UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF SUSTAINABLE COASTAL TOURISM FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Sunderland for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Tourism and Hospitality

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Abstract

This study focuses on harnessing the potential of coastal tourism and the benefits associated with such development without causing harm to the environment. It will fill the gap created by previous research, as no existing studies on sustainable coastal tourism have focused on poverty alleviation and community development in the selected case study areas.

The socio-constructivist paradigm adopted in this study is concerned with social problems such as poverty alleviation and community development. This approach was supported by a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design, which is appropriate for the current research, given the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the researcher spending less time in the field and limited access to research participants due to lockdown rules. This study used Semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants, supported by field notes from the researcher observation during the fieldwork; the data collected was analysed using thematic analysis.

This study makes a significant contribution to knowledge by employing a unique methodological approach, a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design. It is the first of its kind used to investigate coastal tourism and poverty alleviation in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria, and in the context of West Africa.

This approach helps to explore the social construct of life experiences of people who are experiencing hardship in their natural setting; it allows in-depth, rich and meaningful information through the voices and opinions of the local people to be heard and understand the meanings ascribed to social problems such as poverty from their own perspective.

Furthermore, the present study makes theoretical contributions with practical implications, bringing new insights into the debates and expanding the literature on sustainable coastal tourism. This study will help create a platform to build new initiatives and embrace an inclusive form of coastal tourism, using the culture and traditions of the local residents within the destination to develop Coast-Cultural Tourism (CCT).

This study found that stakeholders with political and financial power were active in tourism development activities; jobs and employment opportunities will be created to generate income for residents and revenue for the government. Therefore, implementing the findings of this research could have enormous potential to inform and guide future policies and practices in coastal tourism and the development of tourist destinations within local communities. This study will play a significant role in poverty alleviation and complement efforts to reduce the number of people experiencing economic hardship, contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and beyond.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB - African Development Bank

ADB - Asian Development Bank

AUC - African Union Commission

BVEP - Business Visits and Events Partnership

CBT - Community-Based Tourism

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CCT - Coast-Cultural Tourism

DFID - UK Department for International Development

ESN - Eastern Security Network

EUAA - European Union of Agency for Asylum

FCT - Federal Capital Territory

FDI - Foreign Direct Investment

FGN - Federal Government of Nigeria

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

ICAI - Independent Commission for Aid Impact

ICT - Information Communication Technology

IGR - Internal Generated Revenue

IIED - International Institute for Environment and Development

ILO - International Labour Organisation

IMF - International Monetary Fund

LGA - Local Government Area

MDG - Millennium Development Goal

MECS - Mini Ethnographic Case Study

MNCs - Multinational Corporations

MPI - Multidimensional Poverty Index

NBC - National Bureau of Statistics

NCF - Nigerian Conservation Foundation

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

NIS - National Institute of Statistics

NPC - National Population Commission

NTDC - Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PPT - Pro-Poor Tourism

RPT - Research Participant

RSG - Rivers State Government

RSTDA - Rivers State Tourism Development Agency

SAFE-I - Safe Andoni Forest Elephant Initiative

SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SCCT - Sustainable Coast-Cultural Tourism

SIDS - Small Island Development States

UAC - United African Company

UNCED - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCTAD - United Nations Trade and Development

UN/DESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organisation

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

UNMDGs - United Nations Millennium Development Goals

UNSDGs - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organisation

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

WB - World Bank

WCED - World Commission on Environment and Development

WSSD - World Summit on Social Development

WTTC - World Travel and Tourism Council

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Study

This research was designed to investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development can be used as a tool to alleviate poverty and contribute to community development. The study focuses on the three communities of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria. Rivers State is known for its potential to become the economic power of the Niger Delta through tourism development. However, this opportunity has yet to be harnessed, as the communities remain overly dependent on petroleum resources for their development.

The methodology adopted is a mini-ethnographic case study design, drawing on qualitative interviews and the researcher's field notes. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted at beaches, participants' homes, and other public spaces, including parks, offices, and restaurants.

However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a considerable impact on data collection, resulting in semi-structured interviews being conducted with 19 research participants, and thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. The research participants were protected from ethical issues that might violate their privacy, and the report of the findings included contributions to knowledge and recommendations for future research.

1.2 Background and Context of the Study

Tourism is growing faster than any other sector in global trade, and the number of international tourist arrivals is predicted to be 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO, 2011). Sub-Saharan Africa, with its abundant wildlife, rich cultural resources, and relative peace in many countries, is also registering high growth in international tourism (Christie et al., 2014).

Tourism has become the largest industry in the world, generating economic benefits for people over the past few decades. It has become integral to the development strategies of both emerging and developing economies (Telfer and Sharpley, 2007; Scheyven and Russell, 2009; Sireyjol, 2010; Sharpley, 2014).

However, coastal tourism involves all tourism-related activities that occur around the beaches, and the Mediterranean coast is the most popular destination for tourists from European countries (Page and Connell, 2009, 2014). Therefore, coastal tourism development over the last two decades has called for sustainability, where the protection of the environment is equally significant as the potential economic benefits expected by the local community.

Many studies focus on poverty (Ijeomah, 2007; Cobbinah et al, 2013; Nkwede, 2014), some on sustainable development (Bell-ham, 2003; Oyebamiji and Nwogu, 2015), while other researchers focus on community development (Ijeomah, 2012; Imikan and Ekpo, 2012; Nwankwo and Agboeze, 2013).

However, a few studies conducted in Nigeria explored the potential of coastal tourism development (Adejumo, 2010; Ijeomah et al., 2012; Uduma-Olugu and Onukwube, 2012; Oladele et al., 2018).

In addition, Scheyven and Russell's (2009) study focuses on poverty alleviation and community development in the South Pacific, whereas Leijzer and Denman (2013) and the UNWTO publication (2013) both examine the governance and management of coastal tourism in Africa. Moreover, Scheyven (2012) and Agarwal (2014) expose the dominance of multinational corporations in developing countries. Another study conducted by Odhiambo (2021) focused on Tourism development and poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan African countries.

However, the current study aims to fill the gap in the literature, as there are no studies on sustainable coastal tourism that focus on poverty alleviation and community development in Rivers State, particularly within the context of West Africa. Indeed, the African Development Report (2013) indicated that tourism development in Sub-Saharan Africa has tremendous potential to boost economic growth across the continent and reduce poverty.

Rivers State is the sixth-largest geographic area in Nigeria, with a population of around 5,185,400 (2006 Estimate), occupying an area of 11,077 square kilometres (Datonjo et al., 2015). Ten years later, in 2016, the National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated that the population in Rivers State had risen

to 7,303,924. The following section will discuss the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Niger Delta region, Nigeria

1.3 Tourism Development in Nigeria

Nigeria, located on the West Coast of Africa, is the most populous country and has the largest economy on the continent (OECD, 2012). It is a former British colony bordering Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

However, Nigeria is regarded as the giant of Africa as the country is growing rapidly in both population and economic development. Its economy is based on oil production (the 10th-largest in the world) and is the main business hub in West Africa. According to the OECD (2017), Nigeria, with its 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, plays a significant role in West African economic activities. Cross-border activities closely link southern Niger to the (Hausa) northern part of the Nigerian economy; Benin and Togo benefit from the major economic activity between Lagos and Ibadan. Cameroon and Chad's economies are also strongly oriented towards the Nigerian and South African markets, the two economies rivalling the emerging economies of Asia. Nigeria, in particular, has experienced an average annual growth rate of 7% in its GDP for over a decade (Barungi et al., 2015). All countries worldwide are driven by their national economic policies, which their respective governments formulate. These policies aim to positively impact the economy through factors such as real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and

aggregate investment. Macroeconomic policy uses a variety of tools to influence outcomes, such as the demand for aggregate investment (Ojo, 2000; Mishikin, 2001).

For a long time, Nigeria's macroeconomic landscape has been based on crude oil, which funds government spending and propels the country to economic growth and development (Soludo, 2003). This has sustained the country for some time, helping to register sustainable GDP growth for over a decade. However, the fall in crude oil prices that started at the end of the global economic recession in 2012 has forced the Nigerian government to divert its focus from the oil sector (PcW, 2015).

However, Oyedele and Erikuma (2015) stated that Nigeria’s budget plan for 2014 prioritised the development of the agricultural and infrastructural sectors, including transportation, power, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). According to the World Bank (2020), Nigeria’s economic growth averaged 1.9% in 2018 and 2019. This growth was primarily driven by the services sector, particularly the telecommunications industry. Agricultural growth remains below its potential due to continued insurgency in the Northeast and ongoing farmer-herder conflicts; growth is generally too low to lift the bottom half of the population out of poverty. The weakness of the agriculture sector weakens prospects for the rural poor, while high food inflation adversely impacts the livelihoods of the urban poor. Despite expansion in some sectors, employment creation remains weak and insufficient to absorb the

fast-growing labour force, resulting in a high rate of unemployment (23% in 2018), with another 20% of the labour force underemployed.

Furthermore, the instability in the North and the resulting displacement of people contribute to the high incidence of poverty in the Northeast. Recently, Nigeria has been diversifying into the services sector, focusing on retail and real estate and registering the highest number of hotel constructions in Africa. In 2013, there were 4,080 rooms in development in Lagos and 1,598 in Abuja (ADB, 2013).

Moreover, despite these developments in the accommodation sector, there is an urgent need for greater emphasis on tourism development in Nigeria. The sector is still in the developmental stages, but is growing rapidly compared to other economic sectors. According to the WTTC (2015) report on Nigeria, tourism generated 1.7% of the country's GDP in 2014 and ranked 24th in terms of potential long-term tourism growth out of 184 countries. Tourism has not been considered important in Nigeria’s development plans; it accounts for only 1.9% of GDP, and on the World Economic Forum report (2019) on Travel and Tourism Competitiveness, Nigeria is ranked 129 out of the 140 countries covered in the report.

Moreover, tourism development is not featured among the Federal Government of Nigeria's strategic plans to alleviate poverty or rural development. On the other hand, Nigeria is rich in both cultural and natural resources.

Therefore, the limited development of Tourism in the country is a missed opportunity to diversify the economies of many states and contribute to poverty alleviation. This is an opportunity for many states, particularly those with coastlines, to adopt policies associated with tourism development and avoid the negative impacts suffered by more mature destinations, thereby promoting sustainability and improving the well-being of local communities.

1.3.1 Coastal Area Management in Nigeria

Africa's coastal areas have traditionally been a mine of resources that have supported livelihoods through several economic activities such as agriculture, fisheries and trading. Today, coastal areas are the locus of industrial growth and destinations for mass tourism; they are exploited for oil, gas, and fishing (Arthurton and Korateng, 2005). Due to these activities, coastal areas have experienced rapid population growth and urbanisation. Hatziolos et al. (1996) estimated that by 2015, the West African coastal zone along a 500 Km coastline from Accra in Ghana to the Niger Delta region in Nigeria could be overtaken by a chain of unbroken cities with a population of over 50 million people.

However, Nigeria is blessed with numerous coastal tourism attractions across the country. The coastal regions cover approximately 25% of the total land area, and this region is rich in diverse ecosystems and other natural resources, including abundant green vegetation.

Some of the most important states endowed with coastal attractions are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Rivers State. According to the UNEP (2009) directives, the Nigerian government creates awareness toward the protection of coastal areas so that the natural beauty of the various tourist destinations can be preserved (Ijeoma et al., 2014).

The Nigerian coastline falls within the region identified by Hatziolos et al. (1996); it consists of a narrow coastal border along the Gulf of Guinea in the Central Eastern Atlantic and stretches inland to the Niger Delta. The major ports include Lagos, Warri, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Nigeria's coastal economy is centred on the exploitation of oil, which is traditionally concentrated on land and shallow offshore areas of the Niger Delta (Awosika and Folorunsho, 2009).

Apart from oil, other mineral resources are another vital resource in Nigeria's coastal areas. Mining Sand is one of the main activities undertaken by the local communities. Sand is used to nourish the eroding beaches in Lagos, build houses by local people, and fill swamps, which are then transformed into beaches (Gureau, 2011). Besides sand, the other minerals include clay, salt, and gravel, while fisheries are another major activity, particularly inshore of the Nigerian water. Arthurton and Kerateng (2005) noted that small-scale fisheries contribute close to 70% of total domestic coastal production.

The local people in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt are mostly fishermen, and subsistence agriculture is another activity widely practised by local communities along the coastal areas, particularly in the swamps and the mangrove areas.

1.3.2 Background of the Study Area- Rivers State

Rivers State is one of the 36 states, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, makes up Nigeria. Rivers State is found in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and it occupies a land mass of twelve thousand two hundred and forty (12,240) square kilometres (Otto and Ukpere, 2014). The state is divided into mainland and riverine communities (and local government areas). The riverine areas define those local governments whose access is exclusively by rivers, streams or other water sources, and their economic activities are primarily aqua-related.

The bulk of the terrain in these areas is swamps, creeks, rivulets and a limited, fragile or marshy habitable land space. About 75% of the land in these communities is underwater, and around 5% is used by the local people. In contrast, a small unit of land is available for agricultural purposes in the northern and eastern parts of the state (Datonjo et al., 2015). Rivers State is situated in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, with an annual mean maximum temperature of 31.7°C and an annual mean minimum temperature of 22.6°C. The relative humidity, as measured at 1500 GMT, averages between 67% and 72% annually (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015).

According to Alaogoa (1994), Rivers State was an integral part of the Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893, when it became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate. However, this region was merged in 1900 with the chartered territories of the Royal Niger Company to form the colony of Southern Nigeria (Mmom and Ekpenyong, 2015).

Rivers State was one of the twelve states created on May 27, 1967, during the era of military Government headed by Major General Yakubu Gowon, when the regional structure was dissolved. Since Rivers State was created in 1967, the state has been administered by several governors, including civilians and military administrators, especially before 1999. These administrators, or governors, as they were variously referred to, did a lot to transform the state, especially Port Harcourt. Amini-Philip (2005) documented each governor's contribution to providing social overheads. Some administrators have been influential in promoting rural development. They also made concerted efforts to extend development beyond Port Harcourt and break the one-city syndrome of Rivers State (Otto and Ukpere, 2014).

Most of the population in this region is engaged in agriculture or fishing, while a small number of people are involved in petroleum exploration, including oil and gas. Although Rivers State is rich in oil and has contributed significantly to Nigeria’s economic development, its rural communities are in a state of deprivation and poverty.

However, Rivers State has a well-developed transport infrastructure, which includes a network of roads, rail lines, and waterways, which are key modes of transportation. A functional Rivers State Transport Corporation complements these infrastructures.

Moreover, the state was one of the most advanced in the committee of states in Nigeria, with over 90 industrial concerns, including Shell Petroleum, Agip, Texaco, Elf, Nigerian Petroleum and Refining Company, Michelin, West African Glass Industry, Alcan Aluminium, Metaloplastic, RISONPALM, Nafcon, Pabod Breweries, United African Company (UAC) agencies such as Pan Africa, UAC Property, and a host of others.

In addition, Rivers State also has two industrial layouts, one in Port Harcourt and a second in Ahoada. Although the Ahoada Industrial Estate has not fully taken off, the Trans Amadi Industrial layout has existed since the 1970s. Therefore, developing sustainable coastal tourism that involves the local community could go a long way toward lifting rural people with low incomes out of poverty.

The next section of this chapter will discuss the tourism potential and available resources that can help attract tourists to various destinations across the state, particularly in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

1.3.3 Tourism and Tourist Attractions in Rivers State

Rivers State is bounded by Bayelsa and Delta States in the west, to the East by Akwa Ibom State, to the North by Anambra State, Imo State and Abia States, while in the south is the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean. Rivers State is politically divided into 23 local government areas and 1108 rural communities.

These are Abua/Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku Toru, Andoni, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema, Emohua, Eleme, Etche, Gokana, Ikwere, Khana, Obia/Akpor, Ogba/Egbema, Ndoni, Ogu/Bolo, Okrika, Omumma, Opobo/Nkoro, Port-Harcourt and Tai local government area of Rivers State. However, each of the 23 local governments representing the local communities has a unique identity, making the state culturally dynamic. There are 17 different languages in Rivers State with more than 300 applicable dialects; this variation somewhat discerns the beauty in the diversity of its people (Mmom and Ekpenyong, 2015; RSG, 2016).

Although Ijaw and Ikwere are the most widely spoken local languages in Rivers State, other major ethnic groups include Andoni, Abua, Ekpeye, Engenni, Okrika, Etche, Ikwere, Kalabari, Ogoni, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, among others. British English and Pidgin English are widely spoken and used in television and radio broadcasts (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015; Mmom and Ekpenyong, 2015; RSG, 2016).

However, Port Harcourt has a long history dating back to 1912 when the British founded the city and derived its name from Lewis Vernon Harcourt, the Secretary of State for Colonies (LCC, 2010). It is the largest and capital of Rivers State, with the second largest seaport after Lagos and the nerve centre of Nigeria's oil industry. Port Harcourt's tourist beach is located along Kolabi Creek, east of the old township, and it is regarded as the leading tourist destination in Rivers State (Aga, 2009).

Moreover, this artificial beach was created in 1988, and due to the low level of tourist activity, the site was regarded as one of the least visited ecotourism destinations in Rivers State (Odunlami and Ijeomah, 2016). Just near Port Harcourt is Bonny Island, home to some of the major oil companies in Nigeria; the Island is connected to the mainland in Port Harcourt by ferries. It has beautiful beaches that have become a popular attraction for expatriates, local residents, and tourists. During the festive seasons (Easter and Christmas), the island hosts a series of festivals that attract people from different parts of the country.

The Finima beaches on Bonny Island are primarily used by the staff of the oil companies and the local people. Moreover, the Upper Orashi Forest Reserve is one of the best bird-watching spots in the country, and this attraction is situated near Ikodi Village in the Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers State. The zoological garden is significant to the tourists who visit Port Harcourt and is one of the many places people visit during public holidays and festive periods (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015).

In terms of natural attractions, Biseni Forest is also one of the popular bird-watching sites in Nigeria, located northwest of Ahoada, just west of the Upper Orashi Forest in the Taylor Creek floodplain of the Niger Delta. The forest covers a land area of 21,900 hectares and is seasonally flooded during the rains but dries out during the dry season, leaving numerous small forest lakes. Mammals include white-throated monkeys, pygmy hippopotamuses, and Yellow-backed duikers.

Although the forest is not yet well-explored, about 96 species of birds have been recorded. This forest contains nationally uncommon species, including Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Bulbul, the purple-headed glossy starling, and Estrilda poliopareia, a common bird found in the area (Ezealor, 2001). Port Harcourt is the largest city and capital of Rivers State, with the second-largest seaport in Nigeria, after Lagos. It is the nerve centre of Nigeria's oil industry. Each of the local governments in Rivers State has numerous tourism resources and a lot of tourism potential, which, if adequately developed, could bring much-needed economic development to the state.

Rivers State is one of the most endowed regions in Nigeria in terms of tourism resources, but, like the country, tourism is one of the most neglected economic activities in the state's development planning. Until recently, Nigeria and the southern coastal states have been fixated on oil and paid little attention to non-oil economic activities.

There is enormous potential for community-based coastal tourism projects, given the state's substantial tropical forest region and vast coastline. Although tourism is not as well-developed as in other states, such as Lagos and Cross River, Rivers State hosts one of the largest festivals in Africa—the Calabar Carnival—that lasts seven days, features more than 18 events, and attracts many people from all over West Africa. The next section of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the stakeholders responsible for tourism development in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

1.3.4 Tourism Stakeholders in Rivers State

The process of development and various tourism activities is facilitated by the contributions of individuals or groups of people, usually referred to as stakeholders, who have a vested interest in tourism planning. Different types of stakeholders worldwide are involved in the day-to-day operations of the tourism industry. According to Freeman (1984), stakeholders can be defined as any group or individual who can be affected by, or is affected by, the achievement of the organisation’s objectives (Haukeland, 2011; Khazaei et al., 2015). According to Choi and Murray (2010), many groups and individuals within the community are less engaged as tourism stakeholders. Due to a lack of community participation, those individuals or groups cannot fulfil their various roles in developing tourism products that will satisfy their essential needs.

Therefore, there should be a more robust and deeper understanding of local communities. There should be better identification of key players and more efficient ways to involve them in decision-making (Khazaei et al., 2015). Community participation and stakeholder involvement have become norms in tourism planning and development, so their contribution will be incorporated into the community development process (Obinwanne, 2015).

More so, Udoma et al. (2013) also argued that the private and public sectors are major stakeholders responsible for ensuring effective tourism development. The private sector contributes by developing road maps to guide tourists, establishing airlines, building and operating hotels, and generating employment opportunities for local residents.

The public sector is responsible for the creation of an enabling environment through the expansion of the airports, building of good roads, provision of a reliable public transport system, training of tour guides, establishment of travel agencies, promotion of cultural activities, provision of employment opportunities, and provision of other infrastructure facilities.

Some stakeholders in the development of tourism in Rivers State have direct and indirect responsibilities, including government/public authorities, local communities, tourism professionals, tourism business owners, tourism business employees, and non-governmental organisations (Obinwanne, 2016; Sintayehu, 2016).

Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA) was established in January 2012 with the mission to create partnerships between local and international tourism, cultural, and development agencies to maximise the State's tourism potential.

Additionally, RSTDA is a state government agency responsible for promoting and enhancing sustainable tourism activities at various attractions throughout the state. Lastly, the next section of this chapter will discuss the major obstacles the stakeholders face in developing tourism and preventing potential tourists from visiting the destinations within the region.

1.3.5 Impacts of Political Crisis on Tourism Development

The history of civil unrest can be traced back to the 1960s, when Isaac Adaka Boro, a student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, organised secession as a Niger Delta militant and radical youth to liberate his people from oppression and, subsequently, formed the Republic of the Niger Delta. Isaac Adaka Boro was arrested and punished by the government, but marginalisation continued; between the 1980s and 1990s, another radical environmental activist emerged, Ken-Saro Wiwa.

He also organised some restive youths in the Ogoni land against the Federal Government of Nigeria as a result of marginalisation and total neglect of the Niger Delta. Even though the available mineral resources (petroleum) in this region contributed about 90% of the total income

generated in the country (Nigeria), their local communities are mostly underdeveloped (Chukwuemeka and Aghara, 2010).

Ikelegbe (2005) used the economy of conflict theory to explain the crisis in the Niger Delta region, where an intensive and violent struggle for resource opportunities, ethnic conflicts, and the theft of crude oil have intensified since the 1990s (Omede and Akhanolu, 2013).

Moreover, Ajayi (2012) also argued that studies on the impact of political unrest and crises on tourism and socioeconomic development have been neglected and insufficiently investigated by various researchers, particularly in developing tourist destinations across the African continent and globally.

For instance, Mwathe (2011) reported that the political crisis in Egypt started when the inbound tourist flow reached its peak in 2011. There was a significant decline in the number of tourists visiting the historical sites, leading to an increase in hotel reservation cancellations (Ajayi, 2012). The Niger Delta civil unrest and agitation for control of natural resources between 2003 and 2009 resulted in the militarisation of most communities in the oil-rich Southern part of Nigeria.

Therefore, the militants in the Niger Delta region sometimes attacked the tourists and destroyed tourist destinations' infrastructure and economic facilities with the notion of attracting publicity and emphasising the objectives of their ideology (Adora, 2010).

Nonetheless, Bunuzigha (2010) also reported that tourism and socio-economic development in the Niger Delta region have suffered greatly due to the intentionally planned economic disruption frequently affecting physical facilities in this area (oil installations, road networks, tourist destinations).

1.4 The Rationale of the Study

The reason for conducting the current study was guided by a review of the literature from previous research on coastal tourism and poverty alleviation in Rivers State. During the review, it became clear that there were significant gaps that previous studies had failed to explore.

This research provides an opportunity to fill these identified gaps, reassuring the academic community and policymakers alike. After thorough searches and a review of the literature, it became evident that this research is significant because no prior studies have investigated the potential of sustainable coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the broader West African context.

In addition, this study used a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design, which has not been adopted in previous research conducted in the selected case study areas (Todd and Kral, 2014).

The Atlantic Beach is a tourist destination located at Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni Local Government Area (LGA), the Seaport at Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA, and Port Harcourt Tourist Beach at the state capital in Port Harcourt LGA, Rivers State. Most of the previous studies conducted in the case study areas are quantitative, while some are qualitative, but many use a mixed-method approach for data collection and analysis. Despite this, none of the previous studies conducted in these communities adopted a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design.

This research will create a pathway for policymakers to diversify away from overdependence on petroleum exploration and investment of revenue generated from oil and gas and instead develop sustainable coastal tourism for poverty alleviation and community development, in pursuit of the UN SDG Agenda 2030 and beyond. This study aims to promote economic diversification and enable key stakeholders to refocus and direct their efforts toward implementing strategies that help reduce poverty among residents. The following section of this thesis discusses the scope of the current study on the potential of coastal tourism development, poverty alleviation and community development in selected case study areas.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research explored coastal tourism development in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The current study focuses on residents, examining the benefits and barriers to coastal tourism development, poverty alleviation, and improvements in the livelihoods of people within local communities. This research investigates the residents' perceptions and interpretations of poverty and examines how tourism development can provide opportunities to improve their living standards by satisfying their physiological needs for food, accommodation, security, and fulfilling their daily necessities of life.

However, the current research scope was narrowed and modified during preparation for the fieldwork in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria. This research was initially designed as an ethnographic study, which would have enabled the researcher to stay in the field for a longer period. However, a change was necessary due to the emergence of COVID-19 worldwide. The negative impacts of the pandemic affected the time researchers spent in the field during data collection, as tourism activities were restricted. As a result, there was limited interaction between people from different households; this precaution was necessary to mitigate the rapid spread of the deadly virus. Therefore, using the mini-ethnographic case study design was appropriate for the current research due to the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the researcher spending less time in the field

and limited accessibility to research participants because of lockdown rules. This study was conducted with 19 research participants selected through convenience sampling and snowballing methods from the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews supported by research field notes to record nonverbal communication.

1.6 The Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to explore the potential of sustainable coastal tourism and its contribution to poverty alleviation. The current study focuses on three local government areas (LGAs) in Rivers State, Nigeria: Andoni LGA, Akuku Taru LGA, and Port Harcourt LGA. This region is richly endowed with natural resources, and Rivers State is known worldwide as one of the states that generates higher revenue for both the federal and state governments through proceeds from petroleum exploration. Despite the state's internally generated revenue, most of the local people are suffering from economic hardship as they are unable to benefit from the government's windfall from the sale of petroleum resources, such as oil and gas. Local residents are facing adverse environmental impacts due to pollution resulting from the operations of multinational corporations, such as Shell and ExxonMobil, which are located in their communities.

This study intends to achieve three main objectives as follows:

Research Objective 1 - Critically investigate the stakeholders' role and ability to manage sustainable coastal tourism development in Rivers State.

The current study aims to examine and understand key stakeholders, including individuals with diverse interests and aspirations, in the selected tourist destinations of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The roles played by different stakeholders and their involvement through participation in sustainable coastal development (Chapter 6).

Research Objectives 2 - Critically evaluate the opportunities and challenges of developing community-led sustainable coastal tourism in Rivers State.

This study aims to investigate the obstacles and challenges that prevent residents from accessing substantial benefits that would lift them out of poverty, given the availability of natural resources necessary for sustainable coastal tourism development (Chapter 7).

Research Objectives 3 - Critically investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development will contribute to reducing poverty among the residents of Rivers State.

The aim of the current study is to explore the potential of coastal tourism development in communities and harness the socio-economic opportunities associated with job creation for local people who are

experiencing hardship because of the high unemployment rate and lower standard of living. The third objective focused on how coastal tourism development can be used to reduce poverty within the local community and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Chapter 8).

1.7 The Significance of the Study

The concept of the current study is not just significant but also holds a promising potential. This study aims to explore how sustainable coastal tourism development can serve as an instrument for poverty alleviation and community development in selected case study areas, including Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, in Rivers State.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) recognition of tourism development as a tool to alleviate hardship among people experiencing poverty within the community instils hope and optimism in the potential of this study.

However, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ended in 2015 without attaining their primary objective of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger around the world. According to UNWTO, 1.9 billion people were living in extreme poverty in 1990 before the MDGs, and by 2015, this number had drastically reduced by more than half to 835 million.

As a result, a new strategy for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, which included the establishment of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition, this study will help establish the path to prosperity and how coastal tourism development will contribute to UNWTO efforts to achieve the SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as discussed in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

Moreover, stakeholders' efforts to develop coastal tourism can be promoted by utilising available resources within these communities and by implementing policies that enable sustainable development without altering the culture and traditions of local residents. These communities are blessed with both natural and man-made resources, such as the Atlantic Beach at Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni, Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, and the Old Seaport at Abonnema, which form the bedrock for sustainable coastal tourism development.

Therefore, the present study is relevant and will support the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, utilising coastal tourism development as a vehicle to drive prosperity by creating jobs and reducing the high unemployment rate. This study highlights the need for economic diversification and income redistribution to local people experiencing poverty due to a lack of improvement in their living standards, as the benefits from petroleum exploration do not have a direct impact on uplifting the majority from poverty. The availability of natural resources, such as those found in Atlantic Beach and the Mangrove Forest, as well as some endangered species like dolphins and elephants, will enable tourism development and complement the income

from oil and gas, thereby reducing poverty and contributing to community development.

1.8 The Structure of the Thesis

This study aims to examine how the benefits from coastal tourism development can contribute to alleviating poverty and improving the livelihoods of local communities in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The current study aims to investigate the relevance of coastal tourism growth to developmental strategies aimed at poverty alleviation and stakeholders' perceptions of the associated benefits to the local economy.

Therefore, the thesis of the current study is divided into nine chapters; it starts with the introduction to the thesis (Chapter 1), the next three chapters (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) discussion focused on the literature review, one chapter on research methodology, methods, and data analysis (Chapter 5), and the following four chapters (6, 7, 8 and 9) presents the findings with discussion including contribution to the study, recommendations, and conclusions.

Chapter 1 - This chapter begins with an introduction to the thesis, providing insight into the background and context of the study, including tourism development in Nigeria. The precise study locations of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, as well as the rationale, scope, aim and objectives of the study. Other sections in this chapter

include the significance of the study, the structure of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2 - This chapter provides a review of the existing literature relevant to the context of tourism and development theories. This chapter consists of two sections and subsections; the first section discusses the concept of development, ranging from modernisation theory to dependency theory and neoliberal development, including alternative development. The second section discusses tourism as a vehicle for development through the application of the theoretical concept of development. In this subsection, the four development theories were applied to tourism, enabling the researcher to understand and enrich their knowledge about the impacts of tourism on the local community.

Chapter 3- This chapter continues the literature review presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. It focuses on tourism development and sustainability. However, sustainable coastal tourism development can be traced back to the concept of sustainable development. The following sections will help discuss the key stakeholders within the case study areas.

Chapter 4- This is the last chapter of the review of literature relevant to the current study. Tourism development is examined from a global perspective down to the continent of Africa. In addition, further discussion in this chapter focuses on theoretical and conceptual issues that provide a link between tourism development and poverty, utilising alternative

development paradigms, including inclusive tourism development and community-based tourism. The following section provides background information on tourism and tourist attractions in Rivers State, including the stakeholders and the impact of the political crisis on tourism development.

Chapter 5 - This research methodology and methods are divided into five sections and subsections. The first section provides an overview of the research philosophy, with a particular emphasis on the philosophies of positivism, interpretivism, and constructivism. The discussion in the second section is based on the research methodology adopted in this study, as well as a discussion of qualitative research, ethnography, and the case study research approach. The third section of this chapter focuses on research methods, including a discussion of qualitative research design, mini-ethnographic case study design, and gaining access to the field. The data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews and field notes, are presented in the fourth section, along with the sampling methods employed during fieldwork in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The final section of this chapter presents an analysis of data collected using thematic analysis, discussing trustworthiness and validity, as well as ethical issues related to the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality.

Chapter 6 – This chapter presents the research findings and discussion related to Research Objective 1, focusing on stakeholders and community participation in tourism. The classification of stakeholders, including the local community, NGOs, and government, is based on their level of involvement and roles in tourism development in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

Chapter 7 - This chapter is divided into two sections, presenting the research findings and discussion related to Research Objective 2. The first section focuses on the opportunities associated with coastal tourism development, including the availability of cultural and heritage resources, such as CARNIRIV and the Andoni Unity Carnival, as well as natural resources and infrastructure facilities. The second section of the chapter emphasises the obstacles and barriers affecting the development of coastal tourism in the communities, such as a lack of adequate funding, a lack of Interest, inadequate security and a lack of support.

Chapter 8 – This chapter presents the research findings and discussion related to Research Objective 3, providing insight into the multidimensional poverty index and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This section focuses on tourism and three SDGs, SDG 1, SDG 2, and SDG 8, to eradicate poverty, end hunger, and provide decent jobs, respectively. There is also a discussion on the socio-economic benefits of coastal tourism development in the latter stage of the chapter.

Chapter 9 - The final chapter of the thesis focuses on the conclusion and contributions of the study to knowledge, as well as recommendations for future studies. It also addresses the limitations of the current study and the extent to which the research objectives have been achieved. This will be followed by references and appendices, which contain additional support information.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUALISING TOURISM IN DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

2.0 Introduction

Tourism and its associated industries have been promoted as catalysts for development, particularly in the developing world. However, tourism has also been known to provide economic benefits to host countries, including foreign exchange, export diversification, and employment opportunities.

Tourism is promoted as a tool for development because of its multiplier effect; it is regarded as being consumed at the place of production, and it can increase output, employment, and labour earnings through inter-industry linkages in a region due to tourism expenditures.

Despite tourism's potential as an engine of development, there are issues related to its ability to eventually lift the people of rural communities out of poverty and the number of benefits that remain in the host destinations. According to Telfer and Sharpley (2015), there must be an in-depth understanding of the relationship between tourism and development concepts. Many commentators question the role of multinational corporations in developing world tourism and their ability to siphon off all the benefits through leakages to their home countries. Other commentators blame the development projects that colonial masters instituted in their former colonies for continuing to benefit their economies.

The chapter is divided into two sections and subsections that will help examine the theoretical framework related to exploring the theories of development using tourism as a development tool. This chapter begins with a historical and theoretical discussion of mainstream development theories, comprising four paradigms that range from the concept of evolution to the emergence of development theories such as modernisation, dependency, neoliberalism, and alternative development, all viewed from a tourism perspective. The second section of this chapter will discuss how development theories have been used to explore tourism development since its evolution.

2.1 The Concept of Development

Several meanings and definitions have been attached to the concept of development. However, development is an elusive and ambiguous term; it is a more complex and highly contested concept, making it difficult to assign a single definition to it (Thomas, 2004; Abuiyada, 2018; Agbai et al., 2023). Development can be defined as efforts to bring about social change and provide opportunities for people to achieve their optimum potential. However, development is approached more from a political perspective than a socio-economic concept, as most definitions of development depend on the context and situation in which the concept is used. It was argued that development should be regarded as a multidimensional process which focuses on significant improvements in many variables, such as a change which results in poverty reduction,

inequality and accelerating economic growth, rather than focusing on it as an outcome (Dannefer and Perlmutter, 1990; Todaro, 2017; Okereke and Okoli, 2022; Agbai et al., 2023).

According to Pieterse (2001:3

> "*Development can probably be defined as the organised intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement. What constitutes improvement and what is appropriate intervention vary according to class, culture, historical context and relations of power*".

The improvement in Pieterse's definition varies according to some parameters; it relates to a particular set of beliefs chosen by different parties according to various situations, such as historical periods, places, economic positions, etc. For Western thinkers, development may be understood as the problematic transition of predominantly poorly developed countries from agrarian economies to industrialisation.

According to Todaro and Smith (2015), who argued that development, especially after World War II, was defined purely in economic terms, where development was measured by sustained growth and income per capita rates. The focus in the 1950s and '60s was on these two parameters and the ability of countries to expand their output faster than the population's growth rate.

Moreover, Thorbecke (2006) noted that as development was extended to include independent, still backward countries, economic growth was introduced as their main policy objective. The prevailing belief at the time was that development through economic growth was the only way to eliminate the income and social inequalities that existed in what were referred to as Developing Economies, later renamed Developing Countries. There was no reference to non-quantitative aspects of development, and other socio-economic objectives were considered secondary if they did not result from economic growth.

Hence, Sumner and Tribe (2009) conceptualised development into three different perspectives; the first conceptualisation described 'development' as a process of structural societal change. However, this perspective is highly criticised as it only assumes that the newly independent countries could achieve development by having a considerable change of direction, such as moving from a predominately agrarian economy to a more industrialised one, which could also result in more urban development and fewer people living in rural areas (Hickey and Morgan, 2003; Todaro and Smith, 2015).

Sumner and Tribe (2008) noted that countries with different resources change over time; they experience growth differently, as some may indeed decline while others may not experience any economic growth at all. This was the case for many African countries that had promised to be

on the path of development, but a few decades later, they were in a worse state than they had been in the 1960s (Omotola and Saliu, 2009).

Furthermore, Hettne (1995) argued that development is a product of enlightenment, an unequivocal modern project. This was seen as an idea of unbalanced growth, which is more or less natural and automatic but sometimes regarded as an interrupted process (Mowforth and Hunt, 2009; Willis, 2011). Development was described as a set of biopolitical acts in which the population's strength is built to achieve self-reliance (Duffield, 2006). Hettne (2008) further argued that development is an intentional social change that occurs according to society's objective (Pieterse, 2010; Todaro and Smith, 2012; Andrew and Bawa, 2014).

In addition, Woolcock (2009) describes development as a process that is both internally and externally responsible for shaping a specific social group and providing opportunities for its members regarding welfare and justice. Despite this, the less privileged, who are the poorest within this group, are the most marginalised people (Andrew and Bawa, 2014). Another definition of development is described as the process of organised intervention that contributes to the improvement of human lives and increases capabilities by raising the quality and standard of living, enhancing self-esteem, and promoting freedom (Pieterse, 2010; Todaro and Smith, 2012).

The concept of development was perceived to be associated with developing countries across the world, where the level of people living in poverty is relatively higher, with low per capita income.

According to Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania, who led the South Commission in 1987, it was noted that the common characteristics of developing countries go beyond the differences when compared directly with developed countries. Toye (1987) also stated that developing countries in the Global South share common characteristics in terms of their experience during the period of colonisation by developed countries. Developing countries or Developing Economies are used for poor nations, especially those in Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa (Sumner and Tribe, 2008).

The development efforts of the 1960s, which focused on economic quantitative parameters, were considered a failure as commentators began to question the contribution of economic growth to other aspects of development, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Todaro and Smith, 2015).

Perhaps this was the basis for Sumner and Tribe's (2009) second conceptualisation of development. The scope of this definition is too narrow, and it is referred to as technocratic or instrumental because its primary concern with development focuses on short— to medium-term performance indicators that can be measured and compared with set

goals, such as changes in the standard of living, poverty, and income levels. This second definition is associated with policy, based on the value of judgment within the short and medium term.

Sumner and Tribe (2009) also describe it as a new perspective on development in the 21st Century that focuses on other socio-economic aspects, such as poverty and empowerment. Such perspectives led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 189 countries between September 2000 and September 2015 (Todaro and Smith, 2015).

More recently, in 2015, there was the emergence of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); this is an extended programme designed to complement the achievement of the MDGs for another fifteen years, starting from 2015 to 2030 and beyond. It can be concluded that the objectives of most authors who define development were based on the idea and assumption that this concept is about improving people's welfare and social change (Mowforth and Hunt, 2009).

Since the beginning of the 20th century, efforts have been made to develop the world's poorest countries by focusing on increasing national income and reducing poverty, which will lead to improvements in the standard of living for the people. It can be argued that development theories evolved from Eurocentric thinking, which analyses the economic history of Western capitalist countries such as Europe and America

(Mowforth and Hunt, 2009). Therefore, many countries across the globe faced economic development challenges in the 1950s, after the Second World War, which resulted in the evolution of different development theories (Dang and Pheng, 2015).

2.1.1 Modernisation Theory

Reyes (2001) defines modernisation as a theory that advocates a systematic process for less developed countries to transition from a backwards agrarian form of economic development to a more sophisticated level of development. Many commentators have labelled modernisation theory as a Eurocentric model of development (Martinussen, 1997; Bhambra, 2007), promoted by cultural change in the institutional structures of less developed and non-industrialised economies. In essence, the modernisation theory of development promoted economic growth and expected the less developed economies to follow a defined evolutionary path from traditional agrarian economies to modern, industrialised countries.

The main objective of modernisation theory was based on the assumption that the economies of the newly independent economies in the global south would respond to the economic changes by adopting the same economic policies as their former colonial masters (Austin, 2010; Durokife and Ijeoma, 2018). According to Mowforth and Munt (2015), modernisation theory is described as a false dichotomy between the process of change that is regarded as modern and that which is regarded

as traditional. In this case, development is seen as a form of modernity and global capitalism, which, in reality, has become Westernisation, whereby Western commodities, values, priorities, and ways of life are exported to developing countries.

However, this is the reality in many developing countries around the world, especially in Africa, where many countries go through similar paths of development as their former colonisers (Matunhu, 2011). Moreover, change should happen when the country moves from rural to urban and traditional (backward) values and social institutions to more sophisticated, modern (Western) values and structures. The modernisation paradigm theory of development promotes the idea that all traditional societies must follow similar stages of development in order to become modern societies, as this is associated with an authority-based or top-down model (Etana, 2014).

Moreover, as Zapf (2004) argued, development cannot be achieved by referring to Western countries' exploitation of their colonies, nor can it be accomplished by following the same path of development as other countries. Jessop (1990) pointed out that modernisation and economic growth were hegemonic ideas responsible for bringing together the interests of different social groups and glossing over the growing inequality (Pieterse, 2010; Choi, 2014).

2.1.2 Dependency Theory

One of the most potent critiques of modernisation theory came from the dependency paradigm. The linear model of development promoted by modernisation theory created discontent among many scholars in developing countries, and this discontent acted as a catalyst for new strands of thinking that resulted in dependency theory (Matunhu, 2011).

Commentators, mainly from Latin America, such as Andre Gunder Frank, strongly criticised the state of the post-colonial countries, arguing that conventional development theories of modernisation were misleading as they failed to anticipate the genuine relationship between the former colonial masters in the West (the Core) and newly independent economies (the periphery) in the global south (Collier, 2007; Ferroro, 2008). Moreover, Reid (1995) reported that the expectation that faster economic growth would propel developing countries toward development was a false hope. Instead of prosperity, more people were pushed into poverty, starvation, and despair. These views about modernisation at the time gave impetus to the dependency theory.

This theory was developed in Latin America to investigate and examine the challenges faced by developing countries and reflect on the impacts of Western capitalism's expansion. The exploitation by developed countries created an unequal distribution of resources, making the problems of underdeveloped or less developed countries political rather than a result of a lack of information to achieve desired development.

The notion of dependency theory is related to the transfer of resources, such as raw materials, from the 'periphery' of underdeveloped and poor countries to the 'Core' of industrialised, wealthy countries. As a result, poor countries continue to be impoverished while developed countries enrich themselves. The world is divided into two regions: the 'Core' consists of developed countries such as the United Kingdom, and the 'Periphery' also includes underdeveloped or developing countries such as Nigeria (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Dado and Connell, 2012).

The terms 'Global South' and 'Developing Economies' countries are also used to describe the Periphery, which are countries located in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Antonio Gramsci referred to the Global South as those regions outside Europe and America whose interests conflicted with industrialised power. Most of these countries are low-income and sometimes face political and cultural marginalisation from developed countries (Dado and Connell, 2012).

However, scholars such as Dos Santos (1970) described the economy of Latin American countries as capitalist due to the involvement of the Spanish and Portuguese colonial administrations in trade. This pushed the economy of the region in a direction that would benefit the economy of the centre rather than meet the needs of the people of Latin America, even though the local people controlled the economic activities. In addition to this, Dos Santos concludes that developed countries control technology and receive payment for services such as interest on loans

and send profits to multinational corporations headquartered in New York and London (Chaperon and Bramwell, 2013).

Frank (1978) also argued that the 'periphery' of the 'core' was exploited through colonial control and international ownership of Multinational Corporations, as profits, royalties, and interest are expatriated back to their home countries. Dependency theorists, such as Frank, Wallerstein, Emmanuel, and Amin, explained that the exploitation and underdevelopment of developing countries result from the draining of surplus caused by the outflow of capital through the repatriation of profits, which exceeds the inflow of foreign capital investment and is characterised by unequal exchange. Warren argues that it must be an absolute drain and not just an unequal transaction that will leave both the North and South better off than before (Larrain, 1989).

Similarly, Matunhu (2011) also equated the development of former European colonials with being part of the processes that resulted in the underdevelopment of Africa and many Asian countries. Dependency criticised modernisation development thinking for denying the role of imperialistic exploitation in Western modernisation. The struggle for development also meant countering the West's political and cultural dependency and domination. The proponents of dependency theory based their arguments on four main propositions. They argued that modernisation had driven many economies in the south into a state of underdevelopment, which they claimed was different from undevelopment

(Cater, 1995; Ferraro, 2008). In their arguments, undevelopment is regarded as an economic condition in which the potential of the available resources is not harnessed. In contrast, underdevelopment refers to conditions in which resources are used, but the benefits of these resources are siphoned out of the economy by the dominant countries in the north, leaving the weaker countries in the south, where the resources are located, in poorer states.

The second proposition of dependency theory focused on the rate of development, arguing that it could be difficult for the underdeveloped countries in the South to develop, as the gap is increasing and widening between wealthy economies in the North (Crook, 1992). The lack of the ability to develop was the primary reason for underdevelopment, as the developing countries were going through stages of development when they were forced into the global economy as producers of raw materials and cheap labour for the industries in the North and were denied the opportunity to market their own products openly and transparently (Krugman, 1994).

In response to imperialistic exploitation that turned developing countries into producers of raw materials, dependency theorists suggested that developing countries should create alternative uses for their resources instead of depending on instructions from the dominant economies on how to use their resources (Hoogvelt, 1997; Ferraro, 2008).

For instance, dependency theorists argued that developing countries should turn their agricultural land to produce products that can be used domestically instead of depending on producing a few cash crops for export to the dominant countries. Dependency theorists argued that developing countries still suffered from the colonial hangover, as many local leaders (elites) behaved like the colonial officials they replaced (Hettne and Blomstrom, 1984). The people regarded as elite in developing countries are supposed to have the interests of those experiencing poverty at heart, but they often betray this trust by prioritising their own interests over the welfare of those facing economic hardship (Ferraro, 2008).

2.1.3 Neoliberalism Development Paradigm

In many developing countries worldwide, for example, in Africa and Asia, the optimism surrounding the concept of development resulted in disappointment after the breakup of the Soviet Union, which marked the end of the Cold War (Park, 2019). These shifts had a considerable impact on the economies of Western capitalist countries due to the economic restructuring that resulted in globalisation (Teece, 2019).

Whereas tourism and development were influenced by two theories (Modernisation and dependency) in the 1950s and 1960s, in the 1980s and 1990s, modernisation theory metamorphosed into neo-liberalism, which, as Ley (1994) pointed out, took its analogous model from economics, not from any of the other social sciences (Harrison, 2020).

