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THIRTEEN MONTH'S OF SUNSHINE:

Improving Ethiopia's Image As A Tourist Destination

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ABSTRACT

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<p>The aim of the study was to evaluate, how the image of a country affects the tourist industry in Ethiopia. In this report analyzed the past and the present situation of tourism development in comparison with the potential of the Country. The objective of this work was to suggest a way to build a better Ethiopian image as tourist destination in world standard</p> <p>This research is based on the framework that dealt with the significance of place and image branding in the tourism industry. The research methodology applied in this thesis was qualitative research; Semi-structured interview was conducted with three tourism experts and two foreign tourists in order to get adequate and balanced information. According to the findings Ethiopia's tourism industry currently has shown encouraging and positive growth. However, the research illustrated that the negative image has been a challenge for the development of tourism sector.</p> <p>Based on the framework that the researcher used in this thesis, the data gathered from the tourism expert's combined with personal research, it concluded that the image of the country has been a barrier for tourism industry not to grow as expected. Finally, a suggestion has been made how to improve the country's image in order to be a best tourist destination in the region</p>		
Key Words Country Image ,Branding,Brand Equity, Brand Identity,Tourism Development		

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1 INTRODUCTION

Country image and place branding has been the main marketing tool for tourism business especially in the current time. Brand gives a distinctive nature, value and unique feature to a product that distinguish from its competitors in the usual business. Likewise, place can be branded with its unique natural, historical, cultural, and environmental assets to give an identity for itself. Country image is an idea; value and judgments of a target audience in a specific country or nation based on the existing information handles through different media for the public. Moreover, it is how the audience shape the publicity in their mind depends on the information provided by the media. Tourism product cannot be tested or experienced in order to find out if the product is worthy enough to buy. Rather tourists mostly decide depend on the information they acquire from different media, tv and internet about the specific destination. Therefore, the information what they gather have a decisive factor on their decision to choose which destination to travel for holidays.

Hence, country image has a huge consequence on the nation's foreign relations and tourism activities positively or negatively. It highly affects and shape relationship between the host countries and its own people. Most likely the type of connection and reaction determined by preconception of the image gathered from different public or private media, since one has never been in that country and discovered personally. Public image of one country or destination brand in tourism perspective it is similar with a brand of product in the normal business life. A particular product brand plays a vital role in the process of decision-making of the customer to buy a certain goods. Similarly, the image of destinations towards public observation will modify the customer decision. As a result; it influences the tourism situations of the area. Therefore, in one way or another branding the destinations image are inseparable from tourism industry.

However, Ethiopia has a great tourism potential that could make her the best destination in Africa. But her current image has been a drawback for development of tourism in the country. This country has a lot to offer with a variety of tourism

destinations. Historical tourism could make her number one from Africa with more than 3000 years histories, which are very well documented. Comparing the potential of the country to be utilized the development of tourism the country reach at this point is not satisfying.

Despite Ethiopia has an abundant tourism potential small effort has been put in order to utilize the tourism industry adequately. However there are different factors that constitute for slow development of tourism in Ethiopia, the negative image of the country towards world has a huge effect on the tourism development of the country even recently when the country is in a better place. Most international and even national media focus on negative side of the country and past history.

The main aim of this research is to evaluate, how the image of the country affects the tourism industry in Ethiopia. Analyzing facts that build the current public image of Ethiopia. Evaluating things that are done before to promote the image of the country as a tourist destination. Find out the preconception of foreigners about Ethiopia. Review history, potential and the current situations of tourism in Ethiopia. Analyzing the problem in lacking to create a better image towards the world Suggest way to build a better country image as a tourist destination in the world standard based on the data.

2 TOURISM AND DESTINATION IMAGE

Destination image gives a unique nature, value and distinctive feature to a place that gives an identity. Place can be branded with its unique natural, historical, cultural, and environmental assets. Country image defined as “The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of mind to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place” (Morgan et al., 2004). Moreover it is how the audience shapes the publicity in their mind depending on the information, what they received from the media & other sources. Additionally according to (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997), image is an important attribute that influences the travelers decision-making process about a destination.

In this competitive market destination image plays a vital role for the development of tourism in the region. In the recent years place branding has become a very essential marketing tool for the manager’s of destination branding. The idea of place branding has become a hot topic as tourism industry booming in 21st century. According to WTO by 2020 the number of people traveling would increase to 1.56 billion and the revenue should increase to 2 trillion USD. One reason for the growth of tourism is the emerging of thousands of new destinations as a result of globalization. Therefore; all these new destinations are struggling in order to be able to break into the markets. On other hand, the already established or the top known destinations are also competing to keep up with current marketing trend by making their brand even more stronger, Since the current marketing trend incredibly transforming into another level even the very famous destinations have to maintain their image to sustain in their positions.

2.1 Destination Image

There is no one commonly accepted definition about destination image different scholars given varies definition from old ages until recent years. It is a very vague topic to give one specific definition. Many scholars have given various meaning in the way suitable to the different field of study. Since there are different meaning by different scholars about destination image the writer of this thesis has chosen the most recent and convenient one for the purpose of this research. Therefore Destination Image is “the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place” (Morgan et al., 2004). It is a picture and imagination in the peoples mind about one specific place gained as a result of different information compilation.

From tourism point of view it is the impression and preconceptions that the tourist hold about the specific destination. Based on the image that they have, most likely they will decide where to spend their holiday and money. Destination Image is similar with a brand of a product for example when one say “Dior ‘perfume the first imagination that comes to our mind is quality; exotic product, that is image we have about Dior. Likewise the brand and image of the destination represents and spoke for the specific tourist destination, how quality and comfortable the place is or why it differs than its competitors or they should pay more money than others..

2.2 Different Aspects of Destination Image

A country’s image is influenced by its historical background, geographical location, cultural activity, political situations, art, music, sport activities living style and other features (Morgan et al.40, 2004),For-example Scandinavians are popular for skies, when one think of Fashion the first cities comes to mind are Paris or Milan ,Greece for the great history and Brazil for their football. As stated at the beginning this chapter image is a collection of different information, facts also myths related with the destination for a period of time. Consequently forming an image is neither an easy nor short period of time task. Building an image is a long time process and it is a complex issue, it is a combination of different phenomenon

and happenings in a specific place for long time. Image is huge, vague and sophisticated.

One country can develop a certain type of image deliberately or without intending to build the image. More than a decade Colombian coffee has regard as top quality coffee to the American consumer. The logo “(Café de Colombia)” created in 1981 to be used as a seal of guarantee issued by the National Federation of coffee Growers (FNC, 20003) adopted frpm (Morgan et al., 2004).The logo has been used widely to market and build an image that Colombia as a brand of good coffee which was very successful.

On the other hand, without intending to create a certain image the country could gain positive or negative image because of different factors, for instance the country may host a big event or won sport competitions on international event in this case the country will get more recognition and positive image for example, when South Africa host World cup for the first time in Africa in 2010 shows the level of the country reached and changes the image South Africa had before. In contrast, the country may fall on the war with neighboring country or having internal dispute. This incident plus with the media publicity highly influences the country’s image negatively, For instance, Egypt internal chaos in 2010 cause the cancelation of many travel reservation to Egypt, which hurts the countries tourism industry.

3 TOURISM AND DESTINATION BRANDING

The idea of branding and significance until recent years was mostly related with manufacture products, it was not long ago before place branding became main marketing tools for tourism marketers. The need for place branding as a marketing tools undoubtedly increasing like never before due to the globalization of the world and the nature competitiveness of the market. Most destination have fine hotels and resorts, every country posses unique culture, people, language and food, each of the destination dignify itself having very hospitable society and the best customer services. As a result in this highly possible industry, the need to build a unique brand for the destination is a key factor more than ever (Morgan et al., 2004). Technology makes it easier to exchange information between the people from different part of the world, which enable to see the different opportunity that are found in the various areas as well as makes it much easier to work together. For destination to be able to create a stand out brand that differentiate them from their competitors is critical.

