

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY



CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

STUDIES

COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

PROGRAMME OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR
SUSTAINABLE PARKMANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF ABIJATTA-SHALLA LAKES
NATIONAL PARK, ETHIOPIA**

Thesis Submitted To

**The College of Development Studies of Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of Masters of Arts in Tourism and Development.**

By HELINA YILMA

Advisor: Feyera Senbeta (Ph.D)

June, 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis is my original work done under the guidance of Feyera Senbeta (PhD) and that it has not been presented for a degree in any other university and all the sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Helina Yilma**, entitled: “*Community Participation in the Decision Making Process for Sustainable Park management: The Case of abijatta shala lakes National Park, Ethiopia*” is approved for the Award of Masters of Arts in Tourism and Development.

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Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator

Acknowledgement

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the extent of community participation in the decision making process for sustainable park management of the Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park (ASLNP), Ethiopia. A qualitative method was employed to collect relevant data. A total of 32 people were involved in the research. In which ways are local communities involved in the decision-making process regarding park management, What are the perceptions of the local communities on the existing decision making process regarding park management , What are the challenges faced in engaging local communities in the process of decision-making, What are the existing opportunities to support the sustainable management of ASLNP. One focus group a discussion was conducted and 24 key informants were contacted for in-depth interviews. The findings of this research revealed that communities members who were participating in decision making process for ASLNP management, were the people who employed in park and other members of the communities .There was no concrete effort to involve the communities in decision making in the study area. The findings revealed that the communities' sentiments about the form of decision making processes in place were mixed including sometimes conflicting views about park ownership and role to be played by each of the parties. The study advocates for integrated set of solutions by both parties to reduce heavy dependency of local communities' livelihoods in ASLNP and by establishing a system of incentives so as to spur the spirit of environmental consciousness for local community.

Keywords: Community Participation, Decision Making, ASLNP, Sustainable Park Management.

LIST OF ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASLNP	Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park
CAMPFIRE	Community Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources
CBFRM	Community-Based Forest Resources Management
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CB-PES	Community-Based Payments for Ecosystem Services
CCG	Collaborative Group
CP	Community Participation
ICDPs	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
JFM	Joint Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

For many developing countries including Ethiopia, travel and tourism serves as an important source of foreign currency for their economy. However, it is still the industrialized countries that are some of the largest beneficiaries of inbound international travel (UNECA, 2015). Nonetheless, particularly in the case of Africa, tourism is seen as one of the main providers to a successful development of the countries' economies as well as an important venue for poverty reduction (Ashley and Mitchell, 2005).

As Carson (2015) explained developing countries encourage investment in tourism for mainly economic reasons: tourism generates foreign exchange earnings and through taxation and other fiscal measures and contributes to government income; creates employment and entrepreneurial opportunities; attracts foreign direct investment; and stimulate regional development. The tourism often brings a comparative advantage in development terms, compared to more traditional sectors of the economy such as agriculture, small-scale manufacturing and mining. The use of tourism attractions, which can include climate, culture, wildlife and heritage provide an economic value to assets which previously might have been undervalued (Carson, 2015).

One of the key issues for pursuing sustainable development is the active participation of the local community in the decision-making process. According to Burns *et al.* (2004) community participation concerns the engagement of individuals and communities in decisions about things that affect their lives. Community participation is separated from consultation by the fact that communities play an active part and have a significant degree of power and influence in the decision-making processes (Akortor, 2012).

Over the past few decades the phrase "community participation" has gained increasing usage in academic literatures, policy making documents and international conference papers as a key element in attempts to attain sustainable development in African countries. The issue of community participation is now an established principle when one considers issues dealing with

decision-making to achieve sustainable development (Chirenje, Richard and Emmanuel., 2013; Shackleton *et al.*, 2002).

The concept of community participation in decision making is not a recent development, as since long ago, man lived in small communities where decision-making and community participation in community projects was mandatory. Local village chiefs and family heads met on issues which varied from improving farming and fishing methods to deciding on the perfect punishment for a criminal, right down to the community providing financial and physical support to help a new couple put up their first matrimonial home. With the onset of westernization and in the case of developing countries, the issue of colonization, western forms of governance were seen as more civilized and thus, traditional forms of governance were discarded (Akortor, 2012).

On the other hand, in the case where the project's existence is decided on by a group of experts and the sitting government, it every now and then leads to apathy as the community may not want that particular project at the said time and in some cases, boycott or sabotage it completely. Several publications such as, Ekblom (2005), Newman (1997), Lawson (2007, p.9), exemplify the government initiated project, which had led to the under-utilization of the project due to the area becoming a principal crime area.

In spite of the widespread acceptance of the belief that community participation is necessary in decision making (Fischer, 1993 as cited in Akortor, 2012), some people have the view that decision making should be left to some experts (Cutler and Johnson, 1975; Kontoleon *et al.*, 2001). These are people who support the belief that the government and their technical experts have better knowledge on community project implementation, and that involving the community would lead to increasing the cost of the project.

Ethiopia possesses considerable natural resources, of which some of them are unique to the nation. This subsequently led to the creation of conservation sites all over the country and there have 30 conservation sites designated as protected areas since early 1960s. These areas are acknowledged to be high priority sites for the conservation of wildlife resources. However, all the efforts made to conserve and manage these ecosystems have never been as planned mainly due to direct human population dependency on these resources that led to severe environmental degradation. As an example, Abijatta-Shalla Lakes National Park (ASLNP) is one of the protected areas of the country that has been indicated as a heavily degraded ecosystem in the

country (Feyera and Fekadu, 2000) mainly owing to inadequate community participation in process of park establishment and management.

This research work attempted to critically investigate the multiple realities surrounding the concept of community participation in the decision making process for sustainable park management by taking the special case of ASNLP which is located in the Central Rift Valley System of Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Community participation is a process by which the local communities, influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions over the resources, which affect them. Today, the need to involve communities and other actors, such as NGOs and the private sector, as partners in sustainable natural resources management programs has been highlighted. It has been demonstrated that when communities are empowered with responsibilities and rights for the management, and receive benefits from them, there is an increase in community ownership of resources and processes, thereby encouraging sustainable utilization of natural resources. Evidently, the communities are always at the receiving end when it pertains to losses in the exchange. Community participation was shown to be effective when the local population is involved not as co-operating users but as natural resource managers or owner managers (Chilenge *et al.*, 2013).

While there have been strident calls for community participation in decision making to replace elite democratic practices elsewhere, not much literature is available especially with regards to tourism resource conservation in the case of Ethiopia in general, and in ASLNP in particular. For instance, despite the ASLNP enormous potential for tourism activities, however, this specific park has been, and still is, one of the heavily threatened ecosystems in the country. On top of that, different studies have been undertaken to understand the situation related to its status (Gobena, 2008; Tewodros and Afework, 2014); those studies have not attempted to shed light on the level of community participation in decision making process and its impact on resources management like ASNLP. Actually, there is a need to understand the causes of the unceasing degradation of ASLNP resources and, whether people are correctly involved in decision making

processes regarding conservation efforts in place, and if so, to understand the practices of community participation (CP) that is being implemented.

The literature on community based natural resources management is sparse to non-existent for unique areas like a park that is host to a large human population. Much of the body of work on this issue was conducted from the perspective of the need to protect natural resources to help the local community extract livelihoods out of them. The case of ASLNP differs from such cases in that the natural resource around the area needn't be protected in any special manner for the community to depend on it for their livelihoods unless tourism and biodiversity are seen as factors. To ensure a community is rallied around an area of natural resource that can be used as tourism attraction, there needs to exist a deeply entrenched sense of ownership among the local people about the said area and hence the need for community based decision making process.

ASLNP, from its inception, didn't put much emphasis on helping raise the standards of the local peoples' lives. Rather, the people in and around the park were seen as invaders trampling on precious natural resource, as is the case for many other parks in the country. That people weren't consulted at the decision- making stages of the creation and further development of the park has contributed to the marginalization of the local community and utter non-existence of community conscious decision making.

An investigation of actual participation in conservation and tourism development provides an opportunity to gather information about the status, and help to determine whether the situation meets the community's expectations. Identifying the gap between the two can help to examine the reasons for the gap and generates possible suggestions and solutions. Such findings can be important for the successful conservation and sustainable tourism development in the ASLNP and for other protected areas. This research therefore, examines the following key concepts: current community participation in the decision-making process and the perceptions of the people regarding the existing form of CP in the case of ASLNP resources conservation.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The main objective of this study is to critically analyze local community involvement in the decision-making process for ASLNP management.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- 1) To examine the extent of local communities involvement in decision-making process for ASLNP management.
- 2) To identify bottlenecks for community participation in decision making for management of the ASLNP.
- 3) To determine opportunities towards involving local community in the decision making process for the management of the ASLNP resources.
- 4) To scrutinize community opinions about the form of decision making processes in place.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) In which ways are local communities involved in the decision-making process regarding park management?
- b) What are the perceptions of the local communities on the existing decision making process regarding park management?
- c) What are the challenges faced in engaging local communities in the process of decision-making?
- d) What are the existing opportunities to support the sustainable management of ASLNP?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study contribute to the body of knowledge about better touristic resources management, as it enlightens decision makers, and other practitioners in developing a

consciousness about the significance of community participation in decision making for the conservation of protected areas as a way to promote sustainable tourism and natural resource management. Information from this research can help in identifying the barriers that might prevent communities from participating in conservation of ASLNP resources. It also provides a standpoint for further researches on tourism and conservation regarding community participation in decision-making processes in the case of ASLNP.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is comprised of the national park under study (ASLNP) and select few communities that live around the park. Participation in the management processes was determined by community involvement in activities of planning, budgeting and sharing benefit from ASLNP resources.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study involves only four *Kebeles* out of eighteen constituting the study area due to the fact that during the period of data collection security was not very good in rural Ethiopia. Therefore, the study is limited to individuals who were purposively selected as they were found related more appropriately with the topic under investigation and were easily accessible. The data under study was generated from one group discussion (8 people of different age, sex and education background) made of people that were living in the study area.

Considering the fact that there is only one park under study, this again takes the research findings specific and hence cannot be generalized to a nation-wide scope. The information generated under this study was from sites where the park had not started tourism revenue sharing programs. So it might not capture the views of other communities, which are benefiting from these programs.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory part that provides background on the subjects of tourism and development, on conservation and community participation. It also presents the objectives of the study and research questions as well as limitations of the study. The second chapter gives the literature review where different context relevant for the study are explained in details based on past literatures. It also includes a

framework followed by the study. Chapter three describes the study under investigation, and research methods followed to meet the study aims. The next part of the thesis presents the findings as per the analysis performed, and the last chapter deals with conclusion and recommendations from the findings.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Concepts and Definitions

For a better understanding of community participation in decision making leading to an improvement in the resource conservation, which is fundamental for sustainable tourism development and poverty alleviation, there is a need for the explanation of the significant keywords that are repeated throughout this research.

2.1.1 Community

The word ‘community’ is multifaceted and controversial depending on the angle at which one chooses to look at it. In the Community Planning Handbook, Wates (2000 p. 184) describes a community as a group of people living within close propinquity to each other. Community could also refer to people who live in close proximity with each other.

The word ‘community’ etymologically is derived from the Latin word “*communitatem*”¹, which means community or fellowship. With regards to the sociological point of view, a community is one in which a community consists of people living within close proximity to each other. Communities differ from one locality to another as a result of history and cultural traditions. From a political position, a community consists of a number of dwellings and buildings which are under a particular political jurisdiction. These are so divided for the ease of administration and elections.

¹Online Etymology dictionary

The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines community as; "a group of people with common characteristics or interest living together within a larger society". For the purpose of this thesis, this definition is adopted to mean community.

2.1.2 Participation

Participation 'as a word is etymologically derived from the Latin word "*participationem*"² which stems from the word "*participare*" which means to participate. Participation is synonymous with words such as; involvement, teamwork and engagement. In relation to this study, participation is about "joint collaboration with stakeholders with the aim of being involved in decision making with a goal in mind" .²

The Oxford Dictionary defines participation as; "the action of taking part in something". The World Bank (1996) defines participation as; "the process through which stake-holders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them". For participation to be genuine and sustainable, it should primarily be voluntary.

Notwithstanding, there have been quite a couple of cases where citizens took part in deliberations in the locality because of incentives they stood to gain from it or as a result of persuasion. This is also not sustainable because, once the attraction is absent; the participation equilibrium would be unsettled.