The most significant changes in neoliberalism are associated with a reduction in the state's involvement in economic activities, thereby encouraging increased participation by the private sector and global agencies, such as the World Bank, to take a dominant role (Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Teece, 2019).

However, the neoliberal and globalisation concept of development was based on policymaking, with closer integration of the developing economy into entering the capital market without following the necessary procedure (Tickell and Peck, 2003). Neoliberalism is a political and economic theory and practice responsible for proposing policies that will improve human well-being and open up the freedom of individual entrepreneurs (Harvey, 2005).

Moreover, the state is responsible for creating an enabling environment and preserving all necessary frameworks appropriate for implementing the new concept of development. The assurances regarding the integrity of money and the establishment of the legal structure are the state's responsibility, including defence, military, and police, as well as the guarantee of secure private property rights for the market to function effectively. As Harvey (2005) noted, neoliberalism was developed on an ethical background where the social good is maximised by optimal increases in human action frequency and reach during market transactions (Mostafanezhad, 2013).

According to Steger and Ravi (2010) and Peck et al. (2010), it was argued that neoliberalism is associated with different types of ideas and government policies that were not entirely accepted by scholars in academia and forecasting a post-neoliberal era for the future. Despite this, Ferguson (2010) also noted that over the last decades, there has been an increase in neoliberal policies and an explosion "in de facto government carried out by some Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) with social policy and the nation-state being to a very significant degree decoupled" (Conran, 2011). There was a global increase in many developing countries adopting neoliberal policies due to the Washington Consensus. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), promote neoliberal policies and their implementation, as this approach does not result in small governments but instead leads to the formation of different governments (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

2.1.4 Alternative Development

Alternative development models seek to transcend the Western development model's limitations and constricting tendencies. Above all, they give voice to the excluded and all the victims of 'development' (Munck, 2000).

> *"Pieterse (2001, p.75) points out that in the 1970s, dissatisfaction with mainstream development crystallised into an alternative, people-centred approach to development geared to the satisfaction*

of needs, endogenous, self-reliant, and in harmony with the environment".

The alternative development paradigm emerged in response to the criticisms and shortcomings of previous development concepts, such as modernisation and dependency theories. This paradigm attempts to resolve the issues associated with developing nations' reliance on the economies of Western countries in order to attain their development goals (UNWTO, 2019). However, the people of developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria) and Asia (Bangladesh) will not continue to adopt a development strategy that has contributed to an increase in unemployment and higher levels of poverty among its citizens. Therefore, the emergence of a development strategy that enables growth and prosperity in developing countries is urgently needed as an alternative paradigm to promote multi-ethnicity in African countries, such as Nigeria (Nnaemeka, 2009). The next section of this chapter will focus on applying and integrating development theories into the tourism concept.

2.2. Tourism as a Vehicle for Development

It involves discussion on the gains and obstacles encountered while using tourism as an engine for development, which has progressed since the early sixties (Sorensen, 1999; Saner et al., 2015). Over the last six decades, many scholars have attempted to examine development theories and tourism (Harrison, 1988; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Sharpley and Telfer, 2015).

However, the meaning of development and its objectives is not yet clarified, even though tourism is regarded as a vehicle for development (Sharpley, 2003). Tourism has long been considered a primary instrument of development, as it can facilitate income generation by providing employment opportunities and generating economic power to earn foreign exchange (Sharpley, 2012; Sharpley and Telfer, 2014; Manzoor et al., 2019). Moreover, tourism could catalyse development by effectively transferring wealth from prosperous, developed economies to poor, less developed countries (Sharpley, 2012). According to Sharpley (2014), it was also argued that tourism's rapid growth and economic benefits make it ideal for practitioners and academics to consider as a vehicle for development, particularly in developing economies.

In addition, Jenkins (1991) noted that tourism has become an integral part of the development strategies of economies worldwide. Therefore, the initial enthusiasm for promoting tourism in the Global South countries was essentially based on its ability to generate economic benefits (both direct and indirect) at regional and national levels (Mihalic, 2014; Khan, 2020; Bindoi et al., 2020). According to Willis (2005), who argued and was not disappointed, tourism was favoured in the 1960s because of its economic benefits, which resonated well with the ideas of economic growth that were synonymous with development.

Moreover, Sharpley and Telfer (2014) recognised that effective promotion of tourism would result in the advancement of socioeconomic benefits of development in developing countries. They also raised concerns, questioning the effectiveness of tourism in promoting development, as there is evidence of economic and social inequality in almost all areas where tourism is promoted as a development tool (Mihalic, 2014; Manzoor et al., 2019).

Sharpley (2012) noted that using tourism as a vehicle for development based on economic objectives was also expanded to encompass environmental factors, which consist of political, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions. Tourism in most developing nations has grown along the same lines as the development theory, as both share similar focuses (Telfer, 2014).

Just like in the 1950s, when development evolved from modernisation to neo-liberalism in the 1960s (Globalisation), tourism has also evolved in the same direction as development. Therefore, discussing different development theories and the conceptualisation of the tourism concept is significant, particularly in developing economies, where the meaning of development has been changing over the last few decades. As development evolved, so did the dominant perspectives on how it could be achieved. The discussion in the subsequent sections of this chapter will focus on development theories and their relationship with tourism.

2.2.1 Tourism and Modernisation Theory

Schmidt (1989) defined modernisation theory as a socio-economic development process that passes through an evolution of traditional society to a modern society. Harrison (1988) traced its origins to the 1950s and 1960s, when non-Marxists applied modernisation theory to developing countries (Telfer and Sharpley, 2014).

Shaw and Williams (1994) described tourism as a development approach using modernisation theory with the capability to create employment opportunities, generate foreign exchange and improve the transfer of technology (Awang et al., 2009). Many academic scholars have written about tourism and modernisation during the past few years; MacNaught's work (1982) is regarded as the early defence of tourism in the Pacific Islands. Among others are Oakes (1998) and Sofield and Li (1998), whose studies focused on Chinese tourism as a process of modernisation (Harrison, 2015; 2021).

More recently, the work of Sharpley (2003) in Cyprus and that of Andriotis (2003) on the Island of Crete considered tourism to have become a modernising influence (Harrison, 2021). As Sharpley (2008) noted, modernisation theory is connected to mass tourism, where many people visit the same destination, especially in developing countries (Sharpley and Telfer, 2014). In contrast, Aramberri (2010) boldly defends mass tourism as an example of modernity (Harrison, 2015, 2021).

However, the proponents of modernisation theory saw tourism as a perfect substitute for agriculture and industrialisation; it was regarded as the engine for development in emerging and developing economies. Furthermore, the interests of local people were not considered during tourism planning in developing countries; this was regarded as a new form of imperialism by powerful developed countries (Murphy, 1985; Mowforth and Munt, 2015). Tourism provides a unique opportunity from the perspective of traditional societies (i.e., backwards) by giving local people a 'window into the outside world' (Murphy, 1985, 2013).

Many critics of modernisation theory believe that when a destination in a developing country is involved in international tourism, the relationship structure is unequal, as developing countries are regarded as junior partners. Developing countries are exploited, stripped of foreign exchange, and drained by multinational corporations, which repatriate profits to their home countries and pay management contracts, including leakages associated with imported goods and services that are unavailable locally (Harrison, 2015, 2021). Even though modernisation was the most popular mainstream development theory in the mid-1970s, it consistently faced challenges and criticisms from underdevelopment theory and other authors who opposed its view and concept (Harrison, 2015). The following section in this chapter will discuss dependency theory and its application to tourism development.

2.2.2 Tourism and Dependency Theory

The studies conducted by Britton (1982) were the first major attempt to apply dependency theory to tourism, beginning with an analysis of Fiji. These studies highlight the significance of tourism in development, as Steven Britton's analysis emphasises the varying and non-uniform levels of relationship that exist between developed and developing countries (Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Harrison, 2015; Sharpley, 2022).

As a result, the demand for foreign markets outside the immediate environment is responsible for shaping the direction of tourism development, especially in developing countries (Akama, 1999; Scheyvens, 2011; Dwyer, 2015). The colonial masters introduced tourism to developing countries; however, the top tourist generators are predominantly in developed countries, such as Europe and the United States of America, with China being the notable exception (Yeaman et al., 2014).

Consequently, the control and support of tourism establishments, including their management and long-term sustenance, depend on external factors (Akama, 1999). The investment in large-scale tourism projects is relatively too high for local investors in developing countries to provide; therefore, these countries rely on capital investment from external sources, such as multinational corporations (Akama, 1999; Akama, 2004).

These structures of economic dependency typically led to high leakages of developing world tourism revenues to external sources (Hall and Tucker, 2004; Jonsson, 2015). There were serious concerns about theorising development due to its inequitable nature, which sometimes resulted in unpleasant experiences of the impact of tourism development. On this last noted point, it should be added that the collapse of communism, which began in the early 1990s after the Cold War, exposed the weakness of dependency theories (Elliot, 2013).

Although many academic scholars have accepted dependency theory as a development approach, the government responsible for making the policy has not accepted its implementation; this is popularly adopted by the group and opposed by the movement to mass tourism (Harrison, 2015). The country that made the most attempts to implement the dependency theory was Tanzania, based on former President Nyerere's approach, which focused on African socialism (Harrison, 2015; Sharpley, 2022). According to Wade et al. (2001), tourism is not considered to be significant in the government's strategy of self-reliance, as the number of hotel accommodations which belonged to and were controlled by the government was lower, with inadequate tourism infrastructure and a lack of encouragement to increase foreign investment (Harrison, 2015).

Moreover, many developing countries depend on international capital for investment, including the technical knowledge of developed nations, even though the resources needed by the tourism sector for development are

not available (Sharpley, 2022). The policies engendered by dependency theorists had their failings; for instance, they encouraged developing economies to turn away from the global economy. According to Velasco (2009), Latin American countries that attempted to abandon the gold standard by devaluing their currencies and adopting protectionism for their local industries, such as Cuba, ultimately failed. This is due to protectionism losing relevance as world trade expanded, denying local industries access to technological progress and leading to inefficiencies (Lawrence and Litan, 1984; Sanchez, 2003). Therefore, the response to the failure of dependency theory policies provided fertile ground for many countries' acceptance of trade liberalisation in the 1980s and 1990s. The discussion in the following section will focus on the application of neoliberalism to tourism development.

2.2.3 Tourism and Neoliberalism Development Paradigm

Neoliberalism is concerned with the freedom of an individual in the process of making decisions and interacting with the market toward inclusive social welfare, based on the economic policy advocated by political figures on the left (Simmons, 2017). However, the interests of many tourism scholars are not the same; for instance, the studies conducted by Duffy in 2013 and 2014 focus on the neo-liberalisation of nature, and some other contributor's studies were based on specific areas, such as (Ormond, 2013) research on medical tourism and (Timms, 2006) studies was based on agritourism (Mosadale, 2016).

According to Harvey (1989), the emergence of alternative tourism associated with different forms of the context of capitalism with changes to the neoliberal movements; this restructuring was introduced and implemented around the world through structural adjustment programmes, which resulted in the opening of the markets for foreign investment as directed by the global institutions such as ADB, IMF and the World Bank (Harrison, 2021; Fletcher, 2023).

In addition, Mowforth and Munt (2008) and Honey (2008) noted that the implementation of SAP policies enables foreign investors to enter domestic markets and take control of local tourism industries worldwide (Fletcher, 2023). Furthermore, the tourism sector is closely tied to globalisation, which favours short-term profits over human well-being (Dwyer, 2015). The tourism industry in the Greater Mekong Sub-region received $58.7 million from the Asian Development Bank between 2003 and 2011; most of these funds were used to provide transportation infrastructure, such as roads and rivers, that will contribute to achieving neoliberal objectives. This investment in roads and river facilities will make cross-border activities easier and enable the integration of national markets and private sector development (Harrison, 2021).

However, the emergence of modernisation and dependency theories was accepted as the main concept of development, while neoliberalism and alternative development are regarded as the framework used to restructure the economy through various policies, such as the Structural

Adjustment Programme (SAP), in contradiction to top-down development theories (Sharpley, 2022).

Harrison (2015, pp. 65-66) stated that:

> *Modernisation theory, underdevelopment theory, neoliberalism … along with environmentalism and sustainable development, have all been found wanting. They continue to co-exist … but none dominate current development thinking, and for some time, attention has been focused on lower-level aims and objectives, for example, poverty alleviation, gender equality and basic needs* (Sharpley, 2022).

Nonetheless, Hall (2010), Büscher and Fletcher (2017), and Higgins-Desbiolles (2018) suggested that the capitalist system in neoliberal paradigms will be sustained when the tourism industry is able to play its pivotal role, resulting in the formation of a new tourism development model that does not rely on continual growth (Fletcher, 2023).

Therefore, tourism needs to be planned with special consideration of social factors such as poverty and inequality, including the extent to which it can help combat those problems (Telfer, 2014). The discussion in the following section was based on tourism and the alternative development theory.

2.2.4 Tourism and Alternative Development Paradigm.

As tourism is identified within development discourses, which primarily influence its nature, its relationship with alternative development is no exception. Since the 1980s, tourism has lost its 'mass' characteristic while continuing to grow (Agustin and Heradina, 2014; Theng et al., 2015).

As in other areas of popular culture, tourism has become highly fragmented, and tourists increasingly aim to define their identities through consumption, demanding more individualistic experiences (Weaver, 2004). The tourism industry was increasingly able to satisfy the demand through the supply of different types of novel and exotic attractions in remote areas of countries such as Tanzania in East Africa and Nepal in South Asia, to which tourists are less inclined to return year after year (Honeywell, 2002; Nepal, 1997, 2009).

Besides the change in tourists' taste, many tourism authors also greatly challenged assumptions about tourism's economic benefits (Wall and Mathieson, 2006). After all, in most cases, the ‘authenticity', which tourists, old or new, seek, has become a mere staged event. Just as early tourism scholars, such as Turner and Ash (1975) and Mathieson and Wall (1982), strove to characterise the mass tourism of their time, scholars and other commentators have already attempted to understand alternative tourism.

They give it different labels denoting various aspects of it. It is post-tourism (Urry, 1990), alternative tourism to McLeod (Pearce, 1992; 1997), the new tourism to Mowforth and Munt (1998, 2003, 2015) and ecotourism to Boo (1990) and Ceballos-Lascurain (1996). Others have characterised it as sustainable tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Weaver, 2007).

2.3 Chapter Summary

Proponents of tourism as a development tool present it as one of the largest industries in the world. In the past few decades, it has become integral to the development strategies of both emerging and developing economies (Telfer and Sharply, 2007; Scheyven and Russell, 2009; Sharpley, 2014).

Generally, tourism is viewed by many countries, often with limited economic development options, as an essential growth sector with a huge potential for sustainable development and a contributor to poverty alleviation (Torres & Momsen, 2004; Roe et al., 2004). Recently, tourism has been shifting from traditional destinations in Europe and the Americas to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Europe and North America still lead in terms of the number of arrivals and revenue generated. Still, the Asian economies are buoyed by an increase in the middle class and the improvement in China's economy in the region, which is slowly and steadily gaining a strong foothold in international tourism.

However, tourism still has a massive role in the growth of many developing economies. Its historical role in development, mainly when analysed from the development theories and policies associated with imperialism, such as modernisation and neoliberalism, tourism's role as an engine for development remains debatable.

Moreover, the rise of alternatives to development associated with sustainability offers hope to communities in developing economies that view tourism as a source of revenue for their development. The next chapter of this thesis focuses on a discussion relating to sustainability in coastal tourism development, the stakeholders and the local community, particularly in the developing world.

CHAPTER THREE

SUSTAINABLE COASTAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

3.0 Introduction

Coastal areas have various features and resources that are attractive to tourism development and activities based on land and water. A diverse coastal area offers a range of experiences, primarily centred on the Sun, Sand, and Sea. However, tourism in the coastal areas is a complex phenomenon as it is a significant source of income and other associated benefits. It is also a threat and source of negative environmental effects due to activities exerted upon such areas by those who believe in that form of development and tourists. Coastal tourism development results in environmental modification, and local people often do not share in the benefits of tourism activities. Therefore, to develop coastal tourism that attracts tourists and benefits the local economy, it is essential to involve the residents in planning and implementing such development policies.

This chapter focuses on coastal tourism and the concept of sustainability, tracing the origin of sustainable development and how it was incorporated into tourism management and development. The following section discusses tourism development and its significance, including the threats it poses to the natural environment.

3.1 Tourism Development and Sustainability

Neto (2003) argued that the rapid expansion of tourism activities such as Scuba diving, sports fishing, and snorkelling in marine environments, as well as the convergence of large numbers of people in coastal areas, poses a threat to both the marine and coastal resources (Bramwell, 2004; Hulu et al., 2019; Hengky and Kikvidze, 2021). There is a threat to marine life near coastlines from the intensive use of thrill crafts, such as jet skis, numerous boat tours, and anchors. Hall (2001) noted that Anchors, in particular, were responsible for most of the damage to the coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea due to the growing number of both small boats and large cruise ships visiting the region. Such threats to coastal ecosystems have led to calls for sustainability in the management of coastal resources. Sustainability, or Sustainable Development as it is often referred to in the literature, represents a philosophy for development (Williams, 2004; Bozak, 2016).

Some commentators, such as Urteaga (2011), have compared Sustainable Development to Alternative Development, arguing that conventional development approaches have failed because their promoters sought to apply a single formula to all countries, without regard for cultural differences. Alternative development was promoted as an approach that advocates for alternative practices of development, focusing on participatory and people-centred development with a redefined set of development goals (Piertese, 2002).

Sustainable development is also seen in the same light as an alternative to the destructive development approaches. It is a gradual shift from emphasising economic growth to a form of core people-centred development that cares for the environment (Drummond and Marsden, 1999; Parvis et al., 2018; Streimikiene et al., 2021).

As such, Drummond and Marsden (1999) argued that the idea of sustainable development is now widely accepted among almost all actors, and many are using it to promote and legitimise their agendas. Sustainable development appeared in development literature in 1987 after the publication of *'Our Common World'* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987).

> The WECD (1987) report defined '*sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*' (WCED, 1987:43; Andersen et al., 2018).

Sustainability has been in existence since the concept of sustainable development was introduced by the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987: 49). However, it was not adopted by tourism until almost two decades after the Brundtland Report and today, the concept of sustainable tourism has been incorporated into the fabric of tourism discourse in business, academic and governance terms (Buckely, 2012; Hall et al., 2015; Andersen et al., 2018).

Essentially, it was stressed that both conservation and socio-cultural resources should be used in such a way that satisfies the current generation while at the same time caring for future generations. The World Commission on Environment and Development persuaded many governments to endorse the notion of sustainable development (Mowforth & Munt, 2016; Andersen et al., 2018).

The World Commission on Environment and Development report in 1987 was followed by the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of heads of state from 120 countries in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 (also known as the Earth Summit). The deliberations from this summit were conceptualised in Agenda 21, which became the overriding reference for many countries to set up their sustainable development strategies. At the same time, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED and to monitor and report on the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements at the local, regional, national, and international levels (CSD, 2007; Yamin, 2018).

Twenty years after the Earth Summit in 1992, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, was held in 2012, during which the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development re-emerged. The Rio+20 Summit, organised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), focused more on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and

poverty eradication. Though the UN summit and the subsequent commissions had good intentions of promoting sustainable development, questions have been raised about the actual promise of sustainable development. In the development and environmental literature, there is a vast diversity of sustainable development (Lindsey, 2011).

Stepanyan et al. (2013) argued that the actual meaning of sustainable development varies depending on the number of perspectives and the context, including the field in which it is applied. This diversity in the meaning of the concept has led to its practical use being questioned and the concept itself being regarded as clichéd (Drummond and Marsden, 1999). The tourism industry's response to sustainability was the development of the concept of sustainable tourism (UNEP, 2005). This concept was an alternative tourism development based on the Brundtland Report of 1987 (UNWTO, 2014; Andrew and Bawa, 2014; Mowforth and Munt, 2015).

As early as 1988, the World Tourism Organisation defined sustainable tourism as a way to manage all resources so that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled simultaneously, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems (Ashley et al., 2001). Much of the discussion is currently focused on environmental sustainability or enhancing community involvement in tourism (IIED, 2001).

However, over the years, the meaning of sustainable tourism has shifted to tackling several problems associated with conventional mass tourism, such as ecological degradation, loss of cultural heritage, and economic dependence originating from coastal tourism (UNWTO, 2013). Similar to sustainable development, the sustainability version of tourism aims to meet the needs of both the tourists and host communities, including guaranteeing environmental protection for the future without compromising the needs of the next generation (UNWTO, 2016).

Sustainable tourism is associated with responsible practices, where the economic, social and environmental impacts meet the needs of both the present without limiting the ability to satisfy them with the same degree of fulfilment and enjoyment in the future. Sustainable development appeared as a core focus of UNWTO, intending to create a suitable balance between environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of development. Therefore, sustainable tourism development should meet the needs of tourists (e.g., infrastructure, beauty, and natural perceptions of recreational sites), considering the local population's needs, accommodation capacity, and the environment (Simpson, 2008).

Ecosystem services (Kumar, 2010; Haines-Young and Potschin, 2013), i.e. the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, are explicitly or implicitly used to evaluate the progress towards sustainable development, and they represent an important integrated framework in sustainability science (Griggs et al., 2013; Wu, 2013; Liu et al., 2015).

The practice of sustainable tourism development is often manifested on a small scale and in local projects that do not meet the standards set by the United Nations for sustainable development (Sharpley, 2003).

However, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development meeting in 1999 encouraged governments to maximise the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty by developing various strategies in cooperation with all major groups, including Indigenous and local communities (IIED, 2001). The Earth Summit in 1992, organised by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, established the triple bottom line of environmental, economic, and sustainability. The Rio Conference was concerned about the tourism industry and environmental sustainability through adopting and implementing Agenda 21, which promotes Environmentally Sustainable Tourism (Ashley et al., 2001).

The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 failed due to its inability to secure financial support for implementing Agenda 21, as the conference was seen as mainly focused on the environment. Moreover, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002 sought to establish the lack of progress in implementing Agenda 21. For the first time, tourism was included in the sustainable development agenda, which focused on attaining the Millennium Development Goals (Pisani et al., 2012).

Over the past decade, tourism has become a key instrument for poverty eradication, building environmental sustainability, and contributing to a global initiative to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 2000 to 2015 (UNWTO, 2012). This concept was based on the notion of sustainability for our common future, conceived in the 1987 Brundtland Report (UNDG, 2013).

However, it was not adopted by tourism until almost two decades after the Brundtland Report, and today, the concept of sustainable tourism has been incorporated into the fabric of tourism discourse in business, academic and governance terms (Buckely, 2012; Hall et al., 2015). The negative impacts of tourism on the environment and its long-term viability are consistently addressed through sustainability. Bramwell and Lane (1993) pointed to the positive approach, which aimed to reduce the gaps created by stakeholder interactions. This comprises the tourism industry, tourists, and the environment, including the host communities, to achieve long-term capacity and quality of both human and natural resources. The main objectives of sustainable tourism, as identified by Cater (1993), are to meet the needs of local communities, satisfy the increasing number of tourists, and protect the natural environment to achieve its primary objectives (Liu, 2003). More so, Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) is the new United Nations initiative adopted at the World Summit in September 2015 to replace the MDGs for the next fifteen years.

Economic, social and environmental factors are responsible for sustainable development, and different types of tourism have been recognised for creating employment opportunities, promoting the culture of the host communities and promoting sustainable tourism as agreed by the world leaders (UNDG, 2013; UNWTO, 2014; Regmi and Walter, 2016).

Nevertheless, Butler (1998) also argues that for considerable change to happen, there must be an attempt to solve long-standing problems. As Wight (1993b) noted, there was an inevitable danger ahead unless sustainable tourism is demonstrated and adopted by all the stakeholders involved in tourism development and does not follow the path of ecotourism, whose popularity suffered due to a perceived marketing label (Hardy et al., 2002). In the last few decades, since the WECD report in 1987, there has been a strong focus on the sustainable development of tourism (Liburd & Edwards, 2010).

Sustainable tourism development has been extensively researched (Neto, 2003; Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Saarinen, 2006; Buckley, 2012). A common notion is that tourism development should be based on the environmental, socio-cultural, and economic pillars of sustainability (Hall, 2000; Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005; Buckley, 2012; Mowforth & Munt, 2016). The criticisms and rejection of the mainstream development concept of modernisation and underdevelopment theories led to the adoption of a more comprehensive

globalisation framework. Therefore, environmentalist views were considered in the economic, social, and cultural analysis, as the top-down development approach was rejected in favour of bottom-up development, where local participation through locally owned small-scale tourism enterprises was preferred (Harrison and Schipani, 2007).

De Kadt (1979) identified tourism as a modernisation strategy from the 1950s to the 1960s, and it has the potential to help newly independent developing countries earn foreign exchange (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008). The period of the 1980s and 1990s witnessed the increasing popularity of sustainable tourism development, including ecotourism and other forms of alternative tourism. Butler (1992) described ecotourism and other forms of alternative or sustainable tourism as the thin end of the wedge that lacks the potential to replace or improve mass tourism; the negative impact of ecotourism has led to mass tourism. Harrison (1996) also argues that sustainability is difficult to measure or apply in practice as it has been hijacked to give moral rectitude and green credentials to tourist activities (Harrison and Schipani, 2007). The next section of this chapter will discuss the origin of coastal tourism and its components, with greater emphasis on the significance of coastal areas in tourism development.

3.2 The Development of Coastal Tourism

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2016), Coastal landscapes comprise about 356,000 km of global coastline. These landscapes include more than 90 countries surrounded by coastlines with no other countries on their borders. Coastal areas are located at the interface of land and sea; mutual interactions integrate terrestrial and marine processes (Woodroffe, 2002; Jurasinski, 2018; Kidd et al., 2019). Coastal areas are habitats for many terrestrial and marine ecosystems with various natural and highly altered environments. They are home to ecosystems such as coral reefs, salt marshes, mangroves, and beaches, as well as sand dunes that are responsible for regulating ecosystem services such as protecting the coastal areas from natural hazards such as floods, erosion, surges and storms (Agardy et al., 2006; Martinez et al., 2007; Jurasinski et al., 2018).

Most importantly, coastal zones sustain complex interactions between marine and terrestrial habitats, supporting high biodiversity and complex life cycles and food chain linkages throughout the water column. Coastal areas are rich with natural resources, which are essential for human well-being. The world's coastal areas generate a large share of the ocean's services, and their support of coastal economies and livelihoods is vital in less developed areas (Costanza, 1999; Martınez et al., 2007; Kildow and McIlgorm, 2010; Visbeck et al., 2014).

The richness of the coastal landscape in terms of natural resources provides attractive environments for people to settle, live, and pursue economic activities. In addition, people are also drawn to coastal areas for recreational, aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual reasons, as they attach a specific sense of place and well-being to coastal environments, and for others to enjoy coastal lifestyles (Green, 2010; Bell et al., 2015).

The world's coastal areas contain a striking concentration of human settlement and economic activity. For instance, the World Bank (2005) estimated that out of a population of just over 2 billion in South and Southeast Asian countries, more than 40% (864 million people) live within 100 km of the coast, along a combined coastline length of some 200,000 km (World Resources Institute 2006). This large human population occupies and uses highly productive coastal systems with valuable natural resources.

At the global level, nearly half of major cities are located within 50 km of the coast, and population densities are, on average, more than two and a half times higher than those of inland areas (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). For coastal states and island nations, coastal tourism is a complex factor for conservation and economic development (Kenchington, 1993). In many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), unique land and seascapes enable tourism to be a major economic activity (UNEP, 2009; Division for Sustainable Development, 2015).

Tourism to coastal areas is one of the oldest forms of leisure; coastal tourism has existed since the Roman era, when the first villas were constructed in the southern part of the Apennine Peninsula in the 18th century. According to Page (2019), tourism emerged in coastal landscapes in Europe and North America towards the end of the eighteenth century as a new form of tourism destination for the leisured classes. Similarly, Walton (2000) traced the origin of coastal resorts to Britain during the 18th century, when people organised themselves to participate in sea bathing; this is connected to the royal patronage given to Brighton on the south coast of England (Agarwal and Shaw, 2007).

In addition, Borsay and Walton (2011) also pointed to those papers collected between 1650 and 1939; both argued that little or no attention was given to tourism activities in terms of the development of coastal resorts, except for a brief mention of sea-bathing in Portsmouth and Southsea. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between tourism and other activities at ports and resort centres in seaside destinations. The activities in ports are more commercial in the form of maritime business, such as cruises, military activities of the Royal Navy and manufacturing.

Moreover, the activities of coastal resorts involve both health and leisure, with sea-bathing being the most prominent, and some tourists also engage in other recreational activities, such as swimming, pleasure boating, surfing, and fishing (Borsay and Walton, 2011; Obinwanne and Okpobo, 2015).

Coastal tourism is closely associated with mass tourism, as modern tourism began its path to growth after World War II, and one of the primary forms of leisure was visiting coastal areas. Coastal tourism was and remains associated with the fundamental characteristics of the Sun, Sea, and Sands (3S), which contributed to the evolution of mass tourism in the twentieth century (UNEP, 2009).

A significant part of the holidays worldwide is connected to these three Mantras. Bramwell (2004) noted that from the late 1950s onwards, many coastal areas in Europe began attracting unprecedented numbers of tourists from northern Europe. These coastal holidays were socially constructed as sun, sand and sea experiences, with better prospects of sun and warmth than in the north (Williams, 1997, p. 214).

It became possible for large numbers of people from diverse social groups to be involved due to the rising incomes of post-war prosperity, longer and paid holidays, and innovations in transportation technology, notably the commercial jet airliner. Moreover, coastal tourism involves all tourism-related activities around the beaches, and the most popular destinations for European tourists are located on the Mediterranean coast (Page and Connell, 2014).

According to Hall (2014), coastal tourism comprises a range of leisure, recreational and tourism-oriented activities in the coastal zone and the immediate offshore coastal waters. The activities include, for instance, tourism-related development (accommodation, restaurants and food

services, attractions, and second homes) and the infrastructure supporting coastal and marine tourism development (e.g., retail businesses, transport hubs, marinas, and activity suppliers) (Bramwell, 2004; Gheandi et al., 2010; Neuamann et al., 2017; Drius, 2018).

Other activities such as recreational boating, cruises, swimming, recreational fishing, snorkelling, diving, and marine-based ecotourism are also evident in coastal zones (Hall, 2014). According to Bruna et al. (2014), seaside tourism and recreation have rapidly increased in the last few decades, becoming a big business and a primary contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP) of several countries. Coastlines worldwide receive millions of visitors every year for activities such as beachgoing, swimming and fishing. Travellers have already identified, recognised, and explored Mediterranean and Caribbean coastal areas. A coast has many motivating factors which attract tourists to the destinations, such as beaches, which become an integral component of everyone’s holidays.

Moreover, coastal tourism can only occur in seaside destinations when unique natural resources are available, such as land with abundant sand, clean beaches, and direct sunlight from the sky. Coastal tourism is based on a diversified cultural and historical heritage, a variety of activities that take place in coastal zones, and support for the provision of infrastructural facilities such as roads, hotels, restaurants, and the development of tourism capacity (UNEP, 2009; Obinwanne and Okpobo, 2015).

Typically, coastal resources are essential in attracting tourism investments and facilities for a destination. This is because the coastal surroundings generally have different types of natural resources and cultural riches (Hengky, 2019).

More so, coral reefs, sandy beaches, birds, fish, marine mammals, and other wildlife are associated with cultural beauties, including historic sites, coastal towns, harbours, and fishing fleets. These natural sources are not endless; in contrast, they are fragile and scarce. Hence, uncontrolled tourism development and tourist-related activities may accelerate their extinction in the region (McLoughlin et al., 2018).

Furthermore, many of the world's major cities are situated in coastal areas, and most economic activities, except for agriculture, are concentrated in these cities. Timmerman and White (1997) noted that coastal cities consist of two separate but co-evolving ecosystems: one artificial and built, centred on the part inhabited by people, and the other natural, comprising its elements and resources. While tourism generates considerable socio-economic benefits for the people, it can also be a source of irreversible damage to the natural and vulnerable coastal environment (Bramwell, 2004; Andersen et al., 2018).

Therefore, for tourism to be sustainable in a coastal area, the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects must be integrated to maintain sustainability, leading to continuous benefits from tourism development (Marata, 2008; Taibi, 2016).

Tourism in marine and coastal areas is a complex phenomenon. Coastal environments are very vulnerable, yet they support several human activities and serve as a source of income for many local communities (Creel, 2003; Marafa, 2008).

There is a need to develop sustainable activities in these areas; tourism in coastal areas has both positive and negative effects on the environment due to the activities exerted upon such areas by proponents and tourists. While tourism development can result in the modification of coastal environments, it can also flourish in areas where such environments remain unmodified, as the pristine nature of the environment attracts visitors to the destination. Alternatively, for marine and coastal tourism to develop and continue to attract tourists, there is a need for an integrated approach that can be translated into sustainable coastal tourism development. While there is increasing recognition of the (coastal) environment as a tourism resource, there is also the need to consider the sustainability of that environment as it continues to open up to the full growth of tourism activities. The challenge for coastal tourism destinations is to find solutions to the conflict between the economic benefits of tourism activities in coastal areas and the social environment in which these activities occur.A considerable part of tourism development occurs in coastal areas (Bramwell, 2004; Ong & Smith, 2014). The concept of sustainable development is argued to be a useful and necessary tool for developing tourism in environmentally fragile and

sensitive places, such as coastal areas (Butler, 1999; Hopkins et al., 2012; Mowforth & Munt, 2016).

3.3 Sustainable Coastal Tourism

Sustainable coastal development implies a new approach to managing environmental and ecological resources, intending to utilise ecological resources while protecting them from depletion (Andersen et al., 2018). Therefore, sustainable coastal development implies an attempt to promote greater livability and an equitable and just distribution of resources and opportunities in the coastal zone (Beatley et al., 1994; Hengky and Kikvidze, 2021). Tourism depends heavily on the natural environment (Wong, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Holden, 2008).

Therefore, the unique characteristics of the coastal environment provide opportunities for various types of tourism development. Tourism is a component of integrated approaches towards coastal and marine management; therefore, the natural environment and tourism are inextricably linked (Mason, 2003). Sustainability has found its way into Coastal areas as they continue to evolve due to various natural and human factors and processes. In addition, climate change and the continued threat of rising sea levels pose significant threats to the livelihoods of coastal regions (Phillips, 2011). The onset and promotion of alternatives, such as tourism, have increasingly made the coastal environment more attractive.

The coastal ecosystems, particularly the interface between land and water, offer several opportunities for sustainable coastal tourism development, including adventure, marine, and ecotourism. Given the significance of coastal areas and the opportunities they provide, their continued use may hinge on sustainability, as many coastal communities depend on healthy ecosystems for sustenance, livelihood, and quality of life.

Moreover, the coastal environment requires continuous maintenance, and researchers, including decision-makers, should ensure that there is no excessive pollution or irreversible damage resulting from over-exploitation and overdevelopment due to tourism activities. Globally, coastal areas are densely populated, making the environment (both core and peripheral) increasingly vulnerable (Marata, 2008; Benjamin and Thomas, 2019).

The vulnerability of such environments results from many sources of activities, of which tourism is a key culprit. Sustainable tourism and its derivatives must be encouraged and promoted so that these areas continue to be helpful and support numerous activities (Joseph, 2012; Taibi, 2016; Anderson, 2018).

Promoting sustainable coastal tourism development and other measures that seek to integrate and manage coastal areas is intended to resolve the conflicts of societal demands. It is envisioned that when properly implemented, sustainable development and sustainable tourism development could help create long-term opportunities for coastal tourism

to prosper while promoting effective environmental protection policies. As tourism, the environment, and livelihood continue to interact in coastal areas, there must be a continuous provision of good-quality coastal ecosystems, particularly coastal waters.

However, the coastal environment is complex, and where tourism (in any form) constitutes a key player in the economy, it fosters uncertain interactions between environmental and socio-economic processes. The complexity of interactions and the need for sustainability have become increasingly significant elements in development frameworks worldwide (Gheorghe, 2001). Indeed, complexity and uncertainty play crucial roles in the development and management of coastal tourism.

The integration of environmental and socio-economic processes with tourism could, according to Butler (1999)

> '*Develop and maintain an area in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes* (Butler, 1999, p. 16).

Thus, like sustainable development, sustainable tourism evolved specifically out of concern for the environment. Sustainable tourism development in coastal areas needs to be the framework for managing all resources in such a way that will help to fulfil economic, social and

aesthetic, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (Swarbrooke, 1999; Ross and Wall, 2001).

Sustainable tourism and its other derivatives must be understood in the context of conceptualisation, promotion and implementation, especially in coastal areas. Tourism plays an important role in most communities, so it needs to be refocused. Current trends need to be revisited, potentials need to be unravelled, and alternatives must be created and promoted. The onus is on policy and decision-makers, as well as local communities, to make sustainable coastal tourism development adaptable and implementable.

Additionally, the challenges for the successful implementation of tourism in the coastal and marine environment are cross-sectoral and indeed multifaceted. A more prudent resource management approach involving all key stakeholders needs to be adopted. The bottom line of the policy that can enhance the sustainability of coastal and marine resources for tourism activities is ensuring socio-economic values for the people, preserving rich marine biodiversity, and enhancing the quality of life.

3.4 Stakeholders in Coastal Tourism Development

There is a vast body of literature on both sustainable tourism and Development. However, there is little discussion or understanding of the stakeholders and their participation in implementing and realising sustainable tourism (Waligo et al., 2013).

Within most coastal tourism development literature, there is hardly discussion on key stakeholders; much of the literature focuses on the environment, with less emphasis on the socio-cultural aspect. However, the contribution of stakeholders in tourism development is crucial to achieving sustainability (Bryd, 2007). Murphy and Murphy (2004) identified tourism stakeholders as tourists, tourism business owners, Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Suppliers, employees and the local community, including any other group that may be interested in tourism development. Identifying coastal tourism stakeholders is challenging, as the literature sometimes combines marine and coastal tourism.

In the case of coastal development, Yunis (2001) noted that tourism stakeholders are not the only group; there are many other stakeholders, including those of both land and sea resources, and these often have conflicting interests. Such coastal landscapes are characterised by high conflict potential, which includes tourism, local people, environmental activists, non-tourism activities, and all other parties with an interest in the coastal resources. According to Ecorys (2013), coastal tourism encompasses all activities based on land, including sunbathing and other recreational activities on the coast, which require proximity to the sea, along with their respective services. Maritime or marine tourism is all sea-based activities, including yachting, cruising, boating, snorkelling, and other land-based services and infrastructures.

The next section of this chapter discusses the local community, which is regarded as the most significant stakeholder in the development of coastal tourism within the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

3.5 The local Community and coastal tourism development

Local involvement in tourism development was defined as a key issue for sustainable tourism. However, it is often questioned and less seldom implemented in reality (Lindstrom and Larson, 2016).

Despite the acceptance of the notion of community-based tourism and the involvement of local stakeholders in tourism development in the theoretical debate, effective implementation is still considered a challenge among scholars and practitioners in the field. The reasons often advanced for not including the community in tourism development are a lack of knowledge and practical experience on community-based tourism as a bottom-up approach (Murphy and Murphy, 2004).

According to Lindstrom and Larson (2016), it was argued that one fundamental issue that does not involve the local community in tourism development is the lack of understanding of "community" as a complex phenomenon. Therefore, the notion of a local community needs to be put into perspective to develop effective techniques to involve local stakeholders in tourism development (Iorio and Corsale, 2014). This literature uses the word community without much qualification to denote a culturally homogenous social system or one that, at least implicitly, is

internally cohesive and more or less harmonious, such as an administratively defined locale or a common interest group (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Insufficient attention is given to diversity in the makeup of the communities (IIED 1994). By ignoring differences in history, values, perspectives, and power within a community, as well as the differential access that community members have to various layers of political decision-makers, commentators may raise incorrect assumptions about the ease with which collective decisions at the community level can be made (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999, 2001).

Saarinen (2006) argued that the main interest in developing tourism should be the community's well-being; therefore, in tourism planning and development, the community should be understood as a place rather than a tourist destination that exists to serve and satisfy tourists. The community can also be viewed as a group of people sharing a common environment (Singh et al., 2003).

This study is associated with Saarinen's (2006), which states that a community is a place and a key stakeholder in coastal tourism development. Within the community, there are different groups; Beeton (2006) referred to these groups as any individual (this could be a group of individuals) who has an interest and can influence community development in any way.

Therefore, community stakeholders may include disparate groups such as residents, second homeowners, retail and trade workers, tourism organisations, and government and public administration bodies. The literature further argues that community stakeholder interests are not fixed and straightforward, but rather multiple and fluid (Jamal and Getz, 2000). For instance, local stakeholders may not always be local (Iorio and Corsale, 2014).

Furthermore, local stakeholders often compete with each other and may be involved in conflicts of interest, with varying degrees of power to influence community development (Blackstock, 2005; Harwood, 2010; Iorio and Corsale, 2014). According to Mansuri and Rao (2004), many communities are characterised by serious power imbalances, which place severe constraints on community-based enterprises. In most cases, the poor depend heavily on vertical links with the local elites; it is challenging to form horizontal associations necessary for organising collective action for the common good. Due to the attraction of the coast and the sea, coastal communities, in particular, often face stakeholder conflicts (e.g., Wesley and Pforr, 2010). Community involvement in tourism development is fundamental for sustainable development and should be defined as both a process of involving local stakeholders in decision-making and an outcome of tourism development (Sofield, 2003; Okazaki, 2008). It can be argued that a community-based approach to tourism development can build social capital.

This is about social structures and how they facilitate productive actions that make possible achievements that would otherwise be impossible (Coleman, 1988).

Hence, when applying a community-based approach, local residents, tourism entrepreneurs, other relevant business actors, government representatives, planners, and developers are all integral to the community's social structure, and their involvement, or lack thereof, influences the course of tourism development. Community involvement requires both the stakeholders' capacity and a means, such as power, legal rights, knowledge, time, and money, to be involved in participatory processes (Jamal and Getz, 2000). One argument against community participation is the unwieldy nature of such projects, which, in turn, results in high transaction costs in terms of time and financial resources (Okazaki, 2008).

Nevertheless, one response to this critique would be that what is missing is a lack of education and experience among planners and other stakeholders about dealing with local involvement in tourism development. According to Okazaki's (2008) attempt to scrutinise community participation from the perspective of the level and degree of involvement. Lindstrom and Larson (2016) stressed the importance of defining local participation as a process that includes a ladder of involvement, power redistribution, collaboration, and social capital creation.

Moreover, community participation is integral to sustainable tourism development, particularly through community-based traditions (Tosun, 2000; Murphy and Murphy, 2004; Blackstock, 2005; Beeton, 2006; Saarinen, 2006; Iorio and Corsale, 2014). As opposed to research traditions highlighting economic growth and environmental protection in tourism planning and development, the community approach primarily focuses on the "host" per se. Nonetheless, it highlights the right to be involved in the community's transformation into a tourist destination and the benefits that may result from such involvement (Beeton, 2006; Saarinen, 2006). Additionally, it is argued that the community approach constitutes a necessary link between the economic growth and environmental protection approaches to sustainable tourism. That is simply because relevant stakeholders have to represent and act in the interest of these perspectives in order to make "things happen" (Selin, 1999; Saarinen, 2006).

Moreover, community participation underpins meaningful interaction between "hosts and guests" in the tourism development process (Beeton, 2006). That being said, few attempts have been made to articulate the practical actions of community involvement in tourism development. It is often claimed to be an unrealistic and utopic strategy due to its complexity and high transaction costs (Jamal and Getz, 2000; Blackstock, 2005; Okazaki, 2008; Iorio and Corsale, 2014).

3.6 Chapter Summary

The optimism for the potential of the local communities in developing countries to succeed with a Community-Based agenda is founded on a number of contingencies: socio-historical, political, and geographical. Admittedly, these may not be replicable in other places, but they point to the peculiar circumstances that can allow for flexibility and opportunity for these communities to capture some of the benefits of the booming global coastal tourism business despite the structural constraints they face. Despite the Community-Based approach's potential as a poverty alleviation strategy, its success is highly dependent on protecting the natural and cultural resources that drive coastal tourism and maximising income retained locally.

Many countries are struggling to find a balance between coastal tourism development policies that favour the market, protect resources, and successfully retain and distribute income within and across the country (Akunaay et al., 2003). In addition, successful Community-Based projects are critically dependent on the type of management controls adopted and the involvement of stakeholders in defining resource use and benefits distribution (Brandon, 1996). With the rise of marketisation, community-based approaches to coastal tourism development are expected to stimulate economic improvement at the local and national levels. In discussions of the creation or maintenance of natural areas, it is generally accepted that the individuals or communities of people whose

livelihoods are linked to these areas or will be adversely affected should be incorporated into the coastal tourism projects at levels of either management or benefactors, or both, through employment-related activities or as recipients of lump sums of income (Lindstrom and Larson, 2016). The next chapter of this thesis will discuss tourism development and its relationship with poverty alleviation among the local communities in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

4.0 Introduction

This research will explore the potential of sustainable coastal tourism for local community development. This chapter provides an overview and explores the linkage between tourism and poverty alleviation, using Rivers State, Nigeria, as a case study.

The concept of poverty encompasses various approaches that inform its definition and measurement. It is about what it means to be poor from different perspectives and for different categories of people in a society and the world. It involves the discourses of poverty (Lister, 2004; Omomowo, 2017). The definition of poverty refers to the criteria for distinguishing between those who are poor and those who are not. The inability of individuals and households to adequately satisfy their consumption needs and the lack of collective consumption could account for the condition of poverty (Akanle and Adeshina, 2018).

In addition, Taiwo and Agwu (2016) define poverty as a lack and inability of people to get a minimum standard of living, be respected and recognised in society. The implication of poverty as a result of an inability to provide for one's family could lead an individual to do anything to keep their family afloat and satisfy the basic needs of life, such as food, housing, and security.

From the foregoing definitions, poverty is characterised by the inability to provide the basic necessities of life and a corresponding increase in crime (Jacob et al., 2024). According to the multidimensional poverty index in 2018 (MPI), employment is the indicator with the highest contribution of 24.89% to poverty in Nigeria (NBS, 2022). There is absolute poverty among the residents of the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, primarily due to the high unemployment rate in Rivers State. However, poverty is measured by the ability of households to afford basic needs of life, satisfying physiological needs through the provision of food, decent accommodation and ensuring the safety of lives and their properties. Therefore, individuals who experience hardship and are unable to meet the basic necessities of life, such as food, housing, and security, are regarded as poor in the context of the belief and understanding of poverty among residents within the study areas. Tourism is one of the primary drivers of economic growth and job creation in emerging economies around the world (Badulescu et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Rehman et al., 2020). Africa's unique history and natural wonders are gaining attention amid the local and global interest in cultural heritage and tourism development. Based on analyses of various International Development Organisations such as the World Bank, UNWTO, AU and UNCTAD, among others, it is clear that numerous African countries present tremendous promise to become or remain vibrant hosts for tourists, investors, and entrepreneurs, which can drive employment for low-skilled workers and economic inclusion for women and youth.

