

## **The Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Development in Ethiopian National Parks, the case of Nechsar National Park (NNP)**

**Semere Getahun Abebe**  
Jimma University, Ethiopia

### **Abstract**

This study is conducted with the aim of assessing the challenges of sustainable tourism development in Ethiopian national parks. The study used primary data for the problem under study. Using judgmental sampling, 381 tourists were selected from the total tourist population at the destination. And an interview was conducted with experts in the tourism industry. The data collection has been undertaken for 2 consecutive months, February- March 2021. A descriptive approach was used to analyze the data collected. Most of the tourists visiting Nechsar National park are local tourists while Europe takes the largest share in the number of tourists among foreign tourists. Under-development of roads, communication, accommodation, shopping, financial institutions, and other services has been found as a challenge in the development of sustainable tourism at the destination. On the other dimension, the lack of effective marketing to promote the spot and the lack of effective protection for the natural beauty of the destination have been underlined as the challenges confronted in the development of sustainable tourism. Safety and security issues and lack of strong commitment from the government in promoting businesses at the destination had also their own contribution to hampering the development of sustainable tourism. The multi-dimensional challenges that NNP was currently experiencing call for a collaborative effort from suppliers and expert side stakeholders to build a tourism industry that takes social, environmental, and economic attributes into consideration.

**Keywords:** *sustainable tourism; development; tourist; marketing*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Representing 5% of the world's GDP and 30% of the global exports of services at over US\$ 1 trillion, tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing economic sectors. Tourism creates millions of jobs, accounting for 1 in 12 worldwide. Creating jobs diverse in their level of skill requirement and regional distribution, tourism provides a fast entry point into the workforce for many, particularly for young people and women. As countries across the globe face the challenge of unemployment, tourism can play a leading role in fighting a jobless recovery. (UNWTO, 2010)

Tourism also has an important part to play in fostering development and fighting poverty. Recent trends show that travel towards developing and least developed countries (LDCs) is growing faster than in the developed world. Tourism is one of the major economic sectors of developing countries and the primary source of foreign exchange earnings in a vast majority of these. At the same time, tourism has the power to deliver significant international earnings for

environmental protection as well as give economic value to cultural heritage. It is a proven instrument for raising public awareness of environmental issues and a sustainable tool for cultivating natural resources and preserving biodiversity. (UNWTO, 2010)

The global economic downturn in 2008-2009 has demonstrated more than ever the need for political recognition and support of the tourism sector. As the world faced the challenges of economic recovery, issues such as job creation, poverty alleviation, and climate change remained top on the agenda. In 2010, UNWTO promoted the principles of the Roadmap calling upon world leaders to include tourism in recovery strategies and encouraging public policies which support tourism's economic and development potential. 2010 will be remembered as the year of recovery for the global economy – following one of the most testing periods of recent history – but also the year of persistent uncertainties and challenges. This has also been true for international tourism. International tourist arrivals grew by 7% in 2010 to a record 940 million, with positive growth reported in all world regions. Reflecting global economic trends, growth was driven largely by emerging economies, a development that looks set to continue over the coming years. (UNWTO, 2010)

Throughout 2010, governments worked to mainstream tourism in the global agenda by promoting its significant contribution to global prosperity, development, and well-being, conveying the message that tourism means jobs, trade, economic growth, and development – to leaders and decision-makers around the globe. In response, a number of initiatives emerged to draw attention to tourism's contribution to global challenges. The T.20, for example, gathered the tourism ministers of major economies who committed to intensifying collaboration towards mainstreaming tourism in the global agenda. Alongside the challenge of global economic uncertainty, the longer-term challenges of competitiveness and sustainability have remained at the heart of the industry during 2010. (Ibid)

Though noted for its tourism potential, Africa's underdeveloped tourism sector is attracting only 4.81% (40.7 million) of the total tourist arrivals in the world. What makes the problem severe is the fact that a considerable proportion of this number is taken by South Africa and Northern African countries (Ibid). Although often underestimated, the tourism industry can help to promote peace and stability in developing countries by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment, and promoting cross-cultural awareness. Besides, tourism is a key foreign exchange earner for 83 percent of African developing countries and the leading export earner for one-third of the continent's poorest countries (Ibid).