Furthermore, Claeys (2001 as cited in Akortor,2012 p.17) also comprehends the ability of the citizenry to participate regardless of their social and economic standing as, the respect that is accorded to an individual recognizing, that he/she has the ability to contribute something meaningful towards community advancement. Distrust in the administration of policies and projects have been the backbone in the fight of the communities to be at the forefront of the decision making process. Over the years, corrupted officials have used bureaucratic red-tape as a means of preventing the public to get access to documents that may incriminate them. In frontline position in the fight to be heard, are the activists followed by, non-elected administrators in local government, then by citizens who have participated in at least a communal process or event during the year (Akortor, 2012).

²Online Etymology dictionary

2.2 Different kinds of Participation

In the views of Akortor (2012), the driving force behind participation is a result of a couple of subjective forces. Human beings by nature are different and thus, the compulsion to undertake participatory work unfortunately may sometimes be for the wrong reasons, whilst in some cases it is for the right reasons.

According to Pretty *et al.* (1995 p.61) in their book “Participatory Learning and Action”, some of the types of participation include: 1) Manipulative Participation, 2) Passive Participation, 3) Participation by Consultation, 4) Participation for Material Incentive, 5) Functional Participation, 6) Interactive Participation and 7) Self-Mobilization”. This is further explained in table 1 below.

Table 1. Main Typology of participation

Typology	Characteristics of each type
1. Manipulative participation	Participation is simply pretenses, the community themselves are not willing to participate in development processes but because of the external manipulation they simply pretend. Participation in this type is not sustainable because people will not always pretend.
2. Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Information belongs only to the external professionals. This is regarded as top-down approach to people participation and assume that people do not have potential to decide for themselves. This type of participation is difficult when it come to the implementation stage; people fail to support the project because they were not involved during the planning stage.
3. Participation in giving information	People participate by giving answers to questions posed by extractive researchers and project managers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research or project design are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

4.Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. There is no room for the shared decision-making between the stakeholders and the professional. In most cases people's needs and priorities ignored by professionals. This also becomes difficult during the implementation of development projects. This type creates the gap between the local people and professionals.
5.Participation for material incentive	People participate in work for food arrangements; They may also participate for the cash or other material incentives. The activities and the participation stop when the material incentives stop. This type of participation is not voluntary but people attracted by incentive given to them. The people themselves do not own the development processes under this type.
6.Functional participation	Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined project objectives.
7.Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and formation or strengthening of local group, or institution that determine how available resources are used. Learning methods used to seek multiple viewpoints. This type is the best, because it regards local people as potential and equal partner in development processes. This type of participation creates the sense of ownership of the development project by the community.
8.Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiative independent of external institutions. They develop contact with external institutions for resources and technical advice but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Based on Pretty, (1995, p. 61).

2.3 The Origin of Community Participation in Decision Making Processes

The history of CBNRM goes back to early African agrarian development, starting from the traditional forms of forest management that were practiced by tribal communities for millennia, prior to colonial administration. At this time resource governance was the main traditional community management systems in Africa. Indigenous resource management systems reflected the way communities organized their lives, within the constraints of the environment in which they lived (Ordera, 2009).

CBNRM as a structural concept has crystallized in the past three decades as an effective approach for the management of tree and forest resources (Ordera, 2009). Experiences from various countries have shown that when communities are empowered with responsibility and legally secured rights for the management of forest resources, and acquire benefits from them, the rate of degradation is substantially reduced and in many cases the forest cover improves visibly (Wily, 2002). Community-based forest management (CBFM) has gained a foothold in virtually all countries in the continent through these rather informal footsteps.

Available country case studies (Wily 2002; Kajembeet *al.*, 2003) show that, CBFM had been initiated or implemented in over 35 countries in Africa by 2002. By 1999 only about 20 countries were practicing some form of CBFM system and had developed policies and legal instruments (FAO, 1999). Wily (2002) further states that at country levels, by 2002, the process had stretched to more than 100 projects; 5000 communities participated in more than 100 national forests, and 1000 protected areas. This indicates a rapid rate of spread of the process, despite lack of states' active support. In wildlife management, increasing poaching pressure and shrinking habitats and economies in African countries have led to a growing consensus among conservationists and international conservation organizations that the American National Park model, commonly referred to as the fences-and-fines approach, has failed to protect wildlife on that continent (Songorwa, 1999).

As a result, since the late 1970s and early 1980s, conservationists and policy makers have been searching for viable and sustainable alternatives or a "lasting solution" (Songorwa, 1999). The most appealing alternative for the conservationists and other authorities was to retrace their own footsteps and go to rural communities, their perceived "enemies" and ask for forgiveness and

promise cooperation, partnership and equitable distribution of wildlife costs and benefits (IIED 1994). This led to the birth of local community participation. The fundamental principle behind this is that the local communities have been left out from resources they should rightfully control, manage and benefit from.

2.3 Community Participation in Planning and Financing for resource Management

According to Wily and Monela (1999) the common constructs of CBFM in Africa ranges from full community ownership over forests to small organized forest-user groups and top-down community structures imposed on traditional user groups by intervention agencies (NGOs or government). Communities in southern Africa, Malawi and Tanzania are involved in industrial plantation programs under “out-grower” contract programs (Wily,2002); addressing forest degradation and selling of forest products in Botswana (Mogaka *et al.*, 2001); Mozambique (Mansur and Cuco, 2002); Niger and Mali (Fries and Heemans, 1992). Malawi has articulated supportive forest policies and a forest act that specify community rights and mechanisms for achieving CBFM. Uganda, Lesotho and Namibia are also developing along the same lines (Wily,2002). In Mozambique, CBFM is applied in forests where local people are involved in or are affected by resource use (Mansur and Cuco, 2002). In Madagascar, a range of programs promote state-people agreements that transfer power to communities for the first three years followed by a 10-year term (Ordera, 2009).

In Zimbabwe the development of Community Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and its implementation were guided by a loose consortium of governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and university departments known as the CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group (CCG) (Mapedza and Bond, 2006). The communities were not involved in the planning and budgeting of the program. The case of the Tanzania’s pioneering community-based forest resources management (CBFRM) is best understood when looked at against the background of the country's village administrative structure, the new forest policy and legislation, the land policy and law (MNRT, 1998).

However, as much as the local population was heavily involved in implementation, they were not involved in planning and budgeting. Using the IIED typology, all African countries which were identified in this review fit into categories 1) Passive participation; 3) Participation by consultation and Functional participation. These categories identify limited participation or none by communities in local decision-making through planning and budgeting.

2.4 Involving communities in local decision-making

As noted by Alexander and McGregor (2000) in the 1990s when CAMPFIRE was being introduced in Zimbabwe, at times it was challenged with violent resistance by communities who felt disenfranchised in the whole process. The communities in the CAMPFIRE locations did not participate in the formulation process of the project and therefore did not understand it nor saw its benefits. This ultimately led to conflicts between the project managers who had good intentions and the communities who on paper were the beneficiaries of the proposed projects. The communities in Tanzania and Mozambique were also not involved in the formulation of policies for the management of natural resources in their environment. This means there is very limited sense of ownership of the projects by the communities who constitute the major group in the projects (Chilenge *et al.*, 2013).

Today, the need to involve communities and other actors, such as NGOs and the private sector, as partners in sustainable natural resources management programs has been highlighted. New policies, legislation and regulations in favor of CBNRM have either been enacted or still in the making. According to FAO (2003) experiences from many countries have showed that CBNRM in the past decade has proved itself to be an effective approach to sustainable natural resources management. CBFM projects that have been implemented have paved the way for policies and laws that have in turn embedded the practice in the national forest development agenda. In this regard, the policy and legislation development have benefited immensely from the experiences of the pioneering pilot village community trials (Chilenge *et al.*, 2013).

It has been demonstrated that when communities are empowered with responsibilities and rights for the management, and receive benefits from them, they come to recognize the importance of sustainable natural resources management and respect forest management rules.

It is important that governments of developing countries involve communities in participatory planning and budgeting in local decisions. This can be achieved through involving the communities in local policy formulation which can be adopted at national level thus guaranteeing a bottom-up approach in governance and management. Policy formulation can integrate the communities through granting them veto power in voting for programs, projects and activities. The communities should also be awarded the opportunity to formulate their own ideas which will be supported financially and technically by the government, NGOs and other institutions. This will increase community ownership of resources and processes thereby encouraging sustainable utilization of natural resources (Chilenge et al., 2013).

2.5 Community participation and natural resource conservation in Ethiopia

Awimbo *et al.* (2004) in their broad review of community participation and natural resource conservation in the IGAD region state including Ethiopia they recommended that special effort needed to be made to enhance the decentralization process, which should focus on the empowerment of communities, and in the creation of an appropriate environment for the needs of community-based natural resources management requirements. This needs to be reflected in the policies and regulations, as well as the institutions responsible. The implementation of a policy of decentralized natural resources management requires the establishment of decentralized structures, and capacity building interventions at regional, zonal, district and community levels.” (Awimbo *et al.* 2004)

Demeke and Ashok (2013) in their study on ecotourism for environmental conservation and community livelihoods, in the case of the Bale Mountain National Park found out that people engagement in conservation activities involved activities such as fire protection, wildlife and forest protection in the national park, helping to provide information about illegal activities noticed in the park, and involvement in ecotourism associations of the park. The communities were also involved with the work of park boundary demarcation and fence construction around homesteads to protect crops of local people from wildlife damage.

2.6 Role of communities in community based natural resource management

A case study realized in Tanzania, on areas where joint forest management (JFM) was practiced, the right holder (owner of the resources) was the government and the local communities were duty bearers and in the course of the management process they tended to have their share of benefits and costs. JFM represented a fundamental shift in forest management methods and conceptually envisages a movement from centralized to decentralized management (Kajembe and Kessy, 2000, as cited in Chilenge et al., 2013). In areas where CBFM was applied, the resources belong to the communities and governments only acts as facilitators sending in experts and materials.

WTO envisaged that the livelihood of poor people (local people) and their environments are the major focuses that need sustainable tourism or ecotourism it recognizes the ecological, social and economic aspects of the environment (WTO, 2002). Under CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, the natural resources belong to the Department of Wildlife and Natural Resources and the local communities work to conserve the resources so as to gain some material benefits (Hughes, 2001, Chilenge *et al.*, 2013). In Mozambique the communities own the natural resources and are actively involved in the protection of the forests by setting up fire-guards and limiting the harvest of the forest resources (Mansur and Cuco, 2002 as cited in Chilenge *et al.*, 2013). It was realized that in the implementation of the different programs the communities were involved in all the activities. However, the local communities were not part of the decision-making processes in the formulation stages where there is planning and budgeting (Chilenge *et al.*, (2013).

In the views of Chilenge *et al.* (2013) the results clearly demonstrate that communities already play a crucial role in the implementation of programs, projects and activities. It is the local communities who supply labor and local materials for the projects and at times local knowledge is priceless for the management of natural resources. There is need to actively involve the communities in the decision-making processes from policy formulation through to implementation and even during evaluation. In the developing countries that were identified by Chilenge *et al.*, (2013), the communities were only involved in the implementation of the programs. This led to deliberate negligence of the programs by the local communities and ultimately to failure. Also dependence on donor funds and resources for projects was established to be problematic. In Zimbabwe loss of NGO support that followed the end of donor funding had

severe negative effects on outcomes (Mashinya and Balint, 2007 as cited in Chilenge *et al.*, 2013 p. 14).

Because of too much dependence on donor resources while ignoring the potential of the local communities to provide and sustain their own projects, failure becomes inevitable. Thus the participatory role of communities in planning and budgeting will enable stakeholders to identify resources among communities, which can be used in programs, projects and activities reducing their dependence on donors. Empowering the local communities through sustainable allocation, management and exploitation of resources are key elements of poverty alleviation (Chilenge *et al.*, 2013) and to sustainable management of natural resources.

2.7 Community Participation (CP) in Sustainable Tourism Development

According to Tosun (2005) “community participation is a categorical term that legitimizes various forms (direct, indirect, active, passive, etc.) of participation at different levels (local, regional, and national) under specific circumstances”. CP has been adopted as a strategy to improve development and conservation projects (Pearl *et al.*, 1996; Lee, A.K.-Y., 2016). Through CP, tourism development incorporates the opinions of the local community, which can help to fulfill their expectations. The local community will be more supportive of tourism development if they have a chance to participate in the planning and development process and to help create a more democratic community. However, a lack of interest in or knowledge of tourism development can be a major barrier to the success of CP in rural areas (Mak, 2012).