This chapter discusses the potential for tourism to drive poverty alleviation in Africa. It starts with an overview of tourism from a global perspective and Africa's performance in the past few decades. The chapter also focuses on the potential for tourism to contribute to poverty alleviation, particularly through inclusive tourism development and community-based tourism. Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 of the chapter focus on these two tourism and poverty reduction strategies.

4.1 Tourism and Development: A Global Perspective

Proponents of tourism as a development tool present it as one of the largest industries in the world, and in the past few decades, it has become integral in the development strategies of both emerging and developing economies (Telfer and Sharpley, 2007; Scheyven and Russell, 2009; Sharpley, 2014). Generally, tourism is viewed by many countries, often with limited economic development options, as an important growth sector with a huge potential for sustainable development and a contributor to poverty alleviation (Torres & Momsen, 2004; Roe et al., 2004). The tourism industry has shown a steady and robust growth pattern compared to other traditional economic sectors such as agriculture. It rebounded effectively from the 2008 recession, with international arrivals increasing from 935 million in 2010 to 1133 million in 2014 and continuing to grow by 4% in 2015 (UNWTO, 2015). The industry's performance in 2015 exceeded expectations, with international tourism arrivals (overnight visitors) reaching a record high of 1186

million, an increase of 52 million more visitors compared to 2014. This 5% increase marked the sixth consecutive year of significant growth since the global economic recession in 2008. The Americas, Asia, and the Pacific recorded an almost 6% growth rate in international tourist arrivals, while Europe and the Middle East saw increases of 5% and 2%, respectively. However, the data also revealed a decline in international tourist arrivals in Africa due to political unrest (Arab Spring) and terrorism in North Africa (UNWTO, 2016).

The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015 was USD 2,229.8 billion, accounting for 3% of GDP, and was predicted to rise by 3.3% in 2016 to USD 2,304.0 billion. The economic activities of hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services) were considered significant. The restaurant and leisure industries, which directly support the contribution of Travel and Tourism, are expected to grow by at least 3.4% of GDP every year to USD 3,469.1 billion by 2026 (WTTC, 2016). According to Tunde (2012), the Nigerian government generated N1.149 million from the hospitality sector in 2004, which increased to N100 million by 2009. However, in 2011, the tourism industry contributed about N1,232.2 billion, 3.3 per cent, to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The WTTC predicted that the industry would create 897,500 jobs, representing about 1.4 per cent of Nigeria's total workforce as of 2012; it was expected to increase by 6.5 per cent by 2022,

generating a total of N483.4 billion in revenue (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015). Tourism is seen as a powerful development tool that could uplift communities and reduce poverty due to its unique ability to create jobs and stimulate economic growth (Gerosa, 2003; McLaren, 2003; Torres and Momsen, 2004).

Furthermore, there is less interference from the government's bureaucracy, which is often costly and delays progress. Theoretically, the revenue from tourism would flow directly to the local people, particularly the local restaurants, hotels and retail shops, thus making the economic benefits more far-reaching. It can be argued that tourism has the potential to generate foreign exchange earnings, attract international investment, increase tax revenues through the creation of new jobs, and serve as an incentive for developing countries to promote tourism as an engine for macroeconomic growth (Torres and Momsen 2004: 294–5).

However, some studies have also claimed the dominance of Multinational Corporations, which syphon all the money from tourism away from the destinations' economy back to their head offices in the developed world (Scheyven, 2012; Agarwala, 2014). Britton (1983) stated that tourism, instead of providing much-needed development, is used to degrade developing economies, with MNCs exploiting these countries. In addition, Hampton (2003) noted that the MNCs are the agents of marginalisation and poverty in the developing world.

Nonetheless, tourism still plays a massive role in many developing economies, such as in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Recently, tourism has been shifting from traditional destinations in Europe and the Americas to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Europe and North America still lead in terms of the number of arrivals and revenue generated. However, the Asia economies are buoyed by the rise of China and a growing middle class in the region, which are slowly and steadily gaining a strong foothold in international tourism (Choudry and Lew, 2009). With its abundant wildlife and cultural resources, as well as relative peace in many countries, Sub-Saharan Africa also registers high growth in international tourism (Christie et al., 2013).

The African Development Report (2014) indicated that tourism development in Sub-Saharan Africa has tremendous potential to boost growth across the continent and reduce poverty. Most tourism activities in Africa take place in areas where many communities live below the poverty line. Therefore, if coastal tourism is well-developed, it could contribute to achieving new sustainable development goals, whose main objective is eradicating poverty, protecting the planet from pollution, and ensuring prosperity for all (UN, 2015).

In addition, tourism activities within a destination can have a direct impact on the lives of the local community, which can be positive by creating employment opportunities, increasing government tax revenue,

and promoting economic diversity, while also reducing the negative effects of environmental degradation (Kim et al., 2013).

4.2 Tourism Development in Africa

Until the advent of COVID-19 in 2020, international travel and tourism had been growing steadily in nearly all countries worldwide. In Africa, international tourism was introduced in the 1960s; however, the continent started getting noticed in the 1990s (Christie et al., 2013).

Since the 1990s, Africa has experienced a boom in tourism, with the continent recording an annual growth rate of 4.1% between 1995 and 2010. Revenue from the tourism sector increased by more than 50%, while international arrivals grew by over 1000%, from 6.7 million in 1990 to 71.2 million in 2019 (UNWTO, 2020).

Africa was the only region that continued to experience international tourism growth during the economic recession of 2008–2009, registering an increase of 3.7%, while other regions declined on average by 4.3% (UNWTO, 2018). The 2019 Jumia Hospitality Report on Africa noted that tourism on the continent generated 8.5% of the GDP in 2018, equivalent to $194.2 billion. According to UNWTO (2018), the North African region led tourism growth in the 1990s. Despite this, the political turmoil that engulfed the Maghreb region since 2010 led to the sub-Saharan region taking the lion's share of international tourism arrivals between 2000 and 2017.

Even within Sub-Saharan Africa, there are marked variations in tourism development, with Eastern and Southern Africa attracting the vast majority of visitors, mainly from Europe and the United States (UNCTAD, 2017; Signe, 2018; UNWTO, 2020). In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share, Eastern Africa takes 4.7%, Southern Africa (3.0%), Western Africa (2.1%) and Central Africa (1.7%) (UNCTAD, 2017).

Despite the remarkable growth in international tourism in Africa, when compared with other World regions, Africa's tourism sector remains relatively underdeveloped. For instance, in 2019, there were 1,461 million international arrivals globally, and Africa received 71.2 million travellers, amounting to only 4.9% of all international travellers (UNWTO, 2020). In the same period, Europe led all international arrivals with 742.3 million travellers (50.8%), Asia and the Pacific received 363.6 million travellers (24.9%), and the Americas had 15.1%, or about 220.1 million international visitors (UNWTO, 2020).

However, if tourism development is viewed in terms of growth, Africa demonstrates huge potential to develop into a major travel and tourism market, particularly considering current sectoral growth patterns. International tourists are increasingly interested in developing countries as travel destinations (Signe, 2018). Tourism has been advocated as an engine for sustainable economic development and a catalyst for inclusive growth (UNCTAD, 2017; Bianchi and De Man, 2020).

Tourism has increasingly contributed to Africa’s employment and trade growth for over three decades. The average total contribution of tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) increased from $69 billion in 1995–1998 to $166 billion in 2011–2014, rising from 6.8% of GDP in Africa to 8.5% of GDP.

Furthermore, tourism generated more than 21 million jobs on average between 2011 and 2014, translating into 7.1 per cent of all jobs in Africa (WTTC, 2015; Signe, 2018). The WTTC report (2020), "Travel and Tourism Global Economic Impact and Trends 2020," and the 2019 figures indicated that the tourism sector's contribution to Africa’s economic development was $168.5 billion, equivalent to 2.2% of GDP, and supported 24.6 million jobs. This indicates that the sector has consistently contributed to employment in Africa (Streimikiene et al., 2021).

Africa's economic and political environment has improved over the last few decades, and as this happens, so do the benefits of tourism to many countries on the continent. Christie et al. (2013) noted that tourism in Africa has continued to grow at a faster rate than other sectors of the economy. Many international bodies, as well as African governments and policymakers, recognise tourism’s potential to foster development and increase its participation in the global economy, which is increasingly reflected in national policy frameworks (UNWTO, 2019).

At the continental level, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Tourism Action Plan under its New Partnership for Africa's Development recognise tourism's importance in driving Africa's socio-economic development and structural transformation through job creation, in catalysing growth in other productive sectors and in fostering inclusion through the participation of women and youth in the sector's activities (African Union Commission, 2015; UNCTAD, 2018).

At the national level, the majority of countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have demonstrated the capacity and political will to improve and expand their tourism sector by incentivising investment, attracting finance, and easing restrictions on movement (Christie et al., 2013; UNWTO, 2019). Most African countries have national development plans that outline their countries' visions for the future and identify planned policies and sectoral priorities, highlighting the importance of tourism.

According to a World Bank study, African countries are classified into four performance categories: 'Pre-Emergent, Potential, Emerging, and Consolidating' tourism destinations. Countries' performance was based on indicators such as the ease of doing business, competitiveness in terms of tourism regulation, infrastructure, and resources, tourism receipts per long-haul arrivals, international arrival per head of population, and forecast of growth in tourism arrivals (Christie et al., 2013).

The pre-emerging countries are emerging from civil wars, but they still face significant security and governance challenges and have a low level of government commitment to the tourism sector. Examples include Somalia and Sudan. Moreover, these countries have the potential to develop into major tourist destinations. Though they show relative interest and initiative in the sector, they still face governance challenges and market limitations. For example, countries such as Madagascar, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Gabon are classified into this category.

Emerging countries prioritise and scale up tourism and are relatively competitive; this includes countries such as Rwanda and the Seychelles. Finally, consolidating countries, such as Morocco, South Africa, and Mauritius, are among the top performers with a relatively mature tourism sector. The African continent is rich in natural and cultural resources, which form the main tourist attractions. Africa has vast coastal areas, but individual countries and destinations on the continent are at different stages of coastal tourism development. Eastern, Southern, and Northern African countries are far ahead in coastal tourism development compared to Western African countries. A UNWTO (2013) study of nine coastal areas in Africa noted the relative importance of coastal tourism to the total tourism performance in African countries. The study noted that the tourism sectors in Seychelles and The Gambia are almost entirely leisure-based coastal tourism.

Coastal tourism also dominates in Senegal and Mozambique, accounting for a significant proportion of tourism in Cameroon. There is a significant and developed coastal tourism product in East Africa. However, in Ghana and Nigeria, the proportion of tourism on the coast could be high, partly owing to the coastal location of Accra and Lagos. Although coastal tourism as a product is not highly developed in these countries, the African continent has an incredible opportunity to harness tourism's potential.

Moreover, some commentators argue that tourism is not a panacea for development in less developed countries (Hundt, 1996; Gudaitis, 2001; Lui et al., 2012). Firstly, the tourism sector is extremely competitive and vulnerable to external negative impacts (both natural and human-made), although it does demonstrate strong resilience (Khan et al., 2020).

The outbreak of COVID-19, or the Novel coronavirus pandemic, which took over almost all countries in the world, has considerably impacted the day-to-day lives of billions of people globally (Ranasinghe et al., 2020). As a result of the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, Africa's GDP growth in 2020 could be cut by 3-8%. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has estimated a decline in monetary value of $29 billion from US$66 billion in 2019 to US$37 billion in 2020 (Feyisa, 2020). Secondly, most African countries, particularly in the Sub-Saharan region, have weak capacities, which impact all aspects of tourism development, including planning, legislation, accessibility, marketing and promotion, product development and standards (Christie

et al., 2013). At the same time, tourism has also been associated with operating in isolation from other parts of the economy, suffering from high financial leakage, generating sociocultural tensions and environmental damage.

Furthermore, proponents of tourism as a catalyst for development and a tool to help alleviate poverty argued that tourism is not a panacea for pro-poor growth in Africa, nor is tourism equally appropriate for all countries. There is evidence that poor host countries can capture considerable macroeconomic benefits from tourism, and reasonable grounds for suggesting that economic benefits, particularly employment, reach people experiencing poverty in Africa (Ashley et al., 2005; Ashley and Mitchell, 2006). The next section of this chapter explores the theoretical concept of poverty and the efforts of government and international development agencies to alleviate poverty worldwide.

4.3 Conceptualising Poverty

The Millennium Declaration of the United Nations identified poverty alleviation as one of the most compelling challenges the world faces in the 21st Century. This was later reinforced by the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, which identifies the elimination of poverty as its number one goal. According to Fox (2019), who argued that when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were announced in 2015, it was clear that the success of SDG 1—eradicating extreme poverty—depended on Africa's performance.

The World Bank quantified poverty in 1948 by defining countries with an annual per capita income below $100 as poor. In its World Development Report (WDR) of 1990 and subsequent reports, the World Bank defined poverty as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living, measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them. Poverty was characterised by the failure of individuals, households, or entire communities to command sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. Once, annual per capita income was the gauge, the discernment of global poverty became a comparative statistical operation (Watts, 1995).

The entire nations were considered poor because of its overall income (Rahnema, 1992). Poor countries came to be defined as those lacking the "wealth of more economically advantaged nations (Escobar, 1995), and because industrialised countries were the points of reference, the gap was enormous (Sanarclens, 1997). Eradicating global poverty and the expanding disparity between industrialised and unindustrialised countries became a significant challenge facing the international community (Pritchett, 1996; Williamson, 1996; Birdsall, 1998).

Poverty is a concept that has been widely researched and interpreted differently using either a qualitative or quantitative approach (Spicker, 2007). Lister (2004) noted that the approach utilised to research poverty depends on how poverty is understood and the definition adopted. The quantitative approach seeks to objectify and deliver facts related to poverty through measurement, while the qualitative approach is

concerned with explaining and developing an understanding of poverty (Lister, 2004; Kura, 2012).

Most governments and international development agencies prefer the quantitative approach, which enables an analysis of poverty among a wider population, produces numerical data that can be used to define policies, and monitors the impacts of interventions (Lister, 2004; Spicker, 2007). Moreover, the qualitative approach, on the other hand, has received limited attention since it does not provide a large-scale analysis of poverty, and therefore does not allow for designing effective intervention strategies to alleviate poverty (Spicker, 2007).

Nonetheless, McGee and Brook (2001) noted that a qualitative approach can provide valuable insight into poverty. The qualitative measure of poverty often employs participatory approaches, which enable researchers to engage with individuals experiencing poverty and explore their perspectives on poverty and inequality (Lister, 2004).

Robb (2002:104) also argued that participatory approaches help "engage with the poor [which] leads to a better technical diagnosis of problems and better design and implementation of solutions." Thus, instead of investing time and effort in finding exact measurements, Robb (2002) proposes enhancing understanding from the perspective of people living in poverty to develop and implement policies that matter to them. In this sense, participatory research is committed to empowering people who are experiencing hardship (Lister, 2004).

Yapa (1996) argued that the real cause of poverty is how we understand it. The material deprivation of people with low incomes is a form of socially constructed scarcity. People now identified as impoverished may have viewed themselves and their place within their respective communities quite differently before the advent of development (Escober, 1995). Most societies have found ways of defining and treating poverty that accommodate visions of community, frugality, and sufficiency (Rahnema, 1992; Illich, 1992).

Shrestha (1995:266-77), writing on "becoming a development category," described one such different vision. Without romanticising the pre-development period, Shrestha paints a complex picture of his village in Nepal, his family, and his life in the 1940s. He begins by describing life in Nepal before "development," where his family was impoverished by World Bank standards. Nonetheless, neither his family nor others in the village thought that people were lesser beings because of their poverty.

The idea here is not to romanticise poverty or champion non-Western societies per se, nor to suggest that societies and cultures are fixed and impervious to change. It is also understood that there are concrete aspects to poverty and want that are not entirely socially constructed. Therefore, it is only to suggest that people existed and lived before the West came to their rescue; the people may have devised various internal mechanisms to deal with those who had less, even if those mechanisms were imperfect (Lewellen, 1997).

The possible value of such indigenous knowledge was not even considered, as the Western concept of development was deployed. Poverty was the singular factor by which the development project categorised distinct, varied and, in many instances, quite self-sufficient peoples. This section suggests that poverty cannot be easily defined or measured, as it is a complex and universal issue. The next section of this chapter discusses tourism and poverty reduction strategies, with an insight into inclusive tourism development and community-based tourism.

4.4 Tourism and Poverty

Tourism and poverty have attracted growing interest in the past decade or two (Njoya and Seetaram, 2018; Garza-Rodriguez, 2019). This growing interest reflects changes in the development community. The notion that tourism can contribute significantly to poverty reduction strategies has attracted considerable interest from multilateral institutions, tourism bodies, donors, and other global organisations (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008).

Tourism is undoubtedly a major contributor to economic development in many developing countries, and it is often the only industry that has consistently demonstrated growth in recent years (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008). Tourism is already one of many African countries' most important sources of foreign exchange earnings and job creation. The significance of tourism as a poverty alleviation tool emerged as a new focus of research in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation

(UNWTO, 2001) and major donor organisations such as the World Bank (World Bank, 2006).

In Africa, the link between tourism and poverty alleviation is well articulated in the works of the Economic Commission for Africa (Gerosa, 2003) and in larger clusters of writings on pro-poor tourism (DFID, 1999; Ashley et al. 2000; Roe and Urquhart, 2001; Ashley and Roe, 2002; Goodwin and Bah, 2003; Spenceley and Seif, 2003; Ashely, 2005; Ashley and Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell and Ashley, 2006; Mitchell and Faal, 2006). Such works provide detailed analyses of tourism's potential for 'pro-poor growth'.

Until recently, writings on pro-poor tourism have been one of the most notable contributions to international scholarship on tourism's role in poverty alleviation, deriving substantially from research based in Africa. With the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), using tourism as a tool to achieve prosperity and reduce poverty entered the agenda of International Development Agencies (IDAs) and the emergence of a practitioner movement for pro-poor tourism (PPT) (Harrison, 2008; Scheyvens, 2009; Mitchell, 2012).

Harrison (2008:855) points out that "strategies derived from a PPT perspective are formulated to incorporate the poor into capitalist markets by increasing the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and more collective benefits, available to them". PPT suggested integrating people experiencing poverty into the mainstream tourism industry.

Similarly, Scheyvens (2011:31) emphasises that "the people behind the PPT partnership firmly believe that it is important to bring about changes in mainstream tourism, including challenging corporations to change the way they operate, rather than to establish numerous community-run bungalow ventures with dubious business prospects".

To implement change and "unlock opportunities for the poor" within tourism, the combined efforts of all stakeholders involved in tourism are crucial (Ashley et al., 2001). Bennett et al. (1999) noted that opportunities for people with low incomes (poor) in mainstream tourism were promising, as it is a labour-intensive industry that employs an unskilled and low-skilled workforce, has low entry barriers, and depends on other sectors, such as agriculture. Ashley and Mitchell (2008) confirmed that there are manifold ways for people experiencing poverty to participate in mainstream tourism due to its complex nature, including planning, transport, accommodation, food and drinks, shopping and entertainment/activities provided by direct service providers and being dependent on secondary suppliers such as agriculture or construction.

Mitchell and Ashley (2010) suggest three pathways by which tourism can transfer benefits and costs to local communities: (i) direct, (ii) indirect and induced impacts, and (iii) dynamic effects. The first pathway refers to direct flows from direct tourism service providers to low-income groups (e.g., wages from work in the accommodation or food and beverage sector or support initiatives and schemes).

Mitchell (2012) argues that the direct impacts are relatively local to the destination; however, it can also reach communities outside the destination (e.g., remittances from migrant workers). The second pathway relates to indirect flows in that tourist activity stimulates secondary sectors, such as the supply of food and beverages or construction. It has been argued that the indirect impacts of tourism on poor communities might be significantly higher than the direct impacts (Meyer, 2007; Mitchell, 2012). Thus, it has been suggested that backward linkages with secondary sectors be increased to advance economic development at a broader scale (Meyer, 2007).

However, secondary products are often unavailable locally, so they must be sourced from outside the destination, leading to leakage (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Induced impacts result from the spending of people employed in tourism in the local economy. The third pathway refers to the positive and negative dynamic effects of tourist activity, which encompass the longer-term non-monetary impacts, such as improved skills resulting from employment and training in tourism, or the scarcity of resources (ibid). Due to the variety of impacts tourism can have on poverty reduction, tourism has been frequently adopted as a tool for development by IDAs (Spenceley and Meyer, 2012; Truong, 2018). A host of other studies have been undertaken on sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation (e.g., DFID, 1999; Sosovele, 2005; Jobe, 2006), as well as the

linkage between tourism and agriculture as a potential tool for poverty alleviation (Torres and Momsen, 2004).

Recently, studies focusing on inclusive tourism development as a strategy to alleviate poverty have emerged in the tourism literature. However, whilst tourism for development has a substantial literature, including pro-poor tourism, inclusive growth in relation to tourism is under-theorised (Hampton et al., 2018). The next section of this chapter will focus on inclusive tourism as a new form of alternative development paradigm. It will explore how most people within the local community contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity by using tourism as a developmental tool.

4.4.1 Inclusive Tourism Development

Inclusive growth has become central to the agenda of International Development Agencies (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018). The World Bank (2009:1) defines inclusive growth as growth that allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. More specifically, the argument is that growth should be broad-based across sectors and include a large part of the country's labour force (Ianchovichina and Lundstrom-Gable, 2012).

Although the terms "inclusive growth" and "pro-poor growth" are often used interchangeably in tourism, Bakker and Messerli (2017) argue that they are distinct.

Firstly, central to the concept of inclusive growth is that 'growth is coupled with equal opportunities' (Rauniyar and Kanbur, 2010b, p. 457); while growth can be pro-poor, even if people with low incomes (poor) do not equally benefit (Rauniyar and Kanbur, 2010a). Secondly, the concept of pro-poor growth focuses on people below the poverty line, whilst inclusive growth aims to benefit a wider section of the population (Ianchovichina and Lundstrom, 2009).

Thirdly, inclusive growth seeks to widen the size of the economy and generate productive employment with a long-term perspective; thus, it combines macro-level economic growth with micro-level determinants (World Bank, 2009). In contrast, pro-poor growth focuses on creating micro-level opportunities (Bakker and Messerli, 2017).

The shift in focus from pro-poor to inclusive growth is reflected in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, with two goals specifically addressing inclusive growth. Only recently has the concept of inclusive tourism emerged, which Scheyvens and Biddulph (2018:592) define as 'Transformative tourism in which marginalised groups are engaged in ethical production or consumption of tourism and the sharing of its benefits. The understanding of inclusive tourism takes a holistic approach in line with the inclusive development agenda, which focuses on overall welfare rather than just economic growth (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018).

Moreover, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has also promoted inclusive tourism development. It defines an inclusive tourism destination as a place or destination that offers a tourism experience based on its own singular attributes and transforms the industry by boosting its competitiveness. Inclusive tourism development creates decent employment and promotes equal opportunities for all, especially the most vulnerable groups, to participate in and benefit from tourism activity, all in line with the principles of sustainable development (Butler and Rogerson, 2016). The argument is that if inclusive tourism is well-planned and managed, it can help bridge the gaps in a connected society and ultimately contribute to minimising the social divides in many destinations worldwide.

Moreover, UNWTO (2018) argued in their report on Inclusive tourism that for tourism development to be inclusive, a new approach to operating methods and relations between destinations is needed. For continuous inclusion to occur, all social actors must be integrated, rather than relying on isolated actions. This will require setting up a new methodology that considers the social component when promoting tourism growth. This means that new dynamics are needed in destinations to guarantee access for all, especially for disadvantaged groups, to the opportunities and benefits that tourism can bring (UNWTO, 2018). Researchers on tourism as a tool for poverty reduction argue for leaving behind the simplistic view of tourism as either good or bad for the poor (Meyer, 2009).

Acknowledging that reality is far more complex, research should seek to 'develop a nuanced understanding of the links between tourism and poverty reduction: tourism is neither a panacea nor the root of all problems for developing countries' (Scheyvens, 2011, p. 43).

In that respect, researchers need to develop a holistic picture of the 'multi-layered and intricate web of structures, agents and interactions that interweaves external conditions with local ones in both cooperative as well as competitive ways' (Teo, 2003:460, as cited in Scheyvens, 2011:42) instead of simply measuring tourism's impacts.

As part of the ongoing debate over the complex relationships between economic growth and development, and how these are transmitted to households, the World Bank, UNDP, and other agencies have been investigating the inclusive growth paradigm since around 2008 (Harrison, 2004; Scheyvens, 2011). Within the developing regions, it has been adopted by regional development banks such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank (De Haan and Thorat, 2013), large economies (Kannan, 2014), and, more recently, small economies such as SIDS (Small Island Developing States) to achieve broad-based, equitable growth and development (Tandon, 2012). Initially, the potential of tourism to reduce poverty and inequality was acknowledged under the neoliberal paradigm, which promoted tourism as a tool for development (Sharpley and Telfer, 2015).

However, from the 1970s onwards, this tourism potential has been questioned, following a critical approach based on Frank's (1969) dependency theory due to existing structural inequalities in the international tourism industry (Schilcher, 2007).

To overcome the existing inequalities in the international mainstream tourism industry, small-scale tourism development has been advocated as an alternative to large-scale tourism (Harrison, 2008; Knight et al., 2017). The following section of this chapter will discuss community-based tourism (CBT), with local people being directly involved in tourism planning and decision-making and having direct control over development and benefits, which was promoted in the 1990s (Sebele, 2010; Nair and Hamzah, 2015)

4.4.2 Community-Based Tourism

There is ample literature on Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in many countries (López-Guzmán et al., 2013). CBT as a concept traces its roots to an alternative development approach. In general, CBT is related to emphasising the local community's role and the tourism industry's benefits (Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2018). Community-based tourism (CBT) is promoted as a strategy to foster community development in developing countries, with various examples in different parts of the world (Baktygulov and Raeva, 2010). According to Gorica and Paloka (2016:3), CBT should be community-led and central to the development of the tourism process (Mtapuri et al., 2019).

Giampiccoli and Saayman (2016) argued that this encompasses ownership, community capacities, involvement, and the attainment of social justice. CBT is about individual and community or collective development. There appears to be some imbrication between community and collective development. Still, in this study, CBT is defined as collective development – that is, the development of the community members, each according to his capacity and capabilities for the good of the collective (Sen, 2003).

Spencely's (2008:288) definition of CBT is also relevant in this study, as a community-based tourism initiative is a project, program, or collective action undertaken by a group of people within a community that has decided to participate in or develop a small to medium-scale local tourism industry together. Participation is a key concept in CBT development; it is a form of voluntary action in which individuals confront opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship, such as self-governance, response to external decisions that impact one's life, and collaborative work on collective issues. It is difficult to trace a linear evolutionary pattern in the development of CBT models precisely because the reasoning behind their construction is varied, and many issues remain contested. For instance, Ndlovu and Rogerson (2003) considered the issues of ownership and management of CBT ventures to be debatable, reflecting on the ambiguity of whether communities manage or own the ventures, or whether they

are primarily focused on job creation or community participation in decision-making.

Other studies of CBT, for example, Zapata et al., 2011; Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2012), elaborated on CBT in relation to global issues of development, while others, such as Hausler and Strasdas (2003), oscillated towards practical use as usually reflected in CBT manuals (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2016).

Okazaki's (2008) CBT relates to the concept of Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizen participation', where the community integration planning model was used to assess the actual level of participation in a study site. He argues that the model was created to assess the current status of the host in terms of community participation and movement into different stages of tourism development (Mayaka et al., 2012). Given such a context, CBT should not necessarily follow a linear evolutionary pattern but rather be guided and informed by the model's aim and purpose, including the specific issues it seeks to address. Nevertheless, suppose a trend is proposed as a possible general developmental trajectory of CBT models. In that case, it can be said that they have shifted from a radical, complex, and socially oriented perspective where CBT 'primarily utilises marginalised sectors of society to attain social justice and equity' (Jealous, 1998, p. 10) to a more neoliberal, soft and environmentally oriented approach (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Manyara and Jones, 2007).

However, this trend, as with other issues related to CBT models, still needs to be interpreted cautiously, given the plethora of current CBT models. Although CBT should be a fully community-embedded endogenous development process, CBT projects initiated independently by communities are rare, especially in the initial stages (Leksakundilok and Hirsch, 2008; Fernandes, 2011). CBT usually requires external support (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2012), with partners providing marketing and assistance while not sharing ownership of the venture (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2013, p. 12). As such, CBT can be locally or externally initiated (the latter being more likely). While various external entities, including the private sector, NGOs and government, can be the initial facilitators/proposers of a CBT development project (Scheyvens, 2002; Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2013). Other entities, such as the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can also play a role; however, the government should play a central role in CBT development (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2013). Generally, "government is the principal actor in the political process of tourism development" (Nunkoo, 2015, p. 623). According to Briones et al. (2017:52), governments bridge the gap between the private sector and the local community, as they are responsible for promulgating laws that guide the conduct of tourists and hosts within those communities (Mtapuri et al., 2019).

Community-based tourism has been subject to criticism, and some scholars have pointed to a mismatch between theories and practical, positive examples (Scheyvens, 2002; Muckosy and Mitchell, 2008; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009).

Nonetheless, CBT's potential is acknowledged (Moscardo, 2008), and the literature offers positive examples (Lopez-Guzman et al., 2011) with different levels of success in various parts of the world (Nyaupane et al., 2006; Moeurn et al., 2008; Asker et al., 2010; Baktygulov & Raeva, 2010; Mielke, 2012; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014).

CBT offers both opportunities and challenges; if not properly facilitated, it can inflict profound damage, such as benefits going to a small group of people within the community, environmental damage, sex tourism and indigenous people becoming vulnerable instead of serving as a development tool (Khanal & Babar, 2007).

Furthermore, Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) caution that the measurement of success is subjective, controversial and depends largely on one's perspective and expectations. It therefore follows that CBT presents multifaceted and different understandings (Mayaka et al., 2012). Despite these diverse understandings, it remains a widely promoted approach around the world, particularly in developing countries, as a means of both poverty reduction and community development. The next section will discuss a summary of tourism development and poverty alleviation.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to the development of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, as it is becoming increasingly important for employment, poverty alleviation, and competitiveness and productivity in the agricultural sector. The African Union's Agenda 2063, the structural transformation framework for the continent, recognises tourism's potential and integrates it as a critical driver of inclusive growth, job opportunities, and wealth creation through industry and services.

There are no studies previously conducted in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, which focus on sustainable coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development in Rivers State; additionally, there are no studies in the context of West Africa. The current research addressed existing gaps by adopting a social constructivist approach and employing a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design, a method not previously used in studies conducted in the selected case study areas. Most of the earlier studies in these communities are quantitative, while some are qualitative; however, many employ a mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis. Consequently, none of the previous studies on coastal tourism have used a combination of case study and ethnographic research approaches to investigate a phenomenon in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the context of West Africa. Nigeria presents an interesting case study for testing inclusive growth; despite its abundance of crude oil, the country

still has a large, impoverished population. Therefore, tourism can be an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable economic development. Rivers State in Nigeria should utilise its cultural and coastal resources to develop inclusive tourism, thereby reducing poverty in the area.

In summary, the local communities should be involved in the decision-making process through community participation for an empowerment program to succeed and achieve its objective of poverty alleviation. Although this area is endowed with various natural resources, such as crude oil, development efforts should be redirected to other sectors, like tourism, so that all can achieve prosperity in accordance with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and methods, examining in detail how the paradigms helped achieve the research objectives, including information on case study areas, data collection methods, and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

5.0 Introduction

This research was designed to investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development can be used as a tool to alleviate poverty and contribute to community development. The study focuses on the three communities of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria. Rivers State is known for its potential to become the economic power of the Niger Delta through tourism development. However, this opportunity has yet to be fully harnessed as the communities remain over-dependent on petroleum resources for their development.

The methodology used is a mini-ethnographic case study drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation with local stakeholders in the region. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted at beaches, participants' homes, and other public spaces, such as parks, offices, and restaurants. The combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques was used in this study for the recruitment and selection of researcher participants within the case study areas. The primary data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide had considerable and negative impacts on the time spent in the field during data collection, as well as on the number of potential participants who were interested and willing to be

part of the study. Eventually, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 research participants across the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The audio recording of the data collected through interviews was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The next section of this chapter will discuss the research philosophy, methodology, and methods adopted in the current study, which was designed to investigate and explore the potential for developing sustainable coastal tourism in the communities under study.

5.1 Research Philosophy

McKerchar (2008) noted that researchers' philosophical choices reflect their views of reality and how they see the world (ontology), their beliefs on how knowledge is created (epistemology), and how the research can be done (methodology).

According to Crotty (1998), Ontology is the study of being with assumptions about what constitutes reality and the need for the researcher to take a position on their perception of how things are and how things work. Ontology is the nature of the world and what can be known about it. Snape and Spenser (2003) and Ormston et al. (2014) argued that ontology is concerned with beliefs, the kind and nature of reality about the social world and questions whether there is a social reality existing independently from human perception and interpretations (Al-Saadi, 2014).

Cohen et al. (2007) defined epistemology as the individual's assumptions about the specific bases of knowledge, its nature, forms, and how it can be acquired and communicated to others. In addition, Bryman (2008) described epistemology as an issue concerning what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge within a discipline (Al-Saadi, 2014).

However, various philosophical perspectives encourage researchers to investigate phenomena using different approaches. The research methods literature suggests that researchers must make informed decisions about the research methods they will employ in their study. Positivism and interpretivism are the two extreme philosophies that researchers need to explore and understand (Johnson and Clark, 2006; Park and Artino, 2020).

Moreover, the choice of research philosophy significantly impacts both what researchers do and how they understand what they are investigating. Researchers should be able to reflect upon their philosophical choices and defend them in relation to other alternatives that could have been adopted (Johnson and Clarke, 2006).

In addition, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) suggested that it is appropriate for researchers in a particular study to have the assumption that the philosophy they adopted will be consistent with the research objectives rather than the opposite (Saunders et al., 2009).

The following section discusses the two extremes of philosophical perspectives that researchers adopt and justifies the use of either positivism or interpretivism in their studies.

5.1.1 Philosophy of Positivism

This is associated with a set of interrelated variables that define propositions that specify the relationship between different variables used to form hypotheses. Formulated propositions consist of ideas that can be tested for association or causality against empirical evidence using statistical data analysis (Collis and Hussey, 2009; 2013).

The positivist philosophy is related to physical and natural scientists who prefer working with objects and whose research findings are based on general law. Positivism relies on deductive methodological approaches to verify a priori theories that are often stated quantitatively (Park, Konge, and Artino, 2020). This philosophical approach primarily focuses on the functional relationships that can be derived between causal and explanatory factors (independent variables) and outcomes (dependent variables). However, positivist research does not always rely solely on quantitative methods; some studies may use experimentation to examine the effects of an intervention, although qualitative analysis may also be employed within the positivist paradigm (Park et al., 2020). A positivist researcher will ensure that any concept used is operationalised and can be measured by collecting data from a large group of respondents, as the research subject is clearly stated (Saunders et al., 2009).

Proctor (1998) argued that when considering the philosophical approaches for their study, researchers should consider consistency between the aim of the research study, the research questions, the chosen methods, and their philosophy.

The other extreme of the philosophical continuum is interpretivism, which was developed as a critique of positivism but from a subjectivist perspective. It emerged in Europe in the early and mid-twentieth century and emphasises that human beings are different from physical phenomena because they create new, richer understandings and interpretations of our social world and its contexts (Saunders et al., 2016).

5.1.2 Philosophy of Interpretivism

Interpretivism is concerned with humans as social actors and, therefore, lays greater emphasis on creating a borderline to differentiate between people and objects during the process of conducting research (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Schwartz-Shea and Yanov (2012), Interpretivism grew out of the idea that the social world is ontologically different from the natural world and whether the social world requires specific methodological tools to be understood. Carson et al. (2001) noted the interpretivist's position concerning ontology and epistemology; the researchers subscribing to this philosophical perspective believe that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings, which makes it even more challenging to interpret in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2000).

The researcher's primary objective is to acquire knowledge through empathy and understanding of issues from the perspective of those people involved. As such, Interpretivist researchers are not confined to rigid structural frameworks like positivist researchers. Instead, interpretivists adopt more personal and flexible research structures that are receptive to capturing meanings through interaction with participants and making sense of what is perceived as reality from the participants' perspectives (Carson et al., 2001; Black, 2006).

Unlike positivist researchers who start the research with preconceived theories (hypotheses), the interpretive researcher enters the field with some prior insight into the research context but assumes that this is insufficient to develop a fixed research design due to the complex, multiple, and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Kratochwil, 2008; Kivunja, 2017; Kivunja and Kuyini, 2018).

It was further argued that Interpretivist researchers engage with a small proportion of the population sample during primary data collection and process such data over a period (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The interpretivist approach differentiates between social and natural sciences to achieve its desired result: understanding the interpretation of social phenomena.

Human subjective experience is valued by interpretivist researchers, who seek further knowledge through the development of objective science for more clarification (Andrews, 2012). An interpretive philosophical perspective is based on the idea that qualitative research efforts should focus on revealing multiple realities rather than seeking a single objective reality.

Furthermore, Denzin (2010) argued that objective reality can never be fully captured; an in-depth understanding, using multiple validities rather than a single validity, and a commitment to dialogue are sought in any interpretive study.

Therefore, my Ontological view of reality is relative. I believe in a multiple, socially constructed reality that is not constrained by natural laws. This study also seeks to understand the lived experiences of local people in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt (Rivers State), including people involved in the development of tourism in the state. As a result, my philosophical perspectives tend to align more towards constructivism rather than interpretivism.

5.1.3 Philosophy of Constructivism

The constructivist philosophical approach to research is closely related to interpretivism. Schwandt (1994) described interpretivism and constructivism as sensitising concepts that steer researchers towards a particular worldview.

It was further argued that researchers subscribing to either interpretivism or constructivism aim to understand the complex world of lived experiences from the reference frame of those who live in it. As such, both interpretivism and constructivism subscribe to an emic view of the world, which focuses on the insider's views on reality to understand meaning and grasp the actor's interpretation of the situation (Schwandt, 1994; Kratochwil, 2008; Given, 2008).

However, constructivist approaches challenge the assumption that data are objective facts that exist in the world. Thus, to the constructivist, constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind. Young and Colin (2004) reflected on the researchers pursuing a constructivist approach to research as individuals who mentally construct a world of experiences through cognitive processes (Andrews, 2012).

In addition, Berger and Luckman (1991) are concerned with the nature and construction of knowledge with the view that the interaction of individuals within society enables the creation of knowledge, which is central to constructivism.

The constructivist view assumes that knowledge and truth are created and not discovered by the mind and therefore supports the notion that being a realist is not in conflict with being a constructivist (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015). Crabtree and Miller (1999) described the advantages of constructivism as including a close relationship between the researcher and participants to tell their stories.

In addition, Lather (1992) and Robottom and Hart (1993) described the process of telling stories by the participant as the ability to explain their view about reality and thereby put the researcher in a better position to understand the actions of the participant (Baxter and Jack, 2014).

Moreover, Heiner (2002) and Loseke (1999) stated that social problems must be constructed with victims and villains. Loseke (1999) focuses more on social problems, how they were constructed, and by whom, and then examines the construction of victims and villains in tourism (Pernecky, 2012). Constructivism as a theory of knowledge offers a detailed approach to presenting data, and some researchers with constructivist thinking have made significant contributions to tourism studies (Aitchison, 1999, 2007; Crouch, 2000; Henderson, 1994; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000a; Rojek, 1997).

Tourism is concerned with issues regarded as social problems; in constructivist terms, they are social constructions, such as race, gender, poverty, and sustainability. Pernecky (2011) noted that interest in constructivism in tourism research has existed for some time, citing 'Dann and Parinello (2009), who identified three major contributors to constructivist work in tourism, including Said's (1978) text *Orientalism*, Bruner's (1996) ethnographic work, and Hollinshead's (1993) thesis, *The Truth about Texas: A Naturalistic Study of the Construction of Heritage'.*

Pernecky (2011) argued that adopting constructivism in tourism research is needed as it would encourage the researcher to show more significant commitment to reflexivity with the ability to conduct studies based on solid evidence and a new range of data collection sources, including visual materials. Typical examples include studies conducted by Li et al. (2010) on international tourists' experiences, Weaver's (2009) study based on graduates' views of the quality of jobs in tourism, and Keiti et al. (2008) study on the aspirations of the Kenyan poor for tourism development (Botterill and Platenkamp, 2012).

Constructivism has been used in tourism in the past as a philosophical perspective, for example, by Uriely and Belhassen (2006) in their study on how social and cultural frameworks of understanding influence people's assessment of risk. Constructivism has also been employed in tourism research as a methodological approach, as seen in Ryan and Gu's (2010) study on stakeholder perspectives in the Buddhist festival in China (Pernecky, 2012).

In conclusion, this research supports Loseke's (1999) view that a majority of people within the community of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt can be seen as "victims." These people are living in poverty, with the majority earning their livelihood from traditional fishing and tiny plots of land for farming. The operations of some multinational corporations, such as Shell and Mobil, in Rivers State are regarded as one of the most prominent environmental villains, and the local communities are the

victims. Whereas the potential for tourism to alleviate poverty is not being fully exploited, and the revenue from petroleum exploration has not contributed significantly to the development of the communities or the state. The following sections discuss the methodological approaches from qualitative research, ethnography and case study.

5.2 Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology and methods for this current study. It will examine in detail how the paradigms will be used to answer the research questions and thoroughly investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development will contribute to community development. The present study will focus on sustainable coastal tourism as a vehicle for community development, creating jobs to increase prosperity and alleviate the economic suffering of the local communities without compromising on the environment.

The research methodology for this study is divided into two parts: the research methodology and the research methods. The first part will explore the theoretical elements of the research methodology. This section will examine the study's philosophical perspective in detail and its contribution to answering the research questions on how sustainable coastal tourism development can contribute to community development. Moreover, this section begins with a presentation and discussion of methodological approaches that influenced data gathering, including qualitative methodology, ethnography, and case study research.

This study focuses on using sustainable coastal tourism as a vehicle for community development and poverty alleviation among local communities in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, Rivers State, in Nigeria. Remenyi et al. (1998) defined research methodology as a procedural framework for conducting a research study, approaching problems, and seeking answers (Taylor et al., 2015). Furthermore, Somekh and Lewin (2005) referred to "methodology" as a collection of methods or rules that govern how a specific research plan is implemented, with principles, theories, and values that underpinned a particular approach to the study (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

In addition, Walters (2006) also shared the views of Remenyi et al. (1998), who argue that methodology is the frame of reference that will determine the paradigm to which the research theoretical perspective will be developed. The method can be defined as systematic procedures or tools the researcher uses in data collection and analysis (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

5.2.1 Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach is often the methodological preference for researchers using interpretivism and constructivist philosophical perspectives (Saunders et al., 2009; Tuli, 2010). Unlike quantitative research, which often proceeds deductively from a general premise or theory to specific examples, qualitative research proceeds inductively,

moving from a series of specific observations to a general conclusion (DeCarlo, 2018).

Researchers who adopt the qualitative methodology view the world as composed of active individuals who regularly forge purposeful lines of action to navigate their everyday lives (Baxter and Eyles, 2004; Creswell, 2013). People in their everyday lives take note of the things around them, process and assign meaning to them, and then plan a course of action. This notion was supported by Denscombe (2010), who argued that because meaning comes from within and influences how individuals view the world, their behaviour cannot be understood by seeking external forces and causes.

However, people are not just passive responders to actions around them; instead, they constantly observe, interpret, and assign meaning to these actions, and respond accordingly. Therefore, to understand people's behaviour, researchers need to use methodologies that allow them to interact with individuals and hear their stories from the source.

Moreover, qualitative research allows researchers to uncover meaningful objects in people's worlds and understand those objects from the perspective of the people being studied (Morrison et al., 2002; Capaldi and Proctor, 2005; Aspers and Corte, 2019). Furthermore, Capaldi and Proctor (2005) also argued that in qualitative methodology, researchers assume that due to our limited perception and individual experiences, our understanding of social reality is necessarily subjective.

As such, qualitative researchers distance themselves from the realist worldview, which assumes an objective and measurable reality. Instead, Capaldi and Proctor (2005) and Morrison et al. (2002) argue that reality is a social construction, given meaning through intersubjective interactions and agreements, and that the contours of reality are shaped through consensus among individuals in society. Therefore, it is crucial for qualitative researchers to understand how individuals and groups subjectively understand their experiences.

Qualitative research is used for addressing "how" questions rather than "how many," for understanding real life from the perspective of those being studied, and for examining and articulating processes. Just as quantitative research encompasses many ways to collect data (e.g., survey and laboratory studies) and to analyse data (e.g., structural equation modelling, multiple regression, and factor analyses), so does qualitative research; for example, an individual may choose to collect data using a case study or an ethnographic method.

Qualitative research holds great potential for studying tourism issues because it enables researchers to be closely involved with research participants. This helps researchers better understand social processes, human motivations, and the contexts in which they are situated. Such concerns resonate well with my current interest in coastal tourism and the importance of understanding the subjective viewpoints of various key stakeholders to develop effective and collaborative dialogue.

Several research traditions are associated with qualitative research within the research methods literature, including ethnography, phenomenology, action research, grounded theory, and case study research (Padgett, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2016).

A qualitative mode of inquiry is suitable for this research as it allows the researcher to effectively explore the meaning, interpretations, and individual experiences of the stakeholders in coastal tourism in Rivers State. This study will use ethnography and case study research approaches to investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development will contribute to poverty alleviation and community development. The following sections will discuss the ethnography and case study research approaches, respectively.

5.2.2 Ethnography

This section introduces ethnography as a specific qualitative research methodological approach, which this study will adopt to understand coastal tourism and the perspectives of various stakeholders in Rivers State. Ethnography is a popular and preferred research strategy in tourism, especially among researchers investigating tourists' behaviours from a cultural perspective (Leavy, 2014; Altinay et al., 2015; Hammersley et al., 2019; Martyn and Atkinson, 2019). From a theoretical perspective, the key feature of ethnography is that it explores the entire culture present in a particular environment or associated with a specific

group of people over an extended period (Pope and Mays, 2020; Bayeck, 2023).

More so, Malinowski is regarded as an advocate of the researcher spending more time in the field during data collection. At the same time, his contemporaries depend more on local people who are known as the key informants (Khoo et al., 2012). Individual researchers follow different paths in their studies (Hammersley et al., 2019; Martyn and Atkinson, 2019). Other authors (Hine 2000, 2015; Pink et al., 2010; Horst and Miller 2012, 2020; Lupton 2014) have pointed to challenging cases of virtual and digital ethnography, where data collection may be restricted to only what is available online or through other digital devices (Hammersley et al., 2019).

