

Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: A Study of Eyo Festival in Lagos, Nigeria

By

Obasola Kehinde Emmanuel

Department of Religious Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University,
Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study basically establishes the fact that religion is not just a mere spiritual affair and communion between man and God, but also, it deals with the personal, inter-personal, social and economic dimension of life. Religion is perceived as retarding progress and invariably it does not give room for national development. However, the problem of social disorder, wars, religious crisis and chaos which result from man's desires, wants and particularity of religious groups can be solved if government invests in religious tourism as a means for sustainable development. The fear of African religion going into limbo of anachronism with the advent of Christianity and Islam can also be solved through religious tourism. The paper addressed all these attendant problems thereby strengthening the argument on the socio – economic impact and value of African religion particularly through exploring religious tourism potentials as embedded in the Eyo festival in Lagos State, Nigeria. This study established the nexus between African religion and tourism by using the Eyo festival in Lagos State. It is important to note that humanity as a whole is dynamic, so society and religion cannot be static. The study posited that lots of tourism potentials are enshrined in this festival and if government could harness this potential, it will lead ultimately to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Eyo Festival, Sustainable Development, Lagos

1. Introduction

The centrality of religion to human existence has been identified by several scholars like J.S Mill, Emile Durkheim and E.B Idowu. In fact, Idowu (1991: 45) submitted that:

Religion naturally engages man's attention in consequences of his inevitable involvement in it, in one way or the other and also because of sheer interest in it.

Furthermore, it has been realized that in order to really understand man, it is essential to study his religion because it is that religion that binds all element of human life and no doubt underscores the functional aspect of it. However, religion is viewed as fast becoming out-model, most especially among the elites, due to foreign influences and exposures and so they see religion as primitive in nature and so should not be allowed to survive because it is believed that it is full of barbaric acts and practices (Awolalu & Dopamu, 2005: 279). Also it is believed that African religion will soon go into the limbo of dead memories due to the changes that have come upon it, especially in the area of modernity. The foreign religions brought into Africa have also played down on the significance and relevance of African religion and have killed many customs, beliefs and practices while some no longer function and have gone into extinction.

Modernization, urbanization and industrialization have to a great extent influenced the practice of African religion, its beliefs and practices. People are far removed from the security of the village and many traditional rites are left unperformed. This has brought great laxity and neglect of traditional morality (

Awolalu & Dopamu, 2005: 282). Also due to the oral nature of the religion and no propaganda machinery, the decline of the religion became inevitable.

African religion has also been faced with challenges of votaries. Genuine votaries are dying out in many locations and in cases where priesthood is hereditary; those who are to become priests are not available due to western influence, especially education. This constitutes a big setback for the religion (Awolalu & Dopamu, 2005: 282). All these have overshadowed the significance, benefits and relevance of African religion socially, politically, morally, economically and culturally. These notwithstanding, the religion is still being practiced in our modern society and has in one way or the other, been an instrument through which sustainable development could be achieved especially through religious tourism.

However, according to statistics, tourism provides about ten percent (10%) of the world's income and employ about one-tenth (1/10) of the world work force, most of which emanates from religious tourism (Mirbabayer & Shagzatova, 2009). African religion cannot be left out in this quest considering the various tourist sites and festivals it celebrates, among of which includes: *Osun-Oshogbo* festival in Osun State, *Eyo* festival in Lagos State, *Agemo* festival, *Argungun* fishing festival and *Egungun* festivals. All these are not just ordinary festivals and sites, as they all have religious significance, undertone and relevance which represent deities, divinities, ancestors, spirit, magic or medicine and they can as well serve as tourist potentials.

Festivals

All over the world there are occasions when people of different religions and ethnic groups come together and celebrate an important event. Such celebration or event is regarded as festivals, which has to do with the whole community. Festivals are important and significant aspects of life. They are the most important activities for social and religious purpose and they represent occasions of feasting and celebration involving series of performances, entertainments, merry making, ceremonies and rite (Lawal, Sadiku & Dopamu, 2005: 651). Festivals are institutionalized aspect of people's culture which continues from time to time to play important role in the society.

