Challenges for Developing Tourism in Awi Zone

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Abstract

Tourism is an engine of economic development of many advanced as well as developing countries of the world. Ethiopian government encourages development of the sector to make it one of priority sectors of the economy. The main purpose of this study is to assess challenges of developing tourism in Awi zone, in main corridors of tourism practice. Local communities engaged in tourism related sectors and concerned government offices were the main target population for data collection. Descriptive research design which employed qualitative approaches was mostly used and explanatory approach of study has been employed to show influence of some factors on growth of tourism in the study area. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select sample of the study. Both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. Survey questionnaire, interview and secondary sources were important tools of gathering data. The main challenges for developing tourism in Awi Zone are related with lack of quality accommodation, inaccessibility and insufficiency of infrastructure, problems of institutional frameworks, lack of budget, low of government support etc. The researchers recommend that both government and private sectors must do in collaboration to tackle the abovementioned challenges for developing tourism in the study area.

Key words: Tourism, Challenges, Attractions, Awi zone, Development

Introduction

Tourism represents, in the context of contemporary civilization, through its content and its role, a distinct area of activity, and a segment of essential importance in the economic and social life of the majority of countries in the world (Bunghetz, 2016). It is also honored as a vital part of the global economy (United States Institute of Peace, 2009). The potential economic benefits of tourism on regions or countries have been a recent topic in tourism research literature. Particularly, less developed countries are focusing on tourism as avenue of development (Andrades and Dimanche, 2017). Tourism is one of the major service giving industry in the world, tourism industry is mainly focusing on comforting guests how traveled away from their living for suture on paid business (Asena TF et al, 2016).

Agew Awi is one of 10 Zones in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. It is named for the Awi sub-group of the Agew people, majority of who live in this Zone (http://www.birdlife.org). The area is one of the remarkable potential for tourism development parts in Amhara region. It is naturally endowed with numerous biodiversity of vegetation and wildlife and it has also untapped cultural resources. In this study, the main potential areas of tourism development have been identified in the six woredas. The tourist attractions are distributed in all of the woredas of the zone. The zone is home for panoramic waterfalls, huge caves, creator lakes, hot springs and natural protected areas (Sewnet, 2015). The culture of Awi people is also unique and attractive for visitors. The horse riding games, unique dancing styles of local communities in Jawi and Zigem woredas and ancient monasteries in different parts of the zone are among the identified areas of cultural tourist attractions.

Due to its proximity to Bahir Dar, the tourist attractions of Awi zone, predominated natural attractions can be complementary with tourist attractions in and around Bahir Dar town. Since, Ethiopia’s cultural heritage resources are more concentrated in the northern areas of the country, in sites such as Lalibela, Aksum, Addis Ababa and its environs, Bahir Dar, Gondar, and Harar (World Bank, 2012). The attractions of the study area are also good potentials for rural tourism development which can support the traditional agricultural economic activities. However, despite huge potential of the zone for tourism practice (Sewnet, 2015), finger counted number of foreign tourists visit its tourist attractions. This has also affected the diversification program of tourist attractions in Amhara region.

Researchers particularly who are engaged in biodiversity have conducted researches with regard to the biodiversity potential of the zone; Opportunities and challenges of community based tourism has been conducted in Banja and Guagusa woredas; the tourist attractions of the zone have also been described by the AwiDA. Amhara culture, Tourism and Parks Bureau has also tried to promote some of the zone’s attractions. However, the abovementioned studies did not create clear picture about the circumstances of tourism development in Awi zone, particularly, about the challenges of developing tourism in Awi zone. Therefore, to enhance and diversify tourism industry in Awi, the challenges of practicing tourism.
should be assessed. This study tried to disclose the bottlenecks of developing tourism industry in Awerta.

**Literature Review**

Tourism has become a fiercely competitive industry and it is a vital part of the global economy (United States Institute of Peace, 2009). For tourism destinations all over the world, competitive advantage is no longer natural, but increasingly man-made – driven by science, technology, information and innovation. As such, it is not simply the stock of natural resources of the sub-region that will determine its competitiveness in tourism, but rather how these resources are managed and to what extent they are complemented with man-made innovations (UNECA, 2011).

