



Potential Resources and Management Challenges for Heritage Tourism Development in Amhara Sayint Woreda, South Wollo Zone, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the potential and challenges of heritage tourism development in Amhara Sayint Woreda. A qualitative research approach was employed by the researchers. The study targeted various groups, including local community elders residing in the study area, Amhara Sayint Woreda culture and tourism office employees, heritage owners, Amhara Sayint Woreda church diocese, and church administrators. Non-probability sampling methods, specifically purposive and snowball sampling were used. The research involved 25 key informants and four focus group discussions. Amhara Sayint Woreda possesses significant heritage potential for the growth of the tourism industry. The region has historically served as a political center for local leaders and the country, resulting in the establishment of various historical sites such as monasteries, churches, royal camps and palaces, and settlement areas. However, despite the area's rich cultural heritage, substantial challenges are currently impeding its tourism development. The main obstacles include a lack of awareness, inadequate conservation practices, and the illicit trafficking of historical sites.

Keywords: Potential resources, Management challenges, Heritage tourism development, Amhara Sayint Woreda and South Wollo Zone

INTRODUCTION

Heritage tourism is one of the largest, most prevalent, and fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry today (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Particularly in the developing world, this sector is often viewed as a significant potential panacea for poverty alleviation and community economic development (UNWTO, 2015). Heritage tourism utilizes the tangible and intangible past as tourism resources. Visiting historic sites, cultural landmarks, historic towns, and settlements, attending festivals, and even visiting museums have always been part of the grand tourism experience. These experiences of travelers seeing and experiencing built cultural heritage and contemporary culture are called heritage tourism (Timothy, 2011).

Governments in Africa are increasingly interested in tourism as a source of growth and diversification. Recent work indicates that tourism

in Africa can effectively contribute to economic development under the right circumstances (Nurhussen, 2016). African countries are known for their diverse cultures, ways of life, and protected areas. However, despite Ethiopia having many attractions, the country is not benefiting from these sites (Tafesse, 2016).

Eastern Africa is a leading tourist destination in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region's potential in the tourism industry can be attributed to its natural resources, which have significantly contributed to the economic growth and development of countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and more recently, Rwanda (Atsbeha, 2015). Heritage provides substantial economic benefits. It is essential to manage tourism-related development pressures through a sound governance structure that prioritizes heritage conservation (The Getty Conservation Institute, 2010). There are several reasons to conserve cultural heritage today,

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including safeguarding artistic and aesthetic values, maintaining environmental diversity, preserving collective nostalgia, and generating economic benefits (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Greffe, 2004).

Despite the study area being blessed with both tangible and intangible heritage resources, these resources have not been studied and explored beyond a simple survey and identification. Therefore, this study aims to identify and describe the potential resources and management challenges of heritage tourism development in Amhara Sayint Woreda, South Wollo Zone. This is done through scientific investigation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ethiopia possesses unparalleled potential to become a top tourist destination in Africa due to its abundant and diverse heritage. Ethiopia's cultural and historic treasures are often the primary motivation for visiting. The country is blessed with numerous tourist attractions, encompassing both physical and cultural environments, which hold significant importance for its tourism development. However, despite this immense potential, tourism in Ethiopia remains underdeveloped due to various factors such as limited financial resources, inadequate security systems, unclear boundaries, insufficient infrastructure, looting, absence of impact assessments, lack of local participation, and vandalism (Kidane-Mariam, 2015; ICOMOS, 2005). Global Heritage Fund (2009) says preservation and development efforts are not without risks. These risks include social disparities, political instabilities, mass tourism, unplanned development, looting, neglect, conflicts, weak economic conditions, and natural disasters. These risks can threaten and destroy heritage sites. Therefore, one of the main challenges in existing tourism literature is finding a balance between heritage tourism and conservation (McKercher and du Cros, 2002).

