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RELIGIOUS TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN DEBRE LIBANOS MONASTERY, ETHIOPIA



BY

HENOK ALEMAYEHU

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

June, 2013

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**Religious Tourism Product Development in Debre Libanos
Monastery, Ethiopia**

By

Henok Alemayehu

Advisor: Mulugeta Feseha (PhD)

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Henok Alemayehu**, entitled: **Religious Tourism Product Development in Debre Libanos Monastery, Ethiopia** and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism and Development, complies with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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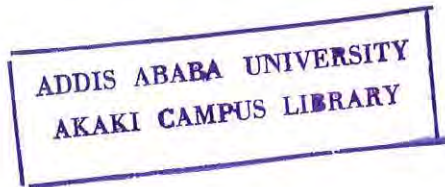


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment
EOTC: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
ETC: European Tourism Commission
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SME: Small and Micro Enterprises
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TPD: Tourism Product Development
UNEP: United Nations Economic Program
UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC: World Travel and Tourism Council

ABSTRACT

This study discusses about religious tourism product development in Debre Libanos Monastery. To explore this research topic, the thesis examines three key concepts: the salient features of the Monastery for religious tourism; the challenges and opportunities presented to religious tourism product development in the area; and sustainable development of religious tourism product. To achieve these systematically, an extensive review of related literature is made and the thesis employs multiple methods (survey, interviews, focus group discussion, field observations, and informal discussions and participation). Such an approach improves the validity of the findings and successfully addresses the central research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative data generated from these techniques are analyzed, integrated, and are used to complement each other. Based on the findings obtained from multiple methods, this research concludes that the key attractions, its uniqueness, the outstanding attributes and the appealing religious activities of the site are the salient features of this religious tourism destination that give a very interesting, spiritual and enlightening experience for visitors. Constraints such as inadequacy and poor quality of facilities and services, gradual expansion of inappropriate activities and developments, challenges on monastic life, administrative problems, community settlement, and natural disaster and human caused problems are the challenges presented to religious tourism product development in the area whereas the area's endowment with amazing attractions, religious values of the site, respect for nature, and its location are the opportunities for the development. Community perception and support for religious tourism product development, collaboration among stakeholders, protection of the area's religious, cultural and environmental values, sustainable marketing and promotion of religious tourism products and setting up appropriate interpretive programs are the fundamental considerations to ensure sustainable religious tourism product development in the area.

Key words: Religious tourism, Debre Libanos monastery, and product development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism, over the past six decades, has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO, 2012). In 2011, the industry contributed 9% of global GDP, or a value of over US\$6 trillion, and accounted for 255 million jobs. Over the next ten years this industry is expected to grow by an average of 4% annually, taking it to 10% of global GDP, or some US\$10 trillion (WTTC, 2012). According to United Nations World Tourism Organization, “ despite occasional shocks, international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth from 277 million in 1980 to 528 million in 1995, and 983 million in 2011” (2012). The organization has also anticipated that by the year 2012, one billion international tourists are expected to travel to foreign destinations. This growing trend in travel includes a growth in religious tourism, the ‘oldest form of tourism’ (Rinschede 1992; Cohen 1998).

It is estimated that there are approximately six hundred million national and international religious and spiritual voyages in the world, of which 40% take place in Europe and around half in Asia (UNWTO, 2011). Asia and the Pacific are considered the region of the world with the greatest number of pilgrims and travelers for religious events, for both international and domestic tourism. “According to UNESCO, 60% of the world population practices religion and these believers form the demographic base of religious tourism” (Ibid). Religious tourism is practiced to a considerable degree not only in the developed countries, but also in developing countries insofar as disposable income allows the upper and middle classes to travel and in this 21st century in search of values, religious and spiritual tourism can represent a great opportunity for men and women of all faiths, philosophies and religions (UNWTO, 2007).

The fact that, eventually, an ever increasing number of destinations have opened up and invested in tourism development, modern tourism has turned into a key driver of socio-economic progress through export revenues, the creation of jobs and enterprises, and infrastructure development (UNWTO, 2012). These indicate that tourism is playing a vital role for the development of tourism destinations worldwide and hence religious tourism.

For a destination's tourism sector operation, the basis are the tourism products offered by the destination and these products include natural or man-made attractions, hotels, resorts, restaurants, theatres, activities, festivals and events (UNWTO & ETC, 2011). A given tourism destination comprises many products within the overall destination and in fact, religious tourism product is one of the tourism products offered by various destinations. Ethiopia is one among the several destinations having considerable religious tourism potential.

Ethiopia is blessed with religious sites, pilgrim centers, religious festivals and other related cultural activities of a religious nature out of which Debre Libanos Monastery, one of the largest and most iconic monastic communities and major pilgrimage centers in the country, is the one. However, the country did not develop these resources into sustainable religious tourism products and needless to say, religious tourism has not been fully exploited. In other words, though the heritage have been serving in the religious practices and giving wide ranging socio-cultural and economic benefits for millennia, there is a very insignificant attempt to enhance those religious resources into a real tourism product ready to be branded in the local and international religious tourism market. This is similar with the nationwide problem we have as stated by Mulugeta, "What seems to be missing in Ethiopia is a comprehensive understanding of tourism resources, developing them into tourism products, and generating revenues that can support the community" (2012).

Therefore, there is a need for more work and endeavor to develop religious tourism products as opposed to the current limited efforts. This study hence attempts to indicate how to develop religious tourism product in one of the prominent Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church monasteries, Debre Libanos. In so doing, it mainly revolves on identifying product development resources and areas, nature and culture based product developments, stakeholder collaboration, protection of the area's religious, cultural and environmental values, and marketing all analyzed under sustainability framework. Thus, the outcome paves the way for the monastery to look at the religious tourism resources and their successful and sustainable development into a fully-fledged religious tourism product.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The central concept in this study is Religious Tourism product development which involves looking systematically at our religious tourism destination areas; offerings and markets to determine which are the right religious tourism activities, markets and products to develop. It concerns with those resources with the potential to thrive economically and to improve the overall offer and experience of the destination. In line with this, identifying and overcoming the wrong sort of developments is an important element as well.

The study focuses on Debre Libanos Monastery, one of the largest and most iconic monastic communities and major pilgrimage centers in Ethiopia, also good for its natural beauty and scenery. The monastery has a special place in the history of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) and it has been reputed as a house of countless celibates, scholars, heritage, promises and miracle. This research is carried out on religious tourism product development in this monastery.

For the destination to realize its full potential, the religious tourism products have to meet the needs and expectation of religious tourists without compromising the sustainability of the resources or products. However, the existing situation put in the picture that less attention is being paid in development and delivery of various attractions, facilities and activities that make up the religious tourism product.

The issues that dictate developing religious tourism product in the site are wide ranging. It begins from the nationwide lack of a strategy for the development of this specialized type of tourism and follows with a number of destination specific issues. The monastery has a varied and interesting pilgrim or spiritual culture that can form a central element in its appeal as a religious tourist destination. Clearly, the monastery has the capacity to provide a rewarding and satisfying experience for a wide range of religious tourists but, at present, this potential is not being realized, largely because of a failure in presentation. The range and number of festivals and events, the museum, historical sites, holy water sites, the cemetery area, the traditional schools, the living styles, handicrafts, caves, the landscape, the forest, church services and other heritage resources of the monastery can be highly marketable products in a sustainable manner but they require some strategic improvement to make them more marketable and be fully fledged religious tourism products.

To do so, identification and situation analysis of product development areas and resources, market research, market: product matching, stakeholder participation, as well as product development and marketing are required, all being conducted under sustainability framework. Development in the tourist infrastructure is of course part and parcel of this religious tourism product development endeavor. As such, event management, so long as the monastery hosts larger number of tourists during festival celebrations, needs to be professional, spectator and participant facilities, safety, wastage disposal, access and parking need improvement. By maintaining the religious and cultural values of the monastery in the first place and through improvements in presentation and packaging as well, the monastery can be an exemplary religious tourism site in the country providing substantive religious tourism products for domestic and international religious tourism market while ensuring sustainability.

The need to undertake religious tourism product development also emanates from the global circumstance that religious segment of travel is showing growth from time to time with tourism becoming a vital and increasingly important part of the world's economy and the fact that many modern pilgrimages are now motivated by secular (education and culture) and touristic purposes. Alongside, for the reason that visitors want to know more about the background of the site or event, but that they also want to be actively involved in the religious or spiritual life of the place they are visiting (Richards & Fernandes, 2007) and given that religious tourism is becoming internationalized (UNWTO, 2007), responding to these global and uncurbed situations also demands the monastery to undertake sustainable religious tourism product development.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the research is to conduct religious tourism product development in Debre Libanos Monastery.

Specifically, the research addressed the following objectives:

1. To analyze the salient features of Debre Libanos Monastery for religious tourism.
2. To inform the destination about the challenges and opportunities presented to religious tourism product development in the area.
3. To provide guiding principles for sustainable development of religious tourism product in Debre Libanos Monastery.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This thesis has a paramount significance, mainly, in adding up to the current knowledge about the concepts the research has gone through pertaining to its particular context. The research provides many of the reasons for the failure of sustainable religious tourism product development and gives some clues for its successful implementation in the study area. The study hence, provides information so that all concerned bodies engaged in the religious tourism product development endeavor can get some relevant information.

This study generally seeks to determine the main issues of developing religious tourism product with a view to examine lessons to be learnt not only by tourism managers, planners and other local destination stakeholders but indeed by all religious tourism destinations with similar characteristics as the one in this research study.

Moreover, it inspires further research in the area and will serve as an input in formulating nationwide strategy for the development of this specialized type of tourism.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study mainly deals with six basic areas of sustainable religious tourism product development; identifying product development resources and areas, nature and culture based product development potentials, assessment of challenges and opportunities, stakeholder collaboration, protection of the area's religious, cultural and environmental values, and sustainable religious tourism marketing.

In terms of area, the study mainly focuses within the Monastery of Debre Libanos, as it is explained in the study area description and indicated in the site location map of the monastery. The area in a 4 km radius to the west of the monastery was also included for the sake of accommodation establishments and other key attractions located in the spot and due to the physical proximity of it.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This thesis is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter has dealt with the introductory part which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and scope of the study.

The second chapter is a review of the literature. This chapter begins by introducing the wider concept of tourism product development and then proceeds with religious tourism product development, sustainable marketing and development of religious tourism products and religious tourism and monastic life.

Chapter three presents the study area background and outlines methodology used for data collection for this thesis. Research design, data source, instruments, sampling design, data analysis and interpretation are included in this part.

The findings of this thesis are presented and discussed in details in Chapters four, five and six. The final chapter, chapter seven, provides a concluding discussion of the findings of this study and provides recommendations and future research directions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourism Product Development

2.1.1 Product in Tourism

Tourists have different needs and hence have different expectations while they plan to make a visit such as: be looked after and cared for, be able to visit places of interest, spend adequate time at such places and engage in the activities that interest them, be facing no risk to one's person or belongings, etc. Tourism Course Preparation Course team, TS-1, notes that the three main ingredients through which tourists meet these expectations are attractions, facilities and accessibility and these three constitute the feature of a tourist product.

Tourism products are the supply factors in tourism, viewed as the interrelated system of demand and supply, and these products include:

- Attractions viz. natural, cultural and special types of features and activities related to these attractions.
- Accommodation: hotels, motels, guesthouses etc.
- Other tourist facilities and services: tour and travel operations, restaurants, shopping, banking and money exchange and medical and postal facilities and services.
- Tourism infrastructure: transportation (air, road, rail and water), water supply, electric power, sewerage and solid waste disposal and telecommunications. (“Tourism Perspective Plan for Arunachal Pradesh”, 2003)

Moreover, the travel and tourism product is a package of images of the destination, what one may experience while proceeding to the destination, experiences at the destination, attitudes of locals or host population, price to the consumer, and overall experience of the tourist in addition to the previous components (Sajani, 2011). “As far as the tourist is concerned, the product is a complete experience; encompassing everything from the time he leaves home to the time he returns” (OECD, 2006).

After analyzing the works of different authors: Jefferson and Lickorish (1988), Kotler (1984), Lewis and Chambers (1989), Medlik and Middleton (1973), Middleton (1989), Normann (1984) and after having looked at supply side perspectives such as that of Gunn's Tourism Planning (1988) and Pearce's Tourist Development (1989), Butler's (1980) applications of the product life

cycle to resort development, Product-specific studies like Wall, Dudycha, and Hutchinson's (1985) study of urban hotel locations, Smith noted that none of the above works address the fundamental nature of the tourism product in any detail (1994). He developed a model by building up on the observation of previous authors and in his model; the tourism product consists of five elements, physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice and involvement. He states that, "the tourism product is not a simple combination of the five elements, but the result of synergistic interaction among all the components".

Smith addresses that, "Involvement, combined with freedom of choice, warm hospitality, competent service, and a good physical plant (which includes accessibility, acceptable environmental quality, good weather, and appropriate numbers of other people) virtually guarantees a quality and satisfying tourism product". The tourism product is a combination of many different services. Even, UNWTO states that tourism products are almost exclusively services (1997). These services include: transportation, accommodation, restaurant meals, sightseeing, car rental, attractions—provided by different firms and a poor experience in any of these can affect customer satisfaction for the trip (P.163). Here it is important to note that the tourism product includes not only the physical product and service but also planning and development, branding, and packaging (P.167).

Smith's work illustrates how the tourism product structure, which is the result of complicated production process, is complex. It is also noted in Tourism Course Preparation Course team, TS-1, that the tourist product is a complex one as it consists of several elements provided by various persons and as some of the products are located at the tourist destinations (hotel, shops, attractions, guides), some are at the place of origin of the tourist (embassy to provide, visa, travel agency or tour operator) and some are enroute (customs, transport, exchange). This and other unidentified tourism products portray that tourism product development is not an easy task.

From these, it becomes vivid that tourism products are the basis for a destination's tourism sector operation (UNWTO & ETC, 2011). They are so diverse and they can be natural, cultural, historical, religious, etc. These are either tangible and or intangible.

The intangibility of tourism products implies a large amount of risk and uncertainty about customer value (quality-price ratio). A guest who books a holiday package does not know what to really expect, or how he will eventually feel about the quality of his vacation. It is particularly

important for destinations to create confidence, to determine quality criteria and to introduce measures to reduce risks for the customer (OECD, 2006, P.57). Despite or because of this intangibility, tourism products can be enhanced in value by adding different sensations like design, fragrance, light, colour and emotional attachment. Such product changes can only enhance the emotional value of the experience.

Just like other tourism products religious heritages are one component of the various tourism products of a destination. It has been demonstrated that:

Pilgrimage routes, one constituent of religious heritages, and religious itineraries have become tourism products to which authorities devote their full attention. They allow improvements and substantial benefits for all the communities along the way. Pilgrimages on foot, on bicycle, on horseback or any other mode of non-motorized transport on trails; whether they are carried out for religious, cultural or artistic purposes are much more than mere excursions. They are prepared in advance and their duration is far longer than the travel time. They require physical and spiritual preparation which in itself forms part of the pilgrimage (UNWTO, 2007, P.3).

In line with this, there exist different establishments engaged in serving the demand of the religious tourism market with various products in and around religious tourism destinations.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Tourism Product

The tourism product is peculiar because of its characteristics. Therefore, considerations while designing and developing tourism products tend to be different from those of general products. Tourism Product is a term that covers all the attractions and services, which can be sold to visitors. This product is so diverse in its nature that tourists just visit a town area, an island or an event rather than the whole country (Sajjani, 2011, p. 21).

The tourism product is fundamentally different from other export commodities in that it is the consumer who travels to the product (UNWTO, 1997, p.195). Furthermore, the point of production is also a place of residence and thus the environmental and social impacts of tourism on the host community are of public concern.

On the other hand, the production and marketing of tourism products is not the same as producing and marketing industrial products. The differences are: tourism produces and sells

include experiences which are very intangible; its products cannot be stored (simultaneous production and consumption); the consumption of tourism products involves the active participation of the customer or consumer; tourism production/marketing may often involve major capital assets (airlines, hotel chains, car rental firms); the intermediation, distribution and final consumption stage may often require interaction of different personnel categories (e.g. travel agencies, restaurants, coaches, etc) (OECD, 2006). When a tourist spends his holidays in a destination, he does not consume the products of just one supplier, but a package of services as a whole as there are many suppliers who participate in the creation of a tourism experience.

Sajnani (2007) states that tourist products or destinations may be an integrated product, or well-appointed product or this may just be a theme based destination with other related services. According to him, whatever may be the nature of destination/tourist site its product components would remain the same, i.e., built and natural attractions, tour and packages, services for travelers like shopping, restaurants, accommodation and other recreational activities. He further explains that “it is true that under normal conditions natural attractions cannot be thought of as a product but when we talk about eco-tours in a National Park, this becomes a product. The heritage architecture of a community is not a product, but its interpretation through a guided tour can be seen as a product” (p.21). This therefore, helps to note that tourist attractions are not the only tourist products, rather the destination in its totality need to be visualized with its different characteristics.

2.1.3 Tourism Product Development

Product development, market research and marketing represent an ongoing continuum, necessary to realize a destination’s full potential (Ibid). Tourism product development (TPD) is influenced by a range of variables. Any tourism product development endeavor need to take these factors into account. The variables include:

- Economic
- Technological
- Political
- Demographic
- Globalisation vs. Localisation
- Socio-Environmental Awareness
- Living and Working Environments
- Search for Authentic Experiences
- Marketing
- Safety of Travel (UNWTO & ETC, 2011)

The following are Procedures for TPD as stated by World Tourism Organization and European Tourism commission (2011):

- Market Research
- Market: Product Matching
- Stakeholder Consultation and Collaboration
- Tourism/Product Development Areas
- Flagships/Hubs
- Clusters/Circuits/Events
- Product Portfolio and Investment Plan
- Human Resource Development
- Marketing and Promotion

The other important point in tourism product development discussion is about the key Principles of undertaking it. In this regard, Tourism Product Development should:

- Be authentic and indigenous reflecting the unique attributes of the destination.
- Have the support of the host community.
- Respect the natural and socio-cultural environments by not damaging these in any way.
- Be differentiated from competitors, avoid “me too/ copy cut” developments.
- Be of sufficient scale to make a significant economic contribution, but not so large as to create high economic leakage (Ibid).

The concept of religious tourism product development is more or less similar with that of tourism product development and hence follows similar pattern as is in the above discussion. This is so because religious tourism products can be categorized under the broad and cumulative tourism product. It has to be noted that this does not mean religious tourism products are exactly the same with other tourism products. But the concept of product development can be applied for religious tourism products by taking unique characteristics of the religious segment of tourism into account. Just to indicate a point on the special characteristics of religious tourism product, Sajnani (2011) says:

Religious tourism products are not like leisure tourism products which are primarily targeted at the segment with plenty of disposable incomes. Moreover, tourists buying leisure tourism products desire a variety of recreational resumes at the destination.

Whereas in the case of religious tourism product, core and supporting products remain the same, only the location changes (P.71).

More to the point, Sajnani (2011) suggests for religious product developers that they should keep the following considerations to be successful:

- a) Holistic approach should be adopted;
- b) All segments of users should be taken care of;
- c) Pricing should be moderately done;
- d) Infrastructural support should be provided;
- e) Environmental and cultural values should be preserved;
- f) Packages should be designed combining one or more of the religious products

2.2 Religious Tourism

There is considerable debate about what is meant by religious tourism. As a starting point, we can turn to the definition of tourism as set out by the World Tourism Organisation: 'The activities of persons travelling to, and staying in, places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes'. Religious tourists clearly fit into this definition, since they involve the decision to travel from home with the intention of returning to it within a given time period (i.e. less than a year) for 'other purposes', that is, incorporating religious motivations (Blackwell, 2007).

In the religious tourism literature, it is not surprising to find different definitions provided for religious tourism like pilgrimage, spiritual tourism, cultural tourism, and so on. After having reviewed different studies on religious tourism (Cohen, 2001; Haab, 1996; Montaner Montejano, 1996; Murray and Graham, 1997; Petrilo, 2003 and Smith, 2003), Richards and Fernandes (2007) concluded that the concept is far from clear and a number of different concepts like: pilgrimage, pilgrim-tourists, spiritual tourism, cultural tourism, creative tourism and holistic tourism may be grouped under the term religious tourism or may be closely related to it. According to them, the growing diversity of the concept also underlines the potential for future growth.

Likewise, according to Olsen and Timothy (2006), "Religious tourism includes pilgrimages and visits to specific religious events, as well as visits made to churches, cathedrals and shrines

primarily for their cultural or historical (as opposed to religious) significance.” Pilgrimage is one of the oldest forms of tourism and is an integral component of the tourism industry. It is defined as a journey made by a pilgrim, who travels from place to place, usually journeying a long distance and to a sacred place as an act of devotion (Onions, 1983), though it can still be defined from differing viewpoints. Pilgrimage was done and is being done to cure an illness, to escape bad luck, or just to redeem a sin (Stoykova, 2008). Describing the link between religious tourism and pilgrimage, Shinde says, “Religious tourism is a natural progression of the ritualised pilgrimage economy, influenced by the changes in socio-economic, religious and cultural activities that accompany contemporary pilgrimage practices” (2010). Closer to this idea is Rinschede’s view that religious tourism is a term widely used in theory and practice to refer to contemporary travel patterns to pilgrimage sites (1992).

Religious tourism is considered to be a ‘specific type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons’ (Rinschede, 1992, p. 52). For instance, Stoykova states, “whether under the influence of religious beliefs or plain curiosity toward their own or the faith of others, people from all over the world travel to visit the holy places” (2008).

Olsen (2008) defined religious tourism as travel by tourists to religious destinations, cultures and sites regardless of motivation, whether the visits to these sites are of primary or secondary interest. His justification to define it as such is that there are many people who visit religious sites for cultural and historical interests rather than the search for religious meaning and at the same time, he argued, tourists who are not initially motivated to travel to religious sites in search for religious meaning can also have religious experiences while at these religious sites. He therefore, perceived it without limiting the definition to tourism industry perspective i.e. based on the sites visited and activities engaged and also to a religious perspective that is based on the motivations of travelers. He rather gave a comprehensive definition for the concept.

Scholars concur that religious tourism is multilayered and involves multi-functional and multi-purpose trips (Kaur, 1985; Nolan and Nolan, 1992). Simultaneously, it is a ‘niche’ market as well as one of the largest contributors to tourist flows (Shinde, 2010).

Nowadays, People are no longer satisfied with passive experience, rather they increasingly want to learn and be actively involved which implies, in the case of religious attractions, that visitors want to know more about the background of the site or event, but that they also want to be actively involved in the religious or spiritual life of the place they are visiting (Richards and Fernandes, 2007). In support of this notion, Gupta (1999) notes that, “religious tourism entails more than visual aspects; it is a participatory process. It is not only about visiting a sacred site but also visiting in a certain manner (socially and culturally) that works on knowledge of religious procedures and protocols.”

