

Research Article

The Role of Hot Spring for Domestic Tourism Development: The Case of Wondo Genet Hot Spring, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Nowadays, the use of natural hot spring is one of the fastest growing sectors of world tourism. Tourism to hot springs led to economic development in many countries, the industry was affected by the emergence of other tourism destinations. Hence, this study aimed to fill this gap by to investigate the role of hot springs for domestic tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia as study context. The study employed exploratory research design and qualitative research approach. Both secondary and primary data were obtained through field observation, semi-structured in-depth interview, and focus group discussions. Key informants were selected purposively from government experts, local community representatives and Wondo Genet Local Ecotourism Tour Guide Association. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 key informants and 2 FGDs were held with local communities and experts. Qualitative data gathered through semi structured interview and FGD were analyzed thematically. The results of the study demonstrate that, the current state of the hot spring tourism practice is very low. Moreover, the study revealed that hot spring tourism has economic, socio-cultural, environmental, tourism and health contributions. Similarly, the results of the study identified the drivers of hot spring tourism such as; natural resources, cultural resources, health, safety and security and special attractions. The major barriers in related with the hot spring tourism development were infrastructural development, stakeholder coordination, and lack of budget, lack of marketing, poor government commitment and lack of awareness were identified as barriers to domestic tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring. Hence, there is a need to develop the required infrastructure, improve service delivery systems, strength stakeholder integration, undertaking promotional and awareness creation activities. These findings assured that the responsible bodies should be integrated to use the contributions of the hot spring for domestic tourism development by enhancing the management and conservation issues.

Keywords

Domestic Tourism, Drivers, Barriers, Hot Spring, Wondo Genet

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1. Background of the Study

Tourism is a global industry, forecast to exceed 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030 [1]. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks third after fuels and chemicals, and is the top export sector in many developing countries [2]. Tourism also plays an increasingly important role in economic expansion because it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange and an essential component of export diversification [3]. In 2019, the tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth outpacing the global economic growth of 2.5% for the 9th consecutive year that contributes 10.3% to the global GDP (USD 8.9 trillion) and creating around 330 million jobs, 1 in every 10 jobs all over the globe [4].

Tourism in Ethiopia is growing at the fastest rate with a growing contribution to the GDP in which total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was ETB 58,581.7 million (10.8% of GDP) in 2011, and is forecast to rise by 3.0% in 2012, and to rise by 4.6% to ETB 94,181.8 million in 2022 (by constant price and exchange rate of 2011). In 2011, the total contribution of travel and tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 9.3% of total employment (2,271,500 jobs). This is expected to rise by 1.7% in 2012 to 2,310,500 jobs and rise by 0.7% to 2,481,000 jobs in 2022 (7.5% of total) [5].

Hot springs tourism is a popular and important segment of the global tourism market. In fact, the market scale of wellness tourism was estimated to be \$4.2 trillion in 2017, with thermal/mineral springs being one of the major sectors in related markets [6]. Specifically, hot springs have been used for medicinal purposes for centuries due to their unique healing and rejuvenating properties, which include reducing stress, improving blood circulation, and relieving pain [7-9]. The popularity of hot springs in tourism has made it a significant contributor to the industry, attracting visitors seeking relaxation, recreation, and adventure [10]. The sector holds great potential for sustainable tourism practices and the development of domestic tourism [11]. The increasing recognition of hot springs' health benefits is expected to drive further growth in the industry, making it a vital component of the tourism market.

Hot springs have been a fascination for humans since ancient times, occurring on every continent [7], where percolating water is heated by magma and released through rock channels [12]. Hot springs tourism caters to visitors seeking the benefits of the minerals found in these natural wonders, as well as those interested in geothermal phenomena and the cultural and historical significance of hot springs. This sub-sector of nature-based tourism represents a complex of physical, biological, and informational elements that promote physical and spiritual recovery, working abilities, and health [13]. The recreational and tourist potential of hot springs, both natural and human-made, varies by region and depends on recreational demand and specialization [14].

In this regard, hot springs are becoming increasingly im-

portant for domestic tourism development, offering local communities a significant opportunity to benefit from tourism. They provide a natural setting for health, wellness, and recreational tourism, as well as for ecotourism [14-16, 6]. Besides, ecotourism focuses. In addition, hot springs can contribute to cultural tourism and the economic development of local communities [17]. As hot springs attract a significant number of domestic tourists, they can generate revenue for local communities through various activities, such as accommodations, restaurants, and souvenir shops.

In fact, the role of hot springs tourism has established in the bulk of the literature. Several studies have explored the role of hot springs in tourism development worldwide. For example, a study conducted by Mi et al. Examined the impact of hot springs on the tourism industry in Taiwan [18]. They found that hot springs tourism had a positive effect on the economy, creating employment opportunities and generating revenue for local businesses. Similarly, a study by Kim and Jamal [19] explored the potential of hot springs for rural tourism development in South Korea. They concluded that hot springs could serve as a catalyst for local economic development, leading to the creation of new jobs and the revitalization of local communities. Several studies have explored the relationship between hot springs and domestic tourism development. Similarly, a study in China and Japan has traditionally been as the global Hot spring's Champions, generating more than 50% of the industry profits. China is the leader in terms of the world highest revenue generation, but Japan holds the record for the world's highest number of hot spring establishments [20, 21].

However, most of these studies are focused on developed countries, and little research has been conducted on the potential of hot springs for domestic tourism development in developing countries. However, natural hot springs tourism is one of the advantages of these countries. For example, the West Java province, Indonesia has a total of 12 natural hot springs resorts visited mostly by domestic visitors each year [22]. In addition, there are many hot springs in Africa that have become a big tourist draw. For example, parts of Ethiopia and Kenya that are known as regions of intense geothermal activity, thanks to the geological turmoil beneath the Great Rift Valley is among the beauties as these two countries are dotted with numerous hot springs [23]. But their potential is yet to be explored as these resources are untapped for various reasons.

2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is a country with great potential for tourism development and ecotourism, given its diverse wildlife, national parks, wildlife reserves, sanctuaries, and hot springs. Hot springs are of particular interest, as they are believed to have healing properties and are considered to be the cleanest of all

waters [24]. In fact, hot springs played an important role in the formation of the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa [25]. Thus, hot springs are a unique feature of Ethiopia's natural, cultural, historical, and religious tourism assets and provide a significant potential for domestic tourism development. As such, tourism development policies have focused on promoting sustainable tourism practices in the country [26]. The 2008 national tourism policy of Ethiopia also prioritized the promotion of domestic tourism, among other things, to strengthen the tourism industry and contribute to the country's economic growth [27].

