



Tourism development potentials and challenges in Shonke Village, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to assess potentials and challenges of tourism development in Shonke village. A detailed section describes local community attractions and the general way of life of inhabitants. A descriptive research design within a qualitative approach was used and informants were selected from members of local communities, decision makers of government bodies, religious institution leaders, and tourism experts, using a purposive sampling technique. Eight individuals were selected for focus group discussions and twenty-three key informants for interviewing along with personal observation of potential and challenges for tourism development. The data were analyzed through arranging it into groups or classes according to their themes and the researchers then assigned symbols to each category of responses. Results indicated that Shonke village has great potential for tourism resources with its beautiful geographical landscape, magnificent terracing of farmlands, impressive architectural design of houses, and the impressive traditional and cultural lifestyles. However, local communities were not benefitting at all from tourism in terms of socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects due to a lack of coordination problem among stakeholders, poor community involvement and participation in tourism development, a lack of funding, limited awareness, security concerned, insufficient marketing and promotion drives, poor physical infrastructure such as accommodation establishments, accessibility, pure water, health center, electric power and public toilets.

Keywords: Tourism development, potentials, challenges, Shonke Village, Ethiopia

Introduction

Tourism is one of the prominent sources of income and chief foreign exchange provider in many countries of the world (Graham, 2008). It has become observed not only as a catalyst of development, but also in political-economic change that can be used in succeeding socio-economic improvements together with a needed redistribution of wealth and power as a necessary condition to achieve development (Akhavue & Okharedia, 2017). International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000, and 1,235 million in 2016 (UNWTO, 2017) and international tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide have surged from US\$2 billion in 1950 to US\$ 104 billion in 1980, US\$ 495 billion in 2000, and US\$ 1,220 billion in 2016.

According to the UNWTO (2017) travel scenario of Africa, there have been 58 million international tourist arrivals and 35 billion international tourism receipts by 2016 which shared



5% of tourist arrival and 3 % tourist receipt in the world. Total contributions of travel and tourism to GDP was about 10.4% of the world economy and 9.9% of employment opportunity was from tourism, both directly and indirectly; it also covered 4.5% of total investments which were invested in the world by 2017 (WTTC, 2017).

Ethiopia is endowed with an immense and magnificent combination of historical, cultural, and natural tourism attractions which can contribute to the development of tourism in the country (Yiheiyis, 2015). Even though Ethiopia is rich in tourism resources in which it registered 9 tangible and 3 intangible world heritages which makes it the first ranked among African countries, tourist arrivals and receipts thereof are low because of poor tourism development (MoCT, 2018).

Amhara National Region State (ANRS) has a number of tourism resources: three of Ethiopia's world heritage properties like the Rock Hewn Church of Lalibela, the Castle of Gondar and the Simien mountains National Park (ANRSCTPDB, 2008) are in this area. Within ANRS, Oromo Nationality Administration is also rich with cultural and natural tourism resources. Among them, Shonke village is one which is an attractive destination but tourism resources are not utilized and developed properly (ONACTD, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Many developing countries have immense cultural, natural and historical tourism resources which can make a significant contribution to economic growth (UNWTO, 2013). Ethiopia is rich with plentiful remarkable and magnificent tourism attractions which are the combination of historical, cultural, and natural attractions that mark the country as a unique tourist destination in ANRS (Yiheiyis, 2015). ANRS has diversified tourism resources in which international and domestic visitors are visiting and contributing to the economic development of the local community development drives (ANRSCTPDB, 2008). According to Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department Data (2017), there are diversified tourism resources in this administration zone. Among them, Shonke Village is one and which has huge potential for its tourism resources that can benefit local communities through the developmental aspects of tourism (ONACTD, 2017).

Many researchers have suggested that numerous challenges which affect the development of tourism, like effective cooperation problems among stakeholders and tourism product diversification are some of the influential factors for the developments of tourism in a given destination (Aregu, 2016). The attitudes of local residents have a great impact on tourism development (Fernando, 2015; Lepp, 2007). Tourism infrastructures like tourism accommodation facilities, transportation systems, road quality, road density, transport services, water supply, electricity, and communication are key determinants of tourism development (Imikan, 2012). Moreover, tourism development is highly affected by the quality of human resources that are occupied in tourism (Rova, 2014). Information communication technology is a key hindrance for the growth and strengthening of local tourism as well as for the development of a destination economy as a whole (Nikolic, 2018). Tourism marketing is then seen as a fundamental challenge for tourism development (Milad & Mohammad, 2016).

The relationship between the poor image of Ethiopia and travel behavior that is now prevailing is an image causing huge obstacles for a growing number of international tourist arrivals (World Bank, 2006). Many foreign tourists consider Ethiopia, before their arrival, as place where there is a prospect of war (Tekabe, 2016). According to Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department Annual Report (2017), Shonke Village is not visited enough by both domestic and international visitors when compared to its potential and the results of this on the local communities are not considered so there is poor growth in the village and tourism may bring in the needed socio-economic benefits (ONACTD, 2017).

Various studies have been conducted in developing countries particularly in Ethiopia, that reveal the issues of tourism development. Kidane-Mariam (2015) investigated opportunities and challenges of tourism development in Addis Ababa, Upper Rift Valley Corridor of Ethiopia. Endalkachew *et al.* (2018) also conducted research on challenges of tourism destination development in ANRS. However, in the case of Shonke village, no research has been conducted.