A number of factors limit the effectiveness of the tourism industry to play a more meaningful role in the national economies. There is an argument that the benefits accruing from tourism development have, not been translated to meaningful benefits for the majority of developing countries, especially the LDCs (UNECA, 2011). The main challenges to tourism development vary by country, but similar patterns of constraints and challenges occur (World Bank, 2014). Some of the major factors that are common to most destinations are related with government know-how and leadership, infrastructure, exchange rate fluctuation and price of oil, stiff competition: security and health: weak tourism associations, entry barriers.

The criteria used for competitiveness indicate that for developing countries like Ethiopia, attaining maximum requirement of tourist has made them lag behind in tourism industry. As the competitiveness index implies that the main challenges for developed countries are price competitiveness and in many developed countries the issue of safety and security other problems. For developing countries the main challenges are product development which mainly includes attraction conservation, preservation and development, ICT readiness and infrastructure. In 2015, 141 countries’ performance was evaluated. Ethiopia has got low rank in ICT readiness (137th) and in infrastructure (124th). On the other hand, it has relatively good position in natural and cultural resources and safety and security and ranked as 73th and 80th respectively. This indicates the country has potential to develop tourism industry as part of significant economic sector. Prioritization of travel and tourism in Ethiopia also indicates that he sector could not get the real attention of the government which ranks it 118th out of 141 countries in the world which is different by far from Spain and Kenya and that were ranked as 23rd and 6th respectively.

Economically, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. The country’s tourism sector is growing from a low base of a minimal 1 percent share of Africa’s tourism market, but it continues to underperform despite its potential. The Ethiopian Government has set ambitious growth targets for the tourism sector for 2015 that will shape sector strategies in the coming years (MoCT, 2012).

The tourism industry in Ethiopia could be described as one that is still in its infancy though the industry is now an important source of employment accounting for 3.8% of total employment in 2013 representing 985,500 jobs directly and this is forecast to grow by 0.1% in 2014 to 986,000 (3.6% of total employment (Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, 2015). In spite of the significant improvement in the performance of the sector since 2000, Ethiopia’s tourism is still woefully underdeveloped when compared with many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kidanemariam, 2015). The country receives under million international tourists which are less than tourists received by its neighboring country Kenya. However, the two countries have relatively comparative advantage even to each other base on their nature of tourist resources; Ethiopia is a country with untapped historical heritages where as Kenya has better advantage in coastal and wildlife safari and the country is indeed, has unique geological history and diverse topography and climate have made it known to the world as one of the few countries in Africa that harbor diverse biological resources with actual and potential ecological (Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, 2015).

Its current low level of development is often attributed to weak promotion, lack of trained manpower, lack of finance, bureaucratic red tape, rent seeking behavior among some government officers, high cost of imported inputs, poor government support, poor standards of accommodations and other service providers, poor international image and visibility as a tourist destination, weak supply chains serving the tourism sector, weak management and coordination structure, unfocussed institutional structure to generate policies etc (Kauffmann, 2008).
Methodology

The researchers mainly used descriptive research which includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In our study area, the practice of tourism is at infant stage and the area is one of undiscovered areas of Ethiopia regardless of its potential for tourism development. Due to this, the tourist attractions are not explored well and not prepared for visitors. Therefore, this research focuses on looking into the challenges that hinder enhancement of the sector.

The researchers used both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary source of data is firsthand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under consideration. This type of data will be collected through observation, interview, questionnaires and photographs.

Secondary source of data was used to support primary data. But, in this study, much of secondary data were used for literature review because getting more direct secondary sources is unlikely. Text books, research outputs, articles, and newspapers, diaries, manuscript, etc were some of the sources used for collecting secondary data.

The target population of the study included government offices concerned with tourism development, tour guides, hotel managers and local communities.

Two types of sampling techniques were used. The first one is probability sampling (simple random sampling) that was employed to select samples from local communities. It helped to give equal chance for local communities around the tourist attractions. The sample was selected from local communities from the six main tourist attractions areas in the zone. The most majority of data collected from local communities via questionnaire was not part of this article but used for another objective of the full discussion of this study (assessing the current status of tourism performance and potential tourist attractions of Awi zone).

