



## **SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Community based tourism in Lake Tana growth corridor of the Amhara region of Ethiopia: The missing link among stakeholders and implications to tourism industry

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# Community based tourism in Lake Tana growth corridor of the Amhara region of Ethiopia: The missing link among stakeholders and implications to tourism industry

Moges Gebreegziabher Woldu<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** Ethiopia is one of the Sub-Saharan countries experiencing fast growing economy. Ethiopia authorized a structure of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) to manage the tourism industry. The relevance of the tourism sector was entertained in the strategic pillars of the Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP-2010/11-2019/20). Therefore, this research attempted to assess the policy directions in the country and practice of community based tourism (CBT) in the Lake Tana growth corridor, which is the second rank in Ethiopia, next to Addis Ababa Development Corridor. The paper used comprehensive analysis of primary and secondary data; such as interviews, observations and document analysis. The result revealed that Tana has natural and manmade heritages. The many endemic fauna, flora and heritages attract tourists. The lake has been a source of livelihood and means of water transportation for the catchment communities. Tana is a UNESCO registered biosphere reserve since 2015. Though policy in the general tourism industry is strong; however, there is a gap of directives with regard to community based tourism practices. Both GTPs and the policies did not address the grassroots practice



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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moges Gebreegziabher Woldu, is a senior lecturer and PhD student of Social Anthropology. He has more than 8 years teaching and research experiences in public Universities in Ethiopia. Moges worked about seven years in Bahir Dar University, Department of Social Anthropology, and currently at the Department of Anthropology, Mekelle University, Ethiopia. Research experiences include marginalized children in the rural settings, Urban Slum poor communities, rural community socio-economic wellbeing, and rural-urban migrated you in Ethiopia. Currently, I am a full time PhD student in Anthropology at Mekelle University, Ethiopia. Planned work for dissertation focuses on the holistic Ethnographic study of one tribal community in Ethiopia, with emphasis of the socio-cultural transformations and continuities among the community. Therefore, the current work is also similar with the other works in the sense that all attempts to understand socio-economic mobility of the community at the targets of the studies.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The research analysis policies documents in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), and the links with community based tourism practices in Lake Tana growth corridor. Lake Tana is a widely extended water body and the catchment area is a source of livelihood for the urban and rural communities. Therefore, this work attempted to explore and describe the links between the national policies and plans against the availability and expansion of community based tourism in the catchment of Lake Tana. The findings revealed, there exist strong policy towards tourism development and code of ethics in the national levels. However, the policies and grand project documents missed guidelines for implementation, and community based tourism does not exist in the growth corridor. Therefore, there is a missing link between the national policies and the grassroots community based tourism practices among the poor communities. Then, cooperative approach of stake holders is a must.

and miss-linked. Therefore, for the maximum utilization of the sector, protection of the environment and expansion of community based Tourism; it needs the collaborative participation of governmental, nongovernmental, and private sectors. The establishment and expansion of inclusive community based tourism practices, and promotion of the sector shall be given maximum attention by all concerned bodies and stakeholders.

**Subjects: Hospitality; Tourism; Sustainable Development; Culture & Development; Rural Development; Culture; Heritage Management & Conservation**

**Keywords: inclusive tourism; community based tourism; religious mass tourism; biosphere reserve; minority groups**

### 1. Introduction

The scope of this work is purposely limited to focus on the general national policy principles, central concepts of community based tourism practices, and the concurrent status of the tourism sector. The spatial focus for the practice of community based tourism is the Lake Tana growth corridor of the Amhara National Regional State, Northwestern Ethiopia. The major goal is to examine the practical applications in expanding community based tourism and contributions towards reducing poverty among the community in the Tana Growth Corridor catchment.

The common and defining features of tourism industry are boldly associated with travel for the purpose of pleasure and/or business. This bold definition confirms only moving a person(s) away from permanent residence. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also defined the sector almost in a similar fashion with some uncertainties. It defined tourism as the activity of “a person or/ and persons travelling to and staying” in places other than permanent residence for open purposes. These are leisure, general business and other unidentified interests (UNWTO, 2012). These definitions are too general and quest additional assessments to substantiate the depth and width of the industry. Therefore, the works of academics, organizations established for shaping, and promotion of the industry in the global and local experiences entertained to provide the complete sense and experience of the industry. In association to UNWTO the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Tourism Code of Ethics (TCE) developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), based on proclamation No. 691/2010. The TCE defined a tourist as a person who “travels away from his/her permanent residence and stays in a destination for not less than 24 h and not more than one full year”. The purposes the travel may vary; however, it prohibits remunerated engagements in the destination country (FDRE, 2011). The FDRE tourism code of ethics confirms the description stated as “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (Theobald, 1998, p. 13). Ethiopia is also member of United Nations World Tourism Organization since 1975 (UNWTO, 2012, p. 67). The definition in the FDRE’s TCE, described the sector and the person travelling, with the minimum and maximum duration of time to hold the position, for unknown reasons in the country of destination, Ethiopia. Therefore, there is still more to focus on the travel and the purpose is unlimited.