Therefore, this research was conducted to assess potentials and challenges of tourism development in Shonke Village, Ethiopia

Research Methodology

Study Area Description

To set the tone for the study it is necessary to describe what the area looks like and includes. Shonke village is basically found in the ANRS, Oromo Nationality Administration Zone, Dewa Chafa district, and Jirota Kebele. As stated by the Dewa Chafa Wereda Plan Commission (DCWPC, 2018), the Wereda covers an area of approximately 56,892 hectares and total arable land is 17,068 hectares. It lies between longitudes 10°43'N39°41'E and latitudes 39°43'N39°41'E with an elevation ranges from 1400-2500 meters above sea level on average. Its annual average temperature is 25°C -35°C while its annual rain fall is 600-900 mm. Its climate encompasses 89% low altitude (*Kola*), 10% mid-altitude (*Weyina Dega*) and 1% high altitude (*Dega*).

Shonke village is located 25km away from Kemissie town towards the East. It is bordered by Tolaha Kebele in the east, Kello Kebele in the west, Artuma Fursi Wereda in the south, and Gula Kebele in the North. Total area of Shonke village covers an area of 7.5 hectares. It is located at latitude and longitude of 10°37' 06" N and 39°58' 41" E respectively and its temperature ranges 18°C -26°C. The village has an altitude which ranges 1896- 1931m above sea level. Geographically, the village is found in the watershed of Borkena River, which is one of tributary of Awash River Shonke village is laid in the climatic zone locally known as *Weyina Dega* (DCWCTO, 2016).

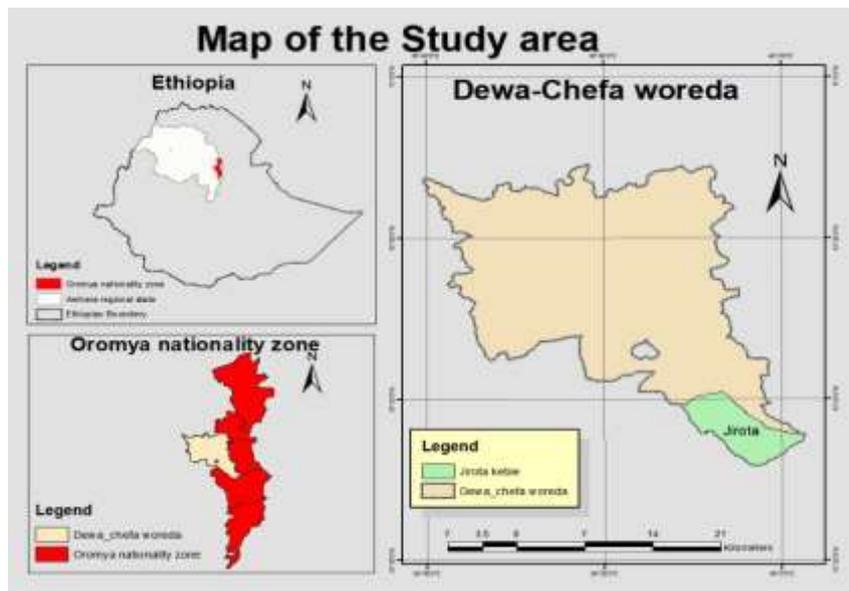


Figure 1: Map of study area https://Oromia_Region

Alongside the Jirota Kebele which takes one to Shonke village, the area is covered by small patches of bushes and shrubs such as *dedeho*, *agam* as well as tall olive trees (*weyira*), *wanza*, fig trees, and other indigenous plant species. The Kebele is also inhabited by a variety



of fauna species like monkeys, hyena, apes, civet cats (*tirgn*), *midakua*, *sesa*, etc. and varieties of birds (DCWANRO, 2018).

According to Dewa Chafa Wereda Planning Commission (DCWPC, 2018), the total population was estimated to be 167,281. Out of this 83,617 or 49.96% are females, the remaining 83,664 or 50.04% are males. Annual population growth rate is estimated to be 2.79. Similarly, there are 153 households which reside in Shonke Village and they speak mainly Argobgna. Some of the communities of Shonke Village can speak the Amharic language and Afan Oromo. Arabic is also used for religious purposes in the Mosques.

According Dewa Chafa Wereda Education Office (DCWEO, 2018), there are 60 elementary, 2 junior secondary and 1 senior secondary schools. The number of students in elementary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools was 30916, 1877 and 98 respectively. With regard to health rendering services, there are 7 health centers and 25 health posts in district administrations. Lack of adequate and safe water supply, shortages of health facilities and medical supplies and a shortage of well- trained professional health workers are the main problems affecting the health status of the people (DCWHO, 2018).

The people of Shonke Village engage in different economic activities. As Dewa Chafa Wereda Agriculture and Natural Resource Office (DCWANRO, 2018) stated, the main agricultural products of the community are *teff*, sorghum, maize, peas, beans, lentils, *Khat*, coffee, and fruits. The communities of Shonke Village practice animal husbandry and livestock production like sheep, cattle, camel, goat and horses. Trades on items like cattle, *Khat*, and coffee are the other economic sector and the Shonke village community is also engaged in weaving of traditional clothes such as *shema*, *mekenet*, *habesha* dress and handcraft activities like *spears*, *wegel*, *Maresha*, hand axes, knives, and others.

