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Historical Survey of Tourism Industry in Ethiopia and its Potential for Economic Development: The Case of Lake Tana Region

Binayew Tamrat Getahun

Lecturer, Adama Science and Technology University, Ethiopia

Yiheyis Aregu Yeshanew

Lecturer, Debre Markos University, Ethiopia

Ph.D. Student, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

Abstract:

By making a brief historical survey about development of tourism industry in the Lake Tana region, this paper investigates the region's tourist potential and contribution for economic development. Based on analysis of information from primary and secondary sources, the study concludes that the tourism industry in Lake Tana region is not effectively managed and as compared with its high tourism resource potential, the amount of revenue and employment opportunities created by the industry is insignificant.

Keywords: Tourism products, tourism potential, tourist attractions, transportation, tourism industry

1. Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the few less developed countries endowed with various manmade and natural heritages. Lake Tana region of northwest Ethiopia, which is blessed with various attractions-natural, cultural, historical and religious, has been recognized as one of the ideal places for tourism development. Some scholars tried to identify the tourism potentials of the area as well as its opportunities and challenges (Sefrin C.2012; Dharmendra Kumar Dube, 2012) Some others disclosed the major tourism products and major attractions of the lake and its monasteries (Gizachew Andargie, 2014; Abel Markos,2012:5-7). However, each of them has one shortcoming in common; they hang up on discussing and explaining current status of tourism in and around the lake. Moreover, some researches confined themselves on site level investigation; some others, by disregarding the local variations and factors, attempted to study the whole issue of tourism at a country level. The course of the development of tourism industry in Lake Tana region and the industry's contribution to the local economy is not well investigated. Therefore, the study aims at making a historical survey and analysis of development and current economic contribution of tourism development in the Lake Tana region of Ethiopia.

2. Historical and Socio-Cultural Background of Tourism in the Region

Lake Tana is situated at the Northwest of Ethiopia adjacent to Bahir Dar Town lays at coordinates of 11°36' N, 37° 23' E. Lake Tana, is the source of the Blue Nile (Amare and Kameswara,2011:57) Lake Tana, the largest fresh water lake of Ethiopia and 3rd largest in Africa, is located in a depression of the northwest plateau. It forms the main reservoir for the Blue Nile (Abbay) River. The lake's surface covers 1,418 square miles (3,673 square km). With a surrounding drainage of 4,500 square miles (11,650 square km); Lake Tana has maximum depth of 45 feet (14 meters) and its average depth is 9 meters. The lake's islands and terrestrial vicinities contain impressive attractions of natural and cultural value. The lake is the upstream source of the mighty Blue Nile River, which forms the marvelous Blue Nile river smoky fall known in Amharic as Tis Isat. The fall is at some 30kms downstream from the point where the Blue Nile leaves Lake Tana and is other major attraction (Sefrin, 2012:44-45; Culture, Tourism and Information Bureau-CTIO-,1991:3)

As it happened in other parts of the World in history, wars had been common in the Ethiopian empire including in vicinity of Lake Tana. However, a strange invader could not violet the serene peace of Lake Tana. The ancient and medieval Orthodox churches and monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana, some of which were established by dedicated monks who are known by the Ethiopian orthodox church as "seven stars"¹ have been served as a safe place to hide and protect valuable treasures and heritages. Some 20 monasteries of Lake Tana have since the medieval times been served as repositories of some of the country's greatest art treasure and religious relics. They host various treasures of historical, cultural and religious interest which include beautiful manuscripts mostly written on parchment, venerated objects of worship, crosses dated back to the dawn of Christianity, good collection of icons and mural

¹The monks who noted as seven stars for establishing the main monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana are; AbunBetre Maryam-founder of Zege Giyorgis; Abune Zeyohanis-founder of Kebran Gabriel; Abune Tadewos-founder of Debre Maryam; Abune Tomas-founder of Debre Gelila Iyesus; Abune Asay-founder of Mandaba; Abune Zekarias founder of Angara/Bergida Maryam church, and Abune Nove founder of Gorgora Maryam. (Sergew Hable Selasie,1989:198)

paintings as well as the coffins of several prominent medieval Ethiopian emperors such as Zera Yaacob(1434-1468) Susnyiou (1603-1632)and Fasilades (1632-1667) in Daga Estifanos; and that of Emperor Sertse Dingile, (r 1563-1597) in Rema Medihanealem (Yohanis Mekonen,1980E.C:7; CTIO, 1991:3-4) Moreover, during the 17th and 18th centuries Gondarine Empire of Ethiopia, the Lake Tana island monasteries and the shores around the lake became centers of cultural and political activities and many other monastic churches such as Narga Silasie of Deq island established and it hosts different parchment books, icon crosses beds of Iyasu II and his mother Etige Mintwab as well as their grave, now became source of tourist inspiration(, Sefrin, 2012: xxiii-xxv)

