



# The Role of Government in Enhancing Tourism Development in Ethiopia: A case of South Nation Nationalities and People Regional State.

Lemma Mesele Woyimo and Shuo She

1 /Ph.D. student/, College of Public Administration (CPA), HuaZhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China

2 / Associate professor/ College of Public Administration (CPA), HuaZhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China

**Abstract:** Tourism development is an activity that involves a large number and diversity of actors, who together provide the overall tourism product and also a combination of different services and goods. In most developing countries, including Ethiopia, Government is the key actor in the political process of tourism development and has major involvement in tourism development compared to other stakeholders. As a tourism stakeholder, the public sector is responsible for determining policies, plans, and maintaining infrastructures as well as setting and enforcing standards relating to facilities, services, and other areas. This paper is aimed to identify the existing government efforts on tourism development activity in Ethiopia. In order to attempt a better understanding of the phenomenon, the current research has applied a descriptive research design. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. The primary data for the study has been gathered using household surveys, key informant interviews, and focused group discussions. The findings revealed that the regional and local Governments' role in enhancing the realization of tourism development in the South Nation Nationalities and People Regional State is minimal. It was found that the Government does not inclusively carry out and facilitate comprehensive tourism development activities to realize tourism development in the regional state.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, Government, Tourism development, Tourist route,

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Most analysts agree that tourism is one of the largest and most significant economic sectors globally (Van Beugen, 2005; Tepelus, 2000). It has been growing consistently over the last decades and has experienced 3.5% of growth in the 2019 global economy that contributed 8.9 trillion USD (10.3% of Global GDP), supported 330 million jobs (providing one in every ten jobs around the world), and 948 billion USD (4.3% of total capital investment) (WTTC, 2020).

Tourism development is an activity that involves a large number and diversity of actors, who together provide the overall tourism product and also a combination of different services and goods (Heath & Wall, 1992). The overall tourist experience at a particular destination is usually the result of different goods, services, and facilities provided by these actors, which include private organizations, public actors, and also the general public. According to Baker and Cameron (2008), success in tourism

activity depends on developing a strategic plan for the development of the destination and forming collaboration among sectorial actors/ stakeholders/ in the tourist destination. The involvement of the most relevant stakeholders in one region is critical for the success of tourism development efforts (Rui, 2011). Any organizations or business entities that are identified as tourism sector stockholders are playing essential roles in developing tourism destinations, exceptionally tourist-friendly destinations. Any level of Government in tourist destinations is responsible for executing policies and plans as well as setting and applying standards relating to tourist accommodations, amenities, and other related deliveries. According to Inskeep (1991), the Government in tourist destinations has focused on numerous functions such as arranging tourism development activities, implementing rules and regulations on tourism, maintaining infrastructures that are related to travel & tourism, advancing the appeal of public tourism and conducting potential tourist-based marketing activity to promote tourism areas and to increase inflows of visitors. Meanwhile, Gunn (1994) states that the function of the public sector in the tourism industry was



focused on coordination, planning, legislation and regulation activities in order to increase visitor satisfaction, promote economic and commercial success, and safeguard & preserving existing tourism resources and maintain societal integration. The general public is more concerned with formulating tourism development policy, making short & long-term development plans, imposing laws related to tourism locations, and handling the construction of tourism-related infrastructure in addition to public tourism enchantment. The government sector additionally offers area (through infrastructural and top-notch structural elements, protection, preserved values and expenses, accessibility), sports (via factors related to subculture and records, special events) and products (through physical trends, offerings, freedom of choice), which are designed for public use. Examples of public-owned areas, sports, and products are country-wide parks, kingdom parks, the natural world, activity regions, invents, monuments, zoos, and sports stadiums (Gunn, 1994). Waligo, Clark & Hawkins (2013) argued that the cooperation of relevant stakeholders' collaboration have extensive roles in tourism improvement without delay or circuitously and has considerable influences on the improvement things to do in distinct ways, together with coverage regulation, infrastructure provision, provision of finance, conducting research, and different administrative affects to sustained sectorial improvement in and round the specific destination. In the past, governments have been unwilling to invest in tourism development, but in this modern age, the situation has changed (World Bank, 2017). The Government can have a high impact on tourism activity because of its responsibilities to the community, initiating the action of activities for tourism development by allocating funds and setting quality standards to sustain tourism growth related to tourist satisfaction (Petrevska, 2012). The Government is also in charge of the destination's infrastructure, which is essential for the inclusive experience that the tourist is seeking (Timur & Getz 2008). Along with being in charge of the community infrastructure, the Government is also responsible for the community's environment and the safety of its citizens (Antonsen, 2010).

