

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE CASE OF LIBOKEMKEM WOREDA, SOUTH GONDER ZONE SENIOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Submitted to Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management, College of Agriculture and Natural Resource, Wolkite University for the Partial Fulfillment of the Completion of Bsc Degree in Wildlife and Ecotourism Management

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Yeshalem Erkie, entitled: Assessment the potentials and challenges of religious tourism in the case of Libokemkem Woreda, south Gondar zone submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements bachelor's degree in wildlife and Ecotourism Management. It is original research work done by the individuals mentioned on the previous pages and has not been presented for a degree in any other University, and that all sources of material used for the research have been duly acknowledged.

Name of student _____ Signature _____ Date_____

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date_____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date_____

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
UNCTO	United Nation Conference of Trade and Development
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTO-	World Tourism Organization

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the research was to assess religious tourism potential and challenges of Libokemkem Woreda, in south Gondar Zone, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. The total of 30 respondents found in and adjacent to the attraction were selected purposively for the survey. Data were collected through direct observation, interview and semi structured questioner and by managing secondary data. Categorical, explanatory and descriptive method of qualitative data analysis technique was employed for data interpretation. Three major religious resources were identified as potential attraction for religious tourism development in the study area. Resources such as a history of the cave of Endrias, Tara monastery and Teklehymanot cave were being utilized by and rated as attractive resources by the majority of tourists. Lack of infrastructure, Lack of local communities' participation in tourism resources management, lack of promotion, Poor Religious festivals management, lack of effective tourism planning and shortage of educated man power were identified as a major challenge for religious tourism development in the study area. Hence, the findings of the study revealed that there is huge potential of tourism resource exhibited in the study area which can be one of the best tourism destinations in Ethiopia. However, now a day, those tourism potential resources are facing aggravating challenges. Therefore, the sector stakeholders should give clear priority for those tourism resources.

Key Words: Assessment, Challenges, Potentials, Religious Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry in the world. The world tourism organization defines tourism more generally, traveling to and staying in places outside their usual place of resident or environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. The tourism industry contributed about 9.4 percent of global gross domestic products (GDP) and employed over 235 million people in the world (WTTC, 2010).

Religious tourism is as old as the religion itself and consequently, it is the oldest form of tourism in the world (Ermias Kifle, 2016). Every religion requires movement from place to place as the matter of fact 60 percent of the world population practice religion out of which 300-330 million visit the world key religion sites (UNWTO, 2011). The most visited destination in the world is Israel, Saudi Arabia and Italy. Religious based tourism destinations are either pilgrimage shrines/place that serve as the goal of religiously motivated journeys/from beyond the immediate locality or religiously significant sites (Ermias Kifle, 2013). The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido church (EOTC) holds many historical and religious treasures that are internationally significant; however, domestic tourists visit for religious purpose (Ermias kifle, 2013). One of these is Tara monastery and the nearby church of Washa Endrias. Religious tourism should be viewed as an alternative to improve the local communities' economy and to conserve the proud heritage of the area (Ayehu Wubetu., 2016).

There are many potentials and challenges found in Libokemkem woreda, particularly Tara monastery and the nearby ancient churches of Washa Endrias. According to Libokemkem woreda culture and tourism office document, there are existing potentials that become a destination area for tourists such as the dense forest of Tara monastery, ancient church of Washa Endrias cave, the nearby church of Tekle hymanot and mount Kuala Yohanes. Besides these, there are associated challenges that hinder /prohibit/ the existing potentials not to be major tourist destination, such as lack of access for transportation, lack of electricity, absence of bed rooms and lodges, lack of promotion (LKWCTO, 2007). I am interested to conduct the study to identify the existing religious based tourism potentials to expand and to come up with applicable solutions for those associated challenges.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Today tourism industry played a vital role than the previous tourism trend in bringing an enormous contribution to the development of countries in economical, socio-cultural and political aspects. Despite its positive endowments and encourage able progress in tourism over the past decades, it remains true that the tourism potentials were underutilized and under developed in Africa in general and in Ethiopia particularly (UNWTO., 2005). Libokemkem is one of the tourist places that contribute for the potential development of tourism activities. But major problems are existing in tourism activities, like loss of the religious tourism potentials resources. This is due to lack of well management plan, well promoted tourism development, shortage of appropriate employee and lack of government activities in managing tourism resources. Moreover, lacks of participation of the local communities in the management of tourism resources are to mention some of them. On the other hand those potentials and challenges are not specifically identified and no promotional activities and measures are not taken. These and the like problems initiated me to do the study.

1.3. Significance of the study

This research will contribute much for local communities, government organizations, NGOs, policy makers and implementers to understand the gaps and to take actions to improve the situation. The research is also would be expected to help (expected to contribute for the concerned stakeholders, especially to Libokemkem woreda administration, Amhara region culture and tourism Office) to understand issues related to major problems in the development of tourism industry. Finally, the research will serve as a source or reference material for conducting further research in the study area. The study has a great role in identifying religious tourism potentials and challenges in churches and monasteries in Libokemkem woreda. This creates good opportunity of the growing sector of tourism industry and to come up with solutions for the existing challenges. It is expected that the study will be achieved successfully and the findings of the study will therefore contribute a lot on coming up with applicable solutions for the existing challenges.

1.4. Objective of the study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the potentials and related challenges for developing religious tourism, in the case of Libokemkem Woreda.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

- To identify potentials of religious tourism in the study area.
- To examine those challenges related to the use of religious tourism potentials and coming up with applicable solutions.

1.5. Research questions

The study was anticipated answering the following research question

- What are the potentials of religious tourism in the study area?
- What are the challenges related to the use of religious tourism potentials and applicable solutions in the study area?