3.1 Building Country Brand As A Tourist Destination

Tourism requires image formulating and branding grounded in the places reality (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Building a positive image and making it brand is necessary for the development of tourism in the area. While building brand the information intended to deliver to customers must match with the reality of the places. Misguiding or miss-leading information causes negative reputation of the destination. The positive image before hand and positive experience at the destination will result fairly positive feedback of the destination. Whereas a negative image of a destination beforehand and a positive experience after visiting the place in person will gain a high positive feedback to the destination .The most dangerous feedback to the destination resulted from a very positive image but when the actual experience will be negative, it will influence negatively the image of the place towards the future potential tourists. Therefore marketing managers

should give focus on what kind of information to transmit which is real but at the same time attractive while building their destination brand in the world standard.

As stated at beginning of this chapter country brand is becoming the most fundamental marketing tools for tourism development.(Limping, 2002), defined destination branding as follows ``Destination branding is a selecting a consistent element mix to identify and distinguish it through positive image building. A brand element comes in the form of name, term, logo, design, symbol, slogan, package, or a combination of these, of which the name is the first and foremost reference``. This leads to what matters the most and what content should be included while launching a global brand of a country as tourist destination towards promoting a positive image of the country.

In the first stage in the process of building or refreshing any destination brand is ``to establish the core values of destination and its brand, these should be durable, relevant, communicable and hold saliency for potential tourists (Morgan et al., 2004). The core values should be communicative enough to the consumers in order to make it easier for them to know and understand what exactly the brands stand for. It is very important for the destination in the core values to include what special quality the place posses and that makes it preferable from its competitors. The core values should be consistent and accurate with the brand representation, as the main goal of branding is to gain trust from the consumers, to be consistent is it is not an option it is a necessity.

Destination Brand representation is like a bridge between the consumers and the destination, For example, as stable and strong bridge can take the traveler successfully to the destination based on the experience during the travel the customer will decide to come back again on the same bridge he passed. On the same way if the brand continue to be reliable for longer period of time on what it represents and the information which communicated on behalf of the destination, it gives a guarantee for potential traveler in order to believe in it and come back again to see the place. According to Health (2007:176), there are five stages in brand building. There are stated as follows in the next table.

TABLE 1 . The five stages in destination branding

Stage one	Market investigation and strategic recommendation
Stage two	Brand identity
Stage three	Brand launch and introduction i.e communicating the vision
Stage four	Brand implementation
Stage five	Monitoring, evaluation and review

Source: Adapted from Health, 2007:176,(Morgan et al., 2004)

Market investigation would help the destination marketer what the potential visitors expect, where are they located in, what age group are most of them and what lacks in the current market, how they would fill the gap and how to be more competitive by developing their destination. Also, help to visualize their vision based on the reality out there. Next step is to develop the brand identity. The brand identity should clearly embrace in each core values, the brand values should be communicated as much as possible in everything slogan, logo, symbol picture and color. When the brand implemented it should ensure that it is representing and meeting the original goal.

All successful brands have social, emotional and identity value to users: they have personalities and enhance the perceived utility, desirability and quality of a product (Kotler and Gertner, 2002),when consumers decide to spend their money and vacation in the destination it is not always only about the price rather it is about emotional attachment to the place they are spending their holiday with their loved ones. The destination brand should be able to create emotional connection with its potential customers. The identity of the destinations and what can offer should be able to bond with the customers on a personal level in a way the brand of destination can stand out from competitors. For example Paris has been a

successful brand around whether newly married or old couples when they think of honeymoon or renewal of anniversary mostly the first option probably comes to their mind is Paris; no other destination could outshine Paris as a romance destination (Morgan et al.65, 2004).But on the other hand only trying to build emotion is not enough but it is also very important to develop a strong brand holds a unique association for the consumer which can be expressed as a clear point of difference from others.

3.1.1 Destination Brand Equity

If the destination successfully launches its brand with strong and promising image the brand equity plays paramount role in expanding the market share of the destination. Brand equity is the value of the brand in the customers mind, how strong is the brand in convincing the customers to buy the package and spend their holiday at the destination in comparisons with its competitors. ``Brand equity is the total accumulated value or worth of a brand in the customers mind`` Ritchie & Ritchie 1998 adopted from (Ndlovu, J., 2009) It is also described as tangible and intangible assets for the destination.

The advantage of brand equity can be expressed in different areas, For example, from financial point of view, because of the value that destination brand hold the customers would be willing to pay whatever it costs over similar package supplied by the competitors. The other advantage would be, building customer trust once the brand fairness is strong over time most of the things or new product comes from that area has a better opportunity to be purchased and it is not going to be hard to enter into the market.

The main advantage of continuously promoting brand equity of the destination is to be able to stay longer and to stand out from its competitors in the market. Evans & Berman 1990:110 from (Ndlovu, J., 2009) ``explain the key to brand equity is to ensure that tourists do not form the opinion that all brands in a certain category are the same ``. It is to give a distinctive picture about one destination or why it is different from the others, why the customers have to choose this one from the

other, why people are willing to pay for the most promoted brands. Furthermore, it could give customers the confidence to choose the brand and willing to pay for it.

In the process of building destination brand equity according to (Kevin Keller, 2003) there should be four steps, namely:

- Ensuring that the customers identify the brand by clearly understanding the product's image and the factors that influence it
- Establish the totality of the meaning of the brand in the minds of the customer and select strategic direction through the use of points of parity and difference
- Elicit customer's responses to create an intensely active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand.
- Convince as many stakeholders as possible to align with strategic direction

3.1.2 Destination Brand Identity.

For a country in order to build a very unique strong and distinctive destinations brand identity effective management of brand equity is necessary. Brand identity building is not just one occurrence that happened at some point rather it is a process in long run which expressed in everything the destination possesses, it is very important to give attention in everything the destination offers. For example, for the customers from the arrival to the destination until he/she leaves the place everything going on, from the services accessibility to the community welcoming behavior or the services that they get in various sectors hotels, resort and tourist attraction places all the combination of this will give some message or image about the country to the outsiders. As a result when the visitor leaves that place he/she might get the general understanding of that country's people and culture, are they welcoming to this visitors and so on. So it is very important to understand the accumulation of all these values expressed in different sectors that the destinations offer gives an identity to the destination brand.

However, there are a lot of definition has given by different scholars the most accepted and the base for many researches in this title is the one by Aaker (1996) and in the case of this thesis the writer found this definition is better suitable by Aaker (Ndlovu, J., 2009) defines, brand identity as the unique set of brand associations that establishes a relationship with the target. He extends his definition by presenting four wide perspective which can brand identity can be viewed, that is brand as an organization, brand as a person, brand as a symbol and brand as a product. These perspectives would help to better understanding of brand identity. For these different perspectives the following a justification will be discussed as follows.

Brand as personality creates a bond between the customers and the brand itself. From product point of view, brand considered being the most important feature of brand identity; this is because a single product, which represents a specific brand, has a direct relationship with a customer's experience and choice of the product. The nature and character of the product influences the experience of the customers, which also affects the identity of the brand, conceived in the users mind as a result of their experience.

Brand identity from organizational point of view focus on the set up of organization rather than on its product. It concentrates on how it works in its relationship with customers like cultural matters which the organizations considers it belongs to it such as innovation, consumer care and concern, this strategy may help a link to consumers. The use of brand from this point of view is highly helpful in understanding of customers need. Brand from symbol point of view provides structure & strength the brand identity, the aim of the symbol is to reinforce the customers to recall and recognize the brand.

3.2 Improving Country's Image and Branding

Improving destination's image and brand are interrelated not necessarily the same concept but they complement each other. According to (Aaker, 1997:339), A

destination image is related to how the brand is currently perceived by customers. People would like to know about the reputation of a destination brand before they make a decision to buy a package to the location. When a country has a positive image it is easier to improve as a competitive and strengthen brand. Destination's Image is part of place branding and it plays crucial role in developing destination branding. "The component of a strong brand complete each other and serve to unify the entire process image formation and buildings, which in turn contributes to the strength and uniqueness of the brand identity" (Limping, 2002).