Most of the tourist attractions are located in rural areas, near the woreda towns and around highways in single kebele. Therefore, the areas are sparsely populated and average number of population per kebele (kebele of one church/Got) is estimated to be 100. Therefore, total number of the ten main tourist sites will be 1,000. Yamane (1967:886) formula was selected to determine the study sample which provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1+N(\alpha^2)} \]

where \( N \) is the total population, \( n \) is sample size and \( \alpha \) represents sampling error. According to Yemane, the total sample of the study was 95 at the confidence level of 95%. 85(89%) questionnaires were distributed but properly filled questions comprise 68% (65 respondents). The research team has also conducted interview with subjects from the offices of culture and tourism in each woreda and the zone. Key informants were also used to get more in-depth information. The research team has conducted interview with tour guides of the Lake Zengena and hotel managers nearby the study areas.

The raw data is difficult to give meaning; rather they have to be summarized, organized, and analyzed by using different techniques depending on the nature of data that was gathered from different subjects. In this study data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Qualitative data has been organized, refined and interpreted thematically. Data analysis has also been made through combination of both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings and Discussion

The objective of this study is determining challenges of developing tourism in the study area. In this study area tourism is ill practiced and even the subjects don’t much experience tourism business. As a result, limited number of respondents were used for questionnaire and very substantial part of data was collected through interview with different stakeholders including key informants. The main findings with regarding challenges for developing tourism have been dealt below.

Lack of standard accommodation and related facilities and services

Development of tourism in the study area is still at its infant stage. Readiness in service provision is similarly at its infancy. As it was asserted by field obverations and the respondents, in all of woreda towns food and service provisions for domestic visitors is available but may not satisfy wants of customers. Few international standard hotels are available only in the town of Injibara. During this study, there were no tourist standard services providing establishments in the rest towns. In addition, those already established service providers do not give quality service (field observation by the research team). Due to lack of trainings for employees on customer care and service, there are problems in
service delivery at these establishments which include knowledge/awareness and attitudinal problems from employees in the service providing institutions of the towns.

Particularly, at the tourist sites, services are not accessed. There are few exceptions such as coffee service at Lake Zengena and Dondor Fall, and boating which is less or not organized service at Lake Tirba. In total these areas have created about 26 unguaranteed direct job opportunities for local communities (15 at Tirba, 4 at Dondor and 7 at Lake Zengena). Therefore, low concern given for accommodation and services and lack of basic and creative service provisions in Awi zone lead to under exploitation of tourism sector.

**Lack of Infrastructure**

In an effort to attract visitors, governments and private sector business people often invest in infrastructure improvements that have positive impacts on the economy and on rural communities (Twining Ward, 2014). Strong political support for tourism is often the starting point for destination development.

**Road:** Some of capital towns of the woredas are connected to main roads via gravel road. Gimjabet (capital of Banja Shikudad) and Kilaj (capital of Zigem) are connected with nearby woredas towns by gravel road. All other capitals are located on the asphalted highways. The strategic position of the towns has helped to get access of asphalt roads. For example, Chagni is located on the highway from Injibara to the Renaissance dam of Ethiopia. Tilili, Injibara, Addis Kidam and Dangila are located on the main road from Addis Ababa-Bahir Dar. This is a good opportunity for these towns to receive tourists travelling to historic route though Bahir Dar can be a base town for tourists who want to visit tourist sites of Awi zone since almost all of the woreda towns are not much remote from the regional city, Bahir Dar.

Quality of roads to the tourist sites is worse than the road network. As it has been described above, some woreda attractions are connected by asphalt road whereas most of tourist sites are located away from main roads and are only reached by poor class roads and many other tourist attractions can’t be reached by even gravel roads. Out of 13 sites selected for this study, only 3 sites are reached by asphalt roads.

**Access to electricity, telecom and water:** Electric power shortage has become a serious crisis in Amhara region. Though the woredas are accessed with power, interruption has affected economic activities including tourism business in the area. In the study area, the most remote and poor power supplied woreda is Zigem. According to key informants “Zigem is located behind the world”. In this woreda, according to local the officials, power access has stopped three years ago. All of the tourist sites of the study area have no power access unless they are located in the woreda towns. Similarly, access of telecommunication and internet access is poor in around the tourist attractions including the administrative towns of the woredas. Little Internet access is available only in the towns of Injibara, Tilili, Chagni and Dangila (wifi is available only in few hotels, and internet cafes).

Awi zone is one the regions in Ethiopia that have enough rainfall and there is big water potential though pure water is not accessed to the communities. According to the local respondents, access to potable water and electricity are available only at tourists sites located in woreda towns.