Moreover, tourism is concisely defined as the movement of people for the purpose of “visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, and having a good time”(Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009, p. 4). Holloway also defined tourism almost in similar context as “one element of leisure, involves the movement of a person or persons away from their normal place of residence”. This definition added another feature that never entertained in other works explained tourism as “a process that usually incurs some expenditure” (Holloway, Davidson, & Claire, 2009, p. 6). Therefore, a tourist may be engaged in various activities for the purpose of leisure and relaxations at the destination sites as the interests and hobbies of the individual per se; and every engagement incurs some financial expenditures.

The above statements indicate that travel and tourism are the sources of employment and income for the receiving nations. In this regard, others described tourism as “one of the world’s largest industries, with almost 700 million international tourists in 2002”. The suggestions showed that the sector can become an essential tool in the challenge to overcome biodiversity losses and eradicate poverty, particularly in sensitive ecosystems and protected areas. In this realm, healthy social and natural environment is the first and most important asset for the global industry. Tourism makes the sector comfortable for tourism stakeholders to be strategically collaborating partners for the sustainability of the agenda. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that tourism totally generates about 12 percent of the world total GNP; which is about 9.8 percent of the 2015 global GDP. The growth rate was about 3.1 percent for 2015, and about 3.3 percent for the 2016. The estimated average growth for the next ten years is 4 percent. The reports predicted that with a continued growth, tourism is an increasingly important factor in the planning and management of world heritage sites (WTTC, 2002, 2016). Therefore, tourism is a strong means of economic growth and employment sector around the world. The direct and indirect share of tourism in the world is very appreciable status. World Travel and Tourism Council estimated that about 3.8 million direct and indirect jobs will be created in Sub-Saharan Africa for the next ten years. The contribution of the tourism sector to the world economy was about 8.8 percent job creation, which shared about 9.1 percent world’s GDP, with contribution of about 5.8 percent world’s export, and lion’s share (4.5%) of the world’s investment sector development (WTTC, 2011). Therefore, Ethiopia is one of the Sub-Saharan countries expected to take the advantages, and change in the livelihood of the society in general, and the communities in the Tana Growth Corridor in particular.

Community Based Tourism has been used in a more concise form for the reason that scholars had been working intensively with particular studies in different parts of the world in a very manageable themes. The scopes of the definitions are related with some of the features of the sector that comprises, “benefits going to individuals or households in the community, collective benefits (creation of assets used by the community as a whole) such as roads, schools, clinics and other social services related to community wellbeing. In this regard, community access to benefits from community based tourism including a distribution of benefit to all households in the community was the priority agenda of the CBT sector. Besides of the benefits, conservation initiatives with community and collective benefits, joint ventures with community and/or an anticipated transfer of management; community owned and managed enterprises; private sector enterprises with community benefit are part of the community engagements. The shared engagement recommends product networks developed for marketing tourism in a local area; community enterprise within a broader co-operative; private sector development within a community owned reserve”.

These statements above can be shortly summarized and explained as the collective ownership, management, and sharing the burdens and benefits developing the CBT sector (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares, & Pavón, 2011). Furthermore, the World Wildlife Fund International (WWFI) defined community based tourism as a form of tourism that “local community has substantial control over and involvement in its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remains within the community” (WWF International, 2001). According to López-Guzmán and colleagues, “Community-based Tourism is gaining prestige all over the world as an alternative to mass tourism” (López-Guzmán et al., 2011, p. 69). Therefore, it is for this rationale, the paper is designed to address the practice of community based tourism in the Lake Tana development corridor, against the interest and orientations of the national and regional policies as well. Though, the catchment is named as development corridor, I renamed it as growth corridor since Ethiopia is in the Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP I and II), until 2020. The name given by the Authorities mismatches with Ethiopian government GTP policy and strategic directives of the GTP.

## 2. Statement of purpose

In the twenty-first century, community based tourism (CBT) is one among the strong elements of the world strategy to reduce poverty; and work with the protection and sustainability of the tourism industry in the destination sites. Therefore, the issues of community based tourism are highly

associated with the interest for the utilization of potentials of the sector whilst keeping the safety of the environment and the interests of the local communities are protected. Though contested, community based tourism can be roughly explained as “an approach to tourism in which the needs and views of local residents are incorporated in the planning and development process” of the CBT sector (Medlik, 2003, p. 39). Community-based tourism (CBT) is a key element of sustainable tourism and it promotes “pro-poor” strategies in a community setting, and the philosophy of community based tourism is focuses on the maximum participation of the community at the tourist destination sites “in the running and management of small tourism projects as a means of alleviating poverty, and providing an alternative income source for community members” (Hainsworth, 2009, p. 9). Therefore, the idea of sustainable tourism has been emerging from the core concept of sustainable development, as defined in the 1987 report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (UNWCED) and applied to all forms of tourism that are in “harmony with their physical, social and cultural environments in the long term. This is for the plausible justification that sustainable tourism meets the needs of the present without compromising the interest of the future generations to meet their own needs” (Medlik, 2003, pp. 158–159), in the unknown global future of economic uncertainties. This is for the reason that, the new generation is living in the unknown global future that is full of economic uncertainties.

