

# Prospects Of Potential Tourism Resources for Tourism Development in Somorika Community of Akoko Edo Local Government Area in Edo State

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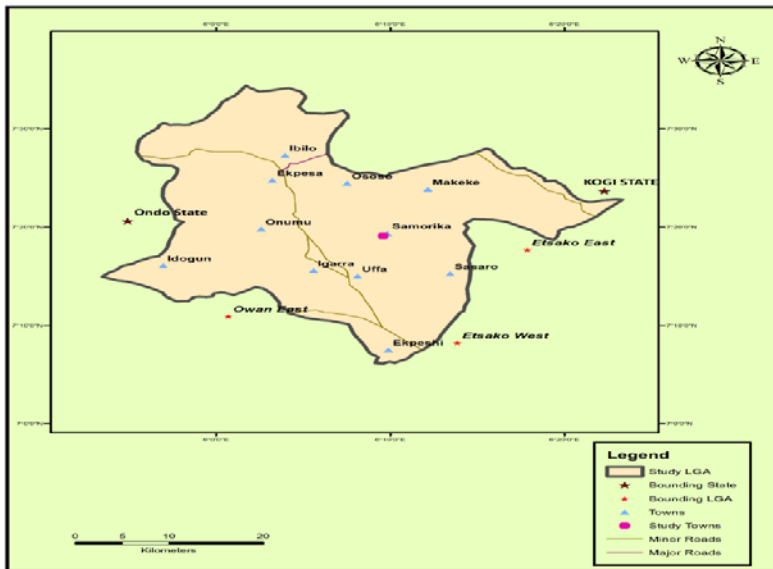
**Abstract:** Somorika is one of the communities in Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State of Nigeria that is blessed with numerous natural resources. These are evident in their festivals, arts, and crafts, natural sites and destinations among others. Despite all these attractions, the community has not benefitted from the prospects of these resources compared to other tourism endowed communities like Obudu in Cross River State and Ikogosi in Ekiti State. This is what prompted the research topic “Prospects of Potential Tourism Resources for Tourism Development in Somorika Community of Akoko Edo Local Government Edo State”. The general objective of this study is to ascertain the prospects of potential tourism resources for tourism development in Somorika community of Akoko Edo L.G.A. The researchers used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to collect data. Yaro Yamen’s method of sample size determination was used. A total of 364 copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed in accordance with the population of the study and a total of 336 were duly returned. It was shown a 92% average rate of return. It was discovered that the potential tourism resources have some prospects in using them for tourism development. Some of these prospects include the creation of job opportunities for local people, income generation (economic growth) and infrastructural development, among others. The study suggested that government should create an enabling environment for the private sector to come in and build hotels, restaurants, banks, motor parks, among others so that any tourist that visits the community will feel at home.

## Introduction

Somorika is one of the communities in Akoko Edo Local Government Area of Edo State of Nigeria that is blessed with numerous natural resources. These are evident in their festivals, arts, and crafts, natural sites and destinations and among others. According to Amune (1983) Anyanwu and Ojeikere (2019), Somorika people are believed to have been one of the first settlers in Akoko-Edo division of Bendel State (now Edo State). The village is located on a hill and totally surrounded with stones (rock). Somorika people were at the up hills called by the local people as ‘Wayin-a’. The hill-top, ‘Wayin-a’, was the location of the people when the British arrived to conquer them in 1904. In 1917, Somorika descended from the hills to their present site. The hilly nature of the area provided the people with a natural defence against attacks. It must be noted that Akoko-Edo is home

to the famed Kukuruku hills and almost every village at that time had access to one part or the other of these hills. Many villagers went to take refuge in Somorika because of its geographical location. The community was literally a haven of safety from the warring Nupes during their invasion and harassment of the people but gave the reason as the 'hilly position' of Somorika, being 'totally surrounded by rocks'.