The promotion of religious tourism today, seen as both devotional and cultural, is proof of the existence of a common search for authenticity at different levels of depth and involvement in both pilgrim and tourist (Swatos, 1998). The modern individual is seeking transcendental values to overcome the fragments, the discontinuity, of modern society and that he or she is the "pilgrim tourist" of modern times. There will be some tourists having similar experiences, and embarking on journeys for similar reasons as pilgrims. Likewise, there may also be pilgrims travelling for reasons all but indistinguishable from some tourists (Norman, 2004). Generally, one can notice multiple and changing motivations of the traveler whose interests and activities may switch from tourism to pilgrimage and vice versa, even without the individual being aware of the change and hence it is becoming more difficult to differentiate between pilgrims and tourists (Kreiner and Kliot, 2000).

By and large, religious tourism can be defined as a special tourist activity orientated by religious culture, with the help of specific eco-cultural environment, and it refers to such special tourist activities as worshipping, research, sightseeing and culture carried out by religious followers and lay tourists (Zhang Mu, Huang Li, Wang Jian-hong, Liu Ji, Jie Yan-geng and Lai Xiting, 2007). The existing situation in a world is that,

Religious tourism is becoming internationalized; whereas this kind of tourism was previously a largely domestic phenomenon, it now involves different nationalities and even—in certain destinations—different spiritualities and religions. The spectacular development of religious tourism destinations over the past thirty years has allowed pilgrimages to regain the prominence they enjoyed in the past, making it possible for religious gatherings to attract tens of millions of persons and for pilgrimage routes and

religious itineraries to once again play their role as links among peoples and nations. But lifestyles have changed, and many modern pilgrimages are now motivated by secular (education and culture) and touristic purposes (UNWTO, 2007, P.1-2).

2.2.1 Contributions and Challenges of Religious Tourism

As it is known, tourism is one of the most profitable economic sectors in the world. Without doubt, the contemporary tourism industry offers the opportunity to develop religious tourism as a comprehensive product. Although many are led by their spirituality and faith, religious tourists travel far away from their homes and require all the conveniences for their travel, food, and shelter (Stoykova, 2008). They often purchase souvenirs during their travels. Hence, they spend money when they travel. Stoykova has listed some of the benefits obtained from religious tourism as under:

- It is proven that the villages located near the sacred grounds note an increase of economic development—more available employment opportunities for the locals, an increase in communication services, and an income increase.
- Religious communities and their connection to the holy grounds do not exist in seclusion. The communities located near the holy grounds need the financial revenues from sacred tourism as much as the religious organizations need the support of society.
- Religious tourism needs mediators, tourist agencies, and tour operators, which would provide services and would satisfy the specific needs of travelers.
- Meanwhile, the religious sites need the revenues that come from offering a number of religious “attractions” in the form of gifts. Various religious items could be freely purchased on the sites: sacred icons, books, souvenirs, cards, and candles.
- Tourists pay entrance fee to visit some places and often make voluntary donation while they are in the place. Often, people are told to throw coins in a fountain or to deposit a sponsorship sum for good luck. Those are important revenue sources for each religious site, and they are often the main resources for maintenance and renovation.
- An important role for the development of local economy plays near the souvenirs shop. Items with religious symbolism have always been among the most valuable presents, especially if they come from special places with unique significance.

- Usually, tourists visit nearby museums and purchase original hand-made articles from local artists.
- Food industry, grocery stores, coffee shops, and restaurants thrive in such places as well. The number of visitors to shelters—hotels, inns, and camping grounds—increases as well.
- Serious investment in the advertisement, distribution, and dissemination of information and brochures can make a very big difference as well. (2008)

Tourism offers religious sites more than visitors and financial opportunities: it brings a wide and potentially receptive audience. According to Rotherham, “visitors to religious sites may become ‘converts’ and this is important to many faiths. There is also opportunity to extend understanding and awareness of faith and heritage to a wider audience” (2007). Some of the cultural benefits of the development of such a type of tourism must be sought in the protection of cultural values, making locals more tolerant and understanding of the diversity of visitors, becoming more aware of any cultural and religious differences, physical disabilities, and decreasing discrimination in general (Stoykova, 2008).

On the other hand, due to its dimensions and diverse forms (pilgrimages, gatherings, visits to sanctuaries, spiritual journeys, etc.), religious tourism presents economic and social challenges for territories as stated by UNWTO (2007). These include:

- The challenge to reconcile the commercial needs of the tourism industry with the spiritual and religious needs of pilgrimages and the faithful, while respecting the physical integrity of religious sites and their religious significance. According to Daniel and Sara (20120, “religious tourism creates the challenge of balancing the benefits of tourism and site conservation, while retaining the spirituality of the place”.
- The challenge with modulating entry rights and finding the revenues that will ensure the sustainability of a sanctuary or a monument as well as the welfare of the communities that manage them.

According to Hughes, Bond and Ballantyne, the increasing popularity of religious tourism presents a challenge for managers. “Many sites still serve their religious purpose as places of worship and ceremony, yet they must also cater for the differing and sometimes conflicting

demands of tourists seeking historic and cultural information, architectural insights and/or an entertaining recreational experience” (2012).

2.2.2 Religious Tourism Sites

Religious sites offer visitors a wide variety of experiences including religious services, choir performances, music recitals, and civic and religious ceremonies (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). “Many of the larger sites also have small museums and treasuries open to the public, and most are situated within beautiful historic buildings and landscapes. A visit to a religious heritage site is thus often an aesthetic experience, one that may engage visitors at emotional, physical, intellectual or spiritual levels.” (Hughes et al., 2012)

Religious tourism destination is generally a sacred site, a pilgrimage site or a religious heritage site (Shinde, 2010). It combines two opposite ends of the binary- sacred and profane (Nolan and Nolan, 1992; Smith, 1992).

Religious tourism and the visiting of sacred sites offer experiences to meet both demands. They can cater for those demanding spiritual retreats or provide a priest to accompany a group of pilgrims. On the other hand, they may facilitate understanding of the significance of a particular religious building, perhaps in relation to a living church of relevance to the participant. Alternatively, they can package the religious experience within a tour or study trip, incorporating the broader topics of history and heritage, food, etc. Tourism can simply provide the experience of a guide for an itinerary of artistic and cultural works from religious and sacred places, the locations serving as museums (Rotherham, 2007, P.65).

To say a little about the problems and issues in religious places, based on Rotherham’s argument, many of them are becoming tourism and leisure visitor attractions. And this consideration of religious tourism and the visiting of sacred sites suggest potential for problems. Religious tourism is embedded within a complex of heritage tourism and mass tourism activities. The image of the mass tourist suggests consumption, triviality and leisure: that of the pilgrim is of sobriety and an engagement with deep religious process. What constitutes heritage for one group is conversely a religious place or artifact for another, and there is potential for conflicts of interests and priorities (2007). Religious tourism is therefore placed at the crossroads of two

realities that seem, to a certain extent, irreconcilable and this is the other challenge that has to be dealt with.

Among the difficulties faced and controversial issues raised in religious sites, competition between faiths for a location and heritage, and conflicts between pilgrimage and secular, commercial tourism; the building, shrine, or artifact may have great spiritual value, but a commercial value too. As such, and often in an openly accessible situation, it is vulnerable to theft and to vandalism (Ibid).

Moreover, financial benefits associated with, say, church visiting do not pay for the resource and its management. The church may be is the attraction, but the money is spent in the local cafe, pub or gift shop and, with little reinvestment in presentation or conservation of the site, building or artifact, the situation is not sustainable. There are aspects of sacred site visiting and management already noted that render some problems particularly important. There can be serious conflicts between a desire to keep facilities freely open to religious visitors, a need to raise money to maintain the fabric and the vulnerability of often-remote sites to vandalism, theft and desecration (Rotherham, 2007, P.69-70).

2.3 Sustainable Development of Religious Tourism Products

The goal of sustainable tourism at heritage religious sites is to allow community use and tourism to continue while preserving the sacredness of the place (Daniel and Sara, 2012). Sustainable tourism products are products that use resources in an environmentally responsible, socially fair and economically viable way, so that users of the product can meet their current needs without compromising future generations from being able to use the same resources (UNEP, 2005). Part of developing a destination as a product is to ensure that sustainable values are adopted by all in the tourism industry.

To develop an attractive and sustainable tourism product, Sajnani (2011) advises to consider the following elements:

- Choose authentic themes which reflect the local culture(s) and environment-human relationships,
- Keep development in scale with the community and environment,

- Ensure that developments also meet community needs (e.g., through joint use),
- Develop attractions that are attractive and competitive in the long run, not faddish,
- Require strong community support, do not impose new ideas on an unreceptive population,
- Avoid imitating successful ideas from other places, you must acknowledge that success comes from strong local commitment and enthusiasm and, therefore, act in this direction,
- Choose themes which help position the destination products within sustainable development principles,
- Consider sports; many competitions and fun events can be held using existing facilities,
- Inform all visitors of tourism plans, goals and management approach,
- Ask local associations, and businesses to generate meetings and conventions to the extent permitted by infrastructure, and
- Provide high-quality experiences.

One thing important to note from the above points is that a successful tourism product development requires seamless cooperation between actors in tourism. The presence of high quality cultural assets is not enough to grow a sustainable tourism industry by itself: product and service development, human resource development, marketing and promotion, and market linkages are also vital (Spenceley, 2010).

With particular focus on sustainable religious tourism product development the following need to be considered:

- the measurement and the management of the flow of persons during mega-events,
- the maintenance and rehabilitation of religious and cultural monuments,
- the environmental protection of natural sites where large religious events are held,
- pilgrimage routes and itineraries,
- the health and safety of persons,
- the effective use of new information and communication technologies, and
- the promotion and marketing of new products and services related to this kind of tourism (UNWTO, 2007).

As it is one of the vital components of tourism product development, there are different marketing considerations for Sustainability of Tourism Products. Basically, Sustainable marketing favors the community and its environment and stresses the following:

- Meeting the needs and goals of the community.
- Matching locally supported “products” to appropriate segments.
- Attracting high yield and high quality visitors, not large numbers.
- Cultivating the right image to convey environmentally and culturally sensitive messages by employing unique selling propositions.
- Communicating effectively with and educating all visitors.
- Employing environmental and cultural interpretation.
- Managing the visitor and encouraging the adoption of codes of conduct.
- Achieving efficiency by avoiding high peaks of demand and overuse.
- High quality attractions and services.
- Research into appropriate segments, communication effectiveness and resultant impacts.
- Building repeat trade (Sajjani, 2011).

The considerations put by Sajjani (2011) for tourism products are also relevant and could be applicable with religious tourism products. In this regard, it is also quiet important to note that globalization has opened up religious tourism to a process of commercialization, transforming it into “marketable product” which was not the case in its beginnings (UNWTO, 2007). Owing to this, it must deal with a series of operational problems that can have a negative impact on the sustainability of facilities, the areas travelled on, and above all, on heritage. The other issue is that religious tourism also involves overlapping markets: that of spirituality, that of physical and mental health, that of leisure activities, that of culture, that of short stays and city-break.

To take a look at the main issues associated with sustainability of religious tourism products in a more elaborate way, in pilgrimage sites and destinations, the issues has to do with how to equip and maintain monuments that must be protected and rehabilitated, and the environmental protection of natural sites using access ways and traffic corridors in order to prevent congestion and in order not to exceed carrying capacities. Other issues include the management and promotion of these destinations, the development of a sustainable local economy, and respect for

the traditions and customs of the host populations in a spirit of dialogue and encounter with the other (Ibid).

As for large religious events and gatherings, according to UNWTO (2007), handling and controlling flows and access; ensuring that participants are received and accommodated under good hygienic and public-health conditions; offering food services for participants that observe the dietary rules of their religion; taking care of the safety and security of persons and their property; assistance for the sick, for old people and for children who may get lost; and delivering the necessary information and communication on the programme of the gathering (times of ceremonies, meals, types of meals according to religion and dietary traditions, etc.) are the issues that must be addressed. In addition, pilgrimage routes and religious itineraries require well coordinated partnerships among the communities along the way, host communities, tourism professionals and territorial development authorities.

By and large, the basic needs for sustainability are similar to tourism generally, ranging from trying to make large-scale mass tourism less socially and environmentally damaging to developing low-key, sacred visits to support local communities (Rotherham, 2007) and almost all religious communities are in favor of tourism, because it is a means to generate income in order to sustain their members, to better inform their faithful and the public, to maintain and preserve sanctuaries and monuments, and their natural environment as well (UNWTO, 2007).

2.3.1 Marketing of Religious Tourism Products

In religious tourism, at least three different yet related submarket segments can be identified: cultural tourism, spiritual tourism and religious travel (Shinde, 2010). Cultural tourism revolves around the cultural experience that people want to derive from visiting a religious site, festivals or religious performances. Many government tourism agencies and private tour operators engage in the packaging of tours around pilgrimage circuits and the promotion of festivals and special events as cultural products. The difference between 'spiritual tourism' and 'religious travel' is noticeable. A spiritual quest and volunteering for self-development are essential in spiritual tourism (Ibid). Whereas, religious travel comprises all kinds of travel undertaken for performing rituals required as a part of organised religion (Singh, 2004). This segment of 'living and active religious practices', mainly of domestic travelers, is by far the largest component in religious tourism (Gupta, 1999).

If the market for religious tourism includes the aforementioned segments, the marketing follows the concept 'resource based instead of market led' to be in sustainability framework. When planning products and services, the expectations and values of the chosen customer segment should be taken into account. Along with this, ensuring sustainability is also crucial point. Sustainability denotes authenticity, which in turn suggests that the tourism product should not be changed just to please tourists. But in doing so, tourism products often do not take into account the expectations of tourists and the needs of tour operators (UNEP, 2005).

Tourism product development should be firmly based on market trends and tastes, necessitating sound analysis of the findings of tailored market research, using a 'market: product matching' process to target specific products at clearly identified segments (UNWTO & ETC, 2011). For instance, in Ethiopia, at a national level, international tourist arrival numbers peak in November to January. Outside Addis Ababa, tourist destinations are much more dependent upon the leisure market and, as a result, have a much stronger seasonal pattern of international tourist arrivals (Mitchell and Coles, 2009). Therefore, tourism product development activities in the country need to take this into account.

Market research has a number of important aims like: understanding what the existing and potential visitors want in terms of benefits and experiences, products and services, identifying the appropriate target market segments, matching products to potential market segments, knowing what the competition is doing, and understanding the relative importance of all elements in the marketing mix (Sajjani, 2011). It is not sufficient to know that demand for a product or experience exists. It must be shown through research and a feasibility study that a proposed development can capture an adequate share of the market. Many good ideas fail because of mistaken assumptions that demand follows supply. Segmentation and selecting target markets is a crucial part of this process because demand will come from specific segments of the global marketplace. Because sustainable tourism marketing is the opposite of mass marketing, extra care must be taken to identify and attract appropriate market segments. Marketing and management bodies of religious tourism destinations are in the process of adopting strategies to protect and to better manage their religious heritage, in accordance with their resources and potential (UNWTO, 2007).

Ethiopia has a diverse variety of natural, cultural and historical attractions (Mitchell and Coles, 2009; Ayalew, 2009 & Mulugeta, 2012) According to Mitchell and Coles (2009), the tour products available in Ethiopia fall broadly into the following categories:

- Addis Ababa city tours;
- Short (one or two day) excursions from Addis Ababa (estimating that there is a latent market of around 20% of business tourists, approximately 38,693 per annum, who wish to undertake excursions from the capital);
- Historical (Northern Historical Circuit) tours of 5 to 14 days;
- Cultural (Southern Circuit) tours of 5 to 14 days; and
- Speciality tours (ecotourism, trekking, Eastern and Western minority destinations).

Tours outside the Northern Historical and Southern circuits tend to be additions to the itineraries of visitors who undertake one of the longer circuit tours and leisure tourists tend to stay in Ethiopia from 7 to 20 days (averaging 14.8 days) but stays of 21 days or more are becoming more common (Ibid).

In Ethiopia, domestic tourism accounts for approximately 20% of the tourist market, and probably produces many tourists as international tourism (Mitchell and Coles, 2009). Domestic tourism is predominantly business tourism in Addis Ababa, but increasingly has a leisure and religious dimension. Mitchell and Coles further state that;

Leisure tourism is important to Ethiopia because, although it involves very small numbers of tourists (27,000 arrivals equates to approximately 74 arrivals per day), leisure tourists visit the country for relatively long periods (14.8 days) and have a high daily spend (US\$127), primarily because of the high daily costs of travelling in 4x4 vehicles. Equally as important, leisure tourists spend most of their time outside Addis Ababa in some of the poorest and most remote parts of the country (2009, P.73).

As a destination, Ethiopia is largely unknown; many of its visitors have existing links to the country and are already aware of its tourism potential. For many, the chief sources of information about Ethiopia are NGOs and the international media, from which they derive perspectives based upon the country in a context of conflict, famine and underdevelopment

(Ibid). In this regard, marketing plays key role in order to promote the positive image of the country and hence that of the religious tourism products.

Nowadays, new technologies have resulted in the development of new skills, new materials, new services, and new forms of organization (OECD, 2006). In tourism, technology has created a new form of business called “e-tourism”, which is today the most successful form of “e-commerce” according to OECD. New information services for guests emerged as databases made it easier to process customer profiles and behavior, and as well new forms of network organisation also emerged particularly in the field of cooperative tourism marketing, assisted by new technologies.

2.3.2 Provision of Signage and Interpretation

Interpretation is a form of communication that helps people understand the heritage being visited. It is a vital component of tourism product that helps in enhancing public religious tourism products through different visual modes and hence laying the ground for enhancement of the current offer of the destination by starting to put the religious tourism product development ideas in place. As said by Sajnani (2011), interpretation takes the story of a community and relates it to the tourists’ first-hand experiences with objects, artifacts, landscapes or sites. “Through techniques such as models, diagrams, analogies, stories and illustrations, interpretation makes connections between visitors’ prior experiences and the new information being presented. In essence, it helps to bridge the gap between what tourists already know and what they want to know” (Hughes et al., 2012).

Successful tourism destinations develop interpretive programmes both to ensure that visitors are better informed about the destination and its culture as well as to help them to be better prepared to respect social and environmental issues in a community. It represents a tool for managing tourism and tourists. If there are places or ceremonies that are considered private and inappropriate for tourists, interpreting the reasons behind may make tourists more considerate and willing to observe the destination communities’ wishes (Sajnani, 2011).

Interpretation can range from the simple use of signage or brochures to the development of interpretive centres to the creation of heritage trails. The most common modes of interpretation, as stated by Sajnani (2011), are:

- Publications
- Maps
- Brochures
- Magazines
- Booklets
- Heritage trails
- Guide certification courses
- Tours
- Display panels/display cases
- Festivals
- Performances/re-enactments
- Audio-visual presentations:
 - Slides
 - Video
 - Virtual reality displays
 - Multimedia shows (e.g., light and sound shows)
- Interpretive centers / museums.

Hughes et al. (2012) indicate the importance of providing ‘balanced’ interpretation; interpretation that explains the religious as well as the secular aspects and features of religious sites. According to them, stories about the site’s architecture, history, artwork and people should be integrated with messages that explain how the spiritual nature of the site finds expression in the physical structure. “In this way, interpretation should appeal to and cater for both religious and secular visitors to religious sites. This will enable religious sites to attract and satisfy a wide range of tourists, thereby ensuring their long-term viability and competitiveness as tourist attractions”.

2.4 Religious Tourism and Monastic life in Ethiopia

2.4.1 Monastic life in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC)

Ethiopia is home to numerous churches and monasteries (out of the 35 thousand parish churches above one thousand are monasteries). The establishment of monasteries goes back to the end of the 5th century (“The Church of Ethiopia past and Present”, 1997).

Monastic life is divided into communal and private monastic life (Ibid). In communal monastic life the whole monastic order works together, eats together, prays together and renders services together. Among the many rules and regulations; owning personal property, staying idle without prayer and work, going outside without permission from the monastic association, eating beyond the type and quantity of food permitted, becoming a slave of secular desire and the like are not the distinguishing mark of monastic life. Among these people of ascetic life, those who attained

a spiritual life as complete as possible may by permission and blessing of the monastic association and without isolating themselves from the communal monastery could live a life of seclusion restricted to one place. It is also important to remember that there are places of asceticism where except roots and fruits no other food is tasted. A private monastic life differs in that a certain measure of private property is permitted. “Otherwise as there is no difference in the life of the asceticism, there is no special account to make about the private monasteries”.

There are times when persons appear dressed in a special way and live in some caves found at a distance from the communal monastery. People call these hermits anchorites. Hermits are hidden persons who live far away from people in solitude. “When seen their appearance is overpowering. Since people know this secret when they find skeletons, books, cross- ended support sticks and fly whisks; littered on the ground in the wilderness they recognize that these are the remains of these saints” Ibid. In the light of these, the so far being discussed sustainability issues become very imperative in the development of a tourism product in this kind of monastery setup or culture.

With regards to the Contributions of Monasteries to Ethiopian Society, although monasteries are places of asceticism, their services to the society and country have never been limited to praying. They have since long been serving as sources of literate education, church music and of the study of the Holy Book. They were also among other things school of arts, museums of relics and libraries, biodiversity conservation areas and thus it is difficult to estimate the value of services given by the monasteries to the Ethiopian people. They have also contributed a lot for the development of tourism in the country (“The Church of Ethiopia past and Present”, 1997).

2.4.2 Pilgrimage Tourism in Ethiopia

On the work ‘Practices and behaviors of pilgrims: An Anthropological study of the December pilgrimage to Kulubi St. Gabriel Church’ Maryamawit (2012) stated, Pilgrimage has been practiced in Ethiopia since the ancient times. “Most pilgrimages are conducted to monasteries, historical sites and sacred patrons by pilgrims or tourists”. An indicative sentence by Levine on the pilgrimage culture in Ethiopia reads, “Pilgrimage constitutes another common feature of the sacred calendars of Ethiopians and that the inclination to go on pilgrimages is a notable pan-

Ethiopian trait” (Levine, 1974, P.50). The huge domestic religious tourism potential that exists in the country is therefore apparent.

The Church of St Gabriel near the town of Kulubi, monastery of Debre Damo, monastery of Gishen Mariam, Lake Tana monasteries, rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Abreha Atsebeha shrine near Wukro, ancient temple of Yeha, rock-hewn churches of the Gheralta region near Hawzen are some of the important Ethiopian Orthodox religious tourism sites. For Muslims, the tomb of Sheikh Hussein in Bale, Nejash Mosque, Mosques in and around Harar and others can be mentioned as important pilgrimage sites. Alongside these irreplaceable religious heritage, there are also many religious festivals of a paramount significance in religious tourism such as; timket, meskel, kulubi Gabriel, Axum Tsion, Gishen Maryam, Easter, etc. just to mention a few.

2.5 Conceptual Framework



Figure : Conceptual Framework (Source: Adopted and modified from UNWTO, 2011)

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Debre Libanos Monastery is located in Oromia region North Shewa zone at about 104 km North of Addis Ababa on the main road to Bahirdar and 40 km from Fiche town, the zonal capital. The monastery is found after spinning eastwards from the highway and traveling 4.5 km. In absolute location, the monastery is located at $09^{\circ}41'$ North and $38^{\circ}51'$ East.

