economy. In addition to generating direct employment, the tourism sector offers the possibility to create indirect economic benefits. This is via goods and services purchased by the tourism sector and through investment and public spending generated by tourism which is also an immense potential. These performances are important drivers of economic growth. Combined with quantitative and qualitative improvements in production, the tourism supply chain creates new employment opportunities arising through the so-called "multiplier effect" (WEF 2012).

Once tourism products in a given region have been identified or developed, a coordination organization is required. This is where the destination management concept plays a key role. Together with local actors and in line with national strategies, a suitable management structure is identified, wherein specific responsibilities are allocated. The organization is assigned with overriding tasks and services (Kester 2003).

Tourism development strategies require investments in the tourism infrastructure itself, i.e. good road and transportation conditions, access to safe water, control of law and order, provision of trained and motivated work force, availability of efficient banking facilities and etc. All these physical and social infrastructure factors, as well as a sustainability approaches to business, should be part of a holistic tourism development strategy of a developing country (UNEP 2013).

Countries could use tourism to support local business in developing new products for exports. In this sense, the tourism industry could provide a means for the local business to experiment with new products and test them in their home country before exporting them. While quality standards can be difficult to reach in the short-term, fully established quality standards lead to growth and improvement over time (Kester 2003).

The main potentials for tourism product development as an economic sector offering key comparative advantages for countries in Africa is; the latter's natural endowments, low cost labor, and abundance of land. Governments need to find ways to transform these potentials into practices. Productivity improvement and better connections to and among markets are the basis for reaping the benefits of recent trends of tourism uptake. As mentioned by the World Economic Forum, key ingredients to this success are governance and infrastructure, and the deployment of a combined strategy of spatial and economic development called growth poles (WTTC 2013:104-105).

Sustainable tourism development has been identified by the “New Partnership for Africa's Development” (NEPAD) as an important potential to address the current development challenges facing Africa. And also, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report on “Sustainable Development Report on Africa” highlights the approval of a “Tourism Action Plan” in 2004. Its main objective is to provide an engine for growth and integration, and to contribute to poverty eradication. Most African governments have included tourism in their national development strategies. Countries have also started adopting policies that unlock opportunities for the poor to gain employment through tourism development. Additionally, countries have adopted the “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism” and have reported on implementation progress” (UNECA 2008:37).

Even though, tourism creates jobs and contributes significantly to economic growth, it is not automatically a solution for poverty reduction. Therefore, it is important for local investors to actively participate in tourism and its related activities. The local workforce can also help by engaging in and encouraging the use of local companies for the provision of transport, services, and food in order to assist in alleviating local poverty. While many small-scale projects have been developed to combine tourism with poverty reduction, on a large scale this requires the implementation of effective national poverty reduction strategy plans (ILO 2010).

## **2.4 Tourism Product Development Strategy**

According to Djoghla (2002), a tourist destination is a complex of attractions, equipment, infrastructure, facilities, businesses, resources and local communities which combine to offer tourists, products and experiences they seek.

The creation of value in a tourism destination can be determined by the specialization through the creation of products targeted towards specific market segments. The creation of tourism products is a process that needs different elements and follows some steps. The initial step is where all basic elements are taken into account, afterwards the product is created and finally it is communicated to the market so that it can be consumed by a part of tourism demand (Jordi 2006).

In Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy and its subsequent “Strategy” it is clearly stated that, “It is necessary to bring about a long-lasting change by developing the potential of Ethiopian tourist attractions and boosting the direct and indirect benefits of tourism to build image and overall development of the country. To realize this, it is essential that the industry is enabled to fulfill its share by gradually overcoming the numerous shortcomings in its supply and demand seen at the moment” (2009:50).

One consistent barrier in developing and implementing policy tools in tourism is that the complex interactions of its numerous stakeholders and its decentralized nature that make governance, a challenge (Djoghla 2002).

Tourism product development aims at long-term sustainable development by the execution of a number of strategies. These strategies bring into focus a generic idea to increase competitiveness and build an inclusive industry by promoting closer integration of people and develop and maintain the environment (ILO 2012).

UNWTO (2004:61) affirms that, “sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio cultural aspects of tourism development and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability”.

As argued by Djolghlaf (2002), destination plans (also known as Master Plans) are usually site or destination specific and describe a future state and process (for example - required human resource, facility, and infrastructure development) to achieve a desired vision. Destination plans include the following elements: an inventory of attractions, equipment and other factors affecting a destination, an examination of the circumstances that mold and influence future development, a strategic analysis of bottle necks, strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities in relation to the destination’s competitiveness, and an assessment of all existing and potential social, economic, and environmental impacts from tourism and mitigating outreach strategies.

As a tourism product development strategy, destination branding can be defined as a way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors (Morrison and Anderson 2002). An image that is typically communicated by branding, is identified as one of the components in the overall tourism product and as a vital element within the augmented product development and marketed by individual businesses in the industry. Tourism products are essentially intangible and need to be communicated in ways that influence consumers’ perception (Kotler 2006).

Likewise the Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy (2009:51-55) incorporates main policy issues and strategies in three folds as follows:

1. Guiding the Tourism Industry in a Broad-Based Direction –

In order to enable the tourism industry to contribute as one of the key development sectors of the country and its large share in the drive to eliminate poverty, the sector should, first of all, be guided out of its present slow growth and put on to a development path that can bring about

comprehensive and rapid change. In light of this, an integrated management of sustainable tourism development becomes a key implementation strategy of the policy.

## 2. Developing the Existing and New Tourist Attractions in Variety, Scale and Quality -

It is evident that the basis for tourism development is the variety and strength of the attractions offered to tourists. A number of limitations are observable with respect to the protection and security of these attractions as well as their accessibility. The next implementation strategy of the policy is the formulation of a strategy for the development and expansion of tourist attractions and products in order to create favorable conditions for tourists by eliminating gaps in the protection of these attractions.

## 3. Undertaking Promotional Work through the Creation of Strong Market Ties in Order to Become Competitive on the International Market –

To advance Ethiopia's tourism development sustainably, shortcomings in supply should be eliminated, and in a manner no less than this, limitations seen in the management of marketing and promotion should be overcome, a positive image of the country should be built, and its benefits maximized.

According to Jordi (2006), development guidelines should help in the adequate development of a destination and at the same time should guarantee a clear vision of a rational and balanced development with the aim of the improvement of the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination. Planning process is an essential tool that provides a framework that makes such development happen, together with the introduction of control mechanisms. Successful planning results in the implementation of development strategies that ensure both long and short term sustainability and balanced growth that shall guarantee the preservation of resources of a destination. And, marketing strategies are crucial for the promotion and commercialization of any destination that develops new tourism products that should be communicated to markets and target public. Both the establishment of specific marketing strategies and the application of the adequate marketing mix can help a destination increase the efficiency of marketing actions.

Preparing a destination plan requires an extensive consultation, comprehensive collection of information, a deep understanding of resources, social and political dynamics, and the relative

influence of different interest groups. Some of the most relevant implementation activities may be organized into separate projects for ease of financing and management. Once destination plans are complete, sub components of the plan maybe packaged as specific projects or a strategy to facilitate management and evaluation. Taking into account the mandated capacities and interests of different agencies and players, a governance structure needs to be setup for each project as components of the overall plan. A common challenge with preparing a destination plan is that managers may underestimate the need for a “transition” phase in the latter half of the product’s life. And also many tourism products fail due to the lack of marketing experience and lack of market access (Djoghla 2002).

The action strategies for the development and management of tourist destination should consider the needs and interests of all stakeholders in the tourism system including local/rural community, entrepreneurs, investors, government, tourists and other stakeholders (ILO 2012).

Policies often refer to institutional setups that allow governance of tourism development; it may not be site-specific and apply across all of a country’s area. While strategies are more action oriented and often linked to a destination or region complementing the site/destination plan, policies and strategies describe a future desired state (vision) and detail the necessary steps to achieve that goal (Djoghla 2002).

## **2.5 Tourism Product Development in Ethiopian Context**

Tourism is a large global industry that is expanding rapidly in developing countries. The market share of tourism in developing countries is also increasing significantly and developing countries now account for two-thirds of long-haul destinations according to the World Bank. Tourism in Ethiopia generated about US\$2.9 billion in 2014, close to a million jobs and about 4.5% of GDP. The Government, however, is determined to significantly increase the number of tourists during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Growth and Transformation Plan (2015–2020). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism plans to triple foreign visitors to more than 2.5 million by 2020. This would make Ethiopia one of the top five tourist destinations in Africa (MoCT 2016).

With an estimated population of 95 million in 2015, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa. Culturally, the population is diverse constituting more than 80 ethnic

groups. The diversity and unique features of Ethiopia's ethnic identities and culture have been used to market tourism with some success. The highly diverse physical environment, climate, flora and fauna have also been important attractions for both domestic and foreign tourists. Ethiopian tourism promotional pictures have used these spectacular features to attract visitors (Tadesse 2015).

There is universal agreement that Ethiopia has an enormous potential as a tourism destination. Not only does it offer the usual African game and cultural experiences to visitors, but it also has a rich array of historic and natural sites that set it apart from most of its neighbors. The basis of Ethiopia's tourism product is cultural, historical, and natural sites where the biggest challenge currently is to preserve the historical sites from natural decay and the national parks from degradation by the communities that live inside them (World Bank 2006).

The top tourist sites of Ethiopia include: The historic route main towns - Axum, Gondar, Lalibela, Bahir Dar area (Blue Nile Falls, monasteries), easily accessible national parks - Awash, Bale Mountains, Abijata Shala and Nechisar. The major sites in Addis Ababa include: Entoto Mariam Orthodox Church with museum, National Museum, Ethnological museum at Addis Ababa University, Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, Africa Hall, Merkato Market and Addis Ababa Museum (MoCT 2014).

While evidence of Ethiopia's culture and history is found in its ancient monuments, cities, and prehistoric sites; its living cultures are reflected in the work of architects, musicians, writers, artisans, and crafts people. Strong traditions have long contributed to Ethiopia's material wealth by producing illuminated parchment manuscripts, leatherwork, metalwork, jewelry, basketry, woodwork, and pottery (World Bank 2006).

Ethiopia earned more than \$3.4 billion from tourism receipts in the year 2015, a huge leap from the previous year's revenues. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism said the revenue was a half billion more than earnings in the previous year of \$2.9 billion. More than 918,000 people visited Ethiopia during the same year (Tilahun 2016). Yet, the tourism industry in Ethiopia could legitimately be described as one that is still in its infancy. Its current low level of development is often attributed to changes in governance systems and development policies, weak promotion,

lack of trained manpower, lack of finance, lack of knowledge, and low management capacity (Tadesse 2015).