Study Design

To identify potentials and challenges of tourism development in Shonke Village, the researchers employed a descriptive research design since the information needed to achieve the objectives must be clearly defined and more often be describing the existing situation. The researchers then used a qualitative approach due to this type of research being basically conducted with richer details emerging and also from observational views into respondents' experiences and thus greater background knowledge about the subject matter can be gleaned.

Population of the Study

Subjects of this study were local communities who are living in the study area and Oromo Administration different Public Sectors at Zonal and Wereda levels which have more of a relation with tourism development, like the Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Leader and expert, the zone and Wereda Administration Office officials, investment expert at zonal level, zonal and Wereda Water Supply experts or Leaders, Zone and Wereda Health Office, Zone and Wereda Road and Transport Office, and others who have experience and proximity to the issue in the study area beyond the listed categories.

Sampling and Size Determination

Patton (2002) as cited by Stephen et.al (2015), says that purposeful sampling is the most frequently used way to describe qualitative research approaches in most current literature. All the concerned target populations were purposively selected based on their work experience, position and background knowledge on the issue so as to get in-depth information about the subject matter. In this regard eight (8) individuals were selected for focus group discussion and twenty-three (23) key informants for interviews. These numbers of informants were selected since the research approach was qualitative due to it being very difficult to involve all



of the households. Finally, the gathered data was analyzed based on the data saturation principle.

Study Variables

Accommodation facilities, stakeholder coordination, tourism marketing strategy, the attitude of local communities, transportation or accessibility, security and infrastructural development variables were hypothesized in order to determine tourism development in Shonke village.

Data collection instruments

Qualitative data collection instruments, such as focus group discussions, key informant interviews, field observations and documentary analysis were employed. For better understanding, data gathering instruments were translated into the Amharic and Argobgna languages.

Focus group discussion

This study used one focus group discussion so as to collect information from groups of people in addition to a series of individuals being chatted to. Informants were selected from arrange of culture and tourism experts and from other concerned bodies that are influential for the study area, which comprised eight individuals. The discussion was done by facilitating discussion by researchers. Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge and experience and the fact that they were more likely to provide the necessary information on the issues of concern.

Key informant interviews

Data for this study was collected through in-depth semi-structured, one-to-one and face to face interviews, with different tourism stakeholders available in the study area. These people were selected purposely due to their extensive knowledge, experience, expertise, and involvement with tourism development in the study area. Twenty-three key informants were selected for interview question answering, of which ten informants came from the village community members and religious leaders, and thirteen from employees of public sectors based on data saturation principles. All interviews were recorded by a digital voice recorder after requesting the consent of participants and the data was noted down during the time of the interviews.

Field Observation

This study employed personal observation of potentials and challenges for tourism developments and participants were also asked about how they consider certain situations. However, there was no assurance that they really do what they say and say they perform concerning tourism development in the study area. Observation is more reliable in that it is possible to see how they actually behave. Besides, it helps the researchers to verify or nullify information provided in face to face encounters and it enables them to provide valuable background information about environment where a research program is being undertaken.

Document Analysis

This study used document analysis for secondary data which helped to describe the meanings and the relationship between certain concepts related to the issues of the study and was this enabled researchers to make inferences about the issues. By using different documents including web pages, journals, articles, and publications, the researchers tried to compare and contrast findings from the semi-structured interviews, FGD and field observations to increase their validity and reliability.

Analysis Plan

Since the researchers used a qualitative approach, the gathered data was analyzed by arranging data in groups or classes according to their thematic areas or resemblance or affinity



and assigning them with symbols or numerical labels for to each category of responses, specifically for open-ended questions, so that raw data could be counted or tabulated. The collected data were also interpreted using a thematic analysis approach. In this case, repeated results from each respondent were then the major themes and were used to generalize the findings.

Result and discussion

The gathered data through key informant interview, focus group discussion and field observation was analyzed in narrative form on the potentials and challenges of tourism development. The historical development of Shonke Village potential tourism activities like trekking and sightseeing activities, indigenous knowledge of the local community such as the gate of Shonke Village, the residential houses and mosques and their fenced areas were all discussed. Religious practices and different traditional activities like rituals, judicial and administration features, food and beverage preparation as well as traditional marriage system were all referred to. Different challenges which faced the village were also discussed. Informants were selected from the local community and public employees who were knowledgeable about the history and the general appearance of Shonke Village. They all had good experience on traditional food preparation methods and traditional marriage practices. They were also knowledgeable on handicrafts production, and the local traditional administration system. The experts in the field were working for more than five years in the culture and tourism sector and had good knowledge of relevant issues.

Potentials of Shonke Village for Tourism Development

History of Shonke Village

According to the Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department (2015), the initial residents of Shonke before the advent of Argoba, were clearly a non-Argoba community. Regarding this, focus group discussions confirmed the idea which was stated by the Culture and Tourism Department. They were said to have had their own traditional administrative system ruled by a local chief called *Shenker* and his wife *Fara*. Shonke is said to have been derived and gradually evolved from the name Shenker. Informants, however, did not give us clear and detailed account about the ethnic origins of the original settlers of Shonke. In fact, some informants associated them with the Christian Amharic-speaking communities.