A ladder of citizen participation proposed by Arnstein (1969) addresses the degree of power distribution in terms of a typology of citizen participation that includes eight rungs (manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control) that are further categorized into top, middle, and bottom levels of participation (Figure 1). The bottom rungs of the ladder, (1) manipulation and (2) therapy, represent levels of non-participation because the authority holds the real power to avoid allowing local community participation in decision-making about development. The middle rungs of the ladder, (3) informing, (4) consultation, and (5) placation, describe levels of tokenism that allow the local community to know and offer opinions on projects. It is not ensured that their views will be

taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The top rungs of the ladder are (6) partnership, (7) delegated power, and (8) citizen control.

Real participation begins where negotiation between various stakeholders is included and the local community takes up part of the responsibility for decision-making. At levels 7 and 8, participants' views have been taken into consideration in the decision-making arena, and they are empowered to development Arnstein (1969). Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (ALCP) has been adopted by tourism scholars to understand both the nature of the participation expected of the community and the community's actual participation in tourism development.

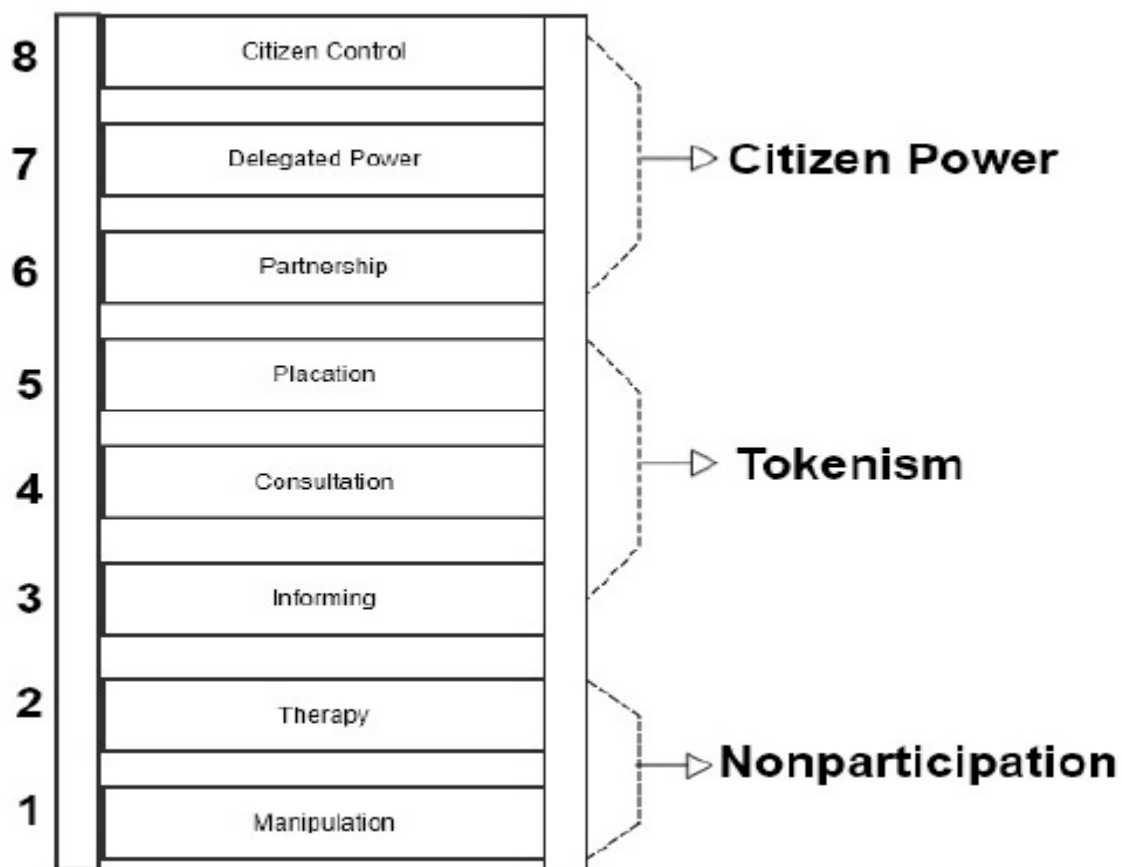


Figure 1. Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation (ALCP)

Source: Adapted from Bonnie et al. (2017)

2.8 Ecosystem services as a benefit of protected areas

Ecosystems provide a range of benefits to all people, including the benefits of provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. (2005)³.The protected areas include lakes, parks, and others. These areas consist a variety of rich ecosystems that provide a different range of services to the local population and to Ethiopia as a whole. The number of services benefitted from the protected areas' ecosystems differs from area to area and may be related to the following classification (See Table on next page).

³ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis. Island Press: Washington. DC, USA.

Table 2. Types and descriptions of ecosystem services

Ecosystem service	Type	Description
<i>Provisioning Services</i>		
1. Food production	Stock-flow	Production of crops, meat, fish, fruits by subsistence farming, hunting, gathering, fishing
2. Raw materials	Stock-flow	Production of lumber, fuels, fiber, fodder, and other raw materials
3. Water supply	Fund-service	Provisioning of water by watersheds, aquifers, and springs for use and retention
4. Pollination	Fund-service	Provisioning of pollinators that support movement of floral gametes and the reproduction of plant species
5. Refugia and habitat	Fund-service	Provisioning of habitat for resident and migratory populations
6. Genetic resources	Fund-service	Provisioning of unique biological materials that provide medicines, resistance to plant pathogens
<i>Regulating Services</i>		
7. Gas regulation	Fund-service	Regulation of atmospheric chemicals (e.g., CO ₂ /O ₂ balance, O ₃ and SO _x levels)
8. Climate regulation	Fund-service	Regulation of global temperature and precipitation by greenhouse gas regulation, evapotranspiration
9. Disturbance regulation	Fund-service	Capacitance, integrity and resilience to storms, flooding, drought and other environmental variability
10. Water regulation	Fund-service	Regulation of hydrological flows that provide water for irrigation, transportation, and industrial processes
11. Waste absorption	Fund-service	Treatment of organic waste, recovery of mobile nutrients, breakdown of excess compounds
12. Biological control	Fund-service	Regulation of biological population through predator control of prey species, including pests
<i>Supporting Services</i>		
13. Erosion control	Fund-service	Retention of soil, prevention of loss by wind, runoff, and siltation
14. Soil formation	Fund-service	Accumulation of organic matter and weathering of rock in soil formation processes
15. Nutrient cycling	Fund-service	Processing and acquisition of nutrients through nitrogen fixation, assimilation of decayed matter
<i>Cultural Services</i>		
16. Recreation	Fund-service	Provisioning of resources that support recreational activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, swimming
17. Cultural	Fund-service	Provisioning of resources that support artistic, educational, or spiritual uses and values of ecosystems

Source: Adapted from Richardson (2010)

2.9 The Ethiopian Protected Area System, their recognized benefits and the policy framework at work

Ethiopia's Protected Area System is larger than the global average, covering 14% of its landmass. The recently created Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) is managing 13 National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Reserves and regulates as well as administers wildlife utilization in the entire country. Other protected areas, including a number of National Parks, Forest Priority Areas and Controlled Hunting Areas, are managed by various regional authorities in the nine states of the federation (Lakew and Ludwig,2008).

In Ethiopia protected areas comprise National Parks, Wildlife Reserves and Sanctuaries, Forestry Priority Areas and Controlled Hunting Areas, forming the cornerstones of the national conservation strategy. As such, they are an integral part of sustainable development for Ethiopia in providing protection to centerpieces of wider landscapes and watersheds as source of important ecosystem services. They act as refuges for species and ecological processes that cannot survive in intensely managed landscapes. Although protected areas were often created primarily to conserve biodiversity, they also provide other essential benefits for local communities as well as the national economy at large. Protected areas provide many resources that can be used to provide direct gains, subsistence resources or less tangible benefits such as climate change mitigation and erosion control. Benefits provided by protected areas can be divided into four categories:

- Providing livelihoods services to local communities (e.g. grazing resources, forest products, fish resources, wild food products, etc.)
- Supporting human life (e.g. potable water and clean air, providing water for electricity production and irrigation)
- Regulating other important ecosystem functions and services (e.g. Mountain forests regulating downstream water flows, carbon sequestration, natural disaster mitigation)
- Having cultural significance and providing opportunities for recreation (e.g. Sacred sites, ecotourism and trophy hunting)

As to the policy framework in place regarding the relationship between protected areas and the local community, many authors have decried it as unworkable and unsustainable. Flower (2011) says “...expressed concern at the incongruity between the status of people living within the park and Ethiopian federal regulations for National Parks, which, in accordance with IUCN Category II, stipulate the exclusion of any occupation or resource use that go against protected area goals of ecosystem protection (IUCN 1994). Ethiopia’s exclusionary policy for national parks has been indicated as a major source of conflict between communities living in/around the park and authorities responsible for conserving park ecosystems and biodiversity”

Table 3. List of protected areas of Ethiopia

National parks of Ethiopia	Wildlife sanctuaries of Ethiopia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Abijatta-Shalla National Park</u> • <u>Awash National Park</u> • <u>Bale Mountains National Park</u> • <u>Chebera Churchura National Park</u> • <u>Gambela National Park</u> • <u>Kafta Sheraro National Park</u> • <u>Mago National Park</u> • <u>Maze National Park</u> • <u>Nechisar National Park</u> • <u>Omo National Park</u> • <u>Simien Mountains National Park</u> • <u>Yangudi Rassa National Park</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Didessa Wildlife Sanctuary</u> • <u>Harar Wildlife Sanctuary</u> • <u>Kuni-Muktar Mountain Nyala Sanctuary</u> • <u>Senkelle Swayne’s Hartebeest Sanctuary</u> • <u>Stephanie Wildlife Sanctuary</u> • <u>Yabelo Wildlife Sanctuary</u>

Source: Adapted from Lakew and Ludwig(2008)