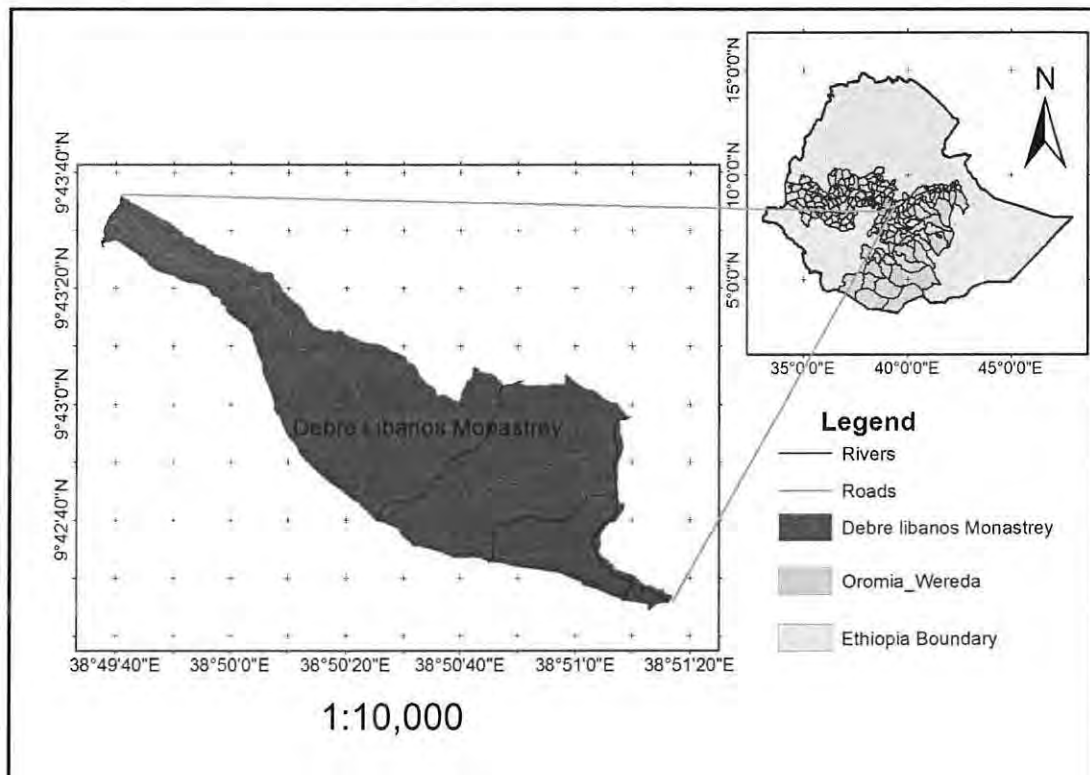


Figure : Map of Debre Libanos Monastery (Mahibere Kidusan, 2004 E.C)

It is found in the altitudinal range of 2,200m-2,600 m.a.s.l, the average being 2400 and thus, weyna dega (warm to cool semi-humid) type of climate. The vegetation of the area has been one of the dry Afromontane forest in Ethiopia that has been very recently explored. The area has densely wooded vegetation. The forest serves as a habitat to wild life. The monastery and the

peri-urban communities use the forestland for recreational, collection of wood for fuel, income generation purposes and so on.

With regards to topography, the forest area is characterized by a rolling topography, and is highly dissected by small streams and two major rivers, Daga and Chagel. The landform surfaces on the top of plateau to very steep slopes and valley bottoms within short distances. To see at the climatic condition, generally, the forest area is warm and humid. The annual average maximum and minimum temperature of the study area is 23°C and 15°C, respectively. The annual average rainfall is 1200 mm and climate varies due to the variation in altitude.

3.2 Research Design

The multi disciplinary character of tourism means that many different methodologies and techniques are employed by researchers (Potter, 2000). In order to achieve the stated objectives, this study employed a mixed method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, in an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering the research questions, with high priority or weight given to qualitative approach.

Recognizing the value of using multi-methods for the substantiation of findings and for enhancing the validity of data, a triangulated method of data collection including questionnaire, interview, observation, and focus group discussion were used and this was mainly to gather primary data. Though they are different, they came to complement each other. The idea of employing more than one method stem from the fact that the various methods contain their own set of assumptions about the kind of data that could be produced. The study also used, to less extent, informal conversations, participatory methods and secondary sources like web pages, journal articles, and project papers to collect data. With regard to sampling techniques, both probability and non-probability sampling were employed in different instances.

3.3 Sources of Data for Each Data Type

The study used both primary and secondary data sources. The population of this study mainly comprised stakeholders of religious tourism in the monastery and its surroundings. These included: the monastic community, visitors, tour guides, culture and tourism office, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tourism and Heritage Section, hoteliers, tour and travel operations, NGOs and associations. These were the population base from which sample was selected.

3.4 Instruments, Samples and Sampling Techniques

The qualitative methods were key informant interview, focus group discussion and observation. The quantitative methods included community and visitor questionnaires.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The communities at the monastery having direct influence on the religious tourism activities in the area have been categorized into two for this study. The one and the major subjects for this study were those monastic communities living under the monastery administration and the other ones were the community settled at a kebele called Wusha Gedel within the boundary of the monastery. After the frequent discussion held with the kebele administration and also some elders in the village on how to represent the Wusha Gedel community in the study, it was decided to take sample respondents from the literate community members. In this regard, elementary school teachers and health extension workers in the area were found to be the appropriate subjects for the study and they were totally 24 in number and 15 of them were randomly chosen to be in the sample.

As regards the monastic community administered under the monastery rule, it was not possible to obtain the sample frame and as a result, after frequent discussion with the monastery's Magabi (Official responsible for practical matters) office, it was sought to purposively choose heads (or other members in some cases through discussion with their respective heads) of the different sections or organizations in the monastery and the number of respondents randomly chosen from those sections added up to 30 respondents. Besides, it was found important to select higher proportion of respondents from the higher level school in the monastery which is the school of commentaries because of their level of education. Accordingly, 15 respondents were randomly selected to fill up the questionnaire. All in all, the total sample size from the community was 60 individuals for which structured questionnaires with both open ended and close-ended questions were administered.

The other instrument used to collect data was the visitor questionnaire. Due to the lack of a usable sampling frame and the high cost of creating one from scratch it was impossible to determine a highly reliable sample size. It was rather decided to select 50 visitors by purposive and convenience techniques and this was so owing to the difficulty of getting easy access to visitors in the huge and sacred festival and fasting times. This sample size was found to be

convenient to manage and in order to make it more reliable, the questionnaires were distributed in different sites and also at different times. It was administered mainly during the January festival of St. Tekle Haymanot and also during the main fasting period following that. This was also the season in which larger numbers of visitors come to the country as it is the peak season in Ethiopia with regard to tourist flow. Different attractions sites in the monastery including the Church and the museum, and the Lodges in the area were the sites where visitors were provided with the questionnaires.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interview

A semi-structured interview was used due to the freedom of sequencing questions and modifying them. It included both open-ended and close-ended questions. The semi structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with purposively selected informants selected based on their knowledge, experience, expertise and involvement with the tourism sector in the study area. In other words, they were selected based on their ability to contribute to the overall research objectives. Accordingly, a total of 16 key informant interviews were conducted. Of those who were interviewed, 4 were managers of hotel and lodge establishments, 6 were experts from the zonal culture and tourism office, and 2 were the monastery guides, of which one is museum manager as well. There was one interviewee each from EOTC heritage department, local elder, tourism scholar and tour lecturer of a tour operation based in Addis Ababa and another from an NGO operating in the study area.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

It was employed to gather qualitative primary data. One focus group discussion was conducted with Derara Tour Guides association, an association organized around the bridge at Debre Libanos. Obviously, the issues addressed the stated objectives of the research.



Figure : Focus Group Discussion with tour guides (Source: own survey 2013)

3.4.4 Observation

It was conducted through observation notes and comment sheets to collect data while observing. It was vital to explore the underlying meaning behind the opinion of informants. The observation embraced the Churches and monasteries in and around Debre Libanos monastery, Debbis cave expedition, Holly water sites, Cemetery areas, Settlement areas, Facilities and infrastructure, Schools, Museum, Festivals, the natural environment, tours and other attractions and amenities in and around. In order to accomplish this task, observation checklist, photographs, informal conversations and participatory methods were used wherever it was appropriate.

3.5 Method of Analysis

SPSS software was made use of for data analysis. The result of the analysis was then interpreted and discussed using descriptive statistics. Narration was also used to analyze and interpret the qualitative data. The results of the study are presented using pictures, tables, and charts.

3.6 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The total sample size for the study, other than the key informant interview and focus group discussion, was 110. Out of this, 60 questionnaires were distributed to the community living within the boundary of the monastery and 50 distinct questionnaires were distributed to visitors. From these distributed questionnaires it was possible to collect back 53 and 45 acceptably filled questionnaires from the community and visitors respectively.

Among the respondents from the community who were provided with a structured questionnaire to assess their views towards religious tourism product development in the area, 84.9% were males and 15.1% were females. 35.8% fall between the age category of 26-35 years whereas 34% of them are in between 18-25 years of age, these two age categories counting the majority. From visitors side, male respondents were 73.3% and females were 26.7% and their age range comprise 46.7% in the category 26-35 years, 31.1% in between 18-25 years, 13.3% in 46 years or older and 8.9% lying in the age range of 36-45 years. As noted, the respondents were generally well spread across age and gender.

As to community respondents' length of residence in the area, of those not coded as missing, 60.8% have been living for less than 10 years and 37.3% had lived for more than 10 years. The

least percentage, 2%, was that of persons who have been in the area since their birth. This implies that a considerable percentage of respondents were long time members of the monastic community in the sense that there is no marriage and birth in Ethiopian monasteries as a result of which the number of those who lived since they were born is insignificant. With regard to ordination level of respondents from the community, the data portrayed 58.5% were ordained from Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church by being monks (15.1%) and deacons (43.4%). It is the traditional church education that was responded by most (39.6%) to be their highest educational qualification while vocational or college diploma(28.3%), some high school(7.5%), primary school and church education(7.5%), high school and church education(5.7%), primary school(5.7%) and first degree or above(3.8%) were replied by the respective percentage of respondents as their highest educational qualification and the least, 1.9%, said not at all.

The data obtained regarding visitors' highest educational qualification showed 46.7% vocational or college diploma, 17.8% some high school, 15.6% primary school, 13.3% first degree or above and 6.7% church education. The religious affiliation of those subjects was also different encompassing mainly Ethiopian Orthodox (82.2%). In the respondent profile of visitors there were no domestic visitors with religion other than Ethiopian Orthodox. But it was observed that domestic people of different religious background came to attend funeral ceremonies. However, foreign tourists from different religions like Catholic, Protestant, Buddhism, Evangelic and others were subject of this study though not many.

As regards monastic communities' major means of living, out of those not coded as missing, 49% were dependent on the monastery and the rest had different means of living.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SALIENT FEATURES OF DEBRE LIBANOS FOR RELIGIOUS
TOURISM

4.1 Stakeholders' Perception of the Monastery as a Potential Religious Tourism Destination

Visitors' perception of Debre Libanos Monastery as a potential religious tourism destination was assessed in terms of their opinion regarding whether it is a nice or attractive place or not, whether it can be enhanced to a better state or not and if it is not totally recommendable site for religious tourism or not. The result has thus revealed that the monastery is a nice place that has to be visited by everyone be they believers of Ethiopian Orthodox or not with the highest value (M=4.29, S.D=1.100). The monastic community were also in agreement with this point with M=3.96 and S.D=1.596. But, a non overlooked response (M=3.08, S.D=1.674) from the community replied that the monastery should not attract and serve tourists having a purpose other than something religious or spiritual. Potential wise, visitors said the site can be improved to better religious tourism destination (M=3.89, S.D=1.210). The output (M=2.4, S.D=.986) still reveals that it is not a less attractive religious tourism site and it is not also totally non recommendable site for religious tourism (M=1.53, S.D=.869) from the visitors' point of view. The table below gives summarized information.

Table : Visitors' and communities' perception of the monastery as a potential religious tourism destination

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Perception of visitors					
The monastery is a nice place that has to be visited by everyone	45	1	5	4.29	1.100
The site has potential to be improved to better religious tourism destination	45	1	5	3.89	1.210
It is less attractive religious tourism site	45	1	4	2.40	.986
It is totally not recommendable site for religious tourism	45	1	5	1.53	.869
Valid N (list wise)	45				
Communities' perception					
Perceive the monastery is a nice place that has to be visited by believers or non believers	53	1	5	3.96	1.519
The monastery should not attract and serve tourists having a purpose other than something religious or spiritual	53	1	5	3.08	1.674
Valid N (list wise)	53				

Source: Own survey, January 2013

From the interviews made with government officials, tourism professionals and tourism service providers as well as the church administration it was obtained that the monastery is a high tourist potential site in terms of the topography, history, the plant species, the festivals and the like. It is said to be one among the famous tourist potential sites in Oromia region and particularly North Shewa Zone. Though the monastery is endowed with a remarkable religious tourism potential, said the stakeholders, the religious tourism product development being done is not to the level it ought to have. Many reasons were put by respondents for this problem which will be discussed in the forthcoming sections. It was also said that the monastery can attract and serve visitors, be they believers or not.

4.2 Key Attractions, Uniqueness, Outstanding Attributes and Appealing Religious Activities of the Site

The Key attractions of the monastery and its environs

The Landscape or Topography: The magnificently scenic beauty of the landscape makes Debre Libanos one of the best places one can visit within the radius of 100 km from the capital Addis. It is ideal for landscape viewing, film-making, mountain climbing, parachute and so on.



Figure : View of the landscape at Debre Libanos (Source: own survey, 2013)

The Forest: Debre Libanos monastery is in the middle of a forest. The monastery's forest



resource is one of the few dry Afro-mountain types of forest in the country and currently there are about 45 species of plants in the monastery (Mahibere Kidusan, 2004 E.C). *Olea europea* (Weyra) is one of the indigenous trees in the monastery.

Figure : Debre Libanos Forest (Source: own survey, 2013)

The area boasts a rare grove of trees that have disappeared from elsewhere in the region and also medicinal plants exist in the area.

Birds and mammals:

The area is a good place for raptors and a few endemics can also be seen including the White-billed Starling, Banded Barbet, Abyssinian Woodpecker, White-backed Tit and Abyssinian Oriole. Others such as Erckel's Francolin, Lammergeier, Black Eagle, Ruppell's, Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures along with Tawny and Steppe Eagles can easily be seen in the area.



Figure : Lammergeier (Source: www.ethiopianbirding.com)

In Jemma Valley, home to the range-restricted endemic Harwood's Francolin, one can comfortably see over 250 bird species that include a list of birds that are range restricted such as Erckel's Francolin, Red-billed Pytilia, Fox Kestrel, Black-faced Firefinch, White-throated Seedeater, Abyssinian Black Wheatear, Ruppell's Chat and White-billed Starling (Ethiopian



Birding). One of Ethiopia's endemic mammals, the Chelada or bleeding heart baboon is also seen in the area.

Figure : Chelada Baboon (Source: own survey)

Jema River: There are four rivers and numerous streams in the area. Jemma River is one among these and it is one of the tributaries of the Nile. Crocodiles are one among the marine life of it.

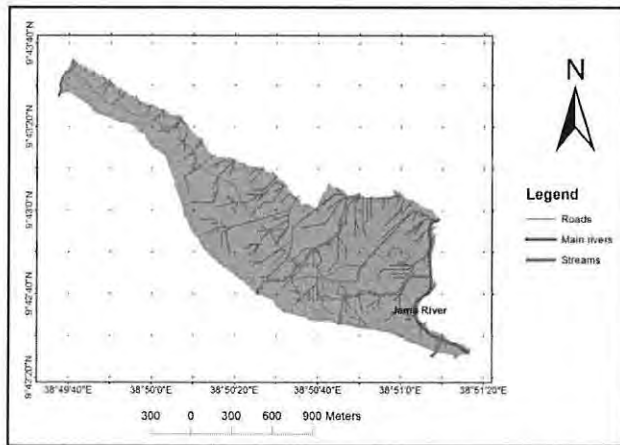


Figure :Debre Libanos Monastery Drainage Map (Source: Mahibere Kidusan, 2004 E.C)



Figure : Jema River (Source: Own survey)

Waterfalls: There are more than three waterfalls in the area. They are so attractive during the rainy season, for about five months in a year, but they are waterless in the dry seasons.

Debre Asbo cave:

According to ‘YeEthiopia Berhan Kidus Tekle Haymanot Gedlena Tarik’ (2004 E.C), it is the cave where Saint Tekle Haymanot used to pray for 29 years and after His death it was a place where His sacred body rested for 57 years. This cave contains a spring, whose water is considered Holy Water (Tsebel), Some of the holy water is directed down from the cave to a public building, where people go to bathe in the Tsebel and also to collect in bottles for drinking. The cave is an important destination of pilgrims.



Figure : Debre Asbo cave (Source: Own survey, 2013)

Debbis/Gemb Cave:

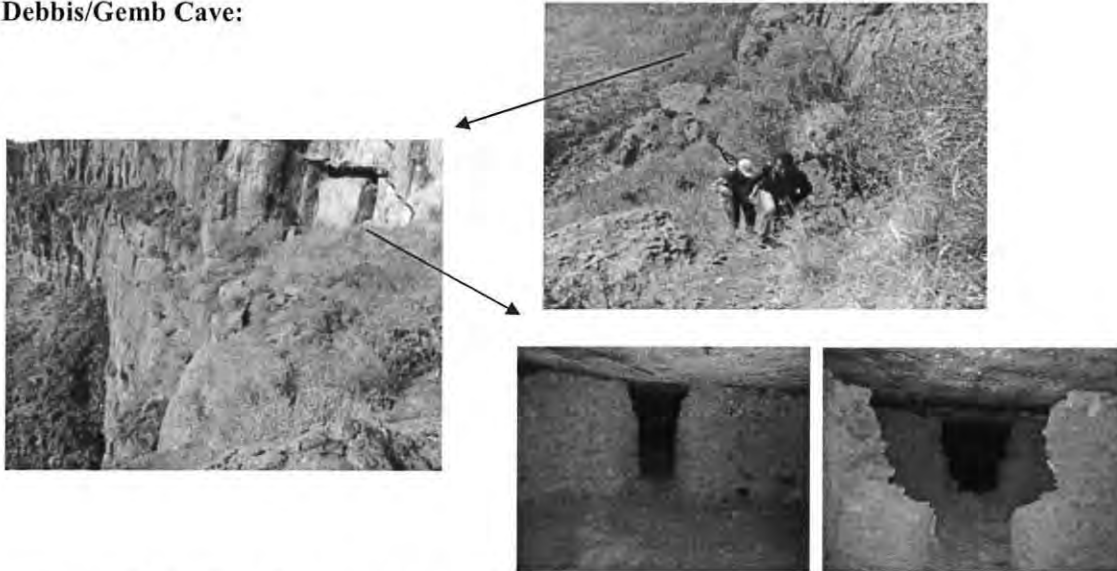


Figure : Debbis Cave (Source: own survey, 2013)

This cave is a historical cave used as a fortress during Italian occupation and it is said to be constructed by Ras Darge Sahle Silase. Different rulers like Ras Kassa, Ras Darge and even Emperor Minilik was said to fortify in the cave according to the local informants, but the history needs to be well studied. It is a wide natural cave modified by human being. It was divided into separate rooms by the still standing manmade structures built inside. It has currently four separate rooms. According to a local elder who was the key informant from the area, two of them were sleeping rooms, one for the ruler and his family and the other for guests. These rooms are approximately 8m by 8m wide and 2.20 m high. Their gates are facing each other and are 0.85m wide. The other room which is about 13m by 13m wide, 1.8m high and 0.76m gate width was said to be store room and the other one found as you get into the cave was said to be dining room. It has about 33m length from the main gate, which is 1.1m wide, up to the corridor. The corridor is 6m long and 2m wide. Totally, the cave is about 51 meters long. The ruins of the building seen in the front part of the cave testify that there were more rooms used for different purposes like kitchen, room for the armed force to make protections or defense, and so on.

The cave is found in a short distance from the bridge at Debre Libanos (Portuguese bridge) to the east direction. In the dry season one can easily walk to the place where the cave is found in few minutes. But, it is quite hard in the rainy season. It is an interesting experience when travelling

down the cliff to the cave site which is in the middle part of the straight standing cliff land. There at the front of the cave entrance is a good vantage point to view the scenic landscape combined with the rural settlement down in the gorge, the Jema river, agricultural lands and churches including Debre Libanos Abune Tekle Haymanot church. In a nearer distance from the cave is also an ideal site for parachute jumpers. On a flat rock structure just in front of the cave, visitors can gate rest and eat some snack while viewing the landscape.

It is however undeveloped cave where there is no electric light and the cleanliness was yet to be improved and bats dwell inside and some other wild animals could also get inside as the safety was yet to be ensured. The assumption that some war armaments and other valuable items might have buried inside the cave had exposed it to destruction by the locals as a result of which part of it was damaged.

There is another cave, said to be much wider and having a lake inside it, waiting to be explored and surveyed just on top of the cave described above. It was mentioned by local informants that predators dwell in it.

Beside these caves, Baboons' dwelling caves are also the other important tourist attractions in the area.

The Bridge at Debre Libanos:

It is an old stone bridge near the monastery of Debre Libanos, located at the head of a gorge that



Figure : The Bridge at Debre Libanos (Source: own survey)

cleaves its way through the plateau towards the distant Blue Nile (Abay) river. It is referred by the locals as the 'Portuguese bridge'. Though there are arguments and uncertainty on who built it and when it was built, according to an elderly local informant, it is said to be built in the 16th century and the restoration of an already existing bridge was carried out under Ras Darge Sahla

Sellasie, an uncle of Emperor Menelik (r1889-1913), when he was the regional governor. The bridge had also been through maintenance in recent times.

If indeed the bridge is four century old or even less, it would still remain as an impressive testimony to masonry skills enduring in the country that were inherited from the much earlier Gondarine period (Stephen Bell, 2003). From bank to bank it is 33 metres long, ten metres high above the perennial stream, and of three arches. The largest and central arch spans two large boulders, pillars which nature has helpfully provided across the stream bed. Low castellations line the 2.75 metre roadway on top. So skillfully has the bridge been built that, in places, it is hard to see where its masonry meets with the natural rock beneath (Ibid). There are also pools and waterfall close to the bridge.

History of Saint Tekle Haymanot Monastery of Debre Libanos:

This part deals with brief account of the Saint and the monastery mainly cited, along with verification, from the official website of St. Tekle Haymanot Coptic Orthodox Church. Here, it is only intended to present the history as it is put on the hagiography of Saint Tekle Haymanot, as it was observed being told by religious scholars and tour guides of the monastery for the religious visitors and as it is accepted by the faithful.

Debre Libanos Monastery is part and parcel of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, one of the oldest churches in the world with more than 2000 years history of existence in the country. The word Debre is a Geez word, which means “mountain” and in most cases it is used in front of the names of Ethiopian monasteries as they are mostly built around mountainous areas. This Monastery is named after the name of a monk called Abba Lebanos, who lived in the sixth century A.D and prayed at the area for 40 years. After that, according to the tradition, He was told by Archangel Gabriel to leave the area, since it is assigned to a Father who is chosen by God from his childhood. The Father was Tekle Haymanot. Angel Gabriel also told Abba Lebanos that the place will be named after him as “Debre Libanos”. Then this monk went to Tigray.