But in interviews conducted with some informants it was stated that before the establishment of Shonke Village, it was believed that Tolaha Village occupied the site, at least 34 years before Shonke Village. It is today located 7km to the East of Shonke Village. This would help the researchers to understand the immediate background for the foundation of the Argoba of the Shonke Village settlement.

In connection to this, key informants in their interview suggested that Kukubas was the founder of Tolaha Village and Faqi Ahmed was one of the loyal comrades of Kulubas and they had been living together in the village. They also added that both Kulubas and Faqi Ahmed were descended from Argoba ethnic groups and the early Muslim Arab refugee groups. On the other hand, data obtained from document analysis from the Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department (2015) showed that Sheikh Faqi Ahmad originally lived on a high mountain called *Amzalu*, in the present day, Afar region. He later came to Tolaha Village via Majid (Ayalu), a mountain around Harar. Other information obtained from interviews, stated that there was a tradition which spoke of the coming Sheikh Faqi Ahmad from Goze. Goze was the earliest political and religious centre of Argoba people in north eastern Showa (Hussein, 2001).



As explained by Mohammed Ismaeil (*Haji*) and other community informants, at one time the communities of Tolaha encountered frequent attacks/raids from non-Argoba inhabitants. Community focused group discussions informants also proved the idea that was suggested by one interview. Eventually, on one occasion, the non-Argoba inhabitants of Shonke routed the Argoba settlers of Tolaha Village. During the confrontation, the founder of Tolaha Village, whose name was *Kulubas*, was killed. Sheikh Faqi Ahmad and some Argoba settlers, however, were able to defend themselves and from the attacks from their enemies and finally they could save their village from utter destruction.

Following the incident, Sheikh Faqi Ahmad tried to drive the necessary military preparation by reorganizing his followers with the view to retaliate against his enemies. In so doing, the counter-offensive led by the followers of Sheikh Faqi Ahmad was directed against the old inhabitants of Shonke. In due course, he enjoyed a spectacular success by devastating his enemies that ultimately then led to the expulsion of the non-Argoba community from Shonke. Finally, the site of Shonke became the private domain of Argoba.

In connection with this, Sheikh Faqi Ahmad and his followers had initially lived in tentative tents at Shonke. Shortly afterwards, they decided to establish a permanent settlement there due to the strategic significance of Shonke for defence purposes as it was located on an elevated hill surrounded by a large cliff. Once settled there, Faqi Ahmad is said to have built the present Shonke mosques.

Shonke Village has an estimated age of more than 900 years according to some informants. The elders added that the ancient settler or Argoba people of Shonke Village assumed that they were descended from Saudi Arabia which is associated with the Prophet Mohammed's followers the *Suhabas*. This notion seems to be plausible on the ground that the date should be associated with the days of the Muslim sultanate of Yifat which had been flourishing. It is a well known fact that the northern Argoba, including Argoba of Shonke are indeed the remnant population of the sultanate of Yifat.

Similarly, it is believed that immediately after the emergence of the Yifat kingdom, Argoba people came to Shonke. They hailed from Majid (Ayalu). They are said to have been the close relatives of Sheikh Faqi Ahmad. On their arrival, they are said having been given permission by Faqi Ahmad to settle dawn at Shonke. By the same token, in the course of history, it is said that some members of the Argoba people, mostly from Yifat, came and settled in Shonke Village. There are conflicting traditions about the cause for the coming of these people to Shonke. One version asserts that they had been persecuted as a religious minority by the then ruling class of the Christian Kingdom. Thus, they later decided to migrate into the site of Shonke. Another informant said that they were initially brought from their homeland by Faqi Ahmad. After a short period of time and once settlement, the number of inhabitants of Shonke village grew considerably.

Tourism activities in Shonke Village

Trekking: It is one of the tourism activities which is undertaken with the particular purpose of exploring and enjoying the landscapes and it is most often conducted in areas of relatively unspoiled wilderness or marginal areas. Ethiopia is a country rich with a temperate climate and its impressive landscape offers trekking opportunities, either walking or riding (a mule, horse or camel) or a combination of the two. Trekkers usually use animals so as to load their luggage or to ride for some part the time of their travel.

According to the Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department experts, there are different ranges of terrain which are magnificent for trekking purposes. Among them, on the way to Shonke Village is one which is very impressive for tourists. In connection to this, there were foreign tourist trekkers whose package tour was organized by *Monpay* tour operator on Shonke Village. Tourism experts from focus group discussion, added that most often trekking activities are conducted starting from the Borkena river bridge and heading



towards east, from the main asphalt road of Addis Ababa to Dessie, to the destiny Shonke Village. Tourists were very excited during their trekking activities as they could observe beautiful scenery at the right and left as well at back and front directions. Tourists can observe Borkena River, which is one of the tributaries of Awash River. Moreover, tourists can visit different biodiversity in the whole direction. Trekkers are generally pleased with their visits and can also visit different cultures, traditional religions and enjoy the way of life of the local communities while on their trekking route.

Sightseeing: In relation to sightseeing, as per an interview conducted with informants from Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department Experts, Shonke Village and its surrounding landscape are very impressive as places in which tourists either international or domestic refresh themselves. Being at the top of the village, anyone who is able to see, can observe the chain mountain of Shewa and the lowland area of the Chafa Valley as well as the impressive Borkena river in a westerly direction. One also views the far off lowland areas to the east, and Artuma Fursi Wereda and its beautiful scenery in a southerly direction. There are also interesting terracing and farming practices of the Argoba communities in the surrounding areas worth viewing.