Though community based tourism is the most appealing strategy to address the needs of the local community through the active involvement of the community in all the process; there are also shortcomings in the strict sense of the practical experiences. The worldwide lessons learnt and challenges encountered whilst implementing projects depicted the following concepts. First, the most challenging issue is practices of community based projects have limitations in equal distribution of the benefits to the target community. Second, for Goodwin and allies, the concomitant associated problems in the industry are: too large community members to distribute benefit, limited involvement of the members in the community based projects, projects are interested in selecting some sections of the community, number of visitors to the destination remains limited, and lastly the poorest members of the community have difficulty to involve in the tourism development process. Third, the level of awareness about community based tourism plays a major role for the community; however, the community lacks interest to be engaged at the newly flourishing sector. These are communities that lack access for information to understand the associated benefits from the sector. In one hand, the strategies are new and the community questions everything about the projects. On the other hand, there are limited successful good practices visible to the community to create awareness (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

The interest for this work began in association to two major questions. These are (1) my personal practical experiences for the last six years in Bahir Dar University, along the Southern Shore of Lake Tana, part of the Lake Tana growth corridor catchment. As member of the faculty and a resident of Bahir Dar City; I have brief experiences about Lake Tana, including the source of the river Abay (locally know as *Gish Abay*), named after the nearby Mount Gish. The experiences are personal observation and participation in different academic conferences, and an intensive socioeconomic survey on the Lake Tana catchments from 2010 to 2011. During these experiences, I witnessed research works on the Lake Tana were well done but focused on natural resources and wetland management, tourist flow, and cultural heritage protection to keep for the next generations to come. (2) The works scholars were about the endangered status of the Lake Tana heritages and the possibility of future risks coming from multiple dimensions or about the tourism potentials, though totally lost the issues of CBT. The works of Andargie (2014), “the challenges and prospects of the Lake Tana island monasteries as a tourist site since 1950’s: the kebran Gabriel” and Ayele Tamene (2017) “Challenges and Prospects of Tangible Cultural Heritage Management: a Case Study in Lake Tana Island, Ethiopia”, summarizes some potential risks. On the other hand, researches on Lake Tana growth corridor focus on the rich cultural and natural potentials for tourism industry. However, works about utilization of the opportunity for improving the livelihood of the local community practicing community based tourism approaches were scarce. According to López-Guzmán and colleagues, community-based tourism is present in many different geographical areas of the world in general and in developing

countries in particular (López-Guzmán et al., 2011). But, about the community based tourism practice in Lake Tana growth corridor, nothing is known yet, even in the literature. Therefore, there is critical gap of data about the CBT sector. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) points out that sustainable tourism developed in certain geographical areas may become a fundamental tool in the economic development and the reduction of poverty in certain areas (World Tourism Organization, 2002). Therefore, tourism experiences reveal that issues of tourism sustainability are the essential features in the twenty-first Century. The contribution of the sector in the form of the community centered ecotourism development schemes is positively growing (López-Guzmán et al., 2011). Therefore, the focus of the paper is on the availability of legal declarations, policy approaches, the strength and limitations of those policies and strategies against practices of CBT. Besides, the practices of community based tourism at the grassroots in the Tana Growth Corridor; and implications for the expansion of inclusive CBT in the Lake Tana growth corridor in the Amhara National Regional State, North Western part of Ethiopia the main concerns of this research.

### 3. Objectives of the study

This paper is focused on systematically exploring the national policy approaches and the practice of community based tourism (CBT) in the Lake Tana growth corridor of the Amhara National Regional State, Northwestern Ethiopia. This helps to develop better insights towards the status of the national and regional government considerations in the policies, and the grassroots practices of community based tourism in the Lake Tana catchment. The study comprises a comprehensive review of a sort of relevant document analysis, interviews, and observations and tried to forward some contributing recommendations to address the quest on the practices and sustainability of community based tourism to benefits of the community around the tourism destination sites.

Therefore, the general objective of this particular study is to explore, analyze, and describe the link between the government national policy approaches and community based tourism practices in the Lake Tana growth corridor in the Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. Then, the specific objectives are to:

- Identify the policy principles of Ethiopia towards community based tourism
- Examine the practices of community based tourism in the Lake Tana growth corridor
- Describe the existing knowledge about community based tourism in the Lake Tana growth corridor
- Forward the way-out towards community based tourism practice in the Lake Tana growth corridor

### 4. Materials and methods

The sources used for this paper are documents that were not examined and analyzed in the formal research approaches and practical experiences in the research area. Therefore, the sources can be broadly sorted into five categories, such as research papers; policy documents, and other technical official documents. The first categories are associated with federal government documents, Bahir Dar City Administration municipal development plan documents, official statistics, technical reports, development work documents of agriculture and rural development, environment and social welfare documents, roads and transport, disaster management and other data that have relevance to the study. The second categories are the partner Nongovernmental Organizations documents; governmental Organization documents, such as project reports, baseline studies, and project monitoring and evaluations reports. The third sorts of data were from published materials, such as journal articles, computerized database and other web links. The fourth version of data were interviews with experts in the regional Bureau of Culture, Tourism and Parks Development (BCTPD), and finally the fifth category of data were collected during researcher's scheduled field visits, observations and insights.