With the above wide scope benefits of tourism in mind, the United Nations has identified the development of tourism as one of the methods poorer countries might use to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For the first MDG, alleviating poverty, the merits of tourism are evident. It can provide jobs and generate income for communities that, in some cases, lack viable alternative means of employment. With its tendency to produce flexible labor markets and offer diverse working opportunities, tourism can help to realize a second MDG that of promoting gender equality. (Solimar, 2010)

Tourism has a central role to play in the sustainable development of developing countries and in the achievement of millennium development goals. The adoption of sustainable tourism development practices has been instrumental for many developing countries in pursuit of growth and development; some have graduated from the category due to the benefit of sustainable tourism

development. Sustainable tourism development, including the potential of the sector to facilitate intercultural understanding and tolerance, requires the engagement and respect of all relevant stakeholders, in particular of local communities, as well as strong political leadership to ensure nationwide participation and consensus building. Sustainable tourism should maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience for travelers, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices. (UNWTO, 2010)

Tourism is one of the most important tools used to boost economies, promotes development by creating jobs that increase people's income, and is thus considered a key factor in the development of developing countries. Therefore, tourism serves as a potential means to generate higher revenue for a country. (Szivas, Riley, & Airey, 2003). Although tourism has a huge potential for poverty alleviation, often, poor segments of the population in developing countries and LDCs do not benefit from its economic advantages. The success of tourism as a service sector depends largely on quality, so a skilled and motivated workforce is critical. Education and training are key factors in sustainable tourism development, providing people at all levels of ability with the relevant skills to assume active responsibility aimed at improving employment conditions.

Tourism that focuses on natural environments is a large and growing part of the tourism industry. While it can contribute in a positive manner to socio-economic development and environmental protection, uncontrolled tourism growth can also cause environmental degradation, destruction of fragile ecosystems, and social and cultural conflict, undermining the basis of tourism.

Despite a wealth of cultural and natural tourism resources, there are challenges, constraints, and issues that need to be addressed as tourism develops in Ethiopia. The country has rich flora, fauna, and landscapes, but many challenges to biodiversity conservation exist, including the effectiveness of the protected area management system and its relationship with communities both within and adjacent to parks and sanctuaries. (Ethiopian sustainable tourism-alliance, 2013)

The Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Alliance (ESTA) aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and economic development through sustainable tourism products, services, and other opportunities throughout destination regions of Ethiopia. (ESTA, 2013) Even though some achievements have been there, the multi-dimensional bottlenecks have still posed a challenge to its development. It's also evident that various stakeholders have to play the necessary role in tackling the challenges of the initiative and bringing sustainable tourism development to a higher level.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

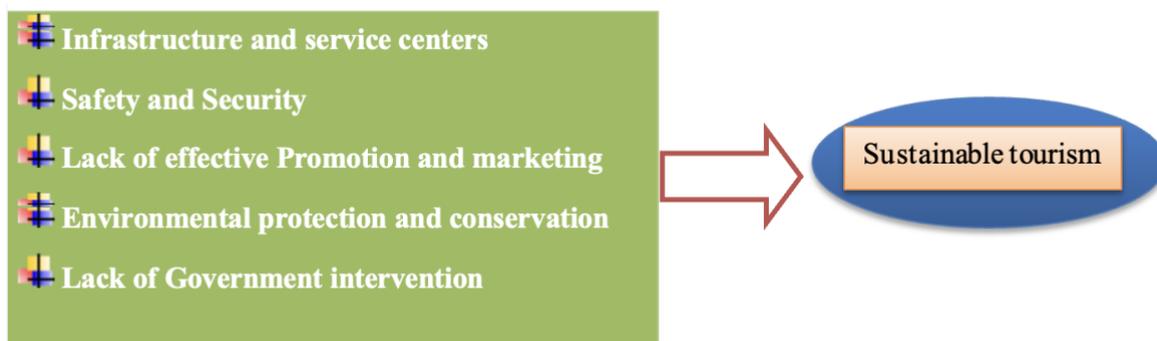
### **Dependent variable**

Sustainable tourism development: The United Nations World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