Although, Ethiopia is endowed with multifaceted natural, cultural, and historical tourism resources; its tourism industry has not been developed to make meaningful socio-economic benefits. Dozens of problems that hinder tourism development in the country can be spelt out; ranging from underdeveloped infrastructure to limited number of tourist facilities and poor quality of service delivery to shortage of skilled manpower in the industry (Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy 2009:39).

The impact of the tourism industry on the national economy is quite significant. The level of development of tour companies, hotel chains and promotional services in the sector needs to be significantly improved in order to package the tourist experience more satisfactorily (Walle 2010).

The Ethiopian tourism industry is under-performing relative to the tremendous potential value of its cultural heritage as an anchor for a tourism industry. This is attributed to weaknesses in Ethiopia's image, weak market presence and penetration resulting in a demonstrable weak demand for its products, a severely under-valued cultural and natural resource base, uncompetitive supplier and support services (hotels, transporters, activity providers, restaurants, handicraft manufacturers and distributors, banks, telecoms and emergency health services), and finally the absence of an efficiently coordinating and communicating governance framework to guide and integrate the many stakeholders at both the national and regional levels (MoCT 2010).

Tour operators and travel agents mainly handle the sale of the end product to the consumer although, transportation companies, such as Ethiopian Airlines, also sell the end product directly to tourists. The distributors or intermediaries decide which end products to market to, separate segments of potential demand based on the quality and competitiveness of the product and the evidence of market acceptability through the positive or negative reactions of returning tourists. The margins the distributors receive from selling a particular end-product, and, most importantly for Africa and Ethiopia, the distributors own interest and specialization. These decisions can be influenced by the promotional and marketing activities of tourist destinations and external factors such as media attention in the form of stories about the destination (World Bank 2006).

Foreign tour operators that do not have a program in Ethiopia are always keen to develop new destinations but have stated that they have little product knowledge of the country. They have little time to research a new destination themselves and have suggested that open days are a good way of introducing the country to potential operators, with follow up familiarization trips. Those that do have a program in Ethiopia cite poor communication and information coming from Ethiopia in the form of product up-dates and regular contact (ETOA 2013).

The government of Ethiopia has opened up possibilities for more regional level participation in decision-making and resource mobilization and allocation for different sectors of the economy. The concepts of sustainable development, public-private partnership, poverty reduction, equity, decentralization and regional and local development have defined the thinking and practice of the federal government. The government has defined tourism as a comprehensive sustainable development activity in which the objectives and goals of promoting economic growth, raising the standard of living of people, the protection of the environment and the rational use of natural resources are central to its overall operation and management (MoCT 2010).

Ethiopia has immense and untapped natural resources, a competitive labor force and stability. These attributes make it a major investment destination in Africa, and this creates many opportunities for the tourism sector. Ethiopia's tourist destination sites used to be inaccessible due to inadequate road and air infrastructure, lack of power infrastructure and other facilities. In the past ten years, the government has carried out large-scale investments in the construction of airports, road, and railway and the energy sector (MoFA 2016).

According to Tadesse (2015), in spite of the significant improvement in the performance of the sector since 2000, Ethiopia's tourism is still woefully underdeveloped when compared with many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country's hotel infrastructure has yet to reach a critical mass to attract more tourists. It was noted that there were only 900 high end hotel rooms (Sheraton, Radisson Blu and Hilton). The figure will likely grow to 1700 by 2017 with the completion of a number of important hotel investments. Likewise, the road network of the country would reach 136,000 kms by 2017 from less than 50,000 kms in 2010.

According to MoCT (2010), based on the findings of the 2006 World Bank study, a strategic framework for the development and management of a sustainable and productive tourism sector was elaborated using the following four fundamental and interlocking issues: sector management and governance, enabling environment, tourism enterprises cluster, and resource base. The five year tourism development plan had incorporated human resources development, strengthening information and management capacity, image reconstruction strategy, improvement of services, infrastructure development, and the promotion of domestic tourism as priority areas. The key generic tools to translate the strategies into actions included well developed sector strategies and policies, a strong public investment program, public-private partnerships, strong community involvement, reliable and timely information, strong coordination among sectors, and strong public promotion campaigns.

The tourism development policy of Ethiopia that came out in 2009 encouraged the more vigorous participation of the private sector in tourism development. According to the “National Growth and Transformation Plan”, the tourism industry will be expected to garner an annual revenue of \$US 3 billion beginning from 2015. It also envisaged the creation of 1.5 million jobs in the sector (60% of the entire new jobs to be created). The Ministry of Culture and Tourism indicated that governmental support for tourism was visible. The recent establishment of the “Ethiopian Tourism Transformation Council” headed by the prime minister is a clear demonstration of the priority attention that the sector was getting from the government. It was cited as another important strategic move in promoting destination marketing and development (Tadesse 2015).

## **2.6 Challenges to Tourism Product Development**

The tourism product is a combination of many different elements, which are rarely provided by a single supplier. For the composite tourism product to be fully successful, both for the host destination and the visiting tourist the different components need to be complementary since the overall performance of the destination’s tourism sector can be determined by the weakest link in the tourist product chain. Ensuring this necessary balance in terms of standards between the different elements of the tourism product range can be an important role for government through regulatory standards or incentives (UNEP 2005).

The challenges of the tourism sector include: competitiveness in the tourism business environment, the multi-dimensionality of the sector in scope like transport, accommodation, food and beverages, tour operation, security, safety, health and insurance etc., the co-ordination problems across other sectors related to the tourism sector and across donors, externalities from tourism activities, sustainability, and shared growth (Erik and Kristopher 2007).

According to UNWTO (2005), the operation of tourism products is constrained to a significant degree by rigidity of supply. This applies to fixed site visitor attractions which are subject to seasonal variations in demand.

One of the main challenges for tourism to position itself a key economic sector in developing countries is that market forces cannot equitably distribute benefits and costs and there is a necessity for government policies and donor-financed tourism development programs that attempt to redistribute some of the excesses of a market and private-sector led tourism industry (Butler 1993).

The development of major tourism attractions and facilities are subject to considerable lead times i.e. from concept development to land acquisition, consultation, planning application and approval, feasibility study, financing, building and equipment, and staff recruitment and training. Tourism products are perishable, being fixed in time and space; an unfilled hotel room on any given day cannot be stored for sale on another day. Thus, Tourism destination products are intangible in that a visit to a destination comprises the sequence of “expectations” ahead of arrival, “experiences” while in the destination and “memories” after the visit. There are few goods to show for the visit (except souvenirs) with photographs and videos serving as proxies of the trip (Erik and Kristopher 2007).

Discretionary purpose tourists exhibit a high price elasticity of demand, switching between destinations according to factors such as price levels in the destination and exchange rate variations. A tourist’s experiences in the destination begin at the point of arrival and continue until departure. All places visited and people encountered form parts of the visitor experience. The implications for the destination are twofold: first, to ensure that all personnel (including officials at airports etc.) are fully trained and able to communicate in a positive way with visitors

and second, for individual operators to ensure that their client mix is compatible since “other tourists” form part of a tourists’ experience in the country (Taleb 2013).

According to the Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy (2009:46-48), domestic as well as external challenges facing the Sector are outlined as follows:

#### A. Domestic Challenges –

1. Although the country possesses vast potential in varied historical, cultural and natural attractions, this has not been adequately protected, developed and used as tourist attraction
2. There is a serious shortage in number and type of tourist facilities at existing and potential tourist destinations and vicinities; moreover, the quality of service is poor and unsatisfactory to tourists
3. Interpretations of tourist attractions are not based on credible facts and knowledge; they are not consistent; and their presentation is disorganized
4. Handicrafts, other local creative products, performing arts and entertainment services, which could have helped to lengthen the stay and increase the spending of visitors at every destination, are not offered in sufficient variety, quantity and quality
5. Human resources already deployed in the sector and those needed for new deployment are limited in terms of type, number, and quality
6. There is a shortage of highly trained and moderately trained manpower that is crucial to the development of the sector
7. There are capacity limitations among tourism stakeholders, and mutual support and coordination of efforts among them have not been strengthened.

#### B. External Challenges –

Ethiopia’s image on the international scene is widely associated with drought, famine, and war. Plus, the Horn of Africa is seen as a region of instability and terrorism.

## 2.7 Opportunities of Tourism Product Development

Tourism makes substantial contributions by expanding micro, small-scale, and medium-scale enterprises for the production of goods and services, creating considerable employment opportunities, promoting sustainable development and eliminating poverty. Tourism has a great role in accelerating development and eradicating poverty, which is the major enemy of developing countries, and in this its impact is no less important than those of other main economic and social sectors (Ethiopian Tourism Development Policy 2009).

Middleton and Clarke (2001) identify three propositions about marketing in travel and tourism in terms of opportunities that are relevant to all forms it takes and the immense value it has:

- i. In the context of opportunities and constraints arising from the business environment of a major global market products are designed, adapted and promoted to meet the long-run needs, expectations, and interests of prospective customers. This is common ground with all forms of consumer marketing and the cornerstone of all marketing theory.
- ii. Service products generally have particular characteristics of inseparability and perishability, which call for a different application of the traditional marketing mix variables.
- iii. Marketing in travel and tourism is shaped and determined by the nature of the demand for tourism and the operating characteristics of supplying industries.

Smith (1994) proposes a marketing plan which is but an essential means by which an organization realizes its goals in respect to its markets and grasps opportunities. The marketing plan is a navigational chart that is a tool for implementation, guiding the specific activities designed to influence the behavior of the market and enabling the effectiveness of such activities to be assessed. The development of marketing plan may not require intensive scholarly work rather, it is an attribute that will govern and influence the directions an organization intends to go.

Strategic planning is the process by which an organization; first, analyzes its strengths and weaknesses in its current and prospective markets “where are we now?”, second, identifies its aims and the opportunities it seeks to develop “where do we want to get to?” and third, defines

the strategies and programs of activity to achieve these aims “how do we get there?”. Strategic decisions are always focused on the longer run, normally beyond three years (Middleton and Clarke 2001).

Even in instances where a destination is found to have no obvious strengths, a strategy can be devised to create a competitive advantage (Kotler 2001). As Middleton and Clarke (2001:61) state: “strategy is essentially proactive in the sense that it defines and wills the future shape of the organization as well as responding to changing industry patterns, technology, market conditions and consumer needs”.