As it is stated in the hagiography of the Saint and as it is believed by the faithful, in the beginning of the 13th century A.D. in 1205 G.C., Abune Tekle Haymanot, who was chosen and blessed by God from childhood was born in “Shewa” administrative region at a place called “Itisa”. His parents were the priest Father Tsegazeab, and His mother Egzihareya. His parents were kind and deeply religious. Feseha Tsion (i.e. The Pleasure, Glory of Zion) was the name given to Abune Tekle Haymanot. According to the hagiography, later after He started preaching

the Gospel with miracles, His name was changed and called Tekle Haymanot by Archangel Michael during His childhood, which means “A plant planted by the Father (Aab), the Son (Welde), and the Holy Spirit (Menfes Kidus)”.

According to the religious sources, Tekle Haymanot started preaching the Gospel and serving the Monasteries at His early age of 22. In His later ages, in the year 1275 G. C., while He was 70 years of age, being guided by Angel Mikael, He came to this historical place; which was prepared for Him many years before His birth. It is stated that, with His holy preaching and miracles, He has changed people of this area to Christians, and founded the Monastery Debre Libanos. First He made a cave at the foot of the gorge of Assebo, and prayed there for 29 years, after 22 years of prayer He lost His right leg because He stood there for many days and nights, and then He finished praying the seven years by standing by His remaining one leg. During His stay for 29 years in the cave, He did not sleep or even sit; He stood like a strong pillar, as the religious sources widely claim. This is also believed by the faithful.

The Church and the faithful consider that, the Holy Father Tekle Haymanot was a light of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Christianity, who carelessly and selflessly struggled with all evils of this world, and guided the Christians in the way of heaven. As per the widely held belief, the Lord Jesus Christ has promised Him before His death at the age of 99, that His sons and daughters (followers) will be millions, and that the miracles that He performed during His lifetime will continue in His historical place, where the body of the Holy Father was buried. At first, His dead body was buried at the cave of Assebo, where He prayed for 29 years, then after 57 years, His body was transferred to the area where the church is built.

In the year 1434 G.C., the Monastery was named “Debre Libanos” by the religious King Zera-Yakob. In 1531 G.C., during the expansion of Mohammed Geragn (Gragn means left handed in Amharic), the Monastery was burnt out by his followers. The followers of Tekle Haymanot paid sacrifices by throwing themselves into the fire, not to see such evil done by invaders. In the year 1937 G.C., during the Italian invasion, almost all the monks were killed by fascist’s machine guns at a place called “Shinkurt” near the Monastery.

This Holy place has four names:

- 1- It was named “Zegamel” during the time of Saint Libanos.
- 2- It was known as “Graria” during the time of the Holy Father Saint Tekla Haymanot in the 13th century.
- 3- It was known as “Assebo” after the death of the Holy Father Tekle Haymanot.
- 4- It finally got its present name “Debre Libanos” during the reign of King Zera Yacob.

Another important historical aspect of the monastery is that it was a place for **Ichege**. The monastery's chief abbot, called the Ichege, was the second most powerful official in the Ethiopian Church after the Abuna. Fifty nine Icheges had ruled the monastery starting from Saint Tekle Haymanot, the first Ichege, up to Gebre Giyorgis who was the last Ichege (Ye Ethiopia Berhan Kidus Teklehaymanot Gedlena Tarik, Debre Libanos Monastery). The last Ichege later became the first Ethiopian Patriarch named Abune Baslios.

Abune Tekle Haymanot Church of Debre Libanos:

The monastery complex sits on a terrace between a cliff and the gorge of one of the tributaries of



Figure : Abune Tekle Haymanot Church of Debre Libanos Monastery (Source: unknown)

the Abbay River. None of the original buildings of Debre Libanos survives. Current buildings include the church over St. Tekle Haymanot's tomb, which Emperor Haile Selassie ordered constructed in 1961. Inside the church takes place various enticing church services like the Liturgy which takes place every day, hymns or religious songs of praise, Se'atat, Hagiography reading and interpretation and so on. A visitor can see a magnificent harmony of deep chanting and a spirituality that showed on the faces of everyone.

The church has beautiful stained glass windows, and contains unique mosaic figures, found in the façade, and some interesting mural paintings by the well-known Ethiopian Maitre Artiste World Laureate Afework Tekle.



Figure : Stained glass pictures on the windows of the church (Source, Google images)

Monastic life and healing:

Ethiopian monasticism had continued from the earliest strata of Christian asceticism retaining a pristine spontaneity and Ethiopia possesses the last remaining substantial tradition of Christian hermitical asceticism; her robust tradition offers a contemporary observational window on a phenomenon once widespread (Persoon, 2003). This feature also describes Debre Libanos as one of the prominent and ancient Ethiopian monasteries. Furthermore, Comparison with other Oriental Orthodox Churches indicates that Ethiopian Orthodoxy has the highest degree of cultural and spiritual continuity, preserving a pristine monastic tradition complete with a traditional education system within a living national culture (Ibid). In Ethiopia, the cultural and religious landscape is still seen in sharp relief, and monasticism has retained a more radical nature than elsewhere and one example for this could be Debre Libanos.

According to Persoon (2003), Spiritual healing has been a central feature of most Ethiopian religious systems. Healing that is conducted by the priests and monks or authorized by them include the administration of the sacraments, the recitation of hagiographies and liturgies for the sick, the application of holy relics (the leg-bone of St. Tekle Haymanot for example) and the ingestion or immersion in holy ash, holy mud and holy water. These elements are taken from the church compound and are considered efficacious against disease because of their sanctity. At Debre Libanos, religious miracles daily occur through the Holy water and prayer. There are about seven holy water sites in the monastery and patients are being cured from different types of diseases and evil spirits as a result of which a large number of people constantly travel to the monastery.

The cross which is believed to be delivered from heaven to the saint, housed in the Cross Church (Meskel Bet), is also the other important relic brought out from the church every Wednesday and applied to heal and bless people. In the Cross Church is also housed the sacred leg bone of the Saint. Pilgrims visit the place named Atsme Kidusan, where the remains of Saints are found, inside the monastery to get blessings and a place named Debre Elam is also one of the highly sanctified sites.

Cemetery:

Because of the promise believed to be given to the Saint, People oblige the solemn promise of their family to bury their body at Debre Libanos. On average 8 funeral ceremonies are held at the monastery per day. Basically, monasteries are associated with divine promises offering both physical and spiritual advantages for the burial of the deceased (Persoon, 2003). In light of this, the souls of the departed are believed to benefit from the intercession of Saint Tekle Haymanot. The monastery is also a place where the Holy relics of many Saints were buried. The body of Abune Habte Maryam and Aba Filipos can be mentioned as an example.

Festivals:

The 24th day of every month in the Ethiopian calendar is dedicated to St. Tekle Haymanot. There are three major feasts for St. Tekle Haymanot: Feast of the Birth of St. Tekle Haymanot on January, Feast of the Death of St. Tekle Haymanot on August and Feast of Moving His Holy Relics on May. They are major festivals involving procession with the holy Tabotat (representation of the arc of the covenant, centre of sanctity in a church).

There is a big celebration regarding the commemoration of moving the Holy Relics of Saint Taklehaimanot from the Cave to the Big Church in Debre Libanos Monastery after 57 years of His departure every year starting from May 11(the eve) till May 12 in the Ethiopian Calendar. Monastery of Debre Libanos is the original burial place of His Holy Relics, and it is the place that has witnessed that historical event, and the miracles that have happened on that day.

On this festival, one can see tens of thousands of cars, and hundreds of thousands of people. The whole road for more than 4km is full of people coming from all over Ethiopia. During the event beautiful chants and hymns are played using the musical instruments of Saint Yared. People stand in awe, and participate in chanting and prayers. The celebration encompasses evening

prayers and the Holy Liturgy, composed of hymns, songs and sermons. This and other feasts at the monastery are very colorfully celebrated and various open air activities are observed during those times.



Figure : The January festival at Debre Libanos (source: own survey 2013)

Museum:

The monastery of Debre Libanos has a modern museum building just near the Church of St. Tekle Haymanot. This Museum has a good collection of ecclesiastical, cultural and historical relics. The collections in it speak a lot about history of the monastery and that of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

The Ceremonial chair of Abune Baslios, the first Ethiopian Patriarch who was enthroned in 1959, which the patriarch used to sit on when he came to the monastery as Ethiopian patriarchs are titled Ichege of the see of St. Tekle Haymanot, as it is commonly known as the Holy See of St. Mark in Coptic Church. That of the second Ethiopian Patriarch Abune Tewoflos is also kept in this museum. The museum also hosts the Ceremonial Chair of King Haile Silase, Ceremonial chairs of different Church fathers and state officials which they used to sit on at the

monastery. Among the many other heritage displayed in the museum are paintings, different sacred objects used in the church, different types of crosses and manuscripts, vestments, war armaments used on the historical Adwa battle, gifts of bishops, rulers and prominent personalities and much more.

Church Education:

One of the unique features of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and hence Debre Libanos monastery is the existence of an institution of traditional education preserving a system only retained in Ethiopia. It is the center of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church education. The schools have been serving as educational institutions of the country for years.

There are roughly four levels of Church education (Persoon, 2003). It starts with Nibab Bet, the reading school concerned with basic literacy for children, including: Fidal (alphabet) instruction, the reading of religious texts and the psalms of David. Subsequently comes Kidase Bet (the school of Liturgy) where Gibre Dikuna and Gibre Kissina, basic knowledge for deacons and priests, are taught. The Zema Bet has four disciplines: a) Digwa, annual hymnody b) Zimare and Mawasit, hymns for terminating the mass, funerary services c) Kidase and sa'atat, Mass and Horologium d) Akwakwam, chant with rhythmic movements (Wereb, Zimame, Mahilet). The next stage, Kine Bet, involving different types of liturgical poetry, requires much intellectual training. Finally the Masthaf Bet, school of commentaries, has four branches: a) Biluy, the 46 books of the Old Testament b) Haddis, the 35 books of the Ethiopian New Testament c) Likawunt, studies and commentary on the Church Fathers (John Chrysostom, Karilos and others), Fetha Negest Canon Law, as well as Bahre Hasab Calendar calculation d) Menekosat, commentaries on monastic literature; graduates of the latter enjoyed high prestige as scholars eligible for senior ecclesiastical posts.

In Debre Libanos there are currently 11 schools (4 Nebab Bet, 1 kidase Bet, 2 Kine Bet, 1 Akwakwam Bet, 1 Zema Bet, and 2 Metsihaf Bet). Though the number of the students in these schools varies from time to time it was indicated that it may reach up to 4000 (Mahibere kidusan, 2004 E.C). Classes were taught at specific periods, at different times of the day. According to Persoon, they had a strict schedule, the Debre Libanos system was particularly demanding: early morning they served in the church, 9:00 till 16:00 continuous teaching, only after this would they eat Dabe and Nefro (black bread and a mixture of boiled grains and pulses), from 18:30 till 24:00

there would be study again. Weekends and festivals were more relaxed. Senior students assist the teacher in drilling the students. Students normally run away from home to join schools in distant areas. Some students were provided with their daily needs in return for performing practical tasks. However, most followed the old custom of begging for their daily bread, and lived frugal and austere lives (2003).

The traditional schools served as an induction to the monastery, supplying the majority of recruits. Entirely devoted to prayer, study and practical service, student life was considered a monastic novitiate, young outstanding pupils being encouraged to take monastic vows (Ibid).

St. Yared cannot be forgotten when talking about church schools because He is credited with originating the unique system of Ethiopian liturgical music, according to tradition inspired by the 24 elder or priests of heaven and the song of birds. His musical compositions were immortalized in the compilation of the 'Degwa', basis of the traditional education system and poetic tradition (Ibid).

Tegbar Bet (The kitchen):

It is a place where foods and drinks are prepared with monastic men only. There are four Tegbar Bet in the monastery, namely, Enjera Bet (where the black bread is prepared), Nifro Bet (Where mixture of boiled grains and pulses is prepared), Tella Bet (where local alcoholic beverage resembling beer is prepared) and Wet Bet (where souse is prepared). There is always prayer and hagiography recitation at this place. The way the foods and drinks are prepared, the traditional and age old materials used to prepare the foods and drinks, uniqueness of the traditional foods and drinks prepared, the monks and other monastic men involved in the preparation, the history, the curative value and sanctity of the place and the foods and drinks as well as the ashes are important features that make the 'Tegbar Bet' an attractive site for visitors. The smokes are believed to be curative. The monastery fathers tell, one miracle among the many in this kitchen is that the dough is spoiled if the containers are covered. They are kept uncovered all the time.

Handicrafts:

It is common to see crosses handicraft around the monastery beside other handicrafts. The cross is carved cross from a stony matter, which is some kind of marble. The people make crosses of various shapes and sizes, some kind of rosaries, and frames for religious pictures with different

shapes of crosses. Wooden crosses, prayer sticks, garments, basket works, kob (round cap) and the like are the artisanal products one can find in the monastery and its surrounding. The area is also endowed with different natural construction materials like clay soil and other rocks which can be used for handicraft development, masonry, and construction etc.



Figure : Few of the handicraft activities in the monastery and its surroundings (Source: own survey, 2013)

Historical Monasteries and Churches in a nearer distance from Debre Libanos:

The Nunnery behind Debre Libanos (Set Debr): There is a Monastery of Nuns near Debre Libanos Monastery. Also there is a house for elders, being served by the nuns, built in 1913. It is an ideal place for those who want to support or give a visit to the elderly and disabled. It also gives the chance to experience the nunnery life style.

Abune Habte Maryam Monastery, named after a saint who lived and prayed there, is found in



the gorge beyond Debre Libanos and it is a recent example of a prominent cave monastery.

Figure : Abune Habtemaryam cave church (left) and cave dwelling of an ascetic person (right) (Source: own survey)

Immersion in nature was represented by the strong troglodyte tradition in Ethiopia, numerous pious monks lived in caves, often the sites of miracles and Abuna Habta Maryam is one example for this (Persoon, 2003). A number of pilgrims travel to this monastery to get benefited from the intercession of Saint Habte Maryam, to get blessing, because of the promise of the place, to get

healed (by holy water, holy ash, lemon, etc), to pass a prayer time and so on. The monastery also has small museums for holy relics or remains of Saints.

Abune Habte Maryam Monastery is a two or one and half hour journey from Debre Libanos and the only way to go there is on foot. In the rainy season it would be quite difficult for a visitor. The journey to and from the monastery is so exciting because of the marvelous landforms, beautiful rural life, agricultural activities etc. one comes across on the trek. On the way back from the monastery, the challenging experience of climbing the steep plateau would give another enjoyment.

In a nearer distance from Abune Habte Maryam is the historic **Zegamel Maryam Church** which was established in 450 E.C. The church has traditional school in it and what makes this church unique is the 'Kelebet', a ring like stone which Abba Libanos used to hold it on His neck during his 40 years prayer time at Debre Libanos. Pilgrims pick up this sanctified stone with their index finger of their left hand by kneeling down and this act is believed to give blessing.



Figure : The sanctified stone which Aba Libanos used to pray holding it on His neck(Left) and a pilgrim holding the stone to get blessings (right) (Source: own survey)

Other churches of pilgrim or visitor interest in the area includes Ketseba Maryam (During field observation the old church building was not there and new church building was underway), which was said to be miraculously saved from the big stone thrown down by Gagn Mahammed to destroy the church. Kidist Arsema is in a gorge near Debre Libanos Church and it is a cave church and a place where pilgrims or the faithful go to stay there for Suba'e (prayer time or a kind of meditation; one suba'e equals seven days prayer time). Abune Filipos (the third Ichege) Church is a 16th century historical church found near Debre Libanos and Kulfa Maryam is another outstanding religious heritage site in Debre Tsigie town which is endowed with a number of religious and historical heritage.

What makes the area unique?

In order to evaluate uniqueness of the site visitors were made to reflect their views on whether they perceive the monastery as a unique place or not along with their ground to say so. In so doing, the result portrayed it is a unique religious tourism destination (90.5%) and only 9.5%, of those not coded as missing, said it is not unique. The explanations given by those who said it is unique are diverse. History of the monastery, miracles, spectacular and enjoyable landscape, promises given to the Saint who had been praying for 28 years at the place and rested there and his sacred body kept inside the church, and the unique, attractive and ancient heritage possessed by the monastery were mentioned. In addition, its location, nearness to the countries' capital city, the beautiful natural forest with its biodiversity, the outstanding place the monastery has in the history of Ethiopia, the 24 hours yearlong ritual services and prayers and the monastery is also visited by many people from the country and outsiders as well making it still a unique religious tourism destination in the country.

Moreover, the annual festival celebrations or feasts are uniquely Ethiopian experience and one that can't be found in other parts of the world. For some it is unique because one can learn many religious and social issues, because of the monastic way of life, because it is a peaceful place where one can forget his or her bad memories and stress and as it has been said it is considered to be a sacred place where a father who laid a base for the current achievement of Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church lived and prayed. Few of the respondents who do not perceive the monastery as a unique place stated it is difficult to say so in its current condition but, said, it can potentially be unique while others preferred not to give their reasons. The monastery guides added points that Debre Libanos is unique because it is the largest monastery in our country and because many people get healed by the holy water. Moreover, it is a holy place for Orthodox Christians. Concerning the unique Services provided in the area, it was indicated by the hospitality establishments that their area is chosen by most Paragliders as one of the few ideal sites for paragliding in the zone and also ideal vantage points for bird watchers especially the Lammergeyer.

What are the outstanding features of the area?

In order to identify the outstanding features of the monastery, visitors were asked to mark any of the features they thought as outstanding attributes. As it is depicted on the figure below, History and Scenic landscape got the highest selection by 55.6% and 48.9% of respondents respectively and on the third place, cures or miracles at the monastery were chosen to be the other most outstanding feature of the area with 40% selection. A considerable amount, 33.3%, of response put the museum as another outstanding attribute and the rest features scored close percentages.

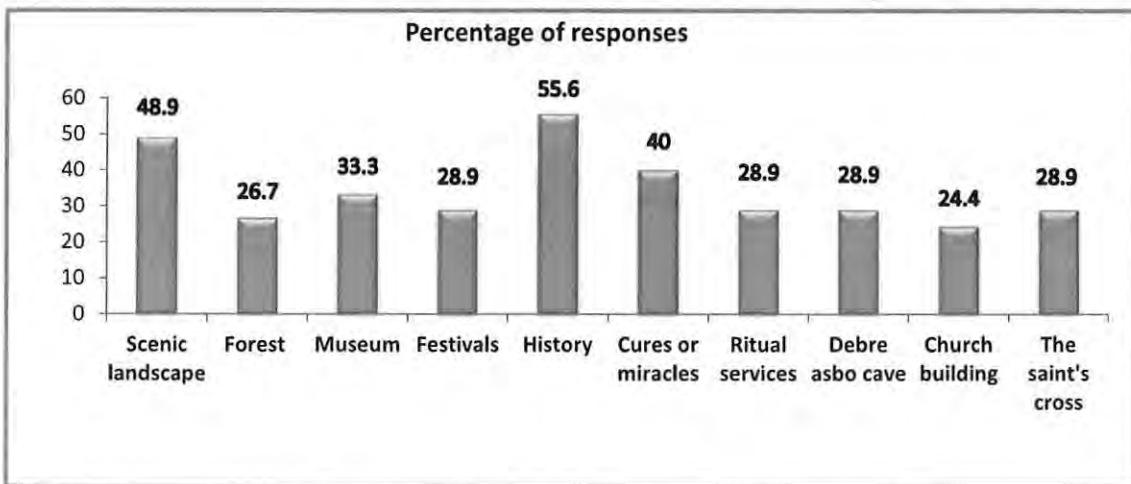


Figure : The most outstanding features of the monastery (Source: own survey, 2013)

According to the monastery guides, the scenic view of the landscape, Debre Asbo cave, forest, the whole church service and the monastic culture are the outstanding features and unique attributes of Debre Libanos monastery that are of touristic interest. In addition, many tourists who say they have visited many stained glasses in other parts of the world highly admire the stained glass inside the church of Debre Libanos, as said by the monastery guides. Those who come during church service hours are also attracted to the church music.

As to the respondents from lodges in the area, Debre Libanos monastery, the view of the landscape and the Portuguese bridge are the most outstanding attractions. Visitors, who also like the view, requested the owners to construct rooms facing the view. For one of the motive behind opening up the lodge at the site was the scenic view the area has.

What appeals the religious traveler most?

It was also attempted to separately look at what appeals the religious or non leisure traveler most through some basic activities expected to be experienced by a religious traveler or pilgrim. As it is depicted in the figure below, the three most important religious activities that appealed to those visitors were promise of the place (64.4%), Church services or ceremony of religious worship (46.7%) and baptism by Holy water (44.4%). The other activities are also considerably important as it can be seen from the chart.

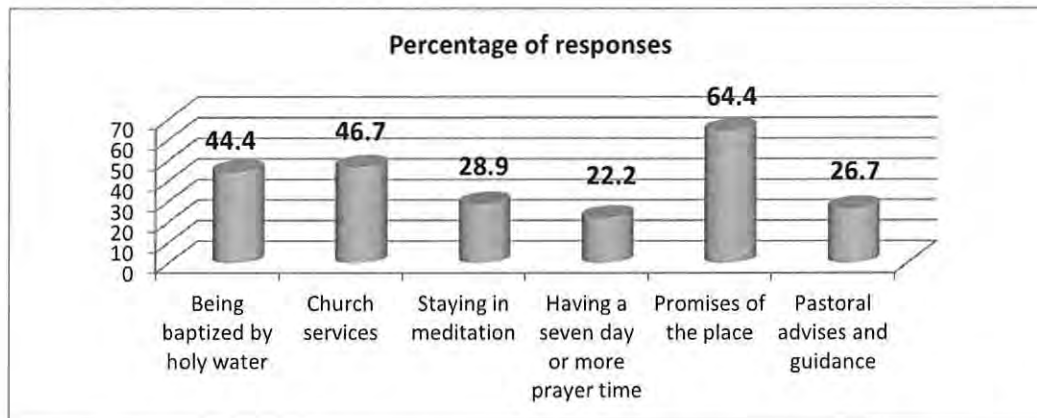


Figure : Attributes that appeal the religious travelers most (Source: Own survey, 2013)

In addition, some respondents stated other appealing attributes such as ordination as a monk or initiation into monastic life obtained at the monastery, the annual feasts of the Saint, receiving Holy Communion and the prayer system.

Visitors' overall feelings about the area's salient features

Here it is important to look at the feelings the tourists had about the features of the area following their visit. To this end, a summary of visitors' opinion was made from a recent suggestion book of the monastery. Visitors generally described the monastery as a unique and appealing site with different salient features. Below is the summarized list of expressions given by visitors, who came from different corners of the world, about their feelings on the monastery's religious tourism features.

- ✓ The place is pleasing and educative. The monastery gives an opportunity to learn about Ethiopian church. It gives an opportunity to understand how people serve God here and

gives a great insight into the church and customs. A tourist described his tour of the monastery as “a very interesting, spiritual and enlightening”.