Several researchers have conducted studies on the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church's (EOTC) contribution to tourism development. Ermias (2014) assessed the religious tourism potential of Gishen Mariam, Zelalem (2013) evaluated the heritage tourism potential of the EOTC in general and the Entoto complex in particular, Aselefech (2014) explored the role of the EOTC in the development of adult education, Binayew and Yiheyis (2016) investigated the potentials and contributions of tourism for economic development in the Lake Tana region, and Mezmur (2011) identified the prominent problems leading to the decline of traditional schools associated with the EOTC. However, despite these studies, there is still a dearth of adequate and detailed research in the field. This is particularly in heritage management

and heritage tourism. Hence, it is crucial to conduct this study to provide comprehensive documentation. It will assess the current conditions, promote awareness, and recommend possible ways to protect the sites in the study area. Therefore, this study is intended to:

- ✓ Assess the potential resources for cultural heritage tourism development in Amhara Sayint Woreda
- ✓ To identify the challenges of heritage management for cultural tourism development in Amhara Sayint Woreda

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Description of the Study Area

Amhara Sayint Woreda is one of the 22 Woredas in the Administrative South Wollo Zone, situated west of Dessie City at 200 Kilometers. It is approximately 589 Kilometers from the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, and about 600 Kilometres from the regional capital city of Bahir Dar. Amhara Sayint Woreda is bordered by Mqidela Woreda to the north, Mehal Sayint and Debresina Woreda to the south, Legambo Woreda to the east, and South Gondar and East Gojjam Zones to the west. The Woreda consists of 35 kebeles, including 34 rural kebeles and 1 urban kebele (Amhara Sayint Woreda Communication Office, 2017).

Research Design and Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach, aiming to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world by exploring people's social and material circumstances, experiences, perspectives, and histories (Kothari, 2004). The researchers used a descriptive research design based on the objective of the research. The study also followed a cross-sectional research design in terms of time dimension, observing one point at a time.

Target Population of the Study

The target population for this study included the local community elders residing in the study area, employees of the Amhara Sayint Woreda culture and tourism office, heritage owners, church community members, and employees of the South Wollo Zone Culture and Tourism department.

Sampling Techniques and Size Determination

The researchers employed a non-probability sampling method for this study. Individuals were interviewed from the community elders and heritage owners using the snowball sampling method. The employees of the Amhara Sayint Woreda culture and tourism office (including the office head and heritage conservation and tourism development experts) and the employees of the South Wollo Zone culture and tourism department (heritage conservation and tourism development

experts) were purposefully selected for interviews based on their proximity and experience related to heritage potential and management challenges.

Sources of Data and Collection Instrument

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Various techniques were employed to collect both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and field observations. Secondary data were gathered from local government office reports, brochures, folders, magazines, plans, and other related documents. Semi-structured one-to-one and face-to-face interviews were conducted for this research. The interview questionnaire was initially prepared in English and then translated into the Amharic language. Semi-structured interviews are widely used as they allow for open expression of viewpoints from the interviewees (Flick, 2006).

Personal observation was also employed to assess the potentials and challenges of heritage in the study area, utilizing an observation checklist and visiting the study sites to understand the current situation regarding heritage potentials and challenges. Focus group discussions were conducted with employees of the Amhara Sayint Woreda culture and tourism office and local community elders to gather additional insight

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Heritage Tourism Potentials of Amhara Sayint Woreda

Monastery of Tedibabe Maryam

The church is situated at 016 Kebele, 28 Kilometers from Sayint Adjbar, the town of Amhara Sayint Woreda. It is located 228 Kilometers away from Dessie, the capital of South Wollo Administrative Zone, and 650 Kilometres from Addis Ababa. The church's location is bordered by Guameda Kebele to the west, Smada Woreda to the north, Waro Kebele to the east, and Ajbar Town to the south (Amhara Sayint Woreda Rural Development Office, 2018).

The church of Tedibabe Maryam is situated with the two rivers Gedamaya and Gunda flowing underneath. These rivers are tributaries of the Nile and Beshilo Rivers, adding to the church's scenic view and enhancing its beauty and attractiveness (Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office, 2018). The church of Tedibabe Maryam is one of the most magnificent ancient and historic churches in the country, particularly in the region, with its origins dating back to 982 BC. It is also believed to be a site where sacrifices were performed before the arrival of Christianity, as shared by informant Aba Gebre Tsadik during an interview on May 3rd, 2021.

Currently, the researchers have observed four old-age buildings within the churchyards: the church itself, the treasure house, the tombs where various saints' coffins are kept, and the bell house. The church houses numerous mummified remains of saints, believed to have been brought from Egypt and Israel, including the hair of St. Hana and the remains of five children killed by King Herodias. Additionally, the remains of several Ethiopian kings are said to rest in this house, known as 'Enkullal Ginb' among the local community.