1.6. Scope of the study

The scope of the study would be limited in Libokemkem woreda in South Gonder Zone, Amhara Region. The study was focused on assessment the potentials and challenges of religious tourism in Libokemkem woreda and the research were conducted from February to May in 2011 E.C.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition and concept of religious tourism

Travel is the phenomenon dating back to antiquity and the reason for travel was diverse and numerous. Religion and religious related matters were some of the reasons why people of the ancient world traveled. However, tourism with its current basic elements and features is a very recent phenomenon (Wright, 2008). According to UNWTO, Tourism encompasses the activities of individuals traveling to, and staying in, different sites outside their customary environment for less than one consecutive year for different purposes like leisure, business and others which is not linked to the activity of income earnings from the place visited. There are also diverse types of tourism based on different means of classification. Based on the motivation of tourists, we can identify a variety forms of tourism like holiday tourism, cultural tourism, social or group tourism, sports tourism, economic tourism, political tourism, religious tourism, ecotourism and so on (2011).

Though religious tourism seems to be the latest scholarly concept, it is surely not a new occurrence. It is one of the oldest, if not the most ancient form of tourism and the difference between these forms of tourism in comparison to the other forms of tourism rely on the issue of religious motivation that is prime the motive for the travelers displacement (Wright, 2008). In the literature, religious tourism has been stated as being a spiritual tourism, religious heritage tourism, religious-based tourism, pilgrimage tourism, faith tourism, sacred tourism, and so on (Phukan, Rahman and Devdutt, 2012). In fact, pilgrimages and other similar travels are identified with the idea of religious tourism with of course the necessary accompanying explanations (Vukonic, 1998).

Religious tourism has many definitions written by different scholars, researchers, and organizations. For instance, Esteve defined religious tourism as a tourist activity through which the tourists seek spiritual grace, looking for the proximity, immersion or contact with the sacred (Rinschede, 1992). defined Religious tourism as the type of tourism in which participants are stimulate tourism is also defined as a type of tourism in which the adherents of a religion travel either individually or in groups as pilgrims, missionaries, or for leisure (Petroman e tal, 2011). According to the (Wright, 2008), religious travel is somehow complex in that it includes travel to a religious destination site (example: a trip to the Holy Land); travel with a spiritual intent

(example: Christian conference); leisure travel with a fellowship intent (example: Faith-based cruise). Generally, from the above definitions and others, it can easily be understood that religious tourism is a tourism type or form of travel that is motivated by faith or religious reasons. Accordingly, religious tourism includes all the religions, religious places associated with them, and the emotional and spiritual attachments to these centers and infrastructure facilities for the tourists (Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005).

On the other hand, religious tourists are those who engage in tourism but do so at religious sites (Stark, 2009). As per the researchers (Ebrahimzadeh, Kazemizad and Eskandari, 2010), religious tourists can be classified into two: pilgrims or travelers and multi-purpose religious' tourists. For the first group tourists, their motivation is only the religious affairs that the time and duration of their station does not depend on their acts whereas the second groups take part in religious ceremonies and visit other tourism sites with a main concern given to the pilgrimage. Participants of religious tourism do not look for luxury but arduous journeys to meet the divine goal or simple life (Phukan, Rahman and Devdutt, 2012). (Nicolaides, 2016) states rather effectively that:

The pilgrimage tourist enjoys sightseeing, traveling, visiting diverse places and, may travel by land, air or sea to a desired destination. Once there, they may stay for one or many nights and buy local memorabilia, eat at local restaurants and experience the unique culture and virtually act like every other tourist, except that they are primarily spiritually motivated. This therefore includes tourism that is inspired by spirituality and religiousness and it is generally associated with religious heritage sites. The religious desire to travel is one of the oldest motivations.

Spiritual tourism, pilgrimage tourism, and religious tourism are highly related and mostly used interchangeably (UNWTO, 2011) Spiritual tourism is that type of tourism motivated fully or partly by spiritual or religious values (UNWTO, 2011; Nicolaides, 2016). Whereas, pilgrimage tourism is a type of tourism encouraged, either partly or wholly by religious motives closely or loosely connected with holiday making or with journey undertaken for social, cultural or political reasons over short or long distances (Vijayanand, 2012).(Norman, 2004) and also Nicolaides (2016) have defined Spiritual tourism as the travel of tourists who seek out religious or spiritual settings for the purpose of fulfilling their desire to travel, either in whole or in part, and to have

some form of religious or spiritual experience. Moreover, religious tourism is closely connected with holiday and cultural tourism. Participants of pilgrims or religious tourism have a chance to travel to the surrounding areas and absorb the culture of the local community. It also a strong affinity with social and group tourism. Religious tourism has political aspects as well, to an extent (Rinschede, 1992).

2.2. Ethiopia and Religions

Mankind, in search of its identity and the reason for its existence, has long sought answers to vexing questions in a serious of examinations of teachings, beliefs, and dogmas that later gave rise to the different religions that characterize different cultures (Phillips and Carillet, 2009). Religion is a very complex concept that it has no simple definition, according to (Raj and Morpeth, 2007), and it is a system of recognizable beliefs and practices that acknowledge the existence of a 'superhuman' power that enables people to overcome the problems of life. Religion is highly connected with invisible forces. Harvey (2000) explained religion as a well-structured, organized, and socially endorsed ways of reaching out for what people want most (Rotherham, 2007). On the other hand, belief is that something beyond the known world where there exists a power that converts the difficulties into the right solutions (Norman, 2004).

Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic country that harbors different religious beliefs. The main religions in Ethiopia are Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Paganism. Ethiopia is largely a Christian country and most of the people are Orthodox Tewahedo Christians. Most Ethiopians claim that Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia long before the 4th century, but Christianity was not an officially recognized religion of the state until the reign of King Ezana in 341 AD. According to written evidence, Christianity began in Ethiopia when two Syrian Christians (Frumentius and Aedissius) came to Aksum and started to tell people about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Frumentius and Aedissius preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to King Ezana, who ruled Aksumite Kingdome in the early 4th century and successfully converted him to Christianity

In Orthodox Christian religion, churches are often built and named after Saints and Angels. The Blessed Virgin Mary is honoured above all the saints. The Tabot which is designed after the Ark of the Covenant is placed in the center of each Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It is this symbolic object rather than the church building which is consecrated and accorded extreme relevance. There are also a number of religious festivals. Some of these include Easter, the Solomonic

festival, the Timket or Epiphany which is the most celebrated festival, Gena or Christmas, Kidus Yohannes or the Ethiopian New Year and (Suleiman, 2010). So on (Phillips and Carillet, 2009).

Even though the Aksumite kingdom had accepted the Messiah, Jesus Christ, during the reign of King Ezana in 341 C.E, the Ethiopian Jews also known as Falashas or Beta Israel didn't accept Christianity and continued to practice their Old Testament (Jewish) faith which they still do today.

The Islamic religion was introduced to Ethiopia in the 7th century CE when the followers and families of the Prophet Mohammed, sought refuge in Aksum. According to the tradition, Mohammed asked the Aksumite King Aderaz to protect his relatives from persecution in Mecca. The then king of Aksum, commonly known as king Armah, welcomed them, respected their religion and offered them the needed protection. Ethiopian Islam is expressed by two complimentary belief forms: Urban Islam and Rural Islam. The former is mainly professed in cities with Mosques, Koranic Schools and the religious committees follow an orthodox Sunni Islam belief system. The latter is widespread in many areas of Oromia, Southern region, Afar, and Somali regions. Paganism or indigenous religious beliefs are widely practiced in Gambella, Southern Peoples' State, and Oromia administrative regions..

2.3. Religious tourism development

Religious tourism is one of the oldest types of tourism worldwide. However, the first international conference on religious tourism was conducted in 1967 in Cordoba, Spain, by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), entitled "Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue of Cultures, Religions, and Civilizations", highlighting the sociology of religions in world tourism (UNWTO, 2011). Historical documents and prehistoric signs and evidence from the ancient great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt indicated that there have been numerous religious trips by many thousands of people from the past up to now. In fact, mankind for thousands of years has taken long journeys in order to observe religious practices. Nonetheless, careful marketing of sites is vital as Nicolaides and Grobler (2017) state that:

Spirituality is a multi-dimensional construct based on dimensions such as religion, quality of life and wellness, which are all closely related. Consequently, spirituality needs to be carefully

marketed and a tourism perspective highlighting segmentation is considered to be a suitable method to adopt.

Today, religious tourism is one of the most important phenomena which has been spread all over the world and has overcome the obstacles of weather (climatic change), terrorism, and infrastructural limitations (Ebrahimzadeh, Kazemizad and Eskandari, 2010). According to UNWTO estimations from 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites each year (UNWTO, 2011). Being the ancient home of the world's three major religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, Palestine is most probably the first center of religious tourism (Suleiman, and Mohamed, 2010). Religious tourism today, according to the (UNWTO, 2011), is dominated by Europe followed by Asia. Out of an estimated 600 million religious and spiritual voyages, 40% were in Europe and around half in Asia. Sustainable development of religious tourism with education and training given their rightful place are the keys to safeguarding the vast cultural heritage of the world (UNWTO, 2011).

2.4. Challenges of Religious tourism development

The tourism industry plays multiple roles in the economy, socio-culture, and environment of all countries in the world. The most widely recognized outcomes of tourism include providing employment, incomes, taxes revenues and foreign exchange (Nicolaides, 2016; Suleiman and Mohamed, 2010). Religious tourism as any other type of tourism is volatile in nature that anything can affect it. Changes like global economic downturns, inflation, currency fluctuations, disease or viruses, and political unrest all hamper religious tourism development.

However, despite the numerous negative impacts of globalization, terrorism, racism, economic recession and possible self-imposed limitations on travel due to concerns for climate change, religious tourism is and can be a greater force for peace, solidarity, and integrity of the world (UNWTO, 2011). Some other factors that affect religious tourism include political instability, other political obstacles, financial problems, environment and health factors, marketing, services and poor infrastructural and facilities factors (Nicolaides, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the study area

3.1.1 Location

Libokemkem woreda is found in Amhara regional state in south Gondar zone in north western Ethiopia. The capital of the woreda is Addis zemen and it is located in north east of lake Tana, which is located at 12^0 06`59``-$12^0$ 07` 25``and $37^0$45 `02``-$37^0$47` 15`` on Addis Ababa, Gondar main road about 85 km north east of Bahirdar and 95 km south of Gondar. Distance from Addis zemen to Addis Ababa is 645 km and distance from the city of Gondar to Addis Ababa is 740 km (Getnet, 2011).

3.1.2 Climate

The climate of the woreda characterized by two agro climatic zones, moist woinadega 95 percent and dega 4.9 percent. The woreda receive a unimodal rain fall at approximately 1300mm per year. The majority of which falls between June and august. The dry season extends from December to March. The climate data obtained from national meteorological service agency for the study showed the mean annual maximum and minimum temperature is 32^0 and 8^0 respectively.

3.1.3 Population

According to the 2007 census report of central statistical Agency of Ethiopia, Libokemkem Woreda has an estimated total population size of 209,451 of which 106,564 are males and 102,887 are females about 25,011 of populations are urban residents and the remaining 184,440 are rural. The ethnicity of the Woreda population belongs largely to the Amhara who speak the Amharic language.