**Low political commitment**

The government is one of the key stakeholders that provide the leading role in tourism development. It is expected to show political commitment for the sector, initiate the formulation of a strategy for it, and play the crucial coordinating role between the different public sector agencies involved and the relevant private for-profit and nonprofit entities and local communities (Twining et al., 2014).

The employees of culture and tourism are not empowered to perform their activities. The office has its own annual plan to be performed. However, the employees working in culture and tourism offices strongly explain that they don’t have good working environment and no facilities to carry out activities. Even the cabinet members at different government offices don’t have positive attitude with regard to the tasks of culture and tourism office. According to employees in the offices, it is difficult to get transportation service to accomplish field works. Paradoxically, the employees face discouragement and sense of inferiority on their job. Therefore, most of their activities are office based. Staying much in offices has made their activities very limited and they become idle.

According to officials of the woredas, the budget allocated for their office is too low as compared other offices with same level. For example, in one of the Woredas, a respondent stated:

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“When we go for field work, we usually do the tasks of other sectors like health and agriculture. From all offices at a woreda level, the least attention is given to Culture and Tourism Office. Hence, appropriate manpower, office facilities and finance are not allocated for the office. When the government cabinet allocates budget for the offices, they think that Culture and Tourism Office has nothing to do, and hence allocate to it the least amount of budget. This is a huge hurdle to develop tourism” (interview).

The extent of problem is different from one woreda to another. For example, Banja woreda has a plan to collect information on heritages and wants to strengthen the traditional music band of the woreda. But musical instruments and other related materials could not be purchased due to lack of budget. Furthermore, they undertake very limited field works due to lack of working budget and lack transportation facilities to travel to different heritage sites. As a result, though, there are different cultural and natural heritages, they are not studied and interpreted, and most of heritages sites have no signage. On the hand, according to experts, the town of Chagni has good facilities for traditional music band.

Negative criticisms are frequently launched against tourism; not all are justified, and some are exaggerated. Nevertheless, the sector requires careful and expert management to address the risks it can pose (Twining et al., 2014).

The statistics collected from the woredas indicates that in culture and tourism offices, especially the tourism wing is run by non-professionals who need further trainings at least to understand the concept of tourism business. An interviewee describes that:

“Among the government sectors, the one given the least attention is culture and tourism office. Most of the employees working in office are non-professionals. We don’t have much how to work in tourism industry, except few employees rightly assigned for cultural aspect. Deadly sure even the existing employees are not ready to stay in this office; they are dreaming to leave for other sectors”.

Generally, low annual budget allocated, stagnant career ladder, poor facilities provided are good indicators of the low attention of the government. on the other hand, Tourism is essentially a private sector activity but is also a highly dependent on public sector support. A high-quality product can only flourish in a country where the tourism sector is well managed (Twining-ward et al., 2014). According to Twining-ward et al, Political support from the top is needed to remove policy bottlenecks, mobilize resources for infrastructure investments, and coordinate actions across ministries and with the respective local governments (ibid).

During this study, average budget allocated for the woredas was 75,166 ($2,784) Birr and this may not enable to study a single cultural study. A respondent in one of the Woredas explained the problem of finance as follows:

One of the main obstacles is lack of finance. The budget allocated for operational tasks is so small that we can’t achieve what we have planned. For example, the annual budget for the office during 2009 EC was Br 75,000 ($2,777.8). The office is unable to support organized youth who are working on tourism to help them implement their project.

Though the concept of tourism business is getting familiar with those who are working service providers, local communities who don’t involve in the sector do not have good attitude toward tourism development. For example, around Lake Tirba unknown local communities destroyed a small lodge built for local youth to help them in providing services for visitors of the lake. Some people in the churches also do not have trust on the need of registering heritages. Hence, they hide them, and this causes to temporary or permanent damage of heritages.