Shonke Village and its surrounding area are very attractive and have great power to attract tourists and can definitely bring in socio-cultural, economic and environmental benefits for the communities directly or indirectly. Hussein Mamo Ali, one of informants and the former manager of the Culture and Tourism department at zonal level, and Ayub Abdela Luba, the then team leader of tourism and heritage also suggested that Shonke Village has great potential for sightseeing in which anyone can visit range of geographical and cultural features of Shonke Village and its surrounding areas and in turn this will likely bring in socio-cultural and economic benefit for the community.

Indigenous knowledge of architectural design

Gates of Shonke Village: Shonke Village has one entrance road and exit route. In the past decades, local communities of Shonke Village had stretched hard-waved cotton fabric threads on right and left sides of the fence and on the gates. These stretched hard threads were secretly known by local communities during night times. Local communities had to cross the gates carefully without interrupting the stretched fabric cotton thread. If the cotton thread was broken, the assigned guardian perceived or judged that an enemy or stranger entered the compound. Stretching the cotton fabric thread was done in order to protect people from the surrounding non-Argoba communities.

Residence of Shonke Village: Argoba settlements are usually found on the hill and plateau area which is referred to as *Amba* (Xavier, Fauvelle, & Bertrand, 2010). Most often Argoba rural communities have more or less similar patterns of building structures from one house to another including their mosques (Tarekegn, 2010). In a discussion conducted with informants from the public sector employees during the focus group discussion, it came out that Shonke Village is one of the historical places of the Argoba communities who have lived there for a long period of time with their unique and fascinating architectural building structures. There are also a limited number of houses found in the village locally known as *Yesekela Bet* and in the compound of most residents of Shonke village, the perimeter is enclosed with a stone wall.

As interview conducted with community informants, stated there are different sections of room areas which are available within the compound of most resident houses. The first section of the compound is the front part which is used to store different agricultural tools and served for sheltering for cattle, specifically located at the left margin of the compound while entering to the interior part of the residence house. From field work activities in relation to each section, the researchers tried to measure the exterior door of single selected dwellings within the compound which have a 0.90-meter width and 2.10-meter height. Furthermore, there are salon rooms and *majet* rooms as well as kitchens which are observed in the second section of the interior part of the residence house. The salon room is basically used for guests, or as a



bedroom for adult males and household heads, and some family members and guests also use this room for praying. The *Majet* room serves the purpose of storing different household materials available in the house and serves as a bedroom for women and their children under ten years of age. *Bolekiya* traditional steam is practiced in the *majet* room. No male person is allowed to enter in *majet* room except the family members. The other interior part the resident house is a kitchen which is used to prepare foods and coffee for the family members as well as for the guests.

According to interviews as well as focus group discussion, all residence houses in the village have more or less similar patterns of internal division and have a 0.7 metre wall thickness. Each of the *salon* and *majet* rooms in most building of the village have a 6-meter width by 6-meter length and are 2.5 metre height. There are also 16 wooden columns which are supporting the ceiling or the roof of the building that is locally named the *Bala* and it has 20 beams locally named as *Feresegna*.

Mosques in Shonke Village: As per an interview conducted with informants, Jemoye mosque and other two small mosques are found in Shonke Village. Jemoye mosque is the largest and best known mosque which is found at the top or peak of the village. It has an elevation of 1926 meter above sea level. Informants stated that it was established about 1118 CE by Sheikh Feki Ahmed, and it is a well preserved mosque and still offers religious services to Muslim communities, and daily prayers in the time of *Solat* and annual religious festivals. There is also a hole like open space that is made from clay which is locally known as *Fololcha*, available on the top of the roof and which is significantly used to regulate the air condition especially during hot conditions and it also allows light to penetrate to the interior of the mosque.

Besides *Fololcha*, solar radiation penetrates to the inside part of the mosque through the doors and the window which is sufficient to show the inside features of the mosques. The floor of the mosque is strewn with grass and the outer top roof of Jemoye mosque has eight rectangular divisions with erected stones which play a very important role in protecting the roof and allowing it not to be damaged during the rain season. Jemoye mosque has four doors and one window.

The entrance of the mosque is found on the west direction which has 1.60-meters length and 1.05-meters width and its exit is found in a southerly direction which has 1.70 meters length and 0.70 meters width. The other exit is found on the east side and has about 1.9-meters length and 0.80 meters width. Just like other residences of Shonke village, there are locks, which are locally known as *Meshegoriya* that are used to lock the mosque at the interior part.

According to an interview conducted with community informants, there is *Miherab* which occupies a central position on the northern interior facade of the wall, i.e. the *Qilba* wall and is signposted towards Mecca. The northern door of the mosque serves as the entrance of *Imams* and *Qadis* at the time of *Solat* and when there is preaching. *Miherab* has a 1.85-meter height and 0.70-meter width. A small window is also found on the northern wall which is 0.60-meter width and 0.60-meters in height. The Jemoye mosque interior space dimension is 12.85-meter length and 8.24-meter width. All the wooden columns which are supporting the roof are 40 in number with the average circumference of 0.60 meters and the horizontal support timber beam exceeds some 400 in number.