2.8 Conceptual Framework for the Study

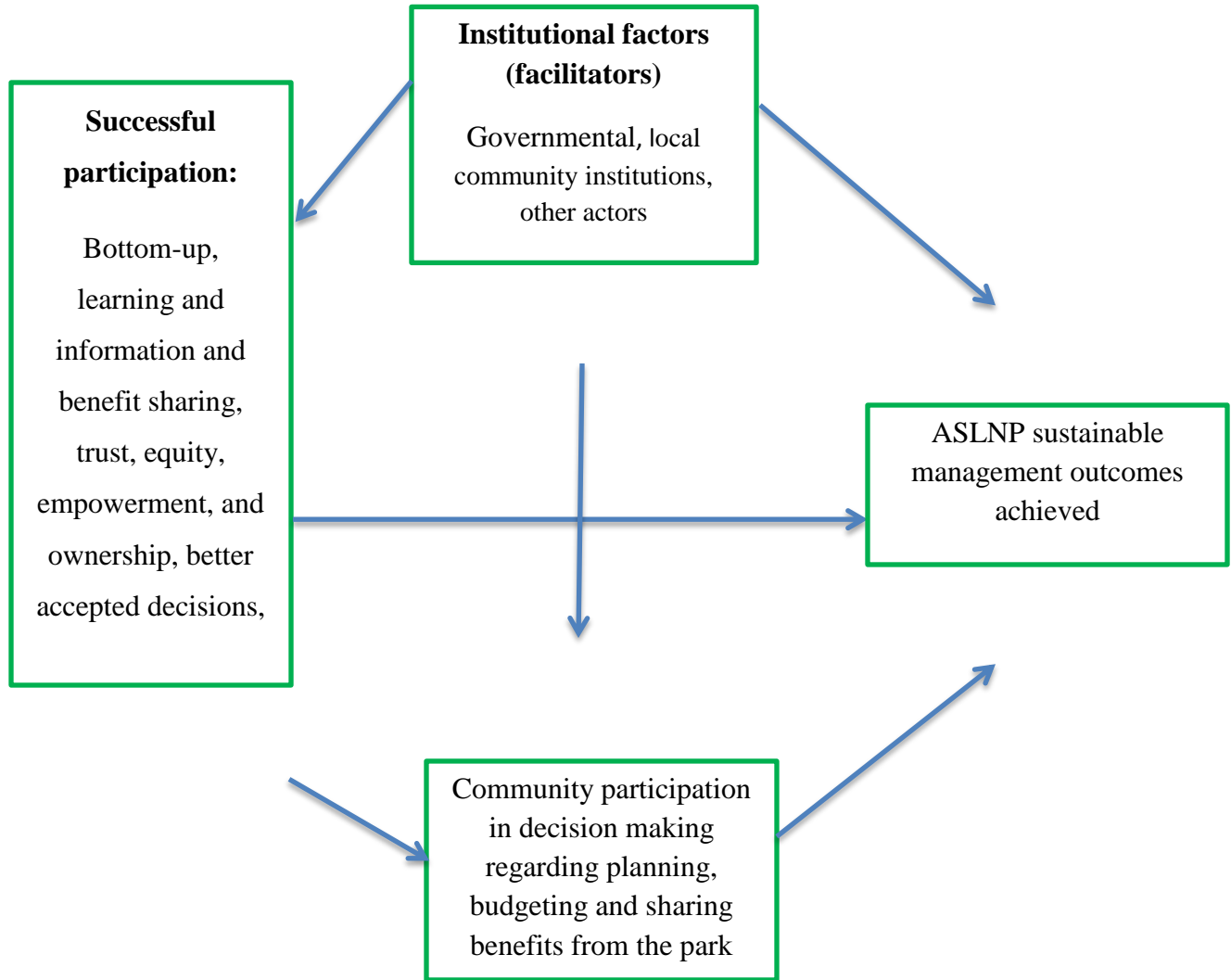


Figure 2. Analytical Framework for the study

Source: Author, 2017

2.10. Ethiopian Tourism Policy Review on Community Involvement in National Parks

The Ethiopian natural resources, tourism and national park theoretical underpinnings are sparse at best and non-existent in some cases. The policy framework that is supposed to guide what happens to the future of these resources and institutions is fragmented among various literatures prepared by the many stakeholders like the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and Ethiopian Tourism Organization. Among the many policy documents prepared by these bodies, the most recent and the one that carries more weight among the various stakeholders is the “Sustainable Tourism Master Plan”. This master plan was prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in 2015.

According to the tourism master plan “nature-based tourism is seen in the country as an avenue through which the prevailing tourism product, which is predominantly cultural and heritage-based, could be diversified. It is worth noting that as the prefix suggests, nature-based tourism products rely heavily on the natural environment and, consequently, its sustainability and/or conservation is of critical importance to the long-term development of the industry.” (MoCT, 2015) In the same paragraph is a bleak assessment of the state of the nation’s natural resources.

While Ethiopia is endowed with ample natural resources as compared to neighboring countries that rely heavily on nature-based tourism, it is assessed that the country ranks very low on environmental sustainability. The main reasons that this assessment was made are “...stringency of environmental regulation; enforcement of environmental regulation; sustainability of the travel and tourism industry (mainly to do with prevailing policies to ensure that, for example, nature-based tourism is developed in a sustainable manner); percentage of threatened species; and environmental treaty ratification.” (MoCT, 2015)

To guide the actions of the various stakeholders, the master plan is organized into 10 actionable ‘pillars’. Out of these pillars, about 3 affect the communities’ living in and around tourism attractions directly. The pillar dealing with “Investment in Tourism Facilities and Services” doesn’t mention the local communities’ with respect to founding, running and investing in the said facilities and services.

That such an omission exists in the most important document for the development of the Ethiopian tourism sector makes it very difficult for the stakeholders to help the local community benefit from any tourism related commerce.

Another pillar of the master plan is called “Human Resource Development”. This pillar deals with ways to solve the human resource shortage in the tourism sector and make the professionals competitive. Here too, there is no mention of members of the local communities’ living in and around tourism attractions with respect to recruiting them into the sector.

A pillar titled “Conservation and Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources” mentions local communities in and around the park saying “Many of the wildlife protected areas and cultural heritages do not have any legal boundary demarcated by the law of the country. Therefore, there is a need to designate and demarcate the resources with involvement of local authorities and communities.” (MoCT, 2015) It also talks about the need to build community awareness “Apart from the moral and ethical imperatives to protect rare and fragile resources, host communities will be made aware of their economic and amenity value both locally and to the nation at large through the development of carefully planned and sensitive tourism activity. To achieve this, continuous awareness programme will be implemented.” (MoCT, 2015) This, of course, provides a clear indication as to the recognition of the role of local communities’ in protecting natural resources.

This review, while focusing on a single document shows just how little space local communities’ decision making is given in the sustainable management of tourism attractions including natural resources like ASLNP. That this master plan is the most important document in the development of tourism whether it is natural-based or not means that its omissions are going to be felt practically in the non-adequate support any initiatives to involve communities in the decision making process will get.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Description of the Study area

ASLNP is located at 7° 30' N; 38° 30' in the Central Rift Valley of Ethiopia, some 200 km South of Addis Ababa, with an altitudinal range of 1540 to 2075 m.a.s.l. Abijata-Shalla Lakes National Park is located in the East Showa and West Arsi zones of Oromia National Regional State at about 207 km South East of Addis Ababa.. It was established in 1974. The park area covers three districts; Arsi Negele (North East and South), Shalla (South West), and Adami Tullu Jido Kombolcha (North). It covers an area of about 887 km² of which 405 km² is land and 482 km² is water body (Feyera and Fekadu, 2000).

ASLNP comprises two types of ecosystems: aquatic (482 km²) and terrestrial (405 km²) ecosystems covering a surface area of 887 km². The climate of the study area can be described as semi-arid for most of the year, with the rainy season between June and September and the dry season from October to February and the small rainy season in between. ASLNP receives an annual rainfall ranging between 500 and 700 mm with mean annual temperature of 20°C (Alemayehu *et al.*, 2006).

The area is one of the most scenically beautiful spots of Ethiopia, possessing blue lakes fringed with flat-topped *Acacia* trees and alive with a spectacular wealth of bird life. According to Tefera *et al.* (2002) a total of 453 bird's species have been recorded in the Park and 6 are endemic to Ethiopia. Flamingos are the most prominent and important consumer in the lakes. The climate of the area is semi-arid with two distinct rainy seasons, short rains in March to May and long rain during June to September. The average mean annual rainfall in the area is about 500 mm to 700 mm (Legesse *et al.*, 2002).

Table 4. physical attributes of ASLNP

Attribute		Reference
Total Area	887 km ²	(Hillman 1993)
Land Area	405 km ²	(Hillman 1993)
Water Area	482 km ²	(Hillman 1993)
Altitude Range	1540-2075 m asl	(Hillman 1993)
Air Temperature	5°C –16-45°C	(Hillman 1993)
Range (min–max)		
Vegetation Types	Acacia-euphorbia woodland	(Hillman 1993)
Agro-climactic Zone	Woina Dega	(EWNHS 1996)
Ecological Zone	Rift Valley	(Hillman 1993)
Climate Zone	Upper Kolla or semi-desert (moisture index between 45-52)	(Hillman 1993; Tefera & Almaw 2002; Wako 2009)
Soil type	Light, sandy loams of either volcanic or alluvial origin—highly susceptible to wind and water erosion and, thus, loss of fertility	(Debushe & Itana 2010)
Exceptional Physical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All lakes are terminal ▪ Scenic isthmus between lakes, including Mt. Fike ▪ Hot springs at L. Shalla and L. Chitu believed to have curative properties ▪ Lava caves ▪ Cliffs ▪ Four L. Shalla islands used as breeding sites for important bird species ▪ Volcanic plugs (Fisher’s Tower), calderas/cones ▪ Steam vents and geysers 	(Debushe & Itana 2010; EWNHS 1996; Hillman 1993; Tefera & Almaw 2002)

Source:based on Reaugh-Flower(2011)

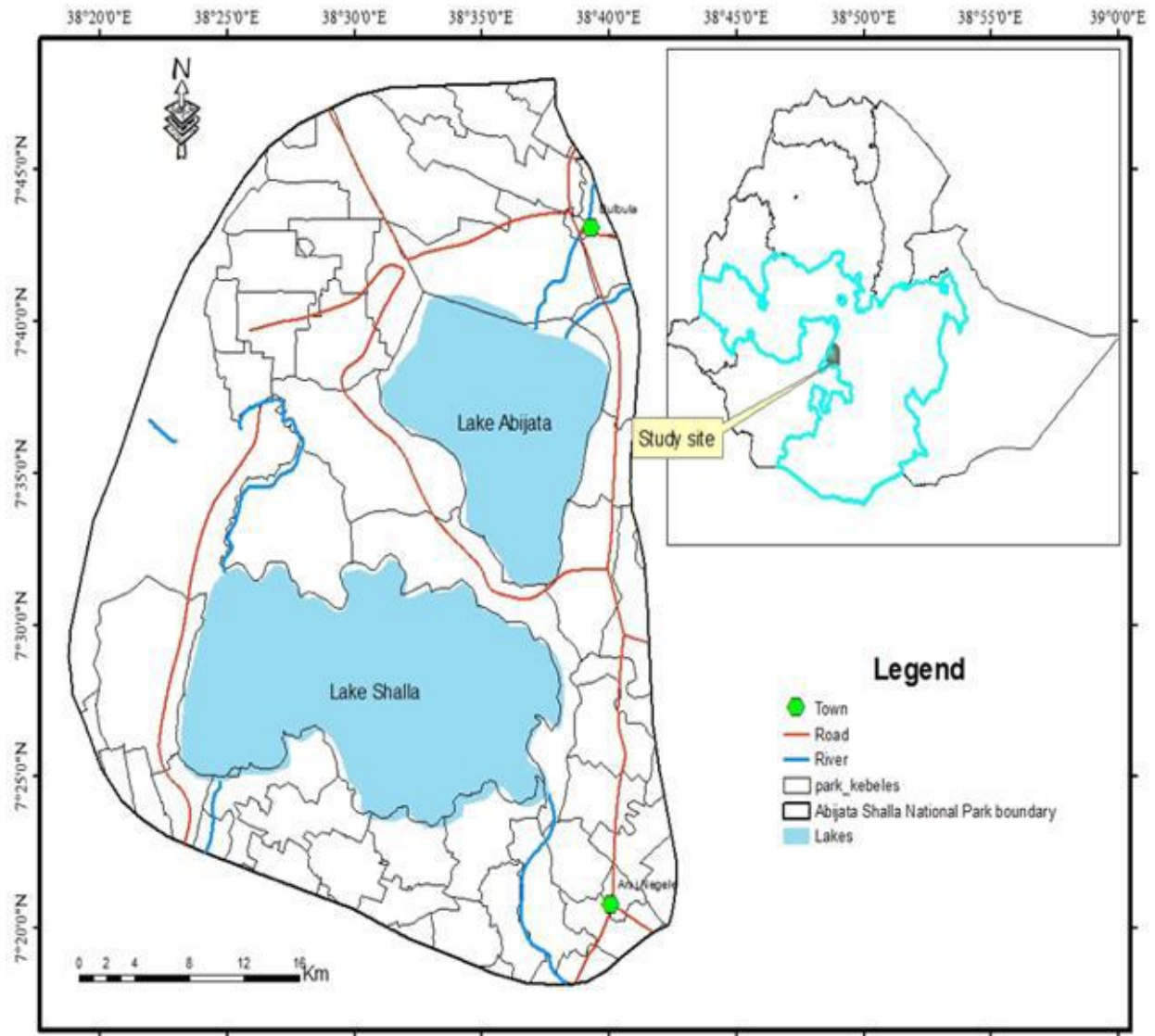


Figure 3. Map of the study area

Source: GIS data 2018

3.1.1. Socio-demographic situation of ASLNP

In terms of human population size, 31,545 settlers lived in Arsi Negele, 7246 people from Shalla, and 4684 from Adami Tulu. This is based on archives from District Agricultural Offices of Arsi Negele, Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha, and Shalla, (2010). According to feyera and fekadu (2001) over the last three decades, the livestock population inside the park has increased from 30,410 in 1971 to 202,644 in 2010.

a) Settlement expansion and natural resource management problems in ASLNP

According to the District's Agricultural Office⁴ (2010) the population density of the settlers in the park is 19 people per km². Population pressure during the last three decades has resulted in the conversion of natural vegetation, due to overgrazing of natural grasslands, removal of natural shrub for firewood, and clearing of forests for construction material. As a consequence of these changes in land cover, vulnerable sloping areas in the area face increased erosion and depletion of nutrients required for vegetative growth (Ayenew, 2004).

b) Environmental implications of changes in the levels of lakes in the Ethiopian Rift since 1970.