### **Independent variables**

A range of environmental, social, and institutional variables that are expected to challenge the development of sustainable tourism development is described and hypothesized below as explanatory variables;

1. Infrastructure and service centers: this is a continuous variable expected to positively influence the development of sustainable tourism development with a consideration that a destination with a well-established infrastructural facility and service centers will attract more tourists and ensures a higher level of tourist satisfaction.
2. Safety and security: this is a continuous variable expected to positively influence the development of sustainable tourism development with a consideration that destinations with ensured safety and security issues have the potential to attract more tourists.
3. Promotion and marketing: this is a continuous variable expected to positively influence the development of sustainable tourism development with a consideration that destinations undertaking intense and wide-scope promotional and marketing activity have the potential to attract more and more tourists.
4. Environmental protection and conservation is also a continuous variable expected to positively influence the development of sustainable tourism development keeping in mind that enriched with lots of eye-catching natural beauty and good conservational practice have the potential to attract more tourists for an extended period of time.
5. Lack of Government intervention: is also a continuous variable expected to negatively affect the development of sustainable tourism, taking into consideration that a nation that has designed well-integrated tourism policies and strategies could benefit more from the industry. On the other hand, nations without well-defined strategic policies in the sector couldn't be able to attract tourists from different spots.



## DISCUSSION

### The demographic background of respondents

Responses of the observation regarding the origin of tourists, 35.08 % of the respondents are foreign tourists, while 64.92% of the respondents are local tourists. This shows the observation comprises a significant proportion of foreign tourists, which helps to get a comparative judgment, while local tourist enriches the study with multi-dimensional attributes of the variable. In line with the origin of tourists, the homeland of foreign tourists is also diversified, which keeps the heterogeneity of the observations. The observation comprises tourists from Africa, Europe, Asia,

the Middle East, and other regions for which Europe takes the largest share, 57.92 %. This implies the study has incorporated heterogeneous considerations regarding the variables raised.

Looking into the tourism experience, observations showed that 71.91 % of the respondents have more than 2 years of experience as a tourist. This shows the study comprises a significant number of experienced tourists who are capable of forwarding insights regarding the aforementioned variables. Observations regarding the number of tourist destinations visited show that 70.04 % of the respondents have visited more than one destination. This helps the study to comprise a comparative view of tourists regarding different tourist spots.

### **Challenges of sustainable tourism**

#### **Infrastructure and service centers in sustainable tourism development**

A number of authors, including Gunn (1988) and Inskeep (1991), have cited the infrastructure base of a country as a potential determinant of the attractiveness of a destination. Infrastructure is critical to the success of the tourism product. Without suitable access to a destination, whether by road or air, the tourist will not be able to visit. Communications also play a vital role, especially today when people expect cell phone coverage and internet access to keep in touch with family and friends or for business. Access to clean public toilets, good sewerage, and waste disposal system will also challenge the tourism sector. (WEF, 2011)

#### **Accessibility of communication facility (ICT infrastructure) in sustainable tourism development)**

From the observations, 60% of the respondents reflected there is no sufficient communication facility at the destination. On the other hand, the frequency distribution shows a median and mode of 2. This implies that most of the observations disagree with the availability of sufficient communication facilities at the destination, and most of the tourists feel the available communication facility is inconvenient, which will affect the possibility of revisiting NNP. From this, it had been understood that the absence of well-installed communication facilities resulted in dissatisfaction of tourists at NNP, which, eventually, resulted in a bottleneck for the development of sustainable tourism.

#### **Accessibility of well-developed roads in sustainable tourism development**

Most of the observations considered road infrastructure development at the destination not satisfying. Around 65% of them are not satisfied with the level of road infrastructure.

According to the interview with the NechSar National Park management office (2015), the movement of tourists to NechSar National Park is independent of the season but influenced by the accessibility of park roads during the wet season (June, July August) when the flooding of Kulfo and Sermele river is very high and preventing the tourists from moving within the park easily.