Laying emphasis on the observation made by Opoku (1979), (Lawal, Sadiku & Dopamu, 2005: 651-652) posited that:

There is also the conscious expectation that certain very specific end will come about as a result of the performance of the festival and the performance is motivated by the desire to gain some form of satisfaction and is expected to be effected. Festivals take place at special times set aside by a community in order to commemorate some event of historical, cultural and religious significance, and by performance of certain rituals, such event are re-enacted giving both individual and their community a sense of meaning and cohesiveness.

They hinge their position on Yoruba traditional festival, stating the different categories of festivals. It is observed that every town and village in Yoruba kingdom has something to celebrate which cannot be separated from their religion. As such, feasts and festivals serve two fold purpose of keeping the religion alive and affirming some religious and theological truth connected with them (Lawal, Sadiku & Dopamu, 2005:652).

From the above, it is evident that there is no aspect of Yoruba life that can be understood without proper understanding of the religion. There are two types of festivals which are:

- Minor festival day
- Major festival day

Minor festival day are regarded as *ojo ose* (holy or sacred day), which are often at five day, seven day, seventeen day and twenty-one day interval depending on the divinity. The major festival is called *odun* (annual festival). *Odun* as opined by (Lawal, Sadiku & Dopamu, 2005:653), is used to express both the seasonal circle and the annual circle. It is both year and festival, which explain why people pray at festival that: *a-seyi-sa-modun* (Just as we celebrate this year, we will celebrate another year)

Festivals emphasize the belief in the continuity of the society and that each divinity has an annual festival associated with him or her. The king has a special ritual to perform during each festival as observed in *Osun-Oshogbo* festival by the *Ataoja* of *Oshogbo* and *Eyo* festival by the *Oba* of Lagos. It should be reiterated that the life of a community is renewed through festivals and that festivals bring the people together as a group, positing that religion and social values are repeated and renewed through communal festival. Therefore, rituals and festivals are religious ways of implementing the values and beliefs in the society and it is the means through which people give thanks for the past year and seek protection in the year to come.

Festivals preserve tradition, culture and religion. They give full and eloquent expression to religious sentiment and belief and also strengthen the social bond that binds the member of the community, thus encouraging group solidarity. Festival builds the relationship between people and through it, religion becomes a dynamic, living faith which continues to be relevant to the people and to all aspect of their life, despite the influence of Islam, Christianity and Western culture (Lawal, Sadiku & Dopamu, 2005: 653).

In another perspective, the significance of festivals lie in the fact that they illustrate among other things, historical event, coming of age, harvesting of crops and appeasement to various gods for protection. Festival is the cultivation of nature and the celebration of history, which are re-curent rituals (Religious drama). Through festival the people remember their past leaders and ask for their help and protection. Festivals are used to purify the whole state, so that the people can enter the New Year with confidence and hope.

Famuyiwa (1992: 82) discussed the role of traditional festival and modern festival of arts and culture in the promotion of cultural education in Nigeria. According to him, the concept of festival is derived from Medieval Latin "*Festivitis*", which is from classical Latin, *Festum*, meaning, "a feast" or "holy day". He asserts that it is used to include traditional times of celebration, sacred or secular days specially appointed for local or national rejoicing. He stated that festivals are periodic recurring day or season of gaiety or merry making set aside by a community for the observance of sacred celebration, religious solemnities or music and traditional performance of special significance. He acknowledges the fact that in most Nigerian festivals, religious activities play a prominent role and that each festival has the following characteristics:

- A. Performance of a kind of rite: passage rite, sacrificial rite, seasonal or commemoration observance and rite celebrating the end of fast, at shrine, an altar or any solemn spot.
- B. People gathering together at a community centre or market place.
- C. Communal eating and drinking.
- D. Dramatic dancing music playing and athletic displaying.