- ✓ It is a beautiful church and museum in a magical place. The glass art is so beautiful, history of the place is admirable and guides are excellent.
- ✓ It is wonderful, mystic and holy place. The spirit of God is evident in the place and the silence here is from Him. One can feel it, if he or she is ready to listen. It is always a peaceful place to come to.
- ✓ “Visiting Debre Libanos is like visiting my christian origins.”
- ✓ Able to realize extraordinary history of Christianity in Ethiopia and understood Ethiopia is a land of spiritual wonders. A tourist said, “In this church and museum, I saw Ethiopia’s soul”.

4.3 The Area’s Potential to Develop Nature Based and Culture Based Religious Tourism Products

In order to assess the area’s potential to develop religious tourism products, the communities’ willingness to allow for these developments, and the opinions of visitors, service providers and professionals were considered to be imperative.

Communities’ opinion and willingness to allow for their natural and cultural values

To assess the communities’ opinion towards culture based and nature based religious tourism product developments in the area, their willingness to allow visitors was taken as a good indicative and this was asked with a 5-point likert scale of agreement. The result revealed that the communities feel visitors can come and enjoy, learn or experience their natural environment and cultural assets (M=4.47, SD=.846).

Assessment of visitors’ interest on nature and culture based religious tourism products

The area’s nature based religious tourism product development potential was evaluated in different ways one of which was through assessment of visitors’ interest. A number of possible nature based activities were put for the visitor to give their opinion and the group mean (3.30) of those activities indicate agreement of respondents to experience nature based tourism activities

as it is above the average mean. Specifically, the largest score (M=4.38, S.D=.984) is that of the visitors' perception of the area as interesting place to do landscape viewing or scenic tour. Bird watching (with M=3.62, S.D=1.007), Bush walking (with M=3.53, S.D=1.217), wildlife tour (with M=3.51, S.D=1.058), Mountaineering and climbing (with M=3.47, S.D=1.375) and Trekking (with M=3.38, S.D=1.211) were the subsequent activities to which the data revealed visitors' agreement to undertake them at the area. The exception was with experiencing a campfire (M=2.00, S.D=1.128) and staying in a resort for more enjoyable experience of the monastery (M=2.53, S.D=1.618). The respondents felt those activities as inappropriate nature based religious tourism activities in the area.

Table : Visitors' interest of nature based religious tourism products

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Like to experience bush walking at the site	45	1	5	3.53	1.217
Want to make wildlife tour	45	1	5	3.51	1.058
The area is ideal for trekking	45	1	5	3.38	1.211
Want to undertake bird watching at the site	45	1	5	3.62	1.007
Interested to do adventurous activities like mountaineering and climbing	45	1	5	3.47	1.375
Interesting to do landscape viewing or scenic tour	45	1	5	4.38	.984
Appropriate to experience a campfire	45	1	5	2.00	1.128
Staying in a resort would give more enjoyable experience of the monastery	45	1	5	2.53	1.618
Valid N (list wise)	45				

Source: Own survey, 2013

With regard to culture based religious tourism activities, the least scores were that of Evening entertainment products like bar, pub etc (M=1.36, S.D=.865) and experiencing secular cultural performances contrary to the monastery's cultural values (M=1.70, S.D=1.193) signifying visitor disagreement with those developments. The product development potentials with highest mean scores, in descending order, are Festivals (M=4.53, S.D=.726), Visiting artworks along with the way they are prepared (M=4.51, S.D=.727), History of Saint Tekle Haymanot along with history of the place (M=4.49, S.D=.869), building spiritual knowledge by learning at the monastery (M=4.2, S.D=.894), Visiting site where monks were massacred during Italian occupation (M=4.18, S.D=1.029), volunteering, visiting and helping the handicapped (M=4.14, S.D=1.153), taking part in ritual practices of the monastic community (M=3.87, S.D=1.036), locally designed accommodations mainly serving local products (M=3.82, S.D=1.336) and souvenirs (M=3.77, S.D=1.054). These are the potential products for which visitors showed desire to experience at

the site. Visiting cemeteries (M=3.07, S.D=1.246) is the activity for which a medium score is obtained but still being above the average mean value implying agreement of visitors to experience it.

Table 3: Visitors' interest of culture based religious tourism product

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Visiting cemeteries is an interesting experience	44	1	5	3.07	1.246
Would love to volunteer, visit and help the handicapped	44	1	5	4.14	1.153
Festivals are good attractions	45	2	5	4.53	.726
Want to build spiritual knowledge by learning at the monastery	45	2	5	4.20	.894
Desire to take part in ritual practices of the monastic community	45	1	5	3.87	1.036
Want to buy souvenirs in memory of my stay	44	1	5	3.77	1.054
Evening entertainment products like bar, pub etc. at the monastery gives additional enjoyment	44	1	5	1.36	.865
Interesting to experience secular cultural performances contrary to the monastery's cultural values	44	1	4	1.70	1.193
History of Saint Tekle Haymanot along with history of the place is an interesting attraction	45	1	5	4.49	.869
Visiting site where monks were massacred during Italian occupation would be remarkable experience	45	1	5	4.18	1.029
Visiting artworks along with the way they are prepared is more interesting	45	2	5	4.51	.727
Prefer locally designed accommodations mainly serving local products than luxurious multistory building	45	1	5	3.82	1.336
Valid N (list wise)	42				

Source: Own survey, 2013

According to the monastery guides, there is a possibility of developing lots of products in the monastery. Apparently, the church services like the Mahelet (Liturgical chant), Se'atat (canonical hours of prayer), Kidase (Liturgy) etc. are attractive and live religious heritage which the visitor can enjoy and participate in. These intangible heritages can even be made available on the internet by developing website for the monastery. Furthermore, the monastery guides stated that there are many church schools in the monastery. It is possible to give a sensible tour to those schools and get the visitor know the teaching tradition of the church and the knowledge and the education system followed. This creates a chance for the visitor to know a lot about Ethiopia's age old teaching tradition and support the schools as well. This in turn helps in conserving these heritage and expansion of it.

The place where monks were massacred during Italian occupation is at a farm land in a place named Shinkurt around Fiche, the zonal capital. A tour guide said, elders told him that a miracle had happened during the event. It is the appearance of light on the place the next three days just after the massacre. It is believed that God has accepted them as martyrs. This place is therefore, said the experienced tour guide, a historical place that the monastery may think of developing it as a religious tourism product.

The other issue is about an arrangement to attract international visitors who want to stay at the monastery for some days, experience and learn the monastic life in Ethiopia. Professionals support the idea of opening an opportunity, for the demanding visitor, to stay and experience the monastic life and learn about the religion. Through this kind of experience visitors can learn what monastic life is and females can learn what nunnery life is. A knowledgeable person can give explanations on different issues of visitors' concern and the church teachings. There is an experience of accommodating a limited number of people who want to learn about their church in a guest house (in Catholic Church for example, even here in Addis Ababa). The eating and drinking arrangements for such kind of visitors can be self catering if the monastery does not want to involve in that business. Or else, services might be outsourced. The target of this activity should not be to convert visitors from their religious affiliation to Ethiopian Orthodox or to let visitors teach and convert followers of Ethiopian Orthodox to their religions. Rather it is to let them know how the Ethiopian church worships God.

This kind of arrangement may also help to strengthen relationship between Ethiopian church and other churches. It opens an opportunity to share experience with different churches from different parts of the world. The market for this kind of product can be diverse but if a targeted marketing is done even on the priests and monks of two big religions Catholic and Orthodox, millions of tourists may come and experience our product. This can be done through a delegation sent to the potential generating countries for a thorough discussion with their counter parts in other target religious institutions and promotion of the product. This requires a strong work done at Ethiopian Orthodox church level.

The above case being for the foreign tourists, it is also imperative to think about the possibility of doing the same with the domestic people of Ethiopia as stated by the key informant. There are a lot of Ethiopians who do not know what a monastic life looks like and so on, even followers of

the church. So far, there has not been a planned and organized effort on this matter to attract visitors from the country or abroad. Thus, according to the monastery guides, there had been no much request on staying in the monastery and the like from the foreign tourists and besides they don't even have enough time as the monastery has so far been visited mostly by short time foreign visitors. However, they asked about Orthodox religion and Bible and they were told about that. The guides give detailed explanation about religious issues when tourists ask and otherwise just descriptions of relevant and associated matters are provided.

More on product development potentiality of the area, tourist service providers suggested the possibility of developing products like bird watching; visit of Chelada baboon; travel in the semi desert (Kola) area to experience the rural agricultural life; Study/research tour; visit to Church schools; voluntary tourism; visit of handicrafts and their workshops; experiencing cultural foods; attending Timket (feast of the Epiphany) and Meskel (festival of the Cross) and so on.

As to the potential facilities and services that can be developed in the area, it was stated by service providers that they can develop products like children playground, cultural house, a house for meat and the local honey wine, transfer car service, lower rate rooms, tennis field, Horse riding, Camping and swimming pool.

Products being developed to enhance the experience of religious tourists

Among the activities underway in order to enhance the experience of the religious tourists, as stated by monastery guides, includes giving explanation on history and benefit of heritage, some efforts in cleaning the area and giving place for beggars, efforts to fulfill visitors' requirements (requirement of the believer differs from that of the non believer. For instance, believers ask repentance, fasting, spiritual education, the whereabouts of holy fathers and the like). The tour guides noted that non believers sometimes come for spying and therefore, they are very careful in dealing with them. They inform the rules and regulations of the monastery. Tourists are told the dos and don'ts. They are accompanied with the monastery security men for their safety and the monastery as well.

The other products which are being developed in the study site are the food and accommodation establishments. The two establishments found in a distance of 4 km from the monastery which can be mentioned in the area are Ethio-German Park Hotel and Top View Lodge. Ethio-German

park hotel mainly gives room service (currently has about 15 rooms), restaurant and bar, some souvenirs for sale, parking, hall, coffee ceremony, and campfire services on a wide land area located in a beautiful natural set up having a nice view of the natural landscape, just near the historical Portuguese bridge. Top View lodge is a lodge managed by Sewasewe Genet Orphanage and Elderly support organization. The main objective of the organization is to help the disabled people. The organization have first identified that the main problem of disabled people coming to Debre Libanos monastery is shelter. It had thus initiated to support those people. According to the Founder and manager of the organization, Top view lodge is one and recent product being developed to generate income for this voluntary organization. As a result of the area's stunning view, the organization had found it important to build a lodge in that particular place and they are however doing this without any professional background in the field of hospitality and tourism.



Figure : Ethio-German Park Hotel (left) and Top View Lodge (right) (Source: Own survey 2013)

These hotel establishments have tried to identify the needs of the market like accommodating and serving visitors coming to Debre Libanos monastery for leisure, pilgrimage and funeral, arrangements for weddings and meeting facilities and they said they are prepared to develop facilities and services in order to address these demands. The construction of some rooms will also be commenced soon; especially Top view has not yet started giving room service. They are also making wide efforts to make the area greener. As the manager of Top view lodge stated, they are being role model for the community in their surroundings by introducing different agricultural products to the land which was previously considered unproductive, and also in ground water extraction etc. He said they have also hired some local persons and since the organization is a voluntary service provider, most of the workers are non- paid.

On the other hand, the tour guiding activity is the other recently being developed tourism product in Debre Libanos area. Derara Tour Guiders' Association is the only organized and legal tour guiding service provider outside the monastery as the monastery has its own tour guides. The tour guiding activity in the area prior to the establishment of this association was disorganized and informal. This had initiated some young men in the area to get associated. They were organized by Culture and Tourism Office together with Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) office in the year 2009 and the office provided a short training up on the foundation of this association. None of the members has professional qualification in tour guiding or related field of study. They are doing the job with experience and actually some of them have completed elementary school and few had graduated from high school or above.

Their guiding activity though is mainly concentrated on Portuguese bridge, covers further to Jemma River and its surroundings, Debis cave, Abune Habte Maryam Monastery, around Debre Libanos Monastery and Bole cave, as it was indicated on the focus group discussion held with them. But, the zonal culture and tourism officials said they are only allowed to work in Portuguese Bridge area and Debis cave. Beside guiding service, the association members also prepare and sell some souvenirs like crosses to the tourist. Since Debre Libanos Monastery has its own tour guides, these local guides only take tourists who want to visit the monastery but interpretation about the monastery is given by the monastery tour guides.

Just inside the monastery land, there is a village called Wusha Gedel where there are some small food and drink establishments. From the interview made with two relatively better establishments it was obtained that they are legally prohibited to make constructions and expansions, regardless of this rule they are capable enough to enhance their services. They provide food and beverage for the visitor but they cannot give lodging service as a result of the prohibition not to build rooms. It was however indicated that the area is an ideal place to make business by providing standardized accommodation and boarding service for the large number of visitors coming to the monastery.

What shall be improved from the current offer of the destination?

With regard to the improvements, that the tour guides think, needed on the current offer of the destination, it was said that the monastery needs to make arrangements to give trainings on the tour guiding profession. It can be on job or off job training. This is not conducted so far. They started the job just by announcement given from the monastery administration. They are just doing by experience. A guide and museum manager also suggested peer training and experience sharing among the guiding service providers. These are imperative for the reason that the lack of training had been creating problems in dealing with guests' requirements, conflicts, complains, etc. The other problem was that the monastery's security guards do not have uniforms. They can't be identified from other people. Sometimes this has created conflict between guards and tourist guides accompanying visitors. Besides, there is no reception at the gate and hence no one is there to provide visitors the necessary information and direction.

Moreover, the tour guides and other service providers in the area put forward the following points:

- There is a need to set up direction panel or signage.
- Cleaning the premise and creating good-looking environment.
- Graveyards need to be well planned and clean in order to be visited. Toilet facility needs to be improved. The bridge found on the way to Debre Asbo cave needs to be constructed because it is difficult to cross in the rainy season.
- Making arrangements for climbing elevated landforms where there is a good vantage point to view the area.
- Setting up a kind of zoning or designated area to protect and make the forest, the landscape, birds and the wildlife visitable with some necessary provisions in it.
- A place to stay or a shelter for the visitor is needed. Since it is difficult to serve the facility against payment, especially for domestic pilgrims, it shall better be provided free of rate but for a limited length of stay. Hotel establishments outside the monastery should provide quality room and catering service, and shall hire hotel and tourism professionals for better customer service.
- There is a need to train and assign more number of tour guides since it is impossible to serve well with the current number and quality of tour guides.

- Many visitors want postcards of the stained glasses and other beautiful attractions in the area. It is therefore important to produce postcards for the relevant items in need.
- The Portuguese Bridge is not being well managed, well protected and well marketed and in addition, the caves in the surrounding area should be developed into products which can be visited by tourists.
- Derara tour guides Association needs to have a formal and organized office and recognized address. They don't have to hung up here and there and go after tourists like illegal guides. It is good if they set up a reception area where tourists can also gate rest before and after their visit with some provisions like water, snack and the like. Tourism office should work with them in this regard and the necessary arrangements and support shall be made for those guides so that good and enjoyable tourist experience will be provided at the destination.

CHAPTER FIVE
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO RELIGIOUS
TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Challenges Presented to Religious Tourism Product Development in the area

Inadequacy and poor quality of facilities and services

Availability and quality of facilities and services can be challenges or opportunities for an area's tourism product development. In order to examine this situation, respondents were asked to rate the quality of various visitor facilities and services. Overall, the visitors viewed the quality of these facilities and service as poor (Group mean=2.29). The mean score for most of the facilities and services (about 69%) is below 3 and the rest are below 3.67, signifying their poor quality. Food and beverage facilities and services, shopping facilities, guiding service, toilet facility, waste disposal facilities, signage, telecommunication facilities and services, internet service, drinking water service, medical facilities and banking services are those facilities with lowest mean scores, below 3. In fact there were also facilities and services which respondents did not know about and hence could not rate their quality. One of the reasons is that the availability of some facilities like banking, medical and internet facilities is in surrounding towns.

It was also examined on a 5-point Likert scale if adequacy and quality of accommodation facilities at the destination are being challenges for religious tourism product development. The result indicated respondents' agreement with the absence of adequate and quality accommodation facilities at the destination (M=3.53, SD=1.279).

Table : Visitors' opinion on adequacy and quality of accommodation facilities

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
There is absence of adequate and quality accommodation facilities at the destination	43	1	5	3.53	1.279
Valid N (list wise)	43				

Source: own survey, 2013

Visitors were asked to put the products which they think were missing in the monastery in order to enrich the product development challenges. In so doing, it was indicated by respondents that medical service, hotel, adequate and clean toilet, trekking facilities, walking trails, kiosks in surroundings, additional explanations for historical and cultural landmarks and festivals,

accommodation or shelter for visitors, shower, Bank, Internet, wastage disposal facility, qualified tour guides in adequate number, strong security, telephone and water are the products which the area needs to develop. Inadequacy of shelter, food and cloth provision for people with disabilities is the other challenging situation mentioned by visitors. These people are becoming beggars due to absence of arrangements to enable them sustain their life through artwork preparation and the like.

Hotel establishments also stressed mainly on problems associated with internet facility and interrupted electric power supply and they also agreed with the inadequacy of tourist facilities and services they provide. Beside, the lodges only accept cash based payments so far and there were no other facilities like credit card system and the like and this had also been a challenge to some extent.

Visitor experience related challenges

Visitors, especially foreigners, lack the opportunity to interact, volunteer, and meditate, etc. at the monastery. Language would also be difficult for any tourist to understand. Besides, the monastery is sometimes congested by people and hence lacks silence. Few leisure tourists had also found the rules or the dos and don'ts as strict.

Some respondent visitors and a tourism scholar stated it was a bit of a mess in the area. Lack of cleanliness, widespread begging and expansion of different commercial activities without permission of the monastery were the other challenges. Disorganized commercial activities prevailed as a result of people residing in the area were said to deter attractiveness of the monastery.

It was also mentioned that the monastery is weak in presenting the heritage it has to the visitor. The heritages currently displayed in the museum are not the only heritage of this historical monastery. A lot is said to be kept hidden. This could be the other challenge for religious tourism product development. There could have been an arrangement to ensure well protection and presentation of those heritages. As it was said by the chief Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Heritage official, from among the monastery's heritage which shall be visited, even 5% of it is not displayed in the museum, taking into account the history and age of the monastery. An official from the zonal culture and tourism office stated that in the monastery's museum a visitor

cannot make note of what he or she is visiting in the museum. It is prohibited to write about, record and photograph any heritage in the museum. This might be an indicative of the monastery's unwillingness to allow researchers and it might lead to a suspect that there is something the monastery does not want to expose about its heritage. The response from the museum administration is that for anybody who is curious about the prohibition at least to make a note about the heritage on display is that 'it is the rule and regulation of the museum'.

Human resource, Licensing and Marketing related challenges

Inadequate number of knowledgeable and skilled tour guides is sought by visitors as one of the challenges hampering sustainable religious tourism product development in the area. Professionals were also lacking in different service providing establishments and even insufficient in culture and tourism office. On the other hand the licensing activity particularly that of tourism establishments in the zone has a problem in that it is not collaboratively done by trade and tourism offices. There is a missing of clear understanding of one another's separate and collaborative responsibilities on matters related with trade license and professional certification as indicated by an official from tourism office.

It was underlined by respondents that the area lacks adequate promotion and marketing efforts, Service providers even admit this. The monastery did not make maximum use of the advantage it has owing to its proximity to Addis Ababa and convenient road facility and other opportunities due to weak promotion, said an official from culture and tourism office. Besides, absence of an information desk, unavailability of travel agency office in the zone, weakness in initiating new business ideas or product developments and employing various interpretation mechanisms are the other challenge mentioned by subjects with regard to marketing religious tourism products.

Expansion of inappropriate developments and activities

As to the wrong or inappropriate developments in the area, visitors mentioned expansion of bars inside the monastery land, transportation service up to the church or the location of the car terminal just near the main church, renting house which is contrary to the places history and spirituality and photographing the handicapped without any permission (it was said by some community members that they use the pictures to spoil the image of the monastery) as improper things in the monastery. If night club is to be opened tomorrow, as there are alcoholic drink establishments today, sustainability of the monastery will be in question and there is no reason

for some monks not to visit the night clubs, said a scholar. Similarly, the monastic community has also raised all of these challenges and additionally mentioned destruction of plants to build cemeteries and gradual expansion of private hotels and shops.

In order to examine the monastic community's opinion towards touristic facilities and the presence of tourists themselves in the monastery and also on the commercial activities undertaken, respondents were asked on a 5-point Likert scale how strongly they disagree or agree with three statements. The respondents showed an agreement with the statement 'Hotels, restaurants, bars, lodges, other small entertainment and drinking establishments etc. appearing inside the monastery compound should be taken outside' (M=3.62, SD=1.643). This indicates the communities' have considered these facilities as a challenge for sustainable religious tourism product development or something inappropriate inside the monastery. On the other hand, they were asked if there should be provision of quality facilities and services at the monastery for local and foreign visitors in adequate amount and of those not coded as missing, 78.8% of community respondents agreed with this. Some have noted that the facilities should not challenge the monastery's survival and contradict the major spiritual objective of the monastery. And among those who did not support the idea, some stated monastery is only about following God, no need to worry about those facilities.

Respondents were in a strong disagreement with the statement 'the tourists presence in monastery distract me from the performance of my normal functions' (M=2.02, SD=1.421) implying presence of tourists in the monastery was not being considered by the community as a challenge or problem. As to the commercial activities, the result portrays a weaker agreement of respondents with the statement 'Open market commercial activities undertaken in the monastery, especially during annual festivals are conducted in organized, peaceful and attractive way' (M=3.09, SD=1.596). The monastery is gradually changing into a secular place deprived of its spirituality. It is also becoming a market center. Commercial activities, especially during holidays are posing negative impacts on the religious values of the place, as stated by other participants of the study. Clearly, inappropriate tourist activities and commercial development around heritage religious sites can lead to the trivialization of these sites (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

Table : Opinion of the monastic community regarding touristic facilities and presence of tourists

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Hotels, restaurants, bars, lodges, other small entertainment and drinking establishments etc. appearing inside the monastery compound should be taken outside	53	1	5	3.62	1.643
Open market commercial activities undertaken in the monastery, especially during annual festivals are conducted in organized, peaceful and attractive way	53	1	5	3.09	1.596
The tourists presence in monastery distract me from the performance of my normal functions	53	1	5	2.02	1.421
Valid N (listwise)	53				

Source: Own survey, 2013

It was stated by the monastic community that some Visitors disobey the monastery rules and regulations. As to the monastery guides and the community, sometimes female foreign visitors come in undersized shorts and this creates inducement or temptation. Some female local visitors come by wearing tights and body. These kinds of clothing are inappropriate in the monastery. The other things they witnessed as inappropriate were smoking visitors and strange romantic actions from some couples visiting the site. In addition, some people who come for Wedding ceremony sometimes make noise and this creates disturbance to Fathers and others who are in silence and prayer and hence distracts the monastery's peacefulness.

Respondent from one of the major accommodation establishments stated that there was sometimes intimidation on tourists from tour guides in the area. It was said that guides organized around the bridge intimidate tourists in different ways to buy some handicrafts charged much exaggerated price. Due to some risky situations the lodge was not confident enough to direct its guests to go and visit the bridge. It rather warned them to be careful about that. There was also a time when tourist valuables and bags were taken by thieves in times tourists traveled deep into the semi desert area far away from the bridge, as said by the hotel people, though this was very rare. Besides, the result obtained after examining visitors' response, on a 5 point likert scale, if prevalence of illegal things were being challenges for religious tourism product development indicated with strong agreement that they did not face illegal things like robbery, misleading, abuse etc. at the monastery (M=4.11, S.D=1.166).

