



**Ethiopian ecotourism potentials/nature-based tourism**  
**Potenciales del ecoturismo en Etiopía/turismo basado en la naturaleza**

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**Abstract**

One of the economic sectors that generates significant cash and ensures the maintenance of protected areas is ecotourism, which is environmentally conscious travel to natural places. Ecotourism is a potential example of an off-farm activity that generates revenue in a different way and benefits the community while also conserving natural resources. By providing local people with cash while protected areas fulfil their conservation aims, ecotourism may serve as a bridge between them and nearby communities. Therefore, the main objective of this paper was to review the Ecotourism potentials of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's tourist sector is now expanding quickly in pace with the growth of tourism globally. There is definitely a lot of room for growth in Ethiopia's tourist sector. There are a lot of wonderful natural, historical, and cultural tourism areas in Ethiopia, One of the most significant tourist locations on earth. Ethiopia occasionally saw an increase in foreign visitors. The environmental impacts of tourism are often minimal, and it also aids in the management and conservation of natural, historical, and cultural resources. The establishment and management of protected areas, the re-greening of landscapes, the conservation and restoration of historical and cultural resources, and the promotion of environmental awareness among the local people (both residents and visitors) can all be done with a certain amount of the revenue made from tourism.

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**Resumen**

Uno de los sectores económicos que genera importantes ingresos y garantiza el mantenimiento de áreas protegidas es el ecoturismo, que consiste en viajes ambientalmente conscientes a lugares naturales. El ecoturismo es un ejemplo potencial de una actividad no agrícola que genera ingresos de una manera diferente y beneficia a la comunidad, al mismo tiempo que conserva los recursos naturales. Al proporcionar dinero en efectivo a la población local, mientras las áreas protegidas cumplen sus objetivos de conservación, el ecoturismo puede servir como puente entre ellos y las comunidades cercanas. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de este artículo fue revisar el potencial del ecoturismo de Etiopía. El sector turístico de Etiopía se está expandiendo rápidamente al ritmo del crecimiento del turismo a nivel mundial. Definitivamente hay mucho margen de crecimiento en el sector turístico de Etiopía. Hay muchas áreas maravillosas de turismo natural, histórico y cultural en Etiopía, uno de los lugares turísticos más importantes del mundo. Ocasionalmente, Etiopía experimentó un aumento de visitantes extranjeros. Los impactos ambientales del turismo suelen ser mínimos y también ayuda en la gestión y conservación de los recursos naturales, históricos y culturales. El establecimiento y gestión de áreas protegidas, el reverdecimiento de paisajes, la conservación, restauración de recursos históricos, culturales y la promoción de la conciencia ambiental entre la población local (tanto residentes como visitantes) se pueden lograr con una cierta cantidad de los ingresos obtenidos del turismo.

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## Introduction

The act of traveling to and staying temporarily in places other than one's usual residence for enjoyment, business, or other purposes is referred to as tourism. It has the greatest potential to generate a large number of new employment globally and industry that is growing in fastest level. It might serve as a source of income in rural area because it doesn't require years of work training<sup>1</sup>. Tourism is one of the most important industries which provide goods and services for long term economic development of a country<sup>2</sup>. It is acknowledged on a global scale as one of the most important and rapidly expanding economic sectors, and it is considered an alternative to other established economic sectors like industrialization for promoting economic development and reducing poverty<sup>3</sup>. After fuels, chemicals, and automotive items, tourism is the world's fourth-largest export sector<sup>4</sup>. There is no single definition for ecotourism. It is deliberate travel to unspoiled locations that preserves the ecosystem and upholds the welfare of the community<sup>5</sup>. A tourist strategy that prioritizes environmental and cultural conservation is known as ecotourism<sup>6-9</sup>. Additionally, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) defined ecotourism in (1996) as a responsible travel and visitation to natural areas to experience and admire nature (as well as any related cultural features, both ancient and contemporary) that encourages conservation and invariably also has a minimal visitor impact and offers beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local peoples, enhancing their regional sustainability<sup>10</sup>.