It is believed that the tomb contains the skeletons of six Ethiopian kings: Emperor Tewodros I (1403-1406), Emperor Yisshaq (1429 – 1430), Emperor Endirias (1430-1433), Emperor Eskindr (1470-1487), Emperor Minas (1551-1556), Tsehafie Lahim Bistrate Michael (the Lord of Shewa and Gondar), as well as Etege Romane Worq (wife of Emperor Naod), and King Gelawdewos (1533-1551), as shared by informants Aba Girum and Leke Tiguan Debebe during interviews on April 25th and 29th, 2018, respectively.

According to local informants Debebe and Aba Sisay, there is an ancient hair preserved within the church's Meqides. This hair is believed to belong to St. Hana, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and is stored in a beautifully decorated pot. The informants believe that the hair was introduced into the church during the reign of Dawit I, when other treasures from Israel were brought to the area.



Figure 1: The Tomb house of Atse Gelawdewos and other Saints

Source: Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office, 2021

The walls of the Tedibabe Maryam church are adorned with exquisite Gondarine ecclesiastical mural paintings. These paintings depict the story of Jesus Christ, starting from his childhood to the resurrection, conveying profound biblical messages. Additionally, the walls feature vibrant depictions of various kings and dignitaries, showcasing their splendour through astonishing colours. The entire mural painting is executed in the traditional Ethiopian painter style. It is important to note that the mural painting is accessible

to tourists only from the date of the crucifixion until June 12th, as it remains covered with a curtain during other times, as shared by informant Aba Girum during an interview on March 25th, 2021.

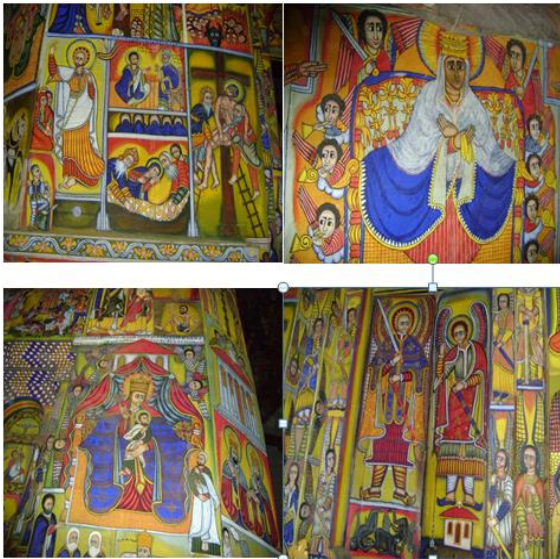


Figure 2: Mural Paintings of Tedibabe Maryam Church (Source: Photograph by the researchers, 2021).

The church of Tedibabe Maryam underwent decoration and painting from August 1913 to November 1916 E.C., sponsored by King Hailessilassie. Two painters, Aleqa Mengstu Zebhere Amhara Sayint and Aleqa Alemu Zebhere Begemdir, were commissioned for the task. Although they lacked formal training in specialized decoration and painting, they developed unique skills over time and experience. The remarkable selection of colours and their decorative techniques have a captivating effect on any visitor. Despite the paintings being over 100 years old, they still appear fresh and vibrant.

On the East side of the Meqides's window, the date of the mural paintings, the names of the renowned painters, and the sponsors were inscribed. Among the manuscripts displayed in the church, the Hawi book written in the 4th century, the Hagiography of Adam and Giworgis Woldeamin, Abushahir, Sinodos, Kibrenegest, Tarikenegest, Sinkisar, Gedile Abriha, Atsibha, Metsehafe Liqawent, Metsihafe Menekosat, and others can be found. The church acquired these manuscripts through various means, including donations, bequests, and inscriptions by the church servants of that time, as shared during an interview with Aba Muche in 2021.



Figure 3: Some manuscript books of the church
Source: Amhara SayintWoreda culture and tourism office, 2021.

“Almost the manuscripts displayed in the treasure house are religious in their content and handwritten with Ge’ez, the ancient language of Ethiopia” (Informant Aba Teferie and Aba Muche, 2021).

These manuscripts are housed in the treasure household valuable information. Among them, the four Gospels are coated with gold plates and the Digwa (book of songs) stands out due to its impressive size. The pages of the Digwa are beautifully adorned with a variety of colours and designs, capturing the attention of visitors. Even the page borders are embellished with intricate patterns such as grasses, leaves, and geometrical shapes.