The term "Ethnography" describes the process of developing an in-depth description of a group. The researcher becomes 'immersed' in the group's culture through observation and other means of data collection (Mann and MacLeod, 2015). In addition, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) also emphasise the need for researchers to actively participate in various levels of cultural activities, recording and reflecting on their daily encounters and experiences. It was further argued that to understand any group's culture and activities, the researcher needs to learn from them by studying their behaviour and questioning the importance and meaning of their actions and words (Jaimangal-Jones, 2013).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) stated that ethnography is a research methodology with a strong foundation in empiricism and naturalism; collectively, these approaches emphasise data collection in naturalistic social settings. Like other forms of qualitative research, ethnography differs from positivistic inquiry, as ethnographers neither hypothesise about their research nor does the ethnographic method set out to test hypotheses. Instead, ethnographic research is inherently exploratory. This approach means that the ethnographer goes into the field to explore a cultural group and specific social interactions (Reeves et al., 2013).

Therefore, the research questions are not necessarily specified at the beginning of this endeavour; instead, this approach facilitates an inductive and interactive approach, whereby a thick description leads to the development of research questions as the social phenomenon is being studied. However, the ethnographic researcher must go through the " Immersion " process. According to Fetterman (2010), this approach enables the researcher to account for people’s experiences and tell their stories in their own words, providing a better understanding and interpretation of the participants' behaviours and culture (Merriam and Grenier, 2019). This process creates direct access for the researcher to gain significant knowledge about the participants' daily lives through observation and living with them in the same environment. It also leads to the establishment of prolonged contact with the people or group of people being studied (Pope and Mays, 2020).

According to Davies (1999), ethnographic research not only produces knowledge about the research participant but is also used by the researcher to gain better insight into themselves and the ability to understand their relationship with others (Wijngaarden, 2017).

Most importantly, ethnography is about understanding how people live in a symbolic world, see things from other perspectives, and give meaningful interpretations to make sense of daily experiences (Pope and Mays, 2020). According to Angrosino (2007), ethnography is concerned with the predictable patterns of human lived experiences through careful observation and participation in the lives of those under study; it also aims to capture the behaviours and culture within a specific environment (Sangasubana, 2011).

Rivoal and Salazar (2013) further argued that, irrespective of the theory adopted, the ethnographic study should involve extensive fieldwork by the researcher to familiarise themselves with the group through Immersion on-site and participant observation, which is used as the primary data collection method (Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

Moreover, Ervin (2000) also reported that there is no fixed structure or procedure to follow when conducting an ethnographic study; however, the researcher may adopt the use of multiple data collection approaches, one of which would necessarily be fieldwork and observation (Jaimangal-Jones, 2013; Mann and Macleod, 2015).

Other sources that will enable the participant to express their personal feelings or ideas may include field notes, formal and informal interviews, policy documents, records, journals, memos, and artefacts, which also constitute the data set, along with a researcher's diaries of daily happenings, impressions, or insights about those events (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015; Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

It is argued that ethnography, as a research approach, lays down the procedural rules for studying people in naturally occurring settings, or 'fields', by means that capture their social meanings and ordinary activities (Brewer, 2000). While these procedural rules or methods are rooted in different methodological frameworks, methodological differences do not alter the basic practice of ethnography as a method. What differs between these methodological positions is the status of ethnography's representations in the field and the legitimacy of the criteria to evaluate them, not the practice of the method.

The current study employs an ethnographic and case study research approach, which will be discussed in the next section. A case study enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomenon within the participants' natural environment, using Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA, and the capital city of Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA, all in Rivers State, Nigeria, as the case study area.

5.2.3 Case Study

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), the case study approach to research is functional when exploring a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. It ensures that the issues are explored using multiple lenses, allowing for a variety of the phenomenon's facets to be revealed and understood. Several definitions and descriptions of case studies are presented by several authors across the literature.

However, the most common are those presented by Stake (1995), Merriam (2009), and Yin (2014). Stake's (1995) view of case studies emphasises rigour in the processes and maintains a focus on what is studied (the case) rather than how it is studied (the method). For Stake (1995: xi), case study research is 'the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances' (Yazan, 2015).

Merriam (2009) defines a case study as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system that focuses on a particular thing and argues that the product of an investigation should be descriptive and heuristic in nature. Despite the definitions and opinions of Stake (1995) and Merriam (2009), Yin (2014) focused on the scope, process, and methodological characteristics of the case study research, emphasising the nature of inquiry as empirical and the importance of context to the case (Yazan, 2015).

Moreover, Yin (2018) defined a case study as an empirical inquiry into a phenomenon within its real-life context. He argues that the case study research strategy is useful for studying contemporary phenomena, particularly when the study aims to answer the 'how' and 'why' questions. A case study is a research approach used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life setting (Crowe et al., 2011). It is an established research design that is used extensively in various disciplines, including the social sciences and tourism (Beeton, 2005; Xiao and Smith, 2006; Fefer et al., 2018).

Crowe et al. (2011) noted that the case study approach to research is useful when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest in its natural, real-life context. As a result, the case study approach is suitable for this study, which aims to investigate the potential of sustainable coastal tourism development by interacting with local stakeholders in their natural settings in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The next section of this thesis will discuss the three case study areas visited by the researcher during the fieldwork for data collection.

5.3 Study Sites

The three study locations used in this research were selected from three local government areas (LGAs) in Rivers State. The selected case study areas are Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Taro LGA and the capital city of Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA,

respectively. The selection process was based on coastal tourism potential, ease of access, and proximity to the field, using convenience sampling (Chapter 5.4.1). The field trip to the case study areas allows the researcher to have direct face-to-face interaction, obtain raw data from participants in their natural settings, and gain a better understanding of the issues from their perspective.

5.3.1 Study Site 1 - Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA

This study site is located in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, with its headquarters in Ngo Town. The area covers more than 233km and has a population of over 311,500, as of the last census conducted in 2006 (Peterside, 2018). Most parts of the road from Port Harcourt were under reconstruction at the time of the researcher's visit to the case study area of Andoni.

Furthermore, as the journey to Andoni progressed, we passed through Akpaja road to Eleme junction and other neighbouring communities. When I arrived at the Ogoni Land, the first thing that came to mind was Ken Saro-Wiwa and the “Ogoni 9”. These are the group of nine activists from the Ogoni region of the Niger Delta who opposed the operations and practices of Royal Dutch Shell, a multinational corporation (Ojaide and Ashuntantang, 2020). I arrived at the Asuk-Ama junction after an almost three-hour drive from Port Harcourt. Moreover, I was escorted to the seaside with my team, and the security guard showed us the area along the road where an elephant was sighted in July 2021.

If not for the presence and timely intervention of my research guide, an indigene of Asuk-Ama village, the military personnel who secured the area would not have granted me access to the Seaside. The road from Asuk -Ama Junction to the seaside was in a state of disrepair, very bad, swampy, and waterlogged.

Several rivers and lakes are along the road; the water is oily and very dark in colour because of oil spillage, which contaminates the water. The people of this community's main occupation is fishing; continuous oil spillage kills the fish, and only a small portion of land is available for farming activities in this area.

There were about four security checkpoints after the Asuk-Ama junction, heavily guarded and less than 200 metres from others leading to the seaside. No tourist will be allowed to access the beach from this point due to the heavy security, and neither will the local people within the community.

Eventually, I met some men who sat under the tent and parked their trucks at the seaside, as the water level was very high after the rainfall. These people were collecting sand used to construct the oil well from the Atlantic Sea, and three canoes were left by the seaside. The sky was blue, widely open to both smoke and flame from gas flaring during petroleum exploration by the multinational corporations. The researcher left Asuk-Ama village and arrived at Ikuru Town about 10 minutes later; there was a community health centre located between Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town,

which serves the two communities. A statue of John Ikuru, the founding father of Ikuru Town, was erected in the middle of the road; it was well crafted with a golden colour.

The Atlantic Beach is about a 10–15-minute drive from Ikuru Town and is currently used annually for community events such as Beach parties organised on the 4th of January every year. Apart from this event and fishing by the local people in this community, no recognised tourist activities are taking place at Atlantic Beach. A jetty in Ikuru Town enabled transportation by canoe from this area to other nearby communities within Andoni and its environs.

5.3.2 Study Site 2 – Abonnema in Akuku Taro LGA

Abonnema town is located in the Kalabari Kingdom; it was discovered by the Elem Kalabari after the expedition by a host of chiefs from the Kalabari town in 1882 (Wikipedia, 2024). Abonnema became a growing and flourishing major seaport in Nigeria during the period of colonial rule, as several companies from Europe operated from this community, for example, the Royal Niger Company, which later became the United Africa Company (Wikipedia, 2024). The journey to Abonnema began in Port Harcourt, passing through Buguma Junction, and continued to Usokun and Degema, where a prison was located along the road. At Abonnema, there was a mini stadium with many restaurants and hotels within the town, an old seaport that was no longer in use, and the headquarters of the Akuku-Toro Local Government Secretariat.

The Researcher left the secretariat and continued the interview in the town before visiting the waterside, the old seaport, which is very deep; the water was polluted with oil spillage, plastic, and human waste. The depth of this water enabled ships to dock at Abonnema before the seaport was closed. Some of the activities at the waterfront include the movement of boats on the water and fishing, while some people are seated very close to the terminal. The people of this community participate in several activities, such as the Go to Niger event, the masquerade festival, and carnival-like events that take place during the Christmas and New Year period.

5.3.3 Study Site 3 - Port Harcourt Tourist Beach

This is an artificial or manmade beach which was created in 1988 along the Kolabi Creek line in Port Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers State. There was a notion that the recreational part of the city is regarded as an unsafe area for visitors because of the activities and high crime rate within the local area. Despite this assertion, it was noted that adequate security and protection were in place around the tourist beach during the researcher's visits. There was a police post before entering the beach area, and a Naval vessel patrolling the beach to control and stop the kidnappers from operating on the waterways. There are groups of people from the community who claim to be members of the management team, and permission to collect data was granted by their leader.

At the Tourist Beach, there was the Wazobia Beach Bar, a cultural arena and playing ground that was regularly used for playing football, hosting parties, and other social events. The Tourist Beach is regarded as a popular destination for tourists to visit whenever they are in Port Harcourt, especially during CARNIRIV, a cultural fiesta organised yearly to watch the boat regatta, which is organised by the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA). However, Ifoko Beach is another destination with potential for coastal tourism development. This beautiful beach was created by nature, not artificially (man-made), unlike the Tourist Beach, which was artificially created in 1988. Port Harcourt Pleasure Park is another popular tourist spot owned by the Rivers State government. It has an artificial lake with paddleboats, which can carry up to five people, including two drivers and three passengers (Wikipedia, 2024). This project was officially opened to the public in 2017 and included a mini-golf course, a climbing tower, various amusement rides, and a playground for children. The next section of this chapter will discuss the research method, based on my research interests, as an ethnographic study, and the limitations associated with data collection methods during preparation for fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 Research Methods

The choice of research method is guided by the researcher's interests and the research questions at hand. This thesis aims to investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation and the empowerment of the local community in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

To achieve this, a range of research methods will be employed, from documentary sources to empirical data collected through a mini-ethnographic case study design. It is crucial to understand the local communities' perceptions of tourism activities, their environmental impact, and the role they play in poverty alleviation. Given my research interests in ethnography, this study used a qualitative research method during the collection of primary data.

Smith (2001) also argued that using qualitative methods to collect data provides a voice for ordinary people, particularly those in deprived communities, to air their views, and this perspective becomes the basis for knowledge production. Indeed, one of the primary objectives of qualitative research is to bring the often-neglected experiences and knowledge of non-dominant groups to the forefront of the academic research agenda. The current research is interested in the views and knowledge of stakeholders, including government agencies, community leaders, youth leaders, women’s groups, and local government representatives.

Therefore, the most appropriate methodology for gathering the knowledge and experiences of local people is ethnographic qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation (Patton, 2015).

However, the researcher was unable to employ participant observation as a data collection tool due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to government-imposed restrictions on visiting public spaces to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus. The primary data for the current study were collected using semi-structured interviews, supported by field notes; adopting a mini ethnographic case study enabled the researcher to spend five weeks in the selected areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt.

The researcher had the privilege of gaining first-hand information on available resources and the residents' perspectives, knowledge and understanding of social problems, such as poverty, and identifying opportunities for tourism to be used as a tool for community development. The next section of this chapter will discuss the research design, which is based on my research interests as an ethnographic study, and the limitations associated with data collection methods during preparation for the fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4.1 Qualitative Research Design

This qualitative research adopted both ethnographic and case study approaches as the scope was changed from ethnographic research to a mini ethnography case study (MECS) design. This study adopted a qualitative research method, specifically a mini-ethnographic case study

research design. Several data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, are developed and used in qualitative research. Some of these methods allow an in-depth understanding of the research question and other issues affecting the phenomenon under investigation in its natural setting.

Qualitative research is adopted by researchers interested in exploring and understanding the meaning that a group of people ascribes to social problems within their own context. This research design enables the production of data that is not quantifiable, using open-ended questions (Creswell, 2014; Asenahabi, 2019).

Moreover, this study was designed to achieve its purpose, create a better understanding, and increase the residents' knowledge about the potential of sustainable coastal tourism development in the communities. This research was designed to provide more insight into the investigation and answer the research questions on stakeholder management, including the opportunities and challenges related to tourism development and poverty alleviation within the local communities. The objectives of this study reflect the statement of problems, which it intends to explore and examine how sustainable coastal tourism development contributes to poverty alleviation and the empowerment of local communities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The researcher's role in this study was crucial, and the study's objectives were considered when designing the research plan and the rationale

behind the chosen research method. It can be concluded that the researcher adopted a research design to provide guidelines to follow in the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation of research findings. Therefore, the discussion in the next section focuses on a mini-ethnographic case study design, which combines ethnography and case study design, and its relevance to the current research.

5.4.2 Mini Ethnography Case Study Design

My study focused on exploring the potential of sustainable coastal tourism development and its contribution to poverty alleviation and community development in key selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. A social constructivist framework underpins this research, and a case study methodology will help capture the phenomenon's interaction within its natural setting (Gaikwad, 2017).

The research design chosen for this study was a mini-ethnographic case study, designed to address the research question and achieve the study's objective. This approach was suitable as it allowed the researchers, with limited time and resources, to explore the social construct of the real-life experiences of the research participants in their own communities. A mini ethnographic case study design is another qualitative research approach that emerged from the combination of ethnography and case study.

It can be described as focused ethnography because it narrowly investigates a specific phenomenon and requires less time to complete the fieldwork (Bayeck, 2023). According to White et al. (2009; Tsang,

2014; Peter, 2015), based on in-depth investigations associated with ethnographic and case studies, both approaches are able to produce rich and extensive descriptive knowledge gained from research participants (Bayeck, 2023).

Dooley et al. (2020) described a mini-ethnographic case study as appropriate for researchers with little time to spend in the field but who want an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bayeck, 2023). The study conducted by Dobbin et al. (2021) was a good example of a mini-ethnographic case study where the research student experience was investigated, and a short time was spent in the field, for instance, two weeks (Bayeck, 2023)

However, based on the combination of ethnography and case study methodologies, the mini-ethnographic case study design was appropriate for observing, investigating, and describing the potential contributions of sustainable coastal tourism development to local communities (Cox et al., 2019). A mini-ethnographic approach is bounded within a case and designed to allow researchers with limited time and resources to understand the culture being studied and conduct rich, in-depth collaborative research (Fusch et al., 2017; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Moreover, White (2009) stated that specific and narrow inquiry uses a mini-ethnographic case study design, and Dooley et al. (2020) also noted that it allows the researcher to understand cultural norms, beliefs, values, and the roles of participants within a particular setting (Dobbins et al.,

2021). The significance of using a mini ethnographic case study methodology for this study lies in its ability to give voice to the residents through active participation in the study, providing meaningful information that helps to investigate their concerns within a short timeframe and with limited resources available to the researcher.

Therefore, the mini-ethnographic case study approach is appropriate to investigate and seek answers to the research questions. This study was designed to provide more insight into the stakeholder activities, opportunities, and challenges of coastal tourism, as well as its contribution to community development. Hence, the next section of the chapter focuses on the position of the researcher during the interaction with participants for the purpose of data collection in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

5.4.3 Positionality of the Researcher

Some researchers (Merriam et al., 2001; Ergun and Erdemir, 2010; Suwankhong and Liamputtong, 2015) have argued that a researcher sharing some characteristics with the participants is not sufficient to make the researcher an insider, as it is significant to know the group through the literature or engage with the group previously in their natural setting (Adeagbo, 2021). According to (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Trowler, 2011; Greene, 2014), positionality is associated with the position of the researcher in the political context of the study and changes in position that may occur during the process of conducting the research (Afolabi,

2021). A researcher can adopt an insider or outsider position at different stages of the study and take up the in-between position depending on the study context.

However, being a researcher in the current study put me in a position that is both an insider and an outsider; this is a flexible role that changes at different stages of the research. The researcher, who stands at a specific period or setting, can change their position from being an insider when the researcher has some similarity with the participants in terms of their cultural values and norms. At the same time, there is a possibility that an outsider may misinterpret the social behaviour and beliefs of the local people (Bayeck, 2022).

For example, the views and interpretations of people experiencing poverty from an African perspective, as insiders, differ from those of outsiders from developed European countries, such as the United Kingdom. My position changed several times during interaction with participants in their natural settings to collect data for the qualitative mini-ethnographic case study and seek answers to research questions on how to achieve the research objectives.

Bourke (2014) described a qualitative researcher as an instrument for data collection, and Britton (2019) also stated that the cultural background, such as gender, education, ethnicity, race and beliefs of the researcher, has a significant impact on the research process (Bayeck, 2022).

Furthermore, the researcher's position also changes from an insider to an outsider during the analysis of data collected, interpretation and reporting of the research findings. For example, my position in this research as an insider was based on my identity as a Nigerian citizen and an African researcher with understanding and knowledge about the interpretation of the social problems relating to poverty alleviation and community development of the local people of the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

This national identity is an essential resource that helped gain access to the fields during data collection, as well as being a student researcher, which gives participants confidence to participate in the study for academic purposes. The reason for choosing a student identity to complement being a Nigerian arose in Ikuru Town, Andoni. When I arrived at Ikuru Town, the youths were gathering nearby, and the women were standing in front of their houses. As I approached ELD-RPT, little attention was given to me, as the participant claimed that I was working for the government and they were not interested in participating in the study.

This led to a situation where one of my research guides, a native of Asuk-Ama, stepped in by speaking her local language (Obolo) to explain the purpose of the research to ELD-RPT. After that, the participant gave her consent to be interviewed and recorded her voice.

The participant ELD-RPT claimed that the people of their community have granted several interviews, as the government always used their people to perform research experiments without any meaningful tourism development in their community, even during the tenure of their own son, Engr Tele Ikuru, who was the deputy governor of Rivers State from 2007 to 2015.

According to Acevedo et al. (2015), it was noted that individual researchers have multiple identities that are fluid and context situated as they inform the positions from which the researcher engages with participants and makes meaning about the world (Bayeck, 2022).

Furthermore, sharing some cultural background as a Nigerian with my research guides during the fieldwork put me in the position of an insider and being an indigene of another ethnic group, as a Yoruba from the Southwest and living in the United Kingdom, shifts my position to become an outsider, thereby experiencing a range of reactions from acceptance to rejection. There is an element of trust in the researcher's personality to become an insider; this encourages participants to be part of the study, but their past experiences with researchers resulted in mistrust, and this is likened to that of the politicians who failed to fulfil their promises after winning an election and changes in political party and government priorities.

In addition, being unable to speak and understand the Obolo language necessitates the use of a research guide as a gatekeeper for acceptance

and interpretation of the local dialect; this put me in the position of an outsider, but the ability to communicate effectively in Pidgin English shifted my position to an insider and direct observation, which enabled me to access some information from the research participants through physical and face to face interactions (Afolabi, 2021; Bayeck, 2022).

Therefore, my position in this qualitative mini-ethnographic case study is not fixed as it fluctuates from one position to another; this can be considered in-between as it continues to change from insider to outsider and vice versa. The discussion in the next section of this chapter explains the researcher's entry into the field to collect primary data from potential participants in the study areas.

5.4.4 Gaining access to the field

To gain access to the field, I needed to create rapport with those regarded as the gatekeepers and research informants. I established contacts at the University of Port Harcourt through a professor and another lecturer, which enabled easy access to the field. However, the professor, a research fellow with many years of experience in tourism studies, helped the researcher establish contacts with officials from the Rivers State government, the Department of Culture and Tourism, and a tourism business operator during the most challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also engaged four students who are indigenous to the communities as research guides to facilitate access and enable the

research participants to have confidence and give their consent to be part of the study.

Assurance was also given to the participant that they were free to request the withdrawal of their consent at any time during and after the interview, should they later decide to do so. Moreover, one of the students, an indigene of Andoni who was recruited as a research guide, contacted the brother who lived in Asuk-Ama about the purpose of the study. He was happy to participate and became our facilitator for conducting the interviews in their village and Ikuru Town. He joined the research team and directed me to potential participant houses, spoke the local dialects to the people, explained the purpose of the research and helped in seeking and distributing the consent forms.

Most of the people contacted within the communities were afraid of being recorded during the interview; some of them claimed that I was an agent working for the government, and they did not want to get into trouble. My facilitator approached these people by speaking their local dialect to explain that the recorded interview would only be used for academic purposes. I gave the participants more assurance on the confidentiality of all the data collected: the participants' identities would not be disclosed to third parties, and the audio-tape recordings of the semi-structured interviews would be deleted five years after the completion of the research. The other challenge faced while on the field collecting data is related to the coronavirus pandemic, as people are afraid of meeting

others from different households. This serves as a precaution against contracting the disease and the government's restrictions aimed at reducing the spread of the virus.

Despite concerns about high-security risks for people visiting communities such as Andoni, Nigerian Army personnel were present to ensure the security of residents and visitors, including the protection of oil companies operating in the area. During the visits to the communities of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, I conducted face-to-face interviews and observed the research participants and their environment to collect primary data from the residents. The discussion in the next section focuses on the methods used by the researcher to enable data collection from the research participants.

5.5 Data Collection Methods

The outcome of most studies often depends on the research instruments used to collect primary data, the interpretation of the data through analysis, and the implementation of the results. This study is underpinned by a qualitative inquiry, with the selection of data collection methods based on the research objectives. However, the nature of the phenomena being investigated, the accessibility of the field, the availability of research participants, the time required, and financial resources are among the most significant factors that helped choose the appropriate data collection method. This research strategy is guided by the aforementioned factors, and most qualitative research methods are

associated with inductive approaches, where the researcher collects data and develops a theory based on the interpretation and analysis of the data (Saunders et al., 2009; Ishola, 2014).

Moreover, the Inductive approach enables the researchers to become more flexible as it allows the use of alternative theories, as it is more efficient when the sample size to be investigated is relatively small (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008). This was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the number of research participants was small; day-to-day activities were reduced, travel restrictions were imposed worldwide, and the amount of time proposed for fieldwork was reduced. The negative impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in a reduction in the amount of time spent in the field during data collection and changed the scope of this study to become a mini ethnographic case study.

During my master's degree programme, I conducted a study using surveys (questionnaires) as a data collection instrument. The same set of questions was used to collect data from many research participants. Despite the benefits associated with these techniques in terms of the cost, ease of arrangement and time taken for each research participant to complete the survey was very short when compared with an interview as it was pre-coded with answers which makes it easy for the respondents to pick their answers from the options given by the researcher and its accuracy cannot be guarantee as it may be subject to the state of the mind of the respondents (Veal, 2006; Denscombe, 2010; Ishola, 2014).

It was discovered from the previous study that the quantitative data collected from the respondents were not reliable. This is because most respondents in the previous study were unable to express their feelings and personal views in their own words. Likewise, as the researcher, it was not possible to ask follow-up questions to cross-check whether the research participants were honest in their choice of answers, and there was no opportunity for the respondents to provide more information and clarify their opinions and personal views in answering the research questions.

As a result of this personal experience, I decided and was encouraged to adopt a qualitative research approach that enables the participants to feel comfortable expressing their personal views and opinions in the way they understand the research questions. As the researcher, this provides opportunities to ask follow-up questions and cross-check their honesty when addressing social problems such as poverty within the research communities. Therefore, the current study is interested in the views and knowledge of the local people about coastal tourism development and its contribution to poverty alleviation and community development.

The research methods adopted in this study include semi-structured interviews and field notes, which were used to collect primary data from the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

The following section of this chapter discusses research sampling methods, which include non-probability sampling methods, such as convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques, adopted in the current study.

5.5.1 Research Sampling Methods

Sampling can be described as the process of selecting research participants from a larger population based on the research criteria. The primary objective of sampling is to obtain a representative sample of a large population or group of people that the researcher intends to investigate (Rahman, 2023).

According to Muzari et al. (2022), sampling is regarded as very significant in qualitative research, as it contributes to the selection of participants who are well-informed and will provide relevant information that helps answer the research questions and achieve the study's objectives. However, the two most used sampling procedures in research are probability sampling and non-probability sampling techniques (Rahman, 2023).

Probability sampling methods are concerned with statistical theory and are related to the normal distribution of events, such as random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling techniques, among others. On the other hand, non-probability sampling methods can be described as a selection procedure that involves the use of the researcher's discretion or judgment when selecting participants for the

study. Examples of non-random sampling are convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, theoretical sampling, and snowball sampling (Denscombe, 2010; Ishola, 2014; Rahman, 2023).

The participants for the current study were selected using non-probability sampling methods, as primary data can be obtained within a short time and requires a smaller financial budget than with probability sampling techniques (Rahman, 2023).

In this study, a combination of convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques was adopted, as they were suitable for the mini-ethnographic case study research conducted in the selected areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. Using convenience sampling allows participants to be easily accessible to the researcher during the data collection process, without requiring the researcher to follow specific patterns or procedures, as is the case with the random sampling technique (Bryman, 2008).

Moreover, purposive sampling involves recruiting participants with specific characteristics and knowledge to gather information about the phenomenon under study (Muzari et al., 2022). According to Jenning (2010), the convenience sampling technique involves participant selection based on their proximity to the researcher and the ease of access to the field (Tshipala et al., 2016; Muzari et al., 2022).

There are twenty-three local government areas in Rivers State; convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the research participants and the three case study areas from three LGAs in the state.

The selected case study areas are Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA, and the city of Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, in Port Harcourt LGA. The research communities were selected due to their proximity to the researcher, which allowed for easy access to the participants needed for data collection, as well as based on security and safety considerations in the field, including the potential for sustainable coastal tourism development in the area.

In addition, the researcher employed a snowball sampling method, where participants were asked to help identify and recommend others, without overlooking any potential participants for the study. Convenience sampling enables the researcher to identify the initial contact associated with the snowball sampling method, as participants were nominating other potential participants with the knowledge and information that would be helpful for the investigation. Moreover, snowball sampling is used when it is difficult to identify participants from the desired population and characteristics; contact is made through whatever access route available to the researcher to reach the first participant, who in turn introduces other participants (Edward and Holland, 2013; Muzari et al., 2022).

Finally, I contacted the initial contact by phone through one of my research guides, an indigene of Asuk-Ama who had become the key informant at Andoni during the fieldwork, and another from Abonnema. The researcher targeted communities with the potential to develop sustainable coastal tourism by utilising available natural resources, such as Atlantic Beach. Still, the residents are experiencing high levels of poverty and a lack of community development. The next section of this thesis will discuss the criteria set by the researcher, which potential interviewees must meet to be eligible to participate in the study.

5.5.2 Interview Participants' Selection Criteria

During the field work at case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt, those people who participated in the study were selected using a set of criteria and meeting specific benchmarks such as being adult participants over 18 years old, indigene or non-indigene with ten years residence in the community, basic knowledge about coastal tourism development, understanding of the research problem, and the willingness to take part in the study. The research participants selected represent different stakeholders identified within the case of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. There are four groups of stakeholders in these communities: the local community, local businesses, the government, and non-government organisations.

However, this study employed multiple sampling techniques, including convenience, purposive and Snowball Sampling, which depend on the research method used for data collection and the target research participants within the population (Denscombe, 2010; Rahman, 2023). The researcher employed convenience and snowball sampling techniques to identify the local community and local businesses, which comprise residents such as farmers, fishermen, youth, and women.

The government officials and NGO representatives were selected for an interview using purposive sampling techniques, which enables the recruitment of research participants from RSTDA and the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, who possess in-depth knowledge of policy and tourism development. However, it is challenging to recruit participants during the researcher's visit to Rivers State for data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

Moreover, I am privileged to have interviewed MIN-RPT, who worked with the Rivers State government, and RS2-RPT, an employee of RSTDA, among others (Appendix E). The privacy and confidentiality of the participants are guaranteed by the researcher through the use of pseudonyms to protect their identities, such as names, addresses and other personal information known only to the researcher (Negrin et al., 2022).

Recruitment of research participants is crucial to this study, as it enables the researcher to investigate and collect in-depth information about the research problem through semi-structured interviews, which are designed to last between 45 minutes and 70 minutes.

In addition, twenty-one interviewees signed the consent form before participating in this study; two participants withdrew their consent, while nineteen research participants completed the interview, granting the researcher permission to audio-record and use the information provided for the study (Storesund and McMurray, 2009; Negrin et al., 2022). The discussion in the following section will focus on the size of the population sample used in the current study and the level at which data saturation was reached.

5.5.3 Sample Size and Data Saturation

The researcher's experience is significant in judging and classifying the quality of data collected in qualitative research (De Gagne and Walter, 2010). In social constructivist studies, knowledge is regarded as partial, intermediate, and dependent on the situations and views of the researcher, as it does not support the idea that qualitative studies should ideally comprise a total amount of facts. There are various ways in which different research approaches frame research questions, select participants, and collect data to achieve the richness and depth of analysis (Malterud et al., 2016).

However, collecting data from a relatively small portion of the population was seen as a weakness by critics of qualitative studies, but the need for in-depth data collection from a small sample is part of the justification for doing so (Mwita, 2022). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the sample size of the study is related to the portion or subset of the population that is required to ensure sufficient information is collected to generalise the research findings (Rahman, 2023).

Furthermore, it can be argued that data saturation was reached far sooner than later in the study, which is bounded in time and space required by a case study design (Fusch, 2013). The sample size for the current mini-ethnographic case study consisted of 21 research participants. The amount of time spent in the field, financial resources available to the researcher, and data saturation were the most significant factors that helped determine the appropriate sample size. According to Bernard (2012), the number of interviews required for qualitative research to reach saturation is a variable that cannot be quantified, but the researcher takes what they can get (Fusch and Ness, 2015).

In addition, Anderson (2010) and Walker (2012) argued that saturation of data collected is attained as soon as the researcher has enough information to replicate the study and when the ability to obtain new information has been reached (Fusch et al., 2017).

According to Guest et al. (2006), who stated that interview questions should be designed to facilitate the request for many participants to be asked the same questions; if not, the researcher's data will not be able to reach saturation as it would be a regularly changing target (Fusch and Ness, 2015). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The non-probability sampling method of convenience sampling and snowball techniques was used to recruit research participants.

Therefore, data collection reached saturation as soon as no new information or themes emerged from the subsequent information received from the research participants. The following section will delve into semi-structured interviews as the appropriate method for data collection during fieldwork at the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

5.5.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are regarded as the most suitable technique in qualitative research for collecting raw data from participants through face-to-face and direct contact with researchers (Yin, 2014). Interviews were conducted using the interview guide, which was designed to contain sets of questions that will enable the researcher to find out and gain an insight into the participant's views, opinions and feelings on particular inquiry, such as poverty alleviation and community development in the study

areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State (Muzari et al., 2022).

To achieve the objectives of this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, which enabled the participants to express their views in a detailed manner, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. This approach also allowed the researchers to ask the participants follow-up questions and probe their previous answers to ensure the accuracy and truthfulness of the information provided (Muzari et al., 2022). According to Mann and Stewart (2000), the semi-structured approach empowers research participants to elaborate on areas important to them, thereby enhancing the researcher's ability to direct the conversation around theoretical themes relevant to the study (Jaimangal-Jone, 2014).

For this qualitative mini-ethnographic case study, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection as the researcher was in the field for a short period because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, an unstructured interview was unsuitable for this current study, as the researcher spent less time in the field and the participants were guided on how much time to spend answering the interview questions (Jamshed, 2014). The interview was designed to last between 45 minutes and 70 minutes; the participants were audio recorded, and the researcher sought consent and permission from the participant before the start of the interview by signing the consent form (Storesund and

McMurray, 2009). The interview technique used in the current study was developed and aligned with the socio-constructivist approach, as this study focuses on social issues such as community development and poverty alleviation in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State (Lauckner et al., 2012). According to Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006), this approach enables researchers to understand other people's knowledge through their interpretation and make sense of their daily interactions (Edward and Holland, 2013).

For five weeks, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the research participants at the beaches, parks, houses, shops, and offices in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The interview schedule was flexible and mainly depended on the participants' availability and willingness to participate in the study. Many people within the community were unwilling to participate and had close contact with others from different households, so that the rapid spreading of the deadly virus could be curtailed.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on data collection. Travel restrictions were imposed, and most staff members from government agencies, such as the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency and the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, were unavailable as their offices were closed to the public.

The other challenges faced during fieldwork interviews with participants were the fear that the researcher was a government agent, and some people were unwilling to participate in the study.

As a result, I employed persuasion and explained the purpose of the study to the participants, with the assistance of my research guides, who are indigenous to the case study areas. I provided more detailed explanations of the study's aims and objectives, and subsequently, some of the potential participants agreed to be interviewed. I started the interview with warm-up questions to familiarise myself with the participants.

Additionally, participants were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time and had the right to decline answering any questions if they felt uncomfortable with the question. I also assured them that their identity and personal details would not be disclosed at any stage of the study, and that the data collected would be kept confidential and deleted five years after the study's completion.

The participants were encouraged to express their opinions and views on social problems, including poverty, barriers, and opportunities associated with coastal tourism development in the selected case study areas. Follow-up questions were asked for clarification and probing of answers to the interview questions to ensure that participants were genuine, gave honest information to the best of their knowledge, and to reduce the level of bias that may arise during the interview.

The researcher also took field notes during the interview sections with participants to support the audio recordings and covered other informal discussions relevant to the study. As a researcher in the field, I had direct, face-to-face contact with the participants, observing and collecting firsthand information. The next section of the thesis focused on analysing qualitative data collected from research participants through audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and field notes, which included other informal interactions.

5.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

The data collected during the fieldwork were audio-recorded with permission from the research participants before the commencement of the interview sessions. This data was analysed by providing more detailed descriptions of the participants' views and opinions on the potential of coastal tourism development and its contribution to poverty alleviation in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

Most interpretive studies, such as constructivism, employ thematic analysis to emphasise social, cultural, and structural contexts that can influence the individual experience, developing knowledge that is socially constructed through the interaction between participants and the researcher (Varpio et al., 2017; Kiger and Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis (TA) is the most appropriate method for analysing the qualitative data collected for this study, enabling the researcher to seek answers to

the research question and achieve the research objectives (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Kiger and Varpio, 2020). According to Braun and Clarke's (2006) assertion, thematic analysis is regarded as a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns that emerge from going back and forth between entire sets of data (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018; Mohajan, 2018; Maher et al., 2018; Christou, 2022).

Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2012) stated that researchers can adopt an inductive or deductive approach to identify themes using thematic analysis. However, A researcher can employ the combination of deductive (top-down) and inductive (bottom-up) approaches, known as hybrid thematic data analysis (Proudfoot, 2023).

A deductive approach is theory-driven; the researcher uses a theoretical framework with open coding to identify themes relevant to the study (Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Byme, 2022). Using theoretical frameworks enables the development of themes that focus more on specific data sets or research questions that interest the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the researchers were able to make informed decisions about theories that could be used to interpret the data after collection, and the theoretical framework for the study was developed during the data analysis process (Varpio et al., 2020).

An inductive approach is data-driven, as it involves in-depth analysis and the generation of codes from the entire dataset. Inductive analysis enables the researcher to derive themes from open-coded and

participants' data, ensuring that the identified themes are more closely linked to the original data collected and reflect the entire dataset (Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Byme, 2022; Proudfoot, 2023).

According to Varpio et al. (2017), themes do not directly or automatically emerge from datasets; themes are constructed by the researcher through analysing, combining, comparing, and graphically mapping how one code is related to another. In addition, themes enable researchers to capture the significance of the phenomenon under investigation in relation to the study's research questions or objectives (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018).

However, the researcher adopts a diverse approach of multiple methods to carry out triangulated analysis, which was achieved through coding and thematic analysis (Varpio et al., 2017; Muzari et al., 2022). According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), coding enables researchers to identify meaningful information from the data that is significant to the research question, allowing for the development of an in-depth understanding of concepts and ideas (Naeem, 2023).

The triangulation of the data collection method involves using multiple data sources, including semi-structured interviews, observation and field notes, which are related to the theory and literature relevant to the study. The purpose of triangulation in constructivism typically focuses on capturing the richness and diversity of perspectives on a phenomenon rather than on specific and valid representations of data (Varpio et al., 2017).

The researcher uses data triangulation to enhance the validity of the methodological approaches adopted in the current study. It enables the researcher to compensate for the weaknesses in one method when collecting data with another (Kakar et al., 2023).

5.6.1 Thematic Analysis

After collection of data at selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria; the researcher listened to the audio recordings of the participant interviews repeatedly to become familiar with the data; this was followed by word for word, accurate and verbatim transcription, which enabled further analysis and reporting of the research findings (Ishak and Bakar, 2012; Naeem et al., 2023).

The researcher began the transcription and cleaning of data collected from the field through semi-structured interviews, it was imported to the qualitative analysis software QSR NVivo 12, which helped to structure and organise the data; while the researcher was responsible for deciding or interpreting what to do with the data (Ishak and Bakar, 2012; Castleberry and Nolen, 2018).

The interview transcripts and field notes from the non-verbal communication of the research participants during fieldwork at the case study areas were analysed using thematic analysis (TA). Therefore, the researcher adopted a combination of both deductive and inductive thematic analysis in the current study by moving forwards and backwards during data analysis, from deductive (top-down) to inductive (bottom-up)

approaches (Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Byme, 2022; Naeem et al., 2023; Proudfoot, 2023).

A constructivist philosophical methodology underpinned the current qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design; this approach is used to explore the social constructs of participants' real-life experiences related to poverty alleviation and community development in their own communities of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt.

In addition, Lin (1998) noted that researchers can select an appropriate method for their study when they understand the philosophical and conceptual knowledge that underpins different types of approaches to thematic analysis, as this ensures the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings (Naeem et al., 2023). For this study, the researcher employed a social constructivist thematic analysis to gain knowledge, understanding and experience from individual participants' perspectives (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The next section discusses six phases of thematic analysis.

5.6.2 Six Stages of Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2020), using thematic analysis involves a six-phase process, with a flexible guideline that is not linear but recursive and time-consuming; the researcher continues to move backwards and forwards from one phase to another throughout the data analysis process (Byme, 2022).

The researcher outlined below the step-by-step process of using thematic analysis following the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Stage 1: Familiarisation with the research data

The researcher began thematic analysis after data collection, repeatedly playing and listening to the audio-tape recordings to understand participant responses and answers to interview questions. This process enabled familiarity with the tape recordings, which in turn facilitated ease and accuracy in transcribing the audio recordings into interview transcripts.

The researcher transcribed all the audio-recorded interviews into British English, as most participants responded to the interview questions by speaking in Pidgin English. The researcher employed both the traditional method of manual transcription and software to ensure that participants' answers to interview questions were accurately translated. This approach was necessary, as most transcribing computer software requires manual support for accurate and effective transcription.

Stage 2: Generating Initial Codes

The answers to the interview questions from the research participants were organised and aligned with the research objectives using a theoretical framework. This enables the researcher to adopt deductive thematic analysis to identify initial codes and generate emerging themes

related to the study or existing literature, without necessarily following a specific theory when analysing the data.

At the same time, after transcribing all 19 interview recordings from audio to text, word for word, verbatim and repeated reading of the transcripts to become familiar with the data, the researcher also used inductive thematic analysis to identify initial codes and generate emerging themes by highlighting in colours and grouping relevant points that the research participants made. Below is an excerpt from a research participant's EKI-RPT transcript that illustrates the step-by-step process of thematic analysis.

> *"Tourism generates income and revenue; the government can also generate revenue from visitors by charging them for tickets to access tourist facilities, such as museums. During the festival period, if you visit the waterside, you will see flying boats on the sea, and people will have to pay to enter the boat, as this creates jobs for the locals and generates income for the community".*

Stage 3: Searching for Themes

The researcher began this phase after relevant data on the interview transcripts had been identified and coded; then the focus shifted from interpreting individual participants' data to identifying more meaningful information in the form of the emerging themes (Byme, 2022). For example, an excerpt from the EKI-RPT transcript is illustrated in the table below: -

Key Themes	*Excerpt from interview transcripts*	Sub-themes
Social economic benefits of Coastal Tourism Development	*Tourism generates income and revenue; the government can also generate revenue from visitors by charging them for tickets to access tourist facilities, such as museums. During the festival period, if you visit the waterside, you will see flying boats on the sea, and people will have to pay to enter the boat, as this creates jobs for the local people and generates income for the community (EKI-RPT).*	Generate Income Generate Revenue Infrastructural facilities Employment Local people

The researcher searched for a combination of codes to form themes and sub-themes using a predetermined or theoretical framework, which also includes searching for overarching ideas from the research participant interview transcripts (Christou, 2022).

The researcher became more engaged and immersed in the participant transcripts while searching for relevant themes in the datasets to provide answers to key questions and meet the research objectives. Therefore, the researcher was unable to guarantee which theme, or sub-themes, would be retained, discarded, or modified until the review phase of the thematic analysis (Kiger and Varpio, 2020).

Stage 4: Reviewing the Themes

During the review of themes, the researcher identified new codes from the participants' interview transcripts, which were allocated to the relevant theme and sub-themes. At this stage, it was decided which themes to retain or modify for final analysis, which sub-themes to discard that have no meaningful impact on the entire dataset, and whether the thematic map accurately represents the entire information provided in the interview transcripts (Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Byme, 2022; Christou, 2022). This stage involved going back and forth, checking the interview transcripts for codes that enabled the researcher to generate themes and sub-themes, which were linked with the theoretical framework and relevant literature from existing studies to facilitate data analysis and reporting of findings.

Stage 5: Defining and Naming Themes

The researcher reviewed the names of emergent themes and selected the data extracts to be included in the final report at this stage, ensuring that the themes were concise and accurate in describing participants' views about coastal tourism development and poverty alleviation in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). In addition, many extracts from the participant interview transcripts were used to generate themes, and an illustrative write-up of the data analysis was supported with existing literature, as presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of the thesis (Byme, 2022).

Stage 6: Producing the Report

This is the final phase of using thematic analysis, which involves writing a report of the findings after data analysis, following the guidelines set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). At this stage, the researcher engaged in storytelling by presenting the findings in a way that ensured the validity of the research process using themes, sub-themes and direct quotations as extracts from the participant interview transcripts (Christou, 2022). The themes were arranged logically, and the researcher used existing literature to justify the selection of a particular theme or quotation (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). Lastly, the findings from the current study, after analysing the data using thematic analysis, were reported in the subsequent three chapters, six, seven, and eight of the thesis. The researcher used the following sections of this chapter to discuss the issues related to the trustworthiness and validity of this study.

5.7 Issues of Trustworthiness and Validity

The nature of qualitative research demands that the researcher ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study's findings. Patton (2014) states that validity and reliability in qualitative research are concerned with understanding the techniques or methods used by the researchers to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the research findings (Kakar et al., 2023).

Reliability and validity concern how researchers persuade their audiences that the research findings are worth paying attention to, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of trustworthiness (Riazi et al., 2023).

In addition, the procedure followed by the researchers will determine the trustworthiness of the research activities and the report of findings from the study (Stahl and King, 2020). The triangulation of the data collection method by using multiple data sources from the semi-structured interview transcripts, participants' observations, reflective journal and field notes is related to the theory and literature relevant to the study on the potential of coastal tourism development and its contribution to poverty alleviation and community development in the case study area of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

The purpose of triangulation in constructivism typically focuses on capturing the richness and diversity of perspectives on a phenomenon rather than on specific and valid representations of data (Varpio et al., 2017). The researcher uses data triangulation to enhance the validity of the methodological approaches adopted in the current study. It enables the researcher to compensate for the weaknesses in one method when collecting data with another (Kakar et al., 2023).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it was suggested that qualitative researchers should use some strategies and techniques to ensure the trustworthiness of their study's results by relying on four criteria:

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017; Stahl and King, 2020; Kakar et al., 2023; Riazi et al., 2023).

The researcher ensures the credibility of the research findings by employing methodological triangulation to validate data collected from multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, field notes, and reflective journals (Riazi et al., 2023). However, triangulation is described as using information from more than one source repeatedly to establish identifiable patterns (Stahl and King, 2020). The field notes were used throughout the research process to identify and establish the relationship between the primary data collected, the theory, and the researcher's interpretation.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility can be operationalised by using formal or informal member checking to test the research findings against participants' interpretations (Nowell et al., 2017). For this study, the researcher conducted informal member checking with participants while collecting data in the field. This involved playing back interview recordings to seek clarity and honesty about the participants' answers and to correct the researcher's bias during data interpretation (Amin et al., 2020; Stahl and King, 2020; Riazi et al., 2023). Moreover, some of the participants were contacted after the data was transcribed through telephone conversations, as the researcher could not spend more time in the field due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by the government to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus.

The researcher was faced with ethical challenges because of time lags between data collection and analysis, and some of the participants were no longer willing to discuss social problems such as poverty and community development (Varpio et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, with the advancement of technology, it has become easier to contact participants to perform member checking through telecommunication services, such as using the telephone without necessarily meeting the participants face-to-face. Dependability is associated with the researchers' ability to ensure the study follows logical procedures, which are traceable and clearly documented for generating and analysing the results (Novell et al., 2017; Riazi et al., 2023). This has the same meaning as reliability, as it provides adequate documentation and explanation of data coding and analysis (Riazi et al., 2023).

The data collection process and procedures for interpretation through analysis are clearly explained and can be followed by other researchers. Transferability is related to qualitative researchers' belief that patterns and descriptions maintained in one study context could be replicated in another (Stahl and King, 2020). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that providing more detailed information and evidence enables the reader to judge the transferability of the findings to other contexts (Riazi et al., 2023). The mini-ethnographic case study combines ethnography and case study approaches; this research followed multiple case studies from

Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The study sought to provide detailed descriptions and in-depth interpretations within its context.

According to Olmos-Vega et al. (2022), researchers can achieve confirmability by employing reflexivity strategies, which can help them disclose and examine their beliefs, judgements, and practices in their role as researchers and how their position might have influenced the research findings (Riazi et al., 2023).

5.8 Issue of Ethical Considerations

This is a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study that involves the researcher interacting with participants in their natural settings in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. During the fieldwork for data collection, the researcher met the participants in their homes, offices, restaurants, beaches and parks. This raised concerns about their privacy and the issue concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated ethical considerations.

However, the ethics procedure in research can be discussed and classified into three different categories; the first procedure involves seeking approval from the relevant ethics committee for permission to undertake research that involves human participation, the second ethics practice is related to day-to-day ethical issues that arise during the period of conducting the study and the third is associated with ethical issues or challenges the researcher encounters in the field during the data

collection and the questions of how to reacts to circumstances that may arise without harming the research participants (Khoo-Lattimore, 2018).