However, because of the geographical area of the community, there are different rock formations, caves, and stone hangers, among others, in the area. Some of these rocks have a height of 1700 feet above the sea level which serves as a tourist attraction. Examples of these natural sites include Oriakpe rock(see plate 1) which has a human-shaped rock on top, Odeburu rock which marks the highest peak of Kukuruku hills (See plate 2). Standing on top of this rock one can see the entire of Akoko Edo local government area. In terms of caves, Somorika has many caves which include Ofe'Otaru, Ofe'Ekisa, (see plate 3&4) among others. The Somorika old site from where the British invaders forced Somorikans to their present site is full of historical relics worth seeing. The ancient architectural buildings, stone hangers, massive stone-steps, tunnels, shrines etc will excite the imagination.



**Figure 1: Map showing Somorika community**

Despite all these attractions, the community has not benefitted from the prospects of these resources compared to other tourism endowed communities like Obudu in Cross River State and Ikogosi in Ekiti State. Thus, this study is to unveil the prospects of the potential tourism resources in Somorika community.

However, the general objective of this study is to assess the prospects of the potential tourism resources in Somorika community.

## **Materials and Methods**

In this study, mixed research approach was employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data which were collected via extensive literature, structured questionnaire, in-depth interview, oral tradition and field observation. The reason for using mixed research is to ensure the triangulation of data. Secondly, it enhances the weakness inherent in using either qualitative or quantitative.

### **Population of the Study.**

The population of Somorika community as at 2006 census was 3,526. The estimated population for 2016 is 4,404 persons using 2.5% increase which Population Commission stipulates.

### **Sample Size**

The sample size showed the number of people that were taken from the whole population for sampling using copies of the structured questionnaire. Yaro Yamen's method of sample size determination as stated by Anyanwu (2013) was used. It is stated thus:

$$n = N$$

$$1 + N(e)^2 \text{ where}$$

$$n = \text{sample size}$$

$$N = \text{population}$$

$$1 = \text{constant}$$

$$e = \text{error level of significance}$$

$$n = \frac{4404}{1 + 4404(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4404}{1 + 4404(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{4404}{1 + 11.01}$$

$$n = \frac{4404}{12.01}$$

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = 364$$

The sample size calculated above was shared among the three quarters in Somorika as shown below.

$$\text{Oyinokara Quarter} = 121$$

$$\text{Igoni Quarter} = 121$$

$$\text{Oyenovo Quarter} = 122$$

## **Results and Findings**

A total of 364 copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed in accordance with the population of the study and a total of 336 were duly returned. It was shown a 92% average rate of return. The remaining 8% were not returned due to the attitude of the respondents.

### **Socio – demographic characteristics.**

This section discussed the responses/data from people on sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, religion and position in the community leanings on the three hundred and thirty-six (336) respondents that received the structured questionnaire. Meanwhile, it is worthy to reiterate that the three quarters are Quarter A, B, and C, which are named Oyenokara, Oyenovo and Igoni respectively (Table 1)

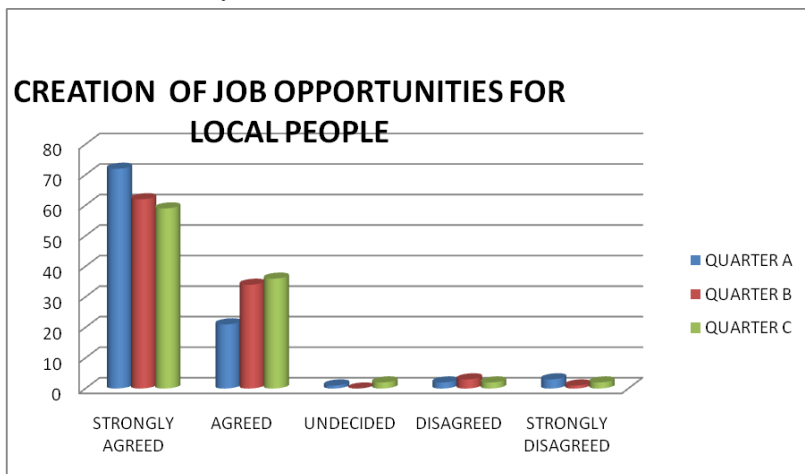
**Table 1 Socio – Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Quarter A</b>	<b>Quarter B</b>	<b>Quarter C</b>
<b>Sex: Male</b>	90 (80.36)	80(71.43)	72(64.29)
Female	22 (19.64)	32 (28.57)	40 (35.71)
<b>Age:18-30Yrs</b>	12 (10.71)	8(7.14)	9 (8.04)
31-40Yrs	15 (13.39)	7(6.26)	6 (5.36)
41-50Yrs	20 (17.86)	15 (13.39)	5 (4.6)
51-60Yrs	50 (44.64)	60 (53.57)	70 (62.50)
61-70Yrs	10 (8.93)	12 (10.71)	14 (12.50)
Above 70 Yrs	5(4.46)	10 (8.93)	8 (7.14)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	30(26.79)	37 (33.04)	40 (35.71)
Married	70 (62.50)	66 (58.93)	61 (54.46)
Widow	5 (4.46)	4 (3.57)	7 (6.25)
Divorced	7 (6.25)	5 (4.46)	4 (3.57)
<b>Educational Qualification</b>			
No Formal Education	5 (4.46)	6 (5.36 )	7 (6.25)
Primary	35 (31.25)	30 (26.79)	32 (28.57)
Secondary	65 (58.04)	75 (66.94)	60 (53.57)
Tertiary	7 (6.25)	1 (0.89)	13 (11.61)
<b>Religion</b>			
Christianity	67 (59.82)	60 (53.57)	65 (58.04)
Islam	30 (26.79)	40 (35.71)	38 (33.93)
Traditional	15 (13.79)	12 (10.71)	9 (8.04)