Hot springs in Ethiopia have become popular among locals and tourists are also being utilized by hotels to heat their swimming pools, such as Filwuha, Sodere, and Lake Shala. Despite this, there are many undeveloped hot spring pools that can be enjoyed in their natural state, such as Aweyitu hot springs, Borkana hot springs, and the Wondo Genet hot springs, leaving behind their potentials to serve as a focal point for developing a variety of tourism-related services. Besides, if properly managed hot springs could provide opportunities for alternative forms of tourism, such as eco-tourism and wellness tourism [28]. Furthermore, hot springs are a natural resource that can promote cultural exchange and environmental awareness while generating income and creating jobs for local communities [29]. As a result the development of these hot springs tourism could have a positive impact on the local economy [30], particularly in areas where economic opportunities are limited, as noted by Wang and Lin [29].

Given the potentials of hot springs in tourism and economic developments, only few studies that have examined the role of hot springs in tourism development exist. To mention few, a study conducted by Tilahun [31] explored the potential of hot springs for ecotourism development in Ethiopia. The study found that hot springs could serve as an important resource for community-based tourism, contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Additionally, a study by Mariam [27] examined the potential of hot springs for spa and wellness tourism in Ethiopia. The study found that hot springs had the potential to attract both domestic and international tourists seeking therapeutic benefits. Moreover, it has been highlighted that tourism from any sector, in Ethiopia, in general, has been rising, but the absence of domestic tourism data at the national level weakens the generalization and was evidence to the level of attention given to the sector [32]. In addition, a recent literature review revealed that the cultural heritages of Ethiopia contributed to the development of sustainable cultural tourism but it did not achieve the expected results [33].

Studies have also shown that various factors influence the role of hot springs in domestic tourism development, including accessibility, natural features, and cultural significance. Specifically, accessibility is a key factor as hot springs that are easily accessible to visitors are more likely to attract tourists and contribute to domestic tourism development [28]. Natural

features, such as mineral-rich water heated by the earth's core, provide a relaxing and therapeutic experience for visitors, while the surrounding landscape adds to their attraction [34, 35, 30]. Cultural significance is another factor, as hot springs have been utilized for centuries by different cultures for their healing properties [17, 29]. Availability of amenities and services in the surrounding area also play a role in the role of hot springs in domestic tourism development [28].

Despite the potential of hot springs for domestic tourism development, there is a lack of understanding of the level of hot spring tourism practice, the major contributions of hot springs to domestic tourism.

Despite the potential of hot springs for domestic tourism development, there is a lack of understanding of the level of hot spring tourism practice, the major contributions of hot springs to domestic tourism development, and the factors that influence the performance of hot springs in domestic tourism development of Ethiopia, specifically in case of Wondo Genet hot springs among others. As far as knowledge of the researcher no study had been done before on the role of hot spring for domestic tourism development in the area. More importantly, other similar studies are rare in Ethiopia and only little attempts towards uncovering this interesting area of research were made in the past. For instance, Tilahun [36] focused on the study challenges and opportunities of Wanzaye hot spring for domestic tourism development, revealing that domestic tourism is not well developed due to massive challenges in related to tourism policy and strategy.

Wondo Genet town, located in the southern part of Ethiopia, is one of the most well-known nature based recreational sites the country has. The main attraction of the site includes the pockets of landscapes covered with jungle forests, streams and a variety of birds and wildlife as well as hot springs [37]. Even though, ecotourism was suggested as complimentary form of tourism development in this area, previously by Wondirad [38]. Therefore, the researcher argues that studying the role of hot springs in domestic tourism development is critical for two reasons. Firstly, hot springs have the potential to create job opportunities, promote local businesses and generate income for communities living near hot springs. Secondly, hot springs are considered as eco-friendly tourism resource and can contribute to sustainable tourism development, which is critical for the preservation of the environment.

While there is considerable scientific research conducted into hot springs and their use in health and medical facilities, the role of natural hot and mineral springs in health, wellness and recreational tourism is underreported and under researched yet. This is an indication that the role of natural hot springs in health, wellness and recreational tourism is not fully recognized as a valuable tourism resource, neither is the substantial economic contribution the usage of these resources makes to the tourism industry.

Driven by reasons, the main aim of this is to explore the role of hot spring for domestic tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring and to identify the major contribu-

tions of hot springs to the local economy. In addition, the thesis aims to examine the factors that influence the performance of hot springs in domestic tourism development in this area. Thus, this study adds to the knowledge on the role of hot springs in tourism development and provides recommendations for the sustainable development of Wondo Genet hot springs and extrapolates the results to similar comparable resources in Ethiopia.

3. Research Questions

The thesis uncovered the following research questions:

- 1) What is the current state of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring?
- 2) What are the drivers of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring?
- 3) What are the major contributions of hot spring tourism development for domestic tourism development in Wondo Genet spring?
- 4) What are the barriers of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring?

4. Objective of the Study

4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate the role

of hot springs for domestic tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia.

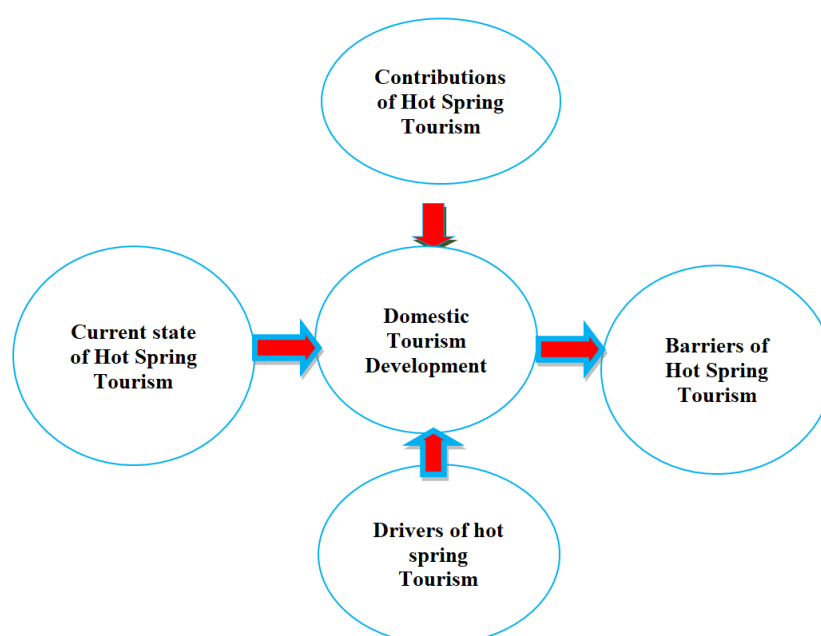
4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) To assess the current state of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring.
- 2) To identify the drivers of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring.
- 3) To analyze the major contributions of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring.
- 4) To examine the barriers of hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet hot spring.

5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework gives particular emphasis to the relationship between hot spring and domestic tourism development. To achieve the objectives of the research this conceptual framework shows current state of hot spring, drivers of hot spring tourism, contribution of hot spring and barriers that influence the performance of hot spring for domestic tourism development in the study area. It has designed by the researcher by reviewing the existing literature to explain the conceptual relationship that exists between hot spring and domestic tourism development.