Bahir Dar town, which is located at the south eastern lakeshore of Lake Tana in the North West

Ethiopia, currently the capital city of one of the 9 regional states, Amhara region, is the other major tourist center and gate for tourists who embark on tourism activities in the northern tourist circuit also known as the “historic route”.² Moreover, Bahir Dar is an entry point to visit and explore the lake’s natural attractions and monasteries that houses various cultural and religious heritages (Sefrin, 2012:45-46). The Lake Environment and terrestrial wetland in the lake’s vicinity with more than 260bird species and more than 180woody plants species is recognized as one of the important hot tourist spot for its biodiversity. Tourists enjoy watching birds, hippopotamus and other natural attractions such as the natural forest of Zegé peninsula (Yabibal Mulualm, 2010:5; Sefrien, 2012:44). The town is 563 kms far from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and indeed OAU/Au/ Africa since 1963.It takes about 40 minutes Air flight to arrive at Bahir Dar from Addis Abeba.

The introduction and expansion of tourism in Lake Tana and its localities is attributed, among others, to improvement of transportation facilities like ports& jetties on different edges of Lake Tana.³During their occupation, the Italians began to install the basic modern infrastructural layouts, which are basic ingredients for tourism development. Zegé peninsula and other important islands dotted on and around the lake were linked by a motorboat transport with nearby towns of Bahir Dar, Delgi and Kunzela. And for the first time the Italians introduced and began to use modern boat transportation on Lake Tana. During that time, though the infrastructure constructed by the Italians was intended to facilitate conquest, local travelling and tourism benefited a lot. Moreover, for the first time Bahir Dar was also connected in road transport with the country’s capital city, Addis Abeba (Seleten Seyum, 1988, 98-99; Yetananesh, 2015:6)

The central government on its part deserved a sufficient attention for Bahir Dar’s infrastructure and port facilities. This was mainly because the government had intended to make Bahir Dar town an alternative capital in the country. On the other hand, established by the Italian and Ethiopian property owners a private enterprise, Navigatana, had a significant contribution in making tourism resources in the Lake Tana more accessible to tourists. Two developments in Bahir Dar had a substantial contribution for further growth of tourism in the Lake Tana area. On the one hand from the late 1940s onwards, the Italian built hotel, Ghion Hotel, began to serve as center of accommodation for tourists. On the other hand, in 1950s, the resumption of motor boat transportation service on the lake, and the connection in air and road transport of Bahir Dar with Addis Ababa and Gondar, ensured constant flow of passengers and visitors to the region and contributed for development tourism (Binayew, 2014:62; Seleten, 1988:98-99; Yetananesh, 2015:6-7)

From the late 1940s and early 1950s onwards cultural and natural attractions in and around Lake Tana became more accessible to visitors. Archival source from Lake Tana Transport Enterprise which was written in 1948 by one of the Bahir Dar Awraja Court Record Officers indicates that both pack animals such as mule and motor boats had been used to get access in to the peninsula of Zegé. However, for visiting monasteries in the island of the lake, using boat transportation was mandatory. As elucidated by the record officer, the voyage was conducted from Bahir Dar to Zegé port and then to other island monasteries like Daga Estifanos using a boat transport. Moreover, the officer prescribed tour operators and visitors to plan only for half or full day round tour to Bahir Dar town, where they could get accommodation services (Manuscript by Kebede Ayele, dated in Hidar1941) The various institutions and buildings such as the Palace of Emperor Haile Selasie also known as Bezawit Palace (established in 1960s) and the numerous heritages it houses; (Seleten Seyum, 1988) the traditional Basketry of the Woito people are worth visiting. (Binayew, 2014:7; Abel, 2012:6)

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Design and Instruments

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the potentials and contributions of tourism for economic development. A historical and descriptive survey research is used to investigate and understand status of the tourism for the development of the region’s local economy. Statistical data is collected from archival and secondary sources deposited in different institutions found in Addis Ababa and Bahirdar. In this case the archives of Lake Tana Transport enterprise, Amhara Economic and Finance Development and the Ethiopian National Archives and library Agency were visited and both primary and secondary sources consulted. Moreover, purposive sampling technique was used to collect the information from knowledgeable informants. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Firsthand information was gathered using inventory field survey and intensive reading in the archives of different institutions and through guided interview from knowledgeable informants. In the category of secondary sources, the works of different