Table : Visitors' opinion on prevalence of illegal things at the monastery

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Did not face illegal things like robbery, misleading, abuse etc at the monastery	44	1	5	4.11	1.166
Valid N (listwise)	44				

Source: own survey, 2013

It was however indicated by monastic community respondents that there were thieves during annual festivals and this is also in congruence with Mahibere Kidusan (2004 E.C).

Challenges on the monastic life

The monastic communities were asked if there was a time or circumstance when they felt visitors coming to the monastery and the associated activities and developments have brought some kind of challenge to their monastic life. Their responses indicated that it was upsetting when visitors demonstrate bad and strange behaviors and actions which do not go with the monastic culture of the place. The demonstration effects of the wealthy and foreign visitors have started to prevail on some of the monastic community members, as they said. Basically, visitors and the monastic community follow different lifestyles. Some of the monastic people are being attracted to the strange culture of visitors and there is sometimes influence from visitors coming from different religions other than Orthodox. Some tourists bring with them something unwanted like heresy, disrespectfulness for church rules while entering church and so on. Another challenge posed on the attractive monastic life, as mentioned by the monastic community, was secret marriage life by the few which is violation of the monastery's rule of being celibate.

Administrative problems

The tourism administration at the study site starting from the culture and tourism office up to each attraction sites in the area was indicated to be weak. In the zonal culture and tourism office, the right person is not at the right place. There is a mismatch between the job done and the professional required to do the job. The big challenge of the office, as indicated by respondents from the office, was that different government bodies at different levels do not give due attention for culture and tourism office. It was said to be difficult to get acceptance wherever they go to accomplish the office mission, which is a big challenge for them to do their job. The perception of other government bodies towards tourism office is that they think there is no as such significant work done in culture and tourism office and this wrong perception has probably led to less attention given for the office. Tourism service providers in the study site also complained

about the weak administration and follow up from the office. It was said that the office could not solve major problems they faced rather than just giving minor supports.

As indicated in Mahibere Kidusan (2004 E.C), the administrative problems in Debre Libanos Monastery included the inability of the administration to forecast and plan for problems ahead of time and it could not also solve problems on time. This had therefore, put the monasteries existence in danger. The other problem identified was the absence of centralized and well organized management. The administration did not establish a system that can follow up different socio economic activities undertaken in the monastery, including religious tourism. Besides to the administration's weakness in regulating the burial service or cemetery building, solving the wide ranging problems of the church schools in the monastery and a weak follow up of the issues related with illegal settlement of people inside the monastery are additional problems. It was also indicated that there was a problem of good governance to some extent.

Community settlement inside the monastery

There is a village named Wusha Gedel which visitors need to pass inside on their way to Debre Libanos Abune Tekle Haymanot Monastery just before the monastic community settlement area and monastery buildings. The village is found inside the monastery land in the western direction and an unknown number of people had been living in the area and the settlement area was estimated to be 11 hectares of land. It is a kebele having its own administration. In a research recently conducted by team of researchers from Mahibere Kidusan, the issues related with the people who had settled in this monastery land was thoroughly examined and it is found imperative to discuss the result herein.

The people who came to the area for various reasons had settled there in different times without the recognition and permit of the monastery and they had been building houses and making expansions by their own. According to the research, this illegal settlement had posed a problem on the biodiversity resource of the monastery as the settlers depended on the resources for their consumptions, and the selling and transferring of the monastery land by those illegal settlers had put the monastery's land in danger. Moreover, the settlers had begun to raise ownership right to the monastery land. The issue had previously resulted in quarrel, even death and physical injuries, between the monastic community and the settlers. The expansion of road side

commercial activities, open air markets, alcoholic drink establishments and conflicts were also the other problems said to happen due to the settlement.

As stated by an informant scholar and tour lecturer, there was a land use conflict in the area and the land which is now a settlement area and a village where people can marry was a place for hermitage and monks. It is now a place in which one can see alcoholic drink establishments and there is no reason for night clubs not to be opened tomorrow, as said by scholars.

Natural disaster and human caused problems

Landslide and Extraction of rock

During the field survey, it was possible to identify landslide and land erosion caused by flood as challenges for religious tourism product development in the monastery. As it can be observed from the pictures below the catastrophe had distracted trees and also fractured residential houses in some places.



Figure : Monastery land affected by Landslide in the year 2005 E.C (Source: own survey)

There is a rock structure (locally called ‘Beha dengay’) currently being extracted by heavy machines for masonry. Local people do also manually extract and provide it for sale. This activity is expanding in the area around the bridge where different plants and wild life inhabit. It seems that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not done for the activity underway and the tour guides organized in the area were also worried about the damage that might result on the ecosystem.



Figure : Mechanical and manual masonry extraction near the bridge at Debre Libanos

5.2 Religious Tourism Product Development Opportunities of the Destination

Attractions and facilities related opportunities

The area is endowed with an amazing landscape setting and an undisturbed nature. Attractive religious festivals, history, the museum, church schools, cave, holy waters, tombs plus the presence of many historical churches and monasteries in the surrounding are the vital opportunities for religious tourism product development in the destination. It was also put by visitors to consider the contribution of the monastery in creating positive image of the country and promoting EOTC to the world community as a good opportunity for religious tourism product development. The area's potential for religious tourism product development is significant.

On the matter in which respondent visitors were asked to rate the quality of various visitor facilities and services, the highest mean score was that of vantage points (M=3.67, SD=1.934) and the next highest was quality of transportation facility (M=3.44, SD=1.469). The road was said to be convenient. These results indicate somehow good quality of those services in the area which is an opportunity for product development. Walkways (M=3.32, SD=1.171), safety and security service (M=3.29, SD=1.274) and electricity service (M=3.07, SD=1.844) account for the subsequent mean scores and these results imply a fair quality of those facilities. As another service which could be an opportunity for religious tourism product development in the area, respondent visitors were asked if Monastery owned travel agency would have been better and easier option for their tour. The mean score for this statement (M=3.87, SD=1.179) suggests visitors agreement to it.

Table : Visitors' opinion on monastery owned travel operation service

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Monastery owned travel agency would have been better and easier option for my tour	45	1	5	3.87	1.179
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Source: own survey, 2013

The lodge establishments in the area considered their location in a central and convenient place as a big opportunity for them added with the adequate land resource they have which will help them enhance their services provision for the religious tourist.

Religious values of the area

This monastery of a well known and revered Saint Tekle Haymanot has kept the ancient religious values to this day. The worship system and spirituality of the place is so alluring and also believed to give spiritual growth and strength to live with God and to get redeemed from sin. The monastery contributes a lot in enabling the faithful to remain in their religion. It is where one can learn good deeds and ethics and live in a good monastic order. Elderly can pass the rest of their life in prayer and fasting at the monastery. Spiritual strength of church fathers is a big lesson for the believer and also teachings and preaching are always given by church fathers in the monastery. These along with the spiritual healing activities are essential opportunities for the monastery in attracting religious tourists.

In their endeavor to provide tour guiding service at the monastery, the monastery guides have learned that pilgrims get spiritually stronger because of many things they hear, see and practice in the monastery. They learn a lot about their religion; they repent and strive for their spiritual growth. They bring behavioral changes and get their problems relieved. This is therefore, a big opportunity for developing religious tourism in its own right.

Respect for nature

One of the unique aspects of Ethiopian monastic tradition was its integration in and respect for nature (Persoon, 2003). "Forest reserves exist not by chance, but by the commitment to emphasize the biblical words on respecting and taking care of nature in totality, as God's creation." (Kesis Kefyalew, 2001, p.9)

At a time when the horror of ecocide is present to all living things, the monasteries showed how hope for a renewed earth is best undergirded by recovering the biblical witness to a God who stands for the integrity of all forms of life. The monastic rules of Waldibba and Mahbara Silase enshrined respect for nature. In addition, Zikwala showed how the struggle for the protection of the eco-system coincided with the integrity of monastic tradition and the protection of sacred space (Persoon, 2003).

The church's strict principle on protection of forest surrounding churches contributes a lot in protecting trees from being cut down. This was what have been witnessed in Debre Libanos and found to be an opportunity to develop sustainable religious tourism products, as the interview

with scholars indicated. However though, a study recently conducted by Mahibere Kidusan portrayed that the forest cover is decreasing due to the increase in number of communities residing in the monastery and hence their consumption for fuel and house construction (2004 E.C).

Location of the site

In terms of location, it is with the highest mean score (M=4.33, SD=.977) that respondents strongly agreed that the location of the monastery at a short distance from Addis Ababa is an opportunity to visit it whereas the statement ‘I could not have visited had it not been located on the northern historic rout’ was rejected by the respondents (M=1.91, SD=1.137). The head of EOTC Heritage section also stated that travel operators and pilgrim associations can easily arrange a tour to Debre Libanos due to its proximity to Addis Ababa.

Table : Visitors' perception of the area's location

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Its location at a short distance from Addis Ababa is an opportunity to visit	45	1	5	4.33	.977
I could not have visited had it not been located on the northern historic route	44	1	5	1.91	1.137
Valid N (listwise)	44				

Source: own survey, 2013

CHAPTER SIX

SUSTAINABLE RELIGIOUS TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The Role of the Community in Developing Religious Tourism Product

Communities' perception and support for the development

Community perception and support is one of the key determining factors for sustainable religious tourism product development. In this regard, the finding reveals that the monastic community loves to show a warm welcome and hospitality for tourists, this being the variable with the highest mean score (M=4.72, SD=.818), and also willing to support efforts made to develop sustainable religious tourism product (M=4.68, SD=.956). It was also viewed that the benefit of attracting tourists to the monastery outweigh its negative impacts but with slightly lesser, but above the average, mean score (M=3.44, SD=1.474). By and large, the community accepts that religious tourism development can bring socio-economic benefits while preserving and promoting religious values (M=4.38, SD=1.042). These are all indicatives of the community's good perception and willingness to support the development.

Table : The monastic community's perception and willingness for religious tourism product development

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Love to show a warm welcome and hospitality for tourists	53	1	5	4.72	.818
Willing to support efforts made to develop sustainable religious tourism product	53	1	5	4.68	.956
Religious tourism development can bring socio-economic benefits while preserving and promoting religious values	53	1	5	4.38	1.042
I feel the benefit of attracting tourists to the monastery outweigh its negative impacts	52	1	5	3.44	1.474
Valid N (listwise)	52				

Source: own survey, 2013

In order to understand the communities' hospitality and friendliness from visitors' point of view, visitors were asked how important warm and friendliness of people was in motivating them visit the site on a 3-point scale, if it is unimportant, important or very important. Visitors viewed the factor as important motivators with a mean score above the average (M=2.59, SD=.583), suggesting strong consideration of the factor as important motivator.

Table : Visitors' perception on friendliness of the local people

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
How important is warm and friendly people in motivating you visit the site	44	1	3	2.59	.583
Valid N (listwise)	44				

Source: own survey, 2013

What should be the role of the monastic community in religious tourism product development?

In order to determine the role of the monastic community in developing religious tourism product, through monastic community questionnaire, respondents were asked on a 5-point Likert scale how strongly they agree or disagree with a series of seven statements. As depicted on the table below, the respondents had the tendency to support the idea that they should be consulted when the developments are planned. In fact this was the most popularly accepted option (M=4.68, SD=.779). Respondents regarded 'having a voice in decision making process' (M=4.66, SD=.758), 'taking the leading role as entrepreneurs' (M=4.45, SD=1.084), 'having a role as a worker in the developed tourism products' (M=4.36, SD=1.039), 'being financially supported to invest in religious tourism development' (M=3.87, SD=1.373) and 'being consulted but the final decision be made by the monastery administration' (M=3.83, SD=1.614) as appropriate means by which they can play their role in religious tourism product development. They rejected the idea that community should not participate by any means (M=1.72, SD=1.321).

Table : The role of the monastic community in developing religious tourism product

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Community should be consulted when the developments are planned	53	1	5	4.68	.779
Should have a voice in decision making process	53	1	5	4.66	.758
Take the leading role as entrepreneurs	53	1	5	4.45	1.084
Community should have a role as a worker in the developed tourism products	53	1	5	4.36	1.039
Should be financially supported to invest in religious tourism development	53	1	5	3.87	1.373
Should be consulted but the final decision should be made by the monastery administration	53	1	5	3.83	1.614
Community should not participate by any means	53	1	5	1.72	1.321
Valid N (listwise)	53				

Source: own survey, 2013

6.2 Collaboration among Religious Tourism Stakeholders

It is difficult to think about sustainable development of religious tourism products without the involvement and collaboration of the concerned bodies. This aspect of the religious tourism product development in the study area is thoroughly discussed herein.

Respondents from the monastery believed that collaboration among stakeholders is vital in religious tourism product development. According to the monastery guides, it was generally weak and specifically, the collaboration and consultation with culture and tourism office was very weak. Professional support and heritage protection was mentioned by the guides as one area the office failed to do a lot and limited itself on asking for revenue data of the monastery. According to respondents from tourism office, strong collaboration was difficult because of the monastery's unwillingness. Request of tourist data of the monastery was said to be perceived as if the office asks to share the money they generated from tourism. Besides, they had some fears of stealing the ancient things there, as it did happen more than once, and hence, it had been difficult for the office to involve and work on different tourism related matters with the monastery, as the office people said. However, other officials said the office was also weak in approaching the monastery to collaborate. It did not go and knock at their door. If it did so, there was no reason for the office not to end up being collaborative with the monastery as it was possible in other parts of Ethiopia. Overall, it was stated from the office side that much work is needed afterwards to maintain strong collaboration with the monastery.

With regard to the monastery's collaboration with tour and travel intermediaries, according to the museum head, some travel agency managers occasionally make a familiarization tour at the beginning and end of the year to gather information about attractions, services, improvements on fees and the like. This was just to share information and there was also no established collaboration between the monastery and travel and tour operators. However, a number of travel agencies bring visitors to the area and also promote the site by their own. The same was true with pilgrim associations in the country.

All in all, relationships between the monastery and other service providers in the area and among the service providers themselves were not based on consultation and discussion with each other, the result being inability to make due account of the opinions of those stakeholders in the

religious tourism product development. Needless to say, tourist service providers did not also establish considerable collaboration and consultation with the community, as was indicated by service providers themselves. Those establishments could also benefit the local community from what they gain from religious tourism, said a scholar, in order to win their collaboration and participation.

As to the small food and drink establishments in a village inside the monastery land, it was indicated that there was a very weak collaboration and consultation with the monastery administration. It was said that the monastery wanted the settlers to evacuate the monastery's land which they have been living in for years. However, the issue between the monastery and the village in which this and other food and drink establishments are found has been pending undecided for years and not yet reached on a final decision though government had involved on the matter. This could be one indicative of how might the relation between the settlers and the monastery look like.

Derara tour guides association on the other hand was in an encouraging relationship with the local farmers. They had been lending them money for purchase of fertilizer, involved in work campaigns, festivals and so on. And, they said their collaboration with the monastery was weak (For instance, they had to pay entrance fee for themselves every time they accompany tourists to the monastery museum). Their relation with culture and tourism office could not also solve their major problems (mainly concerning their relation with Ethio-German Park hotel), beyond minor supports because of administrative weakness of the office.

Ethio-German Park hotel and Derara tour guides association were not in a good relation with each other. According to the information obtained from the zonal culture and tourism office and the tour guides themselves, owners of the lodge nearby the Portuguese bridge had a desire to own and manage the tour around the bridge, though this kind of heritage cannot be possessed by private business men. This was actually not successful and the association had acquired government's permission to manage and benefit from the bridge and pay tax for government. According to respondents from the tourism office, this had resulted in an ongoing disagreement between the two.

One of the problems resulted was that tourists were sometimes charged double fee to visit the bridge. One is by the hotel establishment and second is by the guides. The park hotel's reason was that if foreign tourists coming to the lodge did not use any service of the lodge against payment, he or she was charged some amount as an entrance fee or else they had to use something. The guides view was that, the lodge collects entrance fee from tourists (mostly when they are in large number) which was illegal since it was the association's legally approved right to collect entrance fees from tourists visiting Portuguese bridge. Many tourists complained and even returned back without visiting because of double fee they were charged within a very short distance. This situation had decreased their income and most dangerously tourists were going back with complain and bad image of the area, as the tour guides stressed on the focus group discussion held with them. Respondents from the sector office and professionals stated that it was only appropriate for those guides to collect entrance fee at the bridge area.

The tour guides have already started using another access way, outside the lodge compound, to the bridge as an option and the lodge was not happy with this. The other perception of the lodge for the guides was that they hassle tourists as a result of which the lodge did not allow them enter its compound. But, the tour guides felt that the lodge had been making agitations by creating bad image of the tour guides in the mind of tourists.

To bring about mutual and lasting solution for these and other problems between the two tourism service providers, the association members underlined the need for collaboration and consultation and they were also willing enough for this. Problems might exist on both sides and what had been making the issue more complicated was an unlawful and veiled influence from a government official as informants said. It was stated by respondents from the sector office that it was their mandate to solve the issue but they needed attention and cooperation from other government bodies. It was also stated by an informant from professionals that government should make continuous follow up on their activities and the role of the responsible government body ought to be beyond collecting tax from them.

6.3 Protection of the area's Religious, Cultural and Environmental Values

Current protection efforts in the area

There had been some efforts in the study area to protect cultural and environmental values. Culture and Tourism office hasn't made a notable involvement in the protection and conservation of the heritage in the study area so far, as put by respondents from the office. There are some attempts from attraction sites and service providers in the area that the paper is going to discuss under this section.

The heritage in the museum was protected with the aid of security cameras and there were security guardians for the forest resource of the monastery. Moreover, everyone of the monastic community feels responsible for the monastery's heritage, said a monastery guide. They had always been striving to keep and strengthen the established and age old religious traditions and customs so that the religious values of the monastery do not spoil. The guides stated that they also taught and have made aware visitors on this matter and informed them the religious rules and regulations up on their arrival.

Besides, it was prohibited to use flash cameras to take picture of paintings and inside the museum it was totally prohibited to take picture or video. There was no clearly put reason for this complete prohibition. But, a guide said people may not come and visit if they see the pictures of heritage in the museum, which is an arguable justification.

Among the protection efforts observed at Hotel establishments, they did planting and gardening to beautify the environment and they made protections to animals and birds living and wondering inside the lodge boundary like the endemic Chelada Baboon, especially in one of the lodges. The organization managing the other lodge had also begun growing and distributing plant seedlings for the community and also to plant by its own. There were attempts to give environmentally friendly services. It was tried to localize the design of the buildings and furniture used. They had better wastage disposal mechanisms and those small establishments at Wusha Gedel area were poor in this regard. Furthermore, the lodges had at least been orally giving warnings and informed the common dos and don'ts about the monastery for their guests. And also some escort guides did same.

Derara tour guides association is involved in environmental protection through forest development activities like planting trees, terracing and so on around the bridge. The association also made protections for the endemic Chelada Baboon and some other wild animals in the area from different harms like killing, scaring and destroying their habitat from the local people as these animals are their means of income by attracting tourists. The protection was actually not done by armed security guards rather by the guides themselves when they are around. They had also cleaned the historical Debis cave and started efforts to promote it.

The very crucial role the monastery, and hence the monastic community, had been playing in preserving and protecting the ancient and historical religious values of the church to this day is a remarkable achievement. It was not an easy affair for those people. They paid whatever it cost them. Believing that traditional church education, which is weakening from time to time, should be preserved, the other lodge owner organization had been making efforts to preserve this precious heritage by establishing church schools just besides the lodge building and it had already launched education.

It can generally be understood from the discussions being made so far that the protection work has a long way to go though there are some attempts here and there.

What shall be done towards a better protection and development of religious tourism products?

This section mainly makes a summarized discussion on various ideas collected from the research subjects regarding the things that could be done in order to enhance the protection of religious tourism products and to ensure its development in the area.

Towards the protection and development of religious tourism products, the monastic community as well as visitors and service providers suggested that rules and regulations of the monastery should be observed and it was put that rules and customs laid by forefathers should be respected. The monastery would keep its authenticity if the church services be undertaken according to the well established tradition or regulation and the monastic community, especially, the monks should obey what the book of monks state as said by respondent from the community.

It was everyone's suggestion that heritage of the area be protected. The monastery should use modern technology in order to protect its heritage and wealth. Heritage should be carefully kept

Through improvement of facilities, assigning professionals, adding more attraction sites to the tour itinerary (the forest, church schools and holy water sites for example) and by creating a clean and attractive places, it is possible to enhance the tourist experience of the area. Visitors should get special care and protection and should be guided well while they are at the destination and they should obviously obey the monastery rules. It would give a better experience if the visitor is not prohibited to take note in the monastery museum. But, it is good if visitors are prohibited to capture the videos and photos of the disabled without permission as some might use it to spoil the image of the monastery. Persuasion and begging were also affecting the visitor experience and therefore, the local kids should be discouraged from persuading the tourists and it should be explained to them that begging is a bad habit. As regards cleanliness of the site, it could be enhanced by creating awareness on the laity and all the visitors especially during festivals.

The recommendations given as regards to marketing and promotion of religious tourism products emphasized the need to work more on electronic based marketing and promotion efforts like websites, social medias and others to create better option for international tourists. The sites should not expect some other body to promote for them. They should rather do it by themselves. It was also said that the monastery should expose its ancient events and heritage to the modern science and technology research institutions.

Moreover, the site should not only be a place where people go for the two or three major festivals and funeral, as it is the case now. It has the capacity to serve beyond this. The capacity of the site is not fully exploited and more products; attractions and services can be developed. The development should not however contradict with the religious values of the place. Modern developments should be in harmony with the culture and through mobilizing the community, consulting the faithful and asking the support of volunteers it is possible to develop the site. There also needs to be training and education on heritage protection, religious tourism and the like. On services that might be developed to accommodate the tourists, the local community should benefit by providing different local supplies from their farm products. And it is also possible for the monastery and the community around to generate income by selling different products directly to visitors. Another important point made by visitors about the developments

was that the monastery should prepare a master plan and undertake developmental activities accordingly.

6.4 Marketing and Promotion of Religious Tourism Products

The Religious tourist market

Tourism to religious sites is growing worldwide, yet our understanding of the motives, interests and needs of tourists at these sites is limited (Hughes et al., 2012). Visitors to the monastery are comprised of various social groups and market segments. In terms of gender, both males and females came to visit the monastery and as the respondent data of this study indicates they account 73.3% and 26.7% respectively. As to the age category of visitors, it was obtained that the majority (46.7%) were those between 26-35 years. A considerable percentage was that of the ones between 18-25 years (31.1%) and there were also people who were in the category of 36-45 years (8.9%) and 46 or older (13.3%). It was also observed that some visitors brought their children with them.