Cultural and heritage tourism is a global phenomenon, and, it could be argued that every country has some form of cultural or heritage product. However, the countries of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Central and Southern America are traditionally considered as having the most significant attractions (Christou 2005).

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism now has a new brand “Land of Origins” to communicate Ethiopia's attractiveness and uniqueness more fully to the rest of the world. It is developing new websites, software, and mobile applications to promote Ethiopia. It is participating in different worldwide trade fairs in order to expand promotion and get better market access to tourism products. Ethiopian Airlines has been playing a key role in opening up the country to more visitors with a range of new routes. In 2015, it began flying to Los Angeles, Tokyo, Manila and Dublin (Ken 2016).

According to MoCT (2016), overall infrastructure development remains one of country's top priorities. Now, the Government is investing a lot into these areas. Tourists are accessing these destinations more easily and equally; investors are keen to invest in building lodges, hotels and restaurants at the tourist sites or operate as tour operators. Potential investors can take advantage of these opportunities through direct investment or joint ventures with local partners. Tourism opportunities exist in the construction of star-rated hotels, lodges and resorts, international and specialized restaurants. The return of investment for government and the private sector is growing. The new strategy focuses on coordinating and communicating the many stakeholders at both the national and sub-national levels effectively in order to improve Ethiopia's image, market presence and penetration.

In the same token Ethiopian Tourism Development policy (2009:43-45) presents the domestic and external opportunities favoring the development of tourism in Ethiopia:

#### A. Domestic Opportunities of the Sector –

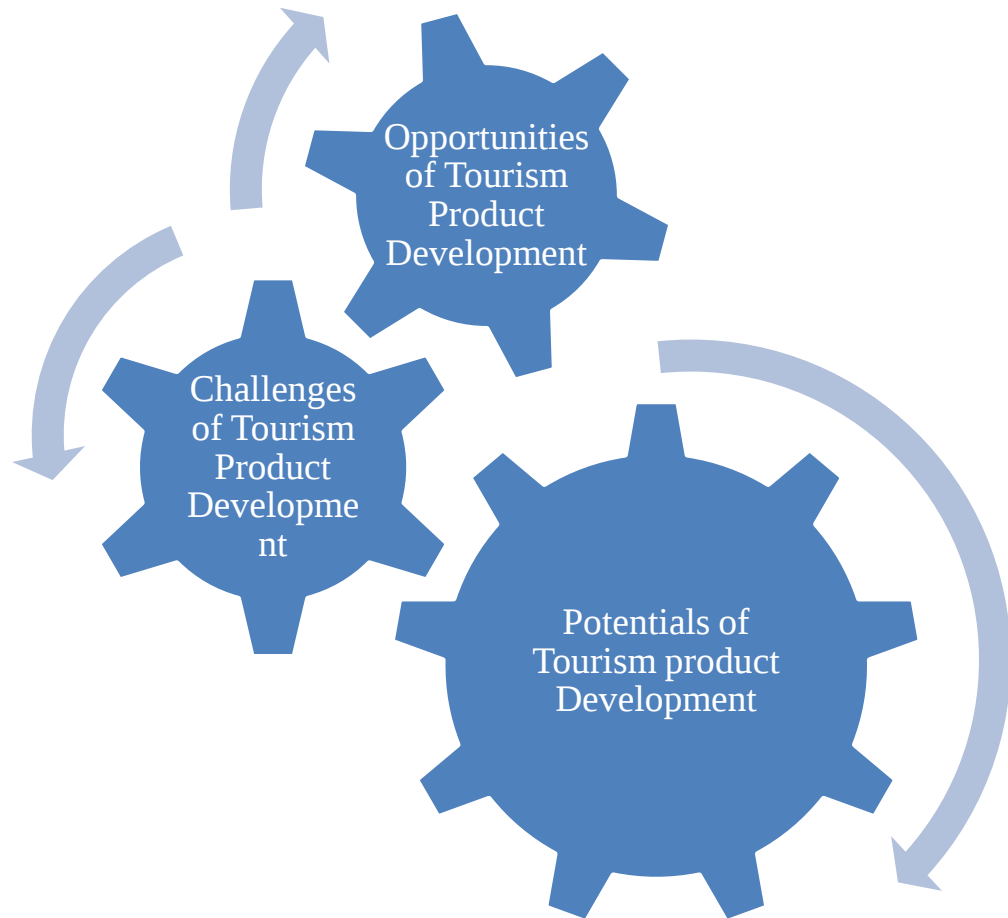
1. Ethiopia's possession of varied attractions: as it is known Ethiopia is full of varied historical, cultural, and natural attractions; it is the possessor of many fossils attesting that it is the cradle of humankind; and on top of all that, its people are hospitable and their cultures diversified, a combination which makes it suitable for tourism development
2. The guiding principle of economic diplomacy on which the country's policy and strategy for foreign affairs and national security are based, makes visible contributions in increasing the number of visitors by promoting the tourist attractions, building a positive image of the country, and drawing foreign direct investment which is crucial to the growth of the industry
3. Because tourism is inherently trans-sectoral, development policies and strategies formulated for other economic, social, and political sectors positively affect tourism directly or indirectly
4. The industrial development strategy of the country, enhancing the private sector's share in development, enables it to fulfill its role in the growth of tourism
5. Ethiopia is the seat of the headquarters of the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa, and more than 105 embassies and numerous international organizations.

#### B. External Opportunities Favoring the Development of Tourism

International tourism shows growth year after year, the use of modern information and communication technologies is expanding the dissemination and efficiency of information in tourism, and among international tourists; interest in authentic, indigenous and organic products is increasing highly from time to time.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Own formulation/2017

The conceptual framework design depicts the relationship and interdependence between three interlocking concepts namely: potentials, challenges, and opportunities of tourism product development. Speaking of which, in the course of unleashing a certain destination's potentials (the bigger gear) for tourism product development, there are inevitable challenges met on the way that must be dealt with accordingly, and so, then and only then will opportunities that promote tourism product development be present (the smaller gears). Hence, in order for the gear that simulates tourism product development to propel; potentials, challenges, and opportunities of a certain tourist destination must be identified, dealt with and promoted respectively.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

“A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which, the research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data” (Sellitiz 1992:36).

Research design is a plan for collecting and analyzing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed. The design of an investigation touches almost all aspects of the minute details of data collection to the selection of the techniques of data analysis (Ragin 1994).

Research design is needed because it facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations, thereby, making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money (Kothari 2004).

The approach of this study is qualitative approach that discusses the potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center for tourism product development in detail.

Qualitative research strives to collect, integrate, and present data from a variety of sources of evidence as part of any given study. The variety will likely follow from having to study a real-world setting and its participants. The complexity of the field setting and the diversity of its participants are likely to warrant the use of interviews and observations and even the inspection of documents and artifacts (Robert 2011). Qualitative research does not seek to show statistical associations or cause and effect relationships. Instead, the emphasis is on describing or illuminating social phenomena and human experience (Frey 2003:54).

Qualitative methodology represents a divergent paradigm of research tradition which is fundamentally different from quantitative methodology. One key difference of qualitative research over quantitative research design is its flexibility. As qualitative research methods are

typically more flexible, allowing greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participants (Natasha et al. 2005). In qualitative research, an exploration of the subject is undertaken without prior formulations. The objective is to gain an understanding and collect information and data so that theories will emerge (Richard and Anita 2008).

## **3.2 Data Collection**

### **3.2.1 Primary Data Sources**

#### **i. In-depth Interviews**

An interview can be defined as a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter. Thus, interviewing is a highly purposeful task which goes beyond mere conversation (Downs 2000:93). Interviews are one of the most widely used research methods. They provide a way of generating data by asking people to talk about their everyday lives. Their main function is to provide a framework in which respondents can express their own thoughts in their own words (Robert and John 2003). Researchers use interviews for a variety of purposes; interviews can be used as a primary data gathering method to collect information from individuals about their own practices, beliefs, or opinions. They can be used to gather information on past or present behaviors or experiences (Bernard 2009).

The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses (Kothari 2004). The purpose of a research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods such as interviews are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires (Hamersley 1995).

The most useful interview format for conducting qualitative research is often “semi-structured” sometimes called “moderately scheduled”. Semi-structured interviews offer topics and questions to the interviewee, but are carefully designed to elicit the interviewee’s ideas and opinions on the topic of interest, as opposed to leading the interviewee towards preconceived choices. They rely

on the interviewer following up with probes to get in-depth information on topics of interest (Ted 2010). Semi-structured means, the interview is not highly structured, as is the case of an interview that consists of all closed-ended questions, nor is it unstructured, such that the interviewee is simply given a license to talk freely about whatever comes up (Bernard 2000).

Likewise, 10 key informants purposively selected, were interviewed in this study for they were considered to have a better knowledge of the subject matter. Amongst them, eight were professionals working at different positions within Oromo Cultural Center, including two museum professionals, one heritage conservation team leader, one linguistic study coordinator, one library coordinator, one ethnographic coordinator, one art and theater centre coordinator, and one informant from members of a higher management of the cultural center. And, the other two interviews were conducted with two tourism professionals working in Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau. All the informants were males as they were the ones that occupied key positions of departments in Oromo Cultural Center. The interview took place from February 22, to March 15, 2017.

The interview was conducted to understand informants' views on tourism product development potentials of Oromo Cultural Center, whether or not there is a platform that synthesizes product and market, demand of visitors, reflection of visitors, marketing and promotion activities in the cultural center, and challenges and opportunities of the cultural center for tourism product development. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed and thematically analyzed.

## **ii. Focus Group Discussions**

A focus group is a small group of six to ten people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out (Eliot 2005). Focus group discussions have an edge over individual interviews in such a way that they offer dynamics and ways of “eliciting, stimulating, and elaborating audience interpretations” (Hansen et al. 1998:79).

Focus groups are used for generating information on collective views, and the meanings that lie behind those views. They are also useful in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs (Morgan 1998). Focus group sessions usually last from one to two hours.

Anything less than one hour would not allow enough time to get to grips with the subject. Some form of icebreaker at the beginning of the session can help to make participants feel at ease (Robert and John 2003). The members of a focus group should have something in common characteristics, which are important to the topic of investigation for example - they may all be members of the same profession or they may work in the same team (Beverley 2002).