He discloses that African traditional religion has some peculiarity. According to him, it is true that the root of Yoruba traditional festival is religion (Famuyiwa, 1992: 83). This assertion is upheld by Idowu (1962: 5) who assert that:

The key note of their life is their religion; in all things they are religious. Religion forms the foundation and the all governing principle of life for them.

Famuyiwa, (1992: 83) therefore, expressed categorically that festivals revolve around two major spirits:

- A. The pure spirit or non-human spirit, that is, spirit that had never had human body.
- B. Spirit of the dead, which is referred to as "the living dead"

Conclusively, he explained that festival is a form of cultural propagation, that is, it enables one to get a practical experience of the people's custom, their way of life and their belief system.

Tourism

From the beginning of times, human beings have always traveled and their motivations have always been food, water, safety and acquisition of resources. However, the idea of travel for pleasure or exploration soon emerged which has always depended upon the technology to provide the means of travel. Accordingly, it was established that the earliest travelers walked or rode domestic animals. As roads were improved, government stabilized, interest in travel increased for education, site seeing and religious purposes.

Tourism has different definitions which thus makes it a complex term to define, however it is defined by various scholars. Mathieson & Wall (2010) define tourism as the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater to their needs. Tourism could be regarded as the sum of the phenomena and relationship arising from the interaction of tourist, business suppliers, host government and communities in the process of attracting and hosting these visitors.

According to Pender, (2005:2) tourism is an economic activity of immense global significance and that in accordance with World Tourism Organisation (WTO); tourism is now the largest industry in the world. Accordingly, demand for tourism has grown faster than demand for other economic activity. Tourism is also an activity that impact on many other areas. Pender, (2005:8) advocated that tourism education have also been an area of significant development in recent decades.

According to him, there has been definitional problem in relation to tourism which has led to different difficulties, but of all the definitions, one thing is paramount: most definitions seem to agree on the difficulty that is attached to defining tourism. However, Pender, (2005:9) went further to define tourism as an activity that takes place when in international term, people cross border for leisure or business and stay at least twenty-four hours (24 hrs) but less than one year. Consequently, tourism could be described as the activities of a person or persons outside his or her usual environment for less than a specific period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than exercise of an activity remunerated from the place visited.

According to Mirbabayev & Shagzatova, (2009) tourism is one of the largest and dynamic developing sectors of external economic activities. Tourism has both positive and negative social environmental impact. They opined that socially, tourism has a great influence on the host communities and that it is a source of international amity, peace and understanding. It is also a destroyer and corrupter of indigenous culture and a source of ecological destruction and an assault of people's privacy, dignity and authenticity.

They highlighted some positive effects of tourism which includes:

1. Developing positive attitudes towards each other.
2. Learning about each other's culture and custom.
3. Reducing negative perception and stereotype.
4. Developing pride, appreciation, understanding, respect and tolerance for each other.
5. Increasing self-esteem of the host and tourist.
6. Psychological satisfaction with interaction (Mirbabayev & Shagzatova, 2009).

Also the negative impacts were discussed, and that tourism can increase tension, hostility and suspicious, which invariably debunk the fact that tourism is a vital tool for peace. It is instructive to note that the economic and social impact of tourism of the local community depend on how much of the income generated by the tourist goes to the host community. Furthermore, they opined that hotels and guest houses often import food stuff to satisfy foreign visitors, thus not patronizing locally made stuff which is a form of

economic deregulation. In this context also, organization rarely employ local staff for senior manager's position.

Furthermore, tourism has the power to affect cultural change. According to them, successful development of a resource can lead to negative impact, such as artificial construction, assimilation and conflict which negate the major benefit and reason for tourism. They also highlighted the negative and positive impact of tourism, from the ecological point of view. Tourism over time grows into mass-tourism which leads to pollution, over consumption and lack of resources. However, tourism is considered to be more environmental friendlier than any other industry or production (Mirbabayev & Shagzatova, 2009).

Conclusively, they opined that tourism has both negative and positive impacts, either economically, socially or environmentally and that it depends on the extent to which tourism is developed in a particular region, bearing in mind that every region has its own capacity or limit which if overcome; the negative impact of tourism will manifest.

