



HAWASSA UNIVERSITY

WONDO GENET COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SCHOOL OF WILDLIFE AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM: WILDLIFE ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION (MSc)

THESIS TITLE: **Opportunities and Challenges of Community-Based Ecotourism
Development for Sustainable Protected Area Management: the case of Gambella National
Park**

MSC THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL

BY

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WONDO GENET, ETHIOPIA

APPROVAL LETTER



Hawassa University, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources
School of Wildlife and Protected area Management

August 12, 2021

To Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network

Subject: Approval Letter

This is to certify that the thesis proposal entitled "**Opportunities and Challenges of Community-Based Ecotourism Development for Sustainable Protected Area Management: the case of Gambella national park**" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with specialization in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resource, and by Geleta Shasho under our supervision. Therefore we recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence here is the thesis proposal to the Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resource.

Besides, we know his potential to work independently. Therefore, we are confident that he will efficiently under take proposed research under our close supervision.

Sincerely,

Submitted by:

Geleta shasho

16/8/2021

Name of Student

Signature

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LIST OF ACRONOMS

CBET	Community-Based Ecotourism
CSA	Census Statical Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GNP	Gambella National Park
PA	Protected Area
SPSS	Statistical package for social science
WWF	World Wildlife Foundation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) initiatives are bottom-up activities that bring different stakeholders to work for achieving desired goals of conservation, local livelihood improvement and development of tourist facilities (Ven, 2015). CBET provides a more sustainable form of livelihood for local communities, encourage communities themselves to be more directly involved in conservation and generate more income as well as local communities benefit from the conservation measures in protected areas (PA) (WWF, 2001). CBET as a means of reducing local threats to biodiversity, such as expanding agriculture, unsustainable harvesting of wild plants and animals, and killing wildlife that threatens peoples' crops, their livestock or themselves. The premise is that ecotourism depends on maintaining attractive natural landscapes and a rich flora and fauna; therefore, helping communities earn money from ecotourism provides both an incentive for conservation and an economic alternative to destructive activities (Salafsky *et al.*, 2001).

Community-based Ecotourism has been practiced in many forms, but in the broadest sense includes natural resources or biodiversity conservation by, for, and with the local community through Ecotourism activities (Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2012). The co-existence of people and nature, as distinct from protectionism and the segregation of people and nature, is its central characteristic in ecotourism (Eshetu, 2014). It offers both an opportunity and threat to the communities. If the management and capacity building of local communities are not done in parallel, opportunities will be lost and significant damage will be caused. Protected areas, especially those found in the tropics and in less developed countries, contain many of the world's greatest ecotourism attractions (Bhoj and Jan, 2007). These attractions may consist of one or a combination of rare or endemic species of flora or fauna, abundant wildlife, high indices of species diversity and unusual or spectacular geomorphologic formations.

According to Gray (2003), ecotourism offers a market-based approach for the pursuit of both conservation and development. It promotes sustainable use of biodiversity in order to provide opportunities for revenue generation and employment (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). This is particularly the case with CBET because the host community takes part in the decision-making processes relating to ecotourism development (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Active local participation in decision making is a prerequisite if benefits are to reach communities (Li, 2006). The underlying principle of CBET is that the natural environment must pay for itself by generating economic benefits for the local community and the economic benefits derived should foster pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (Kiss, 2004 & Idajati *et al.*, 2016).

Ethiopia is a country which is endowed with the vast array of ecotourism resources, cultural, historical, archaeological, protected area and other natural attractions (Tesfaye, 2017). Moreover, strong traditions have long contributed to Ethiopia's material wealth by producing illuminated parchment manuscripts, pottery, basketry, leatherwork, woodwork, metalwork, and jewelry, and making it perhaps a perfect country for the development of community-based ecotourism ventures (Teshome *et al.*, 2018). Even though community participation is important especially in protected area management, there are several constraints encountered in household participation in community-based ecotourism. Studies by (Kim *et al.*, 2019 & Amare, 2015) have been discussed the lack of financial viability and length of residency in the area. Generally, households are heterogeneous with unequal opportunities and different expectations. For that reason, households face limited information, resources, and access to training. Another constraint pointed out by Ketema (2015) was the lack of human and financial resources as well as the dominance of elite people in tourism participations.