Source: Own Completion, 2023

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

6. Research Design

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of hot springs for domestic tourism development in Wondo genet hot spring, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia. In line with the nature and objectives of the current study, exploratory research design is deemed feasible since it explores and interprets existing conditions, opinions, situations, and problems undergoing. Therefore; an explorative method was used to collect data with the intention of describing the nature of existing and current situations related with tourism in the study area.

7. Research Approach

The major reason for doing qualitative research is to become more experienced with the phenomenon under study and to investigate complex and sensitive issues and similarly, most of the previous sustainability studies/literatures adopted qualitative approach. Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions [39]. The main reason to conduct qualitative research in this study is to become more experienced with the phenomenon under study and to investigate complex and sensitive issues.

8. Target Population

The term population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects that have common observable characteristics. It refers to all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a given universe. The target population of this study was the local community representatives, tourists (both domestic and international tourists), Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations and Wondo Genet government tourism experts from, because they are important stakeholders who are more knowledgeable about the area.

9. Data Type and Sources

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources (for literature and discussion part) to effectively achieve the objectives of the study. The primary data were collected for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. On the other hand, the secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process [40]. Accordingly, this study employed primary data sources including through interview, focus group discussion, observation and secondary data from published (books, journals, and articles, magazine) and unpublished materials (Government office tourism reports, UNWTO tourism websites, WTO Handbook).

10. Sampling Techniques

Made extensive argument on purposive sampling and he stated that to say one engages in purposive sampling signifies that one sees sampling as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where and how one does his/her research. In doing so, it is vital to contact the key personnel who are experts in the area and can give concrete data on the area [41]. Consequently, purposive sampling technique fits the requirement of this research. Therefore, local community representatives, Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations and Wondo Genet government tourism experts were selected based on purposive sampling and based on their experience, knowledge, positions and authority to administer interview. Whereas tourists were selected based on connivance/accidental sampling to administer interview.

11. Sample Size

Sample size refers to a number of items to be selected from the population. It is also a collection of some parts of the population to be a true representative of the population [42]. The sample considered in the current study consists of 20 (data saturation point) semi-structured in-depth interviews that were conducted with government tourism experts (5), local community representatives (5) and Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations (5) and tourists (both domestic and international tourists (5). In addition, two separate FGDs were held with government tourism experts, local community representatives and Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations. The total number of discussants from the selected kebele were, therefore, be 18 (6 community representatives, 6 Wondo Genet resort hotel employees and 6 government tourism experts from Woreda).

12. Methods of Data Collection

12.1. Semi-structured In-depth Interview

The skill of guiding the discussion back to the topic outlined when discussions are unfruitful. Indeed, interview has the disadvantages of being very costly time consuming and can introduce bias through desires of the respondent to the interviewer [43]. In this study, semi structured interview for informants that were selected purposefully as the tool for data collection were used as provides participants with the opportunity to fully describe their experiences. Overall, 20 key informants will be interviewed: from 5 local community representatives, 5 Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations, 5 from tourists and 5 government tourism experts from Woreda.

12.2. Focus Group Discussions

In order to get detailed and ample information to answer the research questions, focus group discussions were also organized to help the researcher in understanding the issues under consideration from the viewpoints of different individuals at a given time period. Accordingly, three separate FGDs were held with 18 discussants from 6 community representatives, 6 Wondo Genet local ecotourism tour guide associations and 6 government tourism experts from woreda. The FGD was conducted in Amharic and later translated to English. In doing so, the researcher prepared a checklist based on the specific objectives to be discussed by FGD. In capturing the full discussion, audio recording instrument was used after seeking the respondents' consent by asking the interviewees permission and clarifying the objective of the study.

12.3. Observations

Observation is instrumental in conducting thorough inspections of the ongoing tourist community interactions in the tourist settings. Acknowledged the superior merits of observation as it creates the opportunities for observing and thinking at the scene of the action, event, processes or phenomena [44]. In this study, the researcher took the role as an observer. Observation includes observation of the tourism activities, tourist services and facilities, natural and cultural tourism resources, the conditions of community in tourist attraction area. As a result, field level observations served as a complementary method to triangulate data collected through interviews and questionnaire. During the field observation information were acquired through note taking and photo camera to record important information and activities.

13. Methods of Data Analysis

After collecting data necessary for this study through field observation, key informants' interview, focus group discussion, the researcher organized and arranged these data in the way which is easy and give meaning to analyze and interpret. To analyze the data collected, the current study used thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing and reporting themes with in a data [45]. It will use in this study due to its accessibility and flexibility [46]. The step by step process will be adopted from [45]. First, the data collected through interview and FGDs transcribed considering the sign languages, hatred and happiness. The sign languages, likes and dislikes replaced by correct punctuations during data transcription to evidence them later on analysis [48]. Secondly, the researcher went through the transcribed document to familiarize with the data corpus. Thirdly, having familiarized with the data corpus, the initial codes generated from the data set carefully. Next, potential themes searched

and the initial codes associated with the emerging themes from the data set by moving back and forth over the data set to identify homogeneity and heterogeneity. Subsequently, the potential themes reviewed to refine confounding themes which are not themes but merely pretending and wrongly labeled as themes. Lastly, the refined themes defined and named and reports generated based on the final themes emerged from the data inductively.

14. Current State of Hot Spring Tourism Development in Wondo Genet Hot Spring

Wondo Genet is a tourist destination nestled in the eastern sub-catchment of Lake Hawassa Basin frequented by conventional visitors. Hot springs in Wondo Genet has been served as an idyllic place for excursionist and tourists to escape the daily hectic and hustle life for many decades [47]. The area is endowed with many breathtaking ecotourism potential resources like: sizzling hot springs, lush green dense forest and wildlife diversity [49].

Likewise, data found from literatures and information got from the interview, observation and focus group discussion confirmed that hot spring tourism in Wondo Genet is being practiced. The researcher observed that the respondent also believes the current status of the hot spring tourism practice is at infant stage, it needs strong private and public sector commitment. Furthermore, findings from the observation is also supported this fact that the hot spring tourism is being practiced in different ways. Similarly the interviewee from WWCTSO1 stated that:

The current status of hot spring tourism is very low. The main causes for low level of hot spring practice are poor stakeholders' collaboration, lack of infrastructural development, lack of budget, poor marketing strategy, and lack of development programs, lack of training and development and poor benefit sharing mechanisms.

Currently, hot spring developments offer a wider range of different attractions that include game parks, with accommodation ranging from camping sites and self-catering chalets to luxurious hotels [50]. Additionally, Wondo Genet has a potential for wildlife tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, gastronomy tourism, agro tourism, spa and health tourism, cultural and eco-tourism. More specifically, Wondo Genet area can provide tourism and ecotourism activities like: ballooning, mountain trekking, mountain biking, rafting, camping, photographing and video graphing, picnicking, and birding, fishing, and swimming and cultural tourism activities.