As the researcher, before embarking on fieldwork for data collection in Nigeria, which was located outside the United Kingdom, the first step in preparation for data collection was to apply to and request approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of Sunderland. The application was submitted on September 19, 2021, and approved on October 5, 2021.

The research participants are protected by administering a consent form with full disclosure of the purpose of the study, ensuring privacy and confidentiality of the information provided by the vulnerable population (Kendall and Halliday, 2014; Yin, 2014).

The consent form is used to seek the participant's permission to participate in the study and ensure the protection of their right to withdraw their consent at any time if necessary. The researcher must ensure that no harm was caused to the participants and other residents in the areas and that they were impartially selected from the group to gain equitable representation (Hariss and Atkinson, 2013; Peter, 2015).

The participants were informed of the study's purpose and their roles in it; their names, addresses, and identities would not be disclosed at any stage of the study. The researcher ensured that no other person had access to the audio recordings of the interviews, which would be deleted five years after the data collection date.

The electronic data, which consists of audio recordings and interview transcripts, was password-protected and known only by the researcher. The next chapter presents the findings of the thesis based on Research Objective One, which relates to stakeholder management and community participation in tourism within the selected case study areas in Rivers State.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The objectives of the research methodology and methods chapter are to review and evaluate the methodological and theoretical approaches applied to this study. After conducting the literature reviews, the researcher adopts a socio-constructivist approach to interpret the mini-ethnographic case study, utilising qualitative methods to gather rich data and gain an in-depth understanding of poverty and community development in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The researcher used convenience and snowball sampling techniques to recruit research participants, and the primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation during the fieldwork. After transcription of the audio recording of the interview, the data were imported into NVivo QSR 12 software, which is very useful for organising and preparing large amounts of data for analysis. The issues of validity and trustworthiness were discussed in this chapter, and more importantly, ethical considerations were taken into account when selecting the research participants,

including the protection of their rights to privacy and confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw their consent at any stage of the study. The data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, and the research findings are presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, respectively. The next chapter presents the findings of the thesis based on Research Objective One, which relates to stakeholder management and community participation in tourism within the selected case study areas in Rivers State.

CHAPTER SIX

THESIS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 1

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM

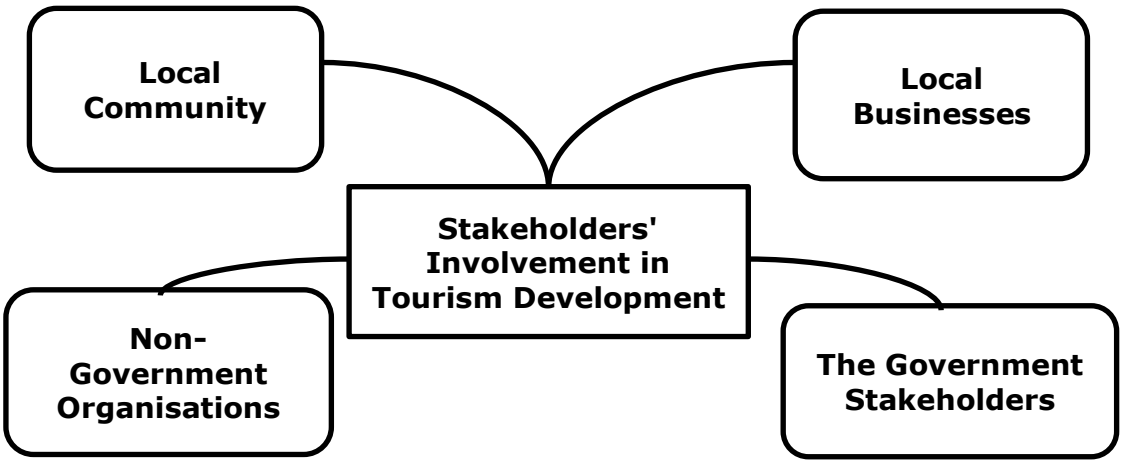
6.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt after carefully analysing data collected from the fieldwork. The first section of this chapter presents the results of the relationship (perception) between different stakeholders responsible for tourism development. The findings reported in this chapter are not only relevant but also crucial to Objective 1 of this study, which focuses on investigating the role and ability of stakeholders to manage sustainable coastal tourism development in Rivers State. However, the second section offers insight into community perceptions and the obstacles faced by local people in participating in tourism development projects. As a result, the research community cannot harness the potential of tourism and enjoy the socio-economic benefits that will improve their livelihood through strategies that help reduce poverty within the community.

This study recognises the key stakeholders, including local residents, businesses, the government, and non-governmental organisations, with a vested interest in tourism development projects within the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The interests of various stakeholders within the community need to be protected, and the potential impacts of coastal tourism development

should be critically evaluated during the planning stage, as this will help to reduce the level of dissatisfaction among the stakeholders.

6.1 Stakeholders' Involvement in Tourism Development



Stakeholder involvement is related to the recognition of the significance of key individuals, groups, or organisations with an interest in developmental projects, such as coastal tourism (Lazzi et al., 2020). The last pillar of sustainable tourism development is socio-cultural development, which implies that for any form of development to happen, all the key stakeholders should be informed participants (Poudel et al., 2014).

However, Stakeholders are defined by Freeman (1984: 46) as groups or individuals affected by the activities or achievements of an organisation's objectives. According to Bryd (2007), stakeholder theory is related to the assumption that the voices of all the groups or individuals that could affect or be affected by the development activities should be involved in the decision-making process, regardless of their interest or power in the activities.

However, Clarkson (1995) categorised stakeholders into two groups, namely primary and secondary stakeholders, where primary stakeholders are classified as the groups or individuals whose participation is vital to the survival of the organisation. In contrast, secondary stakeholders are those whose participation is not essential to the organisation's survival, although they may be affected by or have an impact on the organisation's activities.

Although Freeman’s (1984) definition of stakeholders and most subsequent discussions focus more on business organisations, it still applies to tourism planning and development. Sauter and Leisen (1999) argued that the main tenets of the stakeholder theory apply to tourism planning and development, where the voices of all parties with an interest or stake in tourism development should be heard. Therefore, sustainable tourism development requires stakeholders' support and participants' involvement in every step of the development process (Bryd et al., 2009; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Waligo et al., 2015).

Previous research on stakeholders in tourism has indicated that stakeholders are diverse, including residents of the host community, businesses, government bodies, and tourists (Bryd, 2007; Poudel et al., 2014). According to Freeman (1984), the core argument of stakeholder theory is the understanding of the relationships among the groups or individuals that are affected by or affected by the organisation's activities.

In tourism, the relationship among primary stakeholders is complex and dynamic, and their interests and roles are site-specific, interchanging with time and leadership as well as the availability of resources (Sautter and Leisen, 1999; Bryd, 2008; Todd et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory has been widely used in tourism planning and development to identify the primary stakeholders who are key to tourism development and their interests (Todd et al., 2017).

In the context of sustainable coastal tourism development, various studies have adopted the stakeholder approach (Esteve-Perez and Garcia-Sanchez, 2016; Brandao et al., 2019; James et al., 2020; Olsen et al., 2020; Dimitrovski, 2021)

The researcher conducted a stakeholder analysis to identify individuals, groups, or organisations with a vested interest in coastal tourism development in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria, before embarking on the fieldwork to collect data. During the fieldwork, the researcher spoke with residents, religious leaders, and officials from the Rivers State Tourism Development Authority, and the conversations were informal; however, they generated rich data on stakeholders.

While analysing the data collected, the emerging information in the study enables the researcher to identify the key stakeholders, which consist of the local community, tourism-related businesses, government agencies and NGOs.

It helps to understand further how they may be affected by the impact of coastal tourism development in the communities. In this study, the people or residents of the selected case study areas are regarded as the local community, which was further divided into farmers, fishermen, youths and local businesses. Another group of key stakeholders identified in this study was the government and non-governmental agencies, which were further broken down to include the Rivers State government and its agencies responsible for tourism development.

The following section will discuss the local community, comprising farmers, fishermen, youths, and local businesses, who are key stakeholders in the development of coastal tourism in the three local government areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Nigeria.

6.1.1 The Local Community

Community is a contested concept in the literature; some scholars view community as a social and relational entity (Flora et al., 2016). Others have studied it as a collective collection (Chiarenza, 2014), while some scholars have viewed the community as a symbolic and socially constructed idea (Cohen, 2001).

However, this study views the community from a geographical perspective based on Scherzer et al. (2020: 154) definition of a community as a group of people residing in a specific geographical area (in this study, the geographical area includes the three local government

areas of Andoni LGA, Akuku Toru LGA and Port Harcourt LGA in Rivers State) sharing a set of norms and values, regularly have face-to-face interactions and have collective action to address common problems to achieve common goals.

The term' local community' in this research refers to the local people who are the hosts living in specific tourist destinations, specifically indigenes or residents who are familiar with the culture and traditions of the study area. It is crucial to understand the attitudes and perceptions of the local people and their contributions to exploring the potential of sustainable coastal tourism development.

6.1.1.1 The Farmers

Farming and fishing are the main activities in Andoni and Abonnema, whereas Port Harcourt is the industrial area where most economic activities occur. In the conversations with the village chiefs, the farmers were identified as key stakeholders in tourism development. For instance, one of the residents of Port Harcourt, whom RSTDA employs, RS1-RPT, commented that:

> *"The people here are part and parcel of tourism development; whatever tourism development you introduce, the farmers and the fishermen will be affected. The plan is to encourage the farmers and fishermen to participate in tourism development; they can sell their products to tourism businesses. We can also start fishing tourism so that the visitors we receive can participate in fishing".*

Including the farmers among the key stakeholders is unsurprising as farming is a crucial activity, particularly in the Andoni Local Government Area. The Farmers are mostly older men residing in Andoni and Abonnema. They mostly own small farms; their lands have grown smaller as they have had to redistribute some of their land to their children. Therefore, farmers faced the challenges of a small portion of land available for cultivation and growing of farm products, including the negative effects of environmental hazards such as oil pollution through spillage on soil and water.

Their main occupation is Agriculture, though most of them focus only on farming for home consumption and selling the surplus to the local markets. A few of them practice farming and keep livestock on their land. This group of people are becoming the minority within the study area, as most of the community is urbanising and expanding to the inner areas of Rivers State.

One of the village chiefs in Andoni stresses the role of the farmers in tourism development in Rivers State. According to CAN-RPT, which observed that:

> *"Tourism development will benefit the community, especially the farmers. They will sell their food to the restaurants and earn an income, encouraging them to grow some of the food crops the local residents and visitors need, such as yams, carrots and broccoli".*

The role of farmers in tourism development is well recognised in the literature. For instance, Torres and Momsen (2004) argued that well-planned tourism can galvanise local farming by offering opportunities for backward linkages where local farmers can supply food to tourism establishments.

Accordingly, Ruegg (2009) observed that strengthening the linkages between farming and tourism is vital to creating a symbiosis rather than conflicts for land between farmers and tourism. There are opportunities to stimulate agricultural growth through partnerships between farmers and businesses to supply food for tourists' needs in their accommodations, such as lodging and hotels (Siagian et al., 2023).

According to Rogerson (2012), the relationship between farming and tourism is not well understood in many destinations in developing countries such as Nigeria. However, communities that engage in farming can develop their skills without changing their livelihoods if tourism businesses become the suppliers of food products (Bengesi and Abdalla, 2018; Siagian et al., 2023).

Furthermore, a study by Welteji and Zerihun (2018) in Ethiopia observed that, despite the numerous benefits attributed to the linkage of tourism and farming, as well as the localisation of food production at a destination, small farmers do not benefit significantly due to the non-commercial nature of their farming practices. It is the large commercial farmers who usually benefit from this tourism–farming linkage.

The role of the farmers in this study is minimal, as few of them claimed to understand the meaning of tourism and what it could contribute to their livelihood. However, a farmer in Abonnema claimed to sell his farm products to local restaurants and food kiosks in the community. For instance, according to the comments of SOY-RPT, a resident of Abonnema and a farmer:

> *"I have a market for my products; I supply yams and pumpkins to the restaurants and kiosks in the town. I have even rented more land to expand my farming. I also supply 20 litres of milk to Iyabba Restaurant".*

These comments demonstrate that farmers play a significant role in tourism and confirm the benefits they derive from well-developed tourism. Other farmers, like EKI-RPT, who was also a civil servant with Akuku-Taro LGA, claimed to sell their food products to restaurants, lodging accommodations and local markets.

6.1.1.2 The Fishermen

According to a village chief in Abonnema, CAB-RPT, whose main occupation is fishing, as highlighted the importance of fishermen to tourism, this is another key local stakeholder in the community.

> *"Fishing is a critical economic activity in our area. It is the primary source of employment for young people. They do not like to work in the garden; they run to the sea to become fishermen. I want the*

tourists to come and taste our fish as we have the best fish in the whole of Nigeria".

Within the research area, fishermen enjoy a much better status in the community than farmers because fishing is regarded as one of the principal occupations of the people in the riverine areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and the entire Rivers State. The study area is surrounded by water from the Atlantic Sea, including other rivers and lakes.

This group of stakeholders consists mainly of men, although there are a few older men still in the trade. The group also includes several young men who prefer fishing to farming because they require only a few resources to get started. The local fishermen use locally made wooden canoes or boats for their fishing activities. Most fishermen use ancient and primitive ways to catch fish and other seafood, such as crabs and periwinkle.

The use of locally made artefacts for fishing attracts tourists, as observed and commented on by MIN-RPT, an indigene of Abonnema who worked at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Rivers State, and a civil servant who resides in Port Harcourt.

"In our area, tourism would benefit us a lot, we have a few white people who come here, and they like to fish; we see them fishing with the local fishermen. Some of the fishermen now earn a living by teaching the visitors how to fish. You know we have a lot of fish here, and we would like to get more visitors from abroad".

The views of CAB-RPT and MIN-RPT highlighted the importance of fishing and fishermen in attracting tourists to the community and promoting coastal tourism development. Fishing is not typically associated with tourism, although CAB-RPT and MIN-RPT noted that a few foreign visitors come to fish with the local people. However, the women in the two groups above (Farmers and Fishermen) are responsible for selling seafood, locally made handicrafts, and petty trading, such as selling food and drink, especially during the festive season when demand is relatively high.

The fisheries' contributions to the local community primarily focus on generating employment and ensuring food security (Ten and Sumaila, 2013; Béné et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2021). In addition, the importance of fisheries extends beyond employment and food security, with growing recognition of their contribution to the tourism sector (Pascoe et al., 2023).

Moreover, LaVancy et al. (2020), who studied in Nicaragua, showed that tourism development can sometimes create conflicts between tourism and artisanal fishermen, especially when the fishing area is declared a Marine Protected Area and tourism is prioritised. In the selected case study areas of this research, the government had not yet taken that step at the time of data collection for this study, though, when it is done, it could have a significant impact on the fishermen’s livelihood in the area. Fishing in the selected case study areas is primarily for local consumption, with fishermen supplying fish to local restaurants and markets.

There is an opportunity to develop recreational fishing to support sustainable coastal tourism development in the area. It was argued that recreational fishing is growing into a key tourism activity. It is now a major economic activity of the blue economy, with high participation rates, particularly in coastal and riverine areas, where well-planned recreational fishing can play a significant role in branding and marketing the destination (Hall, 2020).

6.1.1.3 The Youth and Women

This group is presented as a separate category of stakeholders because if tourism is well-planned and developed, it could be one of the key groups to benefit from it. The youth form a large group in the population of the study area. Many of them attained higher education and earned bachelor's degrees. Some participants in this group attended higher education institutions, and some of these young individuals hold degrees in tourism and hospitality but remain unemployed. A University of Port Harcourt professor, PRO-RPT, highlighted the importance of youth in tourism development. He observed that:

> *"Tourism is essential as it provides jobs to our young people. In terms of human resources for tourism, we have plenty of them. We have a university that provides a degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management, and most of the students are local; therefore, we need to develop our tourism sector to generate jobs for these young people. Some of them have to travel to Lagos in search of jobs, but*

if we get more 5-star hotels in Port Harcourt and its environs, we can retain our youth here".

One of the youths in Andoni, UGB-RPT, an indigene of Asuk-Ama who resides in the village, commented that:

"Everyone benefits from tourism in one way or another during the festive season, when carnivals and beach parties are organised, and these events attract tourists and other visitors to our community. The youths also participated in different games, where the winners were given prizes; some people engaged in petty trading by selling recharge cards and transportation businesses using motorcycles to carry people from one location to another".

The youths participated in masquerade performances and carnivals, which attracted indigenes who lived away from home and other visitors across the country. Tourism may provide an avenue to employment for many young people in the area. Due to a lack of employment opportunities, some youth work with parents and relatives in fishing and farming.

In addition, studies conducted by Tambunan et al. (2021) in Indonesia have demonstrated that the youth play a crucial role in the development of cultural tourism in the area, particularly in terms of moral strength, social control, and acting as agents of change (Sormin and Sihombing, 2023).

Another study by Thipsingh (2015) in Laos and Thailand revealed that the youth were key to developing tourism in the study areas in five ways, including searching for and identifying problems, planning, operations, distributing benefits, and evaluating the project.

Rivers State's economy is not creating enough jobs in the area to provide employment opportunities for the youth population; the few existing jobs are highly competitive. However, this study argues that if the youth are given resources such as funds and opportunities, they could be instrumental in developing tourism and creating employment opportunities in the area.

6.1.2 Local Businesses

In Nigeria, just like other developing economies, formal businesses work alongside informal firms. La Porta and Shleifer (2014) noted that the informal sector in developing countries is responsible for half of the economic activity and provides billions of jobs to the local economy. This study also found that the local business economy in the study areas comprised both formal and informal businesses.

The formal sector consisted of businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and retail shops, including supermarkets, mostly located in Port Harcourt. A few tour companies, hotels, and bed and breakfast lodges were also present in Port Harcourt. Lodging accommodations were available in Abonnema, and there was no such place as Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, where Atlantic Beach was located.

However, most of the local businesses in Andoni and Abonnema were involved in informal trading. These included people with street food stalls, hawkers, and women selling food and handicrafts.

The distribution of tourism businesses in the study areas was contrasting; Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, had well-developed tourism businesses such as hotels, lodging, restaurants, and travel and tour operators. In Andoni and Abonnema, most tourism businesses operate in the informal sector, although Abonnema has a few well-established hotels and lodges. In Asuk–Ama and Ikuru Town, near Atlantic Beach in Andoni, accommodations are locally owned by the residents as family homes.

It primarily attracts local residents seeking leisure activities, as there are no hotels or lodges where visitors without local connections can stay. The local restaurants in these two areas served local food, but the services provided were poor when compared to Abonnema and Port Harcourt.

Moreover, one participant, PRO-RPT, observed that these establishments are considered key stakeholders in tourism and that development cannot occur without hospitality services.

> *"RSTDA needs to provide support to local businesses that provide services to tourists. We need to train local restaurant owners on key aspects, such as hygiene and bookkeeping, so that their establishments can serve both local people and tourists. Bookkeeping will help them to run their business profitably, and*

these businesses will also create employment opportunities for the community. Tourism in Rivers State needs these businesses".

Besides hotels and restaurants, other businesses facilitate tourism development, such as providing transportation services within Rivers State and other parts of the country. The importance of the transport sector was highlighted by one of the employees of RSTDA, RS1-RPT, who emphasised:

"The transportation sector in Rivers State contributes more to tourism development as it enables easy access from the centre in Port Harcourt to the local communities through roads and waterways".

The presence of Oil refineries in Port Harcourt encouraged the Nigerian government to develop a good transport sector in Rivers State, connecting it to key cities in Nigeria and beyond the country. Furthermore, the roads in the hinterland are not well developed, and the focus is mainly on Port Harcourt. This was a big concern among the participants. For instance, one of the participants, FAV-RPT, from Ikuru Town in Andoni commented on the road. She said that:

"To develop our local businesses here, the government needs to invest in the roads in Rivers State. This will facilitate the movement of tourists from Port Harcourt to Andoni, allowing us to develop other facilities such as hotels for lodging accommodation for foreign tourists".

In the transport sector in the study areas, some of the local people owned canoes/boats used to cross the channels, and others, particularly the young men, owned motorcycles (Bikes), which they used to transport people and deliver goods and services.

6.1.3 Non-Governmental Organisations

The role played by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the development of sustainable tourism is well recognised in the tourism literature (Genç, 2015; Ivanova & Khalifa, 2019). NGOs have become key stakeholders in the promotion of conservation and the development of tourism, particularly in the developing world (Genç, 2015; Romero-Brito et al., 2016; Ivanova and Khalifa, 2019). The NGOs have been instrumental in establishing protected areas and developing sustainable forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, aimed at supporting conservation efforts as well as generating revenue for the local community.

One of the participants, a university professor in Port Harcourt, PRO-RPT, noted the importance of NGOs in the development of tourism in the areas. He observed that:

> *"Tourism can be developed in Rivers State, but we need the support of both local and international NGOs, and we cannot rely on the government alone. So far, the government has taken no action regarding tourism; however, these international NGOs can help, as they did in Lagos and Ibadan. I hear the Americans are working with RSTDA to help them in capacity development, but they also*

need to come down to the local village to mobilise the local people. I know that with their support, we can develop a thriving tourism sector in the state. Look at our neighbour in Cross River; they work with many international organisations, and they have developed into a key destination in the region".

However, whereas the comments are true and relevant, they may require a change in the attitudes of the international NGOs in Rivers State. Although there are a number of NGOs, both international and local, most of them are more focused on conservation issues. For instance, X3M Ideas focus on sensitising people about the impacts of soot from the hydrocarbon industry.

This NGO has also been advocating for the promotion of tourism as an activity to diversify the Rivers State economy. Safe Andoni Forest Elephant Initiative (Safe-i), an indigenous non-governmental organisation, is working in partnership with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) to run a sensitisation awareness campaign among fishermen in the community, aiming to preserve endangered animals and marine species in Andoni Local Government Area.

One research participant, ELD-RPT, an elderly woman at Ikuru Town in Andoni, commented that:

"I do not understand these organisations; the other day, one NGO came to this community when an elephant was sighted in Ikuru Town, maybe from the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP). I do not know what happened to this organisation when they came; they only built a house in the forest, and no other development regarding the preservation of those animals. This NGO was unable to carry on, maybe because of financial constraints or lack of support from the Rivers State government, but this did not help the community at all".

In addition to the local NGOs, there are a number of international NGOs working for conservation and development in Rivers State. For instance, USAID is instrumental in providing education on conservation and tourism development, although this is done through state tourism development agencies, such as the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA).

Some international NGOs in the area engage in humanitarian activities and environmental causes that can impact or influence the outcomes of tourism development within a community. Among the organisation's duties and responsibilities are protecting natural habitats, such as nature and cultural heritage, and conserving forests, Swamps, and the Atlantic Sea. Although international NGOs may be seen as institutions that can assist in tourism development, some participants are unsure whether they can really help.

6.1.4 Government stakeholders

The government's role in the development of tourism is well recognised, particularly in promoting and maintaining tourism in developing countries such as Nigeria. Tourism, as an economic sector, has a diverse range of stakeholders, one of which is the government. It is the government's responsibility to invest in, build, and maintain infrastructure facilities, such as roads and airports, that will help carry out tourism activities successfully. According to Akama (2002), the government has the responsibility to create a conducive environment for tourism in a diverse socio-economic environment.

This can be done by setting policies to ensure that tourism develops in a sustainable way. The government also has the responsibility to coordinate the diverse activities and the different interest groups involved in tourism development. In Nigeria, government involvement in tourism development is done through the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC).

However, in Nigeria, each state has its own government and tourism development agencies. In Rivers State, the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, along with the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA), is responsible for developing tourism in the state. The Rivers State government is responsible for creating an accessible road network to connect the neighbouring communities, as the state is surrounded by water, including the Atlantic Sea and other rivers.

In addition, more investment is needed to improve transportation on the waterways by providing modern boats and ferries to reach the communities in riverine areas. In this study, participants discussed RSTDA more frequently than the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

For instance, one of the research participants, FAV-RPT, stated that:

> *"RSTDA is responsible for developing tourism in the state, but it does not seem to do much. The government, through RSTDA, needs to develop Atlantic Beach to attract tourists to visit this community, create jobs, and become a source of income generation for the people".*

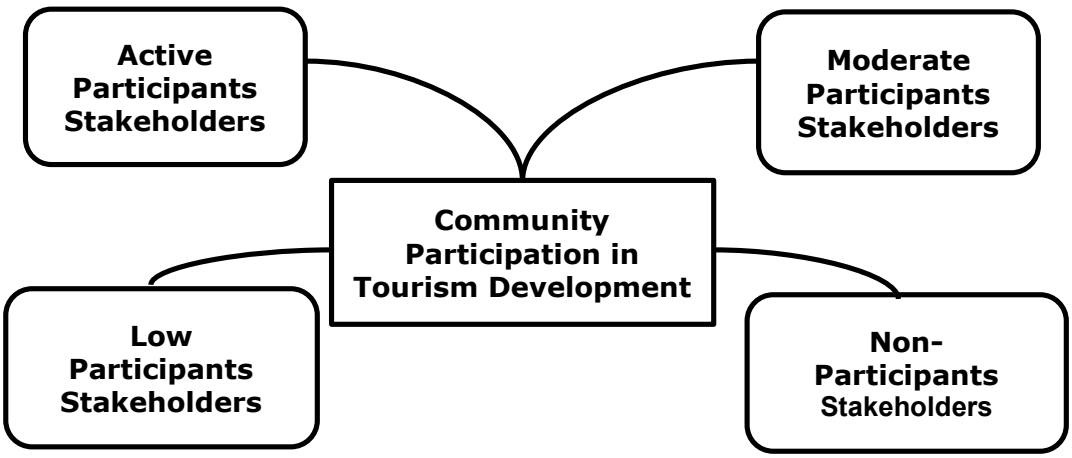
Another participant, CHR-RPT, observed that:

> *"If the RSTDA can join hands and cooperate with local people who are members of the organising committee of cultural events, it will help to take them to another level where they will be regarded as a major tourism activity that will help in community development".*

These comments show the government's importance in tourism development through its tourism agencies. They also highlight people's hope for the RSTDA's ability to facilitate coastal tourism development in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. Tourism has a diverse number of stakeholders who need to come together to develop unique and attractive tourism in the area. As demonstrated above, Rivers State has a number of key stakeholders who must work together to develop sustainable coastal tourism.

However, their role and participation in current tourism in the area need to be analysed. The next section of this chapter focuses on the involvement of stakeholders in tourism development in Rivers State.

6.2 Community Participation in Tourism Development



Several studies have argued that the participation of all the key stakeholders is a key ingredient of sustainable tourism development (Byrd, 2007; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012; Dabphet, 2013). Sustainable tourism development requires key stakeholders to work together to develop a sustainable tourism product at their destination. Naser and Saeideh (2017) argued that the involvement of all key stakeholders in tourism planning and development at a destination will not only attract more tourists to the area but may also result in equitable income distribution and a wealthier generation, which will eventually help reduce poverty. However, some studies have demonstrated that, although participation in tourism is a popular topic, not all key stakeholders have the opportunity to directly or indirectly engage in tourism activities in

their area (Tosun, 2000). Other commentators have argued that due to the different interests of the key stakeholders, it may not be possible to develop tourism products that involve all their interests (Dabphet, 2013).

Tourism in Rivers State is still underdeveloped; however, as this study found out, there are tourism activities taking place in the area, such as cultural tourism, recreational tourism and most importantly the festivals and carnivals, including the CARNIRIV – the Christmas carnival which the organisers claim to be the biggest carnival in Africa, in addition to the CARNIRIV, the local government communities have their local carnivals such as the Andoni Carnival, Buguma Carnival and Isiokpo Carnival.

This study identified the key stakeholders and asked questions about their participation in the current tourism activities in the study area. This section presents the findings on tourism participation in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

Most of the studies on participation in tourism focus on involving stakeholders in the planning and development of tourism. Tourism planning and development in Rivers State is the responsibility of the Rivers State government and its agencies, such as the Rivers State Tourism Development Authority (RSTDA). Rivers State, like other states, the federal government plans top-down; there is little involvement of stakeholders; instead, plans are developed at the top to be implemented at lower levels.

For instance, Ekl–RPT, a research participant from Abonnema, when asked about how the community is involved in the planning of tourism, he replied:

> *"The community does not have a significant role to play in the administration of the beach; it is only when the government needs a particular piece of information about the site (beach) that the government, through the beach management, interacts with the community".*

Another participant from Andoni, PST-RPT, observed that:

> *"The state is not ready to involve the local community, and the government is not willing to develop coastal tourism despite its rich potential".*

The above comments demonstrate the extent to which the local communities in Rivers State participate in tourism planning. It shows that there is little involvement of local people in tourism planning, and their views are not considered to be significant. Whereas the inclusion of all stakeholders is proposed in tourism development literature, there are commentators such as Naranjo (2015) and Gyawali (2017) who stressed that, in cases where the significance of the strategy covers a whole region, top-down planning may be used to develop a vision that the investors and the local communities can adhere to. In this case, local communities can then develop smaller plans that are inclusive at the site level.

In the case of RSTDA, plans are in place, but the local communities lack the necessary resources to implement them. Therefore, the state depends on the leadership of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA) for tourism development in Rivers State. The discussion in this section focuses more on how the stakeholders participate in the tourism activities of Rivers State. Regarding the extent of participation, Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995), and Tosun (2006) provide typologies of community participation ranging from manipulative participation (in which participation is just a 'token' gesture or appeasement) to citizen power (in which people initiate tourism projects by themselves without external intervention).

Tosun follows the approaches of Pretty (1995) and Arnstein (1969) and proposes three levels of differentiated participation, which are applied in the context of tourism regulation.

a) Spontaneous participation in Tosun's model corresponds to degrees of citizen power in Arnstein's typology. This ideal type provides full managerial responsibility and authority to the host community.

b) Induced community participation in tourism development tallies with degrees of citizen tokenism in Arnstein's typology. They have a voice in the tourism development process, but they lack the power to ensure that their views are taken into account by other powerful interest groups. This type is the most common mode found in developing countries, where a host community only endorses decisions regarding tourism development

issues made for them, rather than by them. It is top-down, passive and indirect. Communities' residents may participate in the implementation and sharing of the benefits of tourism, but not in the decision-making process.

c) Coercive participation is manipulated and contrived as a substitute for genuine participation. It represents the lowest rungs of the ladder, encompassing manipulation and therapy in Arnstein's typology (Tosun, 2006). In this rung, as stated by Arnstein, 'the real objective is not to enable people to participate in the tourism development process, but to enable power holders to educate or coerce destination communities to turn away potential and actual threats to the future of tourism development' (Arnstein, 1969), cited in (Tosun, 2006).

Furthermore, whatever the means of assessment, there is now a realisation of the desirability of high levels of participation and power-sharing as meaningful participation in decision-making processes is critical (Reed, 1997). The above models of participation are useful, particularly in situations where tourism development is planned. However, the nature of tourism development in Rivers State is more organic, with less planned tourism development. Therefore, to describe how stakeholders participate in tourism activities in this study, I used terms such as "active participation," referring to stakeholders who are actively involved in tourism activities, and "moderate participation" to include stakeholders who benefit from tourism due to their location.

Additionally, low participants include those whose main livelihood does not depend on tourism, but they still get the trickle-down benefits. Lastly, the non-participants, this group of stakeholders does not benefit at all from tourism, though its activities may affect them negatively.

6.2.1 Active Participants Stakeholders

Active participants can be regarded as organisations and businesses directly involved in tourism activities in the study areas. These stakeholders are mostly located in Port Harcourt due to its position as the capital of Rivers State and the presence of developed infrastructure. This group comprises RSTDA and tourism businesses, including Tour Operators, recreational facilities, and hospitality enterprises. When the participants were asked about the groups' participation in tourism in Rivers State, these were the two groups that were mentioned.

According to PRO-RPT, a participant from Port Harcourt:

> *"There are two groups that are key participants in tourism: the government and the Hotels, as well as the Tour Operators here in Port Harcourt. RSTDA is an automatic participant due to its role in developing and promoting tourism in the state. The tour operators do their job to bring tourists to Port Harcourt, and then the hotels provide accommodation. These are the aristocrats of tourism in Rivers State; the other people just get leftovers. The only way the local people participate in tourism is through the Carnivals, but*

these attract mostly local expatriates, local people from other states and people from the diaspora who come for holidays in December".

Another participant from Port Harcourt and a member of the Port Harcourt Tourist Beach management, CHI-RPT, observed that:

"RSTDA is the main participant in tourism; it organises events like the CARNIRIV, and it also supports the Community Development Committees in organising their carnivals. Other groups are the tourism businesses in Port Harcourt. I see tourists here, but they are just passing through; some stop to take photos and then return to the city. The hotels are also beneficiaries of tourism; you know, without tourists, they have no business. That's it; I do not see any other group benefiting from tourism activities here".

The views above indicate the role of tourism businesses and government agencies in tourism at a destination. The inclusion of RSTDA, tour and travel companies, and hospitality businesses as stakeholders actively participating in tourism in Rivers State is not a surprise.

These stakeholder groups are directly involved in tourism activities by the nature of their business, in the case of RSTDA, as the organisation responsible for promoting tourism in Rivers State and the tourism and hospitality businesses, such as tour operators and Hospitality businesses, by their nature as part of the supply chain in tourism in Rivers State. These two groups of stakeholders perceive that tourism in Rivers State has a major positive impact on the state, and they actively participate in

the decision-making process. It has been noted that differential access to tourism benefits changes power relations (Key and Pillai, 2006).

Those who have a vested interest in tourism activities are more likely to favour the tourist industry. These particular groups in Rivers State are familiar with tourism and aware of its opportunities through their participation in tourism activities, and they would like tourism to continue its growth in the state. They are well placed to benefit from tourism because they possess the most important assets – knowledge, power, capital, and information.

6.2.2 Moderate Participants Stakeholders

The moderate participants can be generalised as the local business community, mostly found in Port Harcourt, Andoni, and Abonnema. Some are engaged in tourism-related businesses such as lodges and restaurants, whilst others are involved in petty trade. This category of participants is found in the main local municipalities of Abonnema and Ngo Town. Although the nature of their trade does not attract much business from tourists, they still earn more income from tourism in the Local Government Areas.

Another moderate participant group consists of larger farmers and fishermen who supply food and fish to hotels and restaurants in Port Harcourt. These stakeholders participate in tourism because of their socio-economic status.

The participants who identified these groups are also the stakeholders who benefit, either directly or indirectly, from tourism. For instance, a farmer in Andoni, PST-RPT, commented:

> *"I do not get involved in tourism directly, but benefit from those places you have mentioned. I have a number of hotels that buy food from my farm. I supply vegetables to Ogeyi (that is, Ogeyi Place Hotel in Port Harcourt) and Landmark hotels. The tourists there eat my vegetables. I also sell yams and Chicken to restaurants in Ngo town. The best time for me is the festive season, during which I sell 1000 chickens during the carnival season. I want more tourists to come to Andoni, then I will expand my farm and sell more chicken".*

PST- RPT is a rich farmer in Andoni, and his comments show that the local people may not directly participate in tourism, but they can still benefit from it. The literature has discussed the relationship between tourism and agriculture, including the linkages where tourism provides a market for farm supplies at the destination (Bowen et al., 1991; Fisher, 2019).

Another group of stakeholders that may be considered moderate participants are the local hospitality businesses. There are no hotels that can accommodate visitors from Western countries in Andoni and Abonemma; tourists use hotels in Port Harcourt. There are no major restaurants, although there are small restaurants serving local foods in Abonnema. The owners of these restaurants are very busy during the

festive season. Additionally, there are no restaurants, lodges, or hotels in Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, the community with the highest potential for coastal tourism development, as the Atlantic Beach is located in this community.

Local residents participate in tourism activities mostly during the festive season when the area hosts several carnivals and festivals. One of the participants, who is a restaurant owner in Abonnema, CHR-RPT, had this to say:

> *"I do participate in tourism here during the festive season. My business starts in October when people start visiting the area; during the carnival, I employ two more people to help in serving. I also have a lady from the village who helps in the cooking. However, the rest of the year, business is slow; I serve the locals, though when we receive visitors from Port Harcourt, sometimes, they do come to my restaurant. I want to get money and build this place into the best restaurant in Abonnema".*

The comments from CHR-RPT highlight how the local businesses, particularly in Andoni and Abonnema, are participating in tourism. Although participation in tourism is seasonal, local business owners seem content with that period when they receive visitors from other states in Nigeria and abroad.

Tourism in Rivers State needs to develop with local businesses in mind, just like CHR-RPT observed that if he had the financial capability, he would like to build his business to the level of restaurants in the city.

The importance of small tourism businesses is well recognised; for instance, Sadeghi and Seidaiy (2023) observed that local tourism entrepreneurship is crucial in developing rural areas, and it also provides an alternative to relying on agriculture. Paresishvili et al. (2017) noted that small tourism businesses play a significant role in the rural areas in European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Great Britain and Hungary.

The support given to local businesses in the rural areas of Rivers State could go a long way in contributing to the development of tourism in the areas outside Port Harcourt and spreading tourism income to the rural areas. Regarding participation, this group of stakeholders was considered moderate participants based on their economic activities. They are involved in tourism-related businesses, and though tourism is seasonal, these stakeholders still benefit from the few visitors to the areas as they spend money on the local economy through these businesses.

This group of stakeholders is considered to have moderate participation instead of low participation, which will be discussed in the next section. They could participate in tourism activities, albeit on a smaller scale compared to the active participants discussed in the section above.

6.2.3 Low Participants Stakeholders

This group is considered low participants because they only participate in tourism activities during the carnival season. For the rest of the year, they are involved in other economic activities. Some of the people are farmers and involved in petty trade. They sell foodstuffs, handicrafts, and essential items which the visitors or tourists may need. Others are the local people who participate in the carnival activities as performers. This group's understanding of tourism in their area revolves around the carnival season, as they work throughout the year, waiting for the events at the carnival to either perform or sell their products.

One participant from Abonnema, CHR-RPT, stated that:

> *"The other thing that attracts people to Abonnema is the cultural festival, where there is a masquerade performance and the Go To Niger celebration. Both indigenes living outside the community and visitors come to Abonnema during this festive period. The community participates in tourism by watching the masquerades' performance during the festival period and taking part in the celebration of the Go To Niger".*

Another participant, FAV-RPT, commented that:

> *"We also used social media to tell people about Atlantic Beach's uniqueness, including the benefits associated with coastal tourism development. During the festive period in December, only Atlantic*

Beach and the masquerades bring people to this community, both Indigenous and some visitors".

FAV-RPT comments demonstrate how many people in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt participate in tourism activities. To many of them, the carnival is a form of tourism. Some participants suggested that the carnival season be expanded to last longer than the current two-month period.

Another participant, MIN-RPT, an indigene of Abonnema working in Port Harcourt, commented that:

"We only benefit from the beach during the festive season when we are called to showcase our culture, such as boat regalia and cruising; young and able-bodied men who can paddle a canoe very well are engaged and paid to do so during the festive period. But we want more. We want this beach to be developed so that these activities can last longer. This will create more jobs and also encourage young people to become more interested in cultural activities".

The comments from FAV-RPT and MIN-RPT demonstrated the local residents' willingness to participate in tourism activities. However, these comments also show their frustration with having only a short period in the year to do so. It is argued in the literature that to achieve optimal participation in tourism activities, increase local people's income, and improve their welfare, the local community needs to develop a tourism

product that brings together a number of stakeholders in tourism activities (Anis et al., 2020; Yergeau, 2020). Rivers State may not expand the duration of the Carnival; however, RSTDA can introduce more activities that will attract visitors not only to Port Harcourt but also to the local communities outside the city, such as Andoni, Abonnema, and other places with potential for coastal tourism development.

The Rivers State government, working in conjunction with the Federal Government of Nigeria, needs to provide infrastructure facilities to facilitate the development of tourism activities beyond Port Harcourt and to other communities within the state.

One problem that may hinder people's full participation in tourism, as observed by the participants, is the seasonality of tourism activities in Rivers State. Although seasonality may be considered a problem for tourism development, the argument is that if tourism is well-planned, it can diversify the economy, allowing local people to participate in more than one economic activity throughout the year.

This is the opinion of another participant, PST-RPT, who commented that:

> *"The community is not really involved in tourism development because we don't have any government representatives to speak for us. Apart from the Atlantic beach, the other attraction to this community is seasonal, which only takes place occasionally, as the elephant sighted a few months ago, unless there is a zoo where the government would keep those animals.*

The people of Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town also organised a festival every two years for people living along this axis to attend. The traditional festival that we have is called "Owu". When it takes place in this community, Asuk-Ama, this time, it will occur in Ikuru Town, another community two years later by rotation".

The problem of seasonality can also be addressed by developing the state's infrastructure facilities, which will attract visitors to other areas beyond Port Harcourt. Kanwal et al.'s (2019) study in Pakistan demonstrated that the improvement in roads and other infrastructure in Pakistan had a positive impact on the residents; it brought tourism to their area, and they were not only satisfied, as this resulted in many local residents participating in tourism activities in one form or another.

6.2.4 The Non-Participants Stakeholders

The last group of stakeholders is non-participants, comprising the largest part of the people in the study areas, particularly in Andoni and Abonnema. This study found that most non-participants come from local administrative areas outside Port Harcourt; they are not directly involved in tourism, despite being surrounded by numerous tourist attractions, such as the Atlantic Beach. Most people in this category are the most vulnerable in the study area, and apart from being spectators, they do not benefit from the tourism activities in the area. Although they do not currently participate in tourism, some expressed interest in participating in the future.

One of the participants, EKI-RPT, in Abonnema commented that:

> *"I am not involved in any of their activities because I don't attend any of the events they organise, but that does not mean that I always close my eyes when the cultural performance passes through our home. When they organised the beach party, I did not attend that event because of a lack of security, where people swimming and dancing in the water drowned".*

EKI-RPT's observation demonstrates that though some residents may be aware of the tourism activities in their area, they do not participate because they are not interested. This raises another important issue when discussing tourism participation, which indicates that not everyone in the community will participate. After all, tourism is just one economic activity in the community; there are other economic activities that exist alongside tourism. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) observed that motivation is one of the key factors in participating in tourism activities, and how residents participate in tourism activities is motivated by a number of factors. Among these factors is awareness and knowledge of tourism activities. Those who are aware of tourism tend to participate at a low level, and some individuals, such as EKI-RPT, do not participate in any tourism-related activities at all. While individuals with a greater knowledge of tourism are highly motivated to participate in tourism activities, they form an active group of participants.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the stakeholders in tourism in the three local administration areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, where this study was conducted. Tourism, by its nature, has several stakeholders; in this study, the key stakeholders were grouped into two categories: the local community and the government. Among the local communities were various stakeholders, including farmers, fishermen, youth, and local businesses. On the government side, the key stakeholder is the Rivers State Tourism Development Authority, the body under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism responsible for promoting and developing tourism in the state.

Besides identifying the key stakeholders, this chapter also analysed their levels of participation in tourism activities in the area. Stakeholders with both political and financial power were very active in tourism development activities, with the majority located in Port Harcourt. The rest of the people in the other communities fell into three categories: moderate, low, or non-participants. The next chapter will continue the discussion by looking at the opportunities and challenges of developing coastal tourism in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

CHAPTER SEVEN – THESIS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 2

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING COASTAL TOURISM IN RIVERS STATE

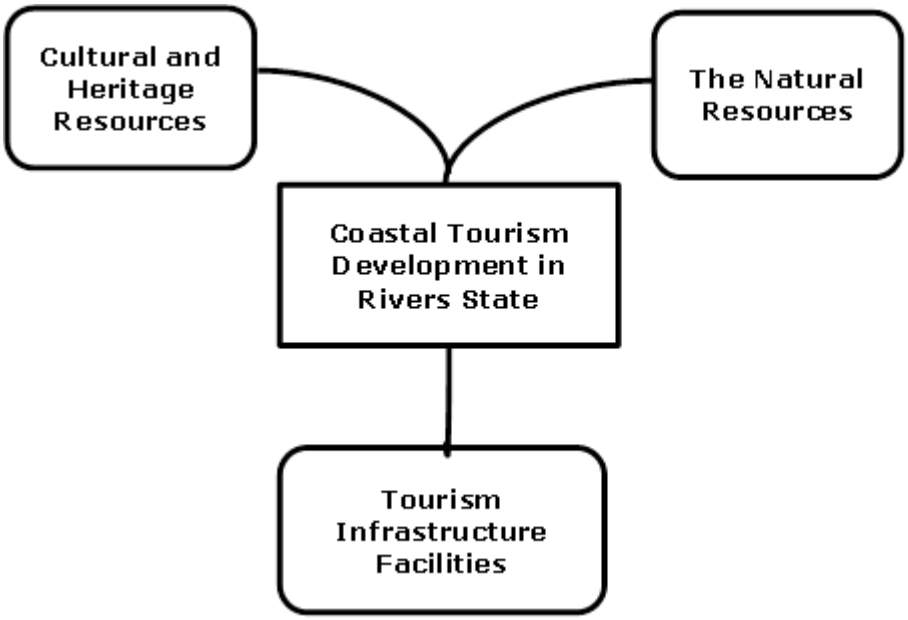
7.0 Introduction

This chapter identifies and examines the status of tourism activities in the study areas of Abonnema, Andoni, and Port Harcourt, as well as the opportunities for developing tourism in Rivers State. It also discusses the challenges and barriers that have stagnated this potential for coastal tourism and its socio-economic contributions to community development in Rivers State. The chapter consists of two sections; the first section discusses tourism activities in the area and the opportunities that would facilitate the development of community-led sustainable coastal tourism within the study areas.

This section focuses on tourism resources in Rivers State, emphasising the study areas of Port Harcourt, Andoni and Abonnema. This includes a detailed review of natural resources, such as the Atlantic Beach and Mangrove Forest, as potential opportunities for tourism development in the state. The second section of this chapter identifies and discusses the challenges and barriers hindering tourism development in Rivers State, particularly in the coastal areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. This chapter examines various types of resources that can be explored to promote tourism as an alternative source of development, alongside the availability of petroleum resources in the study areas.

Despite its potential as a development tool for alleviating poverty among local communities, tourism has not thrived due to several obstacles that hinder such development.

7.1 Coastal Tourism Development in Rivers State



The unique resources on which Coastal tourism is based are land and sea; both resources provide vital amenities such as beaches, water, mangrove forests and swamps, as well as a variety of cultural heritage (Thia-Eng, 1993; Dimitrovskie et al., 2021). These resources provide a basis for several tourism activities in coastal waters and within the coastal zone, leading to the development of tourism infrastructure, including hotels, road networks, resorts, and other facilities. Atlantic Beach is significant in the development of sustainable coastal tourism in the study areas of Andoni and the old seaport in Abonnema, including the Port Harcourt

Tourist Beach, which was artificially created by the Rivers State Government in 1988.

Moreover, Pleasure Park is another visitor attraction, a public recreation park located in the oil-rich city of Port Harcourt, in the Niger Delta. It was created in 2017 with an artificial lake, a cinema, and other recreational facilities. The location was easily accessible and had a high level of security due to its proximity to the military barracks.