3.2. Sample size Determination

The researcher was used purposive sampling and simple random sampling method. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling method which helps to collect necessary data (information) related to my study purposively. First two kebele would be selected from these two kebele there are 300 households among these I select 30 respondents purposively. Among them 20 workers of Libokemkem Woreda office the researcher was taken 10 percent respondents, which have enough knowledge and information about the religion and give the necessary information for my study.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The study mainly uses a qualitative approach and is an explanatory research that tries to assess and give insight to the current potentials and challenges. For the purpose of this study data on religious based tourism potential would be collected from primary and secondary sources and which serve as the basis of discussion and analysis of investigating potentials and challenges of the study area.

3.4 Primary Data sources

The primary data was collected through interviewing and questioning tourism professionals of Libokemkem Woreda, staff workers and religious leaders' /priests/ through direct observation of the area.

3.5 Secondary Data sources

The data sources include books, tourism office documents, church documents, different website information's, and leaflet papers and other materials are important sources to support a base line information and would be used as a guide line.

3.6 Data analysis

The primary and secondary data were discussed qualitatively in order to exhibit the potentials and challenges of the research site. In order to investigate the potentials and challenges in managing and utilizing these research sites for tourist attraction, data was gathered through in-depth interview, semi structured questionnaires, and personal observation and it was discussed by using qualitative analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Demographic characteristics of sampled population

According to table 1 below show 80% (24) of the respondents were male and 20 % (6) of the respondent were female. Therefore, most of the respondents were male. Further indicate the respondents replied that found in the age between (20-30) were 27%, (31-45), 40%, (46-60), 23 % and greater than 60, 10%. From this table 4.1 the researcher understands that most of the respondents were adult. Regarding to educational level 17% (7) of the respondents that were Bachelor degree, 47% (14) of the respondent are Diploma, 6% (2) of the respondents are master and above and 13% (4). The researcher concludes that from this understand that most of the respondents were Diploma. Marital status indicators 73 % (22) of respondents were married, 27 % (8) of respondents were single.

Table: 1 Demographic characteristics of sampled population (n=30)

variables	**Section**	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Sex	M	24	80
	F	6	20
	Total	30	100
Age	20-30	8	27
	31-45	12	40
	46-60	7	23
	>60	3	10
	Total	30	100
Education level	Certificate	5	17
	Diploma	14	47
	Bachelor Degree	5	17
	Master	2	6
	Illiterate	4	13
	Total	30	100
Marital Status	Married	22	73
	Un married	8	27

(**Source**: personal survey, 2019)

4.2. Religious Tourism Potential of Libokemkem Woreda

4.2.1 The cave of Endrias

This site has a beautiful scenery and natural attraction that can satisfy any local or foreign visitor of the place. The cave of Endrias is a church which has been serving the local society since 899 GC before the birth of Jesus Christ. Unlike the other churches this church is a peculiar because it was built from a natural cave. The roof of this church is made from a natural rock.

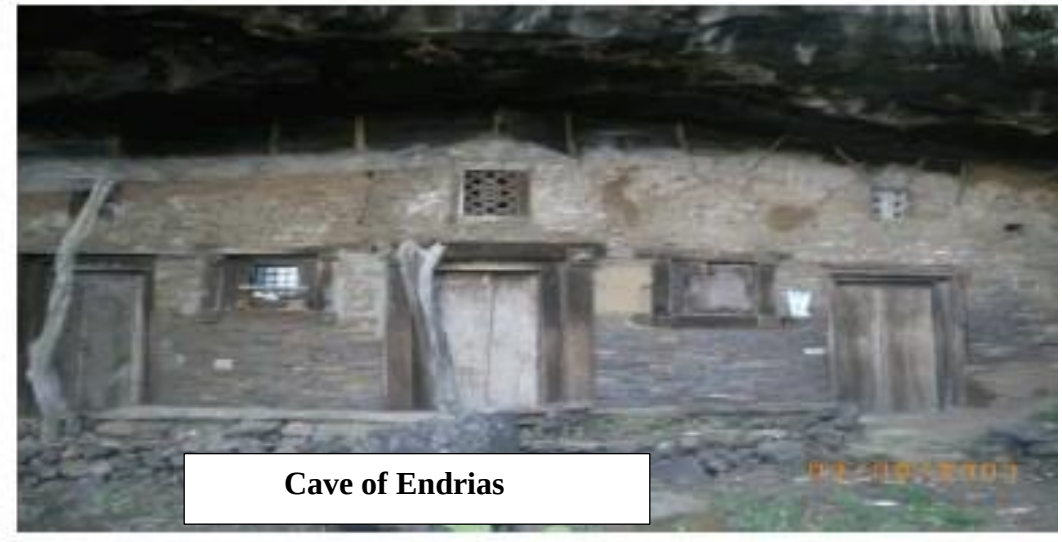


figure1: The cave of Endrias (Source: Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019)

When it comes to history, monument, heritage, arts, handcrafts and way of life of local people, this site is enriched with these attributes. To start with its history, this place is believed to host different rituals of the God while this place was worshiped for God; it was believed that there was a python in the place. It is believed that the people who used to dwell in the surrounding area of this cave used to present a sacrifice to the python. This is witnessed by the rock slate that was used for drinking the sacrificed blood as well as the wood soak which was used to splash the blood.