Terefo and Yetachgnaw mosques: Terefo mosque is located in the west of Shonke Village near the main entrance, which is the second largest mosque of the village. The mosque has one door and two windows. “*Yetachgnaw*” or “*Tenshow*” mosque is located in the east of Shonke Village. This mosque is the smallest of all with one door and no window. Local communities of Shonke Village have since been constructing their fences with stone.



Religious practices

According to the Oromo Nationality Administration Culture and Tourism Department (2017), almost all the member of the community of Shonke Village, are the followers of the Islamic religion. Shonke mosques were very well-known centres of Islamic education in Wollo since medieval times (Xavier, Fauvelle, & Bertrand, 2010). As explained by Mohammed Ismaeil (*Haji*) and other community interview key informants, Faqi Ahmad, a well-known Islamic scholar of the village, had taught Islamic education in the local mosques during his lifetime. Shonke mosques were not limited to Islamic students coming from Wollo and neighboring regions but also served for those students coming from Gurage, Jimma, and Harari (Xavier, Fauvelle, & Bertrand, 2010). Key informants described in their interview that Abbaye Shonke had taught more than five hundred Islamic students locally and they were called *Darasa*. Besides this, a number of distinguished Muslim *Ullama* have emerged from Shonke Village.

Shrine of Shonke Village: The shrine of Shonke is found at an elevated hill in *Boqoke* village near Shonke Village. In interviews conducted with informants, it is considered to be a major center of holy veneration and a Shrine of the well-known Sufi scholar and mystic of Shonke. In connection with this, the compound of the Shrine consists of a well-constructed stone Mosque and a room where the remains of holy people were laid to rest. Local communities of the Shrine's keeper have also been found within the compound. The holy shrine has been separated from other structures by a stone-walled fence. The land of the enclosure around the Shrine was and is viewed as ritualistically hygienic and sanctified.

Traditional practices

The Ziyara ritual ceremony: it came out in the interviews that Shonke communities have been practicing the *Ziyara* ritual ceremony which is performed annually on different occasions. One of the most common *Ziyara* ceremonies is held in the month of October which is associated with the harvest ritual, and thus practiced during the period when the communities of Shonke Village cultivators harvest their crops. This practice is prepared and performed for two main purposes. On one hand, when the communities of Shonke Village want to offer thanks to their God "*Allah*" and to get blessing for their new crops, as well as when they want to support the poor and landless local individuals.

The harvest ritual is believed to have been originated during the times of the establishment of the Walasema dynasty (Ababa, 2007). Indeed, as described by Ababa (2007), in rural Argoba homelands in north central Ethiopia, the early Walasema leaders and the Argoba people had celebrated the famed harvest ritual annually during autumn /*metsew*/ season. The reason for this was that Walasema leaders were agrarian and political powers rested on the ability to use supernatural power to ensure good crops. Explicitly, such ritual ceremony was undertaken with sorghum harvesting. The sorghum harvest ritual was originally dedicated to God who gave sorghum seeds to humans. By the advent of 18th and 19th centuries, it served to legitimize local Walasema leaders whose leaderships were founded on the sorghum agriculture industry (Ababa, 2007). Likewise, informants in their interviews stated that all kinds of grain harvesting are related to the ritual ceremony of Shonke Village communities in which the whole process of preparation of the harvest ritual lasted for one full day. After choosing a convenient site for the ritual ceremony, local communities will bring new grains collected from various fields and celebrate ritual activities of *Ziyara* together with others.

According to informants and a conducted interview, the most important offerings for this traditional practice are fresh grains, such as sorghum, beans, peas, maize, and others. Besides this, bulls, sheep's, goats and other animal products are offered. Gifts also include food products, consisting of *Injera*, bread, and *Qeribo* (a grain based non-alcoholic beverage). These play an essential happiness role in this ceremonial occasion. Local communities will celebrate such traditional practices together. Those who are not able to celebrate together due to various problems, will take and give foods and other offerings which clearly demonstrate the existence of a strong sense of virtue and character and in a spirit of mutual



help among communities. In such traditional ritual activity, there might be tourists either domestic or international who are very interested and want to observe such proceedings. So that it needs to be maintained and used as a tourism product, which enables tourism to enhance socio-cultural and economic benefits for the community of Shonke Village.

Traditional food preparation and consumption: According to community informants and an interview conducted, the Shonke communities have two of the most important traditional foods which have existed since earlier times: *Aletato* and *Waqalimo*. Such traditional foods have been regarded as special foods which are prepared and consumed on special occasions such as weddings and religious ceremonies. *Aletato* is leavened wheat flour paste which is prepared together with chicken. The communities of Shonke village prepare such a meal for someone in order to strengthen and extend a relationships. As far as the preparation and consumption of *Waqalimo* food is concerned, the Shonke women offered the following descriptions. *Waqalimo* is prepared from any kind of meat and intestines. Most often women are responsible in the preparation of such kinds of traditional food in that they used a number of techniques that are considered to be unique.

Traditional administrative and judicial system: The community of Shonke Village has their own long established traditional administrative and judicial system. From the focus group discussion, it is evident that the community has adopted customary dispute settlement practices managed by the *Qadi*. As stated in the interview conducted with the community, the *Qadi* is the highest standing religious leader of the people who is chosen after very careful consideration. He is chosen from amongst the elders of the community of Shonke Village who have some religious and educational knowledge, competence and social regard for the law of the Islamic religion. The *Qadi* has remained the key person in safeguarding the establishment of justice in the village in line with *Sharia law*. His judgment must be totally compatible with *Sharia law*. After passing a decision, there is no appeal to the judgment of a *Qadi* in the tradition of Shonke communities. Despite the fact that the people have the right to bring cases directly to court, their problems are being settled rather more effectively by their *Qadi* (Tesfaye, 2000).