## 5. Results and discussion

### 5.1. *The status of Ethiopian policy initiatives towards tourism industry*

The government of Ethiopia highly acknowledges the importance of tourism industry in the country. The sector substantiates the fast growing economy in terms of the gross domestic product (GDP). Therefore, the federal government of Ethiopia authorized the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the proclamation No. 471/2005. Following the approval of the structure, policies start to appear in the nation. An instance is the Tourism Development Policy (TDP), issued in 2009. The policy states, tourism as it triggers the “economic and social sectors that are registering rapid growth in the world”, and nowadays it has been found to be making its contribution in supporting and accelerating national development (FDRE, 2009, p. 1). The TDP further stresses on guiding the tourism sector in a broad based development frameworks. These include developing the existing and new tourism attractions and products; and expanding the infrastructure and tourist services. These activities are expected to ensure the benefit of the country from the international tourism market, and finally to solve the capacity limitations appeared in the industry (FDRE, 2009). Besides, the FDRE TCE explicitly articulated tourism as one of the potential sectors to the country. In the TCE document, tourism is valued as an appealing vehicle in energizing the economy of the nation. The particular contributions of the sector are diversified. These are (1) generating foreign currency, job creation in the service industry, capacity building and socio-economic benefits, and (2) maintenance of good relations among people (FDRE, 2011). The TCE demands the ethical obligations of the communities found at tourist attractions sites, and the tourists visiting the nation. The calls for action are aimed at the preservation and protection of the environment, historical and cultural values, and respect the laws and regulations issued to protect the environment and attractions. As part of the hospitality towards visitors, the communities expected reflect positive and welcoming attitudes towards tourists and visitors. The tourists are also advised to refrain from violating the human rights and the well-being of the members of society (FDRE, 2011). However, except the obligations, nothing was mentioned about the benefits of the community from the tourism industry. The explanations of FDRE TCE, seems a reflection and corrective measure to the findings of (Kauffmann, 2008), that stated foreign tourists in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia that experienced difficulties in the tourist destination sites.

Next to the TDP (FDRE, 2012) and in line with the TCE (FDRE, 2011), the sector is addressed in the strategic pillars of Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTPI-2010/11-2014/15) and Growth Transformation Plans II (GTPI-2015/16-2019/20). The content and contexts of both GTP-I and GTP-II documents focused on culture and tourism endeavors in the general level, while specific practical elements such community based tourism are completely excluded from the plans. Beyond the legal proclamation documents, the relevance of tourism to the GDP, and as the means of poverty alleviating strategy has been getting the attention of the experts in the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) in drafting the First Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I), and the Ethiopian National Planning Commission (NPC) in the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II). In the areas of natural resources management and climate change, GTP-I (2010–2015), encourages organized participation of the local community in the forestry (re-forestation) development, protection, and utilization and soil and water conservation (GTP-I, FDRE, 2010b, p. 22). However, the GTP document failed to address the link with community based tourism, which is the means for the active participation of the local community. The collaborative and integrated approach in the practice provides the off-farm quick cash revenue generation to the community. Additionally, the practice of environmental protection and community development is planned to accustom in to local contexts (GTP-II, FDRE, 2015). In terms of the environmental protection and building green economy, the GTP II put explicit strategic directives to enable the community to actively participate in environmental protection and forest development activities as well as mixed farming and implementing climate resilient practices in all the federal and regional states based administrations. However, the sustainable benefits to the participant community and environmental protections are not explained in a sensible terms. It discourages the appropriate management of government and communal forests (GTP-II, FDRE, 2015). In association to this approach, the contribution of the service to the GDP is

expected to decline from 43.4 to 41.6%, if tourism is less innovative and lack to add some creative marketable alternatives. Therefore, the near future is challenging to the nation in general, and to the poor community in particular (GTP II, FDRE, 2015). This projection weights needs critical look at the sector, since it plays a paramount role in the economy of the developing countries, such as Ethiopia.

Though, the TDP focuses on identifying the country's Historical, Cultural, Wildlife, and Natural Resources to develop responsible and sustainable tourism through the participation of the private sector and local community (GTP-I, FDRE, 2010b). However, it never mentioned any clue about community based tourism approach and practices. It shows the participation of the community is relevant, but, the benefit margin allocation is not articulated. Most of the community participations are related with environmental protection practices. The community gets limited payments during initial installments from the project budget only in the form of productive safety net (work for food). Therefore, the policy documents shall confirm the full and partial control of the benefits, creative CBT practices, and sustainable use of the benefits of the sector to the local society and the nation. In the GTP-II, the strategies of culture and tourism are focused on enabling the youth and women. The sector had considered as a promising enterprise in creating job opportunities. However, the document mentioned certain member of the community only and secures access to benefit from the sector and never mentioned about the inclusive development approaches. The interest is more politicized and looks towards women and the youth. This affects the community and the sector in its development and sustainability endeavors.