Changing the world's perceptions of a place is neither easy nor quick; after all, it is a brand image has often evolved over many centuries, shaped by wars, religion, diplomacy, international sporting victories or disasters, famous, infamous sons and daughters of the country. Image is very strong beliefs influenced by many very influential phenomena that projected in people's mind, changing people's belief about a specific place or thing is very complex issue. It is somehow personal situation, because people always would like to believe what they know to confirm their expectation what they considered as their knowledge as existed for long time in their mind. "They prefer to adjust what they see to fit in what they know and they disregard information that challenges their knowledge structures, in a process known as confirmation bias" (Philip Kotler & David Gertner 1993, from the book (Morgan et al.43, 2004)

But on the other hand perceptions of places can also change far more quickly and more completely than might be expected. In fact we could look the most dramatic examples of how places can be imagined, communicated and established across much of the world market is the case of Walter Scott and Brand Scotland, The country build itself a brand as image of modern Scotland as attractive, charming and compelling and it has remained and create itself more than centuries in the mind of Europe. The other example that shows us it is possible, is the case of the modern Japan. Thirty years ago "Made in Japan", was a sign of cheap product and particularly negative concept in most western consumers mind. The perception of brand Japan was depends on their experience as careless and second-rate product getting to the market. But now days Japan brand undoubtedly become or build itself as technologically advanced, highly standard product, quality, competitive and status Simon Anholt from (Morgan et al.28, 2004).

3.2.1 Challenges of destination's image branding

Most of the time Destination Marketing Organizations get less attention from the government. Consequently, They don't receive enough funds or capital for implementing the necessary marketing of the destination and yet they have to compete with other strong and rich destination brand around the world. They have to share not only with tourism destinations since for marketing they have to use the same international media they even have to compete with other global brands .For instance a corporate like Sony and (Proctor and Gambel) spends millions of dollar each year which may exceed the total combined annual budget for marketing of most worlds' national destinations organization.

In addition, to limited budget DMO influenced by different areas that are influential in tourism industry. Because they have to cooperate with different sectors, since tourism is a composition of various component in a specific country or destination like, government officials, accommodation sector owners, tourist attractions, entertainment &cultural managers & natural environment protection officials. All these different sectors, even though they share common interest they definitely have different priority and values as a result it makes it even more complicated for DMO to set its own goal and achieve without any obstacles. They have to compromise and search a way to make it work in the process the brand may get affected. Destination marketers have almost no control on these different aspects and companies or stockholders in the marketing of a place (Morgan et al., 2004).

DMO operate its activity in a very unstable external environment. Tourism is by nature very vulnerable for inconvenient business environment such us political instability, economical downswings, natural disaster, terrorism, war, religion fight and so on. If we can see recent phenomena the terrorist attack of Turkey, Saudi Arabia , Kenya, Brazil ,September 11, Sunami 2004.The list of these major international crisis highly affects tourism globally, Moreover, when these disaster happens in relatively small place and limited power in worldwide the consequence would get worsen and very hard to restore the image and brand of that area. For example, Nepal one of the smallest and least developed Southern

Asia country is a home to eight of the world's ten highest peaks including the number one (Mount Everest), tourism was a significant foreign exchange and the country was enjoying encouraging growth in the sector with international arrivals peaking at 492000 in 1999. But during 2001-2002 however the country's tourism distorted arrivals degrade by 20% as a result of a highly publicized airline hijacking followed suspension of five-month international key flight to Nepal's international airport (Morgan et al.64, 2004). So it is difficult to control the effect of external environment especially when the media tends to focus on the negative aspects of a destination.

Over promising about the destination in the marketing process is another challenge, when a destination tries to differentiate itself from the competitors and end up with over exaggeration by disregarding the reality and customers need. After the visit if the promised value and the reality doesn't much the feedback would be negative and the reputation of the brand might fell into a bad condition. Baker 2007:22 (Ndlovu, J., 2009) "failure to base the brand on its strongest and distinctive proposition can lead to brand ambiguity". A lack of conducting research and forming a defined tourism strategy also leads to misunderstanding of the customers need and the destinations potential assets, which influences the building of sound and real representation of the place brand image. 'It may also occur that a destination may fail to understand what is being branded as a result of its lack of adequate research and stakeholder support (Badal 2008 available at <http://upetd.up.ac.za>)

3.3 The Role Of Government & Stakeholders In Destination Branding

The role of government in the development of destination brand image is incomparable with other sectors. When the government pays attention towards tourism sector and understand what it takes to build a country as international tourism brand undoubtedly change would be on the way. The government of a country has an ultimate power where to take the country agendas and development strategies in order to achieve the goal. There is a certain identity which government would like to make its country known for and control. With all

power and authority the governments has if implemented in the right path, building and changing of country's image could be real and succeed profoundly.

Olins 2002:24 adopted from (Ndlovu, J., 2009) Outlines the following roles of government in destination branding

- It maintains a record and profile of all the visitors that come to a destination;
- It controls all the marketing and communication activities including the messages that are sent out to the global village
- It coordinates all the branding efforts. From the local and regional to the national level
- It controls the tourism environment, making it conducive for visitation; and
- Finally, it is responsible for the maintenance of all the natural and manmade attractions, local culture and heritage

On the other hand, the government influence could affect in opposing of positive development of destination branding. If the government is following political ideology that are not conducive or contradictory for tourism objectives and if there is no cooperation between other stakeholders the impact could be very negative and challenge the destination branding activities. However, the government is huge accelerator for the development of destination image branding, the participation and cooperation of other stakeholder also has a fundamental effect in the improvement a destination image. DMO should be able to work hand in hand with different influential sectors in tourism in order to achieve a remarkable growth at the destination.

According to (Morgan, Roger Pride, and Annette Pritchard, Place Branding 2004)., Stakeholder from tourism point of view compromise tourism services providers, tourism authority and tourism representative bodies, which may share different interest and values. They somewhat have various goals and interest in the industry yet they have to collaborate in decision-making process regarding tourism related matters. For instance, tourism service providers like Hotels,

Airlines, small transportation sectors, which are profitable organization their main goal could be profit. On the other hand, tourism authority and tourism representative bodies their main concern things like, image of the destination, sustainable conservation of the attraction sites, the environment and more. Therefore destination branding could be at risk of being influenced by power imbalance, which can hold back both its initiation and its success.

In order to minimize the negative consequences of the destination image and branding caused by imbalance of power between different sectors of tourism the collaboration amongst stakeholders should be balanced. The creation, management and success of destination brand requires a balanced collaboration among stakeholders (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). This is very important because as discussed in the previous paragraph the various of stakeholders have different goals and agendas. If each of them running to achieve their goals individually without any collaboration between them, then destination lack its common identity and makes it difficult for DMO to create a certain image about the place for outsider.

Therefore the stakeholder should work together by creating common goals, values and standards in different tourism sectors. Which can give an identity to the destination over time when all these implemented properly. If they have common understanding and value about their destination, they know how to market it, what to market, to whom also will make the sacrifice to achieve their goal for the common good of the destination as well as themselves. After all a destination brand is considered to be a common good that is the outcome of an ongoing process of collaboration amongst various stakeholders (Hardy & Philips, 1998:220).

3.4 The Effect of Media in Destination Branding

Worldwide the tourist customer is exposed to newspaper and travel supplements; magazines, television, travel programs and guidebooks Cleverdon & Fabricus, 2006:10 adopted Ndlovu, J 2009. They are filled with information that conveys a

positive or a negative message about a destination. But as a matter of fact most country images are stereotype, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate as resulted from biased media publicity. The information might depend on exceptional phenomena rather than on patterns, on impression rather than on the real facts, but nonetheless pervasive (Kotler and Gertner, 2002)

Destination marketer managers have no control over external environmental factors that may affect decision of tourist to visit the place, such as political turmoil and natural disaster. Moreover, it is even more difficult to control how the media and press broadcast a county's problems, often creating or spreading stereotypes. For example, Turkish spokes person once stated that Turkey receives much worse press than Greece more than it deserves. Turkish claims that they have longer coasts and beaches, less polluted waters and as many wonderful archeological sites. A large number of international campaigns have been implemented to refresh Turkey's brand and put it closer to Greece's position (Kotler et al.30 1999).