One of the notable crosses in the Tedibabe Maryam Church is known as the Nii'wa Biigu, meaning "Behold the Lamb" in the local language. It is believed to be the cross used by St. John to baptize Jesus Christ. This cross measures 20 x 16 cm and are crafted from chased silver or silver-dipped bronze. Upon observing the cross, the researchers noticed the engraved and gilded figure of St. Mika'el facing right, with raised hands and a bowed head, while his wings flow gracefully behind him. On the reverse side, there are Cherubim depicted with four symbolic pairs of wings, stretching along the four arms of the cross. This cross serves as a reliquary, with the front panel opening outward. Inside the open panel, there is a figure of St. Gabriel, hands clasped before him, with his wings, attire, and halo partially gilded. Each of the three figures has their names engraved in Ethiopic script above their heads.



Figure 4: The Cross of Nii'waBiigu (Source: Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office, 2021)

The Menber Dawit, or the chair of King Dawit, is an extraordinary movable treasure of the church adorned with gold, silver, wood, and leather. This historic chair exudes magnificence and glamour, and remarkably, it still appears new despite its age. Various arrows, presented by distinguished individuals, are also displayed within the church.

The Menber Dawit chair, along with other sacred treasures like the Icon of St. Luke and various other icons, as well as mummified remains of saints from Israel and Egypt, were brought to the church during the reign of Emperor Dawit. They were initially brought to a place called Sinar and later, after the passing of Emperor Dawit I, Emperor Zeryakob transported them to the Tedibabe Maryam church, along with the True Cross and other valuable artifacts (informant Aba Girum, interviewed on March 29th, 2021).



Figure 5: MenberDawit/chair of David
Source: Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office, 2021

Wogde Teklehaimanot Cave Church

The Wogde Teklehaimanot Cave Church is in Ambasenber Kebele 012, Amhara Sayint Woreda, South Wollo Zone, in the Amhara National Regional State. It is situated approximately 40 km west of Adjibar, the town of Amhara Sayint Woreda (Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture & Tourism Office, 2012).

According to key informants, the name "Wogde" has two possible origins. The first hypothesis suggests that when Abune Teklehaimanot was petitioned, the Devil was affecting the community. Abune Teklehaimanot

instructed the Devil to move away, and since that incident, the place came to be known as Wogde. The second hypothesis is that the founder of the church, Tsehafie Lahim Bisrate Michael, named the church after his birthplace, which is called "Wogde" in Shewa (informants Aba Ambaye and Qes Seyifu, 2021).



Figure 6: The view of Wogde Teklehaimanot Cave Church and Spain Cave the church (B) (Source: Photograph by the researchers, 2021)

According to local accounts, the original church was established by Tsehafie Lahim Bisrate Michael in the 12th century. The construction of the church utilized stone, wood, and limestone as the primary raw materials (Informant Qes Meliknew). Upon observing the cave, the researchers noted the presence of significant tangible cultural artifacts. Among the debris of the church, various items were discovered, including Qene Mahelate (religious songs), Qedist (Holy Scriptures), and Qidesteqidusan/Meqides (sacred objects). Additionally, within the church compound and inside the cave, there were remnants such as a gallows tree (used for chaplets, rosaries, and fly whisks), a spa, the skeleton of Areyanetsegahu Deke Mezmur (a religious song), and skeletons of regional lords (informants Aba Girum and Leke Tiguhan Debebe, interviewed on April 25th and 29th, 2018, respectively). Nowadays the cave church does not have full religious practice because the road to the entrance of the cave is rocky slope and there is no place of tomb. So, during 1915 the local worshiper built another church at the Plato in the Southeastern direction.

Shifal Medehanialem Church

The Cave Church of Shifal Medehanialem is in Shego Dfer 04 kebele in the Eastern direction of Adjibar the town of Amhara Sayint Woreda away from 13 km and with an elevation of 2758m above sea level. The entrance of the cave measures 11 meters, not opening about 2 meters serving as the door of the cave.



Figure 7: Inside and outside view of the Cave (A) and new building Church of Shifal Medehanialem (B) (Source: Photograph by the researchers, 2021)

During the 1920s, the cave served as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, housing Qene Mahelate, Qedist, and Qidesteqidusan/Meqidides. According to local accounts, the name "Shifal" originated from the time when St. Mary and her child, accompanied by Joseph, travelled to Egypt and later returned to Israel. During their journey, they stayed in this area and performed many miracles. As a result, the place became known as Shifal (informants Tareegn interviewed on March 7th, 2021).

Washa Maryam Cave Church is located in Kebele 011, approximately 30 km west of Adjibar, the town of Amhara Sayint Woreda, in the specific area of Alichabena. Geographically, Washa Maryam is situated on a cliff and canyon (Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office).



