

Theme 4. Human and Social Development

Ethiopia is endowed with diverse cultural and natural resources, reflecting the co-existence of various socio-cultural dynamics, linguistic and literacy resources across the regions. Capitalising on the role of media in the practice of unearthing such tangible and intangible socio-cultural assets has nowadays become a pivotal tool for development. However, low awareness about this diversity, limited cooperation among stakeholders, low number of professionals in the field and minimal media coverage to communicate within and across various socio-cultural and development of societies have had impact on the scope of understanding socio-cultural, historical and natural heritage values, and their remarkable tourism potential to support economic development.

Therefore, it is important to satisfying the complementary demands of high scientific payoff (research excellence) and response to pressing development concerns with a focus on, among others: language, in particular major foreign and Ethiopian languages; cultural diversity and social integration; cultural heritage; education; growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy; socio-economic and scientific indicators; governance, rule of law, and justice; sustainable and enhanced service delivery for humans; gender; peace building and conflict resolution; tourism.

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.

Sub-theme 4.2. Educational Advancement and Quality Assurance

Rationale

Ethiopia has made significant progresses in educational development in recent years. The university system in Ethiopia has experienced educational massification. In addition, strategies have been designed for alternative basic education, early child care and education, functional adult literacy, and new school health and nutrition initiatives.

However, student competencies in knowledge, skills, adaptability, teamwork, communication, entrepreneurship, and motivation etc. are short of the requirements for the socio-economic development in the fast changing and globalized world. The challenges are often posed by shortage of competent staff and professional development, poor educational governance and leadership, problems of quality and relevance of educational programmes, weak research and innovation capacities, limited financial resources, poor physical facilities and infrastructure, and inability to meet increasing demands for access and equity.

In recognition of these challenges, greater attention needs to be focused on educational advancement and quality assurance as a critical factor to ensure educational relevance in the country. Therefore, to address the challenges of the education system in Ethiopia, there is a need to undertake thematic research to generate evidence for new knowledge, innovations, and best practices that can be geared towards improvement of the quality and relevance of education in the country.

Aim

This research sub-theme aims at generating knowledge, skills, innovations, technologies and best practices for improving educational quality, relevance, equity, standard, quality assurance, and educational leadership.

Description

The research sub-theme focuses on improving the quality of the teaching-learning process, student learning competence and achievements, professional development, leadership development, educational planning, curriculum enhancement, school education improvement programmes, application of ICT, and other technologies for enhancing quality of education, and inclusive education. It also deals with interlinking education with research results, with community based education, with industries as well as businesses. The sub-theme also focuses on finding ways of creating enabling environments and facilities for teaching and learning, including for special-need students. Educational standards, dimension, models, and tools for quality assurances are also the thrust of this theme. The sub-theme also deals with research on student assessment, guidance and counselling, and the link between quality assessment and policy interventions as well as functional adult literacy and other forms of non-formal education.

Potential Collaborators

Ministry of Education, other federal ministries, regional and zonal education bureaus, research institutions, NGOs, national and international higher learning institutions, colleges, schools, students, teachers, industries, businesses, the wider communities, and other stakeholders.

Expected Output

- Improved knowledge, skill and awareness to enhance quality of education
- Enhanced knowledge and skills and best practices for creating enabling environment for educational access and quality
- Best practices and improved knowledge for enhanced academic achievements for female and special need students
- Better knowledge, skills, and practices to enhance student competencies in academics, research, and team work and entrepreneurships
- Increased knowledge and skills for effective and productive educational planning and leadership

- Better instructional technologies for quality teaching-learning
- Better knowledge and skills for implementing sound student assessment and feedbacks
- Improved knowledge, skills, and best practices for effective student guidance and counselling services
- Enhanced techniques for installing and monitoring effective quality assurance systems
- Improved application of ICT for the betterment of the quality of education
- Enhanced knowledge, skills and best practices for improving professional competencies of staff
- Enhanced best practices for renewal and effective realization of Functional Adult Literacy
- Knowledge and skills for improving access to education for disadvantaged and special-need students
- Improved expertise and practices for improving the content and relevance of curricula
- Better knowledge, expertise and practices for realizing effective community-based learning and participative research and dissemination of knowledge and technologies
- Research-based evidence for formulating policies, guidelines, and standards etc.