Unfortunately, larger number of vacationers prefers sun and antiquities pick in Greece instead of Turkey. The incident that showed as human right violators many years ago by the film 'Midnight Express' still affecting the image of Turkey. However Turkey tried so hard to create a bright image and promote the country as democratic and peaceful place. But images are not easy to create or to change especially when the destination possess negative image for long time followed by vast publicity of media about the problem.

Considering how influential the media is the marketing body of the destination should be always alert. A destination must prepare itself for any kind of unexpected happening that may harm the tourism industry. At any given time they need to have strategies and plans in order to overcome the unpredicted condition. They have to provide clear and updated information about the incident to the media. Marzano & Scott 2005:205 (Ndlovu, J., 2009) advise that during a crisis, a destination should act speedily by providing regular updates on the prevailing situation. In such a case, the media can be used to rebuild the destination image.

In conclusion of this chapter, the above frame work showed different aspects of image and branding, their nature, most of all how image branding is crucial in

tourism industry as well as how influential is in the decision making process of customers mind. It discussed the key for the building and refreshing the existed image. In the process of building image, it is important to give focus on the brands identity and equity. As they give a value and distinctive nature for the brand. It discussed that the image that created by the media is not always the exact representation of the reality it could be myths and stereotypes.

It also indicated that the advantages of working together between different Government sectors, Destination marketing organization and stakeholder to develop the image of one country. However, they all have various goals and priority, for the establishment of successful destination brand the collaboration between them is critical. The issues discussed under this framework are widely related with the case of Ethiopia, as the main aim of this research is how to improve Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination. All the theories discussed are well suitable and the researcher further the study based on the framework, which leads for the final result. In the following chapter it is discussed in detail the tourism situation and potential in Ethiopia.

4. TOURISM IN ETHIOPIA

Usually traveling is the normal activity of mankind for different reasons. Especially in Ethiopia people travel from place to places long distance not for the simple day to day traveling purpose. Rather for visiting old churches and celebrating big religious holidays, also for visiting different old monuments by staying more than a night far from their home. However, People travel for religious purpose and attending holiday ceremonies but the government and society haven't considered tourism activity as major economic factor.

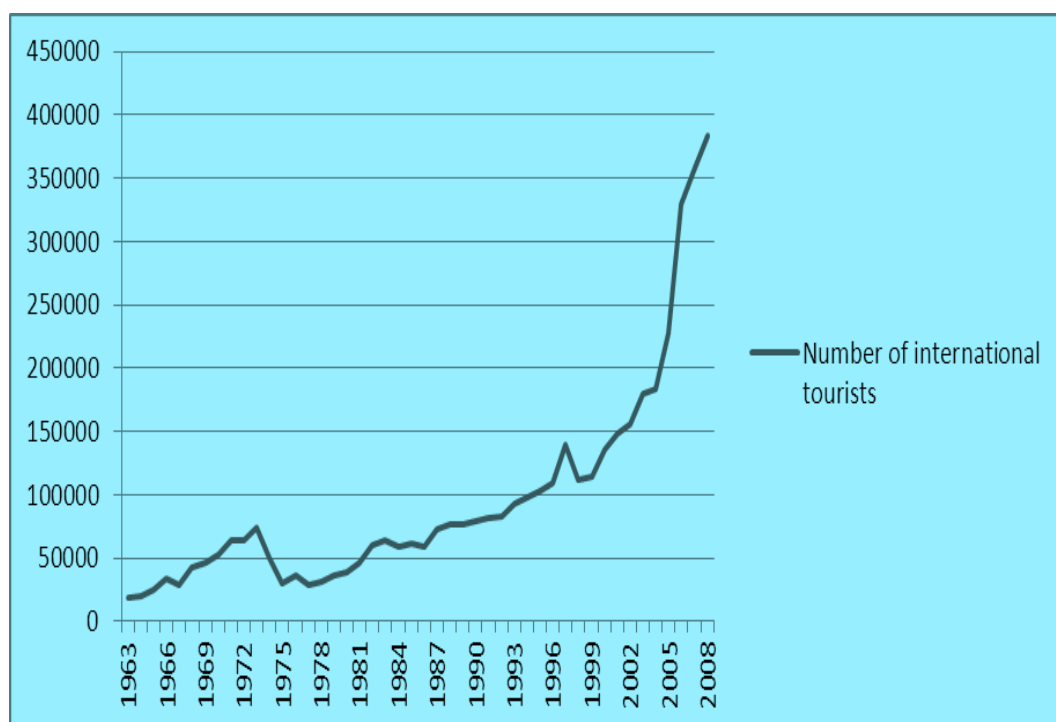
The modern concept of Ethiopian tourism was introduced around 1960s by man known as Habte Selassie Tafesse 'who normally referred as "the man who invented tourism in Ethiopia" he created national tourism slogan which is 'Thirteen months of sunshine' in referring uniqueness of Ethiopian calendar which has Thirteen months and the conducive weather of the country this slogan used widely and believed to provoke the imagination of visitors. The first tourism office was established in 1962, it was during this time the tourism potential drew the attention of the imperial government authorities. Which lead for establishment of Ethiopian tourism organization and building of a lot of hotels of chains in different part of the country.

However, encouraging movement has been made by imperial regime to expand the tourism capability of the country. During 1974 for two decades under the military regime the industry was suffering from various adverse effects such as prolonged civil war, restrictions on entry and free movement of tourists (World Bank, 2006). At this stage the tourism sector forgotten and the development has been very slow. Though, tourism introduced since then not shown enough attention to improve tourism industry from the government side due to many factors and shortcomings dragged backward the tourism industry in Ethiopia. But recently the government seemed to figure out that tourism industry can play essential role in growing the economy Walle, Y.M., 2010.

Since, 2001 tourism in the country has been showing a remarkable growth. In 2005, the government start to promote tourism has been increasing and more new practical measures on policies regarding tourism created. The public statement

made by late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2005 shows that the government dedicated to improve the tourism industry. “My government believes that an increased focus on tourism can play more significant role in the war on poverty, both in Ethiopia and across Africa as a whole” (Late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (2005) Adapted from (“Travel and Tourism in Ethiopia(Euromonitor),” 2012).

GRAPH 1. Statistics of tourist arrival in Ethiopia



The above Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and tourism statistics shows the growing number of international tourist's arrivals in past ten years has been increasing though it is very slow.

According to the statistics tourism in the country is growing. However comparing the potential of the country there is still a huge gap to be filled in the tourism industry. Even though, there are different factors that are slowing the tourism sector the representation of the country from outside point of view is still negative and mostly affects the tourism industry in Ethiopia even when the country is in a better position today.

4.1 Tourism Potential in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a land of wonder and fascination, a country with one of the richest histories in the African continent as well in the world more than three thousand years history, a land of contrasts and surprises, of remote and wild places, home to cultured and friendly people who are descended from some of the world's oldest civilizations. There are nine UNESCO world heritage sites in Ethiopia. This possession of varied attractions regarded as an opportunity of tourism sector in East Africa region. Tourists can find everything they interested in because the country is rich in various beautiful tourism attractions ranging from natural beauty attractions to different cultural attractions since the country has more than 80 tribes with their own language and life style, religious attractions with colorful and unique holiday celebrations including ancient magnificent exceptional architecture monuments.

More Significantly the archeological site could be an exciting asset. Ethiopia could market itself as origin of man kind by making the country popular for archeological site, research shows that Ethiopia currently posses the most oldest human fossil dated back three to five million years, the world's most famous early human ancestor is grown old women called ``Lucy or Dinkinesh) was discovered in 1974 at Hadar in the Awash Valley of Ethiopia's Afar Deprrasion. Which is currently exhibited in different prestigious national museums of USA. Below will discussed various tourist attractions in the country (Ethiopian Tourism Organization) .

