

## Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Development in Jimma, Buno Bedele and Nekemt Town, Oromia Region, Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** The south west Oromia Region of Ethiopia is having great potential for cultural and natural heritages in the Jimma, BunoBedele and Nekemt towns. In this region, there is a requirement to rebuild the economy, while preserving and conserving the socio-cultural and the natural environment for future. One of the ways to do so can be the development of sustainable tourism. Therefore, to gather in-depth information about the challenges of sustainable tourism development at the above stated towns, face-to-face interviews, observation and surveys were carried out. The study was conducted in November, 2018 and the respondents that participated in the study were 150. According to the findings, the main challenges of sustainable tourism development in the study area are an expansion of agriculture in the protected areas, the frequent incidence of wild fire, lack of facilities at the concerned area, low level of knowledge of the locals to showcase and protect their cultural heritage as well as weak legal systems. The level of participation of local people in tourism development was also low at the time of the study, but they showed interest in gaining education and training regarding sustainable tourism and wanted to participate in the decision making process.

**Key words:** *Sustainable tourism, tourism challenges, development, environment, local community*

### 1. Introduction

In reviewing the desired goal of tourism in rural areas McAreavy and McDonagh (2011) argues that tourism needs to be viable, but it should not harm the resources such as physical environment and social fabric of the host community i.e. tourism development should be sustainable. Tourism is a development indicator. Indeed, it is an index of mobility and a factor of socialization. It calls and creates an opportunity to transfer income from the more privileged to the less privileged, access to knowledge, expansion of partnerships, enhances diversified involvement and participation and

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