Relevance of African Religious Festivals and Tourism to National Development

African religion has always been with the African man and it is therefore regarded as being inescapable, thus everybody in Africa is involved in it one way or the other and so cannot but be of importance and relevance to national development. It is important to note that if African religion is taken away from an African man, then a vacuum which must be filled with a substitute is created. Huxley (1930) opines that:

If you are going to take people's religion from them, you must provide them with a reasonable or acceptable substitute.

The question then is with what substitute? None seems to have been found.

African religion is so relevant and important to national development, especially by virtue of oath taking by public office holders. According to oral history, the divinities are intermediaries between the Supreme Being and man. Each divinity has a name which is descriptive and tells us about their nature, character and function. The divinities represent the wrath of God which does not hesitate to give judgment on anyone who has defaulted in their name.

African religion is so important and relevant in the area of economic activity. At this time when tourism is regarded as the largest form of external revenue to the government, it will be a high earning source of income to nation, if the tourism potentials of religious festivals are explored. Various religious festivals of different African religious groups such as *Agemo* festival, *Osun* festival, *Eyo* festival, *Oro* festival, *Argungun* fishing festival, *Egungun* festival and *Oke* Ibadan festivals can be exported via tourism, thereby increasing the income of the nation and providing employment to the teeming youths.

Eyo Festival

For a meaningful study of the social impact of *Eyo* festival, its origin is very crucial, so as to shed more light on the significance of the study. Most Yoruba traditional festivals have their origin in religious practices and their rituals are always from religious doctrines. Therefore the *Eyo* festival cannot be an exception. It is important to note that no other type of masquerade is allowed to step into *Isale-Eko* when *Eyo* festival is going on. It is a taboo which is why it is a measure of purity of the culture of Lagos and its origin. "*Eyo ni baba tawa*" is not just a mere or causal statement, but that which the indigenes of Lagos sing with utmost pride and dignity, even though the statement may lack actual genetic authenticity. The emotion attached to it over-rides all other considerations. However, all the people of Lagos regard *Eyo* as their illustrious father.

Adamu-orisa is one of the many manifestations of the deified spirit of ancestors in West African traditional religion (Adegbola, 1983: 112). For the *Adamu* and the *Eyo* to perform, approval is sought

from the *Oba* of Lagos, who then refers the matter to the *Awe-Adimu* (the council) who will decide the date of the ceremony. It is believed that the *orisa* of the *Adamu-orisa* arrived much later after *Eyo* had been well established. Their separate introduction led to the formal making of *Eyo* into a cult (Osanyin, 2004: 71).

There are five main groups within the cult. The *Adimu* is the head of these *orisas* (divinities) who came through the lagoon. In the boat with the *Adimu* were other divinities such as: *Oniko*, *Ologede* and *Agere*. It is believed that the divinities first landed at a spot where *Iga Igbesodi* now stands. They then sent *Oniko* down to survey and ascertain whether the piece of land is suitable for survival, which is why *Oniko* is revered as the “*Agbale Oja*” (the sweeper of the market place) (Osanyin, 2004: 71).

The *Eyo* is the head of all *Eyo* groups, with each group consisting of about fifty (50) smaller groups of not less than 50 masquerades with the exception of the first group (Agbioku, 1979: 13-14). The *Adimu* is the first incarnate spirit to appear in the street, which no other masquerade must precede. However, death penalty was always imposed for the infringement of these rules in the olden days. Throughout the day of the festival, the greatest respect *Oba* who may himself be an *Eyo* has to pay him great respect (Lucas, 1948:144-145).