Besides, there are challenges in the Ethiopian tourism development, and the relationship between the host community and the guests that have direct attachments. In Ethiopia, tourists have been worrying on hospitality issues. These are cheating, begging, throwing stones and asking for financial supports. The host-tourist relations in the central rift valley of Ethiopia are problematic due to misunderstandings, and misperceptions and tourists approached inappropriately. Most of the relationships are hostile and the manifestations are begging, aggressive arguments and in some cases unwelcomed (Kauffmann, 2008). These are irritating practices that affects the wellbeing of the visitors coming for leisure and relaxation with all the financial costs. However, the domestic challenges facing the sector depicted in the FDRE TDP (FDRE, 2012) are limitations in basic supply to the growth and in the implementation capacity of the Sector, and missed the essential challenges that are against the wellbeing of the tourists.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), Ministry of Culture and Tourism authorized under proclamation 471/2005 during 2009, to coordinate and lead the sector. The potential stakeholders were the government, private sectors, and communities at the destinations in cooperation with civic organizations. It was developed to create conducive environment among all the stakeholders. It was supposed enable the policy and strategies for the benefit of all relevant stakeholders whilst improving the tourism sector and reduces poverty among the community addressing the critical shortcomings in the industry. In this policy document, the basic principles are respecting pluralism, guaranteeing community participation and benefits; instituting management transparency and responsibility; and creating partnership and enhancing the capacity of the sector to maximize the benefits. However, the shares of the benefits are not clearly described.

The specific merits and mission of the ministry encompasses working for the study and preservation of history, promote cultural heritages and values of peoples of Ethiopia. Additional initiatives are planned to bring about changes in those cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices hindering social progress. These are expected to rationalize through promoting the contribution of culture to development, expanding cultural organizations to institutionalize public participation in the development of culture, promoting creativity in artistic works and fine arts creating such a conducive environment for the development of the country. Other guiding principles are encouraging domestic tourism, and finally ensuring Ethiopia's tourist attractions are assumed to be identified. The proper management of wildlife conservation in the federal government level, setting strategies for supervision and enforcement of standards in the tourist facilities, and coordinating the partnership among the multiple

interest groups are the major interests. Lastly, collecting, compiling and dissemination of information on culture and tourism are included in the policy (FDRE, 2010a). These all responsibilities are directly or indirectly attached with the organizing, developing and promoting of the sector and assuring the contribution of the tourism industry to the diverse communities in particular and the nation at large. It discourages the community participation at the grassroots.

The ministry of culture and tourism stated its strong commitments for the development and promotion of tourism industry and benefit from the revenues generated. The development of the proclamations, policies and directives are strong in the general assessments. However, there are two typical limitations. These are (1) no sections that describe the need for CBT practices and (2) there is no any engagement on CBT at the Tana Growth Corridor. Therefore, there is missing link between the general policy approaches and the practical engagements in the corridor. In 2015, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) prepared the Ethiopian Hotel Grading Programme in collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) of Ethiopia with funds from the Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Program (ESTDP) project, a project of the World Bank (UNWTO, 2016, p. 47). This movement is a milestone move in the standardizing of the services in the nation. Gemechu Ogato (2014, p. 22) analyzed the existing Ethiopian TDP and Community-Based Ecotourism Guidelines (CBEG); and discovered strengths and weakness. The results of Gemechu's findings revealed gaps in addressing the implementation strategies. The good points of the policy documents and the organizational structures confirm Gemechu's strong findings. However, from the observations and interviews, this paper discovered that policies lacked contexts of CBT and the practical applications are lost at the grassroots. The communities are not benefiting from the potentials of tourism industry, no practical ways or position to protect the biosphere of the Lake Tana catchment. There are seasonal religious based mass tourism events that affect the biosphere. The carrying capacity of the Island and heritage sites' space are not known yet. Monasteries are under the sole control of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In this case, the monasteries and churches in Lake Tana growth corridor did not share the collected money to the local community, and if it shared, limited only to the adherent of the church. The other odd issues are, explanations given to the foreign and domestic tourists are similar with religious connotations and ignores the reality on the ground. Sometimes, the local tour guides and clergy are not comfortable to other religion adherents, ethno-ecological and food tourism is ignored for the reason that did not practiced by the majority community. The authority and the church do not recognize the ethnic, religious and food habits of the minority groups historically attached to the Lake Tana, such as the [Negede] Woyto as a major target and the Bete Israel (Falasha, Ethiopian Jews) in some cases for their specialization in pottery, though both ethnic minorities groups did not fulfill the categories of indigenous groups classifications of the World Bank (FDRE, 2008). This encourages the exclusion of both groups from benefiting the sector and it directly affects the innovative expansion and development of the community based tourism. During the observation and interviews, the researcher discovered, both groups are isolated and the community even did not buy fishes caught by the Negede Weyto and the kids of the group were shy to talk about their minority identity.