In Ethiopia have a great potential in tourism and biodiversity conservation activities [51]. Because of wetlands of Ethiopia support high population of mammals, birds (including transcontinental migratory species), reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrate species. According to the

local guides opinion wetlands of Wondo Genet provides a habitat and food for many types of birds, fishes, hippopotamus and mammals. This is an important platform for tourists to spot and see many kinds of fauna species easily other than other land types in Wondo Genet. Study revealed that,

Wondo Genet ecosystem and associated forest provides nature-based recreation service to different users from local visitors to international tourists [52]. Moreover, Wondo Genet area is gifted with many water sources: rivers/ streams, hot springs and wetland ecosystems.



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 2. Water fall and Forest in and around Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

15. Drivers of Hot Spring Tourism Development in Wondo Genet Hot Spring

Hot spring has a potential to attract domestic and foreign tourists from different parts of the world. According to different literatures the following are considered as drivers of hot spring tourism such as natural resources, cultural resources, health, safety and security and special attraction. The hot spring tourists and visitors have their own expectations at hot spring destinations such as variations depend on personal preference and length of stay, time out (away from home), relaxation and stress management, improvement of health and wellbeing, prevention instead of cure, healing of illness, rehabilitation after accident, injury and surgery, boosting the immune system, enjoyment of natural surroundings, unique landscapes, geothermal water features (rivers, waterfalls), safe environment and quality service and friendly staff.

15.1. Natural Resources

It is generally accepted that the surroundings of a tourism destination played a major role in attracting visitors. Tourists are attracted to a destination because of its natural environment's uniqueness. The destination may be unique in terms of climate, landscape, fauna or flora [53]. The climate, landscape, fauna and flora species, experienced at the tourism destination is also a pull factor [54]. Moreover, Wondo Genet area and its environment are identified with abundant flora and fauna species composition, richness and diversity. The high species richness and species diversity of flora and fauna in Wondo Genet is probably due to the diverse physiographic nature, with its mountain slopes, valleys and fluvial

landforms, in addition to this, springs/rivers flowing from the foot of the mountains, made the area unusually diverse. As a result, Wondo Genet has a national significance regarding conservation of biodiversity and endemic species. It is vivid that the presence of species diversity is perceived as a more suitable criterion for ecotourism development. Because of flora and fauna are being the main attractions for ecotourism (Honey, 2010).

The following are identified during the field survey:

The attraction of Wondo Genet recreation site is primarily based on its naturally endowed resources namely the hot spring water alongside the perennial stream flow that forms nature's unique beauty which visitors enjoy with. Additional glamour of the site is the attractive landscape scenery created by the surrounding forest covered hilly topography containing diverse plant and animal species of tourist importance (Interviewee T3, 2023).

Likewise, the main attractions of the site includes: the hot spring water for bathing and swimming; the forested landscape, streams, birds and other wildlife in the surrounding. Similarly, interview with WLETGA4 revealed that:

Wondo Genet hot spring has distinctive features that make them particularly appealing to tourists. The hot spring is located in picturesque setting surrounding by beautiful mountains, forests or near other cultural attractions.

The forest serves as habitat for many mammals, birds and insects [55]. A total of 27 mammal species were identified in Wondo Genet and its surrounding, including the endemic mountain Nyala and Menelik bush buck [56]. The jungle forests and streams served as the abode and main migratory route for variety bird species and wild animals between the Bale and Arsi mountains. According to the data obtained from WLETGA 1 and based on the field observation mammal species like wild pig, vervet monkey, warthog, civet cat, Columbus monkey and baboon can be found easily around

hot-spring areas.

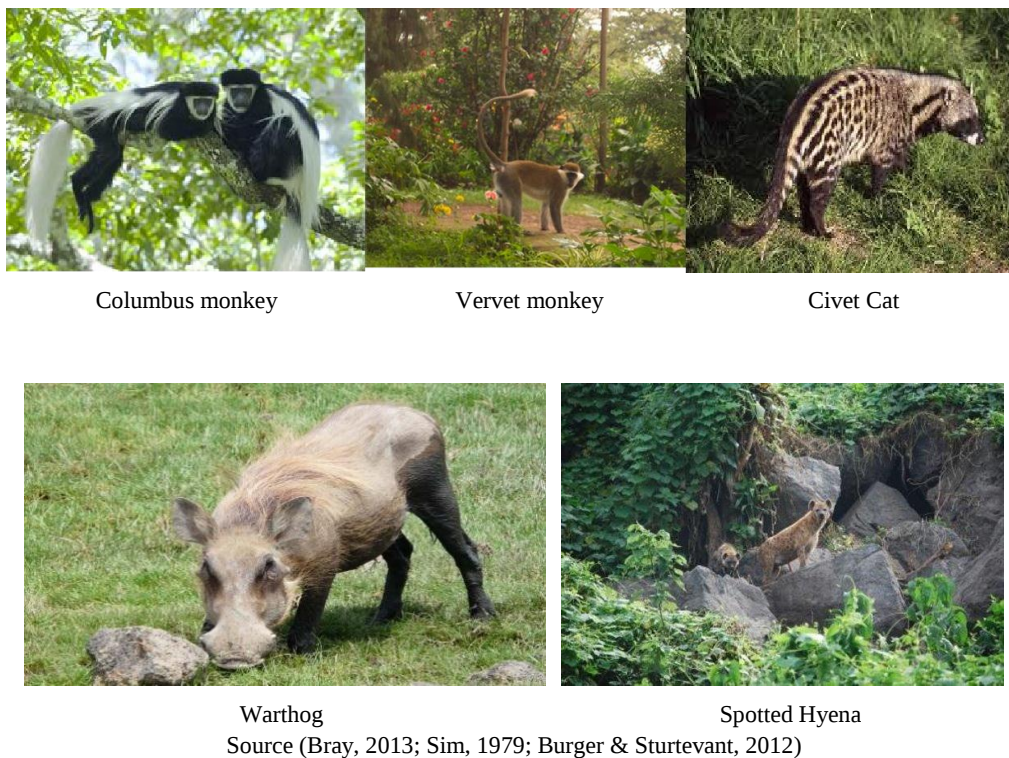


Figure 3. Big Mammals of Wondo Genet.

Wondo Genet is a true bird paradise. The area has been identified among the 73 important bird areas (IBAs) of Ethiopia [57]. A number of bird researches were made in Wondo Genet in different time interval. Earlier, [58] recorded 118 species of birds in Wondo Genet area, out of which seven are endemic to the country, three inter-African migrant and six inter- continental migrant species could be observed. Burger

& Sturtevant (2014) identified more than 50 species of birds in Wondo Genet in 2013. A total of 33 migratory bird species in Wondo Genet and its surrounding were also recorded as the findings of [59] More recently, a total of 137 species of birds in to 47 families and four habitats such as: natural forest, agro forestry, grassland and wooded grassland in and around Wondo genet forest catchment.