According to Saarinen (2015), sustainability is an essential policy framework for the tourism industry, and Amerta et al. (2018) also stated that sustainable tourism should be based on the environmental, social, cultural and economic activities within the community (Andersen et al., 2018; Dalimunthe et al., 2020). However, sustainable tourism development involves reducing the negative impact on the environment and local culture while improving wildlife conservation resources, generating income and providing residents with employment opportunities (Onuchukwu and Ijeomah, 2020).

According to Berno and Bricker (2001), who stated that with all the potential benefits associated with tourism, the process of development is faced with many challenges, barriers, and obstacles because of the negative impact on the environment, the culture, and the economy of the communities within the destination (Ajibade and Imaah, 2022).

Implementing development policies and ideas by the government and other stakeholders in tourism-related businesses should benefit all parties involved without compromising the adverse effects on the environment, beliefs, and way of life of the host communities.

Therefore, sustainability has become relevant in coastal areas due to the processes and effects of change in both natural and human factors, such as climate change, environmental degradation, and deforestation. Sustainability is paramount to the development of coastal tourism in the study areas, as the protection of people, wildlife, marine species, and the environment, encompassing both land and waterways, should be considered to mitigate the negative impacts of such development.

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the state of tourism in the study areas, the opportunities for developing tourism, and the challenges or barriers preventing the people of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt from the benefits associated with developing coastal tourism in their communities.

The following section discusses the participants' views and personal observations about tourism activities and the existing resources in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The next section presents the research participants' views and personal observations, supported by existing literature, on tourism activities in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

7.1.1 Cultural and Heritage Resources

Keitumetse (2013) observed that human beings use their understanding of the socio-culture of an occurrence or event to interact with the environment; therefore, people are conveyors of cultural heritage. It is further argued that these characteristics are inherent in all cultures, thus making people a valuable resource through which sustainable development can be achieved (Keitumetse, 2013). Destinations that develop tourism to attract tourists usually depend on available natural resources and socio-cultural attributes as the basis for their tourism products (Vale et al., 2011; Baloch et al., 2023).

Sociocultural characteristics include art, history, monuments, ways of life, the built environment, and traditions. A research participant, FAV-RPT, an indigene of Ikuru Town in Andoni, commented that:

> *"This place is lively because the people enjoy Christmas celebrations and other cultural activities organised in the community. Examples of the cultural festivals are Owogbo, Nwantam and Ekparu, some of which are played for around two days and others for two weeks. Different age groups participated in the festival, and people from various places attended to watch the masquerade performances during this period. The Atlantic beach is very close to Ikuru Town, and it will take around ten minutes to get there by bike–motorcycle".*

The culture and traditions of the residents have a significant impact on the development of tourism products, which is related to acts of worship, cultural norms, and the individual or collective beliefs of people within the community, particularly through their religious affiliation. Sacred forests around Port Harcourt and other rural communities in Rivers State are mainly used by traditional believers (traditionalists) to worship gods and deities. Although sacred forests are home to wildlife, they also have cultural significance to the local people in the communities. Sacred forest items include skulls, white clothes, kola nuts, and pots, which are presented to the gods as sacrifices. The offerings are associated with the deities, and entering the sacred forest with shoes on one's legs is forbidden (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015).

Therefore, in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, as well as other communities in Rivers State and the Niger Delta region, sociocultural resources are significant in tourism development, as expressed through carnivals, where masquerade performances are displayed during cultural festivals.

7.1.1.1 The CARNIRIV.

The CARNIRIV is one of the biggest events in Rivers State; it is held once a year and will allow the development of coastal tourism to contribute to the improvement in the livelihood of the residents and help in the attainment of objective 1 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 (UN Report, 2020).

Carnival and other cultural events can be tremendous resources for developing tourism, inspiring the conservation of cultural activities, and invigorating the local economy as they provide opportunities for local enterprises, including street vendors, to earn income (Pasanen, 2012).

Carnivals and other events are vital tools in developing destinations, as they attract many domestic and international tourists during the festive season, creating a solid socio-cultural and economic impact in the area. For instance, a report by the UK's Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP, 2019) noted that events such as carnivals can shape a destination's ability, stimulate innovation, enhance the creative sector, and bring together the communities.

The study participants well recognised the presence of the CARNIRIV and its associated socio-economic impacts on the local community. Almost all the participants mentioned the CARNIRIV as the main tourism activity in the area. For instance, RS2-RPT, an employee of RSTDA, a body responsible for developing and promoting tourism in Rivers State, when asked about tourism activities in the State, mentioned CARNIRIV as the main activity. This research participant commented:

> *"We have tourism in Rivers State; there are many activities, such as the carnival. In fact, the carnival is the main activity promoted by the state; it attracts a large number of people from all over Nigeria, and some come from abroad. Unlike other carnivals that last for just a few days, our carnival is held for a whole month, allowing the*

local people to showcase their culture to a very large number of people. Each ethnic group in the state is represented, and all 23 Local Government Areas participate. There is no other carnival in Nigeria like Carniriv; it is the biggest and best in the whole country".

The idea of developing the carnival as a tourism product in Rivers State makes more sense when viewed from a socio-economic and development perspective. Carnivals are cultural expressions that bring together traditions as well as creativity, which have more significant cultural and socioeconomic benefits to the broader economy. Taylor and Kneafsey (2016) observed that cultural festivals, such as the carnival, generate income and serve as catalysts for social cohesion, promoting cultural tourism that may contribute to the marketing and branding of the area. This is also true of the CARNRIV in Rivers State; the carnival has emerged as a space for promoting social harmony and integration, as it appeals to a diverse audience, as mentioned by the participant (RS2-RPT). Whereas the economic benefits of the carnival are easily visible, as many local people participate in petty trade by selling food, drinks, handicrafts, and other items, the social benefits are not usually recognised.

However, the study participants talked about the togetherness that the carnival brings to the area, and many of them were very proud that Rivers State is now recognised all over Nigeria and beyond for its Carnival.

For instance, one of the participants, MIN-RPT, a civil servant in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, commented on the togetherness of the different ethnic groups during the carnival.

> *"I like the carnival season; during the preparation, we work together as one community, and you find the people from Ikwere working harmoniously with the Ijaw and the Kura or any other tribe. All of us in Rivers State have a diverse culture; we dress and cook differently, and speak different dialects, but the carnival brings us together to showcase our rich culture to the world. We all work to make the carnival a success. You know the carnival is important to us because it is an opportunity to teach our young generations about our culture and to make them feel proud of their heritage. I hope that when we are gone, the young generation will keep up our culture, and I pray that the carnival will continue for a very long time".*

This view from MIN-RPT shows that the carnival is an event organised to promote friendship and unity among the local people, generate income, and have positive social and cultural implications, such as bringing the different tribes together. Ziakas and Costa (2012) observed that when an event, such as the carnival, is organised by local people and includes a range of stakeholders who understand the symbolic social spaces and their embeddedness in local community development, the event can address community issues and promote cooperation.

According to Derrett (2014), cultural festivals reflect the values and interests of the community, as well as the community's sense of pride and appreciation of their culture, which they are willing to share with visitors. Based on the participants' views, there may seem to be no other active tourism activities beyond Port Harcourt, apart from the beach parties that are regularly organised during the December festival period in Andoni and Abonnema. There is also Go TO Niger, which the people of Abonnema organise; this event is used to mark and celebrate the liberation of the people of the Kalabari axis. According to one research participant, BES-RPT, who commented that:

> *"We don't have any tourist attractions in this community apart from the old seaport, but there is a certain time, maybe during the festival period, when there is a masquerade performance, mass wedding, and there is an event called "Go To Niger" and that particular day is the day the Biafran War ended, the day of the nation. The liberation of this community on the 21st of June, this particular day always attracts people from other communities to visit, witness and enjoy the celebration".*

Therefore, tourism in Rivers State is not equitably distributed, as some areas, such as Port Harcourt, receive a large number of tourists, while others, like the communities farther inland away from Port Harcourt, participate in tourism primarily through the Carnival.

Other communities, such as Andoni, have taken the initiative to organise their own events, such as the Andoni Unity Carnival.

7.1.1.2 The Andoni Unity Carnival

Besides the CARNIRIV, which brings together all 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State to showcase their cultures, the Andoni LGA also organised the Andoni Unity Carnival, an event aimed at promoting the culture of the Obolo people.

Unlike the CARNIRIV, which lasts for over a month, the Andoni Unity Carnival is a five-day event. One of the event organisers, a close associate who participated in this study, PST-RPT, commented and highlighted the pride associated with the Andoni Unity Carnival.

> *"We started this event based on the large number of people who came to Port Harcourt during the Carnival. We thought that if we organised our own Carnival in Andoni, we would be able to showcase our culture, promote our culture, and attract tourism to our community. So, we organised a boat Regatta, a Coconut festival, and a carnival at the Ikuru Atlantic beach. Did you know that Ikuru is the longest white sand beach on the West African Coast? Well, we wanted people to come not only to Ngo but also to explore the other from Oyorokoto to Okorobire, see our culture, enjoy our hospitality, and eat fish. I can tell you that the Unity Carnival was a success. The Rivers Council for Arts and Culture promised that they would sponsor the Unity Carnival next year*".

Another participant, MIN-RPT, who was connected to the RSTDA and worked in the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, had a similar view when discussing the Andoni Unity Carnival. She talked about the support from Rivers State, narrating that:

> *"I know the state wants to support local projects such as the Andoni Unity Carnival. Local and state agencies, such as RSTDA and the Council for Arts and Culture, provide support to progressive projects; the Andoni Unity Carnival was well-supported. From what we saw in the first Carnival, we can assure you that the Andoni Unity Carnival will grow into a bigger project. This is what the communities need to show their cultures and traditions to future investors and tourists. I hope that international tourists will start coming to Andoni, though there is a problem with accommodation. The place does not have a hotel that takes on international tourists"*.

The Andoni Unity Carnival is a spinoff of CARNIRIV, which represents a positive step forward for local communities in Rivers State to collaborate on developing tourism. As the MIN-RPT and PST-RPT highlighted, there are opportunities to attract more visitors to Andoni, which could result in tourism expanding from Port Harcourt to the inner areas of Rivers State. The effort of Andoni LGA to promote a carnival provides opportunities for socio-economic development for a lot of people in the community.

Getz and Page (2015) observed that, although festivals such as the carnival are expressions of the traditions and cultures of local communities, they have also become a source of economic development. It was noted that cultural events such as the carnival bring cohesion to the communities. Bakhtin (1984) observed that there are no hierarchies during carnivals, and social roles are rescinded because time and space are switched around, and everything is ever-changing, undefined, and playful. In other words, carnivals bring together different groups in the community that are usually exclusive, allowing them to celebrate and laugh together.

It is not only the social benefits that are realised from carnival but also opportunities for the local people to earn some money from the various activities such as costume designing and making, musicians, songwriters, and choreographers, as well as the artists that participate in the events, in addition to the local people who sell their products such as food and locally made handcrafts.

Burr (2016) observed that carnivals can drive the growth and development of local micro and small businesses, many of which rely on artisanal skills. These businesses include cultural groups specialising in entertainment services related to traditions and culture, such as music and dance, while women can open businesses related to handicrafts and local cuisine.

The Andoni Unity Carnival provide opportunities for many local people to earn an income. One participant, DAV-RPT, a teacher at a local secondary school in Andoni, affirmed this perspective.

> *"What I liked about the Andoni carnival is that it gave the local people a chance to make some money. During the big carnival, people come from all over Nigeria to sell their products, and sometimes, the local people do not have space to show their merchandise. But this time, the organiser allocated a big space exclusively for the local residents in Andoni to sell their products. People sold food, fish, and handicrafts. Everyone I saw was happy. This is credited to the Council Chairman of Andoni, Mr Erastus Awortu. He is a visionary man".*

DAV-RPT's comment highlights the role of leadership in the success of staging an event. Burr (2016) observed that, besides carnivals' strengthening relationships, their success rests on strong leadership to coordinate the different groups, the local people as well as outside agencies; according to DAV-RPT, this leadership is present in Andoni, which got actively involved in coordinating activities of the different participants as well as the external organisation, including the Rivers State agencies. Besides the Carnival, there are opportunities to develop wildlife and coastal tourism in other areas of Rivers State, based on the natural resources available in the region. Atlantic Beach is regarded as a gift from nature, with a significant characteristic that is essential for

developing and harnessing the potential of sustainable coastal tourism in the community and its environs.

7.1.2 The Natural Resources - Wildlife Tourism

The natural environment is one of the most critical factors in decision-making regarding the type of tourism that could be developed within a specific destination (Mihalic, 2000; Diaz and Rodriguez, 2016; Baloch et al., 2023). Rivers State is rich in natural resources that could serve as the basis for coastal tourism as well as wildlife tourism in the area, but the state is not recognised as a tourist destination.

Instead, it is well known as an oil-rich state in the Niger Delta region; the state is famous for its significant contribution to Nigeria's economic development through the revenue generated from petroleum exploration. The income generated from petroleum resources has not developed areas outside of Port Harcourt (Bodo and Ekpong, 2018; Omadi and Atiegoba, 2018).

However, there is a huge potential to develop sustainable coastal tourism based on the rich natural resources in Rivers State (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015). According to McCool (2006), Patterson et al. (2008), and Du Plessis et al. (2012), their studies indicate that destinations with natural environments tend to attract a higher number of tourists, as they offer unique and sensory experiences associated with natural areas (Kamran and Omran, 2018).

According to a research participant, ELD-RPT, who commented that:

> *"This community is blessed with other natural resources apart from crude oil. The Atlantic beach is a blessing to our people, and there are wild animals like the elephants in this forest, which has a very rich culture that will delight visitors".*

The discussion on the tourism resources in Rivers State also highlighted the abundance of natural resources in the area. Natural resources, including the sea, coastline, forests, and wildlife (the Environment), are considered key resources in this study; without these resources, tourism development in the area may not be possible. Rivers State is rich in natural resources; besides oil, which is the most crucial resource in the state, the state also has mangrove forests, sacred forests, rivers, lakes, and a coastline that stretches over 60 km, as well as fishing rivers. The natural resources that are primarily located in Andoni and Abonnema have not yet experienced modern development.

However, due to the need for farming and lack of land for that activity, the local people in some villages cleared the mangrove forests and converted the land for agricultural activities. In tourism, natural resources are diverse and constitute a broad category; it was argued by Raban (2021) that natural resources can be categorised based on the critical tourist landscape elements such as landforms, geological elements such as rocks, fossils and minerals, water resources such as rivers, lakes, and seas, and lastly, biological resources which include animals and plants.

On the other hand, natural resources for tourism can be classified based on functionality, such as wildlife, sea surfing, and mountain climbing. The importance of natural resources to tourism development was highlighted by one of the participants, who also works in one of the natural reserves in the study area. According to PKK-RPT, an employee *of Port Harcourt Pleasure Park commented that*:

> *"I believe the natural resources are some of the key requirements for tourism development in Rivers State. Yes, it is true. I consider the gazetted areas we have in the state as key stakeholders. I know we have the coast, but wildlife is the heart of tourism in Rivers State, and the government needs to develop tourism around it. We have wildlife that is unique to the state and that you cannot find in any other area in Nigeria; we need to use it for tourism development in the state".*

Another participant, ELD-RPT, from Andoni also commented that:

> *This community is blessed with other natural resources apart from crude oil. The Atlantic beach is a blessing to our people, and there are wild animals, such as elephants, in this forest, which has a rich culture and tradition that will delight visitors. According to what I said earlier, had it been when our man was on the seat as deputy governor of Rivers State, and the organisers of this event approached him with their program of developing tourism, maybe the government would have helped to transform it into an event*

that will be generating income for the people and become regular and not continue as once in a year events".

The views from PPK-RPT and ELD-RPT highlight the richness of natural resources in Rivers State, which the authorities responsible for developing tourism in the area can utilise. If well-planned, they can extend tourism from Port Harcourt to the inland villages and communities, spreading the socio-economic benefits of tourism to the local economy.

In support of the ELD-RPT comments and observations during the visit to Ikuru Town, as the participant clearly stated, the elderly woman also pointed to the direction of the family compound of the former deputy governor of Rivers State, Engr Telenyem Renner Ikuru, and she promised to raise the issue of developing the Atlantic Beach with the members of the community development council (CDC) in the area.

Erkuş-Öztürk and Terhorst (2015) observed that reliance on single-asset tourism puts the destination in a fragile position, as failure in that product may affect the whole destination. However, Benur and Bramwell (2015) argued that key tourism products are important to destinations as they attract more tourists; diversification and linkage of these tourism products can increase the competitiveness of the destination and contribute to sustainable development. At the time of this study, Rivers State relied on CARNIRIV as its main tourism product, and a few people came to Port Harcourt to attend other events organised by the RSTDA.

Moreover, the development of wildlife tourism, as well as other activities along the coast, can diversify tourism, attract more tourists, and contribute to the sustainable development of communities, especially those along the coastline. Besides the rivers and mangrove forests, another participant commented on the presence of marine life as a key aspect of tourism development in the area.

The research participant, MIN-RPT, observed that:

> *"We have plenty of animals in the forest and the sea, like in Bonny. If you go far into the ocean, you will see all these animals, but they know that if they come close to where people live, they will be killed by the fishermen and say, 'God don butter our bread. That is why these animals prefer to stay off; there is also a hippopotamus in Bonny, and they come out occasionally, "but our mentality is that any animal we see must be killed".*

Indeed, as the participants observed, the study areas have a number of natural resources, such as the mangrove forest of Oke-ohia Agalaj, located in Port Harcourt, which covers a large piece of land connecting it to the other local areas in the study. This forest is home to rivers and wildlife, including elephants, crocodiles, snakes, monkeys, birds and many tree species. In Andoni, there is the Ngo Elephant Forest Reserve, home to the only forest elephants in Nigeria. The pygmy hippopotamus and other mammals are also found in this game reserve.

In addition, the forest reserve is a nesting ground for different species of sea turtles and migratory dolphin species, which usually visit the Atlantic shores of the island during summer.

A research participant, MIN-RPT, commented that:

> *"The other day, at one of our communities, on the 29th of October 2021, a fisherman killed a dolphin at Oyorokoto in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. When I went to Dubai on holiday with my family, we visited an area where trained dolphins were dancing and painting with crayons that were put in their mouth, and tourists were paying to watch the dolphin display. I went there with my children, and each person paid for a ticket, which was equivalent to twenty-five thousand naira at that time".*

The comments made by MIN-RPT supported the views of Benur and Bramwell (2015) concerning tourism products that can attract tourists to specific destinations when wildlife and other marine species, such as dolphins, are preserved and protected from poachers. In areas around Port Harcourt, there are sacred forests; although they are home to wildlife, they also hold cultural significance for the local people. The sacred forest has things like skulls, white clothes, kola nuts, and pots associated with the deities, and no one is allowed to enter this forest with shoes on their legs. More so, Abonnema is considered to have one of the longest coastlines in Rivers State.

In 2021, an Elephant was sighted in the forest at Ikuru Town in Andoni, and this received a wide media coverage on television, in newspapers and social media networks. There is a possibility that there are more elephants in the "Oke-ohia Agala" mangrove forest around Port Harcourt, which covers a large expanse of land that is linked to various communities, including Nkpogu, Bundu Ama and Abonnema waterside (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015).

If the existence of elephants is verified, this could be the genesis of wildlife tourism in the area. As a result of growing ecological concerns relating to climate change and global warming, the natural environment has become an essential element in tourism development with the use of natural resources and protection of the environment (Barkauskas et al., 2015). According to the comments from PPK-RPT, ELD-RPT, and MIN-RPT, there is a mutual understanding and awareness of the resources available to develop tourism. Nevertheless, the constraints faced by the residents prevent them from harnessing the benefits of such development opportunities.

Another participant, UGB-RPT, further stated that:

> *"Our primary occupation is fishing*. Other animals, *such as elephants, are also in our forest, but you would not believe it. We also have crocodiles in our water; if those animals are preserved, tourists will come and see them".*

From UGB-RPT's comments, it is evident that the residents of the communities at Andoni recognise the importance of natural resources, conservation, and their usefulness to coastal tourism development. The availability of the Mangrove Forest, which is home to endangered animals such as elephants and other species, can attract tourists interested in wildlife in pristine areas.

Some commentators in the literature recognise the importance of wildlife tourism as a tool for the sustainable use and preservation of resources, in addition to the economic benefits to the local communities Gossling, 1999; Wunder, 2000; Shrestha et al., 2006). Wildlife tourism is a key attraction for tourists seeking areas that satisfy their recreational needs and offer natural and cultural resources.

In addition, Shrestha et al. (2006) observed that nature-loving tourists are attracted to pristine areas and are willing to travel long distances for recreation in such areas. Still, some areas have not yet recognised the value of these resources. One such area is Rivers State, with its rich cultural and natural resources. The state has not yet realised the potential of wildlife tourism and the benefits it could bring to the economies of some communities, such as Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni.

Natural resources such as Atlantic Beach have the unique attributes of Sun, Sea, and Sand required to attract tourists to coastal destinations; therefore, the 3S is crucial to the development of coastal tourism in Andoni and its environs.

It can be argued that the natural gift of nature, such as Atlantic Beach, is significant and serves as the backbone or pillar for developing Coastal Tourism in Rivers State. Nowadays, many tourists prioritise visiting destinations developed in their natural settings, like the coastal areas, to experience the authenticity and uniqueness of the destination compared to others.

At the time of this study, the researcher observed that Atlantic Beach is not easily accessible to the public through the Asuk-Ama junction; heavy security was along the road, guided and protected by the Nigerian Army, which used sand-filled bags to barricade the road. More so, the road from Asuk-Ama Junction to the seaside was in a state of disrepair—very bad, swampy, and waterlogged. From the researcher's personal observation, the reason for the lack of accessibility from the Asuk-Ama junction to the Atlantic Sea was to provide security for the petroleum exploration company that was building new and operating completed oil wells in the area.

Nevertheless, Atlantic Beach is easily accessible to the public through Asuk-Ama village and Ikuru Town, as the sea is widely open to the blue sky with white sand and some wooden canoes abandoned at the seaside. During the course of collecting data for this study, I visited the Atlantic beach and found it clean, the water levels were high, and some people were sighted fishing in the middle of the sea.

Fishing was the main occupation of the people of Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, and most people used canoes to cross from one community to another due to bad roads. There are jetties in the community where boats and canoes are used for transportation, linking other riverine areas that a direct road network cannot reach. Moreover, coastal tourism can be developed where natural resources, such as the Atlantic Sea, are not readily or naturally available. For example, the Port Harcourt Tourist Beach was artificially created through dredging by the Rivers State government in 1988.

More so, there are other beaches in Port Harcourt, such as Sand City Beach and Elechi Beach, but the Port Harcourt Tourist Beach is the most popular in Rivers State. Another notable artificial beach is in Lagos, in the Southwest of Nigeria; Tarkwa Bay can be described as a sheltered man-made beach created during the formation of Lagos Harbour. Additionally, most residents in this community earn their living from the tourists who visit the beach (Ajani et al., 2017).

According to SOY-RPT and EMA-RPT, research participants from Abonnema commented that:

> *"The government needs to develop the coastal area, as some places can be sand-filled and become useful for tourism development".*
>
> *I heard that Abonnema used to have a mini seaport where ships usually anchored in the past, but there is no such thing anymore; if the seaport is rebuilt, it will attract more tourists".*

The participant's SOY-RPT view above is related to the effort and action taken by the Rivers State government to create Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, as the same approach can be used to develop coastal tourism in Abonnema. At the same time, the second participant, EMA-RPT, emphasised that rebuilding the seaport in Abonnema, which was closed and abandoned by the government, would attract more tourists to the community.

According to Cooper and Wanhill (1998), the basic principle of tourism products is the environment, whether natural or artificially created. Therefore, as tourism activities commence, the environment changes or is modified to accelerate tourism development (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015). However, the Atlantic Sea was a natural resource and regarded as a gift from nature; it is located in the rural communities of Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni, where it remained undeveloped.

In contrast, the artificially created Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, located in the Garden City of Rivers State, was underdeveloped. It can be argued that natural and artificially created attractions, such as Port Harcourt Tourist and Atlantic Beaches, possess the fundamental characteristics of sand, sea, and sun required to develop sustainable coastal tourism.

Therefore, if this potential is fully harnessed to its maximum capacity, it can become an effective catalyst for improving the livelihoods of local people and contributing to community development and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

7.1.3 Tourism Infrastructure Facilities

The availability of infrastructure facilities is another fundamental instrument associated with tourism development; there is potential for tourist accommodations (hotels, lodging, and restaurants) and transportation networks (roads, airports and waterways). The natural resources and infrastructure facilities are directly connected to one another because most of the facilities are built on or utilise natural resources. For example, roads and hotels are constructed on land, and the jetty is linked to waterways for transportation using boats and ferries across different communities.

According to Attila (2016), the availability of accommodation and hotel facilities is essential to the tourist inflow, as destinations with inadequate or low-standard accommodation may be less attractive to visitors. The non-availability of accommodation facilities, such as hotels and lodging, close to the attraction could become a barrier to tourists visiting the destination (Gebreyesus et al., 2022).

Although there is no hotel accommodation available in Asuk Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni, this does not create a barrier to tourists visiting the community if coastal tourism is developed. According to a participant, PST-RPT, from Asuk-Ama in Andoni, who stated that:

> *"This community loves visitors so much that we accommodate people from different parts of the state. We have the Ogoni and*

Akwa Ibom people, who are not indigenes but reside in this community and were given a family".

Contrary to the opinions of Attila (2016) and Gebreyesus et al. (2022), there are no adequate recreational facilities that can be used as hotels and lodges around Atlantic Beach, the nearby villages of Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni. It can be argued that the situation should not be seen as an obstacle to coastal tourism development but rather as an opportunity for stakeholders to encourage homestays with local people (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015).

Another research participant, EMA-RPT, from Abonnema commented that:

"This community is very friendly and accommodating. We welcome visitors to our land with open arms so that when they visit, they feel more at home, and they return with resources found in this place, like crab, fish, periwinkle, and other seafood that are common to the people of Abonnema. These are the most common resources tourists can easily get from this community because our processing method is different from other places where these things can also be found".

The people of this community are regarded as good hosts who will open their doors to visitors and make them feel comfortable away from their homes.

According to the views of PST-RPT and EMA-RPT, the high level of hospitality shown by the Indigenous residents toward the visitors enables some of them to settle and become permanent residents in the communities. The visitors were allowed to stay in their homes for short periods and share accommodations, which will encourage homestays, as tourists will be able to have the desired and deserved memorable experiences at the destination. However, in the case of Abonnema, there are tourism-related facilities such as lodging and hotel accommodations, but not as many and developed as those found in Port Harcourt.

Moreover, Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, located in the Rivers State capital, has received more attention from the state government in terms of infrastructure development, including the reconstruction of roads, the airport, and the provision of reputable accommodation facilities such as five-star hotels and lodging, to the delight of visitors and residents.

According to a research participant, CHI-RPT, from Port Harcourt, who commented that:

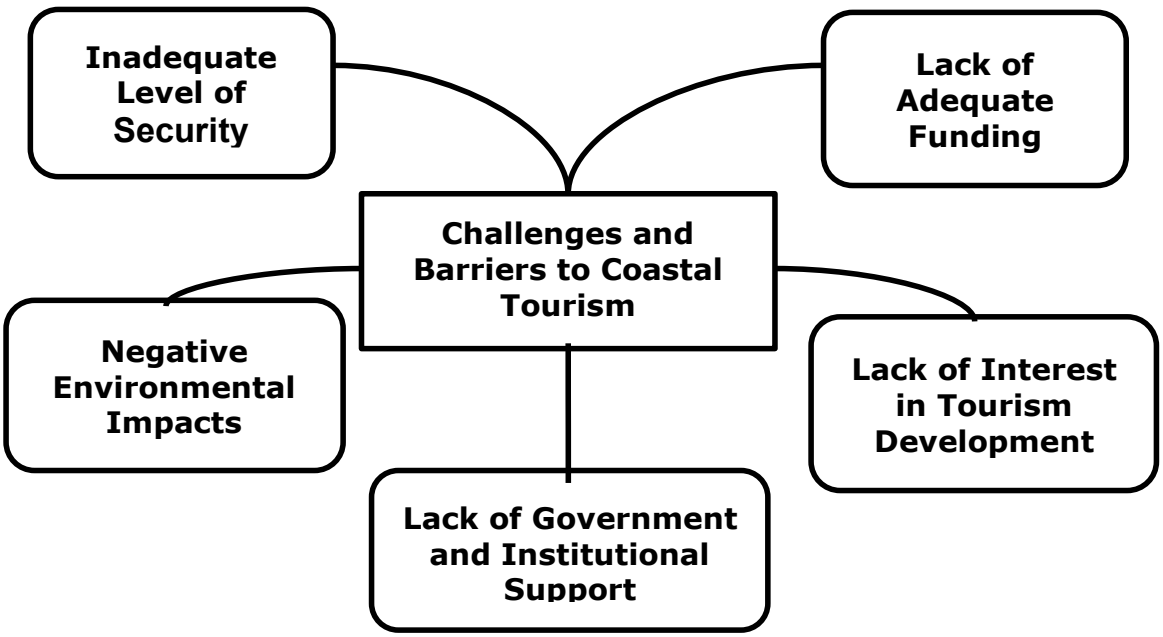
> *"This community is happy to receive tourists anytime, and they will be treated as members of our families who returned home after travelling for a long time".*

The road from Port Harcourt was not as good as anticipated, and most of it was under reconstruction at the time of my visit, which resulted in heavy traffic.

However, the road network in Ogoni land was outstanding and better than the road from Port Harcourt, a well-constructed dual carriageway with street lighting to Bori town.

It was noted that the road network from Port Harcourt to link other parts of the city toward Andoni was under reconstruction during the fieldwork for data collection. There was significant investment in infrastructure facilities by His Excellency Nyesom Wike, the former Governor of Rivers State, from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2023. It can be argued that investing in transportation facilities will become a significant asset to the state in the long run, once the road construction projects are completed. This investment will also contribute to tourism development by providing easy access to various tourist destinations across the state.

7.2 Challenges and Barriers to Coastal Tourism Development



This section examines the research findings on the challenges and barriers perceived by various stakeholders as affecting coastal tourism development in selected case study areas, including Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. These obstacles to coastal tourism development were identified during the thematic analysis of data collected from the research participants' interview transcripts.

7.2.1 Lack of Adequate Funding

One of the key issues identified by almost all the study participants was the lack of funding from the federal government. Nigeria comprises 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and each state is semi-autonomous, although it is funded by the federal government. Rivers State is more commonly known for its oil production; the leaders in the state focus primarily on oil processing in Port Harcourt and do not appear to have a strong interest in developing tourism. This sector is not a priority for government or private sector investment, as this sentiment was evident among the research participants during the interviews. Lack of funding was highlighted as the main reason for the non-existence of tourism development in many areas with high potential in Rivers State.

For instance, one of the participants, MIN-RPT, who is closely connected to the RSTDA, observed that:

> *"The state created an agency to develop tourism, and there is a whole Ministry of Culture and Tourism, but there is no funding for tourism development. The Ministry always receives the lowest*

allocation in the budget, which is just enough to cover the employees' salaries. All the subsequent governments in the state have shown no interest in tourism. When we host the carnival, everyone is happy, but nothing more. The funding allocated to the Ministry has to be shared with the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency, whose mandate is now to organise the carnival. There are opportunities to develop tourism not only in Port Harcourt but also beyond. For instance, Andoni is another place in Nigeria with elephants; this could be a motivation to develop the infrastructure and get investors in the area to develop tourism resources, but no one cares".

MIN-RPT comments are supported by the allocation of funding to tourism and culture in the 2022/23 and 23/24 Rivers State annual budget. For example, in the budget for the 2024 financial year, the state announced an allocation of capital expenditure totalling over N410 billion. However, tourism and culture received the lowest allocation of N1.381 billion, which accounted for 0.03% of the total capital expenditure (Rivers State Budget, 2024). Rivers State's budget for 2023 also shows the same; tourism and culture are the least funded sector (Rivers State Appropriation Law, 2022).

7.2.2 Lack of Interest in Tourism Development

There is a lack of interest and a limited appetite on the part of the government and private investors in developing coastal tourism and other

forms of tourism, as more preference and effort are directed towards developing the petroleum, oil, and gas sectors.

This is not peculiar to Rivers State alone; it is a general issue across states in Nigeria and other less developed countries with available natural resources to develop coastal tourism. However, they failed to explore the potential of tourism to improve the livelihood of the residents in the vicinity of the tourist destination.

The lack of interest in developing tourism is not limited to Rivers State, as observed by one of the participants, PRO-RPT, a lecturer at a local university in Port Harcourt. He observed that:

> *The state does not want to fund tourism development; the politicians do not view tourism as a priority, and some may not even understand the socio-economic impacts that tourism can bring to a place like Rivers State. They all focus on oil and gas. They expect the private sector to develop tourism, but that cannot happen without the state's support. However, apart from Cross River State, no other state in Nigeria has harnessed the economic potential of tourism. They all wait for the federal government, which itself does not consider tourism a key area of development. They all talk about oil, but there are areas with rich wildlife and scenic views as well as our cultures; these are not resources that the government recognises, yet they could help in the development of some rural areas, particularly here in Rivers State".*

PRO-RPT observation presents similar views to those in the literature on tourism funding in Nigeria. Nigeria, as a country, has not shown much interest in promoting tourism as a key export and a driver for rural development (Bankole, 2002).

Dele (2021) observed that though Nigeria may be considered a country with tourism attractions, these have not been fully developed because the governments in the country have all focused on petroleum resources and promoted them as the primary source of revenue; therefore, other sectors such as tourism receive inadequate funding, and that is one of the reasons for the underdevelopment of tourism in the country. The lack of government funding for tourism development shows a lack of interest, as priority is given to the oil and gas sectors.

According to Karimi's (2008) study in Iran, inadequate funding and low interest in tourism development are among the primary reasons that have hindered Iran's participation in the tourism economy. Similarly, the lack of political interest in tourism development, which results in inadequate funding in Rivers State, is one of the key challenges to overcome in developing a sustainable coastal tourism destination that benefits both the government and local communities.

According to a research participant, BES-RPT, an employee of Akuku Toro Local Government Area in Abonnema commented:

> *Even if you suggest something and your suggestion doesn't go with their own, they will not take it because of their position. If you are*

in their social club, they will listen to you, but if you are outside their social club, they may not listen to you and only do their own. They can only listen to you by the grace of God.

According to the BES-RPT, politics plays a significant role in making policy decisions in Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole. There is a lack of continuity in the implementation of policies due to a change in government after the election, as the winning candidate's political ideologies may not align with those of the previous government. Even when the new government belongs to the same political party as the last government, their area of interest and priority are not always the same, and this situation is peculiar not only to Rivers State but also to other states with similar experiences across the country.

7.2.3 Inadequate Level of Security

The research participants also mentioned in-fighting between rival armed groups as a major challenge for the development of tourism in Rivers State and the entire Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The presence of oil and gas in Rivers State is a blessing, but at times, it is a source of conflict in the state. Historically, the battle to control oil resources in Rivers State has been a source of conflict.

First, it was during the Biafra war that Port Harcourt was declared as part of the independent Republic of Biafra, and then the emergence of cult gangs. However, the primary source of conflicts and a menace to security in the state are the criminal gangs and the Eastern Security Network

(ESN), which is an armed group affiliated with the Indigenous People of Biafra.

This separatist group is promoting a pro-Biafra state, and the activities of ESN remain the major causes of insecurity and violence in Rivers State. A report by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA, 2021) singled out Rivers State with crimes related to kidnapping, clashes between gang members and security operatives, robberies, and piracy. The report also highlighted that travel by road in the state was not safe as travellers were robbed, kidnapped, and women raped. Additionally, the Rivers State government has provided inadequate security to protect local communities from these attacks (EUAA, 2021).

Contrary to the report of EUAA (2021), when the researcher visited the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State that same year (Nov 2021), the government improved security to the highest level with the presence of security forces (Military and Police) to protect the lives and properties of the people in the state. In addition, the situation is not as bad as it was portrayed in the media, and this is not to say that the state's crime rate and insecurity level are low.

When research participants were asked about security and violence in the state, they confirmed its existence; however, they downplayed it as not a serious issue that would hinder tourism development.

According to a research participant, PAT-RPT, who commented that:

"We have criminal gangs; they are mostly in the city, which is where the rich people live. Poverty is the main reason why some of the youth join these gangs. If they get jobs, they can be good citizens. Tourism provides job opportunities. Perhaps if the government supports it and develops some of our resources, this could reduce some of our crimes. But these people do not attack civilians; they focus on the rich people. Regarding the safety concerns for people travelling by road, there is a solution: the government has placed roadblocks at strategic points on the road, which has reduced the insecurity. But these things are happening everywhere in Nigeria; it is not a Rivers State issue but a national one. Tourists still go to these places; for instance, our neighbours in Cross River receive a lot of tourists, so if we develop our tourism, we will also receive them".

These comments were made by PAT-RPT, an indigenous resident of Andoni; she was optimistic that what appears in the media is not what is on the ground. Despite PAT-RPT's optimism, insecurity is a major threat to tourism development. According to Odunlami and Ijeomah (2016), in the study on Port Harcourt Tourism Beach, it was noted that tourists had concerns about safety and security due to militant activities and kidnappings in the area. The authors also pointed out that many people outside of Rivers State feared travelling to the state for fear of their lives. Insecurity has a significant impact on tourism at a destination, as it plays

a substantial role in the choices of where to travel for a holiday. Arana and Leon (2008) observed that tourists prefer to visit more peaceful destinations where their personal security and safety are not threatened, allowing them to enjoy their holidays.

In retrospect, it can be argued that the issue of insecurity may not be the biggest threat to tourism development in Rivers State, as one Participant, an employee of the tourism business in Port Harcourt, observed by downplaying the threat of security to tourism development. According to PPK-RPT, who observed that:

> *Security is not a big threat; we have had spates of violence in Andoni and Port Harcourt. A few people have been injured, mostly civilians. But when we host the carnival, the state provides security, and we have not had any serious security issues for all the years the carnival has been hosted in Port Harcourt, yet we receive a large number of visitors from Nigeria and some from other countries in Africa and Europe. We receive more than a million visitors each year, and all the hotels in Port Harcourt are fully booked. I do not see security as an issue to stop tourism development in the area".*

It is true that CARNIRIV has remained one of the most popular events in Nigeria, drawing a large number of visitors to Rivers State, which suggests that the threat of insecurity is not as severe as initially imagined or as portrayed in foreign media. Additionally, it is also worth noting that most visitors to CARNIRIV are Nigerians, including those from the

diaspora. Moreover, attracting international tourists can be a challenge, as most of them follow advice on their country's web pages, such as in the case of the United Kingdom, where British citizens received guidance on international travel from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

As Kaufmann (2008) observed, the perception of insecurity at a destination is enough to discourage international visitors. Debour (2003) noted that the perception of insecurity was the main reason why destinations such as Afghanistan, Mali, and Kazakhstan failed to develop their tourism. Therefore, the perception of insecurity could be a major challenge to tourism development in Rivers State (Odunlami and Ijeomah, 2016). The tourists' fear of being robbed, kidnapped, or even losing their lives is a major concern for potential tourists to a destination (Nwagba, 2014).

A report by UNCTAD on tourism development in Africa noted that instability and insecurity can have long-lasting impacts on a destination, presenting a negative impact on the tourism sector. Although the participants did not view Rivers State as an insecure place, the report from international agencies presented a negative image that could deter foreign investment, impact the development of tourism in the area, and reduce the destination's appeal to tourists.

The authorities' lack of interest makes it difficult to promote Rivers State as a secure destination. The presence of the Carnival, which attracts close to a million visitors to Port Harcourt, could be the springboard for the

authorities to promote the state as a secure and safe place to visit, but this is a missed opportunity.

7.2.4 Lack of Government and Institutional Support

Closely related to funding is the lack of government support for tourism development in Rivers State, and this issue is amplified by changes in the government. A sitting government may have plans to develop certain aspects of tourism, but because governors are elected every five years, after a new governor is elected, they often abandon the plans of their predecessor and instead implement their own.

This has resulted in a lack of continuity, affecting tourism development in the state. One of the participants, MIN-RPT, made an observation referring to one of the attractions in Port Harcourt. He commented that:

> *"The original plan to develop Port Harcourt Beach was conceived between the Rivers State government and the developers. However, the change in government saw the government withdraw from the project, leaving the developers to face the cost alone".*

Rivers State leaders need to recognise that these projects are not for the politicians; they are intended to create jobs and generate revenue for the area. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which is responsible for tourism development in the state, has no interest in developing the Atlantic Beach in Andoni and other parts of the state. The leaders in most developing countries, such as Nigeria, need to be more concerned about

long-term plans that benefit the people and protect their environment from the negative impacts of development, including coastal tourism.

Currently, most governors in the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria make more political than economic decisions, which align with their personal and party interests. Another research participant, BES-RPT, who worked at the Akuku Toru Local Government Area Secretariat in Abonnema, also commented that:

> *"The state's support is needed not only for projects such as coastal tourism but also for developing other infrastructure facilities. The current government has developed flyovers and roads to connect Port Harcourt to some of the towns in the state, but when a new government comes in, they just abandon some of the ongoing projects".*

The view of BES-RPT supports the comment of MIN-RPT, as it demonstrates the need for the government to support tourism development, particularly through the provision of necessary infrastructure facilities, such as roads, airports, waterways, hotels, and lodging accommodations, to enable tourism to thrive.

However, this is affected by a lack of coordination within the government agencies. For instance, in Rivers State, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has no say in the development of roads and other infrastructure. Christie (2013) observed that tourism institutions in countries with little commitment to developing tourism usually find themselves in a weak

position to fulfil their mandates. A lack of support from the state poses a significant challenge to tourism development.

The leaders in the state government need to buy into the importance of tourism in the socio-economic development of rural areas to support it in Rivers State. The lack of support for tourism development is also observed within the federal government. Within Nigeria's federal constitution, there are two main lists of issues: the federal legislative list, on which only the federal government has legislative powers, and the concurrent legislative list, where both the federal and state governments have legislative power (Anya, 2021). For example, in Nigeria, mineral and natural resources such as oil and gas are under the federal legislation issues list, whereas tourism is under the concurrent legislative list of issues. This means that both the federal government and the state can take on the development of tourism. In some states, such as Ogun State and Oyo State, where this approach has been successful, it has not been effective in Rivers State.

This is due to little effort and willingness from the leaders to diversify from oil and gas and invest in developing coastal tourism in the selected case study areas. Nevertheless, the example of the carnival would have shown that tourism, apart from boosting the local economy, also helps to preserve the traditions and cultures of the local communities, providing the young generation and international tourists with an opportunity to understand the state's heritage.

7.2.5 Negative Environmental Impacts

Water pollution is regarded as a major concern in coastal tourism development, especially in Rivers State, due to the operations of some local organisations and multinational corporations involved in petroleum exploration. According to Ekpo (2010), the problem of water pollution arises from biological, physical, and geological effects on the environment (Obinwanne, 2019).

Figure 1 Old Seaport at Abonnema

A research participant, BES-RPT, in Abonnema commented that:

> *"Due to a disagreement between the navy and the sea pirates, they will blow the illegal boats used for oil theft into the sea. The container with everything will scatter into the sea. The oil will now*

start flowing on the surface of the sea, causing damage to the periwinkle, oysters, and fish".

The participants described the causes of water pollution, including the operation and intervention of the security forces to stop sea pirates from illegally bunkering crude oil from the riverine communities. The discharge of oil into the sea and its surrounding areas is regarded as a major environmental issue related to both onshore and offshore petroleum exploration (Obinwanne, 2019).

Figure 2 Oil Spillage at Andoni

Oil spillage pollutes the river water due to illegal crude oil exploration and oil theft, which is often caused by pipeline damage in the communities.

There are several rivers and lakes along the road from Unyeada village to Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in the case study area of Andoni.

The above photograph shows that the river water is oily and very dark in colour due to oil spillage, which contaminates the water. The main occupation of the people in these communities is fishing, but the consistent oil spillage has killed the fish in the water, and the land is no longer fertile enough for farming activities to take place in this area.

More so, there is a high concentration of household waste, such as plastic bags and bottles, found by the researcher during fieldwork at Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, as illustrated by the photograph below:

Figure 3 Port Harcourt Tourist Beach

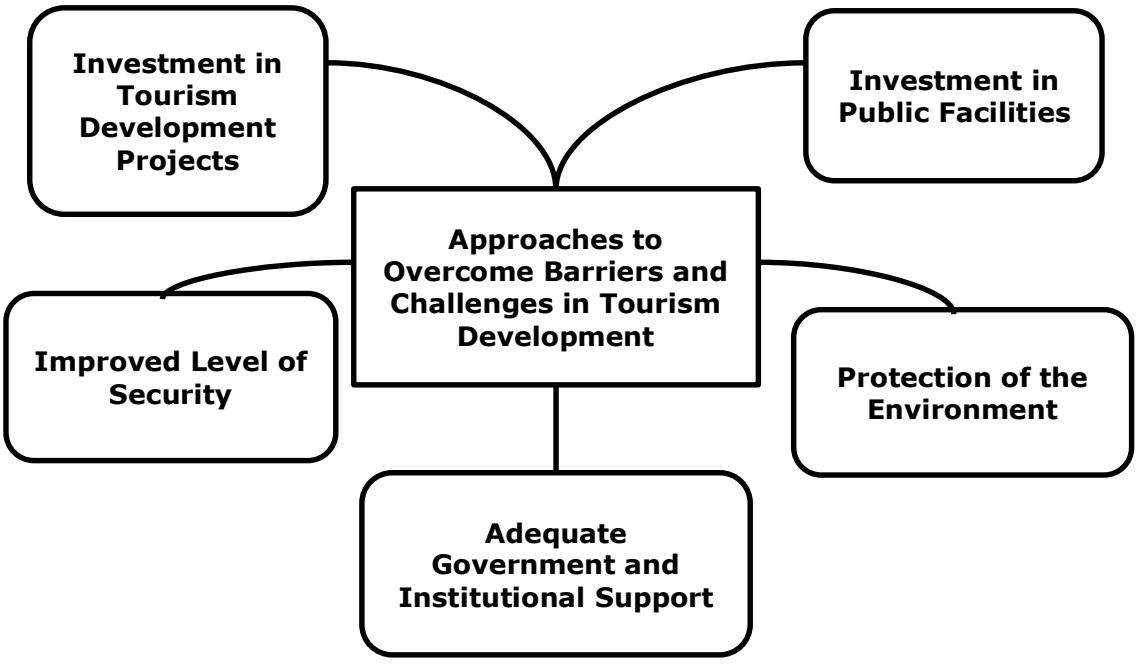
According to CHI-RPT, a research participant at Port Harcourt Tourist Beach commented that:

"The people pollute the water with household waste thrown into the water, and the activities of the boat drivers also contribute to water pollution, as well as issues of plastic and petroleum waste on the water's surface".

The views expressed by CHI-RPT were confirmed during the visit to Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, where household waste was found in the water, oil traces were on the surface, and many damaged boats were parked directly on the beach.

Therefore, pollution and a dirty environment are obstacles to the development of coastal tourism in Port Harcourt, as tourists are less interested in visiting the destination than they were in previous years.

