

Sub-theme 4.1. Society, Culture, and Tourism

Rationale

Culture is a figure of identity and wisdom encompassing diverse heritage and linguistic resources amassed for centuries owing to the socio-cultural, historical, and political interactions nations and nationalities encountered and subsumed in the society. These co-existing pivotal values and norms embedded in the day-to-day practices of the society are considered as ‘footprints’ of the past, basis for the present, and ‘path findings’ of the future. Heritage, language, and literary assets are also recognized either as tangible or intangible resources emanated within socio-cultural dynamics. Protecting these resources minimizes the extent of squandering cherished and fragile cultural and ideological belongings realized in the life, language, and literature of the society. Excavating all these resources and availing them to the tourism industry is one of the government’s pillar strategies set forth for development, thereby fostering the contribution of heritage and promoting the current development efforts people exert in the socio-economic and political system; this process is fundamental to define the characteristics of humanity and social transformation.

So far, the socio-economic potential of heritage values has not been identified and used for economic purposes. Moreover, low level of public awareness and lack of partnership among concerned authorities, demographic and development pressure, environmental degradation, and poverty further affect social synergy and cultural heritages. Therefore, working on this research thematic area can contribute to the development and implementation of mechanisms for sustainable survey and safeguarding of the social values, and intangible cultures using multidisciplinary approaches.

Aim

This sub-theme is meant to investigate and conserve socio-cultural values and historical and natural heritage resources so as to harness, promote, and communicate them for sustainable development of the society.

Description

This sub-theme draws on cross-disciplinary problems and social issues such as sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, social psychology, social ecology, language, literature, communication, culture, and heritage resources, and tourism. All our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems imbedded within the socio-cultural values and norms.

Potential Collaborators

Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Federal and Regional Culture and Tourism Offices, House of Federation, local communities, UNESCO regional offices, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Institute of Language Studies, media organisations, communication offices, Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, public and private higher learning institutions, national archive and museum centres.

Expected Output

- Preserved, sustained, and documented diverse social elements and cultural values, historical and natural heritage resources
- Identified sound knowledge and strategies that nurture symbiotic links between society, culture, heritage and tourism
- Improved socio-economic conditions of people and sustainable community-based cultural assets and ecotourism.
- Documented and conserved socio-cultural and linguistic values and history of the communities in the region

- Developed means of income generation for the society

Research Areas

4.1.1. Heritage and tourism

In this research area, both cultural and natural heritage resources are investigated and conserved to promote development in the country. The rich cultural heritage resources encompass the rich tangible artifactual materials, documentaries, and oral sources of history and intangible attributes of the society. These will be explored and researched for safeguarding and reconstructing objective and comprehensive historical knowledge about the genesis and dynamics of civilizations and cultures in the region. Apart from these, these historical and cultural heritage resources will also be researched aimed at promoting cultural heritage and tourism.

4.1.2. Socio-cultural dynamics

This research area focuses on finding factors of ‘dynamification’ within the interplay of cultural differences on one hand and cultural mutuality and exchanges over time on the other hand. The research area also subsumes research topics on forms of processes through which new directions for societal changes are proposed. This also includes scenarios where existing directions. The research area also explores and analyses the interactions of people, societies, cultures, and environments. It focuses on how social, political, historical, environmental, economic and cultural factors affect different societies, and how people function and communicate in and across cultural groups.

4.1.3. Language and literature

This research area focuses on analysis of the nature and history of linguistic resources, and the practices of the local societies on how they use language and literature to interact, reflect and preserve socio-cultural and historical events and communicate their understanding about life in entirety. In relation to this, it is vital to investigate the cultural, linguistic and socio-linguistic exchanges between the people and how that contributed to common socio-psychological

make-up. It is also deals with understanding of factors that affect the implementation of multilingual and multicultural policy of the government. Importantly included in this research area are also society's oral narratives, poetry, proverbs, folk-tales, myths and riddles, which are analysed to identify and classify their philosophical and intellectual contents and to illustrate the society's thinking and overall cultural outlooks.

4.1.4. Media and communication

This research area focuses on issues related to media law, ethics, democracy, and development. It also covers media influences on public perceptions and policy making. The research area also addresses problems related to role media plays in promoting and/or devastating culture, promoting agriculture and technology, and exposing bad governance.