Given that ecotourism is a relatively new idea, it can be challenging to explain why it has become so popular in Ethiopia<sup>11</sup>. Ethiopia, however, is rich in its diverse people, remarkable geological formations, beautiful landscapes, and the cradle of humanity, which was formed by a combination of complex, ancient natural and man-made factors. This intriguing

region, with its rich biodiversity, intriguing historical events, and friendly cultures, attracts tourists and historical research expeditions<sup>12,13</sup>. Even while it contributes in economic growth, tourism has recently had a negative influence on the environment as a result of mass tourism, which damages tourist attractions area, as a consequence, during the 1990s, tourists' awareness for environmental concerns has increased, ecotourism has gained notoriety, and tourism is increasingly known as a sector of the economy that requires the development of sustainability<sup>14</sup>.

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that is primarily motivated by a region's natural history, including indigenous cultures. In the spirit of engagement, appreciation, and sensitivity, eco-tourists visit relatively unexplored areas. With the intention of actively participating in the preservation of the site and the economic security of the local community, eco-tourists use animals and natural resources carefully and contribute to the location they are visiting through work or financial means<sup>15</sup>. Ecotourism is a sustainable activity that allows visitors to take in more of nature's beauty and biodiversity while leave a smaller carbon footprint<sup>16</sup>. Because of this, ecotourism may be a useful tool for enhancing locally based environmental and cultural conservation and enhancing local communities. Along with promoting tranquil natural areas as a tourism product, ecotourism is also backed by a crucial component of nature education to increase consumer happiness.

Ecotourism is a unique idea that has piqued the interest of many individuals from a wide range of backgrounds. It is considered a catch-all terms with varying implications depending on who you ask. Some phrases used to describe environmentally sound tourism include alternative tourism, nature tourism, appropriate tourism, responsible tourism, ethical tourism, green tourism, and sustainable tourism. Despite

their continued disagreements regarding the precise nature of ecotourism, it seems that the majority of them concur that it must be a force for protecting natural resources. Also recommended additional sources of income and off-farm activities to lessen the load on Ethiopia's vulnerable rural areas<sup>13</sup>. Ecotourism is a potential example of a non-agricultural alternative source of income that benefits the community and promotes the conservation of natural resources. Further showed that evaluating ecotourism relies on locally acquired amenities that can be managed locally and does not demand for new infrastructure<sup>17</sup>. An effort was made to promote ecotourism to rural areas as part of natural resource management by creating a variety of livelihoods for local people in Ethiopia in an effort to make tourism more sustainably managed<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, natural resources can offer economic potential through ecotourism, in addition to other uses<sup>19</sup>. By generating income for local populations while achieving conservation objectives for protected areas, ecotourism might foster a connection between local communities and protected areas. Eco-tourism can be crucial in areas where the ecosystem is vulnerable and conventional methods of natural resource management may be impractical<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine the potential of ecotourism in Ethiopia.

## Development

*Concepts and definitions of tourism.* Since 1950, tourism has gained recognition on a global scale. Now a today the largest and fastest growing industry, creating a considerable number of new employment, especially in rural areas<sup>1</sup>. Over 650 million foreign tourists arrive every year, and by 2020, that number is projected to rise to over 1,600 million due to the rising and quick expansion of tourism<sup>21</sup>. Researchers have characterized tourism in a variety of ways, but no one suitable definition has received in a wide-

spread support<sup>13</sup>. The term "tourism" is challenging to define due to the multiplicity of players and economic sectors. However, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has provided the following definitions of tourism as a recommendation:

*Visitor.* Any individual who goes to a different nation or community from their home for any reason other than to engage in business that is compensated by the destination nation, both tourists and excursionists fall under this definition of visitor.

*Tourist.* A temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours in the country or community visited, the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: (1) leisure, recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, or sport; or (2) business, family, mission, or meeting.

*Tourism.* In terms of balance-of-trade accounting, travel and transportation are considered as commercial services that are exported from the economy that receives tourist to the sector that generates tourism. Tourism is both the act of traveling and the business of providing associated goods, services, and amenities<sup>20</sup>. In its broadest sense, tourism encompasses the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors. Travel by any means of transportation is necessary for tourist, but not all travel is tourist<sup>18</sup>. Because of the economic disruption caused by the drought and political unrest, the tourism sector in East Africa, especially Ethiopia, is still in its infancy<sup>15</sup>. This potential economic sector in Ethiopia has not received the attention it deserves until very recently. Ethiopia's tourism sector is now expanding quickly, in accordance with the expansion of international travel<sup>22,23</sup>.