The modern conception of tourism in Ethiopia was recognized as a vehicle for economic progress and prosperity in the 1960s with the formation of a responsible government body for the tourism sector and understanding of tourism resources to transform them into tourism products and implementation of tourism activity (Tesfaye, 2015). In an attempt to strengthen the contribution of the tourism industry's role, the country formulated the first tourism development road map known as the "National Tourism Master Plan" in 1965. As part of the overall economic policy framework, the Ethiopian Government has taken several reform measures that have a direct impact on the tourism sector, such as a public enterprises reform, lifting of restrictions on the private sector, downward revision of taxes and tariffs, enhancement of investments code, etc. (Tada, 2001). Owing to regime change and introducing economic reforms in the 1990s, tourism has steadily recovered and shown slow growth. In line with the country's economic reforms, the Government has formed new structures and institutional setups intending to transform the tourism industry in the country.

However, the country is not profiting enough from the tourism sector and has not used much of its prospects to enhance the development of its local and regional economy and lagged behind other African neighboring nations in overall travel and tourism sector performances due to different development impeding factors (Carmen, 2018 and Lemma & Shuo, 2021).

## 2 METHODS

The nature and degree of government intervention and involvement in tourism activity have become essential concerns in travel and tourism industry development in most developing countries for sustainable and successful tourism activity. The purpose of this study was to investigate what government strategies and experiences had in practice to boost the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental benefits of tourism for the regional economy and take into account its importance in the southern tourist route of Ethiopia. In order to attempt better understanding of the issue, the current research has applied a descriptive research design. In addition, the researcher also used a cross-sectional research approach which allowed the researcher to collect data in one time period. Therefore, to deal with the study, the researcher used quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to select a total of 499 study participants. The primary data for the study has been gathered using household surveys, key informant interviews, and focused group discussions from tourism sector officials; tourism experts in the Regional Bureau of Culture and Tourism and the same line from the study Zones, Woredas, and City administration offices at study sites, hotel and resort managers; small and medium enterprises; souvenir shoppers and local tour guide associations. Furthermore, the researcher investigated secondary data sources like government publications and earlier research. Moreover, analysis of quantitative data was conducted by employing both descriptive statistics, while qualitative data obtained through key informant interviews and focused group discussion were analyzed using qualitative analysis through transcription and reduction to units of relevant meanings and summarization to triangulate the quantitative results.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to attain relevant conclusions regarding existing government efforts in tourism development processes to enhance the tourism industry's contribution to the local economy of the South Nation Nationalities and the People Regional State of Ethiopia, four indicating elements regarding government experiences on tourism development aspects in study areas were explored.

### 3.1 GOVERNMENT EFFORTS IN INSTITUTIONAL SETUPS

The institutionalization of tourism advancement in open education and its interest within the industry has been



illustrated ordinarily through formal services and various offices (Nunkoo, 2015). Since tourism is inalienably trans-sectorial, which requires distinctive organizational setups to oversee tourism improvement exercises, concurring with the current Ethiopian state structure (FDRE, 1995), the regional state must make organizational structures required for the tourism development in estimated regions. Appropriately, an organizational structure satisfied with tourism improvement has been set up at all levels (Regional, Zonal, City, and Woreda /District Administration) of the region (Debub Negarit Gazeta, 2015). As outlined in Table 1.1, the study participants overview uncovered that 294(78.6%) of the respondents reflected that the existing organization setups are not well organized and compelling sufficient to maintain tourism development within the Southern tourist route, whereas 28(7.5%) of them felt positive with respect to its organization and adequacy. On the subject of item 2, as summarized within the table, 293(78.4%) of overview members oppose this idea with the articulation that the regional Government incredibly controls and arranges the general improvement exercises to fortify the development of tourism,' whereas 16(4.3%) of them concurred with the thought. The results suggest that most of the respondents accepted that the regional Government does not viably direct and facilitate the general advancement exercises to realize tourism development.