Gambella national park (GNP) is one of Ethiopian national park is home to a wildlife potential of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles, some species of which are of internationally importance (Gebresenbet *et al.*, 2018), the region represents a large and important proportion of the wildlife of Ethiopia predominantly require conservation and local community collaboration in the management of national park. Not only natural attraction but also there are lot of cultural attractions which create noble opportunity for the development of community-based ecotourism throughout participating in conservation and management of the park.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Kiper (2013), the aim of CBET is to conserve resources, especially biological diversity, and maintain sustainable use of resources, which can bring ecological experience to travelers, conserve the ecological environment and gain economic benefit. It helps to involve local communities in the conservation of the ecology and biodiversity of the area.

Ecotourism development in Ethiopia is getting increasing interest and attention because the country has a unique biodiversity, spectacular topographic features and rich cultural resources. Though these valuable resources enable Ethiopia to develop community-based ecotourism and empower local communities, while conserving the natural and cultural landscape, ecotourism development has its own challenges (Mulugeta, 2012). Nonetheless, regardless of its potential Ethiopia is not getting significant benefit due to immense problems. The same as true for Gambella national park, it encompassed large array of biological resource in the national park but, the involvement and participation of local community in such biological conservation is very low and majority of community practiced against conservation of the national park (Gebresenbet *et al.*, 2018). For the sake of changing view point of local community towards conservation through involving them in community-based ecotourism is the best way to attract community towards the

conservation idea of national park. Also, many researchers in Ethiopia have been focused on well-developed national park such as Semen mountains national park (Mulugeta, 2011), and Bale Mountains National Park (Demeke and Verma, 2014) related with community-based ecotourism development. Remote national park such as Gambella national park is untouched. Therefore, to strength and encourage the practice of community-based ecotourism in order to enhance the sustainability of protected area management. It is necessary to identify its opportunities and challenges.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) become a two-edged sword for achieving natural resource conservation an improved livelihoods of host communities (Spenceley & Snyman, 2012). For rural communities, whose main sources of livelihood are natural resources such as forests, there is the risk of overexploitation of these natural resources. Because most of the people are farmers, loggers, miners, hunters, and gatherers, the pursuit of their economic activities could eventually result in the depletion of natural resources. However, CBET provides a more sustainable way of managing these natural resources by fostering conservation through the involvement of local communities, which in turn provides economic incentives to the communities.

1.4 General objective

- ❖ To identify opportunities and challenges of CBET development for sustainable PA management in the study area.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

- To identify opportunities of CBET development in the study area
- To examine challenges of CBET development in the study area
- To provide future line improvement of CBET development for sustainable PA management

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Description of the study Area

Gambella National Park (GNP) is located 850 km west of Addis Ababa. Its location is between 33045'- 34015' E and 07030'- 08015'N at the west part of Gambella town, in the Gambella National Regional State. The mean annual temperature of the region varies from 17.3⁰C to 28.3⁰ C. It was established as a protected area in 1973 to conserve a diverse assemblage of wildlife and unique habitats. The Major wildlife conserved includes white-eared Kob, Nile Lechwe, Roan Antelope, Topi and Elephant (Rolkier *et al.*, 2015).