The *Qadi* also plays vital role in some aspects of socio-cultural life within the communities of Shonke Village. For instance, his first role is to lead religious ceremonies and local *Ziyara* rituals held annually and from time to time. Moreover, the *Qadi* also officiates at weddings and official marriages in accordance with the rules defined by Holy Quran. It is told by elders with some sense of pride, that the communities of Shonke have never been exposed into major crime since ancient times. Similarly, they traditionally do not go to a regular court due to the local community's traditional judicial system which has contributed greatly in two respects. Firstly, it settles any disagreements before they are increased into major wrong doing. Secondly, also has a significance to avoid internal division and deep-rooted bitterness among people themselves.

The traditional marriage system: Since the early times, the marriage practices of the Argoba community are confined within their ethnic groups even if they are relatives (Tesfaye, 2000). Informants also confirmed that the communities of Shonke have exercised endogamy and paternal parallel cousin marriage for a long time. Some Argoba communities are now conducting marriage beyond their community members. In an interview with one informant, it was stated that traditionally, marriage has often been arranged due to the interest of the parents of the bride and the also the groom, after a great deal of negotiation. Such activity was locally known as *Qajilito*. A father of the boy, locally called *Azunegi* searches for a bride for his son and once he has chosen a worthy peer for his son along with some local elders (mediators), he visits the home of the girl. On arriving at the opening door of the girl's family's house, the elders will greet the family by saying *Asalame-aleyikum* three times to the girl's family. At this moment, the father of the girl responds the guests by saying *Walayikum-salam*. Then, the guests enter the girl's house after removing their shoes and leaving their walking sticks outside.



After forwarding a warm welcome, the girl's family will allow the guests to sit in the provided guest room. Following this, the guests stand up will ask the girl's family saying, "we came here to ask you the daughter Allah gave you to the son Allah gave us", three times. The girl's father will respond that he will consult with his family. After fixing an appointment day, the guests will leave their home. On the day of appointment, the boy's father along with three notable local elders, will go to the girl's house. The girl's family together with three local elders, offer a heartily welcome for the guests by saying that "we have given the daughter Allah gave us to the son Allah gave you". At this moment the guests express their enthusiastic feeling for the girl's family by kissing the elders' knees. After this special cultural occasion, the girl's family will offer the guests a porridge dish and a beverage which consists of ingredients like flavors, including honey, sugar or butter, and also *Abish* (a local drink).

In so doing, the choice of marriage partner will be concluded. When parents of the two sides have reached an agreement, they set the wedding day on the day of Tuesday or Sunday. Once this ceremony is over, this is followed by the *Nikah* ceremony, in which a religious leader (*Qadi*) legalizes the marriage of the couple and seals the marriage contract. The *Qadi* then call out the names of the bride and the bridegroom and binds them in matrimony. In this respect, it is important to bear in mind that *Qadi* legitimizes the couple's marriage contract in line with Sharia law (law of Islam). Following this, the groom's party come back to his home together with the bride and some of her friends and relatives called *Azay*. They return, after presenting two *Kendiles* to the bride's mother as a gift, and the groom's parties then bring with them the rest of the seven *Kendiles*. The reason for bringing *Kendiles* is because of the view that a couple would utilize them during their nuptial period.

Challenges of tourism development in Shonke Village

Although Shonke Village is one of tourism potential destination areas in Dewa Chafa Wereda, there are a number of challenges that face the destination and make it unable to contribute to socio-cultural development and which also stifle economic benefits for the host communities.

Physical infrastructures challenges

In data gathered from focus group discussions with tourism experts, infrastructure came out as a big challenge for the development of tourism in Shonke Village. There are no accommodation establishments for the tourists seeking lodging, places to eat at or buy a drinking, and other services. As a result of this, tourists both international or domestic are being forced to rely on the community's houses. Tourism infrastructures like tourism accommodation facilities, the transportation system, water supply, electricity, and communication are key determinants of tourism development in different parts of tourist destination areas (Imikan, 2012). This brings uncomfortable conditions and contributes to negative impacts in the growing tourism industry. Accessibility is also another challenge for tourism development in Shonke Village and there are very poor roads. Informants added their view that there is no regular transport service in Shonke Village which is problematic. More often the community of Shonke Village travel on foot for more than 3-4 hours to a destination which results in great fatigue.

Poor marketing and promotional Strategy

According to informants from the focus group discussion, Shonke Village is not well-known and promoted effectively due to a lack of marketing capacity and knowledge on how marketing structures must operate. There is a shortage in identifying the target market for Shonke Village. In addition to this, attracting and developing customer loyalty is another challenge needed to be faced to increase tourist arrivals. Ramphal and Nicolaidis (2014) state that service quality should also be of prime concern in any business which desires to keep in touch with its customers and which desires to provide a high quality service. Failing this any area or business risk losing tourists to the competition. A far bigger emphasis



has to be placed on customer care and its related elements, including the overall marketing performance of a destination.