Focus group discussion was employed in this study to get a comprehensive understanding of participants' reflections on tourism product development related issues. Hence, two focus group discussions were held with two sets of groups working in different departments of Oromo Cultural Center. The first group comprised seven participants, from which three working at Oromia Museum and four working at Oromo Study Center. The next group had eight participants that are evenly divided between the Art and Theater centre and Knowledge and Information Center of Oromo Cultural Center.

The discussion was based on opinions of informants about whether or not the concept of tourism product development was properly understood in Oromo Cultural Center and the beneficiaries of Oromo Cultural Center including the host community are getting adequate benefits from the cultural center. Informants' insight and suggestions for tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center was also examined in the discussion that lasted from sometime between March 17, and March 24, 2017.

Despite, numerous attempts to incorporate female participants at least in the focus group discussion, the effort bared no fruits due to, scarcity of female professionals in Oromo Cultural Center. Both of the focus group discussions were tape recorded and later transcribed and analyzed.

### **iii. Observation**

Observation is a qualitative method whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. Data obtained through observation serve as a check against participants' subjective reporting of what they believe and do (Natasha et al. 2005). Observation techniques for collection of data include photographs and artifacts. Photographs are good way of collecting observable data of phenomena which can be captured in a single shot or series of

shots, for example - photographs of buildings, neighborhoods, dress and appearance. Whereas, artifacts are objects which inform about the phenomena under study because of their significance to the phenomena, for example - memorabilia in historical research (Beverley 2002).

Observation was as well conducted in this study to cross-reference data collected through other instruments. And the observation involved the survey of every single element of attraction in the compound of Oromo Cultural Center by note taking and photography except the museum section, which, by the time of data collection was temporarily closed for organization purpose.

The observation method was also useful in minimizing biases and understanding what was really going on behind the scenes in Oromo Cultural Center for instance – it was through observation that the researcher realized about what people say they do and what they actually do in the cultural center. And this method particularly lasted from dawn to dusk of the study.

### **3.2.2 Secondary Data Sources**

Secondary data sources are datasets that are already in existence such as, census data. Researchers may select variables to use in their analysis from one secondary data source or may combine data from across sources to create new datasets (Bernard 2009).

Secondary data is a data that has been collected by individuals and agencies for purposes of research and other than research. Secondary sources of information can yield accurate data (Green 1993).

Secondary sources of data utilized in this study include books, journals, articles, magazines, petitions, reports and related internet materials.

### **3.3 Method of Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place. It is also a process of explaining and trying to make sense of the data received and reducing it to meaningful accounts (Bernard 2006). Data analysis is the central step in qualitative research. Whatever the data are, it is their analysis that, in a decisive way forms the outcomes of the research (Uwe 2007).

Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby, the researcher moves from the qualitative data that has been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situation under investigation (Ian 1993). Analyzing qualitative data is a systematic process that organizes the data into manageable units, combines and synthesizes ideas, develops and constructs themes, patterns or theories that illuminate the important discoveries of the research (Patton 1990).

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for: “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun 2006:113).

Hence, in this study the data gathered are analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The bases for coding of the data analysis were the objectives of the study that were reflected in the interview and focus group discussion guide as a main categories and themes of the data.

In doing so, codes were several times split, merged, and replaced to present the findings of the study coherently.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Behaving properly in a research is considered a matter of research integrity. The personal quality, prominently positioned and common to the various codes, should not be taken for granted. In its rawest form, research integrity means that the researcher and his word(s) can be trusted as representing truthful positions and statements. Although research does not demand to take an oath as in other fields, people must know, through the researcher’s actions, demeanor, and research methods, that he/she is striving to produce research that is truthful, including clarifying the point of view being represented (Robert 2011).

Involvement in any research project must be undertaken on a completely voluntary basis. Voluntary means that, the participants freely, without threat or inducement, agree to be involved in the research project (Sieber 1992). Any information or data collected from respondents must be managed and handled carefully to safeguard confidentiality during and after completion of the

research. Therefore, data must be stored in such a way that research participants' names are not available to others (Phyllis et al. 2007).

Code of ethics is formulated to regulate the relation between researchers and the people and field they intend to study. Principles of ethics ask that, researchers avoid harming participants involved by respecting and taking into account their needs and interests. These codes of ethics require that research should be based on informed consent (i.e. - the study participants have agreed to partake on the basis of information given to them by the researcher). They also require that the researcher should avoid harming the participants, including not invading their privacy and not deceiving them about his/her aims (Uwe 2006).

According to ASA (1999), the basic ethical manners in research are:

- i. Professional competence, for example - maintaining awareness of current scientific and professional information
- ii. Integrity, for example - honesty, fairness, and respect
- iii. Professional and scientific responsibility, for example - hold on to highest standards and accept responsibility for own work, respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity as well as social responsibility.

Likewise, based on the above principles every single effort has been made in this study to protect the confidentiality of participants and adhere to the ethical standards.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESCRIPTION OF OROMO CULTURAL CENTER

#### 4.1 Overview of Oromo Cultural Center

Oromo Cultural Center was first established with the aim of representing the vast regions of Oromia in a single cultural complex that portrays the culture, tradition, custom, art, history and attire of Oromo people.

Oromo Cultural Center is a poised attraction found in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that is composed of four sections namely: Oromia Museum, Art and Theatre Center, Knowledge and Information Center, and Oromo Study Center.

Figure 2 Front View of Oromo Cultural Center



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure shows the front view of Oromo Cultural Center straight from Addis Ababa Stadium angle. In the figure, the entrance to the cultural center and the gate to Oromia Museum are seen.

## **4.2 Sections of Oromo Cultural Center**

### **4.2.1 Oromia Museum**

Oromia museum is the prime attraction for visitors in Oromo Cultural Center and it is considered as a magnet for tourist flow.

Oromia Museum is considered as a chief attraction as it is one of the main sources of revenue to Oromo Cultural Center. The price for visiting the museum is:

- i. 10 Ethiopian birr for domestic visitors
- ii. 5 Ethiopian birr for domestic children and students
- iii. 50 Ethiopian birr for foreign visitors
- iv. 10 Ethiopian birr for foreign children

The museum operates throughout the week from 9:00 in the morning to 4:00 pm. Oromia Museum is an ideal attraction for visitors aspiring to see cultural resources of Oromo with its international standard building and nowhere else to be found heritages of Oromo people.

The museum is divided in three floors with each, having its own attractions within.

The ground floor has a temporary exhibition area and an ethnographic room that houses thousands of ethnographic objects, art gallery, and a section for the Gada system.

The first floor has several rooms with each that has its own purpose, including:

- i. Social history display room – that has different portraits of Abdisa Aga, Geresu Duki, Abebe Bikila, Balcha Aba Nefso and several other prominent historical figures of Oromo Origin.
- ii. Agricultural civilization room – that has narrations and captions of traditional agricultural practices of Oromia.
- iii. Precious stones room – minerals and stones excavated from Oromia for that they are considered as precious are found here.
- iv. Wildlife of Oromia – this room has a replica of wildlife resources collection of Oromia.

The top floor has show cases (open displays) of:

- i. Gada System related heritages and traditional jewelleryes
- ii. Oromo bride's traditional wearings
- iii. Cultural utensils, clays, and cultural properties dating back hundreds of years and
- iv. Cultural woodworks that are made entirely free of nail use

#### 4.2.2 Oromo Art and Theatre Center

This center basically provides music, theatre, film, and literature trainings and services. At the present moment, only the former two are operational.

Oromo Art and Theatre center has four halls accommodating 1000, 500, 300, and 200 persons respectively and a theatre studio. In addition to that, the center serves as a venue for art and exhibition shows that are held in Oromo Cultural Center.

Figure 3 Theatrical Poster Promoting a Theatre Held in the Art and Theatre Center



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure shows a theatrical poster advertising a theatre named "Hulluqqoo" meaning narrow path in English.

### 4.2.3 Knowledge and Information Center

This center has two sections: for public library use and a research section for conducting different researches. The library section has philosophical, psychological, religious, linguistic, scientific, historic, art and travel books and magazines.

Figure 4 The Library Section of the Knowledge and Information Center



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure shows the library of the knowledge and information center in Oromo Cultural Center. The shelf that is seen has travel books and magazines and, the boards above it displays Bale Mountains National Park and Oromia region.

#### **4.2.4 Oromo Study Center**

Oromo study center is a core for studying the history, culture, language, art and the like of Oromo in depth for experts in the field. This center is still organizing itself and developing by pulling the necessary requirements and professionals in the field and is one of the least developed sections of the cultural center.

### **4.3 The Gada System**

The people of Oromo have an extensive and very rich culture and tradition which has been accumulated for centuries and handed down from generation to generation as a source of pride of the people. The culture of the people is deeply rooted in the Gada System which is a democratic, political, economic, and social system that has been shaping and guiding the lives, mode of governance, socio-economic conditions, philosophical outlooks etc. of the Oromo people. It has also enabled to ensure unity and solidarity among the people as well as the practice of peaceful conflict resolution strategies (OCTB 2015).

Historically, the Gada System probably started out as a system of age sets. Today it is organized along radically different lines. It is a system of temporal differentiation of society having little to do with age. Real age sets are organized in such a different way that, people who are approximately the same age share collective military, economic, political, or ritual responsibilities (Asmerom 1973:81).

According to Waldanso (1980), in the Gada System men are organized along two sets of five categories. The first is a chronologically based age-grade designation. In this set each male goes through five grades of eight years each where he performs a set of duties and responsibilities prior to moving to the next period. The second critical component in the Gada institution is the Luba System. The equivalent concept for Luba in the English language is party. Hence men are organized into five Luba (Party) sets.

The concept of Gada is so vast and it is beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, The Gada System that is been lately inscribed by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of the world is conveyed in Oromo Cultural Center in several ways.

The statues and reliefs found both inside and outside Oromo Cultural Center's building mostly demonstrate The Gada system.

Figure 5 The Stairs of Oromo Cultural Center



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure shows the entrance of Oromo Cultural Center that is made of five-staged stairs which are eight in number in each individual stage, depicting, the eight years of the first five stages of the Gada System.

i.e. - Daballe: 1 - 8 years

Game: 9 - 16 years

Kusa: 17 - 24 years

Raba: 25 - 32 years

Dori: 33 - 40 years

In the middle of the left and right side stairs, there is a mosaic art on five terraces of cascades that represent plants, grasses and water lake banks.

Next to that the two prominent statues at the main gate are that of Aba Gada and Hada Gola. These two male and female figures depict the sixth stage of leadership in the Gada System between the ages of forty and forty eight (Yuba 1<sup>st</sup>).