4.2 Historical Attractions in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a proud and long history stretched back to the known beginning of mankind. Ethiopia was a monarchy for most of its history tracing its roots to the 2nd century BC. Alongside Rome, Persia, China and India, the Kingdom of Aksum was one of the great world powers of the 3rd century and the first major empire in the world to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion in the 4th century. It also

during the colonization period of Africa Ethiopia was the only African country that retained its sovereignty as recognized independent country. The fact that Ethiopia able to be remained independent helped the country to preserve its history as it is without any western countries influences. As a result, currently the country offers the most authentic and original historical attractions and experiences for tourist. Historical routes are the main and important part of Ethiopian tourism. ("Ethiopian Tourism," n.d.). Below discussed shortly the very significant of the destinations since it is not possible to include all.

4.2.1 Ancient Town of Axum

Axum is a city in Northern Ethiopia named after the Kingdom of Aksum, a naval and trading power that ruled the region from 400 B.C.E into the tenth century. Its reserves can still be pictured on the magnificent stelae or obelisks, the graves of Kings Kaleb and Gebre Meskel, and the Legendary Bath of the **Queen of Sheba**. The 16th century Cathedral of St, Mary of Zion was built in the compound of an earlier 4th century church, and is the holies church in Ethiopia. The Obelisk of Axum is also another great attraction in the city. This monument is one thousand seven hundred years old, twenty-four meters tall granite stele/obelisk weighting one hundred sixty tones. It is decorated with two false doors at the base at and features ornaments approaching windows on all sides. The obelisk ends in a semi-circular top part, which used to be enclosed by metal frames. When this is one is the longest steale in the city of Axum and there are a lot of similar old monuments found in modern city of Axum and it make the tourist and some scholars speculate how the Axum kingdom carved the stones, made the designs and stand the monuments without no technologies this shows this kingdom was highly civilized. These historical tourist destinations are very important and attract a lot of tourist from different countries to see this amazing place. ("Ethiopian Tourism," n.d.)

Below the following picture shows the Axum obelisk.

Image 1. Axum Obelisk.



Source. Ethiopian tourism organization

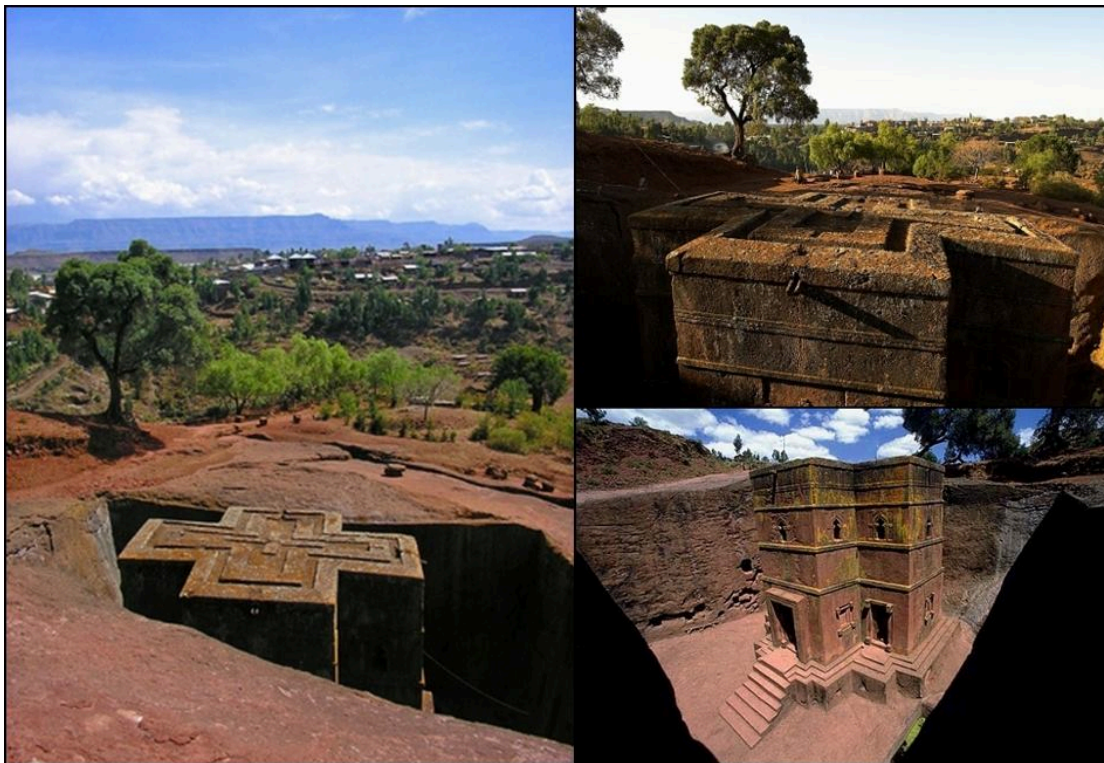
4.2.2 Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela

This is another fascinating historical spots found in small town called Lalibela six hundred-kilo meters north of Addis Ababa the capital city of Ethiopia. The 11 medieval monolithic cave churches of the 13th century of referred as `` New Jerusalem`` constricted around 12 century attributed to King Lalibela who set out to construct the church after Muslim conquests and bring to an end the Christian holy land Jerusalem. It considered as Africans New Jerusalem, it is one of spectacular and extraordinary historical site.

As below showed on the picture from the top of view the churches is simply the sign of Cross but when you enter under the cave you will experience the amazing and complex design of the churches in the current era nobody seemed to figure out how from one huge rock could be made eleven different huge churches

without using no modern technologies. All the eleven churches represent a unique artistic achievement, in their execution, size and the variety and boldness of their form. The whole of Lalibela offers an exceptional testimony to the medieval and post-medieval civilization of Ethiopia.

Image 2: View of Lalibela Rock Hewn Church



Source: National Tour Operation Travel Agency Enterprise Ethiopia

Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela is registered UNESCO world heritage site and attracts thousands of tourists, it recommendable to go during the great celebration of Genna (Ethiopian x-mass) and Timket (Epiphany) is particularly rewarding. It is such colorful and unique beautiful holiday celebration (“Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” n.d.)

4.2.3 Fasil Ghebbi (Gonder)

Fasil Ghebbi is a palace is located in Gondar, Ethiopia. Gondar was the 17th century's capital of Ethiopia and it is notable for its Medieval Castles and Churches. The city's unique imperial compound contains a number of Castles built between 1632 and 1855. It served as the home of Ethiopian's emperor Fasiledes and various Emperors who ruled during this period in the 17th and 18th centuries. This is only one of its kind architecture shows diverse influences including Nubian, Arab, and Baroque styles. The site was inscribed as a UNESCO world heritage site in 1979.

Image 3: View of Fasil Ghebbi



Source :UNESCO

In this compound there are fascinating historic sites such as the Bath of Fasiledes famous for the celebration of Ethiopian Epiphany holiday, Fasiledes castle, Iyasu's Palace, Queen Mentewab's Castle and three churches. The main castle which is very incredible and notable was built in 16130s and early 1640s on the orders of King Fasiledes, who was the founder of the city of Gondar as a capital and responsible for the construction of most of spectacular architectural castles during

his era. "With its huge towers and looming battlemented walls, it resembles a piece of Europe transposed to Ethiopia"("Fasil Ghebbi, Gondar Region - UNESCO World Heritage Centre," n.d.). This is also the main tourist attraction in historical route. Ethiopian Airlines has a daily flight to this destination from the capital Addis Ababa mainly for the convenience of tourist's.