7.3 Approaches to Overcome Barriers and Challenges to Coastal Tourism Development



Despite the opportunities created by tourism as a tool for development, it is essential to identify and find solutions to some of the existing problems and constraints that serve as obstacles to achieving the desired objectives of poverty alleviation and community development in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State. The findings from this study identify various approaches that can help overcome the problems associated with the underdevelopment of coastal destinations.

7.3.1 Investment in Tourism Development Projects

There should be an increase in funding through investment in tourism-related projects, such as the Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, which has suffered from deteriorating facilities over the years, resulting in a decline in tourist visits to the destination. However, the Old Seaport at Abonnema needs redevelopment to become an attractive location for tourists once again. According to PST-RPT, a research participant in Andoni commented that:

> *"The people of this community also need more power and financial resources to develop God-gifted resources such as the Atlantic beach as a tourist attraction".*

Additionally, Atlantic Beach in Andoni requires funding to explore its potential as a coastal destination for development and to contribute to the local community by creating jobs and generating employment

opportunities. Another research participant, SOY-RPT at Abonnema, stated that:

> *"The people should be treated as important stakeholders in the community development plan and encouraged to participate in a private-public partnership."*

The researcher agreed with the views expressed by PST-RPT and SOY-RPT that there is a need for private investment to complement government efforts in tourism development projects, as is the case with the oil and gas sector across the state. Most of the funding for tourism development projects in Rivers State comes from the government, and there is a need for a public-private partnership to support the government's efforts through investment.

7.3.2 Investment in Public Facilities

The success of coastal tourism development depends on the availability of and investment in capital projects, such as an accessible road network, the construction of a jetty on the waterways to reach riverine communities, the development of lodging and hotels for tourist accommodation, and improvements in telecommunication facilities.

A research participant, FAV-RPT at Ikuru Town in Andoni, commented that:

> "*Tourism facilities need to be developed by the state government through investment in infrastructural facilities such as the building*

of accessible roads, guest houses and hotels for tourists to lodge and preservation of our forest"

During the field work at case study areas in November 2021, most parts of the road were under reconstruction as the researcher travelled from Port Harcourt to Andoni through Buan Town, where most parts of the roads were under reconstruction, and the researcher decided to seek an alternative route from Kpean village through Unyeada to Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town.

Therefore, investment in infrastructure facilities will help communities overcome various obstacles that hinder the development of coastal tourism in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt.

7.3.3 Improved Level of Security

Tourism development is significantly affected by the security of the lives and properties of both host communities and tourists visiting the coastal destinations. However, there is a need to provide adequate protection and enforcement of safety measures, such as increased joint patrols of the waterways by police and military personnel, to control the activities of criminals.

According to PST-RPT, a research participant at Asuk-Ama in Andoni commented:

> "*The people need to be involved in decision-making and understand that tourists come to visit for leisure and will not threaten the security of the people or their properties and change their local culture".*

The researcher supported the views of PST-RPT that host communities are essential stakeholders in the implementation of tourism development policies. The representatives of local people in coastal areas, such as Atlantic Beach, must be involved in decision-making processes to ensure the safety of both residents and tourists. Furthermore, during the fieldwork at Andoni, the researcher observed a higher level of security provided by the Army, as evidenced by the setting up of a roadblock when attempting to access the Atlantic Beach from the Asuk-Ama Junction.

In addition, when tourists learn through the media that the government is providing adequate protection in coastal destinations, the visitors are more likely to have a positive perception of the security forces' intervention, which ensures their safety (Cruz-Milan et al., 2016; Akamavi et al., 2023). There is a need to create awareness about the government's efforts to protect its residents and visitors, highlighting that River State is a safer tourist destination, in response to propaganda and negative media reports.

7.3.4 Adequate Government and Institutional Support

Provision of necessary support by the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism on behalf of the state government, including other agencies such as Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA), on planning and implementation of coastal tourism development policies. There is a need for cooperation among various stakeholders in organising and promoting tourism-related events, creating awareness and enlightenment programmes about the benefits of association with the development of coastal tourism within the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt. According to PST-RPT, a research participant from Asuk-Ama in Andoni commented that:

> *"The government must provide a conducive environment where people can develop their skills through regular training and youth empowerment programmes to reduce the level of their poverty".*

Another research participant, ELD-RPT from Ikuru Town in Andoni, also commented that:

> *"Our government should engage in an enlightenment programme that will help educate the people about the benefits the community can derive from coastal tourism development".*

The findings from this study supported the views and opinions of both PST-RPT and ELD-RPT that the government should engage with residents through educational campaigns, training and empowerment programmes

about the socio-economic benefits associated with the development of coastal tourism in their communities.

7.3.5 Protection of the Environment

Increased awareness and the creation of an enabling environment through adequate protection of external influences, such as socio-economic and political factors. Significantly, the coastal areas need protection from water pollution and gas flaring caused by the activities of the petroleum exploration organisation. The conservation of endangered species in their natural habitats, the protection of mangrove forests, and the preservation of wildlife such as elephants and dolphins from illegal poaching and exploitation are crucial.

A research participant, PST-RPT from Asuk-Ama in Andoni, commented that:

> *"We are creating awareness about elephant preservation in our forest".*

Another research participant, MIN-RPT, a civil servant from Abonnema who lived in Port Harcourt, also commented that:

> *"Our primary occupation is fishing*; other animals, *such as elephants, are also in our forest, but you would not believe it. We also have a crocodile in our water; if those animals are protected and preserved, the tourists will come and see it".*

Therefore, political influences from the government and its agencies have a direct impact on the environment, as they are responsible for implementing development policies and protecting coastal areas from negative environmental effects caused by pollution and climate change.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the findings on the state of tourism in Rivers State, as well as the opportunities for developing tourism and challenges to harnessing the potential benefits of visitors to the local economy. Rivers State is a place with numerous cultural and natural attractions that have yet to be exploited to benefit the local communities. The presence of these resources makes Rivers State a potential key tourism destination in Nigeria. Tourism is concentrated in Port Harcourt, and most of the resources there are tailored to day travellers.

The CARNIRIV and the Andoni Unity Carnival are the only events that bring more visitors to the state. The leaders in Rivers State would take the success of these events to develop more tourism activities. However, the research findings indicate that due to the lack of financial support and willingness from political leaders to promote tourism development, along with the threat of insecurity, the state is missing out on the potential socio-economic benefits that could bring development in the poor rural coastal areas, particularly in Andoni and Abonnema.

Therefore, Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole can be regarded as a country tailor-made for tourism. It's over 370 ethnic groups give it a rich cultural heritage, and it is blessed with natural wonders, unique wildlife, and a very favourable climate. Yet minimal effort has been made to develop and harness the potential of tourism and its contribution to community development in tourist destinations.

The discussion in the following chapter will focus on poverty and the socio-economic benefits connected with sustainable coastal tourism development in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THESIS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 3

SUSTAINABLE COASTAL TOURISM AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RIVERS STATE

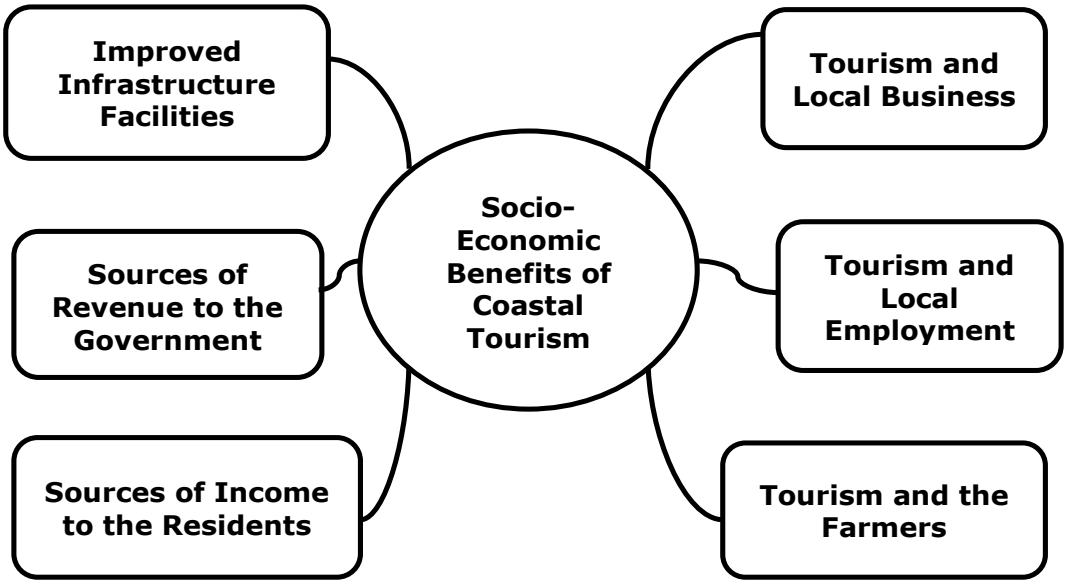
8.0 Introduction

Following the failure of the Millennium Goals to eradicate poverty by 2015, the UN member states agreed and ratified the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to work towards achieving 17 goals and setting the agenda for global development by 2030. The SDGs differ from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in that they are universal and apply to all countries, regardless of their level of development.

In response to tourism's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, Bramwell et al. (2017) observed that if tourism researchers were to be more impactful in their studies, they need to refocus their research on the challenges identified by the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to other global initiatives to fight against poverty. One of the objectives of this research was to identify opportunities for sustainable coastal tourism development and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Rivers State. This chapter discusses the third objective of the current study, focusing on the first SDGs (Eradicating Poverty) and second SDGs (Food Security) in addition to SDG 8 (Decent Labour).

The chapter begins by discussing the socioeconomic impacts of developing coastal tourism on the local economy, including its contributions through job creation, employment opportunities, sources of income, and the linkages between tourism and agriculture. The following sections discuss the state of poverty in Rivers State, laying the groundwork for justifying the use of Sustainable Coastal Tourism Development as a driver to reduce poverty.

8.1 Socio-Economic Benefit of Coastal Tourism Development



8.1.1 Tourism and Local Businesses

Rivers State is one of the most resource-rich states in Nigeria; besides its large deposits of oil and gas, the area has extensive arable lands, water resources and an extended coastal area. In terms of infrastructure, the state has an international airport, two seaports, and a rail and road network that connects the state to other metropolitan areas, such as FCT

Abuja and Lagos. According to the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency, the state has all the necessary ingredients to develop sustainable coastal tourism; one of the key areas for tourism success at any destination is the development of local businesses.

One of the advantages of tourism development is the growth of local businesses. The increase in visitor numbers to a destination can help stimulate small, locally owned businesses, including retail shops and restaurants. At the same time, the local people can take advantage of having a lot of people in the area to engage in businesses in the informal sector.

In Rivers State, the last category of businesses, the informal sector, is the most beneficiary of the existing tourism in the area. The research participants were very positive about the opportunities the carnival provides for those engaging in the informal trade. Port Harcourt hosts most of the formal businesses in Rivers State, such as hotels, restaurants, and travel and tour agencies.

However, in other areas of the state, some people just engaged in trade during the festive season, when events such as carnivals were organised. After the carnival, the residents returned to their usual economic activities, such as agriculture and fishing. The participants expressed the desire to have such events throughout the year to increase participation in the business sector.

For instance, one of the participants, PST-RPT, a resident of Andoni with a small farm, was optimistic about the business opportunities provided by the carnivals in both Port Harcourt and Andoni. He observed that:

> *"The carnival period is an opportunity to make some money; many people are willing to spend their money. I hired a stall for my wife to sell bole[1] and Onunu[2] To the visitors, people like the food. Sometimes, I have to prepare it three or four times a day. People come asking for me to eat my food. I grow the yams and plantain that I use in the stall. I only buy the fish and oil. It is a pity that the Carnivals last for only two months. I wish we could have them for a whole year".*

Another participant, CHR-RPT, from Abonnema, also observed that:

> *I only work for two months in a year, that is during the carnival; I sell Zobo, Palm Wine, Zunu and Coca-Cola. There is business during the Carnival; I also sell some drinks at the Unity Carnival in Andoni, but not as many as I do at Port Harcourt. The money helps to pay my sibling's fees and invest some in my parents' garden. (CHR-RPT).*

[1] Bole is a local food made from a combination of roasted plantain or yams with fish and spicy palm oil. It is more of a street food and people usually eat it at lunch.

[2] Onunu is boiled yam, plantain and oil and can be eaten with any soup

These comments highlight the significance of tourism in providing opportunities for local residents to participate in tourism-related activities through informal businesses. The informal sector in tourism in Africa plays an essential role in reducing poverty.

Firstly, businesses are easy to start with little capital and no formal legalities; secondly, the business can be part-time, where the main participants are engaged in other economic activities and only engage in informal trade when necessary, such as during the Christmas holiday or when big events are organised.

According to Worahu et al. (2022), the existence of informal businesses in Rivers State is attributed to several factors, including their ease of operation, tax avoidance, and the high levels of unemployment in the area. The oil and gas companies practice informalisation by hiring just a few core staff members, with the rest working as needed, allowing people plenty of time to participate in other economic activities. The carnival, with its large number of visitors in the area, provides that opportunity to engage in informal trade.

However, the beneficiaries are not only the people in informal trade but also the local businesses in the area. The local businesses included the local retail shops and restaurants. The participants from this group also expressed their satisfaction with the tourism activities in the area, most notably the Carnivals.

One of the retailers (FAV-RPT) observed that:

"We sit the whole year struggling to make ends meet, as sometimes we have to sell on credit when people do not have money. Nevertheless, during the carnival, the place comes alive and we get many customers, even the local people manage to pay off their debts during this period. I do prepare and stock enough to make it through this period. We are so busy that I have to recruit two boys from the village to come and assist me. During the Carnival, there is no time for eating lunch as we are busy throughout the day. We close at midnight, but even then, more people are still coming to buy a few things, and these are mostly drinks".

These views from the traders are similar to the findings of other studies by Mmom and Ekpenyong (2015), which used a quantitative approach on the socioeconomic benefits of tourism in Rivers State. The study found that many local businesses in the area registered increased trade and high turnover during the festival. Other studies have also indicated the importance of tourism to local businesses of all sizes.

For instance, Marcinkowska et al. (2024) noted in their study of rural tourism development in the European area the strengths of tourism in creating local business opportunities that could contribute to the redistribution of income in the region. FAV-RPT's observation that she hires two local boys is an example of how tourism in Rivers State is helping in the redistribution of income in the area.

The incomes may seem insignificant, but to the unemployed living in a poor area, these small incomes could mean a lot to the recipients and their families. Suppose more businesses are created due to the increased number of visitors in the area, and they also get local people to work for them. In that case, there is more income redistribution, which could contribute to poverty reduction in the area.

Another area where local people earn income is accommodation; although there are hotels in Port Harcourt, they do not provide enough rooms for the large number of visitors to the area during the carnival. Many enterprising local people rent out rooms in their houses to accommodate tourists, and some of them share their food with the visitors.

This benefit was observed by one of the participants, CHR-RPT, from Abonnema, who commented:

> *"Most people in the community benefit in one way or another, especially those who buy and sell things like food and drinks, because some people visit from outside Abonnema; those who have accommodation businesses, like the hotel, also benefit a lot during the Christmas season. Some local people rented out their rooms to visitors at a fee and earned some money during the period".*

Big events and festivals are a source of income for local residents with spare rooms, as the large number of visitors in the area means the available accommodation facilities may not be enough to accommodate all of them. Homestays are a reliable source of income for host families and

can help in the fight against poverty. In a study of tourism development in rural areas of Kenya, Kimaija and Kihima (2018) highlighted the significance of homestay revenue to rural farmers in Taita County, Kenya. This is an area the authorities in the Rivers State Tourism Agency need to explore and educate the local people on the necessary standards, such as keeping good hygiene, to attract more paying visitors to their homes.

Andoni and Abonnema lack hospitality facilities that could accommodate the formal tourist's needs. However, the two areas have an enormous potential for investment in food and accommodation as coastal tourism is promoted. In both Andoni and Abonnema, a few local restaurants are serving traditional local food, although their menus are limited to a single course. They have a low capacity for capital and a low level of tourism knowledge, which results in low performance on the tourism side.

However, their role in redistributing tourism income to farmers in the inner villages should not be underplayed. Conversations with the restaurant operators revealed that the restaurants depend on the local market for their supplies. This way, revenue from tourism is indirectly distributed to the local farmers in the villages through linkages.

Therefore, this indicates one positive economic impact that tourism can have on local farmers in Asuk Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, as well as Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA. Many individuals in these two LGAs would like to get involved in tourism activities beyond the carnivals. However, they are unable to do so due to the low number of tourists

outside of the Carnival, and when asked what stops them, the capital was the most cited reason.

ELD-RPT is an older woman in Ikuru Town, Andoni, who expressed what most people would like to do to benefit from tourism:

> *"I would like to sell food and drinks, this way I will be able to use products from my garden, but the tourists do not reach our village as they only stop in Port Harcourt. And I don't have the money to start up a business in Port Harcourt, as the rent for buildings is very high, and I cannot afford it. So I have to wait until the Carnival both in Port Harcourt and Andoni to sell to the visitors (Informal conversation)".*

The question of capital was put to those already in the restaurant business. They were asked where they obtained the capital to build and operate their businesses, and the most common responses from entrepreneurs from both Andoni and Abonnema were personal savings, assistance from family members, and the sale of land. The conclusion that can be drawn from these answers is that there is no established system for financial institutions to extend loans to willing and able villagers who wish to venture into the tourism business.

8.1.2 Tourism and Local Employment

According to Lain and Pape of the World Bank (2024), Nigeria's unemployment rate is estimated at 5%. However, just 13% of the people categorised as employed are underemployed. The National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria classifies people who are economically active or working between the ages of 15 and 64. Underemployed people are those engaged in work for less than 20 hours a week, while unemployed people are people without work but willing and actively seeking employment (NBS, 2022).

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) in Nigeria, Rivers State has the second-highest unemployment rate in the country, at 45.2%. This is blamed on the political leadership of Rivers State, which paid little attention to accessible economic activities such as tourism and little investment in human capital development (Chukwudi and Ugbomah, 2022). Unemployment and poverty are closely related (Renahy et al., 2018), so it could be argued that high unemployment rates in Rivers State are comparable to the poverty rates.

Furthermore, some commentators have argued that unemployment has a significant impact on security in the region. Okafor (2011) argued that the high crime rates in some states in Nigeria, including Rivers State, appeared to be related to the high numbers of unemployed youth. This is exacerbated by the growing corruption in public offices, poor governance and poor policies (Okafor, 2011; Chukwudi and Ugbomah, 2022).

Employment is considered a key macroeconomic variable for economic development. It is one of the main parameters of development; therefore, having full employment is the goal of both the central and local governments (Dayananda, 2014). Employment is an important source of income for households and a key source of achieving self-respect. It provides entitlement and access to goods and services, thus contributing to the redistribution of revenue in the economy.

Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, unemployment falls under SDG 8, Decent Work & Economic Growth. Tourism is a key generator of employment, particularly within emerging economies (UN Tourism, 2010; Zhao et al., 2023). It generates direct employment for people working in tourism-related activities and indirect jobs for those working in the supply chain (UN Tourism, 2010).

It is argued that the jobs created by tourism are a source of income and an improved standard of living for many people, making it possible for them to afford to get food, shelter, other goods and services, as well as dignity. This is closely linked to SDG8. However, for this to be effective, there must be strong participation from local communities in the development of tourism. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) introduced the concept of decent work in 1999, arguing for workers' dignity. The basic idea of decent work is productive work under conditions of freedom, equity, and dignity, where freedom means that workers'

rights are protected, equity implies adequate remuneration for work, and dignity encompasses social coverage or protection.

Tourism is known for creating jobs and employment opportunities for the local people; this is one of the socioeconomic benefits that could help redistribute tourism income within a destination. However, a few people find employment in tourism in the area, as most of it is seasonal and only available during the carnival season. It could be argued that the development of coastal tourism has the potential to harness those benefits, contribute to community development and poverty reduction. Therefore, some residents, particularly the youth, will be able to benefit directly through employment opportunities. It is recognised that not everyone would be employed in tourism, but increased employment would create a market for other products and stimulate agriculture in the area.

Some of the Indigenous people and residents will be directly involved through employment. In contrast, others may not be engaged in direct tourism but will also benefit from family and friends working in tourism-related businesses or organisations. A research participant, CHR-RPT from Abonnema, commented that:

> *"Most people in the community benefit in one way or another, especially those who buy and sell things like food and drinks, because some people visit from outside Abonnema; those with*

accommodation businesses like the hotel also benefit greatly during the Christmas season".

The development of coastal tourism would encourage investment in establishing tourism-related companies in these communities. People selling tourism products and services, such as accommodations, restaurants, fishing trips, arts and crafts stores, and Indigenous cultural experiences, could potentially create jobs. Using the opportunities already created by the Carnival to develop coastal tourism with Indigenous cultural experiences is the most valuable product that can be developed in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt.

The carnivals provide a unique opportunity for visitors to experience the culture and traditions of the people living in these communities, irrespective of their religion and beliefs, such as organising beach parties, cultural dancing and masquerade performances.

These communities only organised those events during the festive period in December every year, and the residents supported consistency, regularly organising beach parties and masquerade performances to encourage tourists to visit the area at any time of the year.

Another research participant SOY-RPT commented that: -

"Everyone benefits in one way or another during this time, especially the youth and the women. *The youth participated in the games and engaged in the transport business by using motorcycles to carry people from one location to another".*

The comments from CHR-RPT and SOY-RPT show that the development of coastal tourism in their community would create more opportunities for the people and contribute to community development as the source of income from jobs increases. Especially the youths, most of whom were highly educated, and women interested in becoming local food vendors and selling handmade handicrafts to the tourists. The residents are the pillars of the communities and the society at large; they are the bedrock that provides human resources to coordinate and execute tourism development plans. Most people living across the communities and within the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt have the required skills, knowledge, ability, and willingness to contribute to their community development by working in tourism-related jobs whenever the opportunity arises.

In the case study areas of Andoni and Abonnema, tourism is not one of the main economic activities; however, it has created several jobs in Port Harcourt. There is little to no employment in tourism in Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni and Abonnema, except during the festive season.

However, the Carnivals and Beach parties at the end of the year are credited with creating job opportunities for the local people. Tourism is a labour-intensive sector and source of employment for youth and women (Aynalem et al., 2016). A number of young people and women get casual jobs during the Carnival; though the jobs may seem low paying, they

provide income to the local people experiencing poverty (poor) and change their livelihoods.

In this study, some participants expressed their appreciation for the jobs created during the Carnival, while others expressed their desire to work in the tourism industry. For instance, one of the participants, a youth from Andoni, commented:

> *"I would like to see tourism grow in our area; if we get hotels in Andoni, that will create jobs for many people. I would like to work as a tour guide, taking the tourists around and educating them about our culture. During the Carnival, I work as a guide, taking people around and explaining some of the exhibitions, and in the end, I get some good money".*

The women participants were interested in cooking food and making handicrafts. One of the female participants, CHR-RPT, observed that:

> *"I want to see tourism in the area, as this will allow us to sell some of the handicrafts made in the community. During the Carnival, I worked for a lady from Port Harcourt selling handicrafts; you know, most of them are made here by local women. If we get tourism here, the women do not need to sell their crafts to traders in Port Harcourt; they can sell it themselves to the tourists. They would get more money. I have been working for this lady at the carnival for the last three years, and I'm always surprised by the money people make for the crafts; if that money goes to the people who make*

these crafts, many of them will be able to afford a lot of things they are lacking".

Handmade crafts are well recognised as a source of income to support the local communities. They have a good reputation for being unique, high-quality, and often socially responsible.

Another participant, MIN-RPT, commented that:

"Our traditional attire (cloth), such as Ankara, is exported to Europe and America, and my cousin sends these clothes to Dubai and gets paid in foreign currency, US dollars".

The role of crafts in the global arena has gained recognition for both developed and developing economies as well as the local communities (Bellver et al., 2023). Korhonen (2011) noted that handicraft is not only a source of income but also a profession for the residents who make crafts.

Bellver et al. (2023) argued that handicraft is now considered an essential tool for local economic development and job creation. Rivers State is predominantly rural, and in this study, both Andoni and Abonnema can be defined as rural; these areas have a high risk of poverty.

According to Kay (2009), who argued that poverty still has an overwhelmingly rural outlook. The making and selling of handicrafts in rural areas could help to reduce poverty and territorial inequalities in the state.

Rivers State, focusing on the development of Sustainable Coastal Tourism, needs to promote not only the sale of handicrafts to generate income for local communities but also to view handicrafts as a source of employment for the youth and women in the state.

8.1.3 Tourism and the Farmers

The second Sustainable Development Goal is to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Tourism may not have a direct effect on ending hunger and achieving food security. However, as Torres and Momsen (2011) observed in a current environment affected by climate change, poverty and rising food prices, tourism's linkages to agriculture could be a driver for reducing poverty in some communities. Tourism has the ability to contribute to poverty reduction in two ways: as a form of agriculture, tourism brings indirect income to local farmers. Secondly, it serves as a market source for tourism businesses, such as hotels and restaurants.

Agritourism, defined as the symbiotic relationship between tourism and agriculture, is a form of tourism in which activities focus directly on agriculture and utilise the unique offerings of rural and agriculture-rich communities (Walteji and Zerihun, 2018; Fischer, 2019). Agritourism is a growing industry that offers tourists a unique experience, allowing them to live on a farm and explore the local culture while participating in sustainable agricultural practices. It is also an opportunity to promote sustainable development, as the integrated development of agriculture

and tourism is conducive to the realisation of agricultural ecological value, which will facilitate the green development of agriculture and improve the green total factor productivity of agriculture as well (Fischer, 2019).

Rivers State has larger and more extensive arable land than most of the states in the southern parts of Nigeria (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010). The state is well endowed with water resources and has two of the largest fertiliser plants in the country. The Rivers State government developed an agricultural policy that promotes private-public partnerships to develop commercial agriculture. The state serves as a platform for profitable crop and fish farming for local farmers; if the state is to promote agritourism, there is a solid foundation for that in Rivers State.

One of the research participants, PRO-RPT, a lecturer at one of the higher institutions in Port Harcourt, commented:

> *"Rivers State is not just oil and gas; the state is blessed with lush vegetation and rich agricultural resources. If you go deep into the villages away from Port Harcourt, you will see fertile farmland, rivers and forests. Rivers State is a place of natural beauty; it is the breadbasket of Nigeria and a major contributor to the food basket. Yes, we need to promote agritourism; my only problem is that we have not yet realised the link between tourism and agriculture. So, the farmers are missing out on that income source, which could help lift many people out of poverty".*

These remarks by the participants highlight the missed opportunities for many communities in the developing world, where they fail to link tourism with agriculture to maximise their contribution to local economic development and poverty reduction (Walteji and Zerihun, 2018). However, the participant observed that the linkage of agriculture and tourism to promote agritourism could not only be a source of income for farmers but also provide employment opportunities for local people, contribute to local economic development, and help reduce poverty.

Agriculture-tourism linkage does not only exist through agritourism but also through tourism acting as a source of market for agricultural products. Telfer and Wall (1996) observed a strong relationship between tourism and agriculture that ranges from conflict and competition over resources such as land and labour to a symbiosis where tourism and agriculture benefit each other.

Fleischer and Tchetchik (2005) argue in support of the linkage between tourism and agriculture that if farmers do not accrue income from the demand side of tourism, they may do so from the supply side by supplying foodstuffs to tourism businesses.

With the current state of tourism in Rivers State, farmers do not benefit much beyond the festive season, especially during the Christmas period, when most of the events, such as carnivals and masquerade performances, are organised.

However, using the resources available in the state to develop sustainable coastal tourism would create a market for the farmers. This would not only redistribute incomes but could also generate new jobs and directly contribute to poverty reduction in the area.

8.1.4 Sources of Income to the Residents

The development of coastal tourism can become a source of income for the people of the research communities. The development of coastal tourism can become a significant source of income for the people of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, including those residing in neighbouring communities and the entire population of Rivers State. According to a research participant, FAV-RPT, who stated that:

> *"If the events are organised regularly, more people will benefit by generating more income that will help to improve their welfare".*

The above participant, an indigene of Ikuru Town in Andoni, believes that yearly organised events, such as the Andoni Unity Carnival, beach parties, and masquerade performances, should be held regularly so that more people can participate and benefit from these events. This will generate more income for the people of this community, which will help improve their living standards and contribute to community development.

The income generated by people in these communities may come from direct employment in tourism-related businesses, such as working in hotels and receiving their salaries at the end of the month, as well as

payments received by hotel owners, lodging providers, or transportation companies serving the tourist destination.

Another research participant, BES-RPT, comments that:

> *"When people are gainfully employed and receive a salary at the end of the month, their living conditions and well-being will improve".*

However, income generated through wages and salaries collected by people working in tourism-related businesses will help to meet and satisfy the physiological needs for food, drink, and shelter. This will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living of the local people and, consequently, lead to community development.

Moreover, the benefits of tourism development are not limited to those who work directly with tourism-related businesses; local people who sell food in restaurants and those who sell handicrafts also benefit from selling to tourists, generating income that is used for their daily needs.

MIN-RPT and EKI-RPT also comment that:

> *"Many people don't know that the local artisans can make money from selling painted artwork to visitors".*
>
> *"If tourism is improved, it will encourage people to eat out and enjoy more of their beer and women; it will also generate income. Yes, it may depend on the kind of income and may not necessarily be a large income. Yes, it will encourage hawkers. But I doubt they*

can do it consistently because the "Go To Niger" and all other cultural activities are yearly".

The motivating factor for people seeking employment or engaging in the business of buying and selling is to create a source to generate income and fulfil their basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Šimková and Holzner, 2014). The development of Atlantic Beach into a standard coastal tourism destination will attract more tourists to Andoni and its neighbouring communities, thereby opening the local economy and leading to the prosperity of its residents.

One of the key findings from this research is that the primary motivating factors behind people seeking employment are to receive economic benefits, generate income through wages or salaries, and profit from their business transactions, such as selling food and handicrafts to tourists.

8.1.5 Sources of Revenue to the Government

Tourism development can become a source of revenue generation for the state and local governments in Rivers State. According to Alamai et al. (2018), tourism has the potential to become a significant source of income for residents, given the numerous tourist attractions available in Nigeria (Amalare et al., 2020).

However, the revenue generated from activities such as coastal tourism in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt could benefit the economy and provide the government with both domestic and foreign exchange earnings.

A research participant, BES-RPT, commented that:

> *"Tourism can bring in revenue for the government and improve the well-being of people and their environment".*

Domestic earnings are revenue generated internally by the government through tax payments from tourism business operators, as well as accommodation and transport services providers, including hotels, lodging, airlines, ferry services, and road transporters.

Revenue can also be generated from direct services the government provides to tourists visiting destinations. Another research participant, EKI-RPT, a civil servant working at Akuku Toru Local Government Secretariat in Abonnema, commented that:

> *"Tourism generates income and revenue; the government can also generate revenue from visitors by charging them for tickets to access tourist facilities, such as museums. During the festival period, if you visit the waterside, you will see flying boats on the sea, and people will have to pay to enter the boat, as this creates jobs for the locals and generates income for the community".*

The returns on investment in tourism development are connected to a multiplying effect, as the people of the host community receive direct economic benefits by generating income through their involvement in tourism-related businesses. Likewise, the revenue generated by the government through taxes, levies and fees collected is used to develop the communities.

A research participant, MIN-RPT, an indigene of Abonnema who lived in Port Harcourt, was a civil servant and worked with the Rivers State government; she also commented that:

> *"Coastal tourism and marine tourism are money spinners because you have to pay; even in Dubai, when we went for dinner on a boat cruise, if the government can provide the type of boat I am talking about now, people pay to enter and drive off into the sea, they are given dinner, play music and enjoy themselves; you ride on the boat, and you come back. You pay the government some money, you pay the owner of the boat, and the government uses the money to develop new areas".*

According to the UNWTO (2015), many African countries, such as Kenya, Seychelles, Egypt, and South Africa, among others, receive substantial earnings from tourism and depend on revenue from foreign nationals from Europe and the Americas who visit their countries (Oladele et al., 2018).

Therefore, tourism has become another source of revenue and foreign exchange earnings for many developed countries in Europe, America, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, unlike in Nigeria, where most tourism products are still at an infant or developing stage. It can be argued that tourism could become a major source of revenue generation for the Rivers State government and complement the earnings from the oil and gas sector; it will eventually overtake earnings from fishing and

agriculture if the necessary funds are invested into the development of coastal tourism in the state, especially in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt.

8.1.6 Improved Infrastructure Facilities

Tourism can only thrive in an environment with adequate social amenities such as roads, airports, electricity, telecommunications, and water. The availability of infrastructure facilities will facilitate the development of coastal tourism in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, while encouraging potential tourists to visit the destinations. According to Jovanovic and Ivana (2016), tourism infrastructure is regarded as the basis for the development of tourism (Amoako et al., 2021).

During my visit to the case study areas for data collection, many roads were under reconstruction, and new overhead bridges were being built. The various attractions in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt can be easily accessible by tourists using different modes of transportation, such as cars, waterways, motorcycles, bicycles, and on foot, for those people living very close to the destinations.

A research participant, FAV-RPT, commented that:

> *"The state government needs to develop tourism facilities through investment in infrastructure, such as building accessible roads, guesthouses, and hotels for tourists to lodge, while also preserving our forests".*

According to another research participant, CHI-RPT, commented that:

> *"Suppose tourism facilities are developed in Port Harcourt tourist beach, the environment is cleaned from oil waste, a good road network is built, and the security of people and their properties is improved. In that case, more visitors will be attracted to this area to visit places like the zoo. If this is returned to the tourist beach, it will increase the number of visitors coming to see those animals".*

Basic facilities are readily available to local residents and foreign tourists, especially those visiting Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, popularly known as the Garden City. Public transportation is available to take tourists from one community to another; hotels, lodging accommodations, and restaurants in Port Harcourt and Abonnema provide accommodation services.

Furthermore, there were no hotels or lodging facilities available in Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, Andoni, at the time of my visit. Despite this, tourists can visit this destination and return to Port Harcourt on the same day. However, due to the high level of hospitality and generosity of the residents of this community, tourists are welcome, and their doors are widely open to homestays with other families for a truly immersive experience away from home. The possibility of connecting to other tourist destinations by roads and waterways will attract more visitors to different communities across the state.

To make the destination easily accessible from different parts of Rivers State and Nigeria, the transportation network, roads, and jetty need improvement.

Therefore, major towns and cities in Rivers State, such as Port Harcourt and Abonnema, are connected to the national grid to supply electricity. Moreover, during my visit, there was no electricity available in Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, because the communities are not connected to the national grid; instead, power is generated from solar and electric generators.

The subsequent section examines the level of poverty among the residents of Rivers State, focusing on aspects beyond monetary value, such as education and health, among others.

8.2 Multidimensional Poverty in Rivers State

The focus on poverty has shifted from mainly relying on monetary measures to include other factors in the Multidimensional Poverty Index. However, the MPI for Nigeria was calculated using 15 indicators grouped into four dimensions: health, education, living standards, and unemployment, which are often reported as both work and shock (Akinyehun et al., 2021; NBS, 2022; Azubuike et al., 2024). The World Bank's MPI measures poverty beyond monetary poverty, including factors such as education and access to basic infrastructure facilities (World Bank 2020). According to the World Bank, eradicating poverty is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 1.

The UN and the World Bank consider extreme poverty to be a condition where people live on less than $2.15 a day. Moreover, the SDGs aim to eradicate extreme poverty worldwide by 2030, and this remains one of the most significant challenges facing many developing countries in the Global South, including those in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Nigeria.

Rivers State is one of the southern states in Nigeria. It is a resource-rich state with a large population living in poverty (Dapel, 2018; Okojie, 2023). According to the StatiSense study (2022), at least 4.4 million people in Rivers State can be classified as living in multidimensional poverty, which is almost 62% of the estimated 7.47 million people in the state.

Rivers State is one of the 36 states in Nigeria, and it is among the leading states in revenue generation. According to the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) Report at the State level by the National Bureau of Statistics (2021), Rivers State recorded the 3rd highest IGR after Lagos and Abuja, the two largest cities in Nigeria. The NBS (2021) claimed that Rivers State used the revenue to support its capital expenses, which took at least 78% of the revenue. However, the IGR in Rivers State has not been felt by the residents, who are mired in poverty and high unemployment. According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (2019), 1,914,023 people were living below the poverty line, accounting for 23.9% of Rivers State's 8,008,465 inhabitants.

However, the report also indicated that poverty is more concentrated in the rural areas of the state, 53.1%, than in urban areas, with 18% (NBS, 2019).

The Federal Government of Nigeria set up a 13% deprivation fund to reduce poverty in Rivers and other southern States. The fund's purpose was to help the states with large oil and gas resources benefit from their natural resources. However, some analysts are sceptical about the fund's ability to serve its purposes. Commentators have questioned the purpose of this fund, which has failed to lift the southern states, including Rivers State, out of poverty.

Many households in these states still live in poverty. Despite the existence of the deprivation fund and the substantial support it receives, poverty is still high, and it is made worse by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising cost of living, high fuel prices, and the poor performance of the naira, Nigeria's main currency, against the US dollar.

The deprivation fund was used for a cash transfer programme, employing community-based targeting methods to provide low-income families in some parts of the state (Rivers State) with a monthly stipend of N5000. According to the World Bank (2007), a poverty mapping exercise carried out in Rivers State identified six of the 23 Local government Areas as the poorest, including Akuku-Toru, Tai, Degema, Khana, Ogu-Bolo, and Hokitika. A total of 267,812 from these states were identified as potential beneficiaries, of which at least 73,601 households were claimed to have

benefited from the projects. (National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, March 2020). Cash transfers to low-income families (poor) have been hailed as one way of reducing poverty in developing countries.

A report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI, 2017) noted that the British arm for foreign aid—DFID's cash transfer projects in developing countries were successful, targeting the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Another study by Son (2008) for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) found that some projects were successful, while others failed to have a direct impact on poverty reduction.

Similarly, Schady and Aroujo's (2006) study found that cash transfer initiatives had a positive impact on education, health, and nutrition, but had little effect on monetary poverty. From an academic perspective, a number of studies on the impact of cash transfer projects have been done with varying and sometimes conflicting outcomes. Among the multidimensional factors of poverty, the biggest beneficiaries of cash transfers to the poor are health and nutrition (Bastagli et al., 2016; Sibson et al., 2018).

According to the World Bank (2019), the cash transfer projects helped at least 36% of the poor people in Rivers State escape poverty and reduce inequality. However, some commentators questioned the criteria used to select people with low incomes, as 86% of people experiencing poverty in Rivers State identified that the National Bureau of Statistics are excluded from benefitting from the fund.

Furthermore, only six out of the 23 LGAs in Rivers State were included, leaving 74% of the state out of the project, despite also experiencing poverty. The participants of the study were sceptical of money handouts as a solution to reducing poverty in the state. According to one participant, who is a civil servant in Rivers State, talking about poverty in the state, MIN-RPT observed that:

> *"The problem with the current policy is that we are just giving handouts, which are not effective. What the state needs is to develop sustainable economic initiatives to diversify its current reliance on oil revenue. Not everyone can work in oil companies; we need other economic activities, and tourism based on our coastal resources is a good option to create income streams and reduce poverty. Tourism is new in the area; we need projects that will train the youth to acquire the necessary skills; you know, skills development is key to poverty reduction. When the youth are equipped with the required skills and knowledge, we can support them with funding to start their projects, which will create more employment for others".*

All multidimensional poverty indicators using multiple deprivation across three dimensions, such as health, education, and living standards, show that despite the government and other agencies' efforts to reduce poverty through cash handouts, a larger number of people in Rivers State remain classified as poor and vulnerable.

However, the inclusion of security shocks and underemployment in the work dimension, along with nutrition and water reliability in living standards, has contributed to an increase in the number of multidimensional poverty indicators (Akinyehun et al., 2021; NBS, 2022; Azubuike et al., 2024).

Their chances of participating in cash transfer projects are non-existent. Holmes et al.'s (2011) study for UNICEF found that a key issue with cash transfer initiatives was that the small amounts of money received by the poor were insufficient to meet their household needs and initiate income-generating activities. Studies in Nigeria show that even those who received the cash transfers have not been able to lift themselves out of poverty, as many of them spent the money on non-capital investments such as buying food, health services, the education of their children, and others spent the money on servicing existing loans (Eluwa et al., 2023).

Therefore, in Rivers State, a different set of strategies will most likely be required for more than 23% of the population left behind in poverty; coastal tourism, with its economic advantages, is one of the options. Pro-poor growth advocates argue that macroeconomic growth required to combat poverty will only occur if high-potential sectors, such as tourism, lead the way (Ashley et al., 2003).

8.3 Coastal Tourism and Poverty Reduction in Rivers State

Generally, the concept of tourism development in rural communities should be driven by good intentions to provide socio-economic, cultural, and environmental benefits, thereby improving the living standards of local people. Therefore, some of the critical questions that this chapter addresses are: How can sustainable coastal tourism contribute to poverty alleviation in Rivers State? Furthermore, what are the local people's perspectives on the benefits of tourism development in the area?

Tourism has been promoted in the academic literature as a development tool that contributes to the alleviation of poverty, particularly in the developing world (Winter and Kim, 2020; Lagos and Wang, 2022). Commentators argue that tourism is the largest voluntary transfer of resources from the rich to the poor in history, and the development of community tourism is the most potent anti-poverty tool ever (Mitchell and Ashley, 2010).

However, Scheyvens and Hughes (2021) question tourism's ability to be a key driver in eradicating extreme poverty as required by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Objective 1. The SDG1 presents the global community with an important but highly challenging goal.

Therefore, as Scheyven and Hughes (2021) argue, when considering tourism's contribution to SDG 1, which aims to end extreme poverty in all its forms, the multidimensional nature of poverty must be taken into account, rather than focusing solely on economic deprivation.

That is, tourism should be considered within the socioeconomic and sociopolitical areas. Furthermore, poverty needs to be considered beyond the quantitative parameters set by the World Bank, focusing on the qualitative indicators of poverty alleviation (Narayan et al., 2000; Frenzel, 2013).

This study examines poverty reduction from the perspectives of local people, based on how they define poverty and how they intend to overcome it, using tourism as the key driver. Tourism generates increased net benefits for the poor and provides alternative ways to poverty alleviation.

However, the study is also aware that tourism may not be a panacea, as there are cases where tourism revenues have failed to positively impact communities and, in some cases, have even worsened the conditions of poor residents. This study promotes sustainable coastal tourism, which is locally based and managed, providing local people with opportunities to benefit from activities in their own areas.

Moreover, the local people's perceptions and attitudes towards the tourist industry can be beneficial in analysing the impacts of tourism development, especially in marginalised communities adjacent to the coastal areas. Linderova et al. (2021) argued that local attitudes and receptiveness to the tourism industry are critical factors and perhaps most vital in rural areas.

The argument here is that socioeconomic benefits from tourism development in rural areas bear a positive attitude toward tourism activities in the area (Upchurch and Teivane, 2000; Linderova et al., 2021).

Moreover, a slight rise in income in marginalised areas, such as Andoni and Abonnema, tends to have a more pronounced effect on the poor residents than it does on those who are already better off financially. For instance, the casual workers at carnivals, particularly at events, provide major avenues for people experiencing poverty in the communities to enhance their livelihood opportunities through tourism.

Though casual labour tends to be seasonal and part-time, when the jobs are available, they provide a more steady and reliable income than agriculture, which relies on rain and is more exposed to wild animal attacks. This became apparent in the interviews with casual labourers who are usually employed during the Carnivals to hawk goods and sell food. The participant, PAT-RPT, commented that:

> *"The carnival supports me and my family; I know the money is not much and the jobs are not always there, but when I go to work at Carnival, I'm more certain and know how much I will be earning. I plan for it".*

The above participant observation highlights the current economic benefits of tourism, which include creating jobs and employment opportunities for the community, despite its limited development.

However, it has had some positive impacts on the livelihoods and attitudes of local residents in the rural areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt, the capital city of Rivers State. The findings from data collected after thematic analysis indicate a perception of the positive impact and economic benefits that can be attained by developing coastal tourism in Rivers State.

Moreover, some residents of Port Harcourt are already benefiting from tourism through direct employment in tourism-related businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and tour guides. At the same time, other beneficiaries are indirectly employed, such as local artisans, handicraft sellers, fishermen, and farmers. Additionally, they all benefit in one way or another from the day-to-day activities of the tourists who visit the destination, such as Port Harcourt Tourist Beach.

The previous section (8.1) outlines key findings based on data collected from research participants in Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt study areas. Coastal tourism development will bring socio-economic benefits to people residing in these communities by creating jobs that increase employment opportunities for the youth and women, who are often deprived of sources of income.

Hence, most people living in rural communities, especially the coastal regions, face various forms of deprivation related to socioeconomic problems, such as increased unemployment and extremely low standards of living due to high rates of poverty.

Therefore, coastal tourism can serve as an instrument to create wealth and prosperity, contribute to community development, and help alleviate poverty among local residents.

8.4 Chapter Summary

Sustainable Coastal Tourism is a sector where local communities can develop businesses and economic activities that drive local economic development and improve the living standards of local residents by reducing poverty. As one of the participants, MIN-RPT observed that Rivers State is not only about oil and gas; it is a state with a rich culture and abundant natural resources, including the Atlantic Sea and the Mangrove Forest, among others.

Local culture, knowledge, lifestyle, and language, as well as authenticity, present a foundation and valuable resource that local communities in Rivers State can use to develop sustainable coastal tourism products and experiences that differentiate them from other states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The local community's participation and engagement in tourism-related activities in Rivers State will demonstrate the crucial interconnectivity of nature, culture, and sustainable development of coastal tourism.

Sustainable Coastal Tourism development in Rivers State is not necessarily just an economic activity intended for the local community’s well-being; it needs to be developed with a multifaceted perspective that promotes self-determination and the sustainable development of the local

communities in Rivers State, reflected in their effort to get out of poverty while preserving their culture and ways of life. The local people have ambitions to participate in developing coastal tourism and other entrepreneurial activities that will create employment opportunities and generate income, helping to improve their living standards. Although the current income generated through tourism by the people and the revenue for the government may be small, it will play a significant role in contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supplementing household incomes.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.0 Introduction

The current study contributes to the understanding of developing sustainable coastal tourism in rural communities in less developed countries in the Global South, particularly in Africa. This research examines how local people in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt navigate their everyday lives and how tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation in Rivers State, Nigeria.

This is achieved through empirical evidence that will be useful to the Rivers State Tourism Authority, the body responsible for tourism development in Rivers State, in considering new strategies to make tourism one of the state's key economic activities and a tool for alleviating poverty. It is also expected that the key insights from this study will not only be helpful to Rivers State but will also contribute to the literature on sustainable coastal tourism, community development and poverty alleviation in the selected case study areas in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The first section of this chapter discusses the research objectives in relation to the findings of the study. Thereafter, the focus of the following section will be on the contribution of the study to knowledge and its implications, followed by the limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research; the chapter concludes with a personal reflection on the research journey.

The framework for discussion in the first section of this chapter is based on the three research objectives and findings from the study, as presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, following data analysis.