Figure 6 The Statue of Aba Gada and Hoda Gada



Source: Own Photography, 2017

In the above figure, the male one “Aba Gada” is shown with Wonfel (whip), Hororo (stick) and ivory bracelet. Besides him the female “Hada Gola” also wears Chacho (traditional necklace), and held a Sinke (stick for women) and Chocho (milk pot).

Figure 7 Reliefs Showing the First Five Stages of the Gada System



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure demonstrates the age stages of the Gada system shown in framed relief works that as well represents the first five stages of the Gada system.

One of the many significances of the inscription of Gada system by UNESCO is the promotion of the system and Oromo culture at international level that attracts tourists from all over the world and enhances inter-cultural dialogue (OCTB 2015).

In the same token, Oromo Cultural Center plays a prominent role in promoting the Gada System for visitors that are inspired by the system. And yet, this requires a comprehensive tourism product development plan to do so.

The other prominent advantage in this case is the fact that, Oromo Cultural Center is the only institution that accurately and characteristically presents the Gada System to visitors that are enthusiast to visit and study about the system, especially since it is now inscribed by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of the world.

#### 4.4 The Irecha Celebration

Irecha is a holiday where people worship their creator in thanksgiving and commemorate Mother Nature the sooner the rainy season passed, and so the river water becomes clear, plants flower all over the landscape to fill the air with aroma, and people who had been separated by the gush of floods start to meet (Birhanu 2014). According to Mekuria (2015), “Irecha” the Oromo equivalent of thanksgiving was traditionally celebrated bi-annually. The Irecha Birraa festival that is celebrated in the month of September and Irecha Al Faassa in the month of April. The festival in its traditional form is celebrated in different localities across Oromia. At the national level it is an event that brings millions of people together to the shore of Hora (lake) Arsedi in Bishoftu town. As such it has no parallel in Africa.

Figure 8 A Cluster of Sculptures that Describes Irecha Celebration



Source: Own Photography, 2017

As shown in the figure above, among the sculptures one is a sculpture of a girl twelve years or so stretching her right hand forward. At a closer look she held green grasses in her left hand, and she has given some of these grasses to the father figure in front of her “Aba Gada”. While the

latter wore the so called “Kalecha”, a protruded wood like thing on his forehead also he has folded his garment on the right side and slightly stretched his right foot forward in a manner that shows tranquility, ecstasy, and humble dignity. He also has a stick called “Hororo” in his left hand.

Next to him to the right, the mother figure “Hada Gola” is seen holding a stick called “Sinke” in her left hand. On her right side shoulder she wore attire called “Chacho” which traditionally symbolizes fertility in Oromo culture. There is a milk carrying pot called “Chocho” in her left hand also.

Besides these two mother and father there is a boy of fifteen years or so propping himself by a short stick and having green grasses in his left hand.

Behind the four figures there is another boy of eighteen years or so standing so firmly and close.

Beneath the groups there are pebble stones of different sizes that stretch to the right side wing of the building’s inner verandah.

In addition to the sculpture above that describes Irecha Celebration, the lake “Hora Arsedi” is represented in Oromo Cultural Center through a pond like structure that has a figure of a sycamore tree, right in the middle of the cultural center.

According to Oromo culture, the basis of family is natural fertility and it is the action interaction of this fertility that results in bearing and rearing of children in addition to helping them in self actualizing to benefit themselves and their family. Because of this, there are many traditional customs and attires that commemorate fertility among Oromos and all this can be redirected to depict the celebration of Irecha (Birhanu 2014).

#### **4.5 Statues, Reliefs, and Mixed Media Works**

Among the several statues found in Oromo Cultural Center, the two similar upright figures found in the lobby are remarkable achievements and alluring tourist attractions. The statues are shown wearing hide, traditional pants, traditional sandals, earrings and holding a spear and shield.

On the outskirts of the cultural center’s building, there are relief works that shows the traditional attires of Oromo people framed by aluminum sheets.

Figure 9 A Relief Work that Shows Traditional Attire Wore by Wollega Oromo Women



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure shows a relief work that is framed in aluminum sheet describing, the traditional attire wore by a woman from wollega (one of the administrative zones of Oromia).

Figure 10 Mixed Media Work of Cultural Utensils



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure that is found on the right side upper wall of Oromo Cultural Center building, is a mixed media work that is composed of cultural utensils which suggests aspects of cradle; traditional pot, spear, shield, stool and the like which is really eye-catching to tourists. The materials used to execute the works are aluminum, bronze, copper and iron rods.

Figure 11 Mixed Media Work that Shows Gugsii



Source: Own Photography, 2017

The above figure that is found on the left side upper wall of Oromo Cultural Center building is another mixed media work that shows the Oromo cultural sport called “Gugsii” where nine horsemen aligned in three fronts defensively are seen while galloping fastly.

On the further side back of the building there is yet another mixed media work that represents aspects of the Oromo cultural music and household design. The traditional music instruments shown on the mixed media work are traditional violin (Masinqo), drum (Kebero), traditional string instrument (Kirar), flute (Washint) and horns (Trumba).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS OF OROMO CULTURAL CENTER**

#### **5.1 MICE Tourism Development**

The term “MICE” in the context of travel is an acronym for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. It refers to a specialized niche group of tourism dedicated to planning and facilitating conferences, seminars and other events (Ahmad 2015:25).

MICE industry is one of the fastest growing segments within the tourism industry, generating millions of dollars in revenues for cities and countries across the globe. Since tourism ranks among the biggest economic sectors worldwide, enterprises in the travel industry carry an important place for business related travel (Asfiya 2016).

MICE tourism development potential of Oromo Cultural Center is enormous. The cultural center can accommodate as large as number of people per needed and it has vast open air perimeter for bazaar and exhibition.

More specifically, in terms of meetings the meeting halls of the Art and Theatre Centre of Oromo Cultural Center is quite suitable for accommodating meeting attendees as per needed. The attractions of the cultural center including the monuments, sculptures, relief works, and etc. as well as the cultural center as a whole can be an ideal destination for incentive travel. When it comes to conferences, as Oromo Cultural Center has meeting halls accommodating people from 200 up to 1000, small to big sized conferences can be held without any crowdedness. And lastly, event tourism is also possible since the open-air perimeter of the cultural center is vast.

MICE tourism development in Oromo Cultural Center has a great deal of significance to the latter. One of the benefits from the sector is the higher expenditure of business travelers that usually spend more than the average tourist. The other significance is even-out travel demand of visitors that is not constrained by seasonal variations and the standardized service requirement of MICE attendees that have similar requirements as MICE events are based on a linear program.

## **5.2 Incorporation in the City Tour Package of Addis Ababa**

Tour package service implies an inclusive offer for visitors that aspire to visit a certain destination or a series of destinations in a specified discounted price that is set by the tour operator. Tour package service bundles attraction, accommodation, and transportation services (Candela 2012).

The other potential of Oromo Cultural Center as a tourist destination is inclusion in the city tour package of Addis Ababa; that involves different destinations in and around the city by, collaborating with tour operators that package such a product.

It is obvious that, plentiful domestic and international tourists visit the National Museum of Ethiopia, Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, Mercato Market and etc. in Addis Ababa. Likewise, incorporation of Oromo Cultural Center in the city tour package of Addis Ababa will provide additional element of package for tour operators and additional destination for visitors.

Similarly, the cultural center could also be an additional attraction for the city as well, since it has a strategically significant location in the heart of Addis Ababa that straddles so vastly.

## **5.3 Standard Food and Beverage Service**

Food tourism underlies the reciprocal role of food in tourism and tourism in food, the two are connected. It is the connection between food source and food destination. So the food consumed by tourists in a place is part of the tourists' memory formation of their experience when visiting that place. Food Tourism becomes more specialised as tourists become motivated by the desire to experience a particular type of food or the product of a specific region or even to taste the special dishes of a particular chef (Una 2007).

The cafeteria in Oromo Cultural Center (Oda cafe), which is the only food and beverage service outlet in the cultural center offers poor food and beverage service. Its services are below standard for tourists that aspire to experience traditional Oromo foods and beverages, as the latter is not available in the cafeteria.

The cafeteria primarily lacks traditional touches in its interior design which is not aligned with the cultural center. On the contrary, it makes a good modern bar where downtown beverages and snacks are consumed.

The fact that food is expressive of a region means that it can be used to differentiate destinations in a highly competitive globalising market place. Whereas, the fact that food is expressive of identity and culture means that, it is an important component of cultural and heritage tourism (Una 2007).

According to one informant from the cultural center that explains about traditional Oromo foods:

*In Oromo culture and society food serves sustenance, enjoyment and pleasure purposes. As it is in most cultures, food plays an important role in Oromo culture. The main food items in Oromo culture are Marqa (porridge), Qince (shredded grains), Baadu (cheese), Foon wadi (meat) and Annan (milk). Hence, every food item is served with some mix of dairy products and Oromo people offer milk to guests as a welcome.*

Nonetheless, none of the above mentioned traditional Oromo foods are available in the cafeteria of Oromo Cultural Center based on the personal observation of the researcher. And also another informant added on this issue by saying:

Oromos have both alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages, namely Faarso or Daadhi (alcoholic) and Qaribo (non-alcoholic). Faarso would be equivalent for traditional beer and Dhadhi is like a honey-wine.

Ironically, a beer can be found in the cafeteria of Oromo Cultural Center and not a “Faarso”. And so, there is a big gap in food and beverage service in Oromo Cultural Center. However, from the point of view of tourism product development it is a potential; in terms of providing standard traditional and international food and beverage service to customers of the cultural center.

## **5.4 Souvenir Shops**

Appealing to both domestic and foreign visitors, souvenir shops can serve as an attraction themselves and earns additional revenue from visitors. From simple postcards to traditional

outfits and other cultural products could all constitute the service of souvenir shops and yet, there are no souvenir shops in Oromo Cultural Center.

As stipulated by one informant from Oromia Museum as for the reasons to this:

*Speaking of souvenir shops absence in Oromo Cultural Center, we have tried to address the issue since its establishment. At one point, we have attempted to invite bidders to participate in the rental of shops for such purposes and yet, participants failed to rent the shops claiming the rental fee based on the bid is too high for them to afford.*

Other services of such kind lacking in Oromo Cultural Center include, jewellery shops that sell traditional Oromo jewelleries like earrings, and necklaces. as well as media and technology outputs, including traditional music and dances made in DVD and CD.

