

An Assessment of Potentials, Challenges, and Opportunities of Ethiopian Cultural Centers for Tourism Product Development

Authors : Berie Abebe Getahun

Abstract : The tourism sector has been identified by the Ethiopian government as one of the priority economic sectors and planned to make Ethiopia among the top five African destinations by 2020. It is obvious international tourism demand for Ethiopia lags behind other African countries like South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Tanzania, and Kenya. Meanwhile, the number of international tourists' arrival to Ethiopia increases continuously. The main purpose of this study was to find out potentials, challenges, and opportunities of Ethiopian Cultural Center for tourism product development. Therefore, an attempt has been made to identify potentials over which tourism product development can be enhanced, and opportunities that promote tourism product development in Ethiopia. To achieve this objective, data have been collected by using observation, interview and focus group discussion with selected informants working the ministry of tourism and culture. The collected data has been analyzed by transcribing materials, and by using thematic analysis method based on the research objective. Likewise, the analyzed data has been discussed in the context of prevailing literature. As revealed in finding, Ethiopian cultural center has untapped potential for tourism product development that includes: meetings, incentives, conferences, events, availability of concerned stakeholders and demand of visitors. On the other hand, lack of awareness about tourism product development, financial constraints, skilled manpower, absence of tour guiding service and interpretation of heritages have been identified as the major challenges that hindering tourism product development in the cultural center. Moreover, the growth of domestic tourism, distinctive presence and rich culture of Ethiopia, and policy of Ethiopia that promotes the growth and preservation of indigenous cultures are deemed important opportunities for tourism product development in the country. And lastly, conducting a research based on tourism product development, reviewing the existing marketing and promotion strategies, training manpower, working harmoniously with the concerned stakeholders, and a careful examination of opportunities present in order to best utilize resources were implications drawn for future intervention.

Keywords : challenges and opportunities of tourism, Ethiopian tourism potential, tourism product, tourism product development

Conference Title : ICDTTS 2020 : International Conference on Domestic Tourism and Tourism Strategies

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : May 21-22, 2020