²The name historic route is given to the road/route/ which linked group of tourist attractions located in Lake Tana and Bahir Dar, Gondar, Axum to Asmara from Addis Abeba. From tourism perspective the historic route is still exceptionally interesting because of its monuments and historic collections in the region it linked.(S. Angela &L. Mouglin, 1968:4; Mahlet ,2011;20)

³, It is obvious that without travel tourism is unthinkable and without transportation international tourism is not possible and hence transportation is an integral part of the tourism industry (Eden Sorupia, 2005:1767)

scholars and researchers that deal with different aspects of tourism were consulted. Data gathered was analyzed both qualitatively in a historical method and quantitatively using simple statistical tools like percentage, tabulation and Figures.

4. Results and Discussion

The Lake Tana region was recognized as tourist center in the late 1940s and 1950s. In the post Italian occupation period, the improvements in water transportation on Lake Tana had a significant contribution for the expansion of tourism and it enabled tourists to visit monasteries and to explore the biodiversity reach islands and peninsulas of the lake. In this regard the Navigatana Company played a pivotal role to improve water transportation in and around the lake. Nearly for two decades from 1957 to end of 1975, the *Navigatana* Company embarked on multifaceted marine activities to improve the transportation layouts in Lake Tana area. In addition to trying to renovating the transport layouts, the company became busy building new ports along the bays of the lake. In 1957, for instance, it was Navigatana that built the port of Zegé. The total expenditure for its construction was 28,445 Ethiopian birr (Binayew, 2014:58; Seleten Seyum, 1988). Moreover, in order to regulate transportation service and to control revenue from the service more systematically, the government enacted a Regulation on Lake Tana ports in 1958. In addition to giving operational definition to technical terms related to transportation services provided on the lake, on the same regulation cost of different services got fixed, and other related issues explained.

No	Type of Service and	Price in Eth. Birr
1	Hiring Port service	
	For a weight greater than five tones	0.10
2	Hiring warehouse	
	For a property to be lifted within 24 hours at once	0.10
	To accumulate articles to be exported within 24 hours	0.10
	For imported article to be stayed for 24 hours	0.30
	If not lifted up to seven days	0.60
3	Measuring /balancing/	
	A bag equivalent to 100 Kilogram	0.05
4	Loading and unloading	
	For a sack of items that weighs 100k.g	0.03
	For a box equivalent in height to 100 K.g	0.01
5	Embarkation Fee	
	To transport coffee from Zegé to Gorgora town the highest cost	1.70
	To transport other goods from Zegé to Gorgora	1.50
6	For Passengers	
	Transportation fee from Zegé to Daga	1.00
	Transportation fee from Zegé to Gorgora	1.00

Table 1: Cost of different Services by Lake Tana ports' Enterprise.

Source: the 1958 Regulation on Lake Tana ports' Enterprise, N.A.L.E, File No. h. t:17.13.

The introduction of modern tourism in Ethiopia dated to early 1960s. With the establishment of Ethiopian Tourist organization as special body to regulate tourism, Ethiopian modern tourism officially commenced in 1961. From the very beginning of its evolution the emerging tourism in Ethiopia and Bahir dar area had encountered many bottlenecks. To begin with facilities, in 1960s insufficient facilities, lack of modern accommodation and catering facilities, long, tiresome and difficult road transportation from Addis Ababa to Bahir dar, absence of appropriate hostelry at each stop over point in the journey, lack of awareness on the part of host community, almost total absence of heritage promotion services, improper up keep and preservation of moveable heritages as well as immovable heritages such as monuments at sites were the major obstacles that deterred tourism from growing in a desired way (S. Angela & L. Mougín, 1968:5-6).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was incompatible interest between different stake holders. In Bahir Dar and Lake Tana area, for instance, the issue of collecting entrance fees from tourists had become a cause of disagreement among at least three authorities; the Ethiopian orthodox church the Antiquities Administration Authority and the Lake Tana Ports' Enterprise. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church officials were claiming that almost all what has been visited in the Lake Tana region was belonged to the church and aspired to control the revenue obtained from the tourists that visit the church and the natural heritages in the churches yards. The Antiquities Administration Authority that was established by law in 1966), a government institution to protect and administer moveable heritages wanted everything related to tourism to run under its direction; and the Lake Tana Ports' Enterprise, though in support of the claims of the church officials, hated the interference from the antiquities office and was largely concerned with safety its passengers. With regard to tourist fee collection however each of the three institutions wanted the touring fees to be collected in the way of their choice. The Antiquities Authority wanted visitors to take a legal license before entering to the tourist sites and the authority ordered legal receipts to be taken from its office after paying five Ethiopian Birr (Binayew, 2014:54)