The other variable which was used to look at the areas religious tourist market was marital status. In this regard, of all the respondents 73.3% were single while 20% were married and 6.7% were divorced. As regards their religious affiliation, most of them were Ethiopian Orthodox Christians (82.2%) while 4.4% were Protestants and the rest (13.3%) were visitors from different other religions. Visitors to the place also comprised of people from different educational backgrounds; Vocational/College Diploma (46.7%), some High school (17.8%), Primary school (15.6%) and First degree or above (13.3%), in terms of formal education, and Church (EOTC) education (6.7%).

Table : Visitor profile

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Religious affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Male	33	73.3	Ethiopian Orthodox	37	82.2
Female	12	26.7	Protestant	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0	Other	6	13.3
			Total	45	100.0

Age	Frequency	Percent	Highest educational qualification	Frequency	Percent
18-25	14	31.1			
26-35	21	46.7	Primary school	7	15.6
36-45	4	8.9	Some high school	8	17.8
46 or older	6	13.3	Vocational/ College diploma	21	46.7
Total	45	100.0	First degree or above	6	13.3
Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Church education	3	6.7
Single	33	73.3	Total	45	100.0
Married	9	20.0			
Divorced	3	6.7			
Total	45	100.0			

Source: own survey, 2013

Visitor type, purpose and prior choice of alternatives

With regard to visitor type, the data reveals that domestic visitors encompass the largest percentage (82.2%) and the international accounted for 17.8%. As the church's heritage official and scholar said, Pilgrimage or religious travel is considered as a canon in Ethiopian Orthodox church just like fasting and others. It has canonical reward and it gives spiritual satisfaction. This could be the reason for the high flow in domestic pilgrims. Among the domestic visitors 42.2% of them were from Addis Ababa and the rest were from different parts of Ethiopia.

Concerning their purpose of travel to the area, the data indicates that the majority of the respondents were religious tourists (80%) while 8.9% were leisure tourists, 2.2% were visitors with purposes of both religious and leisure and again 2.2% had both religious and education purposes and the rest had other purposes. Few international visitors came for research purpose in group. Most of the foreign tourist being leisure tourists, some are researchers and there are also some having a purpose of both religion and leisure. During festivals, a number of domestic people come to the place for trade and begging as well.

The other important point to examine about religious tourist market was to identify whether the monastery had repeat visitors or not. In so doing, it was obtained that 75% (out of those not coded as missing) of respondents were repeat visitors while the rest were first time visitors. Respondents were also asked if they had thought of another alternative destination before choosing to visit the monastery. To this end, the data portrays 68.9% of them did not think of an alternative where as 31.1% said they had other destinations in mind before deciding Debre

Libanos. The foreign tourist respondents who thought of an alternative destination prior their visit to Debre Llibanos did not mention any other religious site in the country as their alternative choice. Whereas the domestic visitors mentioned sites like Zekwala Monastery, Lalibela , Tsadkane Maryam, Gishen Debre Kerbe , Entoto , Etisa Tekle Haymanot, and Waldeba Monastery.

Table : Visitor type, purpose and prior choice of alternatives

Type of visitor	Frequency	Valid Percent	Repeat visitor	Frequency	Valid Percent
Domestic	37	82.2	Yes	33	75.0
International	8	17.8	No	11	25.0
Total	45	100.0	Total	44	100.0
Purpose of travel	Frequency	Valid Percent	Missing	1	
Religious	36	80.0	Total	45	
Leisure	4	8.9	Thought of alternative destination before	Frequency	Valid Percent
Other	3	6.7	Yes	14	31.1
Religious and leisure	1	2.2	No	31	68.9
Religious and education	1	2.2	Total	45	100.0
Total	45	100.0			

Source: own survey, 2013

Visitors' sources of information, motivating factors, visit time preference and the role of intermediaries

In terms of the information sources that encouraged respondents most, the leading ones were friends or relatives (42.2%) and prior personal experience (40%). Travel agents (8.9%) and printed media (4.4%) were also chosen as information source by the respective percentage of respondents. The rest mentioned teachings given in churches at their home town as an information source. Respondents who came to visit the monastery in group account for 44.4% while individual religious travelers account for the larger amount, 55.6%. As regards the role of intermediaries, only 11.1% said they came through an intermediary while 88.9% of respondents did not come through an intermediary.

Table : Visitors' source of information and the role of intermediaries

Source of information encouraged the visitor most	Frequency	Percent
Friends or relatives	19	42.2
Prior personal experience	18	40.0
Travel agent	4	8.9
Printed media	2	4.4
Other	2	4.4
Total	45	100.0
Did you come in group	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	44.4
No	25	55.6
Total	45	100.0
Did you come through an intermediary	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	11.1
No	40	88.9
Total	45	100.0

Source: own survey, 2013

In order to determine what most importantly motivated visitors to visit the site, through visitor questionnaire, respondents were asked on a 3-point scale, if it is unimportant, important or very important, with a series of six statements. Overall, visitors viewed all factors as important motivators. The mean scores for all variables are above 2.5, suggesting strong consideration of the factors as important motivators.

Table : Factors most importantly motivated tourists to visit the site

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
How important is the beautiful scenery or aesthetic value of the destination	45	1	3	2.80	.457
How important is history of the site in motivating you visit the site	45	2	3	2.80	.405
How important and attractive are the monastic customs and way of life	45	2	3	2.69	.468
How important are ritual services in motivating you visit the site	45	1	3	2.62	.614
How important are festivals in motivating you visit the site	45	1	3	2.60	.720
How important is the warm and friendly culture of the people in motivating you visit the site	44	1	3	2.59	.583
Valid N (list wise)	44				

Source: own survey, 2013

Visitors prefer to visit the site mostly during annual feasts and in fasting seasons. Their reasons for preferring to visit during annual feasts were; to commemorate the saint's holiday along with

visit of historic places, because the festivals are attractive, to get blessings, because of the promise given to the Saint from God, because many people attend it, to hear and know hagiography of Saint Tekle Haymanot, because the Saint's miracles are told during the festivals than other times and/or because they were visiting with friends who come every year. As to the preference to visit during fasting seasons, respondents put reasons like: the 24 hours church service which they believe strengthens their spiritual life, unique and attractive services, because there is no much congestion, to be away from sin and to acquire blessing, and/or to pray and get free from sin.

In which parts of the year does the area receive highest number of visitors?

The tourist flow was said to be seasonal according to experts from the zonal culture and tourism office. Besides, tourists heading to the Northern historic route accounted a significant share of foreigners visiting the area, said a tourism officer. The park hotel in the area was said to have the highest occupancy between September and January which is the peak season in the country.

There is always a guest in the area. According to the information obtained in an interview with the monastery museum head and guides, the highest flow of foreign visitors to the monastery is between September and February. Most of the domestic visitors come during the three major annual feasts of the Saint; Nehase 24 (August), Ginbot 12 (May), Tahesas 24 (January). The number of people seen on the two big feasts in the months of May and August is miraculous. Beside the pilgrims or religious travelers many people come from different places, even away from the area, to do business of various kinds like selling different items. During those times the road is congested to the extent that religious tourists travel more than four kilometers on foot. Relatively, many people from the rural areas come on the May festival where as many urban people come on the August festival. Next to these times, there is also a considerable flow of domestic visitors during Ethiopian Orthodox fasting periods and on Saturdays and Sundays and on Public holidays also.

Marketing and promotion of services in the area

The means the culture and tourism office used to promote the sites in the zone included inviting local Medias and also allowing them when the request comes from them and was also done through posters and brochures. Respondents from the office could not mention any other notable marketing and promotion strategy employed.

Promotion is only done through few signage placed at the T-junction just at the bend of the road from the highway to the monastery, about 4 kilometers away from the monastery, and those put around the main gate of the church. The people in and around had also been making word of mouth promotion. Otherwise there was no planned program to market tourism services of the monastery.

According to a tourism scholar and tour lecturer of a tour operation based in Addis Ababa, the marketing activity was conducted in two ways. One is the general marketing in which websites and guide books were used to promote products and the other was specific promotion which is done through tour operator itinerary. These mechanisms had benefited the study area so far and it was suggested by the scholar that the monastery can develop its own website which he taught does not have any problem. And also put that, if the monastery wants to involve in the business, it can open its own office in Addis and give service.

The park hotel mainly marketed its service through personal contacts abroad (most of their guests were Germany tourists), giving business card, through linkage with tour operators and internet based. Though the lodge does not have its own website it used social media. The other lodge was on a move to strengthen its marketing and promotion efforts and had planned to prepare brochures and develop website. The founder and manager of the organization owning the lodge said that they were also thinking to allow voluntary individuals to construct rooms by their own on a land which they give them and according to the design they set. These individuals will have the right to stay in the rooms they have built whenever they come to the area and it will be sold during the times they are not there.

Keeping visitor profile and statistics

There were gaps in keeping the profile of tourists all over the zone according to respondents from the zonal culture and tourism office. At Debre Libanos monastery, the number of visitors who made visits against payments was known just by counting the receipt and the country from which the visitor came was also written on the ticket (The tourist data was however not disclosed for the researcher and it couldn't be used for this study though it would have been pertinent). There was no other system in place to keep the profile of visitors. The tour guides said that they stopped registering because of the repeated request from the tourism bureau to share the revenue received by the monastery from tourists. As to them, the office wanted to strengthen its

interference and share the benefit. But the monastery said no since the revenue was used to sustain the life of the monastic community, said respondent from the monastery guides. The park hotel keeps the profile of guests like name, country, and length of stay in the lodge etc. though some information like passport and visa number, purpose of visit and the like were missing in their registration form. Service providers in the area were generally weak in keeping tourist profile and statistics.

Visitor length of stay and accommodation site preference

As regards visitor length of stay, the survey data revealed 44.4% of respondents stayed at the area for 1-3days while 35.6% of them stayed less than a day and only 20% stayed for more than seven days. The places respondents preferred most for accommodation during their stay was, in the first place at the monastery (68.2%) and then Chagal (15.9%), Addis Ababa (6.8%), Debre Tsige (4.5%) and other (4.5%). Those who said other preferred to be accommodated at friends' family at the monastery area or wanted to Prepare by themselves or wanted to bring food and roasted cereals from their homes. The main accommodation establishment at Chagal is Ethio-German Park hotel and according to the tour guides' association in the area, when this lodge is in a full occupancy and or in times some service is missing tourists, mainly foreigners, mostly go to Fiche town.

Table : Visitor length of stay and preferred accommodation site

Visitor length of stay at the site	Frequency	Valid %
<1 day	16	35.6
1-3 days	20	44.4
>7 days	9	20.0
Total	45	100.0
Most preferred places to get accommodation facility	Frequency	Valid %
At the monastery	30	68.2
Chagal	7	15.9
Addis Ababa	3	6.8
Debre Tsige	2	4.5
Other	2	4.5
Total	44	100.0
Missing	1	
Total	45	

Source: own survey, 2013

What does the religious tourist market need to experience at the destination?

In order to examine what visitors need to experience or see while they are at the destination, they were provided with different options to choose from and a space to add activity not in the list. Having given the chance to choose more than one option 68.9% of respondents showed their need to participate in ritual services in the first place and considerably the needs to learn about the religion (57.8%), to engage in voluntary services like giving care for disabled, orphan and schizophrenic (46.7%) and the need to have some time to meditate (35.6%) comprised the following mostly preferred visitor experiences. The rest of the activities scored close percentages and they include the needs to test monastic life (26.7%), to interact with the monastic community (26.7%) and to stay in the monastery for some days (24.4%). Additionally, some respondents have mentioned that they want to experience the history, customs, nature, conduct research, to understand more about services in the monastery and to learn the Saint's hagiography and faith and get blessing.

Table : Need of visitors to experience at the destination

Needs of visitors	Frequency	Percent
To participate in ritual services	31	68.9
To learn about the religion	26	57.8
To engage in voluntary services like giving care for disabled, orphan and schizophrenic	21	46.7
To have some time to meditate	16	35.6
To interact with the monastic community	12	26.7
To taste the monastic life	12	26.7
To stay in the monastery for some days	11	24.4

Source: own survey, 2013

The main request areas visitors make about the service they want to get at the destination

Among the requests visitors made for the monastery guides was that, the domestic tourists frequently ask about staying in the monastery for some days, about being baptized, about making donations and other contributions. Foreign tourists requested to buy a postcard with a picture of the stained glasses printed on it.

Top view lodge and establishments in Wusha Gedel had repeatedly requested rooms. Especially, in the rainy season it was difficult for the pilgrims to stay the night in an open air as in the non-

rainy seasons. Derara tour guides association was also requested to construct a kind of accommodation, somewhere around the bridge, in which visitors can eat their picnic in and gate rest, along with provision of soft drinks, coffee and snacks. Ethio-German park hotel was also requested to upgrade its services and particularly requested campfire, European dish, swimming pool and student play ground by its clients.

Interpretive programs

To begin by highlighting the mechanisms employed at the study area to interpret or give explanatory information about offerings, the way the monastery guides as well as the guides around the bridge conduct interpretation activity was mainly verbal. Hotel establishments interpreted orally and through signage placed at their gates. Some had brochures for this purpose. At Debre Libanos monastery, a banner upon which religious regulations were written was kept inside the ticket office for visitors to read when they buy tickets. It was not placed in public because of unwillingness and fear to disclose the amount of entrance fee charged on foreign visitors. There were also few defectively designed signage, mainly directional, placed around the church and gates.

The monastic community strongly agreed with the statement ‘Visitors are expected to be informed about religious and cultural values and give due respect for them’ (M=4.77, SD=.505). This indicates that the community needs for some kind of interpretive programs to be devised.

Table : The monastic communities' opinion on informing the place's values for the visitor to respect

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Visitors are expected to be informed about religious and cultural values and give due respect for them	53	3	5	4.77	.505
Valid N (list wise)	53				

Source: own survey, 2013

With regard to the visitors' view on informative programs, 93.3% of respondents support the need to set up informative programs in the monastery. Besides, it was highly recognized by respondent visitors that interpretations are vital to prepare the visitor respect the socio-cultural and environmental issues (97.8%).

Table : Visitors' opinion on the need of interpretive programs at the destination

Does the monastery need to set up informative interpretive programs				Interpretations are vital to prepare the visitor respect the socio-cultural and environmental issues			
		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	42	93.3	Valid	Yes	44	97.8
	No	3	6.7		No	1	2.2
	Total	45	100.0		Total	45	100.0

Source: own survey

As to the appropriate mode of interpretation in the area, respondent visitors in the first place chose interpretive center (68.9%) and then display panels or signage (53.3%). Publications and audio-visual presentations were chosen by equal percentage of respondents (48.8%) as appropriate modes of interpretation in the destination.

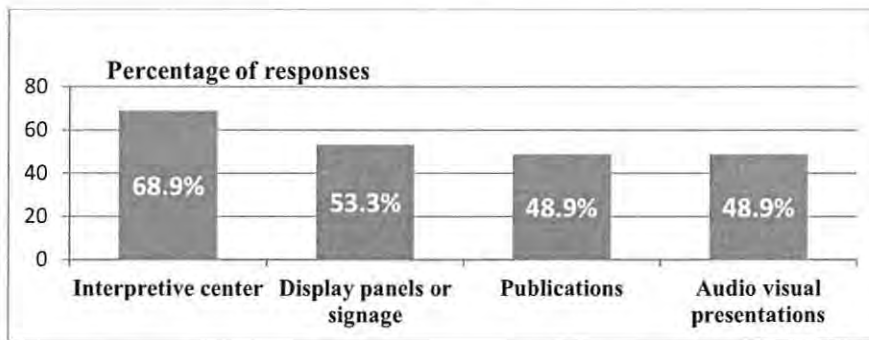


Figure : Visitors' perception of appropriate modes of Interpretation in the destination (Source: own survey 2013)

Others have suggested establishment of an information centre/desk in Addis Ababa, guide and/or hosts responsibility, brochure, broadcast media and development of the monastery's own website as appropriate modes of interpretation. Some suggested computer aided explanations or an electronic guide for the monastery museum. A tourist stated, "Interpretive programs should not be audacious and take away from the natural feeling of the monastery which is a great appeal. Ethiopia is unique and visitors may not be aware of certain cultural norms. So, interpretation is vital. Signage should be modest and natural and should not make it feel like a tourist destination."

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The objective of this research is to determine the main issues of developing religious tourism product in Debre Libanos Monastery and its environs as well as to make suggestions for its contemporary advance. In order to achieve this objective, the research was guided by three inter-related questions: 1) What are the salient features of Debre Libanos Monastery for religious tourism; 2) What challenges and opportunities are presented to religious tourism product development in the monastery; and 3) How is it possible to ensure sustainable development of religious tourism product in the site. In the previous chapters, a detailed discussion on the findings for each of these research questions was made. This chapter draws a conclusion from the findings and summarizes the major findings of the research in the context of the research questions and it points out recommendations as well.

The research findings established that the area is one of the best religious attraction place that can be visited by everyone be they pilgrims or tourists and it has a great potential to be improved to a better religious tourism destination. The key attractions, its uniqueness, the outstanding attributes and the appealing religious activities of the site are found to be the salient features of this religious tourism destination that give a very interesting, spiritual and enlightening experience of the site.

The major potential attractions of the area include: History of Saint Tekle Haymanot monastery of Debre Libanos, the Church of Debre Libanos (Housing St. Tekle Haymanot's tomb, beautiful stained glass windows, enticing church services like the Liturgy which takes place every day, hymns or religious songs of praise, canonical hours of prayer, Hagiography reading and interpretation and so on.), a pristine monastic tradition, Spiritual healing, divine promises offering both physical and spiritual advantages for the burial of the deceased, major feasts for St Takla Haymanot (Feast of the Birth of St. Tekle Haymanot on January, Feast of the Death of St. Tekle Haymanot on August and Feast of Moving His Holy Relics on May), the museum, church education, Tegbar Bet (The kitchen), Historical Monasteries and Churches in a nearer distance from Debre Libanos, the magnificently scenic beauty of the landscape, the forest, birds and

animals, Jema river gorge, Debre Asbo and Debbis caves, Baboons dwelling caves, the old stone bridge near the monastery of Debre Libanos, and handicraft developments.

The findings also signified that the area is a unique religious tourism destination having a lot of peculiar features both in terms of attractions and services as well. History, Scenic landscape, healing or miracles at the monastery and the museum are found to be the most outstanding features of the area. In addition, Debre Asbo cave, the forest, stained glass pictures, the whole church service and the monastic culture are also the unique attributes of Debre Libanos monastery that are of touristic interest. The three most important religious activities that appeals to religious or the non leisure travelers are promise of the place, Church services or ceremony of religious worship and the ingestion or immersion in Holy water. Other appealing attributes include initiation into monastic life obtained at the monastery, the annual feasts of the Saint, and receiving the Eucharist.

The findings with regard to the area's potential to develop nature based and culture based religious tourism products established, in the first place, the local community's willingness to allow for culture and nature based religious tourism product developments. And the assessment on visitors' interest indicated visitors need to experience nature and culture based tourism activities at the area. The site is found to have potentials to develop some nature based activities namely: landscape viewing or scenic tour, Bird watching, Bush walking, wildlife tour, Mountaineering/climbing, trekking and travel in the semi desert area to experience the rural agricultural life (Rural tourism).

Festival tourism, Visit to artworks along with the way they are prepared, visit to Church schools, History of Saint Tekle Haymanot along with history of the place (Historical tourism), building spiritual knowledge by learning at the monastery (Educational tourism), Visiting site where monastic people were massacred during Italian occupation (Tana-tourism), volunteering, visiting and helping the handicapped (Voluntary tourism/ voluntourism), opening an opportunity for the demanding visitor to stay and take part in ritual practices or experience the monastic life and learn about the religion (Experiential tourism), locally designed accommodations mainly serving local products, experiencing cultural foods, souvenirs (Shopping), Study/research tour and cemetery tourism are the potential culture based religious tourism products that can be developed in the area. Religious visitors want to learn and be actively involved which implies

that they want to know more about the background of the site or event, and be actively involved in the religious or spiritual life of the place. Richards and Fernandes (2007) and Gupta (1999) are also in support of this finding. Nevertheless, there are challenges the destination should take on in order to bring about all these to happen.

The challenges presented to religious tourism product development in the area include: inadequacy and poor quality of accommodation, food and beverage, shopping, guiding, toilet, waste disposal, signage, telecommunication, internet, drinking water, medical and banking facilities and services and visitor experience related challenges such as lack of opportunity to interact, volunteer, and meditate, etc., especially for the foreign visitors, language barrier, lack of cleanliness, widespread begging, disorganized commercial activities and weak presentation of heritage the area offers.

Gradual expansion of bars, private hotels, shops and other small entertainment and drinking establishments inside the monastery land, the location of the car terminal just near the main church, renting house in the monastery, photographing and filming the handicapped without any consent, destruction of plants to build cemeteries, some illegal activities like theft during big festivals, and breach of the monastery rules and regulations such as dressing codes by some visitors are the other challenges. The monastic life is being challenged by some visitors' demonstration of bad and strange behaviors and actions which do not go with the monastic culture, and violation of the monastery's rule of being celibate by few of the monastic individuals. Overcrowding and unregulated visitor behavior seriously hampers the visitor circulation at some of the monastery precincts. These sites do not have a basic visitor management system in place and lack adequate manpower to regulate the mass of visitors especially on holidays. All in all, the monastery is gradually changing into a secular place deprived of its spirituality.

Administrative problems, inadequacy of knowledgeable and skilled professionals, very weak promotion and marketing efforts, community settlement inside the monastery, landslide, land erosion caused by flood and extraction of rock undertaken around the bridge at Debre Libanos are also the other challenges presented to religious tourism product development in the area. Human Resource Development is totally inadequate in training quality, skills range and numbers.

On the other hand, the area's endowments with an amazing landscape setting and an undisturbed nature, history, attractive religious festivals and services, monastic life and healing, and other numerous appeals in the area are vital opportunities for religious tourism product development in the destination. Religious values of the area, the monastic culture of respect for nature and the location of the site at a short distance from Addis Ababa along with its accessibility are the other opportunities.

Moving on to the findings on the third research question, community perception and support for religious tourism product development, collaboration among stakeholders, protection of the area's religious, cultural and environmental values and sustainable marketing and promotion of religious tourism products are found to be the fundamental considerations to ensure sustainable religious tourism product development.

The community perceives that religious tourism development can bring socio-economic benefits while preserving and promoting religious values and they are hospitable, friendly and willing to support the development. The community's appropriate roles in religious tourism product development include being consulted when the developments are planned, having a voice in decision making process, taking the leading role as entrepreneurs, having a role as a worker in the developed religious tourism products, and being financially supported to invest in religious tourism development.

In the study site, collaboration and consultation among religious tourism stakeholders is very weak. And the protection and development of the area's religious, cultural and environmental values have a long way to go though there are some attempts here and there. Problems exist with regard to observing rules and age old customs and traditions, heritage protection, coordinated effort to protect and develop products, developing products that do not contradict with the values of the place, expansion of human settlement, appearing hotel establishments inside the sacred monastery land, facilities, care and protection for visitors, training and education, sustainable marketing, benefiting the community and so on.

While the marketing and promotion efforts in the area is weak, visitors to the area comprise of various social groups and market segments in terms of gender, age category, marital status, religious affiliation (mostly Ethiopian Orthodox Christians), and educational backgrounds.