Such products will ultimately make tourists' experience more lively and memorable. After all, visitors would appreciate to have something tangible that can be taken to home after visit.

## **5.5 Exhibitions**

A showcase is a museum property that serves the purpose of protecting and displaying objects. In addition to that, showcases protect the heritage objects from dust, insects, theft, fire and etc. while displaying it easily and flexibly (ICOMOS 1999).

Showcases are very scarce in the museum section of Oromo Cultural Center. To make matters worse the number of heritages that are ought to be displayed in a showcase are above the available showcases in the museum.

As explained by one informant from the museum:

*Several heritages are laid bare on tables due to lack of showcases which is below standard and unacceptable. Such a trend is very degrading to the cultural center in general and the museum department in particular as visitors would not find it very appealing as it is quite imaginable that they get dissatisfied.*

In addition to that, exhibitions are not held in Oromo Cultural Center on regular basis. Yet, art and exhibition shows are essential to Oromia Museum in order to attract large number of visitors at once and expose other aspects of the museum.

Likewise, the expansion of exhibitions and showcases can certainly be seen as a double-edged sword; as visitors coming to see the museum's collections not only contribute economic worth but also, promote both the cultural center and the museum within it to other potential visitors through word of mouth provided that, they are satisfied by their experience. Otherwise, they might as well be destructive weapons as there is nothing worse than, a dissatisfied customer in the tourism and hospitality industry.

## **5.6 Marketing, Promotion, and Technological Inputs**

### **5.6.1 Marketing and Promotion**

Marketing is so basic that it cannot be considered as a separate function. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view. Business success is not determined by the producer but by the customer (Taylor 2001).

According to Leigh (2014), a market orientation is frequently posited to improve business performance. The argument is that, organizations that are market-oriented can perform at a higher level. While many people think of marketing being synonymous with advertising, marketing is actually a broader concept that encompasses a wide range of elements that a company must do to ensure effectiveness. These elements include product, price, place and promotion (which include advertising) that must all be considered and managed effectively.

Surprisingly enough, Oromo Cultural Center has no marketing and promotion department of its own and faintly relies on Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau's few brochures and publications which of course are very low too. Hence, marketing and promotion activities are low to non-existent in Oromo Cultural Center.

While seeing the marketing potential of Oromo Cultural Center from the four P's:

1. In terms of product, proper marketing relative to the tourism products of Oromo Cultural Center including the museum heritages, statues, reliefs, library service, theatre centre, intangible heritages including the Gada System and Irecha Celebration enables to provide valuable service to visitors based on their interest and needs.
2. Concerning price, marketing results in an opportunity to optimally price products and services which in turn enhances the development potentials of the cultural center.
3. When it comes to place, as an access of obtaining specific tourism products Oromo Cultural Center depends on marketing as, the cultural center is promoting itself merely through its strategic location which will not appeal to the wider majority except for passersby in its premises.
4. Lastly in terms of promotion, that includes advertisement and public relations, Oromo Cultural Center could utilize the notion of marketing by making use of electronic, printed and broadcast media mechanisms that would have a huge significance in terms of making the cultural center popular.

Thus, as tourist destination marketing is a core for Oromo Cultural Center in order to promote its product offers and sustain in the business world whereas, it is highly unlikely for the cultural center to outreach to visitors without a clear cut marketing and promotion strategies.

#### **5.6.2 Website and Database Management System**

In order for tourism products and services to be communicated to prospective customers, websites serve as an indispensable tool. Oromo Cultural Center has no website that communicates its product offers to customers. This massively undercuts its ability to target a wider market, which is why the center is not known by the international traveler community, tour operators in the country, visitors, and the host community.

In a nut shell, the benefits of website installation for Oromo Cultural Center can be summed up as:

- i. To show products and services – by including a portfolio of image gallery of the cultural center and testimonials of work.

- ii. To be always accessible – as a website is available 24/7/365 to both regular and potential visitors of the website, it provides them the convenience of reviewing the products and services of the cultural center at all time.
- iii. To improve customer service – by adding a wireframe for frequently asked questions and uploading newsletters, customers’ ongoing needs can be better addressed.

The other potential technological input for Oromo Cultural Center is database management system. Database management system is a collection of interrelated data and a set of programs to access those data.

One of the departments that urgently need a database management system in Oromo Cultural Center is the “Knowledge and Information Center”. And yet, this center has no database management system that backup its collection of books and magazines in thousands of numbers. One of the informants said to this concern:

*It is very disappointing that we have to manually work in the library at the 21<sup>st</sup> century and this is putting too much of a boredom in our daily activities. In addition to that, we have no way of controlling and maintaining an inventory of books and magazines found in the library as it is seldom possible to protect the library collections from theft and loss by working manually.*

The application of database management system is not limited to the library of Oromo Cultural Center, but also the Art and Theatre Centre as well by storing publicized theatres, exhibitions held and etc.

In addition to that a full review of the entire heritage properties of Oromo Cultural Center can be well preserved by using database management system and it can by itself be converted to tourism product via softcopies.

## **5.7 Platform for Stakeholders**

Stakeholders can be referred as interest groups or partners of a certain company or organization. They are characterized for having a substantial form of interest and relation with the company or organization they are affiliated with.

Nasi (1995) classifies two groups of stakeholders in tourism, internal and external. Internal stakeholders are the groups who work in the company like shareholders, managers, and employees. External stakeholders are the groups such as customers, partners, and government bodies.

The stakeholders of Oromo Cultural Center elongate from the federal to local government level and different nongovernmental organizations as well. Mainly though, universities, Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, radio and TV agencies and The Gada Institution have substantial interest in the cultural center. However, there has so far been a slight activity in establishing ties and working cooperatively with the aforementioned and other stakeholders.

One consistent barrier in developing and implementing policy tools in tourism is that of the complex interaction of its numerous stakeholders and its decentralization nature that makes governance a challenge (Djoghla 2002).

In the context of tourism, very generic categories of stakeholders important for the planning and development of products include residents, tourists, employees, government, local businesses, activist groups, educational institutions and the like. From the stakeholder theory perspective, a very important viewpoint on tourism is the functional approach in which tourism is observed as a proactive force which, if developed appropriately seeks to maximize positive returns to a community's overall growth while minimizing the costs to the environment and culture (Marco et al. 2014).

In Oromo Cultural Center all the concerned stakeholders have to be identified clearly and approached accordingly, in order to, consult on the means of working together for better product development in the cultural center.

And also there is a gap in creating conducive environment that enables stakeholders including employees and host communities to work favorably and hand in hand by contributing own share together with the cultural center towards a communally shared goal. The relative better initiation on such regard is the relationship between the cultural center and universities for that matter.

It is obvious that, stakeholder management is complex and often problematic when it comes to collaborating with them that have disparate viewpoints on the same subject. Yet, without

stakeholders' consultation and collaboration tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center is utterly a difficulty.

## **5.8 Demand of Visitors**

With the complex design it bears, Oromo Cultural Center is the first of its kind in Ethiopia. This bestows it unparalleled potential and unprecedented advantage for tourism product development as there are no competitors that share visitors.

As reported by informants in spite of the fact, there remains lack of basic to complementary services and facilities in Oromo Cultural Center, the demand of visitors is appreciable. The majority of visitors comprise domestic visitors of Oromo origin that come in groups as accounted by informants working in Oromia Museum of Oromo Cultural Center.

Visitors coming to Oromo Cultural Center commonly have different attitudes towards the cultural center according to, their comments and remarks expressed in the comment books.

Some of their direct comments excerpted from the comment books include:

*Oromo Cultural Center is extremely elegant; especially the sculptural works and portraits are astonishing. I am pleased with the honor of visiting and learning the culture and history of my ancestors through this admirable complex.*

*Your invaluable effort to preserve Oromo culture and history by establishing Oromo Cultural Center will always be unforgettable. I am proud of my culture that is so amply demonstrated in Oromo Cultural Center, keep up the good job!*

*Even though, Oromo Cultural Center is an impressive cultural attraction, there needs to be additional services that best match our needs and expectations. There is not even any tangible memory except for the photographs we took. So please organize your services.*

Hence, both domestic and foreign visitors going to Oromo Cultural Center can get plentiful experience in their visits as, the cultural center expresses Oromo people's history, culture and art. But, there are plenty of services and facilities absent and tourism products underdeveloped based on the available means.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CHALLENGES TO OROMO CULTURAL CENTER FOR TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

#### 6.1 Lack of Awareness about Tourism Product Development

Even if the number of tourists coming to visit Ethiopia is increasing year after year, the sector is still under-performing while considering the intact potential the country has and when compared to neighboring destinations. Despite a tourism development policy was enacted by the government of Ethiopia back in 2009, its implementation was poor and has not brought about the intended results. In association with that destinations have a vital role of promoting their respective tourist attractions and create a tourism product that benefits everyone (MoCT 2015).

As Pender (2012) notes, many destinations are now actively developing their tangible and intangible cultural assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism market place, and to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalization.

And yet, tourism product development is principally neglected in Oromo Cultural Center. One thing overlooked in this context, is the fact that tourism relies up on and contributes to infrastructures that are intended for other purposes. For instance – MICE tourism development would only require the meeting halls of the cultural center and a good food and beverage service.

Lack of awareness about tourism product development is one of the most prevailing bottlenecks that is hindering the development of Oromo Cultural Center as an attraction. This is manifested through the minimal tourist activity in the cultural center as opposed to the huge capacity for tourism product development the cultural center has.

As one informant articulated:

*Even after the inscription of the Gada System by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage, the tourism activity in the cultural center is as low as it was before Gada's inscription. And this is very much concerning if not threatening as*

*it critically questions the very purpose of the statues and heritages made so expensively in order to demonstrate the Gada System in the cultural center.*

Hence, disinterest in tourism product development by expanding facilities and services in Oromo Cultural Center is also disinterest in preserving the cultural center and facilitating activities that wholly accentuate its development.

## **6.2 Financial Constraints**

Financial limitations are one structure of hindrances that limits new products and services development. As such financial limitations is one of the frequently raised factors for the under-development of tourism in Oromo Cultural Center.

Nonetheless, financial limitations take two forms as a challenge for tourism product development in the cultural center. That is:

### **i. Lack of Budget to Finance Tourism Product Development**

As claimed by the cultural center even if not explicitly stated in amount, there is lack of budget that is annually allocated by the regional state of Oromia to the cultural center. Thus, such a scarce budget is barely enough to maintain the cultural center's routine activities and overhead costs and doesn't go beyond this to be invested on tourism product development schemes.