Abyssinian ground horn bil



Black winged lovebird



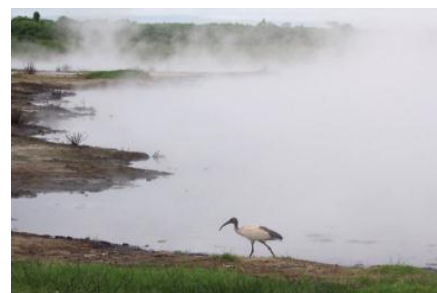
Rupp ell's-Robin-chat



Wattled Ibis



Yellow-fronted Parrot



Ibis in the hot-spring

Source (Bray, 2013; Sim, 1979; Burger & Sturtevant, 2012)

Figure 4. Birds of Wondo Genet.

15.2. Cultural Resources

Like many parts of Sidama, Wondo Genet has various ethnic groups co-reside in the area, with tremendous varieties of tangible and intangible heritages across the woreda. Wondo Genet is favored with wondrous cultural amenities and historical treasures; however, the main drawing factor is still limited to the natural asset specifically water-based activities [60]. Tourists are more likely to appreciate local tradition, customs and cuisine than other market segments. This category of resources includes: traditional music and dancing, cultural foods and drinks, traditional dresses and unique traditional house construction style [61]. According to WLETGA5 narrated that Wondo Genet have traditional values, social customs and diverse cuisines, eating habits; numerous colorful local markets, wedding ceremonies, churches, monasteries and mosques are also part of cultural tourism attractions in the Wondo Genet that could draw visitors.

Moreover, Sidama people has dishes like: Bulla, Bursame, Chukame and Omolcho, which are products of enset/false banana and Shameteta (local drink), which provides a significant platform for gastronomy/culinary-tourism development. Because there are tourists with the interest of consuming testing local food and beverage called gastronomist. Also revealed the interest of visitors to test and experience traditional foods and ways of preparations [62]. According to the WWCTSO4 view, villages particularly around hot spring areas are influential in attracting this kind of tourism. Therefore, the unique cultural assets of local communities are also

among the core elements to develop a more inclusive eco-tourism product in the case of Wondo Genet Woreda. Choosing a travel destination in times like these is not simply a choice, it is moreover a statement of lifestyle. What kind of journey is worth investing one's hard-earned money and relatively little leisure time into? The key to success for tourist destinations is to create a product that attracts potential consumers in an emotional way (Morgan, 2004). Similarly, WWCTO5 commented that

Wondo Genet and its surrounding areas comprise imposing attractions of both natural and cultural settings that are the foremost sources of tourism and ecotourism potentials development. The cultural and natural resource endowment of the area is suitable for eye-catching colorful birds, mammals, suitable weather condition, hot springs at the valley of the forest, abundant wildlife diversity, sharing the local culture and traditions including the hospitality of the local community (Interviewee, WWCTSO5, 2023).

Thus, the culture of the local community in and around a tourist destination area is a pull factor for a tourist destination as visitors want to learn more about the culture of the area. It gives the background to the evolution of the particular society [63] Tourism developments associated with cultural sites and events are important as they can be an uplifting experience in local people's lives. The culture and hospitality of local communities who live around Wondo Genet hot spring plays a key role to attract hot spring tourist. The tourism expert in the city WWCTO1 narrated that;

The hospitable culture of local communities attract so

many domestic and foreign tourists to come to visit and relax, due to this interaction between local communities and would be tourist attractive (Interviewee WWCTO1, 2023).

Moreover, its breath-taking scenery and natural beauty are ascribable to mountain massifs, terrains, peaks, river gorges, natural moist Afromontane forests and magnificent various water bodies. As per the data obtained from local guides view the jungle remnant natural forest and streams are one of the prominent sub-watersheds of Lake Hawassa, which serve as abode and main migratory route for variety of bird species and wild animals between the Bale and Arsi mountains. This has significant opportunity for nature-based tourism. In addition, personal observation also prevailed that the area is blessed with rich cultural heritages including Sidama people dressing styles, cultural dances, local handicrafts, folklore/indigenous knowledge and religious sites (mosques and churches) for

tourism.

15.3. Special Attractions

Special attractions refer to attractive resources found in and around a destination. Destinations that offer a variety of attractions have a competitive edge over other destinations and, according to WTO (2010), encourage tourists to stay longer. Such attractions may include hiking, wild life viewing and many other indoor and outdoor activities [64]. This is even more advantageous if these activities can be pursued throughout the year. The most common reasons for visiting are for relaxation, for the hot swimming pools, tranquil atmosphere, the scenery and natural environment, a holiday, vacation or break and to have family time/be together as a family.



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 5. The attractive landscape around Wondo Genet Hot Spring (important for hiking, bird watching, mountain biking, biking, trekking, photography, sightseeing, adventure tourist, Eco tourist, agro tourist, rural tourist).

The highest the elevation Wondo Genet provides a platform for many kinds of adventurer (allocentric) eco-tourists.

Because adventure tourists, ventured in daring or risky activities and prefer challenges [65]. For example: backpackers

and mountain climbers used the highest altitude for hiking, bungee jumping, Para-shot, rock climbing, and mountain biking and eco-trekking activities. In addition, climatic variables such as temperature or atmospheric pressure decrease with increasing elevation, which is favorable for psycho-centric kind of eco-tourists to enjoy. In addition, the lowest elevation class is not suitable for tourism and eco-tourism because of high temperature. Whereas, the lowest the lower section of Wondo Genet, provide the necessary platform for outdoor sports such river rafting, swimming, horseback riding, boating, motorcycling, and bicycling and so on.

Generally, Wondo Genet area has the potential to provide tourism and ecotourism activities like: rafting, mountain trekking, mountain biking, swimming, camping, photographing and video-graphing, picnicking, ballooning, bird watching, picnicking, and cultural tripping. Whereas, the lower section of Wondo Genet, can also provide the necessary platform for sports such horseback riding, boating, and motorcycling and etc. could be mentioned as some of the interesting opportunities in Wondo Genet Woreda.

15.4. Health and Spa Tourism

Health is the major concerns for tourists, especially those travelling to international destinations. Health issues refer to illness as well as accidents [66]. The hot spring chemical properties as found at the eye of the hot spring were specified and this allowed visitors to know the mineral composition

of the water in which they would probably be swimming. Other factors that pose a risk to the safety of visitors could involve the nature of the kind of activities undertaken, the standard of accommodation and food quality, the behavior of some tourists regarding alcohol and drug abuse, crime and also the actual mode of transport used [67].

Because of the geographical position of Wondo Genet is in the Great Rift Valley, there are countless thermal hot springs with highly concentrated mineral water that emanates naturally from the underground. According to the local guides view, the sizzling hot springs are the main drawing factor for visitors to come to Wondo Genet. Beside the recreational values, the area has paramount importance and potential for spa and medical tourism development. The local people and tourists use Wondo Genet hot springs not only for its cleanliness and cosmetic properties but also for the healing purpose. According to the key informants view the hot spring water's properties gave them better health, greater power and personal balance and more especially healing skin diseases and for relieving muscular and joint pain. In addition, it is believed that the thermal spring is bacteriological clean and hypothermic. As a result, tremendous tourists have drawn to the area for health and recreation purposes. These could be a kind of popular products in the ecotourism market development for Wondo Genet. Thus, it is recommendable that spa center has to be developed for the more spa and health tourist flow in Wondo Genet area.