Figure 8: The View of Cave Church of Washa Maryam (A) and skeleton of holiness (B) (Source: Photograph by the researchers, 2021)

The cave has 2 main sections, the first section serves as the site of the tomb and commemorates the monthly drinking ale or room of "Zikr", and the second one serves as the church which contains Qene Mahelate, Qedist and Qidesteqidusan/ Meqidides. When we enter from Qine Mahilet to Qedist on the right side of the

cave we get a full skeleton of holiness. Until now a day the cave has served as a church (informant Qes Mandefro interviewed on March 8th, 2021).

Major Challenges of Heritage Management and Heritage Tourism Development in Amhara Sayint

Various common problems pose challenges to heritage sites in the study area. These challenges can be categorized into human-made and natural agents of destruction. Based on our observations and data collected from different sources, human intervention emerges as the major source of destruction for heritage sites and impedes tourism development. The following are the key challenges faced by heritage sites in the study area:

1. **Lack of awareness:** Recognizing the responsibility of local communities in the protection of heritage sites, most heritage organizations worldwide emphasize the link between heritage conservation and the development of community awareness. However, in the study area, there is a significant lack of awareness both among the local community and government bodies. This hampers the conservation and protection of heritage sites, as well as the sustainable utilization of tourism resources to support the tourism industry. For example, the local communities utilize the sites within the national park for grazing and farming activities, contributing to the accelerated deterioration of these sites.



Figure 9 The view of Settlement practiced within the buffer zones of the park (Arer media and Belechuma) Source: Photograph by the researchers, 2021.

The local community in Amhara Sayint Woreda lacks awareness about heritage sites and fails to recognize their potential as tourist attractions (informant Getachew, 2021).

2. **Illicit trafficking of cultural and religious properties:** poses a significant threat to tangible cultural assets. Movable cultural objects often fall victim to looters (UNESCO, 1970). In the study areas, Orthodox churches are also affected by illicit trafficking and looting. Residents and church servants sometimes sell valuable antiquities from the church to tourists. According to informants,

several movable cultural heritages from churches such as Gorji Medhanialem, Saleda Yohanis, Yegezaza Maryam, Balewa St. Gebrial, and Washa Maryam have been subjected to illicit trafficking and looting (informants Getachew and Worku, 2021).

3. **Improper conservation practices:** contribute to the loss of authenticity and beauty in EOTC (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) buildings, as highlighted by Zelalem (2017). Professional knowledge and skills in heritage management are necessary for effective conservation. Conservation aims to prevent further deterioration and protect heritage from loss and damage. However, in the study area, some conservation activities are carried out without professional expertise, focusing solely on material aspects and neglecting the preservation of cultural value.

For example, in the church of Washa Maryam, the church administrators attempted to change the wall of Qinemahlet. Originally made of lime, wood, and stone, the new wall is constructed using cement, compromising the authenticity of the church. Additionally, the church's wooden doors and windows have been replaced with metal, further impacting its original character.

4. **Poor handling systems:** Have led to significant damage to the treasures of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) and the lack of museums exacerbates the problem (Zelalem, 2017). The researcher's observations in the study area reveal that church treasures are stored in small and narrow treasure houses, stacked on top of each other without proper consideration for the materials and the need for periodic inspections. As a result, these invaluable church heritages are disfigured or broken, with the inscriptions on parchment books becoming discoloured and the paintings covering them being distorted due to moisture and dust. Furthermore, some church properties are kept in private homes, making them vulnerable to risks such as fire. For example, the church properties of Queen Maryam were lost in a fire that occurred in an individual's house (informant Worku, 2021).
5. **Lack of promotion:** To effectively market a product, it is crucial to ensure that information about the product reaches prospective consumers. Similarly, in the tourism industry, the primary function of promoting heritage sites is to create awareness among potential tourists, thereby increasing visitor numbers in the area. Unfortunately, the attractions in the study area have not been fully utilized for sustainable tourism and have failed to contribute to the economic development of the community due to a lack of promotion. Even the local community is largely unaware of the heritage sites in their own area (informant Andarge, 2021).