### **ii. Improper Utilization of Budget**

The other aspect that is shared by some group of informants for the budgetary problem of the cultural center is improper utilization of the budget allocated to the cultural center. This is implied through which some expenditure that are so expensively made and investments costly planted while the basic facilities and services are lacking. One informant remarked this by saying:

*The cultural center allocates such a huge sum of money for agency cleaning service, while other investments that relatively cost less like internet service is non-present. When you compare between the two, installation of internet service is as important as outsourcing the cleaning activities of the cultural center to outside operators.*

### 6.3 Lack of Skilled and Qualified Manpower

It is evident that tourism is one of the largest employers in the service sector. And yet, shortage of highly and moderately trained manpower that is crucial to the development of the sector has a dire consequence on its performance.

The human resource profile of Oromo Cultural Center lacks professionalism and competitiveness. Most operational and some supervisory positions in the cultural center are characteristically dominated by employees with low to mid-level qualification and the gender distribution as well lacks female composition in it.

According to one informant:

*The human resource gap in Oromo Cultural Center is very high! To make matters worse, the already occupied positions are overwhelmed by non professionals. I attribute this with the generation now a days that is, benefit-seeker as opposed to dedication to career development. And also the nature of the service sector which hosts people in large number with the negligence of labor quality on the way is affiliated with this.*

It goes without saying that, in a very sensitive service like tourism skilled and qualified manpower is mandatory as, lack of qualified human resource leads to the ultimate dissatisfaction of visitors and spoil of the business.

There are numerous factors for the low quality of manpower there is in Oromo Cultural Center. One of the factors as stipulated by the informants of the study is the low payment scale for employees in the cultural center that principally negate their work motivation and, the latter is crucial for product development and delivery of competitive service.

The other cause is lack of on the job training that is ought to be given to employees already hired by the cultural center in order to expertise them in their profession and acquaint them new skills. Such training is crucial to improve service delivery in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition to that, the human resource of Oromo Cultural Center is of low quality due to inappropriate job recruitment criteria that is not based on the required educational qualification.

As one informant stated in an informal conversation, some job hires in the cultural center are made through nepotism, by handpicking relatives and friends. It goes without saying that, this scenario results in an unlimited and incalculable damage to the business and wastage of scarce resources.

Hence, lack of skilled and qualified manpower remains one of the most noticeable challenges hindering tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center.

#### **6.4 Absence of Tour Guiding Service and Interpretation of Heritages**

Facilities and services in tourism are part of the tourism product development process. And so, tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center is a concept of systemizing and rendering additional facilities and services thereby, improving the current scale and quality of services available.

Even though the cultural center is equipped with numerous heritages of high touristic value from top to bottom, there is no single tour guide that interprets the meaning, significance, and attributes of heritages present in Oromo Cultural Center. Not to mention the gates to Oromo Cultural Center, the museum collections, monuments and relief works that demonstrate Gada System and the cluster of sculptures that describes Irecha Celebration are among the few that are simply present without a proper way of communication to visitors.

As Ponder (1993) explains, the provision of indigenous guides is very crucial for destinations, for visitors that visit aboriginal sites, and cultural displays. In a way guides would have two prominent roles to play to make visitors' experience memorable. One is providing leadership service by giving directions, access, security and safety to tourists. The other is mediating role by providing information and interpretation of heritages present.

Interpretation is but an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects based on firsthand experience and by illustrative media rather than simply communicating factual information. Information as such is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information but they are entirely different things. However, all kinds of interpretation include information (Tilden 1977).

Hence, there is a big gap in this regard and it is highly advantageous for Oromo Cultural Center to have guides that possess a firsthand knowledge of heritages present and communicate as such. Otherwise, any interpretation that doesn't somehow relate to what is being displayed or described will be awful for visitors that seek the service of the cultural center.

## **6.5 Loose Interdepartmental Connection**

There can be no tourism product that satisfies consumers'/visitors' diversified needs and high expectations, which is not based on harmonious and cordial interdepartmental relationship of various units within a specific destination. Not only to the ultimate satisfaction of tourists but also, to the smooth functioning of a cultural center as a destination organized rapport of different departments is necessary.

The relationship between the four sections of Oromo Cultural Center: Oromia Museum, Oromo Art and Theatre Centre, Knowledge and Information Center as well as Oromo Study Center in terms of working together for tourism product development is very weak. This is clearly manifested in their lack of mutual interdependence and a communal strategic goal that has resulted in their fragmented presence.

In order for a tourism product to be developed in Oromo Cultural Center, there must be synchronized objectives of the four sections of the cultural center with each contributing its share and seeking the support of the other.

As tourism product development is a joint task that requires liaison and mutual coordination, without such an affiliation and a loose link, it is seldom possible to deliver an internationally competitive product.

## **6.6 Susceptibility to Theft**

To tackle the problem of security in places that contain "cultural property" taking into consideration fire protection and other means of accident prevention is necessary but not enough. Similarly, the presence of anti theft mechanisms alone would not guarantee the safety concerns of Oromo Cultural Center.

Since Oromo Cultural Center has a lot of disorganized services and facilities especially, in the museum area with heritages laid bare on tables there is a risk of theft of heritages and relics within. In addition to that, as different heritage properties including monuments, sculptures and reliefs are not supervised, their vulnerability to be prototyped and established elsewhere is highly probable.

Such a risk will invariably multiply with the growth of visitors and popularity of the cultural center. In connection with that, the cultural center has no insurance that guarantees the safety of the cultural heritages found in it.

Hence, a clear cut tourism product development strategy that takes into consideration the protection of the cultural center's property is as well necessary to that end.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AT OROMO CULTURAL CENTER

#### 7.1 Growth of Domestic Tourism

The population of Oromia has a correlation with the tourism development of Oromo Cultural Center and this is mainly associated with growth of domestic tourism. Based on the 2007 census (the last year for which census data is available), conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, for the year 2007 population and housing census, Oromia region has a total of close to 27 million population in an estimated area of 353,006km<sup>2</sup> (CSA 2007).

As discussed by OCTB (2014) straddling across the very heart of Ethiopia, Oromia state is blessed with an abundance of cultural and natural assets of high touristic value. It is a land of astonishing natural beauty offering all sorts of landscape scenery that ranges from semi-desert steppe to afro-alpine highlands and different sets of cultural attractions, having tremendous tourist value.

As observed in the focus group discussion, the discussion more or less similarly sensed:

*Oromia region has a large share in the Ethiopian tourism industry with weekenders and excursionists visiting attractions in and around Oromia. Likewise, since Oromo Cultural Center itself is found in Addis Ababa which is the capital of the regional state, the cultural center has an advantage of benefiting from the growth of tourism as an ideal cultural attraction for visitors.*

Hence, with the growth of domestic tourism in the country more and more domestic visitors will tend to visit Oromo Cultural Center as the regional state has the largest population of the country. And this is significantly advantageous to the cultural center.

Likewise, with adequate marketing and promotion approaches coupled with tourism product development strategies, it is favorable for Oromo Cultural Center to benefit from growth in tourism and increase in visitors' arrival from time to time. And this implies the growth in tourism

in the region of Oromia has a direct impact on the condition of the cultural center in terms of tourism.

In addition to that, the multiplier effect of tourism to and from Oromo Cultural Center is enormous. In terms of income, the additional spending by tourists will in turn be allocated to the benefits of the public via infrastructural development, education, health and etc. In addition to that, with the development of tourism products there will be an additional employment opportunity that will be created for youths that would in turn serve the cultural center.

And of course, all the direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism can all be vitally sought that has a huge contribution to Oromo Cultural Center's development.

Direct effect – immediate effects of change in tourism revenue from tourists visiting the cultural center can be gained.

Indirect effect – money earned from tourism can be re-spent on the expansion of facilities and services in the cultural center.

Induced effect – income earned directly or indirectly as a result of tourism spending based on the cultural center can cause changes in local economic activity resulting from household spending.

Thus, the benefit of tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center is not only confined to earning of additional revenues and creation of employment opportunities but also, the recycle of the money earned from tourism activities in the cultural center that would be injected in the local economy, and from the local economy to the cultural center.

It is important to note that, Oromo Cultural Center is an attraction that is found in a country where, there are multiple ethnic groups and various cultures. As such, Oromo Cultural Center is publicly accessible to all Ethiopian people as well as foreigners that are interested in visiting and learning about Oromo culture. Hence, the growth of domestic tourism and the subsequent opportunity of the cultural center is not confined only to Oromia region and Oromo visitors.

## **7.2 Distinctiveness and Strategic Location of Oromo Cultural Center**

Oromo Cultural Center presently stands as the first and only of its kind in Ethiopia, having no resemblance in all the nine regional states of the country. The heritages and attractions found in

the cultural center are non-existent in other parts of the country or have not been presented in the way they are in the cultural center.

Had it been realized and converted to tourism products, this is a significantly imperative point for Oromo Cultural Center as tourists are interested in visiting unique and exotic attractions as such.

Nevertheless, without conversion of the potentials the cultural center has for tourism product development by expanding facilities and services to accommodate tourists varying needs, a peculiarity of such kind is of little use.

Next to that, one of the four main components of tourism is accessibility, in addition to attraction, accommodation, and amenities. Accessibility plays a significant role in a tourism destination by pulling visitors from all corners.

The location of Oromo Cultural Center could legitimately be referred as, a strategic and vital point that is found in the heart of Addis Ababa in front of Addis Ababa Stadium. Oromo Cultural Center is accessible from multiple directions both by road and railway transport. The cultural center is also a few minutes' drive from Bole International Airport.

Addis Ababa is a diplomatic headquarters of numerous international organizations like African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa as well as more than 105 embassies (MoFA 2016). With the growth of MICE tourism in the city and cultural tour packages it goes without saying that, Oromo Cultural Center will be eye catching. Over the condition, facilities and services that host such activities are satisfied in the cultural center.

### **7.3 Cultural Policy of Ethiopia**

The cultural policy of Ethiopia which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in October, 1997 emphasizes on: the heritage, history, fine arts, handicrafts, and folk art (tales, proverbs, popular poetry, dance, songs, etc.) of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia are collected, registered, analyzed, and preserved from any form of adulteration, and that these are given equal recognition and right to develop. The objectives of the policy includes: to enable the languages, heritage, history, handicraft, fine arts, oral literature, traditional lore, beliefs and other cultural features of the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to receive equal recognition

and respect; to preserve and conserve these and pass them over to future generations (Heritage Study and Conservation Authority 2011).