The divinities are majorly five in numbers. They are:

1. *Orisa Adimu*
2. *Orisa Okolaba*
3. *Orisa Agere*
4. *Orisa Ologede*
5. *Orisa Oniko*

Orisa Adimu

Adimu is the supreme *orisa* (divinity) fully under the charge of the Apena family. It is the omnipotent spirit who gives the festival its essence. The word “*Adamu orisa*” is derived from “*Adimu*” –*Adimu Orisa*, which has however, become *Adamu-orisa*. According to Lucas, the name *Adimu orisa* means the one who is clad from the head to the foot, in a native cloth, who wears a wooden mask with a protruding but close nose. Hence he is called *Adamu-orisa*, “the *orisa* with the close nostrils”. Sometimes the nose is open and at such times it is called *Adamu-orisa*, meaning “*orisa* with open nostrils” (Osanyin, 2004: 71). Lucas (1948) further explained that there is no aperture in front of his face and hence cannot move about freely, therefore has to be led by elderly member of the cult. This is evidence in the *oriki* of *Adimu*:

Aboju pa a
Aboju woo
Aboju n da m'onoko

Meaning

You with rugged face
You with crooked face
You with the face that glitters frightfully.

The *oriki* pictures how *Adimu*'s masks glow with awe.

Adimu's person depicts the agony of purification. He is the one that carries the ills of the community away, and so cannot be neatly dressed. The *Adimu* is the sacrificial lamb who is hailed as the purifier of the community. *Adimu* suffers under the mask and so must have purgation for his tortured soul.

Orisa Okolaba

This divinity is popularly called *Alakete pupa* or *olopa Eyo*. It is a divinity that is believed to have arrived separately and alone. Unlike the *Adimu*, the *Alakete pupa* does not have its custody under any particular family, but strictly the *orisa* that belongs to the *Oba*, that is, the reigning king and it is the symbol of royal authority for the entire *Adamu-orisa* festival. The *Laba* is a sacred bag; it is the *orisa* and has its

own system of worship due to its tremendous medicinal potency (Adagun, 2010). It is believed that the *Laba* should not be hosted under the same roof within the four wall of *Iga Idungaran*, where other shrines abound, so as to avoid ominous magnetic conflict of herbal force (Osanyin, 2004: 71).

Okolaba takes precedence over all *Eyo Iga*, which is why he is recognised as *olori Eyo* (the head of *Eyo*). His attribute as a leader is derived from it as a symbol of authority for the entire festival. It is the emissary of the *Oba*. *Eyo Laba* is also noted for the red hat.

Orisa Alagere

The *Agere* divinity is maintained by the Onimole's family at *Ojuyewa*. *Agere* as a god is sometimes puts to question because of its worldly nature as an entertainer. *Agere* is still regarded as a spirit (Osanyin, 2004: 73). They are worshipped and series of rituals are performed on the day before the outing of *Agere*. According to the Yoruba proverb, which recognizes the godhead of *Agere*, it says: "*Agere di orisa*", meaning *Agere* is deified.

Orisa Ologede

During the festival, the *Ologede* function as a peace guarantor. He reassures peace in the society. Seven days before the festival, the *Ologede* engages in series of rituals in order to make the festival a peaceful one (Osanyin, 2004: 71). As *Oniko* sweeps off the filth and ills of the passing year, *Ologede* bestow peace, harmony and prosperity for the coming year. *Ologede* is also attributed to be the spirit that brings prosperity as banana symbolizes fertility in Yoruba religion. Fruitfulness is the very height of prosperity.

The costume of *orisa Ologede* is banana leaves; however with the advent of modernization, some elements of sophistication have been introduced. The *Ologede* does not wear banana leaves anymore but wears a spherical costume built of green damask, which create the general impression of the original banana leaf (Oyekan, 2010). However till date, the *Ologede* still retain a token of banana leaves for the sleeves.

Orisa Oniko

The *Oniko* is the official priest of the *Adamu-orisa* festival which is similar to the *Sangbeto* masquerade in Togo land (Oyekan, 2010). The name given to the divinity is derived from his costume that is made of raffia (*Iko*). During the *Eyo* festival, the *Oniko* at first ushers in the festival with series of prodigious rituals. He goes to the *Agodo* as early as 1am to perform some rituals, while he does his circuitous dance which is an act of symbolic sweeping and cleansing. He proceeds to *Ojodu* shrine at *Enu-Owa*, after which he moves to *Ojuyewa* at the Onimole's palace, and then to the *Ojuolokun* shrine at Idumota (Onimole, 2010).