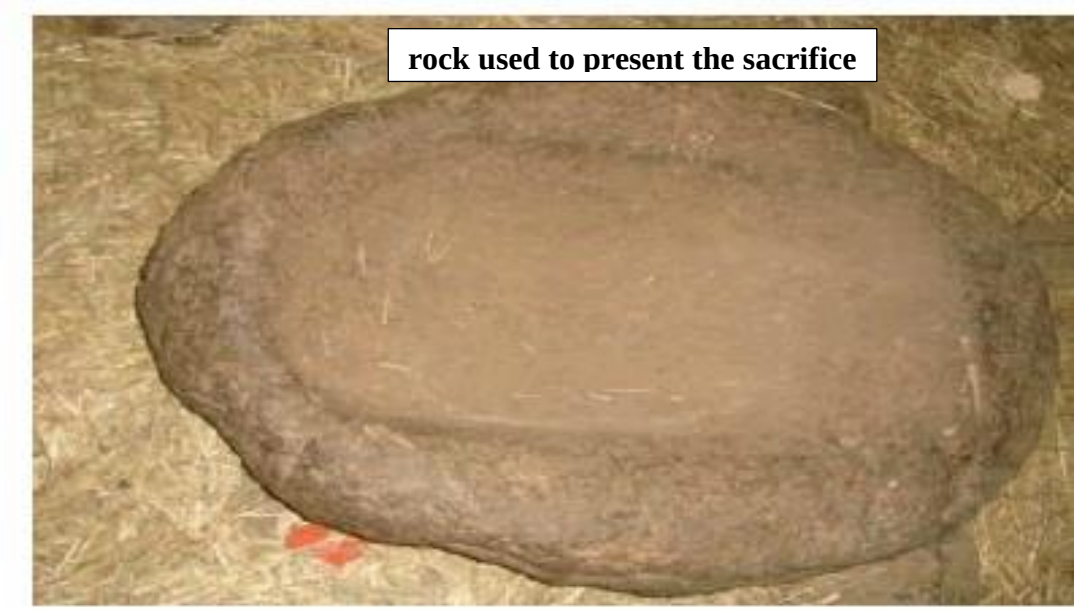


Figure 2: The rock used to present the sacrifice (Source: Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019)

The cave was found by Abune Endrias. It was believed that the python used to drink water with its tail in the cave from Lake Tana. When it comes to good night life and entertainment as long as the site is a church, there is no place to spend time after visiting the cave. To this effect, the visitor may not get the chance to enjoy after visiting the cave nearer to the cave. Though it is unsatisfactory that there are no enough shops, restaurants, and transportation services in the cave on the side of the main road, there are a few shops that sell soft drinks, biscuits, mobile cards, bottled spring water and others relevant goods for a short trip. Besides even Addis Zemen could not accommodate all the kind of services the visitor may need. Therefore, the visitor may not have difficulty in finding a place to stay after visiting the site. The accessibility to get enough information that may facilitate the trip of the site is also unsatisfactory for the reason that there is no information desk in the cave as well as in the town nearer to the cave (Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019). Nevertheless, the people who administer the church are willing to give a tour in the church as well as provide the information about the cave. The local people's attitude towards the visitor is very satisfactory because the people who dwell around the cave are willing to corporate and hospitable from the time someone comes to visit until he/she leaves the site. Some people around the cave are also helpful in guiding to the cave from the main road. As long

as the site has never been given attention by the government, there are no scouts, assigned to the place .However, as long as the society has good attitude towards a visitor, no harm can be done to any visitor who may come to visit the place. It is obvious that the site such as this don't usually allow the establishment of different recreational centers. So there are no relaxation sites at all (Ministry of Culture and Tourism., 2006). The site is located at the top of the mountain, so it is difficult to find natural relaxation venues around the site. What anybody will like when he or she visits this site is the weather .It may be very difficult to predict the preference of whether by any visitor, but the weather in this site is moderate, not worm or cold because of its geographical location. The overall cost someone can spend to visit this site or place is not exaggerated for both national and international visitors and it is worth it. (Larange, 2006)

According to below table 2 show that 73 % of the respondent said the cave is more attractive for tourists, 20% of the respondent said that medium attractive and 7% of the respondents said that less attractive.

Table 2: Opinion of religious tourists in the history of the cave of Endrias

Opinion of respondents	Frequency	Percent %
More Attractive	22	73
Medium attractive	6	20
Less attractive	2	7

(Source own survey, 2019)

4.1.2 The Cave of Tekle Haymanot

To start with the landscape of this site has a beautiful setting which can be a potential attribute for the satisfaction of any local or foreign visitor of the destination. This church is located 2 kilometer away from the main road. This sites percent is covered with a forest of different kinds. The peripheral part of the church is surrounded by forest called Este pathos as can be shown.

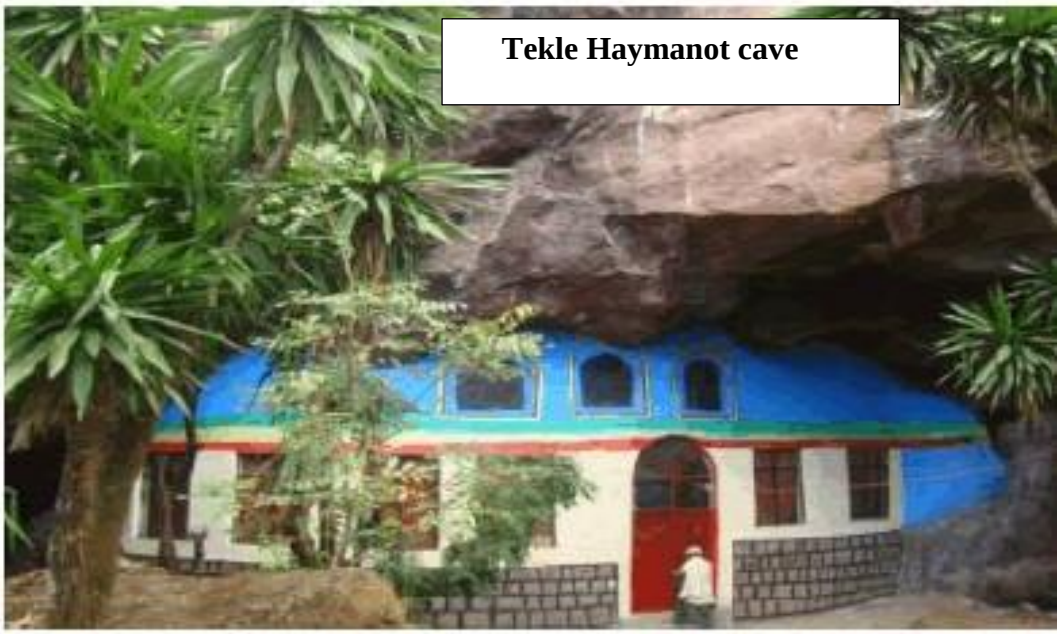


Figure 3: The cave of Tekle Haymanot (Source: Libokemkem Woreda tourism office, 2019)