The Lake Tana Ports' Enterprise, a government institution put in charge of carrying out water transportation service on Lake Tana, on its part rejected the claim made by the Antiquities Authority and considered the Authority's intention to collect entrance fees not only

as an intervention in the ports' regular activities but also as a deliberate act intentionally done to discourage tourism and the church's revenue. The Ports enterprise rather wanted tourists to pay the required fee (five Birr) before embarking on a boat for travelling to the sites. (Manuscript in THTD by Antiquities Administration in Tiqmt 1965 E.C; Manuscript in THTD by Antiquities by Ato Niguse, Tahisas,1965) Eventually the issues of tourist fee ownership referred to the Imperial Government to get final resolution. And the central government responded in favor of the Antiquities Office. Nevertheless, it did not convince the clergy to change their position. However, because of the unrest and instability following the escalation unrest and political upheavals the late 1960s, the government's final decision did not get a hearing and its final judgment on the issue of the fee and orders were not implemented (Gasiorowski, 1981:2-3). The clergy courageously defended their position as well as their economic interest. The revenue from tourist fees therefore remained in the hands of church officials. On June 2, 1974, Ura Kidane Mehret Church Officials decided to retain the income from visitors and allocated the money to run the church administration. The Bahir Dar Awraja clergy and their head, Memher Gebre Selassie, supported their resolution and allowed the church to receive five Birr from individual visitors. After the establishment of local parishes, the churches of Zegé peninsula began to collect and use the income (Manuscript in THTD by Memhir Gebre Selasie, 1966 E.C)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s of lack of peace and stability in the country and in the Lake Tana region tourists desisted from visiting the country. As indicated in Figure 1 below, until mid-1960s even when tourist flow was constantly growing at national level, the number of visitors in the Lake Tana region was decreasing. In the immediate pre 1974 revolutionary and for the three or four post Revolution years the number of tourists that visited the Lake Tana region decreased drastically.

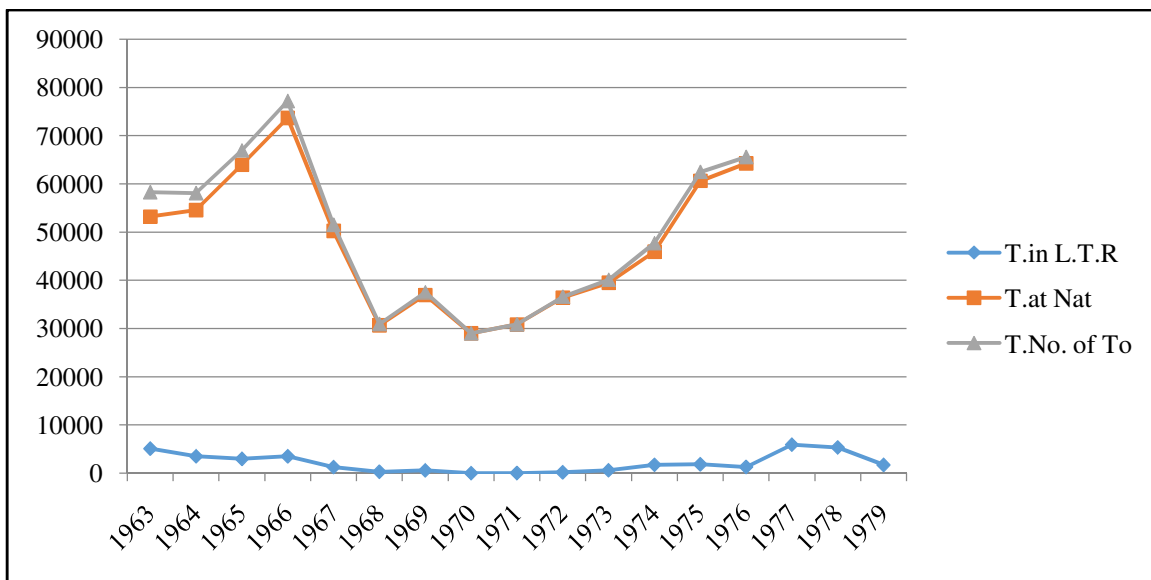


Figure 1: Number of Tourists who visited Lake Tana region and Ethiopia from 1963-1979 E.C
Source, Gondar Tourist Commission Office as cited in (Yohanis Mekonen, 1980E.C:7)