Adamu orisa exists to regenerate the community through the act of blessing. *Adamu* blesses the community and sometimes the privilege individual, so also the other *orisa's* (divinities). *Eyo Iga* (*Eyo* fancy) however, blesses relations, friends and well wishers. *Opambata* which is held by the *Eyo* plays a very important role in the act of blessing. It is the link between the spirit and man. It is the rod that transmits the divine sanction for good wishes and fulfillment. The *Eyo* gently touched the person being blessed with the *Opambata* staff. The *Opambata* is made from coconut palm, seasoned and treated with medicine and best used dry. It is reputed to have mystical power and can serve as a rosary as well as leather weapon of considerable magical possibilities (Adagun, 2010). An *Eyo* is not complete without his *Opambata*. He holds it slanting in the front.

However, the *Opambata* of *Adimu* is a special one. It is totally different in design and shorter. He also carries it differently. He carries it vertically while an *Eyo* carries his diagonally but the *Adimu's* rite of blessing is the prototype. *Adimu* is reputed to be a shorter spirit while *Eyo* is tall and imposing. *Adimu* easily stoops to bless and the *Oba* is traditionally the very first person *Adimu* blesses in the morning.

In the inner chamber of the palace, the *Oba* is seated regally on his throne and the elders of *Awe Adimu* and *Eyo Adimu* seat on the pavement. *Adimu* accompanied by *Okolaba Ekun* steps forward to bless the *Oba*. He stoops holding his *Opambata* parallel to the ground. The *Oba* stretches out his hand to receive the blessing on his palm, while *Adimu* touches the earth with the narrow head of the *opambata*, as he takes it towards the *Oba*; he turns it inside out then gently touches the right palm of the *Oba* with the head of the *Opambata*. He does this repeatedly reciting the esoteric *Opa kika* verse, which goes thus:

Eyi ai ku
Eyi airun
Mofe iku danu
Mofe arun danu
Aseeri o di waju
Eyi a gbo
Wa gbo
Eyi a to
Wa to
Eyi a famo ti pere tip ere ni ti olokun
A mo l'owo
A mo l'ese
A mo timo timo
A mole
Amo lepa lepa
Timo timo leti n mori
Timo timo l'a lamo n mamu
Oju ko ma segi orere
Afomo alagemo ko ma si buta
Omu ko ma silo l'aya obirin dugbe dugbe
Raro agbo ko ma ko agbo l'ese
Oko ni ti igun
Ile ni ti epa
Lesi ma ba lukere se du'le baba re
Nimesi ikole ni mo de raye (Osanyin, 2004:49)

Meaning:

This is for life eternal
This is for good everlasting health
I ward off death
I ward off disease
Failure is thrown overboard
You will grow old
You will bloom into ripe old age
You will emerge clean
For purity belong to *olokun*
Your hands will be clean
Your legs will be clean
Will be clean and chaste
Pure and crystalline
Neatly the ear sticks to the head
Neatly the porter mold the clay
May your eyes not fall victim to pointed sticks
from the front
May the colour of the chameleon not fade

May the breast heavy as they are not drop off the
chest of our women
May the ram not stumble on it mane
The vulture abode is the bush
The groundnut abode is the earth
who dare compete with lukere for the
possession of his father's house
Nimesi ikole, ni mo de raye.

Okolaba Ekun stoops to interpret the message because he is the anchor man, the chief priest of *Adamu-orisa*. He is the most colourful dressed *orisa* of all. He wears a multi coloured skirt and in front of this, he ties a leather apron called "*apete*" and it is decked with assorted charms. Across his shoulder hangs the larger *Laba* bag, the symbol of authority. The bag is highly ornamented. *Okolaba Ekun* holds the formidable "*Ase*" which is contained in the horn of a goat. This guarantees the affirmation of whatever is pronounced. It is also an instrument of casting spell (Oyekan, 2010).