#### **Quality accommodation and hotel facilities for sustainable tourism development**

The data collected from the respondents shows that 57% of the observations are not satisfied with the accommodation and hotel services provided by lodges, hotels, and guest houses. While 43 % of the respondents feel the facilities are satisfying.

In an interview conducted with the management of the park and accommodation centers, the location disadvantage of these centers is the main challenge. With the absence of comfortable road infrastructure as a big challenge at the destination, especially within the park for the movement of tourists, the absence of convenient and quality accommodation and hotel facilities at the nearest possible spot had been a challenge for the initiative. In this regard, some of the prominent accommodations like Arbaminch tourist hotel, Bekele mola hotel, Paradise lodge, and Ezana hotel are found some distance from the park in the town of Arbaminch. This implies that tourists are unsatisfied with the quality of accommodation centers at the destination as well as the geographical location of the existing accommodation centers.

### **Accessible Financial institutions for sustainable tourism development**

The frequency distribution regarding the requirement for financial institutions and their services is not adequately answered by the public as well as private institutions. In the observation, 63.9 % of the respondents feel the services are inconvenient, and they are not adequately served by the institutions. Since most guest houses and accommodation centers require payment to be made with home currency, adequate FOREX centers would have to be accessible.

#### **Safety and security for sustainable tourism development**

Safety and security in tourism refer to the protection of life, health, physical, psychological, and economic integrity of travelers, tourism staff, and people constituting host communities, including the consideration of security interests of tourist sending and receiving states and their tourism entrepreneurs and establishment operators (WTO, 1991).

### **Absence of adequate health and medical services**

Destinations having adequate primary health care tend to provide first aid for tourists in case of any unexpected happenings. Tourist attractions where adventure tourism is extensively experienced attacks from wild animals and other catastrophes require first aid health care as near as possible to the destination (Ibid, 2010).

From the observations, 80% of the respondents feel the primary health care service is not satisfying at the destination, which makes tourists feel unsafe during catastrophic dangers. The frequency distribution of the observation also shows a median and mode of 2, which makes most of the respondents fall in the category of disagree regarding first aid health care services. Since the sense of insecurity from the tourist side regarding a particular destination is a real challenge, the absence of medical services is a challenge to the movement for sustainable tourism development. An interview with the management of the park also suggests that the absence of medical centers at the destination forces tourists to search for medical services in the town of Arbaminch.

### **Disruption from beggars and hawkers**

Around 82.3% of the respondents feel discomfort with the disruption from the beggars and hawkers. Both the mode and median values, with a numeric of 2, show that most of the respondents feel the protection is not enough to protect the disruption from beggars and hawkers.

Tour guides also underlined the challenge of these beggars. They responded that, in most cases, they would try to push back the movement of beggars and hawkers. However, as they have reported, this has resulted in frequent conflicts.

#### Vulnerability of tourists to theft

Theft is one of the common security problems encountered in many tourist destinations. The vulnerability of tourists to theft increases when the destination doesn't have a well-organized system to combat crime.

The observation from tourists shows that the vulnerability of tourists to theft is very minimal. Of the total respondents, 85.2 % of the respondents feel that the destination is very safe and the danger of theft is insignificant, while only 4.6 % of the respondents feel that the destination is vulnerable to theft. The median and mode values are represented with a numeric value of 4, which means most of the respondents agree there is strong protection against theft. Unlike the exposure to beggars, theft hasn't been a challenge to be faced at the destination.

#### **Safety and security of tourists from the local community**

The perception of the local community towards tourists, the socio-cultural values of the host community, and the cost benefits of tourism to the local community determines the attitude of the host community towards tourists.

In NNP, local communities utilize the resources in the park and its environs for different purposes. It has been mainly utilized by two communities, namely Kore/Amaro and Guji Oromo . The kore is living adjacent to the park. They are farmers and thus use the land in the park for subsistence cultivation. The Guji on the other hand is a pastoralist. They use the land in the park and its environs for grazing and other activities to earn their livelihood. (AbiyotNegeraBiressu, 2009). Following the Eviction of 1982, just after the British biologists started to survey the Nechsar area as a potential candidate for the establishment of a game reserve, they saw the Guji and their cattle as a hindrance to conservation. Blower, for instance, postulated that overgrazing by the Guji cattle caused a decrease in-game population.