About 50% (436) of the bird species in Ethiopia have been recorded from the study area due to the proximity of numerous and diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats in the area (EWNHS, 2002). Livestock-based Agro-pastoralism is central to the livelihoods of many rural households around the Rift Valley even though it is progressively replaced by subsistence agriculture. According to Tafesse (2008) greater dependence of residents on resources from the park to generate their livelihoods, which can be regarded as direct economic benefits, and state objectives in protecting the park as conservation area has increased instability and conflict in the area.

⁴ Arsi-Negele Agricultural Statistical Data. Office Archive.

Figure 4. Soil degradation within the park



Source: Arsi-Negele Agricultural Statistical Data. Office Archive.

Land use and land cover (LULC) dynamics have been among the most important visible changes that have taken place everywhere in the Ethiopian landscape. Such changes are severely affecting ecosystem health including degradation of nature reserves and wild animal sanctuaries. One such nature reserve in Ethiopia is the Abijata-Shala National Park (ASNLP). The Abijata Shala national park area is very much threatened by overgrazing and deforestation for fuel wood production and illegal settlements and ethnic conflict (Temesgen *et al.*, 2013). The population density of the settlers in the park is 19 people per km² that are spontaneously migrated from densely populated highlands that surround the rift valley lakes region.

Figure 5. Acacia tree cut down for charcoal production at Shalla Billa Kebele



Official statistics indicate that migrants originated from Arsi Negele district (31,545 people) Shalla district (7,246 people) and Adami Tulu district (4,684 people), quite often resulting in conflict among different groups. Over the last three decades, it is not only the human population that has increased but also the livestock population inside the park, which has gone from 30,410 in 1971 to 202,644 in 2010 (Reaugh-Flower, 2016).

c) Local government

The Arsi Negelle Woreda ARD office is located in Arsi Negelle town, which is 15 km from ASLNP. The Woreda has several divisions grouped into teams. The Natural resource protection team is responsible for protection and conservation of natural resources in the Woreda. Protection is done through raising environmental awareness about the natural resources and their importance related to the provision of environmental services, including fertility of land for agriculture to local people through education. This activity also extends to controlling illegal natural resource utilization such as extraction of sand, charcoal production and others. On the other hand, conservation measure is through plantation of seedlings to their surrounding environment advised and guided by the Development Agents in each Kebele (Arsi Negelle ARD, 2017).

d) Identification of Ecosystem Services of the Park

The most important ecosystem services local people obtained from the park include: Food products (fruits, crop), water, raw materials (construction wood, charcoal wood, fuel wood, Agricultural tool and household furniture making wood, thatching grass and animal fodder (from grazing land) and medicinal resources. Households from kebeles inside and inside/outside the Park are mainly dependent on the Park for the provisioning of services such as food, water and raw materials for their livelihood. These local people use the services almost equally as they do not have alternative means to depend on for their needs including a source of cash income. So, it seems that the local people from kebeles inside/outside the Park are the ones engaged in the production of charcoal in the park.

Figure:



Figure 6: Farmland with crops within the acacia woodland inside the Park



Figure 7. Grazing land established within the park by local communities

3.2 Research design

The main objective of this study is to assess the community participation in the decision-making process for ASLNP management. A qualitative method was used to generate relevant data. This approach was chosen because the study sought to investigate community participation in tourism and conservation of the ASLNP resources.

To find answers to the specific questions of this study a qualitative research method was conducted on Arsi-Negelle woreda (3) kebeles and Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha (1) Keble. To understand community participation in decision making process regarding the management of ASLNP. Relevant information was collected from different groups of people living in the study area. Out of 50 people contacted for interviews, only 32 participants provided adequate responses. The respondents were 8 people who participated in a focus group discussion in one of the kebele of the study area. Due to the difficulty of gathering people for focus group discussions, the researcher opted for in depth interviews and involved a total of 24 key informants. It was intended that data on the community perceptions about ASLNP resources management would be gathered mainly through focus groups with women, men, elders, and

youth groups. Unfortunately, only one FGD was possible because of the security situation in rural Ethiopia during the period of data collection.

So, this research is based on reflections of 24 key informants who were interviewed. These people include 4 communities' elders, 2 park wardens, 1 lodge owners, 2 park rangers and 4 tour guides, 4 governmental officials, we also included 4 young local residents and 4 women living in the study area and 1 representative of an organization involved in the management of the park.

3.2.1 Data sources

This study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data were community elders, community representatives, park officials and managers, lodge owners, government representatives and NGOs participated in conservation activities. In addition, the secondary sources such as the books, published and unpublished materials and annuals were examined.

3.2.2 Target Population

The target population of this study consisted of people living in villages adjacent to the ASLNP. The villages were under 3 woredas namely Arsi-Negelle (pop. 260,129^[1]) (with 8 kebeles), Adami Tullu-Jiddo Kombolcha (pop. 20,923^[1]) (with 3 kebeles) and Shalla (pop. 149,804^[1]) (with 7 kebeles). The main criterion to select a given community was based on the size of the community residents, and on how the residents' livelihoods activities were dependent on park resources. However, due to both time and financial constraints only communities living in 3 kebeles from Arsi-Negelle woreda and 1 kebele from Adami-Tulu Jido-Kombolcha were selected. The kebeles under Arsi-Negelle Woreda are Shala Bila (pop. 4,654), Muda Arja (pop. 5876) and Balena Kilo (pop. 3002) and that under Adami-Tulu Jido-Kombolcha is Desta Abijata (pop. 6023). These kebeles were chosen due to their representative nature in the kinds of economic activities they have, including sand extraction, charcoal making, above average tourist flow and Bole Salt Stone and mineral salt extraction. To understand community participation in decision making process regarding conservation of ASLNP relevant information was collected from different groups of people. A total of 50 people were involved in the research. One FGDs (of 6-8 participants) were conducted and at 8 key informants interviews were conducted. The

data on the community side were collected through focus groups with women, men, elders, and youth groups. On the other hands key informants interviews were conducted with communities' elders, park wardens, lodge owners, park rangers and tour guides, governmental officials, and other relevant stakeholders involved in the management of the park.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Three types of instruments of data collection were used. Using multiple instruments of data collection was used as a strategy to overcome the shortcomings of each instruments of data collection. In relation with this issue Master and Kalton (1972 p. 126) stated that “using different instruments of data collection provide a powerful research strategy for study.” This indicates that using various tools of data collection is a powerful research technique, as it allows minimizing the shortcoming of each tool in the study.

3.4.1 Interview

Interviews were conducted using prepared list of questions as interview guide. Community representatives, park wardens, tour guides, park lodge owners, and government officials were contacted. In-depth interview were conducted with different individuals so that they can be able to forward their ideas, opinions feelings and knowledge regarding the challenges and the possibilities for developing community participation in decision making regarding conservation of ASNLP resources and on the existing form of community participation.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions were conducted with community elders, youth, women, and religious leader. The issues discussed included the current challenges faced to participate in decision making process, as well as the favorable conditions, according to their views as to how they think community participation in decision making can be improved, so as to increase ownership and hence to ensure ASLNP resources sustainable management.

3.4.3 Field observation

The researcher also used note-taking technique to record details observed on the field in a prepared field diary. She also used a camera to capture important information and phenomena.

Observation was the main instrument of data collection to use especially during park visit in order to observe the condition of biodiversity, the visitors, guides, tourism facilities, management of tourism related activities, attitudes and feedbacks of different local peoples, environmental consciousness and lifestyle of the local people, etc.

3.5 Data analysis

The primary data used in this study were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted at community level. Following the completion of data collection, data transcription was performed. It involved translation of the information, which was collected in Afaan Oromo to English. Secondly, data from different key informants and from respective study sites were categorized according to the research questions and analyzed descriptively to reflect on the situation surrounding the practices of community participation in decision making for ASNLP management. The analysis followed mostly thematic analysis and narratives techniques to summarize important stories. In addition data collected through observation are presented in forms of photos with a brief description on their bottom.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretations of the collected information from different sources. To this end, qualitative information was collected on different topics. Those include the extent of local communities involvement in decision making process, the challenges and opportunities available for better involving local community in the decision making process for the management of the ASLNP resources.

4.1. Background characteristics of respondents

This study involved individuals with diversified socio-demographic conditions, to gather relevant information on community participation on ASLNP resources management. These individuals were chosen because of three reasons: 1) Representatives of groups 2) Exposure to the subject under investigation and 3) willingness to participate in the investigation. It turned out that 65.6% participants (N=32) were male, more than 28.1% were in the age of more than 26 years, 25% were illiterate and 53.1% were involved in agricultural and livestock farming activities. This shows that the study area is mainly dwelled by farmers whose dependency over natural resources is very significant and hence might raise critical issues relevant for the understanding of the subject under study.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

The table below illustrates the most relevant data about the respondents for this research. From the table it is possible to see that the group is a bit biased in favor of literate people. There are also a larger number of males than females. But overall, the table is more or less representative of the population group under study.

No	Demographic Characteristics of Participants		Frequency	Percentage
1	Sex	Male	21	65.6%
		Female	11	34.4%
2	Age	18-25	4	12.5%
		26-30	8	25%
		31-35	7	21.8%
		36-40	7	21.8%
		>40	6	18.8%
3	Education Level	Illiterate	8	25%
		Primary	10	31.3%
		High school	7	21.8%
		Bachelor	6	18.8%
		Post graduate	1	0.3%
4	Occupation	Agriculture & livestock	17	53.1%
		Government	4	12.5%
		NGOs	2	0.62%
		Other off-farm activities	9	28.1%

Source: Sample Survey, May 2018

4.2 The Local Communities' Involvement in Decision Making Process for Sustainable Management of ASLNP

According to Reaugh-Flower (2011) based on the proposed list of ecosystem services and following an extensive review of relevant literature and Ethiopia's legal definition of a national park, the following emerged as top-priority park management objectives: ASLNP, as a proposed national park, must adhere to the criteria established by law. In Ethiopia, a National Park is defined as "an area designated to conserve wildlife and associated natural resources to preserve the scenic and scientific value of the area which may include lakes and other aquatic areas" (GoE 2007). Towards this end, the appropriate Ministry is required to "ensure that wildlife conservation areas... meet international standards with a view to facilitating their registration by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature [IUCN]" (GoE,2007).

IUCN standards for a Category II Protected Area ("National Park") state that it is a "protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. [Specifically, a] Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible" (IUCN, 1994).

- Protect wildlife, biodiversity (at species and genetic levels), natural resources and ecosystem
- Processes within the park, with special emphasis on resident birds and mammals;
- Minimize impacts of resident human, livestock and dog populations in the park and buffer area;
- Preserve the scenic and scientific value of the area;
- Provide high-quality habitat for Palearctic and African migrant birds as they transient through the Rift Valley corridor;
- Provide high-value tourism opportunities for Ethiopian and international visitors;
- Reduce poverty through the provision of new and robust economic opportunities for communities near the park; and

- Increase revenue for EWCA to manage the park and expand conservation activities across Ethiopia.

With these objectives in mind, the researcher collected relevant information, to complement data collected based on specific objectives of the study.

4.2.1 The Local Communities' Involvement during the Establishment Phase.

In the park establishment phase, the local communities are expected to be involved in and make decisions that would affect them. In 1970, when ASLNP was established mainly due to its rich bird life the local community didn't had a chance of participation. The communities in and around the park might not even have known that a park had been established there due to the fact that it took several years for any physical barriers to be set up. The local communities lived and led their livelihoods disregarding any rules that the authorities might have wanted to impose. Migrations and new settlements didn't stop and the lack of enforcement by the authorities created a park that existed on paper only.

Negligence on the part of the authorities regarding ASLNP during its establishment phase not only exposed it to further degradation of its natural resources by the increasing human and domestic animal population, but also removed any chance of creating a community based decision making process for the management of the park. Thus, we can safely conclude that any structured and planned involvement of the community in the decision making process during the establishment phase of the park was negligible. A local man succinctly explained this when he said,

We didn't know about any park back then. Nobody asked us to decide where it should be and how to protect it. Some people did come in cars and asked us where the park was and some insisted that our homes were in a park reserved only for the birds and wild animals.

4.2.2 Involvement during the Planning Phase.

The role of local community on protected area and value of wildlife is vital for local people support in conservation activities. Planning is one of the important exercises of management undertaken by park managers. During field work key informants were asked if and how local communities were engaged in planning about the resources of ASLNP.