Thence forward, until the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974, the influx of international tourists to Ethiopia and the commensurate increase in revenue from tourism industry signaled encouraging trend of development. By 1974, when the Emperor Haile Selassie was removed and replaced by the military regime, Ethiopia's tourist sector was not in a worst situation. As depicted in the Figure above, relatively speaking in 1966 E.C /1974-1975/the number of tourists that visited the country and the Lake Tana region was very high until it falls sharply in the next two years. (Ayalew Sisay, 1995:35)

In the mid 1980s (see years 1977 and 1978 E.C in Figure 1 above) international tourist flow in to the Lake Tana region began to revive. However, due to the remoteness of the region the long road transport from Addis Ababa made travelling tiresome. And there was no proper accommodation service on the way. Thus, a tourist who wants to go to the region by bus preferred cancelling the program instead of suffering on the way with no proper security in that time. On the other hand, travelling by Air plane had its own problem related to bureaucratic. At that time a foreign tourist who intended to use the Air transport was obliged to pay all the necessary payment/for accommodation, travelling and entrance fee at the capital city for a specified number of days. The tourists' passport, which was then given from Public security office in Addis Ababa, serves only for one day. Moreover, tourists were sent to Bahir dar only with coupons and Air ticket. The costs of all tourist expenses like those expenses for hotel/accommodation, Transport and entrance fee, all was paid in the main office in Addis Ababa. For instance, if a tourist wants to extend the visiting time at the site or to purchase additional tourism related services, s/he could not do that for the cost already had paid and no other agency available to receive additional payment in the Lake Tana region tourist spots (Yohanis, 1980:15-17; WaleligneKebede, 1997E.C: 10_11)

The other problem was related to high cost of water transport. By 1980s a tourist boat for transportation service on Lake Tana was hired 250 Ethiopian Birr per hour. Thus, unless tourists hired a boat in group for visiting in the Lake Tana, the cost of transportation service and entrance fees was very expensive for a single tourist. (World Bank,2006:63) There was also serious shortage of trained man power in the sector. The National Tourist organization (NTO)for instance was not well organized to coordinate tourist activities.

Out of the five branch offices of the organization, two of its branches were located in Gondar and Bahir Dar. But the two offices had only 5 trained tour guides; two for Gondar branch and three of them were assigned in Bahir Dar. The NTO had also shortage of vehicles to provide tourists transportation service. On the first 10 years of the Derg period (1967-1977 E.C) international tourism especially leisure tourists in the Lake Tana region were almost nonexistent. Towards the end of the Derg Period the flow of tourists to Bahir Dar and to Lake Tana region became extremely low (Yohanis, 1980:14)

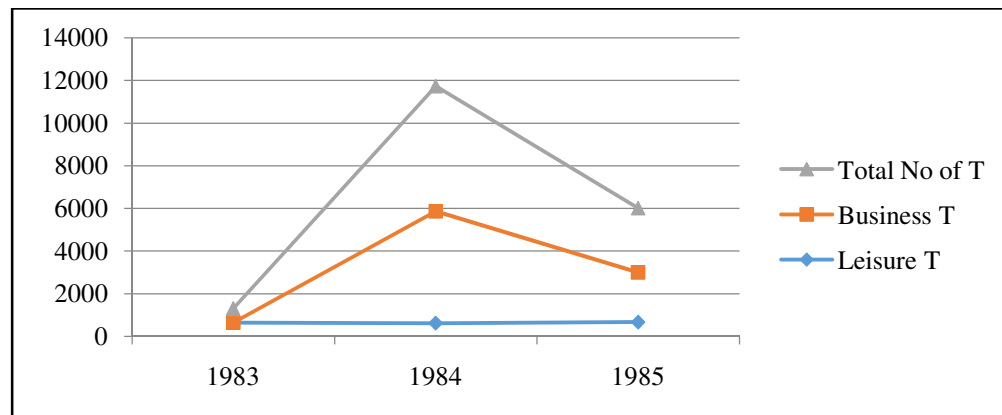


Figure 2: foreign tourists who visited Bahir Dar and the Lake Tana region in 1983/4⁴ to 1986/7
Source, Yohanis (1980:10)