Recognizing the importance of tourism in reducing poverty and fostering long-term development, Ethiopia is actively promoting the industry's growth, however more has to be done, particularly in the area of ecotourism<sup>24</sup>. Prior to being renamed the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) in 2005, the Ethiopian Tourism Commission (ETC), which was established

in 1995, controlled tourism in the country. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is now in charge of developing national policies and programs for the growth and promotion of domestic and international tourism. The responsibility for creating national policies and plans for the expansion and promotion of both domestic and foreign tourism currently rests with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO) and the Tourism Transformation Council (TTC) were established in order to restructure the sector and to coordinate the activities of various industry participants. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Development Project (ESTDP), founded in 2009, organizes tourism programs and supports ministry of culture and tourism (MoCT) capacity building and institutional strengthening. The three primary national tourism policies are. The Cultural Policy (1995), the Wildlife Development, Conservation, and Utilization Policy and Strategy (2004), and the Tourism Development Policy (2009).

*Emergences and development of ecotourism.* Despite making a considerable contribution to economic growth and to the conservation of natural resources, tourism has had a detrimental effect on popular tourist destinations. The notion of nature-based tourism or ecotourism was not addressed, especially in recent decades, due to tour operators' concentration on financial gain to attract more visitors, which led to significant detrimental repercussions on tourist destinations. In the tourist arrival areas, adverse effects included deteriorated vegetation, wildlife losses, contamination of the atmosphere and water, among other things. As a result, ecotourism became more prominent in the 1990s and environmental concerns in tourist sites were given more attention<sup>25</sup>. Eco-tourism, also known as nature-based tourism, is used to conserve and improve natural resources as well as to promote economic growth, decrease poverty, and diversify livelihoods. Many of the world's poor communities, who depend directly on industries like ag-

riculture, forestry, and fisheries that largely contribute to land degradation, directly depend on the environment for their livelihoods. Eco-tourism acts as a potent motivator for conserving natural resources in order to address these environmental problems. The main goal of ecotourism is to protect natural resources while generating income by highlighting the unique characteristics of the local flora and fauna<sup>26</sup>. Since ecotourism is a relatively new phenomena and is not yet widely adopted in Ethiopia, it is challenging to pinpoint its greatest accomplishment. A number of potential ecotourism site developers have received consulting services from the Ethiopian government, which has also acknowledged the growth and promotion of ecotourism. Although authorities and developers have not fully embraced the notion of ecotourism, certain investors have started to take part in its growth in various parts of Ethiopia. Private eco-tourism businesses in Ethiopia include the Bishangari Eco-Lodge in the Oromia Region and Village Ethiopia (Bilen) in the Afar Region<sup>27</sup>. Land Use Policy Oromia has lately worked to establish alternative income-generating techniques, such as ecotourism, to reduce the pressure on the natural resources of land by performing a pre-feasibility study of likely places on the potentials of ecotourism<sup>27</sup>. Like in Oromia, private investors in Tigray who work to enhance ecotourism, particularly around the Hashenge watershed, stand to gain both personally and economically from their efforts.

*Ecotourism and protected areas in Ethiopia.* In Ethiopia, since the 1960s, more than 65 protected areas (PA) have been established in representative ecosystems<sup>28</sup> to conserve the wildlife resources and more importantly to promote the ecotourism sector. However, despite having been recognized globally as exceptional biodiversity hotspots, losses of key biodiversity are increasing and the status of mammalian endemic species is worsening<sup>29</sup>. The primary reason for this is that PA could not generate conservation

funding from the ecotourism sector. In the last decade, an increasing number of annual visitors was recorded in the country. However, ecotourism has not been advocated to achieve both conservation and local economic development goals<sup>30,31</sup>. The current goal of PA is the conservation of large-scale natural ecosystems and biodiversity. However, according to<sup>32</sup>, these PA are becoming more and more susceptible to various hazards. PA are important places for a developing tourism sector like ecotourism since it uses different ecosystems, landscapes, and biodiversity as its key attractions. If properly planned and managed, ecotourism may significantly benefit PA while also reducing its negative effects on the ecosystem<sup>33</sup>. According to<sup>34</sup>, the link between people and PA is essential for the long-term conservation of the natural resources in and surrounding PA.