4.3 Natural & Cultural Attractions in Ethiopia

4.3.1 Simien Mountains National Park

Simien National Park, in northern Ethiopia is a spectacular landscape. The Park has a global significance for biodiversity conservation since it is home to globally threatened species, including the iconic Walia ibex, a wild mountain goat found nowhere else in the world, the Gelada Baboon and the Ethiopian wolf. It is one of the first sites to be made a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987 for Ethiopia. The property's spectacular landscape is part of the Simien Mountain chain, which includes the highest point in Ethiopian, Ras Dejen. The rising and falling plateau of the Simien mountains has over millions of years been eroded to form precipitous cliffs and deep gorges of exceptional natural beauty. The mountains are bounded by deep valleys to the north, east and south, and offer vast views over the rugged-canyon like lowlands below. The spectacular scenery of the Simien Mountains is considered to rival Colorado Grand Canyon in United States.

Image 4: A view of Simien Mountains and the beautiful Gelada Baboon



Source: (“Simien National Park - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” n.d.)

The Simien Mountains are the most beautiful highland plateau in Africa. Vast and exceptional, this mountain has a spectacular skyline of jagged volcanic plugs and deep gorges and channels split it. The views across the landscape are overwhelming. It is very popular for mountain trekking and watching birds as it is home to over 130 birds’ species, 16 beautiful birds species that are only found in Ethiopia. The park has over 20 different large mammal species, five small species endemic as well as an important population of the rare lammergeyer, spectacular vulture bird species.(“Simien National Park - UNESCO World Heritage Centre,” n.d.)

4.3.2 Epiphany (Timket)

Timket, feast of Epiphany is the greatest festival of the year falling on the 19 January just two weeks after the Ethiopian Christmas. It is actually a three-day event beginning on the eve of Timket with dramatic and colorful processions. The following morning the great day itself, Christ baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist is commemorated. Since October and the end of the rain, the country has been drying up steadily. The sun shines down from a clear blue sky and the festival of Timket always takes place in glorious weather.

4.3.3 Finding of the True Cross (Meskal)

Meskal has been celebrated in the country for over 1600 years. The word actually means "cross" and the feast commemorate the discovery of the cross upon which Jesus was crucified, by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. The original event took place on 19 March 326 AD, but the feast is now celebrated on 27 September. During this time of the year flower bloom on mountain and plain the fields are yellow with the brilliant Meskal daisy. Dancing, feasting, merrymaking, bonfires and even gun gestures mark the occasion. The festival begins by planting a green tree on Meskal eve in town squares and village market places. Everyone brings a pole topped with Meskal daisies to form the towering pyramid that will be a beacon of flame. Torches of tree branches tied up together called "Chibo" are use bundle called "Demera". ("Ethiopian Tourism," n.d.)

Image 5 : Color full Celebration of Meskal



Source: AddisCard.net

The above mentioned tourist assets are a glimpse of Ethiopian tremendous tourism potential. Ethiopia has immense tourism potential owing to its natural, historical and cultural endowments. A very old and well preserved historical traditions with fascinating stelae, churches and castles to witness that, an attractive cultural diversity of about 80 nations and nationalities are major tourism area for Ethiopia and which the country can offer a lot compare to other neighboring countries such as Kenya and Tanzania `(Wim and Andrea, 2005).

In addition to this, Ethiopian Airlines one of the largest and safest airline in Africa is a huge advantage for Ethiopian tourism it could be considered as a potential. In effort to link Africa with the rest of the world the airline introduced major African cities. It has a major flight to main cities in Europe, Asia and North America. Ethiopian Airlines has code share agreement with several major airlines including

Lufthansa airlines, South African Airways, United Arab Emirate Airways; it is also a member of Star Alliance. The airline could be considered as a biggest asset in facilitating and promoting the countries tourism to the world market as it has high platform to meet a lot of international customers.

4.4 Current image and Tourism industry of Ethiopia

However, the current situation of tourism in Ethiopia is encouraging especially the performance of last year's in terms of number of tourist was significantly positive. But, if wasn't for negative image of Ethiopia, the country could have a huge amount of tourists during the past times. Ethiopia is more attractive and well above than its average African competitors in many of the inherited resource category like historical sites, heritage and traditional art. But, due to its negative image and other factors Ethiopia has been receiving lower amount of tourist compare to other countries. The current image of Ethiopia still on the international scale widely associated with draught, famine and instability that happed in the past. As the writer discussed at the beginning of this research destination image plays vital role in the process of decision making of tourist, when they decide whether to spend their holiday and money in specific destination. In this regard the negative image of Ethiopia over shadowed and influenced the tourist opinion about the country. (Walle, 2010)

As country image influenced by its historical back ground geographic location and cultural activity Ethiopia's image is not different than this, Morgan Prichard 2004. When these factors are negative the consequence worsen, as the media tends to focus on negative side rather than the positive side. The information that passed through international media might depend on exceptional phenomena rather than on patterns, on impression rather than on the real facts, but nonetheless pervasive. Moreover, most country images are stereotype, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate as resulted from biased media publicity. (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Ethiopia's tourism has been hugely affected by the media publicity and stereotype, as result, many people tend to think still Ethiopia is unstable and difficult place for them to imagine as a destination place to visit.

Without neglecting the fact that Ethiopia has to do a lot in order to develop the tourism sector. Only with the current available resource the country should be able to attract more tourist by improving its negative image.

Despite its Negative image the current Ethiopian's travel and tourism industry witnessed positive growth in terms of value and volume in 2010. This positive growth occurs due to the government's efforts to develop the industry. Given the current more stable sociopolitical background in the country, the government has launched a series of marketing campaigns aimed at attracting international tourists. Together with the private sector, it has been taking part in major international travel and tourism trade fairs in effort to showcase Ethiopia's tourism products. In addition, a new " Tourism Development policy' was recently setup with the aim of exploiting the untouched tourism potential of the country. If the new tourism policy and strategies implemented well it will definitely improve the performance of travel and tourism industry in Ethiopia ("Travel and Tourism in Ethiopia(Euromonitor)," 2012)

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DATA

The research methodologies, which adopted for this research is qualitative, research method. Semi Structured interview and personal research has been used. The interview conducted with three tourism expert's, which are very close to Ethiopian tourism industry, and two foreign tourists who have been in Ethiopia. It is very important to take into consideration their opinion and experiences since they have close tie with Ethiopian tourism. The writer was able to gather reliable and quality information from primary source, which is very determinant for the better understanding of subject matter. The research is based on the belief that the people personally involved in a particular (leisure or tourism) situation are best placed to describe and explain their experience and feelings in their own terms without the intermediary of the researcher to get the deep inside of theme (A.J Veal 2006).

The difference between qualitative and quantitative is when the previous approach research generally not consider with numbers rather it involves gathering a great deal of information about specific subject. While quantitative generate statistic through a use of large-scale survey using methods such as questionnaire or structured interviews. It depends on new numerical evidence to draw conclusion (A.J Veal page 46,2006).

It is important to know and confirm about the validity of the research. Validity is the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied (A.J.Veal page 41, 2006). In this research the data gathered from interviewee who have direct relationship and have deep knowledge about the subject matter. The information collected from them could be considered valid because of their experience and deep knowledge of the tourism industry and Ethiopia situations.

Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects (A.J.Veal page 116). In this research interview conducted with five different people with the same question, however they are living different areas the data shows,

they have close view and opinion about to the subject matter there were asked. This concludes the data in this research is reliable enough.

5.1 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative methods of research involve the collection and analysis of qualitative information rather than numerical data. The method tends to collect a great deal of rich information about relatively a few cases which typical of qualitative research. For the purpose of this research paper this method is very suitable as it enable the writer to gather primary and quality data about the topic, which helps to get an in-depth knowledge and understanding. It is also essential to know the presentation of the result derived from qualitative research is more easily understandable for the readers. (A.J Veal 193, 2006).

From different types of qualitative research method interview has been used for this research. The type of the interview was semi -structured interview, which is the most common type of interview used in qualitative research in the writing of thesis. Open-ended question was prepared in the area the writer wants to know about the subject matter. This type of interview gives freedom for the interviewee to express his or her opinion, experience and knowledge without limitation. Which is very important for the writer to get adequate and comprehensive understanding about the problem, as result, the writer will be able to get all rounded information in order to reach strong and effective solution.