In this context misconception of local communities, has resulted in two negative consequences: The first one is local communities damage the heritages in their areas, especially natural ones and they see some of the tourist attractions as something trivial. The second effect is that they will not be part of tourism development in the area; rather they will stand against any type of tourism related activities.
Problems related with recruitment and job promotion in government office

The institutional framework of culture and tourism has been structured from Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism to Woreda levels (Woreda Culture and Tourism Office). However, the positions of the offices are not properly staffed. As a result, the situation of culture and tourism office is very discouraging for employees. Employees of the office cannot grow beyond Professional Science 2 career (T4-2 in Amharic). Furthermore, their work experience in culture and tourism offices is not relevant when they compete for other jobs because tourism profession is considered as a profession which has no relation with other sectors. In contradiction, plenty of other streams are invited equally with tourism professionals to work in tourism sector. Despite of the fact that there are many graduates of tourism professionals in the market who didn’t get the chance to work in their field (tourism) and some new entrants are suffering from chronic unemployment. This means departments of culture and tourism offices are held by the inappropriate professionals regardless of access of the right manpower in the market as explained above. For example: in all of woreda offices in our study area, tourism promotion work is given to either of the following professions: geography, psychology or sociology. This needs further in-depth study and to take adjustments until the right man power is assigned to the right position.

Lack of Tourism Culture

Tourism culture is the experience of local communities in tourism business. This is common in many developing countries that it is hard to realize the culture of tourism to be a usual business sector. In counties with mature tourism industry, you encounter people whose life is highly dependent on tourism business. If we make it closer, Lalibela and Gonder are among areas in Ethiopia with a good taste of tourism for livelihood. If you go to any place in Awi zone, the word tourism can be too strange for many of dwellers, be it in towns or rural area. (Smith and Kranninch, 1998 cited in Bestar and Nadal, 2007) prove that there is a direct relationship between tourism development and the presence of certain negative attitudes toward tourism by the community’s residents. Similarly, according to theory of tourism area life cycle (developed by Butler), this study area can be put under the level of exploration at which tourist supplies are at lower level (transportation, accommodation, attraction development), majority of local communities have positive attitude for foreign tourists and eager to see them (model by Doxey Irridex) but don’t clearly understand impact to tourism locally. Therefore, at this level the local communities don’t consider tourism as one of economic development and tourism culture is low. On the other hand, people at this stage don’t believe that tourism can be a means of livelihood. So, they don’t have the skill to create tourism business and at the same time they don’t strive how to realize sustainable business from tourism industry. This was observed in many tourist sites of the study area where tourist and even local day visitors don’t get services.

Lack of Research and Promotion

The attractions which are found in the area are not properly studied, documented and promoted to concerned bodies. There is a need to show the significance and value of the attractions to the host community, private and public sectors and the tourist. In this study, many of attractions explained are natural tourist attractions though still they need depth exploration. The research team has got very scanty information about cultural aspect of the area. Unless the cultural values of Awi zone, including historical aspects, are studied and interpreted well, they will be kept hidden and can’t support socio-cultural and economic role for the society. For example, history and culture of Awi people are well documented; dancing, wedding, conflict resolution process, religious festivals, traditional crafts, and ancient tools, are not well studied.

Image Problem

Misperception by tourists about the images of Ethiopia (Tekabe, 2016) is one of a challenge for Ethiopian tourism development. The overall image of the country has significant impact on tourism development of regions and destinations. Hence, the total tourist flow to Ethiopia is really not significant (under a million) compared to its tourism resources. Particularly, foreign nations have wrong perception about Ethiopia and this is among major factors why Ethiopia attracts little number of tourists every year. It was found that the country’s poor international image and visibility as a tourist destination is reflected in weak demand among international tour operators and travel agencies, who, in other countries are among the main sources of business (Mann, 2006). Though the government of Ethiopia is striving for image building of the country (World Bank 2012), the influence of previous misconception could not be tackled easily. This has a transitive impact on performance of each destination of the country, including Awi zone.
Lack of Coordination (poor public–private co-ordination)

Co-ordination problems across sectors and also across donors (Petersen and Hvidsteen, 2007) are considered as a major challenge for tourism development. In the study area participation of private sector in tourism industry is almost none. In Awi zone involvement of private sectors in development of attractions, infrastructure, marketing etc is low. Little effort has been reflected on coordinating local communities in plantation, protection of heritages, development of destinations (example, Falls of Fang and Dondor). In addition, Awi Development Association (local development association) participates in promotion of the tourist attractions.