Stakeholder coordination challenges

As focus group discussion were held with the tourism experts, it was clearly observed that there are problems in accommodation facilities and services in Shonke Village. Besides this, there is problem of accessibility for one to reach the destination area. Moreover, health services, the police station, the media, water and electricity providers, tour operators and travel agents are not working together. Nicolaides and de Witt, (2015a) argue that it is imperative for tourism investors and the state departments to consider all the stakeholders, those in the micro and meso environments in the case of Shonke Village. Government is not giving due attention to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and guiding them to cooperate with each other. The effective amalgamation of problem-issues among stakeholders and tourism product diversification are some of the influential factors for the development of tourism in a given destination (Aregu, 2016). In an interview conducted with Mohammed Siraj, of the Oromo Nationality Administration Investment Department and a team leader, there were currently no activities being conducted to attract investors to Shonke Village due to infrastructural many problems. Hence, according to his suggestions, stakeholder coordination should be mandatory before attracting investors into the village. This concurs with Nicolaides (2015) who says its very important to engage with all relevant stakeholders before commencing with any project. Community relationship management has become one of the very important strategic topics of tourism, and tourism investors they have realised that the retention of stakeholders and strategies to assist the relationship are essential. The first step is to actually establish, then build and then maintain community relationships built on trust and in a win- win situation for all. This is in order to create a long term mutually beneficial, profitable relationship with all relevant stakeholders (Nicolaides, 2015; 2015a, 2015b, 2014).

Poor local community participation

It is clear that without involvement of the local community, development of tourism is not long lasting or effective. Community involvement is crucial in tourism management as it recognizes and enables local community members to be participants in the development process of the whole tourism sector. As the focus group discussion showed, there were no community organizations in which the communities of Shonke Village could participate in tourism business, like renting of mules, providing food and beverage service, guiding service, and offering of various handicraft products to tourists. Nicolaides informs that tourism stakeholder inclusion is an important aspect that must be carefully considered (Nicolaides, 2015) and that the local community must be a role-player in any meaningful tourism initiatives.

Insufficient budget

Tourism is developed in a given destination if there is some assistance or funding either by the government or any private organization. According to informant discussions, there were no organizations working to develop tourism in Shonke Village. This resulted in the village not obtaining any benefits for the host community at the first level and other organization like tourism industries, the public sector, tourists, and others were also then not benefitting either directly or indirectly from the vast tourism potential as well as they should be.

Lack of awareness

Shonke Village has a far reaching history that reflects the lives of Argoba communities. Argoba communities have unique indigenous knowledge in their architectural building which have lasted for a long period of time. However, according to informants' discussion, nowadays, some members of the communities are demolishing their houses and leaving their village and building in the farming areas. They do this, since they were not aware that such tourism resources could bring socio-cultural and economic benefit. Attitudes of local residents have a great impact on tourism development (Fernando, 2015; Nicolaides, 2015; Lepp, 2007).



Lack of public toilets

According to Hessen Hussein, the Head of Department of Oromo National Administration Culture and Tourism that Community, Shonke Village does not have public toilets which the community or guests can use. Even though Oromo has planned to build public offices, to date no public toilet has been constructed, and this was assured during field observations and environmental pollution discussions.

Conclusion

Tourism development has great opportunities for the improvement of socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects of a given society. Tourism resources are thus the main elements as a potential to tourism development. Shonke Village has an old-aged history and acquires great potential from its tourism resources which were astonishing and impressive during the historical developments and endowed with remarkable geographical, socio-cultural and economic features which have an opportunity for tourism development. Even though Shonke Village is rich in tourism potential, the communities were not benefitting from the tourism industry in terms of socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects due to various challenges that faced the area. Physical infrastructure is the biggest challenge for tourism development in Shonke Village.

The various policy and regulatory support structures from the Ethiopian government have the power to shapes the tourism sector in Shonke Village. Nevertheless, the tourism sector faces many challenges such as lack of adequate infrastructure, concerns over health issues for tourists, a lack of skilled and trained workforce and other challenges. Plans must be introduced to tackle all the challenges. Successful implementation of tourism projects is invariably always decisive to speed up the growth of any tourism destination. Thus a range of combined efforts by both the Government and private sectors and the community at large are essential for sustainable development of Shonke Village and the adjacent areas.

The lack of effective linkages and synergy in planning with locals is a very problematic area in tourism development that requires great effort and so stakeholder inclusivity in the dealings of a tourism effort are needed so as to benefit the local community adequately (Nicolaidis, 2015b). There are no accommodation establishments for tourists to get lodging, eating places, drinking areas, and other needed services. Besides this, there are accessibility problems in which the roads are generally too difficult for car to navigate, shortages of pure water for human consumption, a lack of health centers and a shortage of electricity.

Coordination problems among the stakeholders, poor community involvement and participation in tourism development, a lack of funding, a low awareness problem, poor marketing and non-effective promotional strategies are the other challenges of tourism development in Shonke Village. Thus, it is recommended that there should be infrastructure development, stakeholder coordination (Nicolaidis, 2015b), stronger community participation, training provision and awareness creation as well as the provision of a suitable marketing and promotion strategy to develop tourism in the area. In addition to the aforesaid, private sector investment must be encouraged for infrastructure expansion and this should involve both tourism and civil infrastructure development initiatives. Generally, the transportation facilities of the area should be improved and a top quality road network is needed.

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