6. **The absence of infrastructure and facilities:** poses significant challenges. Adequate infrastructure is essential for the successful development of tourism, particularly in less-developed regions. In the study area, the underdeveloped transport sector hampers tourism development as most heritage sites are not accessible by car. Visitors are often forced to travel on foot for several kilometers after reaching the district town of Adjibar. Moreover, the lack of tourist facilities such as hotels, lodges, restaurants, souvenir shops, water supply, and electricity further hinders tourism in the area (informants Worku, Andarge, and Birhanu interviewed on April 11th, March 7th, and April 13th, 2021, respectively).
7. **Lack of skilled manpower:** In the tourism industry, which is focused on hospitality and service, the interaction between customers and employees is vital. The image and quality of services provided to tourists directly impact their experience. However, in the study area, there is a shortage of tour guides, and church elders have not received specialized training on managing, conserving, and preserving their heritage (informant Yalemwork, 2021).
8. **The absence of museums:** Museums play a crucial role in collecting, preserving, describing, displaying, and studying cultural heritage. They are meant to be open to the public, providing opportunities for study, education, and enjoyment of material evidence of people and their environment. In the study area, Ethiopian Orthodox Churches possess various cultural objects that could generate income through tourism. However, the lack of church museums prevents the effective display, promotion, and protection of these cultural objects.

While efforts have been made to construct a new and modern museum for Tedibabe Maryam through collaboration between the Woreda Administration and the Federal and Regional culture and tourism sectors, the project remains incomplete and inaccessible for service. As a result, these remarkable heritages continue to be housed in cramped and inadequate rooms.



Figure 10: The New Building Museum of Tedibabe Maryam 'A' and Handling System of the church in Treasure House 'B' (Source: Amhara Sayint Woreda Culture and Tourism Office, 2021)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Amhara Sayint Woreda possesses immense potential for the development of the cultural tourism industry, thanks to its rich heritage. The area has served as a political centre for both local leaders and the country, resulting in the establishment of historical sites such as monasteries, churches, royal camps and palaces, and settlement areas. The concentration of heritage sites in the area is primarily found in Tedibabe Maryam, Wogde Tekilehaimanot, Washa Maryam, Shifal Medihanialem, and Waka Mikail. Furthermore, the area has its intangible heritage, including traditional celebrations, festivals, hospitality, kinship, and other valuable assets cherished by the community.

However, despite its abundance of natural and cultural treasures, the area faces significant challenges hindering its development. The destruction of sites is primarily caused by human-made factors. Lack of awareness, improper conservation practices, and illicit trafficking pose major threats to the historical sites in the area. Additionally, the challenges of sustainable tourism development in the region encompass a lack of skilled manpower, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, and a negative attitude within the local community. These factors need to be addressed to unlock the full potential of Amhara Sayint Woreda and ensure the sustainable development of its tourism industry.

Recommendations

The researchers put forth the following recommendations to enhance the protection and exploitation of the tourism potential in Woreda:

1. **Improved Protection:** Proper protection of heritage sites is crucial for their preservation. Currently, conservation efforts carried out by the local community often result in unnecessary human

intervention. Additionally, activities such as farming and grazing by the local community residing near the sites contribute to the deterioration of the sites. To address this, the Culture and Tourism Office of Amhara Sayint Woreda should collaborate with the local people to implement measures that prevent further damage to the sites.

2. **Awareness Creation:** Creating awareness is key to halting the ongoing deterioration of the sites. The Culture and Tourism Office of Amhara Sayint Woreda should undertake various promotional activities aimed at attracting tourists. These efforts will not only raise awareness among tourists but also educate the local community about the significance of the heritage sites.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Most of the heritage sites in the area lack basic infrastructure. Collaborative efforts between the Culture and Tourism Office, local community, and government organizations are necessary to improve existing infrastructure. Initiatives should focus on developing access roads, tourist facilities such as hotels, lodges, and restaurants, as well as utilities like water supply and electric power.
4. **Addressing Theft and Illicit Trafficking:** Theft and illicit trafficking pose significant threats to heritages, particularly movable cultural objects. Local people and tourists are often involved in the illegal trade of historic and religious objects for personal gain. The Woreda culture and tourism office should prioritize raising awareness among the local community and relevant authorities about the value of heritage and the need to combat theft and illicit trafficking.
5. **Capacity Building:** The lack of skilled professionals in the sector has contributed to the destruction and damage of heritages in the study area. Church elders and servants should enhance their tourism and tour guiding skills through training and education programs. The Regional and Zonal culture and tourism sectors should facilitate workshops, short-term training, and extended training programs to build the capacity of heritage administrators at different levels.

By implementing these recommendations, the Woreda can significantly improve the protection and sustainable utilization of its heritage sites, contributing to the overall development of the cultural tourism industry in the region.

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