Strained government relations with tourist generating countries and ideological alignment of the *Dergue* with the Eastern Block, as well as its command economic policy negatively affected tourism development by seriously obstructing investment on tourism and related sectors. President Mengistu's rhetoric about socialism frightened western investors; investment by its socialist allies was inappropriate and expensive (Marcus, 1994:203-204). The investment on hotel/hospitality was at the lowest level throughout the *Derg* period. Likewise, apart from periodic upgrades, there had been little investment in infrastructure (Waleligne Kebede, 1997E.C:11) Moreover, after 1988 the position of the socialist government endangered. On the one hand its military sponsor Russia cut of its military assistance and the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) and Tigrian Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) on the other hand succeed in overrunning Northern provinces. With the escalation of the civil war in the north, every effort on the part of *Dergue* government resorted to the warfront. Each economic sector including tourism was neglected (Marcus, 1994:212-213). The inbound tourism became extremely low (Tourism Policy, 2009:6). In years between 1989 and 1992, for example, 80,216 foreign tourists visited the country on average and only 23.2 million US\$ was obtained annually. Until 1991 regime change the tourism sector had been lingered behind other sectors (Waleligne Kebede, 1997E.C: 10_11). Therefore, in terms of tourism development both at national and Regional level, *Derg* period showed more of stagnations than keeping the pace with the 1960s good start ups by the Imperial regime. Altogether, apart from the random order and enactment of regulations, there was no tourism policy document or strategic guideline to tourism sector prior to 1991.

Following the regime change in 1991, Ethiopia transformed from cold war era Marxist-Leninist command economic system to liberal free market economy. As a result, investors began to embark on investment as Tour Agents, Tour operators, and began engagement in hotel and hospitality services. With steady improvement of the quality and quantity of tourist service providing institutions, the number of tourists and the commensurate income from the tourism sector showed remarkable growth right up until the Ethio-Eritrean war⁵ of 1998/1999 (Sefrien, 2012:54-55)

With the proceeding of economic liberalization in post Ethio- Eritrean war, the government resumed to play a leading role in the governance of tourism. And the private investment in hotel and accommodation were encouraged. The Private sector now began to take many of the operational and commercial roles. However, (as indicated in Figure 3 below) in 1990 to 1993, when political condition was unstable and when the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) was embarked on managing the country's affairs focusing on relieving the country from total disintegration (Adejumobi, 2007:136), it is reasonable to expect low tourist inflow to the region. And until the end of Ethio-Eritrean war, Tourism in the Lake Tana region remained almost static with some up and down fluctuations. Moreover, from 2000 up until 2004 insufficient resources was allocated to the sector from government and there was lack of political will from state leaders. Limited capacity of the Ethiopian Tourism commission coordinates stakeholder of the tourism sector (World Bank, 2006:18&59)

Natural catastrophes had their own negative impact on Ethiopian tourism. In 2002 and 2003, most parts of the country and the Amhara region were at the clench of severe drought. Due to the drought there occurred shortage of rains and the rivers and streams that feed Lake Tana drastically reduced and some were almost drying. As a result, boat transportation on the low water level of the lake became impossible and tourists could not find other means of access to visit the natural and cultural attraction in the islands and peninsulas of

⁴The No of visitors in 1984 increased because in that year many foreigners came to relieve Ethiopians dislocated from their home due to the famine of 1984.

⁵The war with Eritrea from 1998 to 2000, the 2005 upheaval that followed the election had a negative impact in diminishing the increasing tendency of international tourist arrival

Lake Tana. Moreover, with decreasing of the water reservoir in the lake and with the extreme decrease in the volume of the Blue Nile, that starts from Lake Tana, the Blue Nile Fall, *tis isat* that attract tourists in large numbers died out and lost its scenery importance until adequate rains came and water levels of the Lake Tana and Blue Nile rose up in 2004 and 2005(Ayalew Gebre etal, 2008:39-40) Consequently, given the presence of diversified tourist attractions and relative peace and stability, for one decade in the post *Derg* period tourist flow sector into the Lake Tana region and revenue from the sector was generally low.