The site is enriched with history, monument, heritage, art, handcrafts and ways of life of local people .The church of cave Tekle Haymanot is similar in its history with the church of cave Endrias. The roof of this cave is made of rock. As to the information gathered from priest Tesfa Mekonen, a priest who dwell and serve in the site, the monastery started giving service in the 13th century. The cave is believed to be discovered during the reigm of Ezana and Ssizana, and it is believed that it was worshiped for its god for 44 years. It is very difficult to find good overnight and entertainment, as long as the site is a church, there is no place to spend time after visiting the cave. More over the site is 12 km far from Addis Zemen; a small town found in south Gondar and a 2km journey on foot from the main road that take from Gondar to Bahirdar. Therefore the visitor may not get the chance to spend their time on the resort after visiting the cave nearer to the cave. The service that are given in the surrounding area of the church are unsatisfactory .However, on the side of the main road there are fewer shops that sell soft drinks, biscuits, mobile cards, bottled spring water, and other relevant goods for a short trip, besides, the shops, restaurants and transportation in Addis Zemen, the little town nearer to the site, provide all the kind of services the visitor may need. Therefore the visitor may not have a difficulty in finding a place to stay after visiting the site. As long as this site is not given attention by the government or any other concerned bodies in the district , the accessibility to find or to get

enough information desk in the cave as well as in the town nearer to the cave. Nevertheless the people who administer the church are willing to give a tour in the church as well as provide information that is needed about the cave .Due to the similarity of the location between the church cave Endrias and the church of cave Tekle Haymanot, the local peoples attitude towards visitor is very satisfactory because the people who dwell around the cave is willing to cooperate and be hospitable from the time someone comes to visit until he/she leaves the site. Some people around the cave are helpful in guiding the cave from the main road. (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2013)

According to below table 3 show 93 % of the respondent said the cave is more attractive for tourists and 7% of the respondent said that medium attractive.

Table 3: Opinion of tourists in the cave of Tekle Haymanot.

Tekle Haymanot cave	Respondents	Percent %
More attractive	28	93
Medium attractive	2	7
Less attractive	0	0

(Source own survey, 2019).

4.1.3 The monastery of Tara

The first attribute any visitor would see when he /she comes to visit this site is its attractive geographical feature which is witnessed in the following figures.

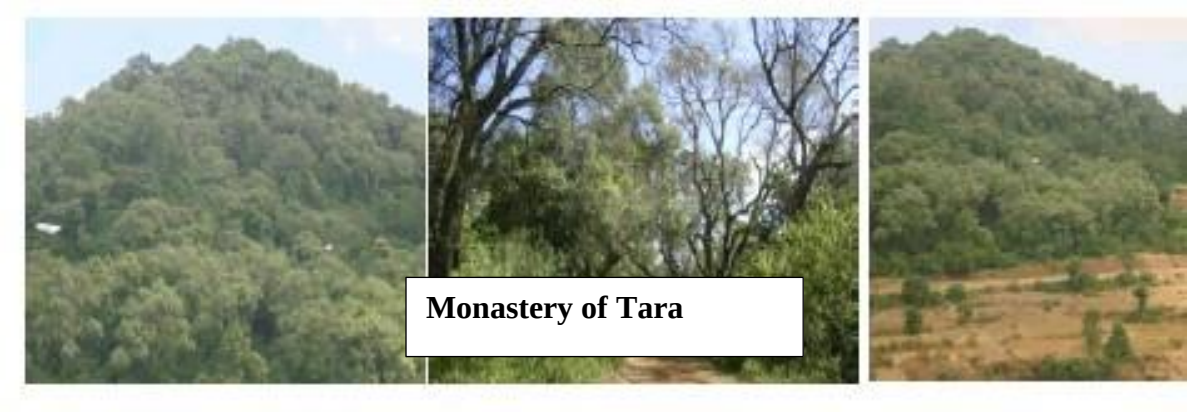


Figure 4: The forest in the monastery of Tara (Source: Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019)

This monastery is rich in its history and culture. Its richness in culture and history is discussed in detail and supposed by visual information as follows. This monastery covers 88 hectare of land in which 85 hectare of it is covered by forest and 3 of its hectare are used for crop production by the monks in the monastery. There are 52 male and 13 female monks who live in the monastery. The cave is believed to build 460 years ago from now. In side Tara monastery, there is an Abune Awestatiwes church for males built in the 16th century by Abune Gelawdiwos as well as another church of St Mary in the monastery which is believed to be built in the 17th century by Empress Mentewab.