Position in the community			
Ordinary man	70 (62.50)	60 (53.37)	75 (66.96)
Chairman/union leader	10 (8.93)	9 (8,04)	12 (10.71)
Family head	30 (26.79)	35 (31.25)	19 (16.96)
Religious leader	2 (1.79)	8 (7.14)	6 (5.36)

**Source:** Author’s Field Survey, 2018

Table 1 above showed that the respondents were mostly males between the ages of 18 to 70 years that attended secondary school who were married Christians in Somorika community.



**Figure 2: creation of job opportunities for local people**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018.

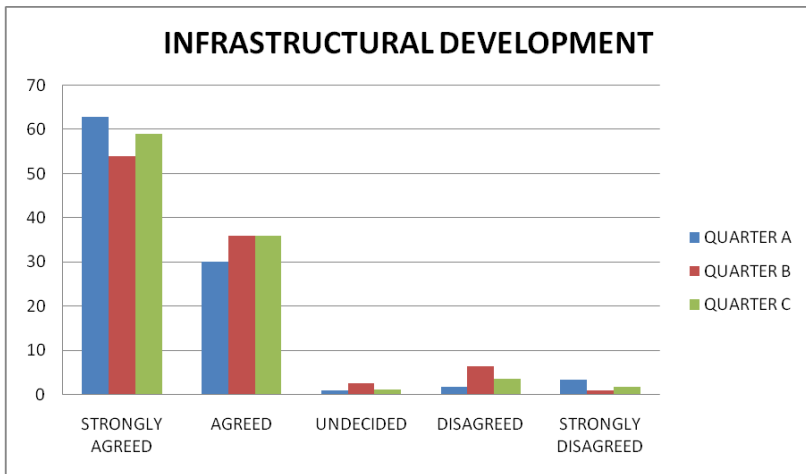
The figure 2 above revealed that the resources can create a wide range of job opportunities for local people. This is supported by 72%, 62% and 59% of respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can create a wide range of job opportunities for local people. 21%, 34% and 36% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed with the statement. But 1%, 2% of respondents in quarters A and C were undecided to the statement while 2% respondents in quarters A and C respectively and 3% respondents in quarter B disagreed with the statement. This is supported by 3%, 1% and 2% respondents in quarters A, B and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can create of a wide range of job opportunities for local people.

The index from the study revealed that the resources if developed can create wild range opportunities for local people. The response from the locals showed that the abundant resources in the community, if tapped, can create a job to the jobless youths. According to informants, when you look at the level of solid

mineral deposits in the community with that at Igarra community that is enjoying their resources now, you will see that if the private sector can come in with help of the government creating enabling environment, the rate of unemployment will be reduced drastically. Tope said:

*“Tourism generates income for our community and jobs opportunities, which has assisted in alleviating poverty. During our festivals, commercial motorcycle riders, food vendors, pure water hawkers, and farmers make a lot of profits. This is as a result of people from different parts of the country that visit us during our festivals”.*

Direct observation showed that the abundant natural and cultural attractions in the community, if harnessed, will create both direct and indirect jobs for the residents.