5.2 Analysis of the tourism expert's interview

The interview was conducted with three tourism experts and two foreign tourists. The two of Ethiopian tourism experts currently living in Finland and they have been in business for more than ten years. Their age range is between 40- 50. The third tourism expert is from Ethiopia tourism and cultural minster office.

The first theme was about development of tourism in Ethiopia. This question was meant to evaluate and over see general situation of tourism in Ethiopia. All of the experts agree on the current improvement of tourism sector in the country compared to the previous times, especially from 2005 encouraging movement has been taken by the government, as a result practical development in the sector has been witnessed.

Interviewee Mr. Ato from The ministry office stated that the current tourism industry growth in Ethiopia is not huge if we only compare it with the potential and the time span tourism started in the country. To determine Ethiopian tourism development, we have to see the country's reality on economic growth and political stability, which in the past time during previous dictatorial regime tourism was very low because of political insecurity and economic policy such as, private sector not allowed in the country everything was owned by the government, not allowing Visa for Tourists. But taking into account the current situation of the country, I would say the growth in tourism Industry is positive but still the government and private sectors has to work hand in hand to transform the countries asset into a big market. Generally Development tourism in Ethiopia has ups and down and if one want to examine fully there should be other factors to consider in order to get well balanced image.

On the other hand, Interviewee Mr. A discussed about the development of tourism in Ethiopia as follows,

The five years growth and transformation plan by the government in August 2010, which set goals to ensure the country's full benefits by turning Ethiopian into a particularly preferred destination in Africa is a huge step in the history of Ethiopian Tourism. However, to make Ethiopia great and preferable destination a lot of work has to be done from the government and private sectors. In Ethiopia it is not so long since tourism became or considered as the main issue, If you take neighboring Kenya with the same weather and land scape they are far more than Ethiopia as a tourist destination in East African region. Ethiopia has to learn and exchange experience from their neighbors. If you compare the potential the two countries have it is not much different it is just a matter of giving time and focus in the area. Ethiopia tourist potential could make the best destination. But the country should do more work to develop the countries tourism. For instance Kenya and Tanzania are known for their Safari, Ethiopia should develop special tourist product that can make the country known for that based on the resource it has and unique for the country so that it will develop its own market .No one will compete or at least it will not be so hard to a place itself in the market, For example in Ethiopia there are many cultural, religious and natural festivals during the all year celebrated in a very unique cultural celebration with millions of people attending. This and others kinds of specialty the country should be able to develop and make known around the globe would help the country.

The second theme was about the current reality of country and the images or perception of outsiders. The aim of the question was too deeply understand and find out their point of view about subject matter, since they are experienced and know about Ethiopia very well.

The interviewee Ms. B

The current image of the country doesn't fully represent and tell the reality of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is growing, a lot of infrastructures are being built, the country is becoming more international, a lot of international company based in Addis Ababa and it is the safest place in the region. However, the country is in better position but the image the outsiders have still negative and biased.

I think the international media still focus on the negative side of the country, not the current change or the latest data that has come directly from the right source. I think Ethiopian's don't get a chance to tell their story it is always outsiders telling their story to outsiders or even for us with time, whether it is true representation of the country or not we tend to believe what they told. Consequently it becomes one sided story but considered as full sided story and give Ethiopia a certain image not the actual image to the public`

Interviewee Mr. Ato discussed about the current situation and image of the country-

The government is putting a lot of capital to the tourism industry by opening hospitality schools to increase the standard of service in international level by recruiting many professionals and also they are encouraging the private sector to enter into hospitality industry like accommodation, as result, a lot of investors are investing in different area, building high standard hotels, transportation and touring company. To invite more investors the government provided tax-free service for importing goods if you are involved in tourism sector. This created an opportunity for more investor to enter to the country to invest. Indeed currently private owners in different part of the country are building most of the lodges, hotels and resorts. But the image of the country has been the same from outside point of view even though there are lots of changes in country especially in tourism area.

" It is a common thing to hear tourists being surprised by the clear difference between their negative image and their actual experience. Most of them recognize that it is still a major obstacle to the tourism development".

Theme three was about to what extent Ethiopia's current image affects the development of tourism in the Country? This question meant to analyze and understand how deep is the problem.

Interviewee B: 'The image of the country immensely affect the development of tourism in Ethiopia, As I live outside of Ethiopia doing travel business to the country, from experience it very difficult to attract tourist because their mixed image about Ethiopia and lack of information, however it is so difficult to convince them to visit Ethiopia once they visited the country they change their mind. Most of the tourists they will come back again. We could see this as encouraging sign that once tourists get to know Ethiopia they are satisfied with their vising experience

She mentioned the western media and the NGO are still focusing on the past history of the country but not current positive condition, which represent the fastest growing country in the world, conducive for business, safe place for foreign visitor as well as inhabitant. The fact that the media and NGO are close to the western customers and more trusted, it is very difficult to give the real image of Ethiopia to the tourist. The interviewee suggested Ethiopian's should start promoting their own country in their own words on high level to give the real image of Ethiopia to the world."

Interviewee Mr. A shared the same view of tourism expert B, The media and NGO give in accurate data to western audience. They tend to focus on negative side of the country rather than the positive side. The audiences trust this organization, we can't say that NGO is not doing great job helping the poor but it is not always they provide the accurate information about the country and the same case with the media.

'He mentioned one incident were UNICEF put stating that the percentage of people in Ethiopia who can read and write is 29% in big fund raising exhibition in Finland, where hew as representing Ethiopia for promotion in 2010, which actually is 75% who can read and write, this data was corrected after contacted the main office in Addis Ababa through the government of Ethiopia

This kind and similar incident when it happens repeatedly they have the power to demolish the image of the country. The other interesting thing, Ethiopian themselves also can influence the image negativity about the country, it happens when there is disagreement with the government and leave the country, they started preaching about negative of the government as well as the country thinking that, they are hurting the government but actually they hurting their own

country. Finally he suggested, from most of all Ethiopians should take responsibility for their own country image and start acting to improve Ethiopia's image.

Interviewee Mr. Ato, we couldn't say that the tourism industry is not growing only because of the negative image but it has a huge impact in the process of development of tourism. Beside its own image the fact that the country is located in the horn of Africa, which is regarded as a region of instability and terrorism plays a huge role affecting the tourism industry. Mr. Ato also shares the same view with other two experts about the media and NGO.

Theme four: Strategies the country should follow to improve the image as a strong tourist destination in the region.

Mr. Ato said, in order to build Ethiopian image a huge attention and big investment on promotion is required, to tell the world that Ethiopia has much to offer. The marketing strategies should be more sophisticated and modernized in addition to the traditional one like advertising through tourism journals and participating in trade fairs, this should include intensive publication of books, brochures, maps and video shows using many languages should be taken seriously by using different languages at least the main international languages for instance English French, Spanish and Chinese.

Mr. A also stressed on the promotion and marketing of the country on international level, he believes building the image of the country is every Ethiopian's responsibility who lives inside or outside. Mainly the Ethiopian embassies have to involve promoting the image of the country by providing accurate information to the media as well as by being alert when incident occurs that may affect negatively the country's image, they should interfere instantly letting know the media the truth. He also suggested that the Ethiopian government should open tourist office in foreign countries, which solely does promoting Ethiopia giving travel info for anyone who need it and searching market through it might require a lot of money and time but it will help the country's tourism industry in the long run. The other thing the interviewee suggested that the country should develop distinguished unique tourism product that promote the country's image.

He said, creating international brand with the country's resource with label made in Ethiopia can actually play huge impact changing peoples negative image about

the country like, Sole Rebel Artisan crafted in Ethiopia international shoe brand (<http://www.solerebelsfootwear.com>).