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 6. Bathing and Swimming activity at Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

16. Contributions of Hot Spring Tourism Development for Domestic Tourism Development in Wondo Genet Spring

Hot spring tourism makes a significant contribution towards health, wellness and recreational tourism; it receives less attention in the academic and popular literature than the general wellness sector [68]. The use of natural hot springs is practiced mainly to achieve health improvements such as rehabilitation from accident, injury or surgery, to prevent

illness maintaining good health, unique selling points for holiday destinations, employment for local communities, encourage new developments, many countries are developing potential hot spring areas, good prospects for future expansion (untapped markets hold further potential, sustainable development possible), value adding to all recreational facilities and substantial financial savings by using geothermal energy for tourism infrastructure.

16.1. Economic Contributions

Although tourism to hot springs led to economic devel-

opment in many countries, the industry was affected by the emergence of other tourism destinations. Stakeholders should work together to facilitate domestic tourism development through expansion of business opportunities, expansion of employment opportunity, and development of collective benefits as well as diversifying noneconomic benefits for the wider community. Contributions of hot spring tourism are viewed in terms of investment and the employment opportunities that they bring [69]. This has also been raised in FGDs with the local community in Woysha Kebele as follows: Local communities who are living near to tourist attractions and who are participated in different tourism business are somehow beneficiaries from tourism business.

Tourism brings investment in public infrastructure and services, direct and indirect jobs are created, revenue is earned from tourists spending power, taxes are earned from tourism businesses and any increase in asset value, like land, and the cost of infrastructure provision [70]. Employment from tourism can be measured by the number of local people employed in tourism, the average wage earned in a community and the ratio of part-time to full-time employment in tourism enterprises [71]. Assessing employment trends in the tourism industry will assist in identifying the benefits of tourism, assist in future planning and evaluation of investment needed, and to reduce the belief among some local communities that tourism generates only low income jobs [71].

The literature review supports that tourism brings opportunities for the development of different business enterprises. Several studies have highlighted the economic benefits of tourism, including job creation and increased revenue for local businesses [72]. This aligns with the finding that tourism creates employment opportunities for job seekers. Furthermore, tourism benefits the government and private sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings. Tourism has been identified as a significant source of revenue for countries, contributing to economic growth [73]. This aligns with the finding that tourism brings foreign exchange earnings and supports economic development. The following text from the said participant explained as;

Around these hot springs, there are many restaurants, hotels, lodges, recreation center built for the visitors/tourists. As a result some people are getting employment in providing the services to the visitors and tourists; selling the local agricultural products; so the economy of the local community has been going in progress and being strong day by day (Interviewee WWCTSO1, 2023).

Moreover, the same thing has also been aired by WWCT01 as follows;

“Hot spring tourism they can have a potential to contribute significantly to the local economy by generating employment opportunities, promoting local business and attracting investments for infrastructure development” (Interviewee WWCT01, 2023).



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 7. Swimming Pool at Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

16.2. Socio-Cultural Contributions



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 8. Selling of Souvenir around Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

Hot springs are believed to have therapeutic properties due to mineral rich waters. Local communities and visitors use these natural resources for relaxation, healing various ailments like skin conditions. Hot springs hold cultural significance for the local communities. They are often associated

with traditional beliefs and rituals that have been passed down through generations. Hot spring tourist can have the potential to buy souvenirs, local foods, and local drinks and any cultural things from the local community.

16.3. Environmental Contributions

Many hot springs are located within or near to protected areas, wildlife reserves, national parks, ecotourism sites and rift valley areas in Ethiopia. This area provides habitats for diverse flora and fauna species that contribute to biodiversity conservation efforts. The presence of the hot spring raises awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources among both local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sectors and tourists. The following text witnessed this issue as follows;

Wondo genet local community have a care for the hot spring environment and ecotourism sites for sake of environmental conservation of the hot spring is necessary (Interviewee WLETGA5, 2023).



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 9. Green Environment around Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

As per local guide's interview, there are some adventurers who came to Wondo Genet with the aim of having adventurer activities like: bungee jumping and Para shot, but because of the underdeveloped ecotourism infrastructure, tourists are unable to practice and enjoy in the area. Generally, the highly suitable section of Wondo Genet area has the potential to provide ecotourism activities like: forest walking, backpacking, mountain trekking, biking, camping, photographing and video-graphing, ballooning, bird watching, picnicking and cultural tripping. Moreover, the lower section of Wondo Genet can also provide the necessary platform for outdoor sports such river rafting, swimming, horseback riding, boat-

ing, motorcycling, and bicycling and so on.

16.4. Health Contributions

Hot spring baths can be used for mentally uplifting and relaxing for people seeking alternative ways for healthy lifestyle and wellbeing [74]. Mostly domestic and international tourists have been using the hot spring water for the treatment of different diseases/physical problems besides the relaxation, recreation and leisure. The medicinal powers of hot springs have been used for the past many years and have been widely acknowledged in Europe and Japan as natural

treatment alternatives for an assortment of common sicknesses. Hot springs healing have been used for over a thousand years and have been widely accepted in Africa, Europe, China and Japan as a natural treatment option for a variety of common ailments and is well known for several therapeutic benefits such as treating illness with bath [75]. The participant mentioned above explained the truth on the ground as under;

The majority of visitors who suffered from skin illness claimed that this hot water had a satisfying impact, similar to how rheumatism sufferers reported that this hot water therapy provided a sensation of comfort in the aching body parts. However, many people came only for pleasure, wanting to experience the sensation of bathing in a hot spring (Interviewee WLETGA3, 2023).

Whereas, FGDs with the local communities witnessed it as follows;

The hot springs can help boost blood circulation, relieve the feet pain, heals the skin problem. Hot springs also can reduce stress and promote sleep. Therefore, this proven that hot a spring is good for external and internal health (Interviewee LCR3, 2023).

16.5. Tourism Contributions

Tourism sectors have been using the hot spring or geothermal resources to provide recreational facilities to the tourists or visitors [76]. These days ‘people are more aware of and tend to take care of their health and wellness any way possible. Many have been using geothermal and mineral water therapies to improve their health conditions along with the spectacular view that comes with these springs [77] has mentioned the following tourism sectors that are using the hot springs: (a) spa and wellness tourism (leisure and recreation); (b) health and medical tourism (thermalism, balneology, hydrotherapy); (c) geo-tourism and ecotourism (geothermal features as visual attractions); (d) adventure tourism (extreme geothermal environments); and (e) nature based tourism. In Ethiopia, thermal springs also contributed to tourism [78]. The thermal waters of Ethiopia attracted people due to their reputation of having curative powers. Tourism is currently responsible for the development of many thermal springs into spas, and many spas are changing their focus to recapture the essence of a true spa’s contribution to health and well-being.



Source: (Own Observation, 2023)

Figure 10. Tourist Attractions around Wondo Genet Hot Spring.