The observation shows there is a safe and secure environment for tourists from the local community. The mode and median results, both showing a numeric value of 5 and frequency distribution of 87.6% of the sample tourists suggesting there is no danger towards tourists from the host community, leads to a conclusion that the host community is not hostile against tourists. Only 7.2 % of the respondents feel there is an insecure environment against tourists posed by the local community.

#### **Tourist's safety and security from terrorist attack**

Even though Ethiopia is one of the sub-Saharan countries where terrorist attacks are frequent, the result of the observation shows that 69.8 % of the respondents strongly agree with the existence of a safe environment from terrorist attacks, while 26.9 % agree with this argument. These results account for a total of 96.7 % of the observations, while only 1.3 % of the respondents feel there is a threat posed to tourists from a terrorist attack. Responses from the interview also suggested that the relatively secure environment of the nation from most African countries in general and the destination specifically had made the spot to be a choice of most international tourists. Tourist's safety from the clan and tribal clashes among the host communities

Since NNP is found on the border of two regional states, SNNPR and Oromia regional states, the spot has frequently experienced clan and tribal clashes. To address this encroachment, NNP

management, in cooperation with the zonal and local officials, conducted a socio-economic survey of the people living in NNP in October 1993. According to the report of this team, the main cause of "encroachment" by the local Guji Oromo community upon the park was to escape the ethnic conflict that flared up between the Guji and peoples like Konso in the Gumayde and AbuloAlfecho areas to the south of the park. (Mateos and Bati 1993). These conflicts at the destination had made the region a sport where tourists thought a sense of insecurity.

Clan and tribal clashes determine the safety of a particular destination. From the above observations, 44.6 % of the observations show clan and tribal clashes among the host community haven't interrupted the activities of tourists. On the other side, 32.5 % of the respondents feel a sense of insecurity from the clan and tribal clashes among the host community. Responses from interviews also suggest that, even though such hostile environments have improved, clashes across the southwest boundary of the park where the adjacent Guji and Kore communities share the Kuaflo River in common; are still a security issue at the destination and hampering the development of sustainable tourism development. This implies that even though clan and tribal clashes had been frequent at the destination, improvements have been remarked. In order to make the destination free from such clashes it still needs effort from the concerned bodies.

### **Lack of environmental protection and conservation**

#### **Spoil nature and water and air pollution**

The frequency distribution of observation from tourists shows that the destination has an un-spoilt natural view which is a key factor in building a more sustainable tourism destination. 78.1 % of the observations show the destination has un-spoilt nature while only 19 % of the observations show the spot is not well protected for its natural beauty, which might, in the long run, results in loss to various floras and fauna of the destination. The statistical result of the observations shows a mode of 4, which describes most of the observations feeling there is un-spoilt nature.

#### **Deforestation of natural forest**

For the development of sustainable tourism at natural attractions, the conservation of natural beauty is a key factor. This requires conserving and protecting the natural forest. In line with protecting the natural forest, forestation is required to maintain the natural beauty of the destination for a longer period.

The frequency distribution of the observations shows that most of the respondents agree with the decline in the composition and coverage of the forest in Nechsar national park. This shows that deforestation is a major problem in the development of sustainable tourism. Previous studies in the area had also shown there is a significant loss of flora and fauna of the destination.

A study by Aramde Fetene, Kumelachew Yeshitela, Ruediger Prasse, and Thomas Hilker, 2013, on Changes in Habitat Type Distribution and Habitat Structure of NechSar National Park, Ethiopia has shown the result. The study results showed that the landscape in NSNP underwent major changes between 1985 and 2013, with the forest and grassland being the most threatened habitats with the mean patch size of the forest decreased from 46.33 ha in 1985 to 13.88 ha in 2013, and the mean patch size of grassland has decreased from 76.52 to 9.81 ha in the same periods, respectively.

The above data implies that the loss of flora and fauna of the destination is resulting decline in the natural forest coverage, which will, eventually, poses a challenge to the natural beauty of the

destination. So, unless effective forest management has been undertaken, deforestation hampers the successful development of sustainable tourism.