### **5.2. Community based tourism potentials of Lake Tana growth corridor**

As the accounts of Amhara National Regional State, Bureau of Culture and Tourism (ANRS, BCT), and Bahir Dar City Administration (BCA), Lake Tana is the largest Lake in Ethiopia. The total area of Lake Tana ranges from 3600 to 3673 square kilometers. It is expanded from 73/75 km North-South and 60/68 km East-West, with a range of 9–14 m in depth. The elevation of Lake Tana is 1,800 m above sea level. Lake Tana is rich in fish and birds species. The relative location of Lake Tana extends from Gondar in the north to Western Gojjam in the south, Bahir Dar City Administration. It has about 60 tributaries and reached by the Scotsman, James Bruce in 1770 (ANRS-BCT, 2006; BCA, 2013). Lake Tana hosts about 33 to 37 Islands, and the 20/21 Islands. The monasteries and sanctuaries host beautiful paintings and parchments. These treasures located at different distances that range 9–50 km from the nearest lake shore center for access, Bahir Dar City Administration. The lake also hosts about 26 fish species and 17 are endemic to Lake Tana. The projected fish production potential is 14, 000 tons and the actual production is only 5 percent of the projection (ANRS-BCT, 2006; BCA,

2013). For Ayetegeb, Lake Tana covers about 50 percent of the fish market in Ethiopia and only about 20 percent of its actual potential of production utilized (Chekol, 2013). The works depicted above indicates, there are ups and downs in the potential and actual fish production of Lake Tana. Therefore, there has been an indication of the contrasting reports among the different institutions and researchers. This reveals the gap in the comprehensive reports on the estimations, potentials and actual fish productions of Lake Tana.

In the human habitat terms, Lake Tana is a home for the Negede Woyto (the Hippopotamus hunters, after the Great Ethiopian Famine, 1889–1892) community. Other Communities around Lake Tana are the Amharic speaking highlanders and almost homogenous groups. There are some ethnic minorities in the area, such as the Bete-Israel (Ethiopian Jews) and Weyto or Negede tribe. However, none of the groups are secured the status of World Bank's category of indigenous peoples (FDRE, 2008). According to the accounts, Lake Tana has high potentials for the livelihood of the marginalized ethnic groups (Negede Woyto and Bete-Israel), and other groups (FDRE, 2008). Tamene (2017), also shares the potentials of tangible heritages that plays an important role in attracting tourists.

Therefore, Lake Tana growth corridor is the highest development area that includes the Tana Beles sub-basin as “Ethiopia's second growth corridor”, next to the capital city of the country, Addis Ababa. The basins in the growth corridor have high potential in terms of land, water, human, ecological and cultural resources to support the rapid economic growth of the country in relation to suitable environment in a planned manner (Fekahmed, 2012, pp. 24–25). In another study conducted by the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Lake Tana Growth Corridor is named as “Lake Tana Development Area”, Next to Addis Ababa cluster among the eight planned development areas and corridors. Therefore, the “North-West Development Area” noticed with the opportunities to develop the tourism sector around Lake Tana, associated with the benefits of sesame processing (EDRI & GGGI, 2014). Lake Tana region is the target area for development intervention and tourism is considered as positional engine for the development of the development corridor. The problem, however, no community guidelines to engage in community based tourism. The relationship between the policies and the practices is null and the community is not benefiting from the sector.

The interviews and observations result revealed that, the contribution of Lake Tana in terms of employment to the local youth and for the national economy is at appreciable status. However, nothing was mentioned on the community based tourism typical plans and experiences, and the tourism management strategy has been the same way and only focused at the age old historical, cultural and religious heritages. The faunal and floral attractions, with high probability of attracting tourists to stay more are marginalized. The approach of tourism in the Lake Tana growth corridor is based on seasonal mass tourism-religious oriented and with high probability of destruction on the environment and biosphere reserve. Supporting the explanations Tamene (2017), stated visitor destructions by camera flash, hand touching, maintaining by non-professionals and the community also lacks ownership of these heritages.

Therefore, to mitigate the adverse impact of unmanaged tourism, promoting alternative tourist attraction sites and accommodating the interest of the direct stakeholders have paramount importance. These stakeholders are the local community, institutions including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and other government and community based associations. The issue needs to be addressed at multidimensional levels for the maximum utilization of the industry and promote the participation and benefits of rural community; and urban residents (Binayew & Yeheyis, 2016). These approaches have high relevance to develop the corridor in the areas of community based tourism sector.