Tourism is additionally created and overseen by distinctive administrative systems to realize the industry's objective. In arrange to explore the nearness and viability of tourism

development-related controls, the current study tried to identify the experiences of the study participants. As shown in Table 1.1, a significant portion, 274(73.3%), have disagreed. In contrast, 46 (12.3%) were reflected positively. Thus, the result implies that the vast majority of respondents felt the region has not a practical and robust regulatory framework to develop tourism in each destination responsibly and sustainably. Concurring to the interviews with culture and tourism office heads and senior subject matter specialists in Konso, Arbaminch, Hawassa, and regional Bureaus, due to the need for a coordinated approach, prepared human assets, budgetary and fabric back, legitimate utilization and usage of existing tourism approaches, methodologies, and other tourism development related control have been missing within the region. Indeed, even though it has been famous that the regional Government has put in teach and organizations that cater tourism-related things to upgrade tourism advancement, it is characterized by powerless execution capacity and constrained budgetary sources. Still, there are variations in organizational capacity between the regional Bureau, Zones, and Woredas. Too, the human, fabric, and money-related assets designated for visitor destinations are profoundly restricted, and posture issues for the mindful organizations to embrace the fundamental improvement controls. The key informants to have made the taking after comments in connection to government endeavors to improve tourism segment development, the regional and Zonal high-level government authorities have constrained understanding around the part of tourism in financial improvement perspectives of the locale and its general possibilities on regional and nearby economies, and they allow small consideration to the division, counting finical and other asset allocation.:

TABLE 1.1. THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS ON INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

Institutional Setup	SDA		DA		N		A		SA	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Institutional arrangement related to tourism development activity was well structured and effective enough to uphold tourism growth in the southern nation nationalities and people regional state	83	22.2	211	56.4	52	13.9	18	4.8	10	2.7
The regional Government extensively regulates and coordinates the overall development activities to strengthen the growth of tourism	68	18.2	225	60.2	65	17.4	10	2.7	6	1.6
The region has an effective and strong regulatory framework to develop tourism in each destination	59	15.8	215	57.5	54	14.4	29	7.8	17	4.5

Note: SDA= Strongly disagree, DA= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree

### 3.2 TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY

From a tourism development perspective, the Government is in charge of surrounding approaches & procedures, creating & presenting plans, and guaranteeing the operation and arrangement of tourism and neighborliness administrations

(Ruhanen, 2013). Marketing strategy formulation in the tourism sector is crucial and makes a huge difference to the businesses involved. Within the current competitive tourism market, area-specific promoting technique is a fundamental component to address showcasing plans to empower visitors getting countries



to realize the overarching advertise benefits and guarantee the development of universal and household visitor requests.

With respect to the regional government endeavors in terms of promoting techniques for accomplishing tourism commitment victory with having a feasible, exceedingly positive effect on the southern tourist route neighborhood economy and its socio-cultural and natural scene, the study result suggested that the regional Government did not create and overhaul a coordinates regional brand-focused marketing strategy procedure to permit the locale to extend universal traveler entries with a reaction rate of 314(84%) which illustrated in Table 1.2. With regard to a promoting technique that fragmented potential advertising, which altogether contributes to the development of tourism,

281(75.1%) of respondents' reactions oppose this idea with the moment explanation recorded within the table. The study discoveries infer that right now, the route does not have a potential-based integrated marketing strategy that's sectioned to the potential advertising, which essentially contributes to the development of tourism. In expansion, the subjective information deduces that the region has no operational promoting technique and regional brand that causes destitute destination limited-time activities and joint marketing with other partners, lack of advanced promotion, and constrained mechanical framework and aptitudes. Moreover, the meet member famous that the current advertising approach does not guarantee the supportability of common and social assets and the administration of conventional structures.