However, difficulties are usually present in the partnership. The residents do not appreciate PA. They viewed protected areas as impeding their ability to utilize their land. People that reside close to PA have different subsistence needs than those of the park. The procedure for involving locals in decision-making and park management tasks was not given adequate consideration. On the other hand, the conservationist reprimanded the people for posing a major threat to the protection of the PA. Only two of Ethiopia's nine PA (National Parks), the Semein Mountains National Park and Awash National Park, are gazetted. Other protected places, such as game reserves, sanctuaries, priority areas for national forests, etc., are not gazetted. The primary goals of these PA are to protect the country's natural assets, however recently the majority of Ethiopia's PA have been severely degraded as a result of the inability to develop alternatives like ecotourism, which are off-farm activities<sup>27</sup>. Thus, in the Adaba Dodola forest priority area in the Bale zone of Oromia regional state, specific treatments incorporating ecotourism activities have been investigated in order to minimize the challenges that expose natural resources to deterioration

in PA.

*Potential ecotourism resources in Ethiopia.* Ethiopia is endowed with unique cultural heritages and attractive natural resources that attract tourists<sup>35</sup>. The churches, castles, oblique, archaeological sites, caves are some of cultural resources of Ethiopia. In addition to these, Ethiopia has an exciting feature such as high mountains, rivers, and lakes in Ethiopia. Another aspect that draws travellers to Ethiopia is its diverse climate and characteristic of Ethiopia's attractions is the hosting of the Africa Organization Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Abeba<sup>35</sup>. The country has a number of parks and reserves that are open to the public for viewing and exploring in order to preserve its flora and fauna. Ecotourism is a tourism strategy that emphasizes the preservation of the natural and cultural environments. The country's unique archaeology, history, and culture are highlighted, along with opportunities for tourists and other visitors to explore many parts of the country's ecosystem and natural resources. The Eastern Afromontane and the horn of Africa hotspots are two of the eight (8) African and thirty-four (34) global biodiversity hotspots that are hosted by Ethiopia, one of the top twenty-five (25) biodiversity-rich nations in the world<sup>17</sup>. It consists of a highland mass surrounded by dry lowlands and is home to a variety of animals and their habitats, which range in altitude from 110 meters below sea level in the Afar valley to more than 4500 meters in Ras Deshen<sup>36</sup>. The majority of highlands have many indigenous plants and animals, but have less species diversity than the lowlands. The occurrence of various animals and a significant number of endemic species is mostly due to the country's steep topography, diverse habitat, and varied climatic conditions<sup>18</sup>.

*Ethiopia's natural, historical, and cultural tourist attractions.* Tourism depends on its attractions to bring in visitors, create excursion circuits, and support their own economies. Outstanding historical, cultural, and natural tourist attractions can be found across Ethio-

pia. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people from both domestic and other countries visit these places. Ethiopia is actually one of the most popular tourist destination in the globe. The Semien and Bale Mountains, Blue Nile River and fall, Lake Tana and its islands, Rift Valley Lakes, as well as Axum, Gondar, and Lalibela for their historical and cultural significance, are among of the top tourist attractions area. These places are well-known for their visual beauty and/or rich biodiversity. According to the International Travelers' Exit Survey performed by the MoCT in (2013)<sup>23</sup>, tourists from abroad were attracted to Ethiopia by its historical, cultural, and natural and wildlife features. The top tourist attractions in Ethiopia are listed below.

*Natural attractions.* i) Geological locations, especially those in the Rift Valley areas, ii) Afar Depression or the Danakil Depression (with its colourful salt and sulfur lakes), iii) Volcanically active areas such as Ertale (lava lake), iv) Hot springs, geysers, and fumaroles (destinations for healthcare travel), v) Significant elevation variation starting at 126 meters below sea level at the Danakil, vi) Depression/Afar Depression (the lowest point in Ethiopia) to 4,620 masl. at Mt. Ras Dashen (which is the highest peak in Ethiopia and the fourth highest in Africa), vii) Gorgeous landscape, including the Semien and Bale Mountains, the Blue Nile Falls, Lake Tana and its islands, and the lakes in the Rift Valley, viii) The greatest canyon in Africa is the Blue Nile Gorge, also known as Abay Gorge in Ethiopia, ix) Favourable weather and environment (the lowlands experience scorching, dry conditions while the highlands are cold and moderate), rich biodiversity and endemism.