Research Areas

4.2.1. Quality education

This research area focuses on generating scientific evidence for realizing enhanced quality of learners, educational contents, processes, and the environment. It also includes researching into ways generating knowledge and technologies for enhancing the quality of teaching-learning and assessment.

4.2.2. Educational planning and management

This research area focuses on educational planning, leadership, organisational management, school and community relations, university-school linkage, university-industry linkage, functional adult education, environment and health education, and HIV/gender education.

4.2.3. Special needs and inclusive education

This research area focuses on early childhood care, inclusive education, early intervention, special needs education, and inclusive education.

4.2.4. Curriculum inquiry

This research area focuses on curriculum, schooling, teaching/learning, curriculum and program development, implementation, and evaluation, education in non-school settings, comparative education and education in international settings, dialogic and social constructivist approaches to curriculum, student and/or teacher problem solving and critical thinking and assessment, and evaluation of teaching-learning.

4.2.5. Applied psychological research

This research area deals with psychology of learning (learning-theory approach to language, mathematics, engineering, and other fields of study), developmental, cognitive, community counselling, personality, organisational and social psychology as well as problems related to parenting.

4.2.6. Basic Science education

This research area focuses on assessing and enhancing biology, chemistry and physics knowledge of students and teachers at school and higher educational institutions. This is attained through exploring and developing research tools, new and recent theories, and global practices using technology and problem solving approaches to the level of students' understanding.

4.2.7. Mathematics education

This research area focuses on assessing and enhancing mathematics knowledge of students and teachers at school and higher educational institutions. This is achieved through assessing mathematical ability of students, students' mathematical conceptions, special talents in mathematics, and developing research materials/tools for mathematical misconceptions to seek solutions.

4.2.8. Assessment and evaluation of teaching-learning

This research area focuses on determinants of teachers' professional competencies, institutional facilities, instructional technologies, and students' performances.

4.2.9. Educational quality assurance

This research area focuses on students' choices of programmes, quality of education, quality of students, administrative factors, academic factors, learning environments, intake capacity versus performances, etc. This research area deals with dimensions of quality assurance systems (tools, models, standards).

4.2.10. Adult education and community development

This research area focuses on functional adult literacy, community-based learning, life-long learning, formal and non-formal education, on-line education and other related issues.

Beneficiary

The scientific community, industry, educational institutions, Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Bureaus, research institutions, policy makers, and the wider public

Sub-theme 4.3. Population, Gender, and Development

Rationale

Population dynamics, gender and development-related issues are the current concerns of countries in the socio-economic reformation trend. The increasing rate of population in sub-Saharan African countries in the next forty years is a threat requiring urgent strategic policies. The impacts of population dynamics play crucial roles in resource degradation. As population continues to expand, it exerts pressure on the proper functioning of the ecosystem and natural resource stocks. One of the reasons of the shrinkage in land holdings as well as degradation of natural resources in many parts of Ethiopia emanates from rapid population growth. Thus, assessment of the processes and factors leading to population dynamics and the resultant effects is indispensable to promote sustainable economic, social, and ecological development in eastern Ethiopia in particular and the country at large.

The increasing concern on how to mainstream gender issues in development projects has been one facet with regard to gender in population. This is due the fact that both men and women play important roles in the successes of any development interventions. However, in most societies, women are disadvantaged in that they are not wholly involved in the decision making process and share no benefits. Both inter- and intra-household differentials in terms of decision making, access to and control over productive resources are common in developing countries. Even though unprecedented efforts have been made by the government of Ethiopia to mainstream gender issues in all development projects carried out by both governmental and non-governmental organisations, there remains a lot to be done to fill the gaps. Information about gender-related issues, roles and relations, decision making, access to and control over resources, gender-based violence, etc is limited in Ethiopia. Knowledge about important factors that need to be considered while mainstreaming gender issues in development activities is generally scarce. Therefore, there is a need to undertake research on gender and development.