Interviewee B I believe word of mouth marketing can play a vital role, She suggested not over exaggerating the destination reality but keeping it simple and real is very important. Also giving the promised service if it possible even more than expected, can impress and encourage the customers to come back again and also to spread their experience to others. She stated, using famous Ethiopian people to promote the country's image like athlete Haile Geberselase would be very helpful.

5.3 Analysis of foreign tourist interview

It is essential to captivate the tourists view about the subject matter. Understanding their point of view helped the writer in order to see the situation from different side and generate quality information.

Theme One: Pre-conception about Ethiopia before the visit, this question was planned to find out about how much they know about Ethiopia and what kind of image they have.

Interview K ,

I was in Ethiopia in 2006 and 2010 respectively, before going Ethiopia or planned to go I didn't have any information other than great runners are coming from there, she mentioned Abebe Bikila, Daratu Tulu and Haile Geberselase. Also I had seen about famine around 1970s and the dictatorial Derge regime on BCC. Other than this, I knew nothing about Ethiopia.

While interview Q said, he only knew about Ethiopia as country in Africa. So he stated that didn't have any idea what Ethiopia looks like. it difficult to generalize but this information gives slight insight foreigners don't know much about the current Ethiopia.

Theme Two: How did you find out about Ethiopia and your view after visiting?

The interviewee K

I found about Ethiopia through a family friend who was working as a missionary. I decided to visit while my friend was there. During the first visit I only visited where my friend stayed and got to know the people and culture. It was the second time, I went as a tourist to visit the historic areas, natural attractions and cultural heritages. I was thrilled by fascinating historical attractions, natural landscapes and the heritage of the society. After visiting, I learned "Ethiopians are proud people, which I think is good with a lot of history but at the same time very welcoming and humble. I think they are proud may be because they are not colonized. So they see everybody the same, which is very encouraging for foreigners. I am also very surprised by the brotherhood between the Christians and Muslims; they are almost equal in percentage of Muslims and Christians in the country, they also practice their traditions loudly. You can hear religion from both sides wherever you live in. She compared the peace and stability with neighboring countries and said Ethiopia is not the country to be afraid to travel.

'On the other hand, interviewee Q found out about Ethiopia from my country's media documentary. After, I decided to explore Ethiopia," when I shared my plan about going to Africa to my family and friends, they thought I was crazy for planning to go there. But they didn't change my mind, I really wanted to see Africa though I didn't know what to expect but I had doubts. When I arrived Ethiopia, it was different than I expected. The people were very nice and friendly to meeting foreigners. After spending two days in Addis Ababa, I was very amazed at the capital city having 5 million people living in the city but still very secure and peaceful, when I walked in the streets of Addis nobody made me uncomfortable even at night.

I traveled to the northern part of the country and visited Lalibela and Axum, which was very stunning by the architecture. Luckily I went to Ethiopia on the season when Ethiopians celebrate their Christmas and Timket (Epiphany), which is a big holiday. Especially Epiphany holiday celebration is quite unique and nowhere in the current world could be found. Ethiopians are able to keep the old traditions and ways of celebration for thousands of years. More than millions of people gather to the main public center to celebrate with their traditional clothes, singing and dancing; it is very interesting to experience.

He stated that a lot of promotion and marketing should be done in order to show and tell the world about these big events and attractions. Once people come to Ethiopia without a doubt, people will not be disappointed and they will for sure come back again. "I think the bad image and lack of information about Ethiopia has been a big barrier to the Western people not to come to Ethiopia, I stressed that on promotion and marketing the country needs to focus enormously'.

5.4 Findings

According to the interviewee with tourism experts, the country's economy is growing and the political situation is stable. Generally the environment in Ethiopia is conducive and encouraging for tourism. However, the country is not utilizing, its tourism potential as it supposed to be.

They all mentioned the country's image being a huge barrier for development of tourism industry. It is stated that the current situation and the outsider's view of the country is not balanced. As result, specifically Ms. B said it very difficult to attract tourist because the negative image about Ethiopia and lack of information but once they visited the country they definitely change their mind. However, she stated the western media and the NGO are still focusing on the past history of the country but not current positive condition which is the fastest growing country in world, conducive for business, safe place for foreign visitor as well as inhabitant. Generally, all the findings testify the bad image of the country affects the tourism industry and the decision of visitors not go to Ethiopia.

All the interviewee highly recommend or suggest the country need to promote and market widely by using the resource that is available. It is also noted that Ethiopia should developed its own specialty tourism product like Kenya and Tanzania, it is suggested Ethiopia has a huge potential for event and cultural as well as Historical destinations that could make her a competitive destination in this regard. The government and private sector need to work together to improve the country's image. However, They said most of it is all Ethiopian responsibility that lives in the country and outside Ethiopia to improve the negative image. In order to develop the tourism industry and to make the country benefited from the sector, it is crucial to improve Ethiopian image throughout world.

6 CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

The writer addressed the research question that was planned to answer in this thesis. In conclusion, however Ethiopia has abundant tourism potential but the performance of the country's tourism is not satisfied. The image of the country is a

drawback or challenge to improve its tourism industry. These researches show that building and improving Ethiopia's image is currently burning issue. Though, It also shows changing people's mind about certain image is not easy and cannot accomplish in short period of time but with time and effort it is possible. This demonstrates the process of image changing should be conducted with consistency of presenting the real image of the place with different strategies. Consequently, Ethiopia has a huge challenge in order to change its image but with time, effort by combining the appropriate method can be accomplished.

Combining the theoretical framework the writer followed and the data gathered, the following suggestions have been recommended from the writer view to improve Ethiopia's image.

- Creating country brand by setting a core values and goals which the brand stands and represents for, in away give focus on the identity of the country brand which can help to distinguish it from the its competitors. In this case it is recommendable to do market research before putting goals and core values. To make sure to whom and where are the right customers.
- Developing country brand is more powerful way to improve the image, by developing product or service that can be used in daily life of people at the same time which can represent the country so that people easily remember.
- Make sure after creating the brand give reliable and consistent service equals to what have been promised this helps in order to strength the brands equity which helps in the long run to gain the customer's trust.
- Promotion and marketing the country's image as well as brand in national and international level should be a priority from the government and stakeholders side.
- The county's famous citizens or people should be encouraged to join together with tourism office to symbolize and promote the country is another way of marketing.

- The government spokesperson in national level should provide updated information on regular basis for international medias and audiences when there is inappropriate incident that could harm the county's image.
- Upgrading the standard of hospitality service inside the country and keep the promised customer service. Which represent the reality of the country on the way it's helps not disappoint the tourist. This creates opportunities to prove about the country for the tourist and later could use the tourists to spread world of mouth information to other people about the positive thing, they faced.
- The government should start opening tourist info office in main city of world that represent Ethiopia and does promotion as a major task. Examples, participating in different exhibition, give presentation about country for free and airing commercials in particular countries.
- Ethiopian cultural and tourism minster office should give more emphasize participating in more number of international travel fare programs by sending professionals who can really present Ethiopia in attractive way. Example, fluent in more than one language and has a good presentation skill.

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Research Title: THIRTEEN MONTHS OF SUNSHINE (Improving Ethiopia's Image As A Tourist Destination)

Interview Type: Open ended questions

Theme 1: The first theme was about development of tourism in Ethiopia. This question was meant to evaluate and over see general situation of tourism in Ethiopia.

Theme 2: The second theme was about the current reality of country and the images or perception of outsiders from tourism point of View

Theme 3: This question was, to what extent Ethiopia's current image affects the development of tourism in the Country? This question meant to analyze and understand how deep is the problem.

Theme 4: Strategies and Solutions the country should follow to improve the image as a strong tourist destination in the East African region

Research Title: **THERTEEN MONTHS OF SUNSHINE**
Improving Ethiopia's Image As A Tourist Destination

Interview Type: Open ended questions

Theme 1: Pre-conception about Ethiopia before the visit , this question was planned to find out about how much they know about Ethiopia and what kind of image they have.

Theme 2: How did you find out about Ethiopia and your view after visiting