17. Barriers of Hot Spring Tourism Development in Wondo Genet Hot Spring

Wondo Genet has tremendous potential for tourism and ecotourism activity, which can boost the domestic tourism development, local economy development and provide employment opportunity. However, many different factors are highly affecting, hampering and treating the hot spring tourism development in Wondo Genet Woreda. The information obtained from both interview, observation and focus group discussion survey conferred the existed hindering factors such as: deforestation, lack of infrastructure, lack of budget, lack of marketing and promotion, poor stakeholder collaborations and etc.

17.1. Deforestations

Deforestation is the replacement of forest cover by other land use types. It is continued reported that there is deforestation of the remnant forest catchment for fuel, construction, and charcoal making purposes, in the upper hill part of Wondo Genet. In addition, [79] conferred the mass destruction of forests results disappearing of avian species which also consequences tourists decline whose primary motive is nature. Based on the interview and focus group discussions many of the forest cover a being deforested at a fast rate mainly for agriculture, charcoal production, fuel and settlement. Therefore, the exploitation of forest resource is one of the most and critical challenges facing the ecotourism resources of Wondo Genet Woreda.

17.2. Lack of Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure is a fundamental component of tourism industry [80]. i.e., road infrastructure enhances accessibility of tourists to different parts of the destination country ensures that tourists experience a comfortable transition from the plane into the borders of the destination country and vice versa. The presence of inadequate infrastructure and amenity development in Wondo Genet area as a key challenging factor for domestic tourism development [81]. At the moment, the lack of tourism facilities and infrastructure, absence of health service and absence of souvenir shops, are the main constraints for the expansion of the ecotourism demand in Wondo Genet. As such communication infrastructure allows quick and cheap communication between the origin and destination countries as well as provides maximum information about the destination thereby reducing uncertainty and fear. Other infrastructures such as pure water, health facility and recreation centers are among others believed to result in more reliable services and thus enhance the attractiveness of the destination. In addition to this, it is important to enhance accommodation capacity such as, tourist hotels, resorts, lodges and guest house [81]. The FGD discussants echoed the infrastructure of the hot spring as under;

The tourism infrastructure of Wondo Genet area is not developed to hold tourism industry. It is also the main factor that hinders the development of tourism in the study area (FGD Participant, 2023).

Furthermore, infrastructural development is the most significant part of tourism industry because it is the hub of tourism development. With good infrastructure it is impossible to think and develop tourism industry at any place, so infrastructural development is a backbone to ensure the development of tourism. The infrastructural base of a country has a power to challenge the development of tourism in a country's infrastructure as forms of an integral part of a tourism package. Further, community empowerment in road infrastructure development leads to efficient and effective utilization of public resource [82]. The participant mentioned above explained the truth on the ground as under

The local, regional and national government commitments in all levels of the hot spring development are very low. As a result of this, it is occurred failure to fulfill basic infrastructures such as quality road, bank, and insurance, basic facilities such as sanitary water and services (Interviewee LCR1, 2023).

Next to that, the data gathered from FGD discussants confirmed that there are different kinds of tourism infrastructural problem. Currently the infrastructure and facilities at the hot spring, such as the swimming pools, are not adequately maintained, and are in a state of decay with few tourists, visiting the hot springs. It should be noted that few visitors from other parts of Ethiopia or elsewhere were found during this study's investigation, as it is now frequented by local people. This has been witnessed by the interview with WWCTO4 as under;

"Many hot springs in Ethiopia are located in remote areas with limited access to transportations and basic amenities. The lack of proper roads, accommodation facilities, communication infrastructure makes it tourists very challenging to visit these sites"(Interviewee WWCTO4, 2023).

17.3. Lack of Awareness

Any development activity needs to be known by all responsible bodies in order to get recognition in the area. Tourism industry should be recognized as economic sector by go, private sectors and local community. Local communities also do not know the importance of tourism to themselves locality. The following text from the said participant explained as;

The level of awareness of local community on the importance stakeholder involvement and sustainable tourism development plays a vital roles to determine the level of participation of the local community to take part in the sustainable tourism activities at hot spring (Interviewee WWCTO4, 2023).

17.4. Lack of Marketing and Promotion

Hot spring is significant tourism products that tourism industry offers to the visitors should be promoted and marketed through an effective and continuing promotion and marketing work [83]. Promoting tourism destination has a great value to the recipient communities and to the traveling public. It is difficult to develop tourism industry in the study area without promotion and marketing. Since promotion and marketing are one of the basic elements to develop tourism. By considering these, respondents were asked about promotional and marketing activity.

A lot of natural and cultural tourism resources found in Wondo Genet. But the big problem is promotion and marketing of tourism resources of the woreda. There is no any kind of promotion and marketing activity is started in Sidama region to introduce and announce the tourism potential of the zone to the general public and visitors (Interviewee WWCTSO5, 2023).

Marketing and promotional activities are core in helping small indigenous businesses promote core messages about their products and services and access potential customers. The need to develop marketing opportunities is of major importance in overcoming the problem of accessing local enterprises 'on appropriate market. Moreover market accessibility is very important in business not only for enhancing quality of the products or services, but also for technical matters that helps to increase the revenues and sales. It was found that market accessibility has given a little attention by responsible stakeholders in Wondo genet woreda. This will lead to limited knowledge of the poor community regarding business. Although it is not adequate, hotels in the city creates market linkages through purchasing raw materials, fruits, vegetables and other materials from local communities and promotes their culture to tourists. The following text from FGD explains this issue as beneath.

To promote and increase market access of the attractions as well as goods and services that local communities supplied, we are working together with private sectors through promotion, preparing of annual events, festivity, bazaar and various sport events. Hence, local business providers, souvenir shop sellers, coffee and breakfast vendors and other business enterprises in the town can provide their products in these occasions (FGD Participant, 2023).

17.5. Lack of Budget

Budget is important to manage protected areas sustainably. Without budget it is impossible to achieve the objectives of protected areas. The FGD discussants from local communities and tourism experts aired that budget has hindered stakeholder involvement in the study area to manage the hot spring resources in sustainable manner. As Participant one participant from WWCTSO1 pointed, lack of budget hampered training and awareness creation campaigns which are backbones of stakeholder involvement in building

knowledge and skills gaps among the stakeholders of protected areas. The following text from the said participant explained as;

The hot spring had faced scarcity of budget to promote the services and facilities, to fulfill the required infrastructures and to paid well wage for the hot spring employees. As a result of this, it is happened limited number of domestic tourist flow and the created dissatisfied with the incoming tourists (Interviewee WWCTSO5, 2023).

Sustainable and long-lasting conservation finance system development is needed in order to achieve the requisite level of funding for hot spring tourism development is unable to meet cost requirements with their own earnings in Ethiopia [83]. All of the FGD and interview participants responded that,

The budget allocated to the tourism sector is very low and is not enough to run any kind of development and collaborative activity in the study area. Some of the respondents said that budget allocated to tourism is not compared with any sector why because the officials themselves do not well understand tourism and the benefit the sector.