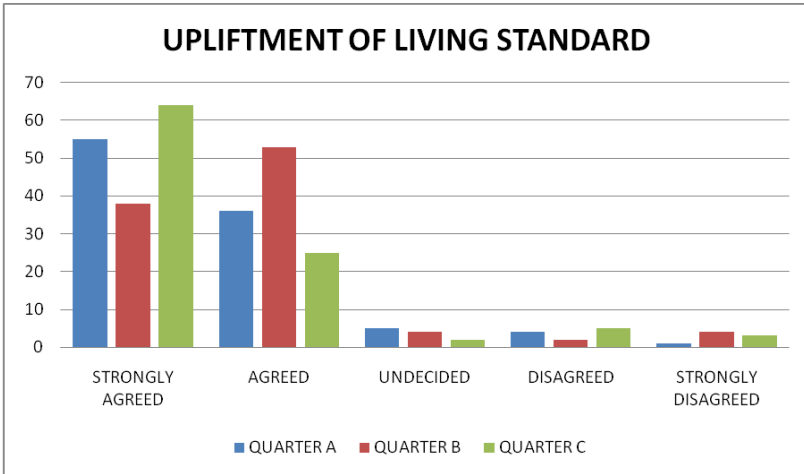
**Figure 3: Infrastructural Development**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018.

The figure 3 revealed that the resources can bring infrastructural development to the community. This is supported by 63%, 54% and 59% respondents in quarters A, B and C respectively who strongly agreed that the resources can bring infrastructural development to the community. 30%, 36% and 36% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed with the statement. But 0.8%, 2.5% and 1.6% respondents in quarters A, B and C were undecided while 1.7%, 6.3% and 3.5% respondents in quarters A B and C disagreed with the statement. This is supported by 3.3%, 0.8% and 1.6% respondents in quarters A and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can bring infrastructural development to the community. This is supported by Aliu (2017: Per. com), who said that when one compares the tourism resources in some state like Cross River and Ekiti with their own that is in a

community, one will believe that Somorika is blessed. According to him, since those states have felt the infrastructural development in their area as a result of the resources, he believes that any time the tourism resources in the community are harnessed it will bring infrastructural development to Somorika.

The index above revealed that the resources can bring infrastructural development to the community. Among these infrastructures are the road network, electricity, hotel and restaurants, communication facilities, and medical facilities. This is supported by oral tradition that with abundant resources in the community, there is belief that when the tourism resources in somorika are developed, it will bring infrastructural development to the community.



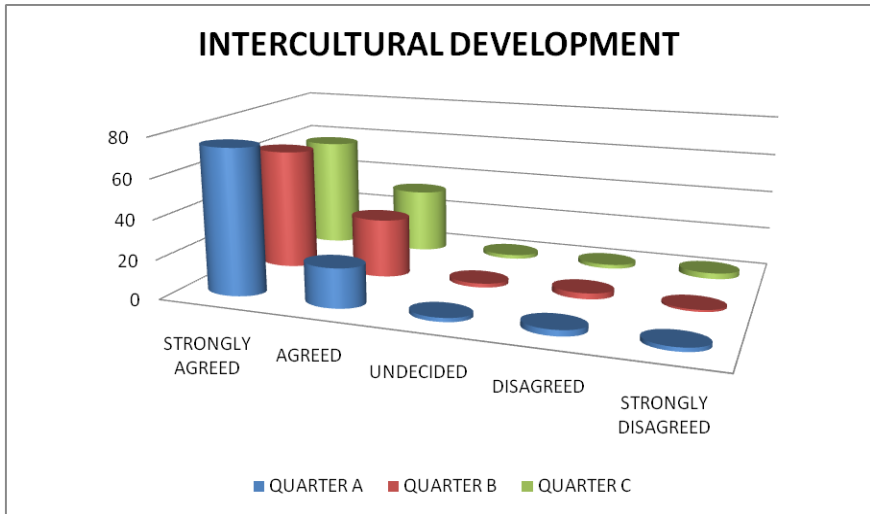
**Figure 4: Upliftment of living standard**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018.