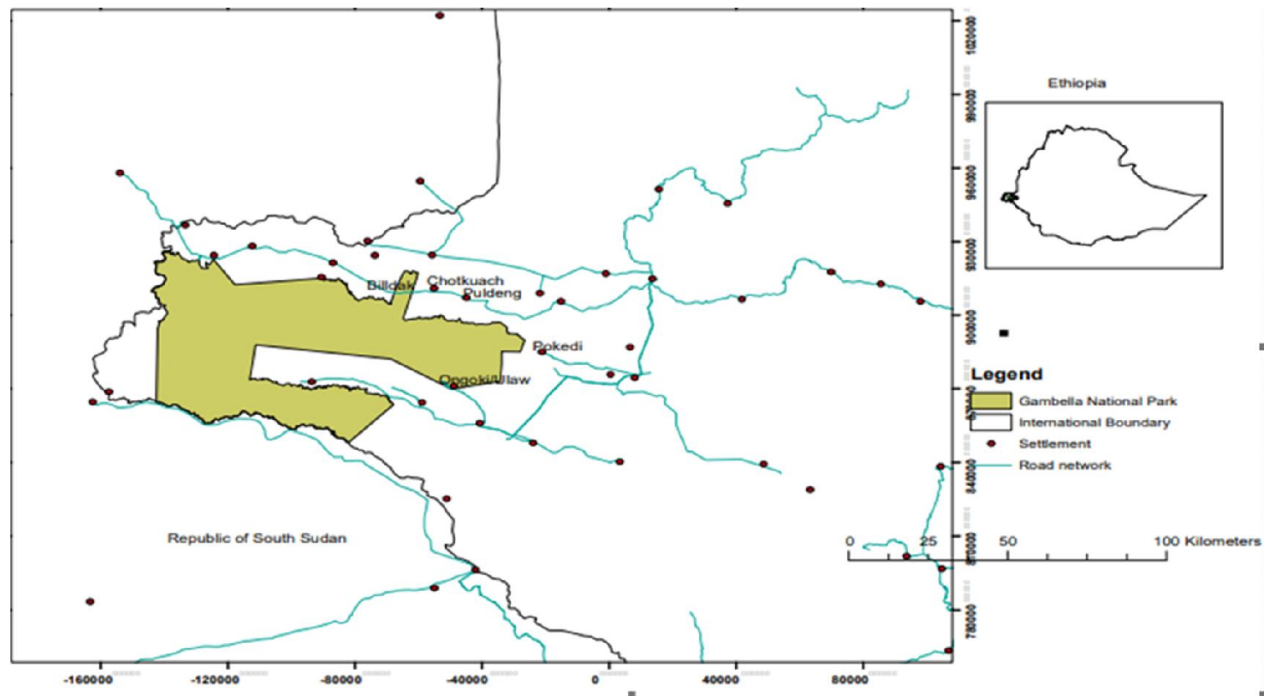


Figure 2: Map of the study Area (source: Ethio- GIS Data Base, ESRI ARC_GIS 9.3, 2008)

The region has a population of approximately 365,000, with two main ethnic groups, Anuak (21% of total population) and Nuer (46% of total population) (CSA, 2007). The Anuak are resident agriculturalists, fisherfolk, and hunters, and the Nuer are pastoralists and agro-pastoralists (Gebeyehu, 2013).

2.2 Preliminary survey

The preliminary survey was conducted for the sake of gathering reliable information. During this period all the available and relevant information and literature on the Gambella National Park and Peoples around the parks was reviewed and assessed.

2.3 Sampling Technique and size determination

According to the preliminary information gathered, the six kebeles will be selected purposively as study samples. Both female and male respondents will be selected from those six kebeles, proportionally. The total numbers of households in this study were 5152 (Gambella Agricultural and natural resource Bureau, 2017).and out of which 789, 931,893, 676, 829 and 1052 house holders live in *Pokedi, Olaw, Onkongi, Poldiang Choet kouch* and *Beldag* respectively. About 152 samples unit will be selected randomly after it is computed through the following sample determination formula adapted from Israel (1992). Number of sample share will be determined proportionally based on the total number of populations each kebele holds.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; N = the total population that will be studied n = the required sample size e = the precision level which is = ($\pm 10\%$) Where Confidence Level is 95% at $P = \pm 5$ (maximum variability). Accordingly, 23, 27, 26, 20, 24 and 32 sample householders Will be taken from *Pokedi, Olaw, Onkongi, Poldiang Choet kouch* and *Beldag* respectively.