Figure 5: Males' monastery of Abune Awestatewes (Source: Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019)

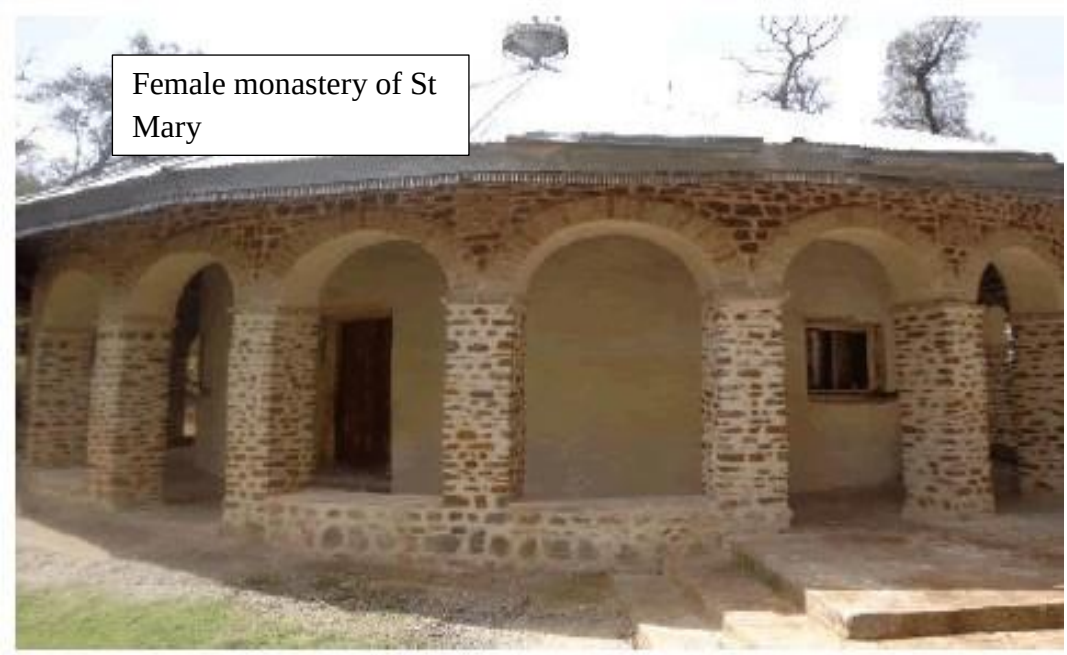


Figure 6: Females monastery of St Mary (Source: Libokemkem woreda tourism office, 2019)

The monastery is a religious place in which the prayer in this monastery has the power to cure those cursed by the devil. The ration in the monastery held once at 3; 00PM. The dining style takes place by ringing a bell to inform the monks to eat with their own dish. There is a rule that is set for those monks in the monastery .There are absence of entertainment in this site too. The reason for absence of a place to spend a good night time is that is a religious and spiritual place i.e. only for pray. There is no a person that provides enough information in order to assist the trip of the site for the reason that there is no information desk in the monastery as well as in the town nearer to the monastery (Sintayehu, 2015). Nevertheless the people who administer the church and the monks who serve the church are willing to give a trip in the church as well as provide the information needed about the monastery. There is no difference at the local people's attitude towards the visitor with other sites discussed above because the people who dwell around the cave are willing to cooperate and be hospitable from the time someone comes to visit until he/she leaves the site. Some people around the cave are also helpful in guiding to the cave from the main road. What might be certain for visitor in this site is the security system. Due to lack of attention by the concerned bodies, there are no security guards assigned to the place. However as long as the society has good attitude towards the visitor, no harm can be done to many visitors who may come to visit the place. As a result of a religious and spiritual place, it is difficult to

allow the establishment of different recreational centers, there are no relaxation centers or sites at all. It is believed that monasteries such as this forbidden the use of this place other than religious purpose .So it is difficult to find natural relaxation venues around the site. It is hard to decide the weather preference of the visitor, but according to different scholars the preferred weather is the kind of weather that you can feel when you go to this place. The overall cost someone can spend to visit this place is not exaggerated for both national and international visitors. Though the site does not satisfy all the attributes of any destination sites, any visitor would be pleased to visit the site for the satisfactory attribute that are potential. (Ayalew, 2003)

According to table 4 below 87% of the respondent said the cave is more attractive for tourists, 10% of the respondent said that medium attractive and 3% of the respondents said that less attractive.

Table 4: Opinion of religious tourists over Tara monastery

Tara monastery	Respondents	Percent %
More attractive	26	87
Medium attractive	3	10
Less attractive	1	3

(Source own survey, 2019)

4.3 Challenges for religious tourism development in Libokemkem Woreda

According to table 5 below show the problems to affect religious tourism development as 7 (23%) of the respondent said infrastructural inaccessibility,5 (17) lack of promotion, 3 (10%) of the respondent said absences of tourism profession, 4 (13%) of the respondent said shortage of budget, 5 (17%) of the respondent said lack of awareness within the community, 2 (7%) of the respondent said lack of well management plan and 4 (13%) said that lack of attention from the administration. we understand from the above table respondent said infrastructural inaccessibility, lack of awareness and lack of promotion are the major covered the highest percent 23%, 17% and 17% respectively. Therefore, we conclude that lack of infrastructure, lack of promotion and lack of awareness are the major problems to develop tourism in the study area.

Table 5: the problem that affects the tourism resource related to religious tourism potentials

Challenges	Respondents	Percent (%)
Lack of infrastructure	7	23
Lack of promotion	5	17
Lack of educated man power	3	10
Financial constraints	4	13
Lack of awareness	5	17
Lack of well management plan	2	7
Lack of Attention from the Administration	4	13

(Source own survey, 2019)

4.4 Management of religious based tourism resource

According to table 6 below show the Solution for the problem affects tourism resources as respondents mentioned were 8 (27%) Giving awareness to the community, 5 (17%) were increase government attention, 4 (13%) were Making participatory management plan, 2 (7%) were Setting documentation in organized form, 6 (20) were Sharing of benefits equally to the community, 5 (17%) were said that should have strong management techniques or strategies

Table 6: Management for the problem that affects religious based tourism resources

Management	Respondents	Percent %
Giving awareness to the community	8	27
Increase government attention	5	17
Making participatory management plan	4	13
Setting documentation in organized form	2	7
Sharing of benefits equally to the community	6	20
Should have strong management techniques or strategies	5	17

(Source own survey, 2019)

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5. DISCUSSION

Libokemkem is endowed with different types of tourism potential resources: natural, cultural, and historical as well as festivals. The area has unique geographical feature and biodiversity resources which includes scenic landscape, natural forest, and wildlife's. It has cultural and historical attraction and gifted with many remarkable tourism potentials. According to the sample respondents, Libokemkem has colorful cultural value which includes tangible and intangible cultural values including living style, artifacts, building environments, and other historical value like historical building and others.