The figure 4 revealed that the resources can uplift the standard of living in the community. This is supported by 55%, 38% and 64% respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can uplift the standard of living in the community. 36%, 53% and 25% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed to the statement. But 5%, 4% and 2% respondent in quarters A, B and C were undecided while 4%, 2% and 5% respondents in quarters A B and C disagreed with the statement. This is supported by 1%, 4% 3% respondents in quarters B and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can uplift the standard of living in the community.

The index in the study revealed that the resources can uplift the standard of living of the community. This is supported by a key informant that Ulokuigbe shrine has affected the life of youths financially. Ijeoma, an ‘Okada rider’, said that “during the time the community is celebrating any festivals, their business always boom”. Ademola (2018: Per.com) said that as a weaver, she always sell her weaved clothes to the celebrants during cultural festivals and to tourists as

souvenirs. She said that her life will be changed for better if other sites and cultural attractions can be developed and promoted.



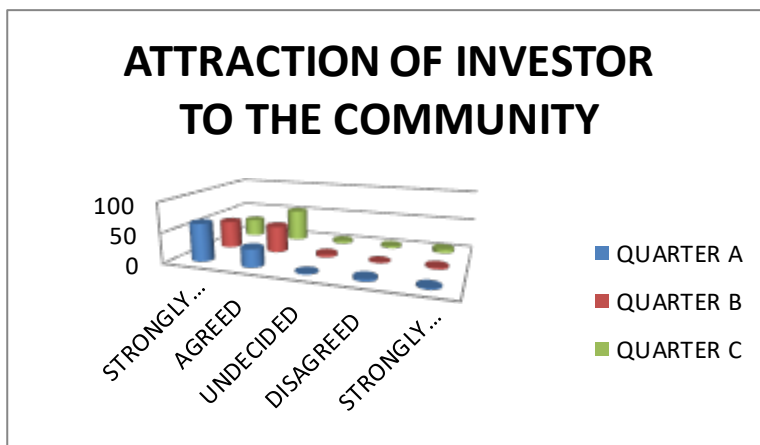
**Figure 5: Intercultural Development**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018.

The figure 5 revealed that the resources can bring intercultural development in the community. This is supported by 74%, 62% and 57% respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can bring intercultural development in the community. 18%, 30% and 33% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed to the statement. But 2% respondents in quarters A B and C were undecided while 3% and 2% respondents in quarters A B and C disagreed to the statement. This is supported by 2%, 1% and 3% respondents in quarters A, B and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can bring intercultural development in the community.

The figure 6 revealed that the resources can attract investors to the community. This is supported by 63%, 46% and 30% respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can bring and can attract investment to the community. 30%, 45% and 54% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed to the statement. But 1% and 5% respondents in quarter A, C and B respectively were undecided to the statement while 4% and 1% respondent in quarters A, C and B respectively disagreed to the statement. This is supported by 2%, 3% and 7% respondents in quarters A, B and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can attract investors to the community.





**Figure 6 : Attraction of Investors to the Community**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018

The index in the study revealed that the resources will attract investors to the community. The finding shows that with the level of natural resources in the community if the government can create an enabling environment, the private investor will come in and develop the area. According to informants, lack of an access road to the community has discouraged investors from coming. They are of the view that when investors will come and it will help the community positively.

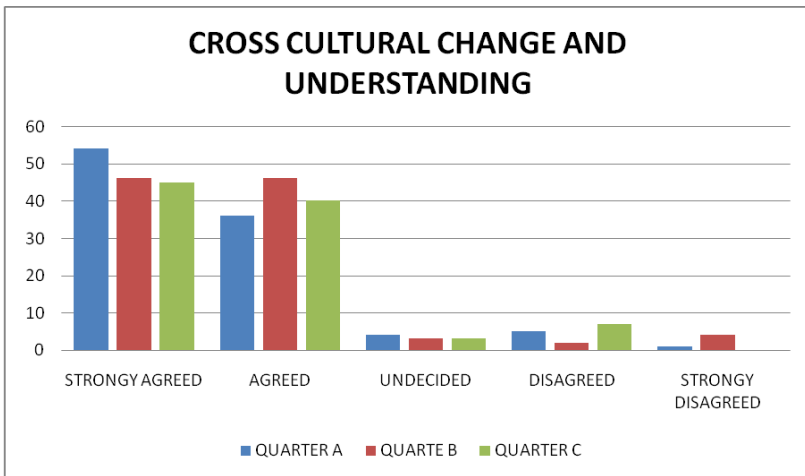


**Figure 7: Attraction of International Tourists to the Community**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018