2.4 Data collection Methods

Data collection will be conducted from September-October 2021. It will be involving a sample of 172 local people from six villages in two different side communities adjacent to the Gambella National Park. Three villages will be selected from Site 1 (where Agnuak population predominant) and Site 2 (where Nuer population predominant) respectively. The study will be carried out by

means of a semi structured questionnaire survey which administered to members of the household on a random manner based on first come first serve basis and alternating male and female respondent's as much as possible and different age groups (Kumssa and Bekele, 2013). Focus group discussion (FGD) that will be designed and conducted in each six sampled villages to interact with representatives of the intended survey population and to gain relevant information about the opportunities and challenges of CBET development and its practice towards national park conservation and management through Ecotourism activity. Field observation will be also conducted to observe the natural resources of the park, such as flora, fauna, landscape, infrastructure, services and facilities and condition of biodiversity, for CBET development in GNP.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data from different sources Will be analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16. Will be used to analyze the data. Each question will be coded and Cross-sectional descriptive statistics will be carried out to calculate frequencies, and to allow cross-tabulations (Field, 2000). Result of FGD will analyzed by content analysis method and narrative fashion.

2.6 Expected Outcome

The study will be reflected out the attitude of community towards CBET development, its opportunities and challenges identified by representative respondents through Household questionnaire and FGD. It hoped that this study will encourage and initiate various stakeholders working in the area and communities to rethink their activities and take action for the running of successful PA management through Ecotourism. The recommendations, which are forwarded in this study, will encourage concerned officials to develop and implement CBET in GNP. The findings of the study are also believed to maximize the positive effects of CBET in GNP towards biodiversity conservation and socio- economic development.

3. WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

3.1 Work plan

Table 1: work plan of the activities

No.	Activity descriptions	Time plan (August 2021- Apr 2022)									
		Aug	Sep	Oct	Dec	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
1	Preliminary survey	XX									
2	Proposal writing	XX									
3	Preparation of data collection		XX								
4	Data collection		XX	XX							
5	Organizing the collected data				XX						
6	Data analysis					XX					
7	Write up, submission and subsequent modifications of thesis						XX	XX			
8	Final submission and thesis presentation								XX		

3.2 Budget plan

Table 2: Transport cost

No	Item	Days/duration	Per-day	Total cost/birr
1	Fuel	50	35L (1L=30birr)	52,500
2	Car rent	50	1200	60,000
Sub-total				112,500

Table 3: personnel expense/allowance/

No	Budget category	persons	Duration (days)	Per-diem	Total cost/birr
1	Advisor	1			10,000
2	Data collection (researcher)	1	50	500	25,000
3	Field assistant	1	10	250	2500
4	Data collectors	3	40	150	18,000
5	Driver	1	50	500	25,000
Subtotal					80,500

Table 4: Office supply and material cost

No	Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total price/birr
1	Field note book	Number	30	70.00	2100
2	Print service	Number	300 pages	4.00	1200
3	Pen	Number	35	15.00	525
4	Pencil	Number	15	5.00	75
5	Flash disk (64Gb)	Number	2	600.00	1200
6	External hard disk	Number	3	2000.00	6,000
7	CD-R	Number	20	30.00	600
Sub total					11,700

Table 5: Budget summary

No.	Cost description	Subtotal cost/birr
1	Transportation cost	112,500
2	Personnel cost	80,500
3	Office supply and Material cost	11,700
6	Total cost	204,700
7	Contingency allowance (10%)	20,470
Grand total cost		<u>225,170</u>

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5. ANNEXES

Household survey questionnaires

The purpose of these questionnaires is to gather the necessary and fundamental information for my study concerning the title; Challenges and opportunities for the Development of Community based Ecotourism for sustainable protected area management the Gambella national park national park. I kindly request your cooperation to fill out the questionnaire accurately considering the importance of the study. I can assure you that this research stands for academic purpose. Therefore, your genuine and correct response has a great value and role in my thesis and to the study area. I appreciate your honest and correct response to the questions listed below. So, I ask you kindly to fill the questionnaires carefully and appropriately.