4.5. Ranking Challenges

The respondents were given an opportunity to rank the challenges that affect developing tourism in the study area. The factors were given six alternatives, i.e. one to six. During questionnaire design, number one was valued as the severe challenge and number six was valued as the simple challenge for growth of tourism in the study area. Therefore, lowest mean value indicates that the factor is ranked as severe challenge whereas the highest mean value indicates that the factor was ranked as the simple challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack of road and other infrastructures</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of promotion</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of trained man power</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of tourist service organizations</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the concept of tourism business is new for local community</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shortage of technology access</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the respondents, lack of infrastructure was ranked as the rigorous challenge for tourism growth. Hence, low capacity to develop infrastructure is the prime factor of the sector’s poor performance. The real situation further indicates that particularly, most natural attractions are located at inaccessible areas and it is difficult for reaching to the sites easily. The respondents have put poor promotion as a second challenge for tourism development. Lack of man power, poor accommodation service/tourist service organizations, low concept of tourism business and lack of technology have been ranked 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th respectively.

Regression analysis

Logistic regression has been employed to investigate the relative impact of each factor on development of tourism in the study area. The dependent variable in our study was the growth of tourism measured by tourist flow and income generation. The independent variables that have been supposed to have an impact on growth of the sector include infrastructure, security, accommodation, and man power. Depending on lack of convenience of data collected, some important variables such as worth of attractions, lack of fund and awareness of local communities, and promotion problem were omitted from regression analysis. In binary logistic regression analysis, influential predictor variables are characterized by odds ratios that are significantly different from 1, 95% confidence intervals of odds ratios that do not contain 1, and P-values that are smaller than 0.05, at the 5% level of significance (Eshetu Bekele & Mammo Muchie; cited in Tadesse and Weldie, 2014).
Table 4.13: Regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LacInfrastructure</td>
<td>4.947</td>
<td>1.420</td>
<td>12.144</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>4.443</td>
<td>1.340</td>
<td>10.998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accmn</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>1.345</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manpow</td>
<td>3.363</td>
<td>1.397</td>
<td>5.799</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-10.577</td>
<td>2.353</td>
<td>20.207</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: beta is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1.

As it can be seen from the table 4.13, three of the factors are statistically significant at significance level of 5%. Lack of infrastructure ($b=4.947$, sig. $=0.00<=0.05$) significantly affected growth of tourism (income generated, tourist flow). Access of road, road network, and water supply, access of electricity and distribution of telecommunication services were measured to investigate the impact of infrastructure on tourism development. Similarly, improvements in security ($B=4.443$, sig. $=0.001<=0.05$), manpower ($B=3.33$, sig. $=0.016<=0.05$) will have significant impact on the growth of the sector in the study area. According to this study, low accommodation ($b=1.345$, sig. $=0.949>=0.05$) has positive impact on growth but does not significantly affect growth of the sector.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to identify the challenges for developing tourism in Awi Zone. The target populations of the study were basically local communities who directly involve in tourism industry. Employees working in culture and tourism offices, representatives of hotels, restaurants, and tour guides were also participants of the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents for questionnaire distribution and purposive sampling was used to select respondents for interview. Key informants were also well used to gather important information about the selected issues of the study. 95 questionnaires were distributed for respondents based on our sample proposal. Some of the questionnaires were incomplete and/or not fully filled, and these were rejected by researchers. Due to these encountering, the response rate was about 68%. Hence, the researchers focused on more of qualitative approach to accomplish this study.

The concern to study challenges of tourism development in the study area was conceived after assessing the current circumstance of tourism practice in Awi zone. Then, different development factors of tourism were assessed.

With regard to service providers, in the study area tourist standard hotels are found only in Zonal town of Injibara. Woreda towns and all of tourist sites have no tourist standard facilities and many tourist sites totally lack tourist facilities.

Public and tourist used infrastructures such as road, electric, telecommunications and water access varies from place to place, but still it is not developed for the sake of tourism industry. Similarly, tourist product development is at infant stage. Almost all of tourist attractions are not made ready for visitors. Institutional element of tourism structurally is almost addressed with different limitations. In government offices and private sectors, the industry has created few jobs. The main challenges for underdevelopment of tourism industry include low and wrong attention and low commitment of public sector, inaccessibility of infrastructure, institutional problems, lack of trained manpower, underdevelopment of tourist attractions, lack of budget/finance for recurrent and capital budgets, etc. Lack of infrastructure, problem of manpower recruitment and treatment, low commitment of government and limited and low standard tourist service providers were found to be main challenges for developing tourism in Awi zone.

According regression analysis result, lack of infrastructure, improvements in security, man power will have significant impact on the growth of the sector in the study area.

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