Under Federal Negarit Gazeta, proclamation No. 691/2010, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is given the power to ensure that the country's tourist attractions are identified, properly developed and organized, tourist facilities are expanded, and that local communities share the benefits derived from tourism development (Federal Negarit Gazeta 2010).

Thus, Oromo Cultural Center as an attraction that was established with the aim of promoting the culture, history, art and language of Oromo people, can use the cultural policy of Ethiopia to defy its right to development and withstand difficulties encountered in the course of tourism product development. In addition to that, the cultural center can better facilitate its activities related with tourism product development by establishing ties with the “Ministry of Culture and Tourism” of Ethiopia that is given an exclusive right to overview and assist, cultural institutions and tourism destinations which, in Oromo Cultural Center’s case is two sides of the same coin.

According to MoCT (2010), the opportunities for tourism development in the country are put in three clusters of political, economic and social prospects.

Political: very good political will and high level of commitment to develop tourism sector for sustainable development and ratification of many international conventions in relation to conservation of cultural heritages and natural environment.

Economic: existence of different economic development policies and strategies like “Growth and Transformational Plan”.

Social: existence of formal institutions and structures promoting tourism development at different levels, high social capital, and social interaction among local communities.

All in all, Oromo Cultural Center has an encouraging future of developing itself by utilizing the opportunities highlighted by Ministry of Culture and Tourism and others provided that, it seizes the opportunities listed in the nearest timeframe available.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 Conclusion**

Tourism industry by far is the largest and most rapidly growing sector in the world. Destinations are thoroughly engaged in developing their potential resources into full fledged tourism attractions. Tourism product development is a pre-condition for an accelerated growth of tourism in any destination.

Oromo Cultural Center is a multi-functional complex that has a huge tourism product development potential that can readily be converted to tourism products at any given time. In association with that, challenges and opportunities that respectively hold back and promote tourism product development in the cultural center persists as well.

This study has made a modest attempt to emphasize on the potentials Oromo Cultural has for tourism product development, what the challenges can be and are hindering from utilizing its resources and opportunities that cannot be undermined in favoring the development of the cultural center as a tourism axis.

Likewise, based on reviewed literature and analyzed data, the study has revealed that tourism product development is under-exploited subject in Oromo Cultural Center despite, the latter's gigantic potential for tourism product development.

The tourism product development potentials of Oromo Cultural Center include: MICE tourism development, incorporation in the city tour package of Addis Ababa, standard food and beverage service, souvenir shops, showcases and exhibitions, marketing, promotion and technological inputs like website development and database management system, availability of concerned stakeholders, and demand of visitors. All are massive potential for tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center.

As identified in the study, the potentials of Oromo Cultural Center for tourism product development has not been utilized and converted to tourism products that can generate additional

revenue to the cultural center. This is mainly because of both recognized and unrecognized challenges thwarting tourism product development in the cultural center.

Therefore, the prime challenge is lack of awareness about the invaluable significance of tourism product development for the cultural center's anticipated growth. And also overlooking the fact that, tourism product development is a double-edged sword that not only relies on but also, contribute to and promote the current level of the cultural center.

Next to that, financial constrains to fund facilities and services related with tourism product development, lack of skilled manpower, absence of tour guiding service and interpretation of heritages, loose and fragile inter-departmental relationship, threat of theft and the effect of globalization are deduced to be challenges deterring tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center.

The other objective achieved by the study is, the examination and insight of opportunities that promote tourism product development in Oromo Cultural Center. Thus, growth of domestic tourism alongside with the significant share of Oromia from Ethiopia's tourism industry and its largest population, distinctiveness and strategic location of Oromo Cultural Center, and the cultural policy of the country that states the safeguarding and promotion of indigenous cultures are all inferred as key opportunities for tourism product development at Oromo Cultural Center.

## **8.2 Recommendations**

It is evident that the current trend of activities in Oromo Cultural Center is not promising. It is indeed unfit to alleviate the challenges posed upfront hindering tourism product development and to seize existing and emerging opportunities that advance the development of the cultural center whilst continually unleashing and converting tourism potentials and resources in to tourism products.

A new paradigm of potential realization, consultation of stakeholders, and planning and implementation of tourism product development strategies must come into existence. That way an enabling environment encouraging everyone concerned to contribute own input will be created.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations are suggested to Oromo Cultural Center and concerned stakeholders including but not limited to Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau.

1. In order for Oromo Cultural Center to promote the art, language, history and culture of Oromo people through tourism product development and present it to prospective visitors, a feasibility study needs to be conducted mainly by the Knowledge and Information Center of Oromo Cultural Center that concerns the resources available and strategies appropriate to do so.
2. MICE tourism development and incorporation in the city tour package of Addis Ababa by consulting with tour operators is highly advisable to Oromo Cultural Center in terms of attracting visitors in large mass and earning additional revenue to the cultural center.
3. It is a must for Oromo Cultural center to review its marketing and promotion aspects, as the issue of marketing is not only about advertising products to potential new customers and increase revenue sought but also, is a publicity tool that enhances the public-image of the cultural center by making it more renowned and accessible to the wider public. In association with this website designing and setting database management system is rewarding as it has a lot of benefits.
4. In order to solve financial constraints, tourism product development through expansion of facilities and services that can be additional source of revenue is the solution. Amongst which filling the gap in tour guiding service, expanding souvenir shops, and improving food and beverage service can be exemplified.
5. Man power training is compulsory to Oromo Cultural Center that includes short term and long term on the job training in order to expertise professionals already hired as well as setting educational qualification standard for prospective candidates. And, so doing will ultimately result in effectiveness of employees on their job description and efficient use of resources available which makes the cultural center more profitable in the long run.

6. As stakeholders are the backbone of any tourism activity, establishing a diplomatic and business relation with concerned stakeholders is necessary and mandatory to Oromo Cultural Center as the former eases the bureaucratic and administrative challenges met on the way. Hence it is imperative for the cultural center to establish ties with the concerned stakeholders for better product development.
7. Having standard exhibitions is indispensable as it not only organizes heritages present in the museum section of the cultural center, but also protects heritages within from theft and vandalism.
8. As opportunities are highly variable, the sooner they are seized the better it is for Oromo Cultural Center to make the best use out of them. Likewise, the cultural policy of the country that promotes such establishments and largest population of the region must all be grasped in a way they conform with the cultural center as soon as possible.

All in all, addressing the aforementioned and other concerns soon enough shall build the capacity of Oromo Cultural Center as a tourism axis and makes it more resilient in outstanding unexpected outcomes. Hence, it is essential to understand that “a failure to get involved in tourism by utilizing own potential in Oromo Cultural Center results in, a failure to capitalize on the opportunities the former represents”.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Interview Guideline



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

### **Dear Respondents**

I am conducting a research entitled “**An Assessment of Potentials, Challenges, and Opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center for Tourism Product Development**” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in Tourism and Development program at Addis Ababa University. Hence, with this interview I conduct with you, I will be able to find out the underlying themes in terms of potentials found in Oromo Cultural Center, challenges the cultural center encounters when it comes to tourism product development, and conversely the opportunities it has that help foster its enhancement as a tourism hub.

You are assured that all the information you provide will absolutely be confidential and anonymous.

**Thank You In Advance!**

## Interview Guide

1. What are the resources/products of Oromo Cultural Center that are considered essential, in terms of attracting visitors?
2. What are the potentials of Oromo Cultural Center as an attraction, for tourism product development?
3. Is it possible to say the potential of Oromo Cultural Center as an attraction is unleashed to its core and converted to tourism products, if not so why and what do you suggest to that effect?
4. Do you have a mechanism that illustrates the life-cycle of your product offers, if so which stage are you currently at: introduction, growth, maturity or decline and rejuvenation?
5. Speaking of product versus market synergies that promote the shared use of facilities and resources between tourism and other services over which, tourist can be additional customers for other products and services, is there any platform for product and market synergies in Oromo Cultural Center?
6. What do you have to say about the gap between demand from visitors and supply offered by the cultural centers, if a gap exists what is done to narrow the gap?
7. What is the reflection of visitors once they witness Oromo Cultural Center, and also how do you rate their level of satisfaction?
8. Is there a mechanism through which the comments and/or remarks of visitors/customers is added in the way you deliver services to them?
9. How much advantage is exploited and how far milestone did Oromo Cultural Center came from being, a sole cultural attraction that is the only of its kind in Ethiopia?
10. How much resource do you recurrently allocate for marketing and promotion activities?
11. What are the difficulties chiefly pertaining to develop new products and operating existing ones in Oromo Cultural Center and how do you intend to approach them?

12. What is done so far and intended to be done to develop the human resource of Oromo Cultural Center in terms of quality and capacity?
13. How much is done to gather all concerned stakeholders and work in liaison for better product development in Oromo cultural Center?
14. Is there anything intended to be done in order to incorporate Oromo Cultural Center in the city tour of Addis Ababa in association with tour operators for that matter?
15. Where do you envisage yourself/your organization ten years from now?

## Appendix 2: Checklist for Focus Group Discussion



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

#### **Dear Respondents**

I am conducting a research entitled **“An Assessment of Potentials, Challenges, and Opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center for Tourism Product Development”** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA degree in Tourism and Development program at Addis Ababa University.

Consequently, the focus group discussion I will have with you will assist me to understand your reflections about what the potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Oromo Cultural Center for tourism product development are.

Having said that, all the information you provide will entirely remain confidential that would solely be consumed for the purpose of this study.

**Thank You Very Much!**

### Checklist for Focus Group Discussion

1. Are you aware that if tourism product development activities are thoroughly carried out and properly managed, they can bring about a huge socio-economic significance to the beneficiaries and if not the other way around?
2. Is it possible to say the people of Oromia (local community) which Oromo Cultural Center represents is gaining optimal socio-economic benefits from the cultural center? If not, why so?
3. Do you think the location of Oromo Cultural Center being at the heart of Addis Ababa alongside with numerous headquarters of international organizations and 105 plus embassies is an advantage for tourism product development?
4. Do you agree that the pioneering advent of Oromo Cultural Center as the first of its kind in Ethiopia until now is of vital importance for tourism product development in the center? If so, in what way?
5. If you were to propose a new product development scheme to Oromo Cultural Center, what would the barriers be for that matter?

## **Declaration**

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

Name: Nebyou Amlaku

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as an advisor.

Name: Desalegn Amsalu (PhD)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_