17.6. Lack of Adequate Manpower

Hot spring tourism development requires skilled manpower working on collaborative activities rather than the routine work. However, in most stakeholder organizations, there is scarcity of skilled manpower for such activities in tourism sector. One interviewee from WWCTSO4 narrated that:

In Wondo Genet, a big problem in tourism industry is emanated from lack of professional in the field of tourism. In culture and tourism offices there is little number of professionals in the field of tourism most of the workers are from other discipline. Many number of employees come to this office as a demotion from higher positions and other come from another discipline. If somebody failed in other sectors, the administration demotes the individual by sending to culture and tourism office. Sometimes, many people refer this office in Wondo Genet as office of demoted people. Hence, more effort and collaboration is needed to hire professionals in the office.

17.7. Lack of Training Institutions

Training institutions are one of the major crucial elements in the development of tourism industry by producing educated professionals to the industry. Their existence and absence can also play great role. Education and training can consist of the encouragement of individual development, the need to advance knowledge and to be practical and relevant to the business necessities of the sector. Even though it may be debated what exactly should be taught, in general tourism training helps understanding the phenomenon of tourism and becoming more managerially oriented [84].

Interview with the WLETGA3 stated that, *Most of the tourist service centers of Wondo Genet town such as hotels, café and restaurants, pensions and others have no professional workers. Most of them told that this is due to lack of training institutions in the study area.*

On the other hand, one interviewee with WWCTSO1 stated that

Most of the owners of the hotels and restaurants are not volunteer to employ the professional workers. They give a chance to serve their relatives and family members on their hotels and other centers. Owners of hotels in Wondo genet town do not like to pay better salary to professional workers rather they are interested to hire uneducated workers from their family or relatives. This is also one of the major factors challenging the tourism development in the area.

17.8. Poor Stakeholders' Collaborations

Discussion it is generally accepted that the cooperation of various stakeholders in tourism development activities are vital. However, lack of stakeholders' cooperation in the field of tourism is the main challenge in tourism industry for its development [84]. In the case Ethiopia in general and the study area particularly in Wondo Genet hot spring the cooperation of all stakeholders for developing tourism are highly needed. However, different stakeholders are working by themselves in tourism industry as one of the determinants for developing the industry. He also distinguishes different reasons or factors for its low level of development; out of the challenges lack of cooperation of all stakeholders is the prominent one.

The tourism industry in under developed countries has various problems which have the power to hinder the further development the of tourism industry [85]. The writer focuses on the lack of cooperation among all stakeholders. From this discussion one can understand that the interconnection among stakeholders is the most vital thing for developing tourism in a destination. However, lack of cooperation among stakeholders is the determining factor for tourism development. The lack of regulation was considered to be the result of poor coordination between different government departments. Multiple government departments, including the ministry of tourism, natural resources, and rural development, should coordinate policies and programs in order to pursue the success of tourism development. International organizations, which often fund tourism projects, must also coordinate with government agencies and local non-profit organizations. The following text from WWCTSO5 explains this issue as beneath.

When local communities involved in the collaboration process, they can get opportunity to work in various jobs and work with some private organizations like hotels and related tourism enterprises. Collaboration of stakeholders increases and facilitates the number of tourist flow and income generated from the sector. Local communities in

the town are benefited from selling souvenir products around Wondo Genet hot spring and this can change the livelihood of various households. Therefore, collaboration also benefits local community (Interviewee WWCTSO5, 2023).

17.9. Poor Government Commitment

Commitment is important to accomplish means and to arrive at ends in personal life as well as at organizational level. The stakeholders of hot spring should be committed to sustainably. If they are not committed, they cannot achieve their objectives like protecting the hot spring from illegal activities. Not only this, they need to be committed to work in collaboration with their partners in managing the resource of in the hot spring. However, in Wondo Genet hot spring lack of commitment among the stakeholders hindered collaborative efforts to protect the resources of the hot spring. The stakeholders of the hot spring are from kebele to regional level but the most functional one is the collaboration between the hot spring administration and the local community. Though Woreda level stakeholders are responsible for facilitating the collaborative efforts of hot spring management by sense of ownership, their commitment is very weak. The government commitments in all levels of the hot spring development are very low. As a result of this, it is occurred failure to fulfill basic infrastructures such as quality road, better telecommunication infrastructure and sanitary water supply. A study conducted by [85] on hot spring tourism in china found that poor government commitment was one of the main challenge faced by the industry. In contrast countries with strong government commitment towards hot spring tourism development have seen significant success in attracting visitors and generating economic benefits.

18. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following possible recommendations should be suggested to concerned stakeholders for betterment of hot spring tourism in sustainable tourism development in the study area.

- 1) *With respect to designing Development Program/Strategy:* In order to increase the contribution of hot spring tourism as a means of employment creation and income generation, there is a need to establish and design effective development programs at the community level that will create opportunities for the local people to take part and be employed in various tourism businesses.
- 2) *With respect to awareness Creation, Training and Capacity Building:* Awareness creation and training are important for successful developing hot spring tourism and domestic tourism development activities. So the local authorities, NGOs, local universities, industry partners, private sector education institutes and poten-

tial training providers cooperation is important to meet the objective of hot spring tourism development.

- 3) *With respect to empowering Local Community in Tourism Investment*: The finding of the study showed that there is low level of hot spring tourism practice in the study area. So empowering local communities in tourism and related business is important for sustainable tourism development is essential. An investment must be promoted in different business such as restaurants, hotels, lodges, tour operators, car rental, souvenirs, cultural cloth and others.
- 4) *With respect to infrastructural Development*: Infrastructural development plays a vital role in the development of hot spring tourism and domestic tourism development. A tourist attraction is not sufficient to satisfy the tourist since it must be complemented by other tourist facilities and a supporting infrastructure. Tourist infrastructure and other amenities should meet at least a certain minimum acceptable standards.
- 5) *With respect to linking Hot spring Tourism with Local Economy*: Tourism has the biggest potential, if linkages with the local economy are existent, to contribute to sustainable tourism development and thus to poverty reduction. So as to realize and ensure the development of the local community, economically, socially and financially viable linkages should be made between the local economy and tourism business.
- 6) *With respect to marketing and promotion campaign*: Establishing strong marketing campaign especially promotion of Wondo genet hot spring. Using of both broadcast and printed media should be established to raise the awareness of tourists to visit the area. An inclusive tourism marketing strategy has to be developed by accompanying tourism packages such us; (ecotourism, adventure tourism, hot spring tourism, agro-tourism, and cultural tourism) in the tour packages or made part of the tour transits of visitors who would like to go to other nearby sites.
- 7) *With respect to stakeholders Collaborations*: The role of the local community and the local authorities becomes very important for the proper management of the hot springs. The local communities, municipalities, and provincial governments should work in joint collaboration adapting clear policies and upholding law and order to develop and manage physical infrastructures required.

Abbreviations

WTO	World Tourism Organization
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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