Part one: personal Information and Socio-economic profile

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age _____
3. Educational background: College diploma Degree and above High school
Reading and writing illiterate
4. Marital status; single married widowed divorced
5. How many members of your household are currently living with you?
Male _____ Female _____ total _____
6. What is your main source of income for the household? Livestock rearing Subsistence agriculture both agricultural and livestock rearing Sale of forest products
Sale of livestock products government employee other (specify) _____
7. Is your yearly income enough to support your families? Yes No

Part two: Interest and attitude related questions of the park and towards CBET development

CBET Development Instructions; please read/listen the statements and explain or rate your degree of agreement by ticking the corresponding numbers and value; strongly agreed (1) agreed (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) disagree (4) strongly disagree (5)

Degree of opinion						
No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Do you believe about community-based ecotourism and Sustainable PA management?					
2	How much do you agree on ecotourism merit for socio economic development of the local community?					
3	Do you believe you are interested to welcome and host tourists?					
4	Do you think CBET can be an ideal tool and promotes conservation of natural resources in Gambella national park?					
5	Do you believe that getting economic benefit from national park conservation and management through CBET?					
6	Do you believe that you have been receiving some benefits from Gambella national park tourism activities which undertaken in your community?					
7	Do you believe that CBET enhance community livelihood if Community based ecotourism developed in the park, it will bring you a sustainable means of livelihood development?					
8	How much do you agree on the institutional support of the government and NGOs for the development CBET?					
9	Is that Ecotourism has positive social and environmental impact?					
10	Are you participate in conservation of national park and satisfied with benefit gain from national park?					

Open questions/ FGD/

1. Do you get any benefit from the park of Gambella? Yes No

2. If you answer is “yes” for question no 8, what kind of benefits do you get? Please specify-----

3. Have you seen the tourists coming to visit the park? Yes No

4. Did you benefited from the coming of tourists? Yes No If you say “yes” How----

5. How do you approach towards tourists when you contact them? Very friendly Friendly
Unfriendly Very unfriendly

6. Do know about community-based ecotourism and importance of PA Conservation? Yes
No

7. Do you think the Gambella national park is suitable for the development of community-based
ecotourism? Yes No Why? Elaborate the reasons -----

8. If your answer is “yes” for question no 15, do you agree to be developed at the area? Yes
No

9. Do you think that you will be beneficial if community-based ecotourism would be developed in
your area? Yes No

10 If your answer is “yes” for question no 17 how you will participate and contribute in CBET and
park management and conservation practice? -----

11. what are the opportunities of CBE development for Gambella national park? Please identify
them-----

12. what are the challenges of CBET development for Gambella national park which are hindered
a CBET practices? Please identify them-----

13. What mitigations should be done to enhance CBET development through sustaining park
resource management? Please Identify them -----

Please if you have ideas you want to add.....

Thank you very much for your consideration!

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)



**GELETA
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OBJECTIVE

To work in an ecological environment which encourages me to succeed and grow professionally where I can utilize my skills and knowledge appropriately as researcher

PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth : May, 14, 1996
Marital Status : Single
Nationality : Ethiopian
Birth place : Selale, North shoa, Ethiopia

SKILLS

Language skills Afaan oromo; fluent, Amharic; Excellent, English; Excellent
Research skill: very good
Computer: Major computer data entry programmes

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EXPERIENCE

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Graduate assistant
Cease to launch master programm in Hawassa University, Ethiopia.

EDUCATION

2016-2019 **Wolkite university**
Bsc in wildlife and ecotourism management

September, 2020 - present **Hawassa university**
MSc degree in wildlife ecology and conservation