According to the report compiled by Bahir Dar City Administration, the flow of domestic and foreign tourists has been increasing from time and the revenue of the sector to the catchment. The below depicts the 2011/12–2013/14, for Bahir Dar tourist destination, which is the center of the Lake

Tana growth corridor. The data shows three year reports for Lake Tana and the environ catchments. The implications of the international tourist arrivals are important for tourism in Ethiopia. Researches revealed one in eleven international tourists choose to visit Ethiopia. TESFA (Tourism in Ethiopia for sustainable future alternatives) is the most successful example of community-based tourism (CBT) in Ethiopia and recommends excursions have effective linkage between tourism and local communities (Mitchell & Coles, 2009). Therefore, such approaches would be productive in the Lake Tana catchment (Table 1).

The analysis of tourism study in Ethiopia depicts, conference tourism is dominating the majority of the visitors. However, there is no classified data on the purpose of the visitors and it is well known too that transit tourists cross Ethiopia as en-route to their destination. The other groups include visitors for work related purpose and the Diaspora visiting Ethiopians for family reasons that data related to this group is not well articulated. The numbers of Diasporas who visit tourist sites beyond the family concern are not well explained. In this study, the experiences of the domestic tourists are marginalized (BCA, 2013). Besides, Tana Transport system has additional recreational areas. The catchment has sixty-seven, personal and group tourist trip boats. Others are the Papyrus, locally known as Dengel, made personal short distance Tankuas-boats used for fishing and on water recreation by the local community as part of the day to day activities (BCA, 2013). Therefore, this would be potential opportunity to boast attraction, and community based tourism creation and expansion practices.

### **5.3. Challenges of community based tourism in the Lake Tana growth corridor**

According to Ajala, Lake Tana has an impact in the national and regional economy of the country, expanding the tourist destination and attractions. Lake Tana has all the potentials to support in the movement to improve the livelihood of the local community and the national economy. Tourism has an appealing sustainable economic development for less developed nations and it is the best alternative opportunity for foreign currency earnings. Tourism boosts all economic sectors and it is fair for inclusive growth and development to the sectors, such as infrastructure, transportation, construction, trade and commerce; and promotion and image building of a country is also part of the creative tourism practices (Ajala, 2008). However, according to the interviews and observation accounts, tourism sector creates employment and revenue generation potentials in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. In this aspect, Ajala identified positive impact of the sector in terms of direct employment opportunities in Bahir Dar City Administration (the Southern Shore of Lake Tana) and grouped these career opportunities in to four general categories. These four groups include, (1) hotel Services, (2) souvenir shops, (3) tour guide, and (4) all forms of transportation facilities. Beyond these direct employment oriented incomes, the indirect income has a potential to change the local community through engagement in supplying the hotels and restaurants (Ajala, 2008). For Desalegn and allies, however, there are also some challenges that negatively affect the productivity and sustainability of Lake Tana attraction potentials. These include uncontrolled overfishing and loss of endemic species, illegal fishing activities, lengthy law making process to protect declining stock, stakeholders' poor knowledge and perception to proclaim and directives, mandated agencies did not discharge their responsibilities. The research discovered weak institutional framework to guarantee sustainable fish resources management and development (Desalegn, Chrishom, & Enright, 2013). Besides, the interview and observations data indicated that the local Christian community marginalizes the Negede Weyto and Bete-Israel communities. The residents did not buy the fishes harvested by the Negede Weyto. The Christian group considered the Negede Weyto as inferior minority groups because of their non-Christian faith and interest on the lake based feeding habits. However, this was good opportunity to expand various ethnic based food traditions as part of the community based tourism attraction alternatives.

## **6. Conclusion**

Tourism in general and CBT in particular have positive impacts on the livelihood of the communities at the destination areas. Besides, there could be negative impacts at the destination sites. However, there are always a means to reduce the negative impacts on the local community and the

**Table 1. Tourist arrivals and revenue generated from attraction**

	Number of arrivals		Revenue in ETB		Remark
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	
2011/2012	33,959	15,034	31,965,175	440,569.57	44,056,957
2012/2013	42,390	25,721	4,202,715	61,421,550	
2013/2014	88,899	45,731	107,065,952	181,021,922	
Total	165,240	86,486	143, 233,842	286,500,429	

Source: Bahir Dar City Administration (BCA, 2013, p. 58).

environment. Therefore, to reduce those possible negative impacts and utilize the maximum potentials for the improvement of livelihoods of the community. This strategy needs the collaborative action of all stakeholders, whilst the government works in regulating the move forward to confirm the maximum benefit of the community and the sustainability of the sector. To materialize such goals, the CBT sector needs the collaborative and participatory approach among the private investors, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the community in the Lake Tana growth corridor. The relevance of the participation of the non-profit organizations and the community in the community based tourism in the planning and implementation is essential. The areas of cooperation are related with tourism planning to positively influence in the utilization of the socio-cultural and environmental resources of the villages and surrounding areas.

In the broad understanding, tourism development has expected to contribute for the improvement of the CBT sector in some predetermined aspects. These include four major features engagement. These are (1) encouraging and strengthening the habit of touring and knowing the attractions to boost domestic tourism attractions is the top priority. Other means of involvement are (2) participating in the development of the sector and sharing the benefits among the community members, and (3) exerting all options of efforts in building the image of the nation whilst ensuring visitors hospitality endeavors. Finally (4) protecting and preserving the socio-cultural heritages, natural landscapes of the catchment and being utilized for tourism development in general and the CBT in particular.