The planning phase of the management of ASLNP couldn't have been any more participatory than its establishment phase. Rather, due to lack of, even one-sided, non-participatory, planning by successive governments, the natural resources of the park have been severely depleted. Lack of any coordinated land-use planning had already resulted in a population explosion in the park but no initiatives were taken to involve the community in any planning to protect the park from further degradation due to human encroachment. As stated above, the human factor is very important in any planning to be done concerning ASLNP management. But to date, no such plans have been proposed and there are no policy initiatives to involve the community in any such plans for the future.

Clearly, human habitation is a priority issue for ASLNP management and conservation planning. Several recent reports, as well as relevant NGOs, recommend a community based co-management approach as the best chance for successful biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in ASLNP. (Reaugh-Flower, 2011)

The results henceforth imply that many of the community members who participated in the study recognized that local communities did not participate adequately in the planning about the establishment of ASLNP. It is posited that understanding of the factors that impede on involving local communities in the planning activities, is important as this exercise has the potential to improve the relationship between local communities and park management team and can help in enhancing peoples' awareness about wildlife conservation in and around protected areas.

Therefore, investigation of the thoughts and outlook of the local communities is critical to outline the boundary of the park, to set a buffer zone, to prepare a management plan and to put down possible conservation strategies of the protected area taking into consideration local communities initiatives is crucial. This is supported by the following statements:

“Local participation is when people are given the authority to gather their own efforts to take care of their resources, make decisions and manage the activities that affect their lives” (Akitanda, 1994).

Also, Sayer (2004) recognized that community participation is a deliberate procedure of bringing together the various aspects of natural resource use into a structure of sustainable management. IIED (1999) asserts that effective local participation is an important component for sustainable management of national park, which can relate wildlife tourism to conservation and development. Whereas Domfeh (2007) is of the view that participation is an indispensable component of sustainable development in general and national park protection in particular. Furthermore, Pound (2003) asserted that community participation can help increase a common visualization of the way natural resources are supposed to be managed, build self-assurance and competence for cooperative action, recognize, develop and integrate local ideas, ways of life and principles.

4.2.3 Involvement during the Implementation and Management Phases.

It has been discussed that initiatives to involve the community in the decision making process for the management of ASLNP has been non-existent. In the implementation phase of the management scheme for ASLNP, the locals reported not having been given the chance to participate. While most of the staff is from the area in and around the park, and thus part of the local community, the way the park is implemented didn't allow for the interests of the community to be properly represented.

The community in and around the park does not view the park as theirs. The way the park is managed right now has resulted in them feeling alienated by an establishment that owns the area they view as their own. This was evident during an episode of unrest in 2017, where members of the local community burned down a few buildings used for management of the park.

4.2.4. The Importance of Communities' Participation in the Management of the ASLNP

The protection and sustainable management of parks resources in any context and in developing countries in particular cannot be achieved without the active participation of the millions of small-scale farmers and landless people who every day depend on the forests and trees for their livelihoods. It has been progressively recognized that effective local participation is an important

component for sustainable management of national park, which can relate wildlife tourism to conservation and development (IIED, 1999).

As Domfeh, (2007) posited participation has been acknowledged as an indispensable component of sustainable development in general and national park protection in particular. In theory, local people may benefit under one or two scenarios:

First of all, it links local people residing outside protected areas to tourism initiatives through benefit sharing schemes. And secondly, it creates community-based tourism initiatives on areas owned by the community members, which are officially outside protected areas. Evidence demonstrates that there is small or no incentive for local people to sustain conservation within protected areas Drake (Domfeh, 2007).

The role of local communities on protected areas and value of wildlife is vital for local people to support conservation activities. During field work one key informant who was working as a park ranger in one of the study sites revealed:

Most of the local communities agree on the importance of conservation of the ASLNP resources. They even show positive attitude towards the protection of resources of the park...but I think that it is because they know the ecological and economic benefit they gain from the park especially after awareness creation done by some stakeholders in the past.

To foster partnership with adjacent community and successfully implement conservation measures, it is imperative to educate and create awareness for local communities. It is also essential to identify, test and validate wildlife protection initiatives, especially by promoting alternative sources of livelihoods for those communities.

According to the park manager:

Local communities must be involved as equal partners in the development and implementation of conservation strategies that might affect territories, waters bodies, and other resources, and in particular, they should be key partners in the establishment and management of ASNLP.

This was supported by one of the local community's member, who stated during an interview,

In park management practices, I think community participation should be the most important determinant of the level of fulfillment with protected area

conservation strategies....however the establishment of the ASLNP was not participatory enough, I think, considering different conflict that has occurred between the people and the park management

This was again confirmed by one community elder who articulated

...Community involvement in planning and in other decision-making exercises promotes the sense of ownership, for example where locals cooperatively protect reserves from outsiders and also regulate their own use of natural resources...I believe no one knows the importance of the park and its resources more than the local residents, and believe that they should be given role to play in implementing plans too.

The interviewed key informant who was working at Woreda level also recognized that

...community participation should go beyond talking with local communities in conservation activities...it should also try to make people understand that conservations is absolutely different from restriction of access to resources as this would never bring local communities positive attitude towards park areas...but rather to finding ways to engage local communities I think that they have their own ways of thinking about their environment .So, there is a need to motivate them to find solutions using indigenous knowledge towards protecting their habitats. Efforts from the park managers and other stakeholders should also look at ways to spur local communities' initiatives through an integrated system that provides incentive to them. Currently, plans that are designed for ASLNP management I am afraid to say they do not consider and give importance to local initiatives, I think this needs to be improved.

Nevertheless, despite knowledge of the importance of involving local communities in sustainable management of ASLNP, however, the FGD participants recognized that the park area was being lost due to agricultural land expansion, grazing and settlement by agro-pastoral communities from other parts of the country and by the number of impoverished resource-dependent local populations which were still growing, both within and adjacent to the park territory and other areas with high biodiversity value. They also indicated that illegal settlements and agricultural practice in and around the park resulted in destruction of wildlife and its habitats.

The result henceforth shows that many of the community members who participated in the study recognized that local communities did not participate adequately in the management and also planning about the establishment of ASLNP. It is posited that understanding of the factors that impede on involving local communities in the planning and management activities, is important as this exercise has the potential to improve the relationship between local communities and park

management team and can help in enhancing peoples' awareness about wildlife conservation in and around protected areas.

4.2.5. Local community participation in decision making towards management of ASLNP

According to one of the key informants serving as the park biodiversity manager, it would be better to adopt co-management which is the distribution of authority and responsibility among the government and the local communities who utilize the resources. So in order to have flourishing co-management there should be the establishment of suitable organizations, which should include the local communities.

According to one of key informants serving as a park guard,

Local community decisions making towards park management in circumstances where several stakeholders within a certain protected environment take part are considered in management activities.

From FGD respondents it was emphasized that in the participatory process; local people in the group do not merely play a part as park suppliers or beneficiaries but contribute dynamically by putting into practice all actions throughout the process.

One of the FGD participants stated:

...local community's involvement in the park resource management, include provision of indigenous knowledge and perception about areas of the park...The communities surrounding the ASLNP take a deliberate involvement in the management of the park, by sharing their ideas with management concerning the use of the park and how it help boost park decisions management activities...people also share information about people who would be degrading the park resources.

It can be said that the kind of participation according to community in which the members from the communities are engaged in is the participation in information sharing. It was noted in the course of data collection and during the focus group discussion that, many students and researchers frequented the study area to collect data for their studies. However, since the community members do not get any benefit in return, some of them have started to become reluctant to provide information to researchers.

Though few people are recognized to be active participants in the management practices of the park, however, this shows that communities are not completely left out in the management of the park natural resources. The community participates in the management of park resources especially as informants in the process of resource preservation and protection. ASLNP management has also stated that it had started to involve the communities in some aspects of park resource management although the observations showed that it was not enough.

Makela (1999) asserts that in the last ten years. Community-based park management and preservation has turned out to be an imperative area that needs to be stressed in international development and conservation in the last decade.

The innovative approach pursues the shift in international growth circles to community-based rural development and their involvement approaches: the attention is geared towards the people, their means of living and local associations, native ideas and local organizational structures. Interview with the manager in charge of community participation reveals that there are ongoing programmes that involve the communities in the management of the park. Their participation however can be said to be passive. According to the FGD participants, passive participants are only informed on what is going to take place or when it has already happened. It was noted during the discussion that community members were informed of what to do and what not to do and they had to abide by that.

A greater number of those who said they participate in decisions making towards park management of ASLNP come from FGD respondents followed by kebels. The reason why this

According to Mowforth and Munt (2003), for a tourism reserve to be sustainable, there should be some education as to how the human and natural environment work and also on local participation. Makela (1999) stated that the benefits that ecotourism can bring to the community include the encouragement of local participation in the sustainable management of the natural resources and in increasing awareness by local members on the need for environmental protection.

FGD respondents confirmed that the community members have the desire to participate in the management of the park so as to ensure its sustainable use. However, to ensure their adequate

participation, they need to get some education. It has also been shown that, majority of the people aren't educated.

The communities alone cannot succeed in their efforts to participate whereas the management alone cannot also succeed in urging the communities to participate without the two parties cooperating and sharing ideas as to how their forms of participation should take place. For such communities with low level of education, they need more information, ideas, knowledge and the learning process in order to gain much understanding of issues regarding forest resource management and the roles that they should play.

According to Sayer and Campbell (2004) research an integrated park management should intend to make possible large numbers of people to discover the full range of options that are accessible for dealing with their local resource management problems. This means building an environment where science and local knowledge assist people to broaden a variety of locally appropriate resource management solutions.

Meela (2001) presented the opinion of one school of thought that community participation as a way of enhancing competence; the innermost idea is that if people are engaged in the activity then they are more probable to have the same opinion with and agree to the new development or service. This apparent confirm that when members from the communities are engaged in some management activities, it is possible that they would adhere to and welcome innovations and policies that would enhance the conservation of the resources. This would however, require cooperation from both management and the communities. Since members of the communities have low education, they would need educational assistance in order to discover the different opportunities that are available within their environment.

During the FGD, participants from the communities revealed that, they would want to be involved in some alternative livelihoods activities. Some of them gave examples of other park management, planning and decisions making in other Kebeles, where communities were engaged in other livelihoods activities and concluded that their involvement would help them to improve their living conditions and learn more about the resources and other management activities.

Pound (2003) asserted that, participatory research increases the significance of the resource by bringing forward innovative information and responses into the participatory learning and

adaptive management. According to Pretty's (1995) typology of people's participation, some people participate for material incentive. Building from all the above perspectives one can argue here that the people around the Abjata Shala National Park would be interested to participate when they are able to get some benefit from the park resources. Which implies that their participation can stop when the benefit cease. Hence, there is the need to devise mechanisms to engage them in management activities, which can be sustainable to ensure their continuous participation.

. In addition, there should be simultaneous generation of revenue that can be used for the benefit of the people living in and around the conservation area.

Rapetto (in Ulhoi et al. 1996) asserts that certain changes are essential in achieving sustainable development and these include a resource change to dependence on profits from the environmental resources with no destruction to the resource base. Ulhoi et al. (1996) believe that sustainable development can be achieved when the current ecological barriers have been detached and the techniques for realizing this is including the use of appropriate expertise, management of renewable resources to achieve increased yields; and to sustainably fulfilling the needs of the poor and managing the environmental resources.

One informant who was a female stated that park officials have tried to create a link between sustainability and human activities where human beings can continue to survive and thrive. However, for all these notions on sustainability in development and in natural resource management to be achieved require the participation of members of communities in which the resources are found. Since resources are dynamic and changes in time and since human needs are also unlimited they would continue to interact with their environment in order to satisfy their needs so that they can continue to survive. Members of communities around the ASLNP Park with such low education and few people participating would need more education and increase in participation in order to sustainably use the park resources effectively.

4.2.6 The levels of local communities contribution towards ASLNP sustainable management

It was also an objective of this research to find out whether there existed at all any local community's contribution towards ASLNP park management (planning, budgeting, sharing benefits, etc...). So, participants were asked whether they thought that by participating in the management they can reduce poverty and at the same time being good rescuers of the park. All FGD participants answered in the affirmative shows that even though few people participated in management of the forest and majority of them have low education, they were aware that when they participate they can reduce damage and keep tourist attracted to their areas and hence bring incomes.

Their reasons to why they thought that their participation could reduce poverty were also collected from each one of the focus group participants. Majority of the respondents said it was going to create employment and park official said it will increase revenue. Majority of those who said it was going to create employment also said it will increase revenue through their engagement in other profit oriented activities like the sale of handcrafts for tourists, food supply to hotels and through services such as tour guiding, etc.. Some of them gave multiple responses. For instance during an interview who was working as a DA in the study area he suggested,

If community participation is not geared towards reduction of poverty then it is not necessary.