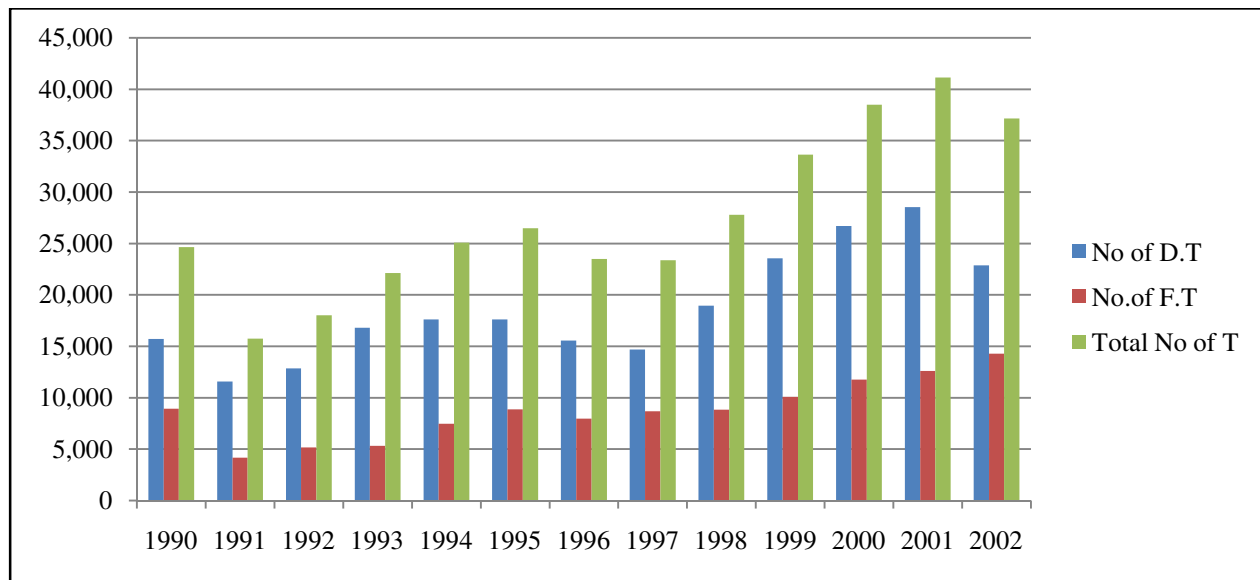


Figure 3: trend of tourist flow to Lake Tana region, 1990-2002

Source, BoCTPD, 20011 cited in (Abel, 2012:8)

After 2004/05 the total number of tourists that visited the Lake Tana region began to grow in a better rate than before. However, because fragmented activities in tourism by all players in the sector, at national and sub-national, public and private, donors, NGOs and other civil society actors such as the Orthodox Church, there was a critical demand to establish a coordinating central organ. Thus in 2005 the former Ethiopian Tourism Commission transformed to ministry level as Ministry of culture and Tourism to coordinate the public and private stake holders of the industry (World Bank, 2006:58-59). Likewise, regional state tourism bureaus were established⁶(Andargie, 2014:48; Tourism Development Policy, 2009:2; Zikre Hig, 2011:45-48). Charged with the mandate to coordinate efforts of the stake holders in the tourism industry; the Amhara National Regional State Culture, Tourism and Information Bureau tried to get the largest possible benefit from the sector (Tourism Development Policy, 2009:2-5)

5. Analysis of the Industry's Contribution for Economic Development

Tourism is a labor intensive service industry that serves as significant source of employment especially for less developed countries like Ethiopia. It invites large number of people with a wide range of jobs from the unskilled to the highly specialized personnel to be tied up to the sector. As such tourism is source of revenue for government and local communities (Ajala O.A, 2008:75; Kumar Dube, 201:96). The contribution of tourism to the local economy can be viewed in the form of three effects; balance of payment effects; employment effect and income effect. The latter two are often measured in terms of their economic multiplier effects, which results from the process by which tourist spending stimulates further spending and increased economic activity. As such economic multiplier effects of tourism can be categorized in to three as direct effect, indirect effect and induced effect (World Bank, 2006:24)

Tourism in the Lake Tana Region contributes for the local economy by providing job opportunities and generating revenues for the region through tourist services providing institutions like hotel and restaurants, resorts, catering, accommodation and transportation services. As one of the region's the prime attraction and main gate to the historic circuit, Bahir dar city, which administratively includes other tourist spots such as Zege peninsula and Tis Abay, has a high direct employment potential. Here direct employment refers to jobs directly related to provision of services to tourists which include among others, such service like accommodation, tour guiding, souvenir shopping and boat transport/riding service on Lake Tana (Ajala O.A, 2008:77) These institutions whose service directly provided to tourists or tourist suppliers and their employees are directly affected by tourism. In this regard, in 2008 alone there was about 1900 direct employment in hotel, souvenir, and tour guiding and boat transportation. Out of that number 1584 direct employment opportunities were created by the hotel industry. And the remaining 316 jobs were created in the areas of tour guiding, souvenir shopping, special transport service such as boat transport (Ajala, 2008:75; Behailu and Kurma, 2015:54)

⁶The government institution that has been charged with leading and coordinating tourism activities in the country made frequent organizational adjustments; as culture, tourism and information Bureau in 2004, later as Tourism commission and as Culture and Tourism Bureau by proclamation Number 471/2005) and as Culture Tourism and Parks Development Bureau (by Proclamation. No 167/2001 in January 2008.)