*Terrestrial ecosystems:* i) Semi-deserts and deserts, woodlands, shrub lands, grasslands, marshes, and forests (particularly coffee forests in the country's south-west and south-east). ii) Afroalpine areas such as the Semien, Choke and Bale Mountains are some the tourist destination location. iii) The lakes and islands of Tana, Ziway, Langano, Shalla, and Abaya.

*Inland water bodies:* i) Rivers with their waterfalls, such as the Awash River and Awash Falls and the Blue Nile River and Blue Nile Falls. ii) The lakes such as Tana, Ziway, Langano, Abijata, Shalla, Hawassa, Abaya and Chamo. iii) Hydroelectric power dams like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile River (under construction), Tekezze, and Koka Dams.

*Endemic species:* i) *Bidens mesfinii*, *Acanthus senii*, *Eragrostis tef*, *Echinops kebericho*, *Boswellia pirottae*, and *Erythrina brucei* are examples of endemic plants. ii) Endemic species like Bale Monkey, Mountain Nyala, Swayne's Hartebeest, Red Fox/Ethiopian Wolf, and Walia Ibex.

*Protected areas:* i) Menagesha-Suba in the western Shewa, Wof Washa in the northern Shewa, Adaba-Dodola in the Bale, and Bonga in the Kaffa are some examples of National Forest Priority Areas (NFPAs). ii) Parks like the Awash National Park, Bale Mountains Park, Semien Mountains Park, Nechsar Park, Gambella Park, Omo Park, and Mago Park are examples of national parks. iii) Wildlife protection like the Senkelle Swayne's Hartebeest Sanctuary and the Babile Elephant Sanctuary. iv) Wildlife reserves such as Allideghi (Afar) and Chew Bahir southern part of the country. v) Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) such as Guassa (Menz/North Shewa) which found in northern part.

Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs), include Murle southern part (former Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples) and Dabus Valley (Oromia).

*Historical and cultural attractions:* i) Archaeological locations like Hadar (Afar). ii) The skeleton of Lucy, a female *Australopithecus afarensis* who lived 3.2 million years ago. iii) The historical battlefield sites of Mekdela (Wollo) and Adwa (Tigray), as well as the ancient architectural remains of Axum, Gondar, and Lalibela. iv) Cultural variety (there are over 80 particular ethnic groups, each with their own languages, traditions, and ways of life). v) Historical settlements like Gafat, which produced Sebastopol, are

close to Debre Tabor. vi) Historical churches and monasteries, including Debre Damo and those on the islands of Lake Tana and Lake Ziway, as well as St. Mary of Zion in Axum, where the original Ark of the Covenant once resided. vii) Ancient mosques including Al Nejashi in Tigray, Jemma Nigus in Wollo, and Sof Umar in Bale. viii) Museums, such as National Herbarium and Zoological Natural History Museum at Addis Ababa University and the National Museum of Ethiopia. ix) The most significant historical landmark in Oromia regional state is Aba Jifar Palace.

*Internationally designated sites (by UNESCO):* i) Nine (9) of which are World Heritage Sites: one (1) natural; eight (8) cultural. ii) National Park of the Semien Mountains 1978. iii) Lalibela's Rock-Hewn Churches, 1978. iv) Gondar's Fasil Ghebbi 1979. v) Axum 1980. vi) Lower Valley of the Awash 1980. vii) Lower Omo Valley 1980 and Tiya 1980. viii) The Fortified Historic Town of Harar Jugol 2006. ix) Cultural Landscape of Konso 2011.

*Biosphere reserves (BRs).* i) Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve (2010), located in Oromia Regional State's southwest. ii) Kaffa Biosphere Reserve (2010), which is situated in the southwest region of Ethiopian. iii) Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve (2012), located in the southwest region of Ethiopian. iv) Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve (2015) which is found in Amahara regional state.

*Special events:* i) Ethiopian Epiphany and Meskel Festival are two religious symbols that have been added to UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013. ii) In addition to major cities, Addis Abeba also holds international conventions in the Millennium Hall, African Union Conference Center, and United Nations Conference Center. iii) Athletic competitions, especially ones like the Great Ethiopian Run. iv) The Gada system, which represents the ancient Oromo peoples' social, political, and cultural landscape, was added to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in October 2016.