Different cultures used as potential resources for tourism development; previous studies states that the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches are important resources for tourism activity development (Ayalew, 2003). The tourist wants preferring to spend holidays in places that they are already familiar with or they had heard something positive about the places they plan to visit. The number of tourist was increased in Libokemkem Woreda. The demonstrated infrastructure development was the major determinant of tourist arrivals in Libokemkem. This indicates the tourists first come to the Land then they move to different sites like different rock hewn churches, monasteries, natural forests and religious festivals.

There were different tourism resources found in Libokemkem woreda among those resources the historical and cultural resource was the most preferable and attractive one (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997). Those Resources have negative and positive impacts on the religious based tourism development. The presence of sufficient tourism resources in the area had positive impact for the tourism development. On the other hand creating imbalanced development, loss of historical, natural and cultural resources leads to loss of profits that generated from religious tourism. This leads to the degradation of countries development of tourism and lack of well management plan was the most critical problem that damage the tourism resources and the resource was lost if there was no government activities towards the conservation and rehabilitation of those resources (langrage, 2010). The cultural, historical and natural resources are potential resources for tourism development. Previous study supports cultural resources is one of the resources for tourism development (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2010)

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

The religious based tourism resources found in Libokemkem woreda the cave of Endrias church, cave Tekle Haymanot church, Tara monastery, Males' monastery of Abune Awestatewes and Females monastery of St Mary the most religious based tourism resources, however the result revealed that the historical and religious sites found in Libokemkem woreda are not highly exposed to the tourists. Hence it can be ensured that there are this implies that the tourism sector has insufficient contribution for the livelihood of the community and for the development of the country at all. Furthermore lack of system for tourist management, insufficient public transportation along with in appropriate roads to access the religious sites, lack of promotion, lack of access to needed goods in the villages, Lack of educated man power, lack of awareness, financial constraints, lack of well management plan, lack of attention to the potential opportunities and designing plans to take advantage of them, are found to be the dominant or major challenges in managing and utilizing the religious sites for tourist attraction.

Finally, to solve those problems it had better to take some actions like, giving awareness to local community, giving opportunity for local people to participate in decision making, the national and regional government should work cooperatively to solve these problems, Increase government attention, Sharing of benefits equally to the community.

6.2 Recommendation

It is recommended that Libokemkem woreda administration to establish an advisory board, all the stakeholders including culture and tourism office, local communities, elders, service providers and other concerned bodies the woreda administration along with the zone administration should plan to focus the necessary infrastructure in the aforementioned religious and heritage sites. To equip other facilities, the woreda administration should design strategies for building organized tourist information centers and travel agents by encouraging the private sector and micro and small enterprises involving in the tourism industry.

- Be having a well management plan/strategy and suitable infrastructure, facilities and services should be developed

- Government should give awareness for the community about tourism resources and equitable distribution of benefits generated from tourism for the community
- Promote the resources of the Woreda by using many systems like websites, gazette, brochures, and other social media.
- Protect and conserve natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Woreda through different measurement action.
- Allocate adequate human and financial resources to the tourism sector.
- Strengthen the conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites.
- Government administration should be give attention for the area to conserve resources.

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APPENDEX

WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCE

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT

Questionaries' prepared for culture and tourism Bearu of Libokemkem woreda. Dear respondent this Questionary is prepared for an academic purpose for the partial fulfillment of Bachelor's degree in ecotourism and cultural heritage management. Specifically the objective of the study is asses of potentials and challenges on religious tourism in religious sites of Libokemkem woreda. Therefore your response is very important for the success of the study, because all information that you provide determines the analysis of and conclusion of the research. Hence you are kindly requested to give your response by selecting your answer from the given alternative choices of describing your opinion. Please be informed that your response is kept in confidential. I would like to thank for your cooperation.

1. Age_____?
2. Sex_____?
   A. Male B. female
3. Marriage status?
   A. Married B. Not married C. Divorce
4. Economic level?
   A. Rich B. Medium C. poor
5. Did you satisfied in that you have joined that in the tourism sector?
   A. Yes B. No
6. Did you create any awareness for the local communities about religious tourism?
   A. Yes B. No
7. Do you think that religious tourism is beneficial for the previous of the country?
   A. Yes B. No C. No idea
8. Do you think that religious tourism potential is well identified?
   A. Yes B. No
9. If you answer in question number 8 is no what the limiting factors are?

A. Lack of awareness

B. Lack of attention

C. Lack of infrastructure

10. Do you think that religious tourism is developed in this district?

A. Yes B. No

11. Is religious tourism potentials are there?

A. Yes B. No

12. If your answer in question number 11 is yes, what are the common visitors of the site?

A. International tourists

B. Domestic tourists

13. Is there challenges (problems) related to developing religious tourism?

A. Yes B. No

14. Is churches or monastery sites are in the appropriate distance to human settlement?

A. Highly appropriate C. Medium

B. Appropriate D. Less appropriate

15. Do you believe that religious tourism development is beneficial for the local community?

A. Yes B. No

16. If you answer is yes in question number 15 what are the benefits?

A. Improve the living of the community

B. Increase the social life

C. Raise the identity of the community

D. All