The figure 7 revealed that the resources can attract international tourists to the community. This is supported by 38%, 30% and 54% respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can attract international tourists to the community. 53%, 54% and 32% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed to the statement. But 2%, 5% and 4% respondents in quarters A and C and B were undecided while 4% 4% and 9% respondents in quarters A, B and C disagreed to the statement. This is supported by 4%, 5% and 3% respondents in quarters A, B and C who strongly disagreed that the resources can attract international tourist to the community.

This is supported by Imah IV of Somonika that many white people have been visiting the area, especially for research purpose. He maintained that since the resources are untapped and international tourists are visiting, he wonders what will happen when developed. According to oral tradition, British people normally come to Somonika for relaxation in the olden days.



**Figure 8: Meeting tourists promotes cross cultural change and understanding**

**Source:** Field Survey Data, 2018

The figure 8 revealed that the resources can attract promotes cross-cultural change and understanding. This is supported by 54%, 46% and 45% respondents in quarters A, B, and C who strongly agreed that the resources can attract international tourists to the community. 36%, 46% and 40% respondents in quarters A, B and C agreed to the statement. But 4% respondent in quarter A while

3% in C and B respectively were undecided while 5%, 2% and 7% respondents in quarter A, B and C disagreed to the statement. This is supported by 1% and 3% respondents in quarters A and B who strongly disagreed that the resources can attract international tourists to the community.

## **Discussions of findings**

**Creation of Jobs and Generation of Income to the Community:** Results showed that the resources can create jobs and generate income to the community when developed. This is supported by WTO (2003), travel and tourism are observed to provide direct employment to thousands of people in developing countries. Some of the countries in Africa that have gained such opportunities include Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Benin, Burundi, Chad and Central Africa. Cape Verde employed the least number of people because tourist attractions have not been well harnessed. This is line with studies carried by Klein, Seng and Cheong (1990) and Flenchtig (1999a) that once tourism site is developed in an area, it will generate a lot of employment. This is the reason why Ward et al (1996) said that travel and tourism create job more rapidly than any other industry. Tourism establishments create job not only for tourism experts alone, but also to the community where the potential tourism resources are located. This is supported by Bentina (2014), that carving of the Isiekpe and weaving of Obu (Mask) of the Ekpe masquerade provides reasonable employment for artists. Not only that, gifts of money and other valuable things are given to the masquerades and dancers during the performance. These tallies with the result of UNWTO (2012) that tourism brings large amount of income into a local economy in the form of payment for goods and services needed by tourists, accounting as of 2011 for 30% of the world's trade in services, and for 6% of overall exports of goods and services. On his own Ukabuili (2007) said "a lot of revenue is derived from Yankari Game Reserve despite the fact that it is underutilized and the amount is encouraging". The implication is that if the identified potential tourism resources are developed, it will create both direct and indirect jobs to the community. If hotel and other superstructure are constructed in the study area, the youths will be employed and other businesses will open up. This will go a long way in reducing unemployment and youth unrest.

**Infrastructural Development:** The result revealed that if the potential tourism resources in the community are harnessed and developed, it will bring infrastructural development to the community. This is in line with World Tourism Organization (2011) that tourism development particularly in a new, remote or rural location can include investment in new infrastructure, such as roads, water and energy supply, sanitation and communication. With careful planning, such infrastructure can also bring positive benefits to the community by providing them with basic services and opening up new and faster route access markets. This is supported by Mathieson and Wall (1982) that tourism necessities help in the creation of infrastructural utilities, which are not only used, by the visitor but become valuable to the local population as well. The development of any tourist site brings infrastructure to the site shared in common with communities where it

is located. The index in the above findings reveals that the identified potential tourism resources if developed will bring infrastructural development to the study area.