The Ethiopian federal government projects documents considered that communities around Lake Tana Growth Corridor are largely the same language speaking highlanders and almost all are homogenous groups. They speak the same language—Amharic; however, there are two minority groups. These are the Bete-Israel (Ethiopian Jews) and Negede Weyto tribes. It is stated that none of the groups considered they do not willful the World Bank category of indigenous peoples. However, such hasty generalization affects the interest and rights of the minority groups in the development of the growth corridor and the community based tourism in the catchment. More effective approaches normally involve creating pro-poor linkages with private sector tourism value and supply chains in the catchment vicinity. Therefore, consciously designed approaches towards the sector in an inclusive ways ensure the fair and equitable distribution of the benefits; whilst confirming the sustainability of the sector and improving the livelihood of the community.

As this finding shows, the status of community based tourism practice in the Lake Tana growth corridor is poor in the general ways and the specific findings revealed that (a) no new expansion of tourism activities and creative/innovative strategies to encourage the tourists to stay more in the area; (b) no inclusive move to incorporate the needs in the development, management and share the benefits of tourism with the rural community; (c) minority groups, such as Negede Woyto and the Bete Israel are marginalized from the sector. The Negede Woyto has been pushing time after time from the buffer zone, though they are the specialists in the Lake Tana region and environmental friendly towards the wetland management practices; and finally (d) Lake Tana's more than half of its surrounding is accessible by road but not utilized for expansion of the tourism sector in general and community based tourism practice in particular.

The development of tourist attractions, products and services lacks the collaborative approach among the stakeholders. The administering bodies, the resources owner communities, and other responsible organizations are expected to participate in the conservation and protection of the attractions with a sense of ownership. Therefore, the TDP was supposed is designed to ascertain these purposes; but lacked the directives, detailed procedures and the contexts of community based tourism approaches. The major goals of the policies and growth and development plans are focused at (a) providing appropriate care to visitors, (2) meeting the quality and standard of the services rendered in the industry, and (3) protecting the attraction sites. Therefore, this shows, the policies and development plans lacked (1) an integrated approach towards the management, development, expansion and protections of the tourism potentials, (2) community based tourism and the benefits of the poor communities at the destination sites are marginalized.

### **7. The way forward for policy implications**

Inclusion of the direct and indirect stakeholders in the tourism industry is relevant for the utilization the industry in the target area, Lake Tana Growth Corridor of Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. The community based tourism practice is expected to ensure the sustainability of the industry via fair distribution of the benefits for the local community whilst contributing to the GDP of the nation.

The TDP tried to accommodate the role of different stakeholders and interest groups and aimed at integrating the action of Civil Societies and government bodies. The private business and local communities are considered as they have influence in the tourism industry, but missed to state the benefits go to the community. However, it was supposed to contribute in the capacity building, tourist data management, technical assistance; and collaboration in the finance, advocacy and exerting coordination efforts. In this regard, the federal and regional governments shall take the lion's share in boosting the sector, and ensure the sustainability and the mutual benefits of the local community. Therefore, the policies and development plans have to be revised to accommodate these diversified interests of the groups.

Innovation and marketing is undermined by the poor linkage among the federal government organizations, such the Ethiopian tourism commission, the wildlife, forestry, and biodiversity organizations. This is for the problem that the institutional setups of the major stakeholders provide due attention to the cultural and historical heritages. The natural heritages with the potential of domestic and foreign tourist attraction capacity are marginalized. The Lake Tana Growth Corridor is not unexceptional. However, it is registered by UNESCO as the biosphere reserve in 2015 for its potentials. Therefore, comprehensive researches shall be conducted to document the natural and socio-economic baselines to ensure the development, sustainability and the mutual benefits of the catchment community from the sector.

The collaborative works among the potential, such as the Ethiopia federal and regional governments, and other agencies would play a paramount role. Besides, the local community, civil society, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and funding agencies shall involve in every activities of the innovative CBT. The private sectors shall be consulted to involve in the investment, innovative expansion, marketing, management and protection of the cultural heritages and the biosphere of the Lake Tana growth corridor. The religion based seasonal mass tourism may be affecting the biosphere. Therefore, all concerned bodies and institutions shall provide due attention to the outcomes of the initiatives. The issues employment; community economic linkages; community economic benefits; social, economic and ecological sustainability shall be the major goals and address all parts of the community. Whilst CBT oriented projects planned and endorsed, the community's engagement in project development, management and benefits planned to be shared shall be stated explicitly before the fund releases. These are important move in creating and ensuring community's economic development, reducing poverty and sustainability of the sector as well. To this effect, the government is responsible to manage, regulate and ensure the rights of the local community to share the burdens and benefits for mutual growth and development. Lastly, I recommend that additional researches focused the socio-economic and attitude of the community towards CBT very essential to understand the scenario and plan ahead to addressed the existing limitation.

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