Aim

This sub-theme aims at analysing gender-based issues, modernisation and development, and population dynamics.

Description

This sub-theme includes studies on issues that are related to gender such as gender-based violence, gender analysis, gender and livelihoods, gender mainstreaming, gender and poverty, gender and social vulnerability, gender auditing and budgeting, gender and population, and gender disparity in higher education, leadership positions, economic and political spheres, gender and HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, gender and energy, gender and media, gender and natural resource management, gender and climatic change, gender sensitive governance, and empowerment of women. In relation to population, the sub-theme focuses on factors that affect the population structure such as migration, fertility, mortality, and marital status. It also researches into socio economic changes and levels that determine the living status and quality of life of the society.

Potential Collaborators

Bureaus of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Justice, Agriculture and Finance and Economic Development, academic and training centres and institutions, UNFPA, UNICEF, Save the Children, UNHCR, USAID, embassies, children's right protection organisations, etc.

Expected Output

- Gender disaggregated information related to decision-making, access to and control over resources
- Improved gender mainstreaming as strategy in all policies of the countries and institutions
- Gender roles and responsibilities in economic development, participation in politics and natural resources management
- Improved policy options for improvement towards gender equality
- Improved ways of tackling gender based violence
- Deterrents to improved socio-economic status of the society in general and women in particular

- Strategic information on population dynamics for decision making

Research Areas

4.3.1. Gender and development

This research area deals with gender and sustainable livelihoods, gender and poverty, gender and social vulnerability, gender and natural resource management, and gender and climatic change. It also focuses on exploring the causes, determinants and solutions to alleviate gender-related problems. It analyses the implications of laws, policies, programmes, and projects with reference to men; and problems in gender power imbalance and gender-related concerns. It investigates involvement of both women and men in the economy, politics, and natural resources management.

This research area also addresses problems that arise from power relation of women/girls and men/boys and cultural practices that have a detrimental effect to girls' and women's life such as early marriage, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, rape and marriage by abduction, which are common phenomena that not only violate the dignity of women but also endanger their life and health.

4.3.2. Population dynamics

This research area deals with the causes, determinants, and consequences of rapid population growth, migration, urbanisation, mortality and other factors that determine population structure and development. Policies, actions, and strategies to curb problems related to population, urbanisation, and development are also dealt with under this research area.

Beneficiary

The scientific community, women advocacy groups, industries, policy makers, and the wider public

Sub-theme 4.4. Governance and the Rule of Law

Rationale

Good governance system is the basis of well-functioning state machineries, societal interactions, and institutions. Developing countries like Ethiopia usually face multifaceted socio-economic and governance problems which adversely affect their pursuit to attain justice and poverty reduction. Ineffective governance systems result in some of the serious problems including persistent conflicts, inequity, human rights violation, deprivations, impacted vulnerable groups, and persistent poverty.

Integrated and multidisciplinary research approaches addressing the interface among governance, rule of law, access to justice, conflict management, and land rights are timely issues. By the same token, protection and commercialisation of intellectual property rights (including local inventions and adaptations) are very crucial for absorbing unemployed human power and transforming the economy towards industrialisation. As a result, for a well-functioning state, resources like land, actors like state machineries, obstacles like dispute and systems like access to justice and adjudication of disputes should be well studied. Thus, an in-depth and investigative research would help to identify the gaps, problems, and challenges, and to suggest the possible areas for reform and intervention in the social, institutional and administrative systems of the country in general and Eastern Ethiopian in particular.

Aim

This sub-theme aims at investigating governance system and its functioning as well as problems in various social, economic, and political environs.