**Upliftment of living standard of the people:** Upliftment of living standard of the people is another prospect of tourism as revealed by the study. This is in agreement with Atta et al (2013), that Calabar carnival fiesta significantly influences the development of infrastructure facilities, level of poverty, and standard of living of the people in term of a clean and healthy environment and sexual behavior of the people. A research carried out by Ononiwu (2008) at Accra in Ghana showed that the country generated a lot of money through tax, business operational permits and sanitation fee from developed tourism site. The research showed that more than fifty billion naira was realized yearly from their developed tourism sites and this amount has a good impact in upgrading the standard of living in Accra.

**Attraction of Investors and International Tourists:** The study revealed that the identified potential tourism resources if developed will attract both investors and international tourists. This is in line with the UNWTO (2011) that estimates that by 2020 there will be 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals worldwide. Africa and Asia- two regions with the most least developed countries (LDC) – are expected to see 75 million of these arrivals respectively. In 2011, international arrivals grew by 4% reaching 982 million in 2010, in a year characterized by a stalled global economic recovery, major recovery, and major political challenges in the Middle East and North Africa and natural disasters in Japan. This is supported by Eja (2010) that today the level of tourist arrivals in Nigeria is quite commendable especially during festival periods in which all the cultural artifacts and other attractions in Nigeria are paraded. People want to explore nature, and such attractions are found in Somorika community. If the government can make the environment favourable for private investors, international tourists will come and patronize the study area. This is supported by a report from UNWTO (2011) that a favourable business and investment regime is required for dynamic and competitive tourism sector to attract local and foreign investment and facilitate local and international business linkages. Therefore, government should make policies that will make the private sector to come to the study area for investment.

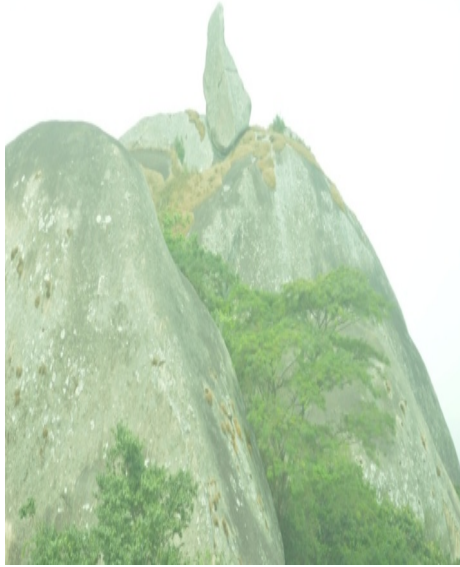
**Cross-Cultural Change and Understanding:** Traveling brings people into contact with each other and, as tourism has an educational element, it can foster understanding between peoples and cultures and provide cultural exchange between hosts and guests. Because of this, the chances increase for people to develop mutual sympathy and understanding and to reduce their prejudices, (Melker, 2006). According to Manandhar (2009) tourism can stimulate development in terms of income, employment, foreign exchange earnings and taxation, as well as exchange cultural understanding and cohesion around the world. Therefore, if the identified potential tourism resources are developed, it will bring people from different cultural background and they will exchange their cultural value and understanding.

## Conclusion and Suggestion

Our findings revealed that potential tourism resources in Somorika have some prospects in using them for tourism development. Some of these prospects include the creation of job opportunities for local people, income generation (economic growth), infrastructural development, upliftment of living standard of the community, intercultural development, and attraction of investment to the community, attraction of international tourists to the community among others. This can be achieved if the government with the private sector can provide the entire basic tourism infrastructure in the area. The study therefore suggests that super structures like hotels, motels, guest houses that can be affordable by students should be provided for tourists. This can be achieved if the government can provide one digit interest loan to private sectors and also make public private partnership business where the government will provide enabling environment why the private sector will now bring the experts and the resources for the building of the super structures.

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**Plate 1: Oriakpe Sacred Site**  
(Source: Field survey 2018)



**Plate 2: Odeburu Sacred Site**  
(Source: Field Survey 2018)



**Plate 3: Ufe' Ekisa**  
(Source: Field Survey 2018.)



**Plate 4: Ufe' Otaru**  
(Source: Field Survey, 2018)