Significance of Eyo Festival

From the foregoing it is obvious that apart from the purely religious significance of *Adamu-orisa*, it also has other significance and attractions which sometimes overweight the religious essence of the occasion. Most importantly, *Adamu-orisa* as it were is a refinery for preservation and enrichment of the dialect spoken by the indigenes of Lagos. Its texture and flavor are safely preserved in the classic language of *Adamu-orisa*. This is a significance of the entirely urban situation like Lagos; in which Western influence tend to out run its indigenous cultural heritage.

Also, the significance of *Eyo* festival can be viewed from the revitalization and rejuvenation of the Lagos culture. This has helped to put Lagos in a unique position in the Yoruba culture. The preservation of the entire Yoruba language and culture through the the various dialects in the chant, such as the Ijebu dialect, Awori dialect, Badagry dialect and a host of others. It also helps in preserving the worship of some other divinities in Yoruba religion. The nourishment of one is the nourishment of others.

It is important to note that most African languages find fulfillment in traditional festivals in which oral tradition plays a vital role as it is in the Yoruba religion. *Adamu-orisa* is also significant as a bulwark of imperialism, which tends to regulate African culture. The *Adamu-orisa* festival re-activates the unique cultural heritage of the indigenes of Lagos.

Its Economic Value

The economic value of the *Eyo* festival is enormous ranging from the total impact of tourism potential it has to the small and medium scale businesses and the entrepreneurship opportunities it provides. The economic value of *Adamu-orisa* surpasses just the dollars tourist spends in the community, though tourism contributes to sales, income, and job and tax revenues. The tourist spend money on variety of things in the community ranging from lodging, food, attraction and other services, thus creating a direct effect on the business in the form of income that pays wages and taxes.

The small scale entrepreneurs benefit immensely from the *Adamu-orisa* festival, as marketers of various fabrics and hats that have been designed for *Eyo* group will increase greatly, the marketers of soft drinks and eateries will also make dramatic sales increase. Apart from cloth sellers at Idumota market whose sales will increase, the fashion designers also will benefit as a result of large turnout of people, while the transporters will not be left out.

Its Social Value

Eyo festival over the years has demonstrated its potency as a uniting factor in the society for the people of Lagos. The value of *Adamu-orisa* festival cannot be overlooked considering it as a medium of social

peace and harmony. Various groups, families, friends and well wishers see the festival as an opportunity to meet new friends, old families and relatives again. The indigenes of Lagos celebrate the festival with pride, such that indigenes outside the country come back to unite and celebrate with their love ones.

The religious function and purpose of the festival as a cleansing and purgatory rite rid the community off social ills, thus creating a balance society, by sweeping away calamity, failure and disappointment of the outgoing year. *Eyo* festival also helps to preserve the culture and heritage of the people, as it is an attribute of all traditional festivals, especially that which embodies religious festival.

The festival as tourism potential attracts people from far and near for social entertainment as is reflected on the eve of the festival day. Fun seekers come with family and friends to relax and also to celebrate the rich cultural heritage, while Western tourists have something to learn and take away. All of this enhances the relationship and understanding of the African culture and also sustainable development and relationship. This has made the festival become a tourist attraction and it has been likened to the carnival of the Caribbean's.

From the above, consistent investment in *Eyo* festival, will make it to emerge as one of the major contributors to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), as the tourism potential of the festival is inexhaustible. The festival and other traditional festivals can boost the financial strength of the nation, if the right steps are taken in the right direction, as exhibited by the government of Lagos State.

3. Conclusion

Festival is one of the major features of African societies. It is the worship of the Supreme Being through various deities. "Worship is an imperative urge in man". This worship is expressed through different medium among which is festival. Religious tourism is a form of economic and social empowerment and from all indications; it has helped in boosting the economy of the people of Lagos and has also helped in repositioning the Yoruba cultural heritage to certain extent.

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