### **Lack of effective marketing and promotion as a challenge for sustainable tourism development**

Marketing strategy is essential in order to make destination products popular. It is deeply interlinked with product development and, by extension, a key component of destination development. Likewise, whereas product development relates to the physical generation of attractions, marketing enhances the processes of communicating the value and appeal to potential customers. Notably, this involves anticipating the needs and wants of target markets and ultimately satisfying them more effectively than competitors. Marketing comprises all the activities and processes used to bring buyers and sellers together, including creating, distributing, promoting, pricing, and innovating ideas to facilitate satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment. (UNECA, 2013)

### **Lack of effective marketing by travel and hospitality agencies**

To compete in today's tourism marketplace with its increasing global competition, organizations in both the public and private sectors must know who their customers are and what they want. They must also be able to communicate the availability of tourism products and services to potential customers and convince them to become actual customers. For communities that hope to compete for their share of visitors, the marketing of a distinctive culture, attractions, or outstanding amenities might be the central theme. For firms in the private sector, success may be dependent on effective marketing and selling activities of the airline, hotel chain, or Tour Company. In order to market a local touristic product, the private sector must become involved, mainly tour operators and wholesalers. When designing, offerings, and managing tourism, their interests, and operational processes must be taken into consideration. In view of sustainable tourism development, marketing and promotion should emphasize environmentally sound and socio-culturally equitable behavior on the part of the tourists and on the tourism industry in general. (Eschborn, 1999)

The mode and median results with a numeric value of 2 and 83.3 % of the observations suggest the absence of effective marketing by travel and hospitality agencies shows the marketing activities undertaken by the tour guides and travel agencies are not sufficient enough to attract potential visitors. This suggests that the image of NNP for its natural beauty and other numerous attributes to attract have not been promoted effectively. This implies that the management of the park and other tourism-related businesses lacks effective marketing strategies which can promote the feature of the destination.

### **Mobile marketing and Social Media as a marketing media**

Online and mobile marketing have become new trends in the tourism industry. With the rapid development of technology, online marketing has become a key media through which different destinations promote the unique feature of a particular destination.

From the total observation, 83.3 % of tourists responded online, and mobile marketing is not delivering the required marketing information for potential tourists, while only 8.2 % of observations feel online and mobile marketing are the key tools for promoting tourism products of NNP. Interview with tour guides also suggests that the involvement of mobile marketing in promoting the destinations is not well developed. This implies that mobile marketing, which is now extensively utilized as a marketing medium by various destination management, is not playing its role, and visitors are facing a challenge in getting information about that particular destination, NNP. This suggests that the absence of involving mobile as a marketing medium to deliver important features and attractions to be visited is a challenge for the destination towards the initiative of sustainable tourism development.

Social media as a marketing tool in dispersing information toward a large size of tourists in different parts of the globe is very high. This makes social Media's ideal marketing and promotion Media through which tourism-related business owners and other stakeholders attract their customers.

Observations regarding the use of social Media for the purpose of marketing tourism products have shown unsatisfactory results. A numeric mode and median result of 2 and frequency distribution of 86.2% of the observations suggesting social Media is ineffective in delivering the required information leads to a finding that social media are not utilized by the management of the park and other tourism-related business owners to attract potential visitors. This implies that poor efforts towards using social media for the purpose of conducting marketing activities and promoting tourism products are a challenge for sustainable tourism development in NNP.

### **Blogs, articles, brochures, and magazines as a marketing tool**

Blogs, articles, brochures and magazines, and other publishing by a destination help tourists to identify the tourism products of that destination. These types of promotion have a key role in promoting tourism products for local tourists.

The observation regarding promotion and marketing activities through Blogs, articles, brochures, and magazines show that the effort is not sufficient to attract tourists. From the total observations, 59.7 % of the respondents don't feel the marketing arrangement through these media is not well developed. During the interview, it had also been remarked that frequent publishing, which can provide more marketing information for visitors, is the major problem. Besides the effort to distribute these publishings has also been raised as a challenge. This implies that the absence of effective marketing through managing blogs, articles, brochures, and magazines is a challenge for sustainable tourism development in general and, specifically, by failing to attract more tourists to the destination.