In Bahir Dar, Zegé, Tis Abay Town and other tourist spots, the local people were also organized themselves in associations of tour guides (Ayalew, 2008:10-11). Both private boat owners and the Lake Tana Transport enterprise render tourists boat transport services. In 2007, tour guiding service yielded 75 direct job opportunities in Bahir Dar. Out of 182 tourist guides operating in Bahir Dar in 2007, 75 % of them were receiving between 200 -500 Ethiopian Birr per weekend each individual tour guide of the rest (25%) were earning between 500-1000 birr⁷per week (ibid, 78-82). In the same year, there was 58 boat captaining direct employment jobs in Lake Tana area (*yetananesh*, 2015:20). And out 58 boat captains, 13.3% of them were earning 2000 Ethiopian birr and more per week;57.4% of them got between 1000-2000 Eth. birr per week and 29.3% received between 500 -1000 Birr per week(Ajala,2008:82) Those captains who obtain 2000 and above per week are private boat owners. The payment per trip, however, varies depending on the distance they covered to and from their harbors.⁸

Apart from their expenditure for transportation, accommodation and catering, Tourists wanted to buy national souvenirs and various kinds of local art and craft products. Therefore, tourism serves as a stimulus for the growth and refinement of indigenous industries. In this regard, tourist expenditure in handicrafts of Ethiopia and Lake Tana area was very high and of the total expenditure on crafts 55% of the income was estimated to be on pro poor; i.e. income that go to the hands/pockets of crafts men and women, its traders or raw material supporters(UNEP,2013:274). The local community in Bahir Dar and its vicinity eked out their living in as souvenirs craft producers and traders. In this regard, local and unique basketry or *agelgil*, which is produced by occupational minorities, Neged Woito Women, cultural cloth and leather products, are sold as souvenir to foreign diplomatic residents and tourists. And the number of direct employment opportunity generated in souvenir shopping in 2007 was 184(Ayalew, 2008; Ajala, 2008: 78)

As a base of boat expedition in to Lake Tana and a hub of international and domestic tourists who travels to the northern historic circuit, in 2000s Bahir Dar town has rapidly developed as well-known tourist destination. Relatively speaking, the quality of infrastructure and hotel service in the town is very good (Kumer Dube, 2012:96). With the establishment of standardized hotels and a standard stadium, Bahir Dar National Stadium, the town is becoming an important center for conference tourism. In 2010 alone Bahir Dar town got total revenue of 72,237,846 Ethiopian birr from 48,786tourists (BoCTPD, information bulletin 2011:26-27)

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is obvious that tourism is already having a substantial impact on the local and national economy of the Lake Tana region as a foreign exchange earner and employment generator. However, the tourism industry in the region has been managed as usual in a traditional way. There is no effective coordination among stake holders and there is very limited effort to diversify tourist products in the region. Tourism in the Lake Tana region is still depended mainly on historical and cultural and religious heritages which as compared with nature based attractions do not give opportunity to tourists' opportunity to stay and enjoy in the sites for longer time. On the other hand, tourism in the region is more of mass tourism which may have uncontrolled negative impact on the environment. Therefore, based on the findings it is recommended to the concerned body to make effort ways of diversifying tourist attractions and to make effort to plan and implement tourism strategies by involving the local community representatives as well as public, civil and other institutions such as the Ethiopian Orthodox church that have stake in tourism development. It is recommended that Development of better facilities and infrastructure should be extended to other major tourist spots like to Zege peninsula, Tis Abay town and other wetlands around to develop nature based tourism. While planning the interest of tourists with multitudes of background and age groups should be taken in to consideration. In this case some major attractions should be fitted with facilities suitable with interest various age groups like for example promotion of water sports in lake Tanalike rowing, yachting, pulling, water safari, jet boots and even traditional Papyrus boat expedition for the youth. In addition to religious tourism which has usually practiced by the local people, domestic tourism on based on ecology and natural resources should be encouraged.

7. Abbreviations

OAU, Organization of African unity;Au- African Union; CTIO- Culture Tourism and Information office; E.C.- Ethiopian Calendar; N ALE- National Archives and Library Agency of Ethiopia; TChart HTD- Tana Haiq Transport Derjet; ACTI-Amhara National Regional State Culture, Tourism and Information Bureau; NTO-National Tourist Organization; UNEP- United Nations Environmental Program,

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⁷ N.B. 1 US dollar in 2007 was exchanged with 9.20 Birr

⁸In 2014 the regular transportation fee from Bahir Dar to Gorgora i. e135.34 kms for a domestic passenger was 45 Ethiopian birrfor a single trip and 90 for round trip. For a foreigner it costs 278 for a single trip or 556 Ethiopian birr for round trip. To travel From Bahir Dar to Ura port, which is the nearest, 11.75 kms, a domestic pay only 10 Ethiopian birr for a single trip and a foreigner 58 Ethiopian Birr (*yetananesh*, 2015:8).

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