*The role of tourism in the economy of Ethiopia.* The number of visitors can offer a general idea of Ethiopia's economic and social state, as well as the country's tourism industry's contributions to the country's coffers. The impact of tourism can also be quantified by looking at how much visitors spend, how that affects GDP, or how much money they make overall from services and other activities related to the tourism industry. According to data that has been preserved, Ethiopia received 19,836 international visitors in 1963, generating eleven (11) million Ethiopian Birr in income<sup>36,37</sup>. But recently, both the number of visitors and the potential revenue have grown significantly. For instance, in 2005, Ethiopia received about 227,398 tourists, and these visitors generated roughly 1,202,368.339 Ethiopian Birr<sup>34</sup>. From 138,856 foreign visitors arriving in Ethiopia in 1997 to 596,341 in 2012, this number climbed steadily. International visitor arrivals increased by 13.92 % from 2011 to 2012 in that year.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian government has recognized the importance of tourism as a socioeconomic development tool for the nation's efforts to reduce poverty. From 63,833 arrivals in the early 1970's to over 933,000 in 2017 (<https://knoema.com/atlas/Ethiopia/topics/Tourism/Inbound-Tourism-Indicators/Arrivals>), there has been a sharp increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting the country<sup>38</sup>. In Ethiopia, the travel and tourism sector produced 466,000 direct jobs in 2016 or 1.9 % of all occupations. In 2016, the aggregate contribution to employment amounted to 1,236,000 jobs, or 5.1 % of all employment. In 2016, the travel and tourism sector contributed 2.2 and 5.7 % of the country's GDP, respectively<sup>38</sup>.

The Americas, Europe, and Africa make up the most of Ethiopia's foreign traveller destinations. Between 2009 and 2012, the top 10 markets for international travellers were the USA (which ranked first), the UK, Germany, Kenya, China, India, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and France<sup>15</sup>. According to<sup>16</sup> report, in 2012,

32.1 % of visitors from outside the country said they were there for pleasure, vacation, and recreation, 31.51 % for work and school, and 22.83 % for transit, VFRs, and other reasons. Of the other 13.56 percent of visitors, the reason for their trip was unknown. Arrivals at Bole International Airport were the primary mode of transportation (86 %), with border crossings serving as the primary point of land entry for the remaining 14 %.

## **Conclusion**

Tourism includes the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment. In Ethiopia as well as the rest of the world, the tourism industry is quickly becoming one of the most significant economic sectors. Undoubtedly, Ethiopia's tourist business has a lot of potential for growth. There are numerous outstanding natural, historical, and cultural tourism sites in Ethiopia. Tourism is today one of the most rapidly expanding industries in the world despite its consequences on economic, cultural, social, and environmental factors. Biosphere reserves endeavour to improve relationship between humans and the environment. The importance of biosphere reserves in the struggle against the present climate change and global warming cannot be understated. When it comes to conserving the ecology and biodiversity, each biosphere reserve has special benefits of its own. Ethiopia has plenty of historical, man-made, and natural tourist attractions such bridges, caves, dams, waterfalls, lakes, rivers and other natural features like flora, wildlife, and landscapes. Eco-tourists are particularly interested in Ethiopia's lakes' various features for the following reasons: These include various ethnic groups, creatures, plants, and birds, as well as historic monasteries and churches and unusual geological characteristics. Ethiopia's tourist sector is still in its infancy,

along with that of the rest of East Africa, partly due to the instability in politics and economic disruption brought on by the drought. This is an important implication that developing countries need to develop ecotourism sector to upsurge the sustainable self-financing of protected area. Increasing the awareness of local communities towards ecotourism or nature tourism is very important and more emphasis should be given on the local community members not directly involved in tourism would also be a valuable source to determine whether the supposedly little negative impact on the communities.

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## **Conflicts of interest**

No potential conflict of interest.

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## **Ethical considerations**

I declared that this manuscript is not submitted for possible publication to other journal publishers. In addition to this, I confirmed that this result is free of research misconduct.



## Research limitations

Ethiopia has significant ecotourism potential due to its diverse ecosystems, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage. However, there are several limitations and challenges that need to be considered when assessing its ecotourism prospects. Here are some of the limitations of Ethiopian ecotourism potentials: Infrastructure, Accessibility, Conservation Efforts, Limited Awareness and Marketing, Socioeconomic Factors. *Political stability*. Political stability is crucial for the growth of any tourism industry, including ecotourism. Unrest or political instability can deter potential visitors and negatively impact the overall tourism sector, including ecotourism.

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