TABLE 1.2 GOVERNMENTS' ROLE RELATED TO TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY

Tourism Marketing Strategy	SDA		DA		N		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
The region has developed and updated regional tourism brands, which international tourists have well known	90	24.1	224	59.9	36	9.6	14	3.7	10	2.7
Currently, the region has a good marketing strategy that is segmented to potential markets, which significantly contributes to the growth of tourism	57	15.2	224	59.9	57	15.2	28	7.5	8	2.1

3.3 GOVERNMENT ROLE IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The execution roles of Government in the performing of tourism improvement were too distinguished by Inskoop (1991) as which open segment is assumed to a few capacities such as growing and making strides the range of tourism items and encounters, organizing advancements exercises, executing arrangement relatives and legislations on tourism, progressing the major infrastructures & other facilities, organizing sector-players, and

venturing up goal advancement & promoting. Concerning the above-stated issue, the survey results indicated in Table 1.3 reveal that infrastructures (roads, pathways, boat jetties, etc.) did not get the attention of the regional Government in ensuring the region creates the best possible international and domestic tourist's demand. As responses to the first items indicated, the regional government effort in maintaining infrastructure is minimal. To this end, 276(73.8%) of respondents indicated that the regional Government does not always strive to maintain tourism infrastructures in destinations. (See Table 1.3)

TABLE 1.3 GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE & TOURISM FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure & facility development	SDA		DA		N		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
The regional Government always strives to maintain tourism infrastructures & tourist facilities in destination	70	18.7	206	55.1	74	19.8	17	4.5	7	1.9

3.4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

To remain ahead of tourism improvement, a community association is basic, and it encourages the victory of tourism

improvement. Community involvement is utilized to name an approach to tourism improvement in which the wants and sights of communities at traveler goals are coordinated in the arranging and advancement process. In order to distinguish the degree of



community engagement clearly concerning the government part, the survey data analysis concerned the involvement in tourism governance issues, participation in management activities, taking part in monitoring and evaluation, and benefits regarding policy and strategy directions. As shown in Table 1.4, regarding item 1, 295(78.9%) of respondents have supposed that most of the community members at their destination were not get the opportunity to be engaged in identifying tourism governance-related issues. Concerning the extent of community participation within the administrative action of tourist destinations and attraction sites, 270(72.2%) of the respondents replayed that the Government does not allow them to involve in the issue which pertains to tourism governance that may hamper tourism development activity. Similarly, the majority, 323(86.4%) of the survey respondents, believed that local communities had not been allowed to take part in monitoring and evaluation of tourism development activities. Regarding community benefit from their involvement in tourism activity at tourist sites, a substantial number of respondents, 286(76.5%), have reported that most of the community members are benefited very low from tourism

activities regarding their participation in tourism activity in respect of the current tourism policies and strategies. In general, the survey finding reveals that the involvement of local communities in each tourist site was low to enhance tourism growth.

Moreover, the subjective data extricated from the FGD on the issue of a community association in tourism development activities in regions has steady with household survey results which have revealed that local communities did not get an opportunity to be looked into all tourism advancement activities, and nearby government bodies did not bolster the inclusion of the community in tourism arranging and management activities. This can be because of the nonattendance of community interest designs but for national parks. Moreover, they felt that they did not have sufficient aptitudes to urge include in the tourism improvement prepare in their resident. Due to these actualities, community individuals are not well organized to come up together within the entirety of tourism arranging and management process except with respect to national parks.