According to the park biodiversity worker indications, members of communities who were involved with ASNLP park management (planning, budgeting, sharing benefits...) were improving their livelihoods. She added:

... You can see even how they feel responsible and have started to engage in alternative livelihood activities hence increasing their income.

In the views who was serving as the park public relations officer, stated,

...I believe that better community participation initiatives should help to address the issues of communities over dependence on forest resources exploitation towards alternative livelihoods activities.

These views reflected above show that community participation has a link with poverty because when the community members have options of engaging in activities that generate income, they can be able to diversify their livelihoods activities. For instance, those who will be rearing animals like snails, grass-cutter, bees and cultivating mushrooms would be employed by doing so and can sell them to get revenue and also make sure that these activities go on throughout the year to ensure sustainable income generation. Also when the community members are able to get income from these activities, their reliability on the forest resources for survival decreases and reduces the pressure put on natural resources allowing them to flourish, ensuring the sustainability of forest resources as a whole. Similar views were derived from participants during the Focus Group Discussion.

Glimour (1999) believes that it cannot be anticipated that societies which are poor would be occupied by preservation when they have not been able to satisfy their basic needs. As a result, there should be attempts to enhance their social and economic welfare in order for them to become concerned with conservation. Rahman et al. (1998) asserted that, the relationship between park conservations and employment were connected to each other and each of them had some effect on the other. Safe guarding the environment can be straightly connected to the process of economic development which in the end creates employment and reduces poverty.

In our case study, if members from the three communities would be employed by participating in the alternative livelihoods activities, this would improve their financial conditions. Besides, the results from interviews and FGDs showed that most of the respondents belonged to the low income category and that could even be the explanation of the fact that few of them were interested in the management of the park management.

4.2.7. Local community participation in budgeting of ASLNP resources

According to one of the key informant who was serving as the park biodiversity manager “...it would better to adopt co-management scheme which is the distribution of authority and responsibility among the government and the local communities who utilize the resources. So, in order to have flourishing co-management there should be the establishment of suitable organizations which should include the local communities”.

who was serving as a park ranger said, “Involving local community in decisions making particularly budgeting, especially in circumstances of several stakeholders with diverse objectives is not an easy thing. So, I do not think that when it comes to budgeting people are being involved at all.”

Even though low education was identified as a challenge for the communities, it is unmistakable that, local communities have certain indigenous knowledge which has been useful in managing the forest successfully from the past generation to the present.

It can be indicated that the kind of participation in budgeting of ASLNP resources according to communities’ members, was once again limited on information sharing. It was noted in the course of data collection and during the focus group discussion that, many students and researchers frequented the study area to collect data for their studies. Nevertheless, since the community members did not get any benefit in return, some of them had started to become reluctant to provide information for researchers.

Though few people recognized to be active participants in the management practices of the park, partly because they were employed as park rangers, however, findings revealed that communities were not completely left out in the management of the park natural resources. The community participation role of informants was recognized as a key role in the process of resource planning and budgeting for preservation and protection. .

Interviews with the manager in charge of community participation revealed that there were ongoing programmers that involved the communities in the management of the forest. Their participation however can be said to be passive. According to the FGD participants, communities were only informed on what is going to take place or when it has already happened. It was noted during the discussion that community members were also informed of what to do and what not to do and they had to abide by that.

The reasons provided to explain the current local communities' participation in budgeting of ASLNP resources was the existence of employees of the park from the surrounding communities. However, people from Adami Tulu Jido Kombolcha stated that they would like to be engaged more in the park management activities as this would help to improve their living conditions. This can be done through income generation activities since they come into contact with visitors and can sell traditional products, seedlings and other products such as handicrafts and others. In the same way, similar opportunities should be created at the other communities in order to reduce conflicts. Moreover, several reasons were given as to why they participate in the management and why they do not.

During the interview with the manager, it was revealed that the members of the communities were not allowed to sell their tourism products at the reception because if all interested members in the communities were allowed to sell there, the place would be so clumsy and it would not give a good impression of a tourism site. It was observed that, there was no member of the community selling at the reception. Even though there was a shop where artifacts were sold, it was indicated during the Focus Group Discussion that it belonged to a member of the management team who was not a member of the local communities.

The same could be done for those who think they are not involved in any other activities, not given the chance to be part of the management as well as those who think they cannot participate because they do not derive any benefit from the resources.

The communities alone cannot succeed in their efforts to participate whereas the management alone cannot also succeed in urging the communities to participate without the two parties cooperating and sharing ideas as to how their forms of participation should take place. For such communities with low level of education, they need more information, ideas, knowledge and the learning process in order to gain much understanding of issues regarding forest resource management and the roles that they should play. They also need confidence to promote their indigenous knowledge about local resource management problems.

During the FGD, participants from the communities revealed that, they would want to be involved in some alternative livelihoods activities. Some of them gave examples of other park management, planning and decisions making in other Kebeles, where communities were engaged in other livelihoods activities and concluded that their involvement would help them to improve their living conditions and learn more about the resources and other management activities.

Building from all the above perspectives one can argue here that the people around the Abjata Shala National Park would be interested to participate when they are able to get some benefit from the park resources. Which implies that their participation can stop when the benefit cease. Hence, there is the need to devise mechanisms to engage them in management activities which can be sustainable to ensure their continuous participation.

In addition, there should be simultaneous generation of revenue that can be used for the benefit of the people living in and around the conservation area. FGD respondents brought out the idea that for sustainable park development to be achieved there is the need to preserve and develop the park natural resource base and also integrate environmental issues in decision making.

Members of communities around the ASLN Park with such low education and few people participating would need more education and increase in participation in order to sustainably use the park resources effectively.

Theoretically, different authors believed that when communities participate in the alternative activities there is the likelihood that they would earn some income which can be reinvested to sustain their activities. Moreover, through community education, members of the community would become aware that the sources of their income is from the forest resources and that would give them the pride to do whatever possible to protect the forest and use its resources at a sustainable rate.

4.2.8. Challenges of sustainable management of ASLNP Park

The research also covered the topic on collaborations or conflicts initiatives between the management of the ASLNP and the local communities. When respondents were asked whether there existed any conflict or collaboration between them and the management of the park, a greater number of the participants recognized that there was collaboration with management although inadequate.

Almost all the participants of the Focus Group Discussion discussants expressed their dissatisfaction with the creation of the reserve, which has not brought any tangible benefit to the local communities. Most of them commented on the dismissal of workers from the community who were working on the park and lamented that it does not give a good impression of the relationship between park management team and the communities. Demesse one of the participant underlined,

People here are not happy with their decision...if the park managers continue like this, it will bring misunderstandings and if it should continue like this, the population will never be at peace with management team of the park.

Those who said they were not at peace with management were asked to give their reasons and to state the forms of conflicts that exist; and accordingly they gave several responses, which are presented in the following paragraph.

Seven out of eight participants of the focus group said that they were not at peace with management team because they do not get any benefit from the reserve as well as from the tourism activities. There are three units/departments here; the law enforcement unit protects the park from encroachers and poachers. The collaborative resource management/community participation unit works with the fringe communities whilst the tourism unit handles the visitors that come to visit the park.

One farmer responded that the source of conflicts arise as a result of farmer destroying the park because the management team prevent them from selling their tourist products at the reception, from the communities when the forest was taken from them. Some of them gave more than one response. It is interesting however, that the management is aware of only one conflict. When management was asked whether there exists any conflict, the response was yes but accepted only one conflict. Which was based on the fact that one day an elephant had raiding on crops of farmers around the park.

An interview with the management of the Park revealed that the communities especially Desta shalla area, have benefited indirectly from the reserve. This is because the current market structure and the primary school in the community were built as a result of the park tourism initiative. However, it was disclosed during the Focus Group Discussion that the community is not satisfied with just a market structure and the school. . On discussant was of the view that,

One needs to have something to sell first, before he/she can go and use the market structure!?! In addition we also have to pay fees for our children to go to the indicated school. So, in reality what we need is what to take to the market in order to make money and be able to pay for our children school fees.

Furthermore, it was made known during the interview with the management that, the communities have been informed not to farm close to the reserve to prevent the lake and park from attracting raiding wild animals. It was however observed that some farms were close to the park and even shared their boundaries with the park. The various park field operators whom the researcher interviewed also admitted that they do have conflicts with the forest communities in which they work. Some of the conflicts include poaching, encroachment, communities' forest management conflicts, complaints of communities not having fair share of tourists proceeds, and so on.

Conflicts arise over the use of natural resources for numerous reasons. The most fundamental reason is the reality that natural resource is entrenched in the environment where the activities of one group can have unexpected consequences somewhere else or on another resource user. Resources can be utilized by others whether intentionally or not, in ways that undermine the living conditions of others. Political factors are frequently caught up in conflicts over natural resources. Those who have more access to authority can best control or manipulate natural resource decisions to suit themselves in parks. Some members of the communities around the Abijatta Shala Lake National Park are not satisfied with the management of the Park because they feel they are not treated well as far as the management of the forest is concerned.

Some of the members especially those from ASLNP complained that they are often beaten up by the forest guards when they go to the forest but they often see these guards with grass-cutters and other forest products. Because these guards have been given the power to go to the lake, they use it to their advantage and this does not give a good impression of a reserve.

According to the interview with park wardens challenges faced in involving communities to participate in the management of the Abijata Shala lake National Park arises from low education level, and limited people involvement in alternative livelihoods activities, where they could gain some income which would help to reduce their dependency over park's resources and consequently lessen conflicts between people and the management of the park. Again, collaboration would improve when there is benefit sharing between the communities and the management.

From the field, the researcher realized that most of key informants wished to have a fair tourism benefits sharing mechanisms and better means to involve all the local communities' members in the management of the forest or provide them with alternatives. These views were not different from those who participated in the Focus Group Discussions. According to the management, some actions have been taken to reduce destruction of park by farmers in the area. But, this action according to members of the communities is concentrated in other areas of the park which were not covered under this research.

On the top of the above challenges, management challenges of ASLNP have been present for a long time and are well known.

According to HGL & GIRD (2009) the following are the ongoing key conservation issues within the park:

a)Reduction in water level and surface area of Lake Abijata due to reduced overflows from Lake Ziway through the Bulbulla River; b)Collapse of fishery and near-collapse of tilapia population in Lake Abijata; d)Near-disappearance of piscivorous birds from the lake (likely due to combined impacts of disappearance of fish and habitat loss); e)Clearance of Acacia trees for fuel wood and charcoal, as well as agricultural expansion and home building; f)Severe overgrazing by cattle, sheep, and goats; g)Sand mining, with secondary effects of tree/grassland clearance, wind and gully erosion; h)Habitat loss for terrestrial, shoreline and aquatic animals; and i)Water abstraction by the Abijata-Shalla Soda Ash Share Company.

4.2.8. The opportunities in place to ensure participatory decision making for the sustainable management of the ASLNP

Cognizant of the relationship between community participation in Abijatta Shala lake National Park resources management and poverty reduction through tourist attractions, it was essential to investigate on the views of local communities on different opportunities towards involving the local communities in the sustainable management of Abijatta Shala lake National Park resources. This research tried to find out from the informants the forms of activities that they would like to be engaged in as a way of their involvement towards sustainable management of the park. During interviews and focus groups, community members were asked to give different ways through which they would like to participate in the sustainable management of the forest. Thus if

they are to be engaged in the management process, what kind of activities would they like to undertake. Some respondents indicated the following activities:

- **Selling to visitors' forest and local products at the reception:** Informants were interested in selling agricultural items like local fruits, traditional meals, and drinks, traditional clothes and handicrafts.
- **Provide tourism services:** Other indicated that they would like to engage in services such as animal rent like mule and horse whereas others would like to provide accommodation services. Some interviewees were also interested in tour guiding exercise and they would need to be employed and trained in order to fulfill that again were interested in educating others on the importance of the forest. Most of the respondents gave multiple responses.

It was noted that most of contacted people were of the view that since the ASNLP's forest is then a reserve and they were not allowed to go and get whatever they wanted from it, they should at least be allowed to sell their products to visitors who come to visit the park, so that they can earn some money. From FGD, the respondents indicated also that they would like to plant trees when given the chance so that they can rely on them for wood and construction instead of the forest. For them to do that, they would need land and seedlings from the forest.