Information obtained from friends or relatives and the visitors' prior personal experience is the major information sources that encouraged visitors to visit the destination. As concerns visitor type, domestic visitors take the lions share and most of the monastery's visitors are repeat visitors. Visitors come to the area mainly for religious purposes but there are also visitors coming for leisure, for both religious and leisure, religious and education, researchers, and during festivals a number of domestic people come to the place for business and begging as well. Most of the visitors to the area stay less than four days and the place preferred most for accommodation during their stay is at the monastery.

The religious tourist market needs comprise of the need to participate in ritual services, the need to learn about the religion, to engage in voluntary services like giving care for disabled, orphan and schizophrenic, and the need to have some time to meditate. Visitors prefer to visit the site mostly during annual feasts and in fasting seasons and the highest flow of foreign visitors to the monastery is between September and February. Most of the domestic visitors' flow to the area is during the three major annual feasts of Saint Tekle Haymanot; August, May, and January.

Interpretive programs are found to be vital to give information and prepare the visitor respect the socio-cultural and environmental issues and the findings also established that interpretive center, display panels or signage, publications and audio-visual presentations are appropriate modes of interpretation in the area.

7.2 Recommendations

Using the findings, the study has established that there are issues that need to be addressed to bring about sustainable religious tourism product development in the destination.

1. Infrastructure Development

- Encourage the development of locally designed accommodations mainly serving local products. Provision of accommodation especially during festival and auspicious dates. Discourage the expansion of bars, private hotels, shops and other small entertainment and drinking establishments inside the monastery precinct.
- The parking place in the monastery is poor, inappropriately located and need modernization. There needs to be segregated parking spaces for buses, four-wheelers and two-wheelers, to prevent bottlenecks, delays, noise and air pollution etc.

- Proper toilet facilities and drinking water, organized and hygienic eating places, telecommunication, internet, medical, banking and street light facilities for the comfort of visitors as well as local inhabitants.
- Proper signage system and Interpretation facilities through proper directional and informative signage to orient the visitors efficiently by augmenting signage system at vantage points of the location, knowledgeable guides, brochures, guide-maps, literature, information booklets, awareness and integration of sites so that tourists visit nearby sites, and heritage interpretation centre. Information and interpretation centre shall be developed in a way it will provide visitors a synoptic depiction of the area, exhibits on flora and fauna etc. It will also act as a documentation centre for spiritual researchers.

2. Resource conservation, and stakeholder collaboration

- Ensuring authenticity and original character of the religious site since development pressure due to the fact that unplanned visitor facilities and illegal encroachments are mushrooming in the area.
- Prepare comprehensive heritage site conservation plans by involving professionals.
- The area needs to establish proper waste management system.
- The development of religious tourism products should be preceded by an environment impact study.
- The protection and development of cultural assets and heritage sites requires the co-ordination of the key tourism stakeholders in the area.
- The coordination of safety and security aspects of religious tourism activities in the area requires an organized effort or a legal working group.
- A sustainable religious tourism product development requires seamless cooperation between actors in the area.

3. Developing special interest tourism products

Religious tourism by itself is, in the first place, a specialized type of tourism for which the country needs to have nationwide strategy for the development of this specialized type of tourism.

To attract tourists to this religious destination, there is a need to propose special interest tourism products such as landscape viewing or scenic tour, bird watching, bush walking, wildlife tour, mountaineering/climbing, parachute jumping, trekking, rural tourism, festival tourism, visit to artworks along with the way they are prepared, visit to church schools, historical tourism, educational tourism, voluntourism, experiential tourism, souvenir shopping, study tour and cemetery tourism. Tourist and Pilgrim may have a different purpose of visits to this religious destination. Tourists may not find it worthwhile to come all the way just for a pilgrimage if special interest products are not there.

4. Sustainable marketing and promotion

- Create destination awareness through extensive media campaign.
- Develop linkages of the surrounding destinations around the pilgrimage site to draw tourists.
- Promote e-marking of the destination through a dedicated website and social media.
- Develop co-operative marketing partnerships with specialized tour operators and travel agents.
- Develop high quality promotional material such as brochures, posters, booklets, guide books, CD-ROM etc.

Further researches need to be carried out on Human Resource Development and Investment Plan.

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(Illustrations and Data collection Instruments)



St. Tekle Haymanot the Ethiopian

Saint Tekle Haymanot's Churches, Monasteries, Relics & Altars - Worldwide

*** Churches:**

1. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - Alexandria, Egypt (1969)
2. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - Ashmoon, El-Menofia, Egypt
3. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - El-Zakazik, Egypt
4. Saint Tekla Haimanot Church - Debre Libanos, Ethiopia
5. St Tekle Haymanot Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church -Los Angeles- California - USA (1973)
6. Saint Tekle Haimanot Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church - Ottawa - Ontario - USA
7. Archangel Michael and Saint Tekla Church - Brampton - Ontario - Canada
8. Saint Takla Himanot Ethiopian Church - Perth - Australia
9. St. Mary, St. Moses the mighty & St. Takla Hemanot Church - Darwin - Sydney - Australia
10. St. Mina & Saint Tekla Hemanot Church - Maseno - Kenya
11. Archangel Mikhael & Saint Tekle Himanot Church - El-Agamy - Alex. - Egypt

*** Monasteries:**

1. Saint Tekle Haimanot Monastery (Monastery of Debre Libanos) - Ethiopia
2. Saint Tekle Haimanot Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Monastery - Halliburton -Toronto - Canada
3. Etissa Tekle Haimanot Monastery, Zorary (His birthplace)
4. Gond Takahimanot Monastery, Digoma, Gonder, Ethiopia
5. Abona TaklaHaimanot Monastery, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia
6. St. Takla Haymanot Monastery, Lake Tana Islands, BahrDar, Ethiopia

*** Relics (parts of His body) in:**

1. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - Alexandria, Egypt
2. Saint Tekla Haimanot Church - Debre Libanos, Ethiopia
3. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - Ashmoon, El-Menofia, Egypt
4. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - El-Zakazik, Egypt
5. Virgin Mary Church - Ebiar, Egypt
6. Saint Mina ancient Monastery - Fom El-Khaleeg - Masr El-Kadima, Cairo, Egypt
7. Archangel Michael and Saint Tekla Church - Brampton - Ontario - Canada
8. Saint Barbra Church, Masr El-Kadima, Cairo, Egypt
9. Saint Mary Church - Ard El-Sherka - El-Sharabia - Cairo, Egypt
10. Saint Mary Church - Banha, Egypt
11. Saint Mariam Church - Lebeisha - El Monofia - Egypt
12. St. George Church - Berket El Sabea - Menfya - Egypt

13. St. Marc the Apostle & St. Samuel the Confessor Coptic Monastery - Klipfontein - South Africa
14. Saint Mark Cathedral - Abu Dhabi
15. Saint Virgin Mariam Church - Darb Mahir - Shebin El Koum - Egypt
16. St. Paul Monastery's Residence, Hadaek El Kobba, Cairo
17. St. Athanasius Church, Kalioub El-Mahatta, Qalioub

*** Altars:**

1. Saint Takla Haymanot Church - Alexandria, Egypt
2. El-Moharak Monastery - Egypt
3. Hanging Church - Masr El-Kadima, Cairo, Egypt (with an Iconostasis for St. Teklahimanot Altar, that goes back to the 13th century).
4. Saint Mena ancient Monastery - Fom El-Khaleeg - Masr El-Kadima, Cairo, Egypt
5. Virgin Mary Church in Rod El-Farag, Cairo, Egypt
6. St. Athanasious Church - Dier El-Zawya - Asiout - Egypt (ancient church from 1300 AD)
7. Archangel Sorial & St. Mina Church - El-Omraneya - El-Giza - Egypt
8. Saint Tekle Himanot Church - Ashmoon - Monofia - Egypt
9. Saint Barbra Church, Masr El-Kadima, Cairo, Egypt
10. St. Athanasius Church, Kalioub El-Mahatta, Qalioub (built: 1973)

Addis Ababa University
College of Development Studies
Tourism and Development Program

Questionnaire for the Monastic Community

February, 2013

This questionnaire is used for the study conducted on **“Religious Tourism Product Development: The Case of Debre Libanos, an Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Monastery”**.

Dear sir/madam,

This survey is for an MA research project. The outcome of the research will help to determine the main issues of developing religious tourism product in Debre Libanos Monastery as well as to make suggestions for its contemporary advance. The research is expected to identify the basic reasons for the failure of sustainable religious tourism development and will provide a number of ideas for the successful realization of religious tourism product development in the study area. It will help in the effort to make Debre Libanos a prominent religious tourism destination in the country. It is my hope that you will give genuine information so that the conclusions arrived at later will be reliable ones. This information you provide will be held in total confidentiality.

Should you have any queries or comments regarding this survey, you are welcome to contact me telephonically at +251-913-512-631 or e-mail me at henyethiotour@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely

Henok Alemayehu

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CROSSING (X) THE RELEVANT BLOCK OR WRITING DOWN YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.

Section A: Background information

1. Sex Male Female
2. Age _____
3. How long have you been living in Debre Libanos?
Less than 10 years longer than 10 years since I was born
4. Are you A monk A priest A deacon Laity Other _____
5. What is your major duty in the monastery?
Employed Student Resident Giving Voluntary or non paid service

6. What is your major means of leaving?

- Salary from the monastery personal/family business Family support
 Support from the monastery Other (Please specify) _____

7. Your highest educational qualification?

- Primary school Vocational/ college diploma Church education
 Some high school 1st degree or above Not at all

Section B

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please indicate your answer using the following 5-point scale where:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Disagree 4 = Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
8. I perceive that the monastery is a nice place that has to be visited by everyone be they believers or not, locals or foreigners.					
9. I feel that the benefits of attracting tourists to the monastery outweigh its negative impacts					
10. I think modern visitor accommodations like hotels, restaurants, bars, lodges, other small entertainment and drinking establishments etc. appearing inside the monastery compound are not appropriate and they should be taken outside					
11. In my opinion the monastery should not attract and serve tourists having a purpose other than something religious or spiritual					
12. I love to show a warm welcome and hospitality when I see tourists visiting the monastery					
13. I am willing to support efforts made to develop sustainable religious tourism product in the monastery					
14. I believe religious tourism development can bring socio-economic benefits while preserving and promoting my religious values					
15. I feel visitors can come and enjoy, learn or experience our natural environment and our cultural assets as well					
16. I expect visitors to be informed about my religious and cultural values and give due respect for them					
17. I feel that the tourists presence in monastery distract me from the performance of my normal functions					
18. The various open market commercial activities undertaken in the monastery, especially during annual festivals are conducted in organized, peaceful and attractive way					

19. Do you believe that there should be provision of quality facilities and services like food and beverage, internet, medical facility, toilet, signage, wastage disposal, shopping etc. at the monastery for local and foreign visitors in adequate amount? Yes No

20. Is there any non-existent or new tourism product or service you want to suggest?
 Yes No If your answer is yes, what is/are that? _____

21. Is there any product or service that you think is wrong in this religious tourism destination?
 Yes No
 If you answered yes, can you note down the wrong development with the reason why you say it is wrong? _____

What should be your role as a member of the monastic community in developing religious tourism product at this monastery? Please indicate your answer using the following 5-point scale where:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral
4 = Agree

5= Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
22. The community should be consulted when the developments are planned					
23. We should have a voice in decision making process					
24. We should be financially supported to invest in religious tourism development					
25. We should take the leading role as entrepreneurs					
26. We should be consulted but the final decision on religious tourism product development should be made by the monastery administration					
27. The community should have a role as a worker in the developed tourism products					
28. The community should not participate by any means					

29. Is there a time or a circumstance when you felt visitors coming to the monastery and the associated activities and developments have brought some kind of challenge to your monastic life? Please note down those challenges if any? _____

30. Would you please make your suggestions on how to realize religious tourism product development that protects your religious, cultural and natural heritage while supporting your socio-economic well being? _____

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire. Kindly return the questionnaire to the researcher/enumerator.

Questionnaire for Visitors

Section A: Background information

1. Sex Male male

2. Age _____

3. Marital status Single married Divorced Widowed

4. Religious affiliation Ethiopian Orthodox Protestant
Muslim Other (Please specify) _____

5. Your highest educational qualification?

Primary school Vocational/ college diploma Church education
Some high school 1st degree or above Not at all

6. Where is your place of origin? City/Town _____ Country _____

7. What is your purpose of travel to this monastery?

Religious
Leisure

Education
Business

Other (please specify) _____

Section B

This section of the questionnaire explores your motivation, perceptions and preferences if any, with regard to the religious tourism products of the area.

8. Have you ever been to this monastery before? Yes No
9. Did you think of an alternative destination/s before you chose to come here? Yes No

If yes, can you name? _____

10. Which source of information encouraged you most in deciding to visit the monastery?

Printed media Internet Other (please specify) _____
Broadcast media Your travel agent
Friends or relatives Prior Personal experience

11. Did you come to this monastery in group? Yes No

12. Did you come through an intermediary (tour operator or a travel agent or a pilgrim association)?
Yes No

13. If your answer for question number 12 is yes, can you mention the main attractions or activities involved in your tour package? _____

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please indicate your answer using the following 5-point scale where:

1 = Strongly Disagree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly Agree
2 = Disagree 4 = Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
14. I perceive that the monastery is a nice place that has to be visited by everyone					
15. I think the site has a potential to be improved to a better religious tourist destination					
16. I feel it is less attractive religious tourism site					
17. I think it is totally not recommendable site for religious tourism					

18. How important is each of the following for you in motivating you to visit the site?

	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Warm and friendly people			
Beautiful scenery or the aesthetic value of the destination			
History of the site			
Attractive monastic customs and way of life			
Festivals			
Ritual services			

19. At what time of the year do you prefer most to come to the monastery? (please mark one option only)

During winter	
During summer	
During spring	
During autumn	
During annual feasts of Saint Tekle Haimanot	
During fasting periods of Ethiopian Orthodox Church	
During annual feasts of Ethiopian Orthodox Church	

Why do you prefer that? _____

20. For how long do you stay at this monastery? Less than a day 1-3 days
 4-7 days More than 7 days

21. Where do you prefer most to get accommodation facilities during your tour period to Debre Libanos?

Addis Ababa Fiche town Chagal village
 Debre Tsige At the monastery Other(specify) _____

22. What do you need to experience or see while you are at this destination? (You can choose more than one option)

To participate in ritual services To interact with the monastic community
 To learn about the religion To engage in voluntary services like giving
 To taste the monastic life care for the disabled, orphan and schizophrenic
 To stay in the monastery for some days Other (please specify) _____
 To have some time to meditate _____

Section C: Salient features of Debre Libanos Monastery

23. What have you found as the most outstanding feature of the monastery?

The scenic landscape The history The church building
 The forest The miracles or cures The Saint's Cross
 The museum The ritual services Other (specify) _____
 The annual festival Debre Asbo cave _____

24. Is this monastery a unique religious tourism destination? Yes No

Why or why not? _____

25. If you are a religious traveler or if you happen to involve in spiritual services after coming here, which are the three most important religious activities those appeal to you? (If you are not, please pass to the next question)

Being baptized by holy water The promises of the place
 Church services Pastoral advises and guidance
 Staying in meditation Other (specify) _____
 Having a 7day or more prayer time _____

26. How would you describe the quality of the facilities and services at the monastery and its environs?
 (Please mark only one option for each facilities)

	Very poor	poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Do not know
Food and beverage facilities						
Shopping facilities						
Guiding						
Walkways						
Vantage points						
Toilet						
wastage disposal facilities						
Signage						
Safety and security						
Transportation						
Telecommunication						
Internet						
Drinking water						
Electricity						
Medical facilities						
Banking						

27. Is there any non-existent or new tourism product or service you want to suggest?
 Yes No If your answer is yes, what is/are that? _____

28. Is there any product or service that you think is wrong in this religious tourism destination?
 Yes No If you answered yes, can you name? _____

For sections D, E and F Please indicate your answer using the following 5-point scale where:
 1 = Strongly Disagree 3 = Neutral 5= Strongly Agree
 2 = Disagree 4 = Agree

Section D: Nature-based religious tourism product development

	1	2	3	4	5
29. I would like to experience bush walking at the site					
30. I want to make wildlife tour at the site					
31. I think the area is ideal for trekking					
32. I want to undertake bird watching at the site					
33. It is my interest to do adventurous tourism activities like mountaineering and climbing at the site					
	1	2	3	4	5
34. It is interesting to do landscape viewing or scenic tour at the site					
35. I feel it is appropriate to experience a campfire at the site					
36. Staying in a resort would make my experience at the monastery more enjoyable					

Section E: Culture based religious tourism product development

	1	2	3	4	5
37. Visiting cemeteries at the monastery is an interesting experience					
38. I would love to volunteer for something like visiting and helping the					

handicapped while visiting the site					
39. Festivals at the site are good attractions					
40. I want to build my spiritual knowledge by learning at this monastery					
41. It is my desire to take part in the various ritual practices of the monastic community					
42. I want to buy souvenir products in memory of my stay at the monastery					
43. Evening entertainment products like bar, pub, etc. at this religious site gives me an additional enjoyable experience of the monastery					
44. It is interesting to experience secular cultural performances contrary to the monastery's cultural values at the destination					
45. History of Saint Tekle Haimanot along with the history of the place and different prior occurrences is an interesting attraction					
46. Visiting the site where monks were massacred during Italians occupation would give me a remarkable experience					
47. It would be more interesting if I visit artworks like parchments, vestments etc. along with the way they are prepared					
48. I prefer locally designed quality accommodations mainly serving local products than luxuries multistory buildings at this site					

Section F: Religious tourism product development challenges and opportunities

	1	2	3	4	5
49. There is absence of adequate and quality accommodation facilities at the destination					
50. I did not face illegal things like robbery, misleading, abuse, etc. at this monastery					
51. Had the monastery had its own travel agency, I believe it could have been a better and easier option for my tour to the monastery's religious tourism products					
52. The location of the site at a short distance from the capital, Addis, is an opportunity for me to visit the site					
53. I could not have visited the monastery had it not been located on the northern historic route					

Section G: Interpretive programs as one tool to enhance the current offer of the destination

54. Does the monastery need to set up different interpretive programs to inform you more about the destination? Yes No
55. Do you think interpretive programs are vital to prepare you to respect the socio-cultural and environmental issues? Yes No
56. If you answered yes for any one or both of the previous questions, which mode of interpretation would be appropriate in the destination? (You can choose more than one option)
- Publications Interpretive center
- Audio visual presentations Other (specify) _____
- Display panels or signage
87. What have you seen as the main strength of this religious tourism destination? _____

88. What about the main weakness of the site? _____

89. What is your recommendation for the better protection and development of religious tourism products of the monastery? _____

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire. Kindly return the questionnaire to the researcher/enumerator.

Checklist for interviewing tourism service providers (Tour guides, travel agencies, lodges, hotels, pilgrim associations, souvenir shops)

1. Background information

Business you involved in _____

Profession _____

Highest educational qualification _____ Age _____ Sex: Male/Female

Religious affiliation _____

2. What do you think are the outstanding features and unique attributes of Debre Libanos monastery that are of touristic interest? Or which feature of the monastery motivated you most to conduct your business here?
3. What is the unique service provided by your business at the destination?
4. Are there facilities and services being developed by your business to enhance the experience of the religious tourists? Have you witnessed attractions being developed in the area? Is there any development which you think is wrong or inappropriate?
5. What shall be improved from the current offer of the destination? Do you see the need and possibilities of developing new products? If yes, what kind?
6. Can't we develop nature, culture and community based religious tourism products? Would you give examples if you think it is possible to develop?
7. What are the major challenges and opportunities you face in your endeavor to provide tourism products at the destination? It could be on marketing and/or providing your services.
8. How do you describe your collaboration and consultation with other stakeholders like the community and the monastery?
9. What are the main strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of your service?
10. Do you do something to protect the religious or cultural and environmental values of the destination?

11. In which part of the year do you receive highest number of clients?
12. How do you market your service?
13. Do you keep the profile of your clients?
14. Do you deal with package planning, promotion and handling?
15. What are the mechanisms you employ to interpret or give explanatory information about your offerings for your clients and why do you do that?
16. What are the main requests areas your clients make about the service they want to get or the experience they want to involve in at the monastery?

Thank You!

Interview checklist for respondents from EOTC heritage and tourism section, Culture and tourism office, and tourism professionals

I. Background information

Institution _____ Profession _____

Highest educational qualification _____ Age _____ Sex: Male/Female

Religious affiliation _____

2. What do you think are the outstanding features and unique attributes of Debre Libanos monastery that are of touristic interest?
3. Do you have any involvement in the tourism affairs of the monastery? If yes, in which areas do you involve? If no, would you tell me about your current or previous involvement in any other related destination?
4. Are there facilities and services being developed or anything being done or planned by your organization to enhance the experience of the religious tourists? Have you witnessed attractions or facilities being developed in the area? Is there any development which you think is wrong or inappropriate?
5. What shall be improved from the current offer of the destination? Do you see the need and possibilities of developing new products? If yes, what kind?
6. Can't we develop nature, culture and community based religious tourism products? Would you give examples if you think it is possible to develop?
7. What do you think are the major challenges and opportunities in the endeavors to develop and provide sustainable religious tourism products at the destination?

8. How do you describe your collaboration and consultation with other stakeholders like the community and the monastery?
9. Do you have a stake in the protection of the religious or cultural and environmental values of the destination? If yes, what do you do? If not, what do you think should be the role of your organization?
10. In which part of the year does the area receive highest number of visitors? And what does it imply for the destination's religious tourism product development?
11. What is your role in marketing the areas' religious tourism products? What effective strategies do you suggest?
12. Is there any functioning mechanism to maintain profile of religious tourists? What is existing situation and let me know your view on how to do it?
13. Which are the best mechanisms you think are vital to interpret or give explanatory information about the areas' offerings for the religious tourist and why do you suggest that?
14. Do you have any idea on the main request areas the religious tourist make about the service they want to get or the experience they want to involve in at a religious attraction, particularly monastery

Thank You!

Focus Group Discussion Checklist for Tour Guides

1. What are your understandings or views regarding religious tourism product development and its benefits?
2. Which are the outstanding features or attributes of Debre Libanos monastery that are the key pulling factors for religious tourists? Are there any attributes you think are promising or potential attractions?
3. Are there attractions, facilities and services being developed in the area to enhance experience of the religious tourists? How do you see the quality and adequacy of these facilities and services?
4. Can you give your critics on any tourism development you think is wrong or inappropriate at this site with the reason why you say it is wrong? Besides, if there are tourism related developments in other places that you believe should not happen at the monastery in the future, please mention with your justifications.

5. Is it not possible to develop nature, culture and community based tourism products in the area?
6. What do you think are the major challenges and opportunities of developing religious tourism products in the site?
7. What shall be improved from the current offer of the destination and what do you think should be done to protect the religious, cultural and environmental values of the monastery?
8. How do you think shall the monastery market its religious tourism products? What did you most frequently observe from tourists (both domestic and foreign) you have been guiding with regard to their needs, buying behaviour, spending habit, season they prefer most, special requests, length of stay, complains, feedbacks they give etc.?
9. What improvements do you think should be made to the interpretation programs of the site in order to bring about a better provision of information for visitors and also to prepare them respect socio-cultural and environmental issues?