### **Lack of support and effective policy measures**

The prevailing policy, rules, and regulatory framework can either be an obstacle or a catalyst for tourism development in any given destination. Such a framework could, for instance, promote or dampen both FDI and domestic investment, encourage or discourage innovation, relevant skills development, and research and development in the tourism industry. In this regard, the TTCI ranking of IGAD select member countries is quite low, which implies that the extant policies, rules,

and regulatory frameworks are comparatively unfavorable for enhancing the competitiveness of the region (World Bank 2012).

### **Government policies in promoting eco-friendly tourism in the region**

The Government of Ethiopia is currently implementing a number of strategic measures to further develop the country's tourism sector, including investment in infrastructure and capacity building on destination management and product development, through the recently established Tourism Transformation Council. UNWTO and Ethiopia have agreed to reinforce their collaboration in the areas of tourism statistics, sustainable tourism development, public-private partnerships, and marketing strategies, as defined in an agreement signed by Mr. Rifai and the Minister of Tourism and Culture of Ethiopia, Mr. Amin Abdulkadir (UNWTO,2014).

#### **Federal and regional culture and tourism offices in promoting business operation**

Support from the federal and regional government in various forms is required to fuel tourism-related business owners to undertake the necessary accommodation and other infrastructure facilities available for tourists. In the absence of these supportive approaches from the government, the initiative toward sustainable tourism development will be hampered. The observation regarding the support from the federal and regional government shows that the support is not satisfactory.76.9% of the observation shows the businesses are not satisfied with the support of the government, while only 21.8 % of the observations have shown there are promising and satisfactory measures to promote sustainable tourism development. This implies that most tourism-related business owners are suggesting the support offered by the government to promote their business is not as much as they had expected.

### **Government intervention in promoting a safe and secure environment for tourism**

The government would have to undertake the necessary measures to make destinations safe and secure. The observation shows that the effort from the government to promote a safe and secure environment at the destination is satisfactory. The numeric value of 5 from mode and median results and frequency distribution of 86.5 % shows most of these businesses are satisfied with the intervention of the government to make the destination safe and secure. In this regard, the effort of the government towards making the destination free from theft and the terrorist attack has been remarked. This implies that the government intervention towards making the destination safe and secure for tourists has contributed to the successful development of sustainable tourism.

### **CONCLUSION**

The following conclusion has been forwarded based on the major findings of this study. The development of sustainable tourism, which takes environmental conservation, protection of natural beauty, tourist satisfaction, and the benefits of the host community into consideration, is facing multi-dimensional challenges at NNP. The findings of the study suggested the challenges confronted by the underdevelopment of road and communication facilities and the absence of well-organized and standardized service providers such as shopping centers and accommodation centers are the main factors for the dissatisfaction of tourists. Interns, the dissatisfaction of tourists will hamper the successful development of sustainable tourism. On the other dimension, the lack of

effective marketing to promote the spot and the lack of effective protection for the natural beauty of the destination have been underlined as the challenges confronted in the development of sustainable tourism. Safety and security issues and lack of determination from the government in promoting businesses at the destination had also their own contribution to hampering the development of sustainable tourism. Finally, it has been concluded that NNP is facing multi-dimensional sustainability challenges, which have to be tackled with a collaborative effort of various stakeholders.

### **LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

Sustainable tourism development requires that both levels of governments, federal and regional, and other stakeholders take their responsibilities and collaborate on the initiative. An understanding of the attitudes and responses of the tourism enterprises, tourists, and local community towards challenges of sustainable tourism initiatives will assist in the successful implementation of policies designed to encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism development principles.

In order to tackle the challenges associated with infrastructure, different bodies would have to collaborate in order to improve the quality of the road, communication, shopping, and accommodation facilities of the destination. To combat the problem of the road within the park and adjacent to the park culture and tourism office, in collaboration with ERCA and other concerned bodies would have to take the lead for the repair and improvement of the road. Here involving the host communities would have twofold importance. First, the host community benefits from the temporary employment opportunity, and second, it helps the neighboring community to benefit from improved road facilities, and on the other side, the host community develops a sense of ownership.