All the respondents during FGD were of the view that crafts and arts were possible to undertake and they were all interested to purchase them. Also during respondents believed that selling traditional products was possible and they would like to produce them, one of them said,

It was not possible unless training were conducted.

The higher response from the communities to participate in these activities is a positive sign and shows that they are really interested in the management activities. The management team also indicated that the visitors had showed interest to purchase these local products and that is also a possible way for management to assist the communities so as to increase their income and reduce poverty in the area.

According to Odoi (1999) if the development of the society could be achieved from different sources, it would reduce the effects of their actions on the resource to be preserved. Besides, it is more probable for local communities to consent to preservation and management of resource use

if they can derive some profit from it. Also it was propose that in order to have a successful resource management, there should be a provision of economic enticements intended for local people to safeguard the resource (Makela 1999).

The Abijata Shala lake National Park has been selected as one of the eco-tourism site in the country and as has been defined by the Eco-tourism Society in Makela (1999) that eco-tourism is a purposeful travel to natural places with the intention of acquiring more knowledge on the tradition and history of the environment and also that the local populace need to be given the economic situations to enable them to benefit from the natural resources, it is essential that the communities surrounding the Park engage in some activities that would benefit them as well as the tourists and which in the long run would result in sustainable use of the natural resources.

Furthermore, Domfeh (2007) is of the view that communities have other duties to perform in their participation in the management of the forest. These include creating their own conservation norms in line with that of the national policy, embark on community education to create awareness of the importance of the park and in sanctioning community members whose activities damage the aim of the creation of the park reserve.

Here it's essential to recognize from the finding that the sustainable management of ASNLP would be possible when communities actively participate in alternative livelihoods activities. Because when their economic welfare is assured through their participation in the management, ownership increases and conflicts with management would be reduced and this would reduce dependency on the forest resources which would lead to sustainability.

4.3. Summary

Agriculture is one of the major factors contributing to conversion of land by exposing the wildlife to different problems. Ecotourism can be used as a way to promote community based natural resources management and to minimize the impact tourism on environment. It can help fuel economic development and conserve protected areas by creating local jobs, providing a sense of community ownership, and bringing in revenue that can be used to manage protected areas in a sustainable way. If local communities directly benefit from the use of their land, water, forests and other natural resources, they can be expected to support and participate in efforts to conserve and sustain them.

From what has been discussed so far, it can be said that community participation in the management of Abijata Shala lake National Park is inevitable as far as park conservations is concerned. The sustainable management of Abijata Shala lake National Park depends upon livelihoods diversification efforts that should involve the local communities in order to earn income without depending on the Park resources for their survival. Furthermore if these activities would ensure an active participation this would inculcate a sense of ownership which would contribute to reduce poverty in the region.

Even though some members from the communities were in collaboration with the management, others were not satisfied with the activities undertaken by the management team and were of the opinion that the benefits from the Abijata Shala lake National Park were only helping the management team whereas the forest was taken from them.

Similarly, it was undeniably confirmed by all who participated in the study that the establishment and fair management practices of the natural resources is one of the practical ways to guarantee that natural resources are conserved so as to meet the material and cultural needs of the current generations without compromising the needs of the future generation. However, it is important to be noted that for the sustainable management of the park's resources, local communities should not be left out, because it is when their present needs are addressed that the conservation of the resources for the future can be guaranteed.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

This research aimed at assessing the community participation in decisions making about ASLNP sustainable management. One of the striking finding from this study was that local population dependence on the provisioning services for survival (source of food, water and raw materials) was higher for many households from inside and inside/outside the Park areas. It was already the case that inadequate community participation in the management of the park resources was found to be confronting some issues especially regarding benefit sharing between the management team and the local communities. Besides, because the local communities did not perceive any benefit from the established schemes of making the park a reserved area for conservation, without prior consultation on how they should participate in park management activities, this generated conflicts among park management team and the local communities. It was underlined by all informants from the community side as well as the management side that local community involvement in decision making at all levels and sharing benefits would help improve collaboration and reduce conflicts, ensuring the sustainable use of the park resources.

Regarding park ownership, planning and budgeting, the resources was between the park management and the local farmers. According to informants from the park management team ownership not only consisted of a set of ideas, but also inculcated a certain set of practices. Such practices were still designated in a very back ward manner, that is, internally and externally inconsistent, inappropriate ways of performing. Thus planning practices regarding the park resources emanated from the differing external stakeholders, the situation which in turn undermined the local institutions and led to loss of park ownership by the local community. So, it was found out that community participation in the sustainable management of forest implied that the kinds of livelihoods activities undertaken by members of the communities were in order with conservation guidelines and allowed them to derive some benefits from the forest resources.

5.2 Recommendations

In order for communities to participate in park management activities to reduce poverty and also to overcome some of the problems related to their participation as well as to ensure the sustainability of Abijatta Shala lake National Park use, the following recommendations have been forwarded for policy consideration:

- The communities surrounding the Abijatta Shala lake National Park need more education. There should be a designed educational programs targeted at educating the communities to have a deeper understanding of the objectives behind the creation of the reserve.
- Community participation in forest management activities should be the prime focus of the managers in charge of community participation. They should design programs together with the communities and reach out to those who are interested to participate in the programs.
- These programs should be geared towards reducing poverty and increasing community participation especially for women since they form a greater part of the population and it is these women who collect non timber forest products from the forest for the members of the households.
- There should be a conscious effort to involve communities surrounding the Abijatta Shala lake National Park in other activities that they can undertake to earn some income whilst conserving the park.
- There should be increased communication between management and communities. Information regarding the forest and activities going on in other communities should be made known to all the communities. This has to be consistent among all beneficiaries. This will help boost their interest to undertake some management activities.
- There is the need to establish a committee representing local communities' interests that would work alongside the community and the management team of the forest. This would enhance communication flow between management and the community. This group should also be in-charge of all community participating activities. The members of the group should be given the necessary training to run the community management activities and to ensure its sustainability.

- There should also be benefit sharing for all stakeholders. All stakeholders including members of the communities should come to a consensus as to what percentage of benefits should accrue to all parties involved. This will be a good way to reduce conflicts on the use of the park resources.
- The communities must be involved in decision making especially those that concern them. This will not only help to reduce conflicts but also improve collaboration and enhance the communities understanding in park conservation efforts.
- The management of Abijatta Shala lake National Park should partner with other NGOs that are interested in community participation issues to come to the aid of the communities especially in the area that concerns capacity building for livelihoods diversification.
- There is also the need to improve on the agricultural base of the communities around the Park since majority of them are farmers. Provision of incentives to farmers can assist them expand their production and market which can also contribute to sustain the park.
- Members of the communities should be encouraged to participate in other activities like the making of soap, agro-processing and other local industrial products with raw materials from their farm products.
- There should be the development of other attractions in the communities that have tourism potentials. Abijatta Shala lake National Park Reserve can also be turned into another attraction site managed by the communities around it. This can help to ease the pressure on the Abijatta Shala lake National Park and provide additional revenue for communities around these areas.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Key informant interview protocol

1. What do you understand by sustainable park management?
2. What is your views regarding the current form of ASLNP management (ownership, planning, budget, etc.)?
3. What are the roles of your organization in the management of the ASLNP?
4. What are the roles of the communities in the management of the ASLNP?
5. What components of your work are related with engaging (participating) the local people in decision making regarding the park management?
6. What are the major challenges faced in participating local people in sustainable management of this park?
7. What are the opportunities in place to ensure participatory decision making for the sustainable management of the ASLNP?
8. How do you evaluate the role of local communities in decision making for conserving the ASLNP resources (planning, budgeting, sharing benefits...)?
9. What do you feel about the current form of participation of local communities in decision making regarding ASLNP management?
10. In summary, what do you think is going wrong with the management of the ASLNP?
11. How are the local communities contributing?
12. How the Government and other stakeholders are contributing?
13. What are your suggestion regarding making more participatory the decision making process regarding ASLNP resources?

APPENDIX2: Focus group discussion guidelines

1. Who do you think should be the owner of the ASLNP?
2. What are the benefits from ASLNP to the livelihoods of local communities?
3. Do you think the ASLNP Park is threatened? Explain what is happening?
4. Do you think this park should be protected? Who is supposed to protect the park?
5. How do communities participate in the activities regarding the ASLNP management?
6. Do you get involved in deciding which activities to be conducted and how much they will cost, and on how to share the benefits from the park?
7. What are the challenges faced by communities in getting involved in the decision making process regarding protecting the ASLNP?
8. Do you think there are opportunities that can help to involve the communities in the decision making process regarding protecting the ASLNP?
9. What do you feel about the current form of participation in ASLNP management by the local communities?
10. What do you think should be done to improve the participation of communities in sustainable management of ASLNP?

MIILTOO

MIILTOO 1: Pirotokolii ragaa gaafii afaanii kennitoota

1. Bulchiinsa paarkii walittii fufiinsa qabuu yeroo jedhamuu maal hubattaa?
2. Waa'ee bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaaleessaa Haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa yeroo ammaa (waa'ee abbummaa, karoora, waa'ee baajata fi kkf.) ilaalchii kee maalinnii?
3. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa irrattii qoodnii dhaabbata keessanii maalinnii?
4. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa irrattii qoodnii hawaasaa maalinnii?
5. Dameen hojii keessanii bulchiinsa paarkii ilaalchisee murtiiif namoota naannoo hirmaachisuu maalinnii?
6. Bulchiinsa paarkii kanaa walittii fufiinsa qabuuf namoota naannoo hirmaachisuu irrattii rakkoon isiin qunnamee maalinnii?
7. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa walittii fufiinsa qabuuf murtoo barbaachisaa dabarsuuf carraan jiruu maalinni?
8. Hawaasnii eegumsa qabeenya paarkii haroo biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa (karoora, baajata, bu'aa hirachuu) irrattii murtoo dabarsuuf ga'ee qabuu haala kamiin madaaltaa?
9. Maanaajimantii paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa ilaalchisee murtoo dabarsuuf haallii hirmaannaa hawaasaa yeroo ammaa kana jiruu irrattii maaltuu sittii dhagahaamaa?
10. Waliigalattii maanaajimantii paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa ilaalchisee dogoggorrii jiruu maalinnii?
11. Hawaasnii naannoo haala kamiin gumaacha godhuu?
12. Mootummaa fi qaamonnii biroo gahee qaban haala kamiin gumaacha godhuu?
13. Qabeenya paarkii biyyaaleessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa ilaalchisee adeemsa murtoo barbaachisaa raawwachu irrattii yaadni kee maalinnii?

MIILTOO 2: Qajeelfama Marii Garee Xiyyeeffannoo

1. Abbaan paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa eenyuu ta'uu qabaa jettaa?
2. Jireenya hawaasaa naannootiif faayidaan paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa maalinni?
3. Paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa seeraan qabameeraa jettee yaaddaa? Maal akka ta'a jiruu ibsii.
4. Paarkiiin kun seeraan eeggameeraa jettee yaaddaa? Paarkicha eenyutu eeguu qabaa jettee yaaddaa?
5. Waa'ee gocha bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa ilaalchisee hawaasnii haala kamiin hirmaannaa gochuu qabaa?
6. Paarkicha ilaalchisee gochaan kam raawwatamuu qaba, gatii haammam nuu baasisaa fi bu'aa paarkicha irraa argannuu haala kamiin hiirachuu dandeenyaa dhimmoota jeedhan murteessuu irrattii hirmaattee beektaa?
7. Paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa eeguu ilaalchisee murtoo dabarsuu irrattii hawaasa rakkoo akkamiituu qunnamaa?
8. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa ilaalchisee murtoo dabarsuu irrattii hawaasa hirmaachisuuf carraan uummamee jira jettee yaaddaa?
9. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa irrattii haala hirmaannaa hawaasa naannoo amma jiruu maaltuu sittii dhagahamaa?
10. Bulchiinsa paarkii biyyaalessaa haroo Abiyaataa Shaalaa walittii fufiinsa qabuu ilaalchisee hirmaannaa hawaasaa fooyyessuuf maaltu taasifamuu qaba jetta

APPENDIX 3: Checklist for observation

Table 6. The degree of the participation of communities in ASLNP management

Area of observations
1. SWC/ soil
2. Forest
3. Water
4. Wildlife
5. Livelihoods activities
6. Organizations involved in decision making
7. How meetings/trainings are conducted
8. ASLNP management activities
9. Women involvement
10. Youth activities