TABLE 1.4. GOVERNMENT ROLE IN ALLOWING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Local Community Participation	SDA		DA		N		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Most of the community members at their destination are involved in the identification of tourism governance issues	55	14.7	240	64.2	56	15.0	14	3.7	9	2.4
The local community is involved in each of the management activities in tourist sites of their residence	46	12.3	224	59.9	68	18.2	26	7.0	10	2.7
Local communities take part in monitoring and evaluation of tourism development activities	101	27.0	222	59.4	28	7.5	13	3.5	10	2.7
Most of the community members are more benefited from tourism activities regarding the current tourism policies and strategies	59	15.8	227	60.7	61	16.3	17	4.5	10	2.7

### 4 CONCLUSION

Many studies on tourism industry development argue that governments at all levels have expected to shoulder more obligation and involvement in planning, executing, and managing overall tourism activity that may harness sustainable development. Furthermore, it has been suggested that governments should have inclined to embrace a more interventionist approach to enhance tourism development in terms of ensuring the operation and arrangement of tourism development components, including tourism development policy relatives, marketing strategy, infrastructure, and tourist-

related facilities, and community engagement in tourist destinations. However, this article presents that the regional and local government efforts in enhancing the realization of tourism development in the southern tourist route of Ethiopia are minimal. It was found that the Government does not make viably direct and facilitate comprehensive tourism development activities to realize sustainability of tourism growth. Moreover, it implies that the regional Government does not have an integrated tourism marketing strategy that's segmented to the potential market, which essentially contributes to the development of tourism, and was not allowing most of the community members at their destination to be involved in tourism governance issues though chance has been given to a few.



## REFERENCES

- [1]Antonsen, I.M.N. (2010). The stakeholders' involvement in the process of building and maintaining a destination brand. EBAPE, Rio de Janeiro, BR
- [2]Carmen Altes (2018). Value Chain Analysis Ethiopia Tourism. CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tourism VCA Ethiopia Final Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbi.eu/sites/default/files/vca-study-tourism-ethiopia.pdf>
- [3]Gunn, C.A (1994). Tourism planning. (3rd Ed). London: Taylor & Francis.
- [4]Heath, E., and Wall, G. (1992). Marketing Tourism Destination. A strategic planning approach. New York: John Wiley and Sons,
- [5]Inskip, E. (1991). Tourism planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- [6]Nunkoo, R. (2015). Tourism development and trust in local Government. *Tourism management*, (46), 623-634.
- [7]Rui, B. and Elisabeth K. (2011). Collaborative destination Marketing. International Conference on Tourism and Management Studies.
- [8]Tada, P.R. (2001). Economic Reforms and Structural Changes in Ethiopia since 1992, an Inquiry. International Conference on Africa Development archives, 18.
- [9]Tefaye Zeleke (2015). Interaction, Institutions, and Impacts of tourism on Bishftu-Modjo-Hawassa Route, central Ethiopia. A Dissertation Submitted in the fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology. Addis Ababa University.
- [10] Timur, S., & Getz, D. (2008). A network perspective on managing stakeholders for sustainable urban tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 20(4).
- [11] Ruhane, L. (2013). 'Local Government: facilitator or inhibitor of sustainable tourism development?' *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp.80-98.
- [12] World Bank (2017). Tourism for development. 2017 World Bank Group, Washington, DC 20433
- [13] Debub Negarit Gazeta (2015). A proclamation To Provide for Redefinition of the Power and Duties of Executive Organs of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional state. No.161, Hawassa, Ethiopia.
- [14] Federal democratic of Ethiopia, FDRE (1995). Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- [15] World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2020). The travel and tourism Economic Impact 2019. London.
- [16] Waligo, V. M., Clarke, J., & Hawkins, R. (2013). Implementing sustainable tourism: A multi-stakeholder involvement management framework. *Tourism Management*, 36, 342-353.
- [17] Baker, M. J. & Cameron, E. (2008). Critical Success Factors in Destination Marketing. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 8 (2), 79-97.
- [18] Tepelus, C.M. (2000). Tracking travel tourism, towards sustainability reporting four operators. The international Institute for industrial Environmental economics (IIIEE) report 16, Lund University, Sweden.
- [19] Van Beugen, M.C.A. (2005). Sustainability of Dutch Tour Operator. Thesis, The Department of Leisure Sciences, Faculty of social & behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University, The Netherlands.