Regarding accommodation quality problems, since the decline in the number of tourists is a worrying issue, a consensus would have to be reached between the culture and tourism office and the nearby accommodation centers to upgrade the service qualities to be delivered. For this initiative, a standard would have to be enacted which puts the minimum quality requirements in the services of these lodges, guest houses, and hotels. Besides the office of culture and tourism would have to grant different incentives to potential investors who are looking forward to establishing tourism-related businesses.

The observations show that the shopping facilities at the destinations fail to address the demand of most tourists, especially foreign tourists; to this end, it has been underlined that the shopping facilities lack the required capacity. Therefore the researcher recommends establishing shopping facilities in line with tourist accommodation centers. This will solve the problems associated with the existing shopping centers and helps tourists to access their demanded products.

Among safety and security challenges are the absence of adequate health and medical services, the absence of strong protection from beggars and hawkers, and clan and tribal clashes among the neighboring host communities. To address the challenge posed by the absence of adequate health and medical services, the researcher recommends that NNP would have to be the first mover in opening a nearly accessible health center. This results in two favorable outcomes. First, it answers the safety requirement of both local and foreign tourists, and next, as corporate responsibility, it will be a center where the local communities could benefit a lot from it.

The researcher recommends the safety concerns of tourists from Beggars and tribal clashes could be answered by securing the economic benefits of the host community and by sustaining equitable benefits to be enjoyed by the neighborhood communities. To do this, it's recommended that the park would have to involve both the Guji and Kore communities in the development of the park inequitable basis. It is also recommended that disrupting activities of begging at the destination could be tackled by creating awareness to what extent it will damage the image of the destination specifically and the nation in general.

The finding of the observation showed that animal migration out of the park and deforestation of the natural forest by the neighboring Guji and Kore communities had been identified as the major challenge for NNP. To tackle these challenges, the researcher recommends the collaborative activity of three stakeholders, EWCA, the management of the park, and the host community is necessary. It has been understood that the major reason for the migration of wildlife out of the park is overgrazing and the illegal entrance of the local community. In order to solve these problems, EWCA, in charge of managing these wildlifes, has to protect the conservation from illegal entrances of the host community and overgrazing by the pastoralists. Since the host community is the major responsible body for the challenge, active and more responsible involvement is required. To this effect, the management of the park has to create awareness in society regarding the problem of deforestation in the community in the long run.

Lacks of effective marketing and promotion campaigns have also been identified as a challenge for the destination. In this regard, the absence of well-organized marketing by travel and hospitality agencies, the failure to promote vacation packages through different Media by tour agencies, and the absence of mobile marketing, which is a new trend in the industry, have been underlined as the major challenges. Besides the application of Social Media, using blogs, articles, brochures, and magazines as a marketing tool has been identified as unsatisfactory and needs improvement. To this end, the researcher recommends the establishment of an independent department under the management of the park, which is responsible for undertaking promotional activities for the destination. Regarding the challenges confronted with the low level of involvement from social media and using blogs, articles, brochures, and magazines as a marketing tool, the researcher recommends the marketing department be established to take responsibility. Once these social Media and blogs have been configured, effective and frequently updated marketing campaigns have to be undertaken.

The other challenge affecting sustainable tourism development in NNP had been identified as a lack of support and effective policy measures. From this perspective, the findings suggested government policies in promoting eco-friendly tourism in the region and government intervention in promoting a safe and secure environment shows the satisfactory result. However, the observation shows that the lack of effective support from the government in promoting business operations has been identified as a challenge. To tackle these challenges, the federal and regional culture and tourism offices have to be supportive and should work together to promote business operations at the destination. To this end, the government should provide the destinations with infrastructure facilities and should work together with the businesses.

Finally, since successful sustainable tourism development is only achieved when the entire stakeholders are actively participating in the initiative, the researcher recommends that a national

consensus would have to be reached among the stakeholders, and the responsibilities of each stakeholder would have to be achieved.

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