Description

This sub-theme generally addresses integrated issues in governance, institutions, access to justice, conflict management, land rights protection, and the socio-economic as well as business environment. It touches upon all the nature, norms, roles and evolution of

institutions in the economy and other vital institutions and organisations. The governance aspect of this study focuses on understanding how the governance system in Ethiopia facilitates or hinders the sustainable development process. It also inquires on the policy, legal and institutional frameworks of state machineries and customary systems that define, support, and stimulate economic and social interactions. This sub-theme also deals with rule of law, land administration, conflict management, real world economic institutions and organisations.

Potential Collaborators

Federal, regional, zone and district based bureaus, research institutes, cooperatives and Micro-and-small scale promotion agencies, TVET institutions. Among them are the justice sector (courts, public prosecutor office, police office, prison administration, peace and security offices, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, judicial training institutions) and NGOs working and supporting justice sector innovations.

Expected Output

- Optimised resource utilisation and production systems in governance, administration and management of various institutions.
- Better understanding of the protection and commercialisation of properties and rights over intellectual property rights.
- Improved and equitable access to land, tenure security and economic exploitation of land resources in agricultural, pastoral and agro-pastoral areas
- Improved universal access to justice and human rights and family protection
- Strengthened conflict management systems both in the formal and informal systems.

Research Areas

4.4.1. Governance and leadership

Under this research area, various researches on both private and public organisations, administration, management practices, natural resource governance, and corporate governance are undertaken. It also deals with assessing the role and contribution of good governance for poverty alleviation, efficient resource utilisation, and sustainable development practices. In addition, public governances including inter-governmental relations, federal arrangements and operation, labour standards, public ethics and corruption issues, financial and tax systems, electoral systems and democratisation system, and media laws could be studied.

4.4.2. Property rights

This research area includes studies on protection of rights over both tangible (real and personal properties) and intangible properties. More importantly, it covers intellectual property (IP) rights regimes of copyright, trademarks, patents (and utility model certificates), industrial design rights, trade dress, and trade secrets. Topics under this research area will shed light on the policy, legal, institutional and practical bottlenecks of seeking, commercialising, industrialising and protection of intangible property rights; and protection, commercialisation, and rights and obligation attached to tangible property claims. It will also investigate the technological learning trends in Ethiopia, the manner by which technology is learned and the role of institutions in stimulating and supporting IP rights protection.

4.4.3. Land laws and institutions

This research area focuses on land policy, tenure security, access to and equitable distribution of land, land rights and their protection, transfer of land rights (including lease, donations, and inheritance), land administration institutions, land disputes, land conservation and productivity, investments in land, overlaps and conflicts of laws pertaining to land. In addition,

use rights, administration and role of customary system pertaining to land in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas are also investigated.

4.4.4. Conflict management and peace building

This research area includes investigations into dynamics of conflict, conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation, peace building, understanding of the customary dispute settlement mechanisms, and their interface with the formal dispute settlement processes, investigating the roles of peace education and intercultural dialogue in social cohesion, analysing capacity of justice sectors (formal and customary), and conflict resolution mechanisms (including inquiry on rehabilitation and restoration of justice systems). Specific research could concentrate on key issues in Ethiopia and in its eastern part in particular such as inter- and intra-group conflicts, cross border conflicts, crimes, proliferation of small arms, family and neighbour disputes, domestic violence, etc. In family matters, studies could inquire into the increasing number of divorces and family break ups, marriage issues, and early marriage; and conflict and overlaps of laws due to simultaneous applications of different customary, state, and religious laws.

4.4.5. Human rights and access to justice

This research area focuses on protection of human rights and ensuring access to justice systems. The research area also encompasses communities' legal awareness and communication channels, human rights protection, protection of vulnerable groups of the society (including family), access to legal services and legal aid, effectiveness and challenges of collective claims, role of civil society, access to courts and quasi-judicial bodies, and legal literacy and information.

Beneficiary

The legal system of the country, institutions, policy makers, and the wider public.