9.1 Research Objectives of the Study

This research aimed to take a social perspective to understand the potential of sustainable coastal tourism development and its potential contributions to reducing poverty and empowering the local communities in Rivers State, Nigeria. This qualitative mini-ethnographic case study was designed to achieve three key research objectives as stated.

1. Critically investigate the stakeholders' role and their ability to manage sustainable coastal tourism development in Rivers State.

2. Critically evaluate the opportunities and challenges of developing community-led sustainable coastal tourism in Rivers State.

3. Critically investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development will contribute to reducing poverty among the residents of Rivers State.

However, Rivers State generates high revenue for the government and Multinational Corporations, such as Shell, from oil and gas exploration. Nevertheless, most local people, especially in rural areas, continue to experience poverty. Therefore, this study is significant in exploring and harnessing the potential of coastal tourism as an alternative source of development, which will benefit local residents and contribute to poverty alleviation and community development.

9.1.1 Objective 1- Stakeholders And Community Participation In Tourism

The study took place in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Rivers State: Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA, and the Garden City of Port Harcourt, located in Port Harcourt LGA. These LGAs were chosen due to their proximity to the coast, whereas Port Harcourt is the capital city of the State. Most of the tourism activities in the state take place in the capital, with a few trickling down to the neighbouring Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The main tourism activity in the state was the Carnival organised in Port Harcourt and the spin-off carnival in Andoni.

Rivers State is an area with high potential for developing sustainable coastal tourism development. However, sustainable tourism development is a complex phenomenon that involves many key stakeholders. Sustainable coastal tourism development necessitates an inclusive and sustainable approach that involves all key stakeholders (Lazzi et al., 2020). Therefore, to develop tourism that contributes to local community development and poverty alleviation, there is a need for the active involvement of all key stakeholders (Poudel et al., 2014). Moreover, one of the critical challenges for developing sustainable coastal tourism in Africa is the limited participation of all key stakeholders in the decision-making process for implementing and developing tourism in their areas.

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the key stakeholders and their participation in tourism activities in the study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt. The purpose of this study was to assess the willingness of key stakeholders to participate in the development of sustainable coastal tourism in Rivers State.

The complexity and presence of a number of local stakeholders proved to be the case in the context of this study (Dabphet, 2013). Among the local stakeholders who expressed their views and commented on community participation are CAN-RPT, a farmer in Andoni and SOY-RPT in Abonnema, who emphasise their interest and expectation of engaging in tourism-related activities and the associated benefits in terms of extra income, which will help the residents improve their living standard if those events are organised regularly.

In addition, some youths in Andoni, such as PAT-RPT and UGB-RPT in Asuk-Ama, stated that Atlantic Beach is a gift from God to the people of Andoni, and their community is ready to support the government and private investors in harnessing the potential of coastal tourism. The local community represented a diverse group of stakeholders based on their economic activities, including farmers, fishmongers, the local business community, as well as women and youth. Government stakeholders such as MIN-RPT, a civil servant at the Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This is another factor that was considered in this study; the participation of the key stakeholders was uneven among individuals, as

well as the government agencies such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Rivers State Tourism Authority, and NGOs, including local organisations mainly focusing on nature conservation and International Development organisations focusing on local development.

To achieve sustainable coastal tourism development, the participation of all key stakeholders at all stages of development is considered a crucial factor for the successful implementation of tourism in the local case study areas of Andoni, Akuku Toru, and Port Harcourt LGAs (Naser and Saeideh, 2017). The findings from the data analysis indicate that government stakeholders are the most active participants. Some local stakeholders are moderate participants, while others are not interested in participating in tourism-related activities.

The study found that the stakeholders who have access to resources and power actively participate in tourism activities, including government agencies and foreign businesses in the state capital of Port Harcourt LGA. In Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town, Andoni LGA, and Abonnema, Akuku Toru LGA, there was little to no participation in tourism activities, except during the festive seasons, such as Christmas and the Go To Niger celebration.

For most stakeholders in the local community category, participation in tourism is seasonal, typically occurring during the carnival season. However, the residents were willing to participate in tourism activities if it were expanded and more opportunities were created within the communities.

Therefore, the authorities in Rivers State responsible for tourism development should direct their efforts to attracting the interest of all stakeholders; this can be achieved by involving locals from the initial planning stages to encourage inclusiveness. PAT-RPT and ELD-RPT expressed ideas on how tourism can reach their areas, but, at the same time, demonstrated frustration at the lack of participation in what the state plans for their development, which has left many people in impoverished conditions.

According to FAV-RPT at Ikuru Town, the Rivers State Tourism Authority is more focused on developing creative tourism like CARNIRIV, which benefits the people in Port Harcourt, and has paid little attention to the rich natural resources such as the Atlantic Beach in Andoni and other LGAs, which could form the foundation for inclusive wildlife and cultural tourism development to supplement the success of the carnivals.

This study found that to achieve optimal participation from local residents, active stakeholders in government and its agencies should attract the interest of the local community and tourism-related businesses to be involved throughout the planning and tourism development stages. However, the communities' residents may participate in implementing and sharing tourism benefits but not in the decision-making process. Therefore, this type of participation may not be effective in sustainable coastal tourism development.

Rivers State may not expand the duration of the Carnival; however, RSTDA can introduce more activities that will attract visitors not only to Port Harcourt but also to the local communities outside the city, such as Andoni, Abonnema, and other places with potential for coastal tourism development. The Rivers State Government (RSG), working with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in cooperation with the 23 Local Government Authorities (LGAs), must provide the infrastructure, such as roads, waterways, and telecommunication facilities, to facilitate the development of tourism activities away from Port Harcourt and to other communities in the state.

As the participants observed, MIN-RPT and ELD-RPT noted that one problem that may hinder people's full participation in tourism in Rivers State is the seasonality of tourism activities. Though seasonality may be considered a problem for tourism development, the argument is that if tourism is well-planned, it will create the opportunity to diversify the economy from over-reliance on petroleum exploration and complement the associated benefits so that local people can participate in more than one economic activity throughout the year (Kanwal et al., 2019).

Other stakeholders should be encouraged by the government to become active participants, listen to the voices of local people, and involve them in the decision-making process from the idea generation stage to the actual development of tourism products (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

This will help to build trust and encourage the local community not only to participate in tourism planning but also to be involved in actual development. The next section of this chapter discusses the second objective of this study, which explores the opportunities and challenges associated with coastal tourism development in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

9.1.2 Objective 2 - Opportunities And Challenges For Developing Coastal Tourism In Rivers State

The second objective of this study was to identify and analyse the opportunities and challenges of developing sustainable coastal tourism in Rivers State. This objective aims to identify existing tourism activities that can utilise existing resources to drive coastal tourism development, and to identify the challenges and threats that may hinder tourism development in the state (Dimitrovskie et al., 2021).

The study found that Rivers State is rich in both cultural and natural resources, and the culture and traditions of the residents in tourist destinations have a significant impact on the development of tourism products (Andersen et al., 2018; Dalimunthe et al., 2020). The most successful tourism activity in Rivers State was the CARNIRIV, which is a heritage and cultural festival. It is an amalgamation of the customs, traditions, and cultural practices of the various ethnic communities in the state.

The carnival is held in high esteem as a key tourism activity in the state, and when the RSTDA was formed in 2012, one of its objectives was to harness the Carnival into a global tourism activity. Besides oil and gas, CARNIRIV is the second-largest export of Rivers State, unlike oil, which is primarily a resource for wealthy and foreign multinational corporations (MNCs), such as Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Total, FinaElf, Agip, and Texaco. CARNIRIV offers opportunities for participation in tourism activities through informal employment and trade. Many participants expressed their satisfaction with the CARNIRIV.

However, one of the essential benefits was the togetherness that the carnival brings to the area, and many of the participants were very proud that Rivers State is now recognised all over Nigeria and beyond for its Carnival (Pasanen, 2012). Moreover, the success of CARNIRIV has become the sole focus of RSTDA, and there is less effort to explore other resources that could have high potential to diversify tourism and expand such development to local communities within the state (Taylor and Kneafsey, 2016).

The study area in Andoni boasts natural resources, including Atlantic Beach, which is well-suited for coastal tourism development, and the Mangrove Forest, home to elephants and other endangered species, such as dolphins, in the Oyokotoro River. There are opportunities to be harnessed through the redevelopment of the Old Seaport in Abonnema, with investment from the Rivers State government in partnership with

private investors. This initiative also aims to transform the fortunes of Port Harcourt Tourist Beach and revive its lost glory of past years as an attractive tourist destination.

Another carnival in Rivers State identified by this study was the Andoni Unity Carnival, a spinoff of CARNIRIV. This was a positive step forward for local communities in Rivers State to forge efforts to develop tourism and provide opportunities to attract more visitors to the Andoni and the liberation day celebration known as “Go To Niger” in Abonnema, which could result in tourism expanding from Port Harcourt to the inner areas of Rivers State.

According to PST-RPT, a research participant in Asuk-Ama in Andoni was excited about organising events that would bring people together and strengthen their unity, pointing to the relationship between Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town. This study found that carnivals and Beach parties in Rivers State play a significant role in bringing together different groups in the community that are usually exclusive to celebrate and laugh together (Ziakas and Costa, 2012; Derrett, 2014).

Furthermore, carnivals also avail opportunities for the local people to earn some money from various activities such as costume designing and making, musicians, songwriters, and choreographers, as well as the artists that participate in the events, in addition to the local people who sell their products such as food and locally made handcrafts (Getz and Page, 2015; Burr, 2016).

Focusing on the success of CARNIRIV and Andoni Unity Carnival, the Rivers State government and RSTDA should make use of its abundant natural resources, such as Atlantic Beach and Mangrove Forest, to develop sustainable coastal tourism that will attract more visitors to the destinations without causing harm and destruction of the environment (Obinwanne and Okpoko, 2015; Kamran and Omran, 2018). Rivers State is rich in natural resources that could serve as the basis for coastal tourism development as well as wildlife tourism in the area, but the state is not well-known or recognised as a tourist destination.

Natural resources, including the sea, coastline, forests, and wildlife (the Environment), are considered key resources in this study. Besides the tourism resources, the study also focused on the infrastructure facilities that are available within the selected study areas. The availability of infrastructure facilities is a fundamental resource associated with tourism development (Uduma-Olugu and Onukwube, 2015).

Port Harcourt, the capital of the state, is well-connected by transport to all major cities in Nigeria, in addition to its international airport. Several types of accommodation facilities are available in Port Harcourt; however, the rural areas of Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA lack such facilities, and those available in Abonnema, Akuku Toru LGA, may not be suitable for accommodating foreign tourists.

PST-RPT in Asuk-Ama and ELD-RPT in Ikuru Town, as well as others in the selected study areas, expressed their communities' willingness to welcome and accommodate visitors, making them feel at home and loved as members of their families. Therefore, this could be the opportunity to develop a homestay, where the local people can provide accommodation to tourists at a fee.

This study also found challenges and threats to tourism development in the state. This is not peculiar to Rivers State alone; it is a general issue across states in Nigeria and other less developed countries with available natural resources to develop coastal tourism. Moreover, this would be an opportunity to explore the potential of tourism to improve the livelihoods of residents in the vicinity of tourist destinations, such as Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town in Andoni, through the creation of employment opportunities and generating extra income to support their living standards.

In addition to the lack of interest and funding for tourism development, the state faces the threat of insecurity. According to PRO-RPT and BES-RPT, there is a need for investment in tourism projects and providing adequate security to attract visitors and residents to the tourist destinations in Rivers State. The presence of oil and gas in Rivers State is a blessing, but at times, it is a source of conflict in the state. Historically, the battle to control oil resources in Rivers State has been a source of conflict.

This study also found that the primary source of conflicts and a threat to security in the state is the presence of criminal gangs and the Eastern Security Network (ESN), which is an armed group affiliated with the Indigenous People of Biafra.

However, the government is making efforts to enhance security to the highest level, with the presence of security forces (Military and Police) to protect the lives and properties of the people in the state. At Port Harcourt Tourist Beach, a police post and a naval patrol on the waterways were in place to provide security for both tourists and residents. Security threats negatively impact tourism development; whereas the insecurity activities in the state are controlled, there is a need for mass communication campaigns to reassure potential tourists that the state is safe to visit and has a lot to offer for a tourism experience.

The success of CARNIRIV, an annual event that lasts over a month, is evidence enough to show that Rivers State is a safe place for tourists. The CARNIRIV and the Andoni Unity Carnival are the only events that bring more visitors to the state. The leaders in Rivers State would take the success of these events to develop more tourism activities. However, due to the lack of financial support and the unwillingness of political leaders to support tourism development, as well as the threat of insecurity, the state is missing out on the potential socio-economic benefits that could bring development to the poor rural coastal areas, particularly in Andoni and Abonnema.

9.1.3 Objective 3 - Sustainable Coastal Tourism And Poverty Alleviation In Rivers State

Objective three of this study focused on the potential socio-economic contributions of sustainable coastal tourism development and its impacts on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly poverty alleviation. This was premised on the potential of sustainable coastal tourism to benefit local communities, businesses, and economic activities, which can drive local economic development and improve residents' standards of living through poverty alleviation.

The idea of tourism development in rural communities should be driven by good intentions to provide socio-economic, cultural, and environmental benefits, thereby improving the local people's living standards. Therefore, some of the critical questions that this section addresses are: How can sustainable coastal tourism contribute to poverty alleviation in Rivers State? Furthermore, what are the local people’s perceptions of the benefits of tourism development in the area?

This study found that, despite the presence of oil and gas in Rivers State and its position as one of the leading revenue-generating states, it has some of the highest poverty rates in the country. The presence of abundant oil and gas in Rivers State has not resulted in lifting the local residents out of poverty. Most of the poor people are concentrated in rural riverine communities, and these areas are also places with rich natural resources.

The state has put in place an initiative to lift the most poor and vulnerable people out of poverty, but this has been implemented in just a few states with few positive results. The state initiated the cash transfer projects, but this was limited to only 6 out of the 23 LGAs in Rivers State. The beneficiary LGAs are Okirika, Akuku-Toru, Degema, Ogu/Bolo, Tai and Khana local government areas, leaving 74% of the state population out of the project, yet they also have poverty.

Rivers State, and perhaps other states in the region, need to develop an approach that will help create jobs to complement the benefits of petroleum exploration and improve residents' standards of living by reducing poverty levels. This study argues that sustainable coastal tourism development in Rivers State can contribute to achieving some of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty alleviation, providing decent work and employment opportunities, and reducing inequalities.

This study suggests that sustainable coastal tourism can serve as a driver for alleviating poverty in Rivers State, in line with the effort to achieve UN SDG 1 (Scheyven and Hughes, 2021). This can be achieved through numerous socio-economic contributions, such as income generated from jobs and revenue received by the government through taxation.

One of the advocates of tourism as a driver for poverty alleviation is a Philanthropist and development entrepreneur named Lelei Lelaulu, who argued that tourism offers opportunities for poverty reduction as it is one

of the biggest voluntary transfers of resources from the rich to the poor, particularly when tourism is developed in rural areas where many people are poor. Developing sustainable coastal tourism in Rivers State would provide opportunities for residents to earn additional income from work and engage in selling local foods and handicrafts to visitors, thereby contributing to improving their standard of living and, in the long run, reducing poverty levels (Mmom and Ekpenyong, 2015).

The livelihoods generated by tourism are some of the basic needs required by those experiencing hardship in the community to get out of poverty. These livelihoods could be for daily survival for some people in the community, and for others, it could be the continuity of the exchange or trade with one another. The employment generated by sustainable coastal tourism could affect individuals' incomes in the community, thereby influencing their decision-making, changing their livelihoods and improving their standard of living.

Furthermore, the findings of this study showed that many people in Andoni and Abonnema were either engaged in farming or fishmongering, and a significant number of young people were unemployed. In addition, the tourism activities that occur during the festival/carnival season provide informal business and employment opportunities for the farmers and fishmongers, as well as the youth and the women in the community. Therefore, if sustainable coastal tourism is developed, it could bring changes to people's livelihoods.

A similar study conducted in Indonesia (Astuti et al., 2020) found that tourism in the coastal areas of Meleura Beach improved the livelihoods of residents by providing employment opportunities, while it changed the livelihoods of other people.

Farmers and fishmongers went into business; the youth got employment in the many local businesses that were started in the area, and the women were engaged in selling sarongs. Similarly, the data from this study suggest that the development of sustainable coastal tourism in Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State could also bring about similar socioeconomic benefits. Fishermen could offer water-related activities, and farmers could sell their food products to tourism businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, and lodging accommodations, among others. The extra demand for food would create jobs, thus enabling more people to earn an income and improve their living standards.

This study suggests that due to consistent changes in governance preferences and political affiliations in Rivers State, the sitting government may not be interested in developing tourism beyond the carnivals. However, evidence from previous studies indicates that when tourism is well-planned, the government also benefits. Any initiative aimed at improving the livelihoods of residents may positively impact poverty reduction strategies and, in turn, contribute to the United Nations

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through poverty alleviation, zero hunger, and the provision of decent work for local people.

Moreover, Rivers State has the opportunity to utilise sustainable coastal tourism to create more jobs and diversify the local economy, shifting its reliance from oil and gas exploration to improve residents' livelihoods and reduce poverty in the state (Aynalem et al., 2016; Bellver et al., 2023). The participants expressed that Rivers State's government needs to develop innovative strategies to lift its residents out of poverty in rural areas of Andoni and Abonnema; sustainable coastal tourism development could be one of those strategies.

Earlier studies on tourism's ability to contribute to poverty alleviation demonstrated that proactive interventions are needed. Tourism planners in the government and its affiliated agencies must target individuals experiencing poverty due to extreme hardship and implement legislation that supports affirmative action approaches. Some of the proactive strategies that the Rivers State government could adopt to challenge poverty include training and empowerment programmes to provide the youth and women with the necessary skills to support their academic qualifications, as required by tourism-related businesses. Providing opportunities for the local people to start their own businesses, particularly in the informal sector, where people do not abandon their existing occupations but supplement them with other tourism-related activities.

When tourism development opportunities are created, they attract foreign investors, which brings more investment to the area. The government is obliged to enact legislation that commits to the attainment of the United Nations' Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG1 - No Poverty, SDG2 - Zero Hunger, SDG8– Decent Work and Economic Growth, including SDG10 – Inequality, and SDG13 – Climate Change.

Another area where sustainable coastal tourism could contribute to the SDGs of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is through procurement. The businesses generated by tourism development would purchase their supplies from local people, such as farmers, fishermen, and handicraft sellers, creating more employment opportunities to generate income, redistributing revenue to local people, and contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

This study has demonstrated that states such as Rivers in the Niger Delta Region, which are rich in resources but have high rates of poverty, need to develop alternative initiatives, such as Coast-Cultural Tourism (CCT), that, if well-planned, could bring sustainable outcomes that will uplift their people from poverty to prosperity. The benefit associated with this development will be widely spread across the communities, ensuring the protection of the local residents' culture and traditions without compromising on the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

While planning for sustainable coastal tourism, the state can include all key stakeholders; the local voices should be listened to, addressed, and actively involved at the planning stage. As noted by Carbone (2005), effective tourism planning must be based on a bottom-up globalisation approach, which empowers local stakeholders in the decision-making process and in implementing tourism development at all stages.

The inclusion of all the key stakeholders in the development of sustainable coastal tourism will require legislation addressing the structural inequalities in the state. This approach worked in Fiji when the government supported the local people with land that may be used for tourism; they introduced the Equal Rent Distribution Policy (Scheyvens and Russel, 2012; Sakai, 2023). The Rivers State government and private investors need to collaborate and direct developmental efforts toward utilising tourism as an instrument to eradicate abject poverty, focusing beyond the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to provide sustainable development opportunities for local people in the selected case study areas in Rivers State.

Therefore, harnessing the opportunity provided by the availability of resources such as Atlantic Beach in Andoni, the seaport in Abonnema and Tourist Beach in Port Harcourt to develop coastal tourism will help to create jobs and generate income to improve the standard of living of people experiencing hardship as a result of the cost of living after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study has made two significant contributions to the existing body of tourism knowledge, both methodological and theoretical, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

9.2 Summary of Contributions of the Study

Type of Contribution	Specific / Area of Contribution	Contribution to Knowledge
Methodological	Mini-Ethnographic Case Study Design	This is the first qualitative study to employ a combination of case study and ethnographic research approaches to investigate coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development in Rivers State, Nigeria, within the broader context of West Africa.
	Hybrid Approach	Data Analysis using both Deductive and Inductive Thematic Analysis This approach is a significant and unique method for exploring how social construction shapes residents' life experiences.
Theoretical	Existing knowledge	This study provides new insights into existing limited resources and expands the literature on sustainable coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development.
	New knowledge	The new initiative aims to be built on an alternative tourism development approach by integrating coastal tourism with the culture and traditions of the destination, thereby developing Coast-Cultural Tourism (CCT) and Sustainable Coast-Cultural Tourism (SCCT).

Practical Implications	Structural inequalities legislation	Policymakers to intensify efforts and use tourism as a developmental tool.
	Diversification	Investment in coastal tourism development projects.
	Empowerment Programme	Adopt innovative initiatives to lift the residents out of extreme poverty, particularly the youth and women.

9.3 Contributions and Implications of this Study

This study focused on understanding how sustainable coastal tourism development can contribute to poverty reduction in Rivers State. Sustainable coastal tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments in the tourism sector. The literature on sustainable coastal tourism and poverty alleviation is diverse and extensive; however, there is no single strategy that fits all destinations.

Nevertheless, this study found that integrating coastal tourism with sustainability and poverty alleviation is a challenging task. The findings from the current study recognised that the local political (Power and Influence) and cultural settings (Traditions and Heritage) significantly influence the development of sustainable coastal tourism. The data for this study were collected from different stakeholders in Rivers State using qualitative methods.

The study covered three selected case study areas across three Local Government administrations, including Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA, and Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA, all in Rivers State.

Consistent with the literature on sustainable tourism and poverty reduction, the results of this study confirmed that sustainable coastal tourism can significantly impact the livelihoods of the local people and serve as a catalyst for poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge in two areas: methodological and theoretical, with practical implications.

9.3.1 Methodological Contributions

From a methodological perspective, this study employed a qualitative approach, which differs from the majority of previous studies on tourism development in Rivers State, which have predominantly used a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research is popular and often preferred in tourism studies conducted in developing countries, such as Nigeria, and in the African context, to provide so-called objective data on social situations, including the number of people experiencing hardship due to the high cost of living. On the other hand, qualitative studies are significant in describing and interpreting complex phenomena that may not be easily quantifiable.

Therefore, qualitative researchers rely more on the knowledge and interpretation of information collected from the participants through their behaviours, experiences, opinions and attitudes toward the subject of the investigation.

Previous studies on tourism development in Rivers State, such as Obinwanne and Okpoko (2015) on the potential of coastal tourism; Ijeomah and Duke (2016) on tourism in Finima Nature Park, Bonny Island; Oladele et al. (2018) on the potential of coastal and marine tourism in Nigeria; and Wosu and Ogan (2022) on the socioeconomic impacts of tourism development in Rivers State, have all employed quantitative research methods. Although these studies offer valuable insights, they did not influence policy, possibly because they lacked the voices of local people. Most studies have employed quantitative methods to explore various aspects of tourism; however, this study integrates coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development in Nigeria and West Africa in general.

To date, no study has employed a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design (MECS) to explore the potential of coastal tourism, poverty alleviation, and community development in Rivers State, particularly within the Nigerian and West African contexts. A qualitative research method was adopted to gather the opinions and perspectives of all stakeholders on coastal tourism development and poverty alleviation in Rivers State.

This study is significant and unique in adopting a mini-ethnographic case study design to explore the social construction of life experiences among individuals experiencing hardship due to the higher cost of living in their natural setting. It includes analysing data collected through a hybrid approach combining deductive and inductive thematic analysis. This approach enables the voices and opinions of local people to be heard and understand the meanings ascribed to social problems such as poverty, from their own perspective, based on their cultural norms and religious beliefs within the context of Africa.

In addition, using a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study methodology for this study allows a small number of participants to provide in-depth, rich and meaningful information that helps to investigate their concerns within a short period of time during data collection because of the restrictions imposed by the government to mitigate the spread of the virus and reduce the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, using a qualitative research approach and mini ethnographic case study design in this study makes a significant impact on coastal tourism development as it enables gathering information that represents the voices of the key stakeholders, including the local community and their willingness to adopt alternative forms of development to compliment the benefits and diversify from over-dependence on the revenue generated from petroleum exploration in the state.

9.3.2 Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the presently limited research on sustainable coastal tourism development in Nigeria, particularly in West Africa. However, there is little literature on sustainable coastal tourism development in Rivers State, unlike the neighbouring Cross Rivers State, where it is widely studied.

The few studies in Rivers State have not addressed the contribution of sustainable coastal tourism development to poverty alleviation and community development. For instance, the study conducted by Olori and Okide (2014) focused on sustainable community development, but it did not specifically highlight poverty.

Further studies, such as those by Obinwanne and Okpoko (2015) and Ijeomah and Duke (2016), have focused on the potential and prospects of developing tourism and ecotourism. In addition, Ollor and Egbuluka (2023) studied tourism destination attributes and economic development, while other studies also analysed the constraints of tourism development (Olori and Okide, 2014) and the problems of developing tourism in Rivers State (Obinwanne, 2019).

Therefore, none of these previous studies focused on how coastal tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation and community development in Rivers State. This study contributes to knowledge by providing new insights into the debates and expanding the literature on sustainable coastal tourism development and its implications on poverty

alleviation and other United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This study contributes to the existing literature on sustainable coastal tourism by employing a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study methodology and adopting new approaches to future research on poverty alleviation and community development with a focus on cultural considerations in the context of Africa. As indicated earlier, this qualitative research is valuable because it offers a different perspective from previous studies. It incorporates local community opinions and viewpoints to explore how they want coastal tourism to develop in their communities and what they expect.

This new initiative aims to be built on methodological decolonisation within the African context and embraces an alternative development approach by integrating coastal resources with the culture and traditions of local people within the destinations, through the development of Coast-Cultural Tourism (CCT) and Sustainable Coast-Cultural Tourism (SCCT). Therefore, future researchers of sustainable coastal tourism are expected to benefit from the new insights provided by this study, which lays a foundation for research aimed at reducing poverty and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Rivers State, Nigeria, Africa, and other less developed countries in the Global South.

9.3.3 Practical Implications of the Study

This study provides new insights into tourism by capturing the local opinions and attitudes of residents toward the development of coastal tourism in their natural setting, which alternative quantitative studies may not be able to achieve.

The results of this study will help policymakers in Rivers State, the government and its agencies, the 23 local government authorities, and non-governmental organisations to intensify efforts and reconsider tourism as a developmental tool that can be used to create jobs, employment opportunities, and generate income, thereby reducing over-reliance on revenue from petroleum exploration to reduce poverty.

The officials at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Rivers State Tourism Development Authority will benefit from this study; they may be aware of the natural resources in the study areas of Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA and Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA, but have yet to recognise the potential contribution of developing sustainable coastal tourism in achieving sustainable development goals. Poverty is a serious problem in Rivers State, and the government needs to adopt innovative initiatives to lift its people out of poverty. The current study demonstrates that coastal tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation and community development in selected case study areas, including Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt.

9.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study showed that the local people in Rivers State are willing to participate in tourism activities in their area, and it also demonstrated that sustainable coastal tourism could be a driver of prosperity, improved standards of living, and a poverty alleviation strategy in the state. However, as with any other research project, there are limitations associated with this study, and it is essential to recognise these limitations.

Firstly, data for this study were collected from three out of twenty-three Local Government Administrations in Rivers State. In contrast, the findings could be relevant to all the local government areas (LGAs); it must be noted that this research was conducted in case study locations of Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA and Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA in Rivers State.

Port Harcourt is the capital of Rivers State, Andoni and Abonnema are coastal areas within the vicinity of Port Harcourt; these latter two LGAs may not enjoy the same benefits from tourism as Port Harcourt, but they do get the spillovers, which may not be the case with other LGAs that are further away from the garden city, Port Harcourt.

Further research is needed to study the other LGAs using ethnography and perhaps mixed methods to investigate how coastal tourism can help the entire state and lift more people out of poverty. Secondly, this being a qualitative study, the findings may not be generalised to the entire state

because only some of the LGAs have coastal areas and access to the sea, so this study proposing sustainable coastal tourism may not benefit the entire state. Future studies might seek to understand how other natural resources in the state, apart from the coast/waters, can be used to supplement the development of sustainable coastal tourism in the area.

Lastly, data collection for this study was conducted during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial plan for this research was to conduct an ethnographic study and remain in the field for at least three months during data collection. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and the resulting lockdown restrictions worldwide, the scope of this research was modified to become a mini-ethnographic case study design.

The qualitative data were collected over five weeks in the field, as the researcher sought an early return to the UK to avoid a total travel ban, given that Nigeria was considered one of the countries on the red list. Data were collected from 19 participants in the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, and follow-up interviews and member checking were conducted online through WhatsApp. This resulted in limiting the number of people who participated in the study and restricted access to government officials, as most offices were closed due to the enforcement of lockdown rules. Therefore, the data used in this study are based on the opinions and views of the residents of the selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt.

Some government officials and employees participated in the study, but they did so as local residents, not in their capacity as government officials. Future research may need to gather insights from all stakeholders, including state government officials, particularly those from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Rivers State Tourism Development Authority.

9.5 Personal Reflection on the Research Journey

I decided to pursue a doctoral research journey after completing my master’s degree, motivated by the desire for self-fulfilment and the satisfaction of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Reaching the top of the pyramid of self-actualisation inspired me to become the first PhD holder in my family. This achievement led to the realisation of an unfinished research interest that arose during my master's degree dissertation on the regeneration of the coastal town of Margate in the United Kingdom.

My interest and passion for improving the livelihood of the local people in coastal destinations, especially Nigeria and other less developed countries in Africa, Asia, and other countries in the Global South, led my investigation into exploring the potential of sustainable coastal tourism and its contribution to poverty alleviation and community development in selected case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

Throughout this doctoral journey, I have gained extensive experience and encountered several challenges over the past couple of years, specifically from May 2016, when I commenced this study, to the time of submission of this thesis in October 2024. Over the past years, I have learnt that researchers need to make tough decisions, set up preferences, and take actions that will have long-lasting effects and considerable impacts on their future ambitions or aspirations.

However, I faced financial challenges in 2017 and requested a leave of absence from the University of Sunderland, returning to study in February 2020. One month later, the COVID-19 pandemic had spread across the globe, and everything was at a standstill as people were primarily concerned at that time about how to survive the deadly virus.

I have undertaken various research training programmes at the University of Sunderland, which have significantly contributed to my personal development and positively impacted my research journey. Research Ethics training has helped with the recruitment of participants for this study, protecting their rights and confidentiality; thematic analysis was used in the analysis of data collected during fieldwork in the case study areas of Andoni, Abonnema, and Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

In addition, the monthly meetings organised by the supervisory team, along with regular feedback and the Annual Monitoring Review reports, helped in the conduct of this study, the completion of this PhD Thesis and the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Tourism and Hospitality.

9.6 Chapter Summary

This research aligns with other studies on tourism and poverty reduction, noting that well-planned tourism can significantly impact the livelihoods of local people and support the United Nations' efforts in poverty alleviation and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The current study differs significantly from existing research in its adoption of a qualitative mini-ethnographic case study design approach.

This methodology is used to investigate the benefit associated with the development of sustainable coastal tourism and its contribution to improving the standard of living of the local people within the selected case study areas of Asuk-Ama/ Ikuru Town in Andoni LGA, Abonnema in Akuku Toru LGA and Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt LGA in Rivers State.

Although Nigeria is a resource-rich country, most of its population still lives in poverty. Rivers State, being the leading producer of oil and gas, has not seen the benefits from these natural resources shared equitably, as most people in these communities continue to experience poverty. Rivers State is the epicentre of Oil and Gas in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria, and is among the areas with high rates of poverty.

Therefore, Rivers State must consider using innovative approaches to improve the livelihoods of residents and help them overcome poverty; its coastline features beaches and recreational attractions, as well as natural resources, like mangrove forests and rare wildlife. The development of sustainable coastal tourism, with a high level of local community

participation, could become another strategy to lift people experiencing hardship out of poverty. The success of CARNIRIV in pulling people to Rivers State should be appreciated and used as a foundation to develop sustainable coastal tourism.

The CARNIRIV attracts a large number of people to Port Harcourt; for instance, in 2022, it is estimated that more than one million visitors participated in the carnival, with most of these visitors staying for only a few days. However, the most important aspect is the socioeconomic benefits of the Carnivals to residents of Rivers State, as many people engage in the informal trade, either as traders or employees.

The farmers and fishermen get a market for their products, and some ingenious people turn their houses into lodgings. The benefits generated by carnivals such as CARNIRIV and Andoni Unity Carnival should encourage the Rivers State Tourism Development Authority and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to think about expanding the tourism offering not only to the Carnival goers but also to international and domestic tourists who may be interested in some of the natural attractions in the state.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Dear Sir/Ma

PhD Research Project

My name is Mufutau Funsho Ishola, a research student at the Faculty of Business, Law, and Tourism, University of Sunderland, and Professor Donna Chambers supervises my research.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research project. A consent form and participant information will be given to you to provide more details about this study. My research work intends to explore the potential of sustainable tourism and its contribution to local community development in Rivers State.

As a research participant for this study, you will be interviewed for 45 – 70 minutes using a semi-structured in-depth interview, and your participation is voluntary; all data collected will be confidential, with the right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

The consent form and information sheet will be provided to give more information on the study and assist you in making a decision regarding your participation. All data collected from individuals and employees of the participating organisations will be highly confidential, as no personal information or participant identity will be made public or available to third parties.

Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to meeting you as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this research, please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Kind Regards,

Mufutau Funsho Ishola

PhD Researcher

Email: bg43kv@student.sunderland.ac.uk

APPENDIX B: PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

PhD Research Project

Study Title:

Exploring the Potential of Sustainable Coastal Tourism for Local Community Development in Rivers State.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to investigate how sustainable coastal tourism development can contribute to poverty alleviation and empowerment of the local communities in selected study areas in Rivers State.

Who can take part in the study?

Participation is voluntary and open to adults who is not less than 18 years old, local residents of the selected study areas, government agencies such as Rivers State Sustainable Tourism Development Agency, Rivers State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, tourism and hospitality business owners, community leaders, local government representatives, local people who are able and willing to take part in the study.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study, **you can withdraw at any point during the session without giving a reason and without penalty**.

After you have completed the study, you can also withdraw your consent for your data not to be included by contacting me via email- **bg43kv@student.sunderland.ac.uk within 12 weeks of participation** and providing me with your participant code. The participant code will be given to you after you have consented to take part in the study. If you decide to

withdraw during the study or in the subsequent 4-week period, your data will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part, the researcher intends to carry out in-depth interviews to answer some questions; this will take between 45 – 70 minutes of your precious time. The questions will be asked using semi-structured interviews, and you may also agree to a follow-up interview to find out more about your opinion and understanding of the research questions. With your consent as a research participant, the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseen disadvantages of discomfort to you by your participation in this study, and no potential risk identified as primary data will be collected from areas that are considered safe by the Rivers State government.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your participation will be highly appreciated as it will help to collect data/ necessary information required in conducting the research project. The findings of this study will help to inform tourism policies that will contribute to the development of local communities.

What if something goes wrong?

If you change your mind about participation, please contact me by email to cancel your participation. If you feel unhappy after the study, please contact me immediately or the Chairperson of the University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee, whose contact details are given below.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The research participants will not be identified, and their personal details will be highly confidential; all information collected will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Section 37 of the Nigerian Constitution, which guarantees the fundamental right to privacy, protections to citizens in their

homes, correspondence, telephone conversations, and telegraphic communications.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

If suitable, the results may also be presented at academic conferences and/or written up for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The study is organised by the researcher, and it is self-funding.

Who has reviewed the study?

The University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved the study.

Contact for further information

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APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant code: ____

PhD Research Project

Title: Exploring the Potential of Sustainable Coastal Tourism for Local Community Development in Rivers State.

Researcher Name: Mufutau Funsho Ishola

Supervisor Name: Prof Donna Chambers

- I am over the age of 18; please tick the box □
- I have read and understood the attached study information, and by signing below, I consent to participate in this study.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time during the study itself.
- I understand that I also have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a short period after the study has concluded, i.e., 2 weeks after participation.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research and that I may contact the University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I understand that I will be audio/video recorded during the interview.

Signed: _____ (Research participant)

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Contact Details:

Researcher: bg43kv@student.sunderland.ac.uk

Supervisor: donna.chambers@sunderland.au.uk

Co-Supervisor: dirisa.mulindwa@sunderland.ac.uk

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part 1

Interview Questions with Stakeholders in Tourism

1- Tourism Development

i. What are your views on how tourism is developing in Rivers State

ii. What are the key attractions of tourists to Rivers State

iii. How attractive is coastal tourism to the state

iv. What is the potential of coastal tourism growing into a major economic activity in the state?

v. What do you think are the challenges or problems that can affect coastal tourism development in the area

2 - Tourism and Community Development

i. How are the local communities participate in tourism activities in the area?

ii. How are the local communities involved in the planning of tourism development in the state?

iii. How sustainable are the tourism activities in the area (by sustainable I'm thinking about tourism not only contributing economically but also putting into consideration aspects of community and the natural and cultural environment)

3 – Tourism and poverty alleviation

i. What are your views about poverty in the state?

ii. How have the local people (particularly the disadvantaged groups such as women and the youth) benefitted from tourism

iii. How do you think coastal tourism can help in reducing poverty in the area

iv. What can be done to make the local people ready to participate and benefit from the opportunities coastal tourism may create in the area

Part 2

Interview Questions with the Local people (these questions will be

asked in the local language to allow the participants to answer the questions effectively)

1. Tourism and Development

i. What is your view about tourism development in the area?

ii. What do you think about more tourists coming to the coastal area here?

iii. In your view, what could be the benefits of having tourists in the area?

iv. And what do you think could be the problems of tourism development in the area?

v. How are you involved in tourism in the area

2. Tourism and the Local community

i. What do you think about the state authorities involving the local

community in the development of coastal tourism in the area?

ii. What are the main tourism activities that bring people to the area?

iii. How does the community participate in tourism activities?

iv. What do you think should be done to involve more local people in tourism activities?

3. Tourism and Poverty Alleviation

i. What is your view on poverty in the area?

ii. How would you describe a poor person?

iii. What do you think are some of the challenges that will prevent people in this community from coming out of poverty?

iv. What should be done to help that person improve their livelihood?

v. How do you think such a person can benefit from the tourism activities in the area?

vi. Do you think developing more tourism facilities to attract tourists to the coastal areas can help the poor benefit and maybe get out of poverty?

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANTS' INTERVIEW PROFILE

No	Name Pseudonym	Sex	Age Range	Ethnicity	Study Area	Residency
1	CHI-RPT	Male	40-45	Kalabari	Port Harcourt	Non-Indigene
2	BES-RPT	Male	40-45	Kalabari	Abonnema	Indigene
3	CHR-RPT	Female	26-45	Kalabari	Abonnema	Indigene
4	DAV-RPT	Male	26-45	Yoruba	Port Harcourt	Non-Indigene
5	EKI-RPT	Male	46-55	Oyingbo	Abonnema	Indigene
6	ELD-RPT	Female	56-70	Obolo	Andoni	Indigene
7	EMA-RPT	Male	26-45	Ibo	Abonnema	Non-Indigene
8	FAV-RPT	Female	26-45	Obolo	Andoni	Indigene
9	MIN-RPT	Female	46-55	Kalabari	Port Harcourt	Indigene
10	CAN-RPT	Male	46-55	Obolo	Andoni	Indigene
11	PST-RPT	Male	46-55	Ibibio	Andoni	Non-Indigene
12	PAT-RPT	Male	26-45	Obolo	Andoni	Indigene
13	CAB-RPT	Male	46-55	Kalabari	Abonnema	Indigene
14	SOY-RPT	Male	46-55	Kalabari	Abonnema	Indigene
15	UGB-RPT	Male	26-45	Obolo	Andoni	Indigene
16	PRO-RPT	Male	46-55	Ibo	Port Harcourt	Non-Indigene
17	RS1-RPT	Female	26-45	Ikwerre	Port Harcourt	Indigene
18	RS2-RPT	Male	46-55	Ogoni	Port Harcourt	Indigene
19	PPK-RPT	Male	26-45	Igede	Port Harcourt	Non-Indigene

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Sample Interview Transcript 1

Background Research Questions

i Name of Research Participant …….[redacted]……

ii Age group of Research Participant

(18yrs-25yrs) (26yrs-45yrs) (46yrs - 55yrs) (56yrs - 70yrs) (70yrs+)

iii Sex of Research Participant: Male/ Female

IV Marital status (Single) (Married) (Widow) (Widower) (Other)

V Ethnic group (specify) ……[redacted]……

VI Level of Education (Primary) (Secondary) (Post-Secondary) (University)

Vii Main occupation……[redacted]…….

Viii, How long have you lived in the area?..... [redacted]……...

Ix What was the area like before tourism activities started?

X How has it changed?

Xi what do you think about these changes?

Xii How far away is your home from the (tourist) beach?

Additional Information

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Part 2

Interview Questions with Informal Stakeholders: -

Local people within the community, Employees in tourism-related businesses, Community Leaders, Youth Leaders, Tourists.

These questions will be asked in the local language to allow the participants to answer the questions effectively.

1. Tourism and Development

i. Do you work in tourism-related?

ii. If YES, where do you work, and what is your role?

iii. If NO, why not?

iv. What do you think about more tourists visiting the coastal area here?

This community love visitors so much, as we accommodate people from different parts of the state; we have the Ogonis and Akwa Ibom people who are not indigene but reside in this community and were given a family. Whatever benefit each family is receiving, they are giving the same benefit. Some of them got married in this community, and you will never know they are from Akwa Ibom; that is the extent to which this community loves visitors.

v. In your view, what could be the benefits of having tourists in the area?

"Because the community does not have the financial capability to develop coastal tourism, we tend to overlook the benefits associated with such development". But if the government can invest in the development of the Atlantic Ocean and the visitors start coming to this community as tourists, this will create employment opportunities, generate income for the local people, and be a source of revenue for both the local and Rivers State governments.

However, the youth benefit more than any other group of people within the community because they are more involved through participation in the festival. The youths participate more in the festival, and some of the business that people do more often and that is moving during this period is the selling of recharge cards by the youths; it is not that the adult does not benefit anything from the visitors, but the youth benefit more than any other group within this community, and they also benefit from transportation through the use of motorbike.

vi. What do you think could be the problems of tourism development in the area?

As you can see, this place is a remote area; there is no good road, no better hospital, no electricity, and no pipe-borne water. This place is a village because there is a lack of basic social amenities. Over the last 20 years, apart from the road, there have been no changes in this community in terms of development and improved standard of living of

the people. This community has a beach, especially when you go to the coastal area. The Atlantic Ocean case close to this community (Asuk-Ama) is in court, as the other community (Ikuru Town) is claiming ownership of the beach. There is no market in this place where people from different communities can come for trading, and no financial institutions, such as banks, in this area. Apart from the primary school and the health centre located between Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, there is nothing else that can show and tell the world that the government cares or has any investment in this place/community. The people of this community also need more power and financial resources to develop God-gifted resources, such as the Atlantic beach, as a tourist attraction.

vii. How are you involved in tourism in the area?

The people of this community are involved in tourism during the period of December; it is a good traditional festival in their own way of belief, as the events last around two weeks, where they display different masquerade performances. Still, I don't participate in this festival because of my religion and belief as a Christian. The community is not making any effort as it stands now because we don't have anybody as the eyes of the people of the community in the government. The community is not involved in tourism development because we don't have any government representatives to speak for us.

2. Tourism and the Local community

i. What do you think about the state authorities involving the local community in developing coastal tourism in the area?

If the government established a higher institution in this community, it would help attract more people and contribute to community development. Secondly, If the government can build hospitals, it will bring more people to this community, like those who like to see doctors for treatment. The government must engage with people by creating awareness regarding the opportunities that coastal tourism development will bring to the community. There must be an access road linking this area to another community, and the state government must ensure improvement in the people's security level and their valuables.

ii. What are the main tourism activities that bring people to the area?

When you drive down the village, you will see the Atlantic beach. If this place is developed and they build a hotel and guest house for people visiting to lodge and provide security, this will attract many people as

tourists to this community. Apart from the Atlantic beach, the other attraction to this community is seasonal, which only occurs occasionally, like the elephant sighted a few months ago, unless there is a zoo where the government would keep those animals. The people of this community, Asuk-Ama and Ikuru Town, also organised a festival every two years for people living along this axis to watch. The traditional festival that we have is called "Owu". When it takes place in this community, Asuk-Ama, this time, it will take place in Ikuru Town, another community, two years later by rotation.

iii. How does the community participate in tourism activities?

Yes, the people are ready to be involved in tourism development, as this will be the opportunity the community has been waiting for so long. It is the responsibility of the youth to create awareness about the opportunity created by tourism and the roles the community needs to play through participation to benefit from the development.

We create awareness on Facebook about the elephant that was sighted in our community, even though the elephant has been there since the time of our ancestors. There was a time when I was a child, they brought some people to come and look at the forest because of the elephant, and nothing was done until now, after their visit. But, unfortunately, the government needs to help us develop this into a tourist attraction that will bring more visitors to our community, beyond our indigenous population.

iv. What do you think should be done to involve more local people in tourism activities?

As a local man in this community, I have never felt the importance of government in response to the reports people give us regarding tourism development, and we are creating awareness about elephant preservation in our forest. But suppose the community can come together and put aside our disagreement, even though we don't have the funds (money) to carry out tourism development projects. In that case, this will help the community as our people will be involved and engage with the government in developing coastal tourism and using the Atlantic beach in a way that will benefit them.

3. Tourism and Poverty Alleviation

i. What is your view on poverty in the area?

Many people in this community are poor, as most of them are farmers and fishermen. But the land within this environment is polluted with oil due to the activities of oil companies. As a result, we now have fewer fish

in our water for the fishermen to catch and a small portion of land for the farmers to cultivate.

ii. How would you describe a poor person?

Poverty is when someone cannot afford their daily needs; for instance, a man who cannot feed his family and take care of their needs is poor. A poor person is somebody who cannot afford the basic needs of life, for example, food, housing and security.

iii. What do you think are some of the challenges that will prevent people in this community from coming out of poverty?

I am really concerned about transportation in this area because it is riverine and very expensive, and there needs to be a better communication network available in this community. Even though there is a telecom mask within this community, there is always a communication failure. "Look at the road leading to this community, does it look like we are getting enough incentive from the oil drilling (petroleum exploration), and it is those people who are members of the board that benefit directly from the oil companies, and the people at the lower level do not have access to this incentives, they are not receiving any benefit but will be happy to be part of a tourism project that will create jobs opportunity for the youths and other people of the community".

iv. What should be done to help that person improve their livelihood?

The only thing the community benefits from the government is a small yearly incentive from the oil companies paid to the community. However, it is not because of this incentive that makes us not interested in tourism development. "If tourism is developed in this place, it will serve as a tangible project that will bring more visitors to this community because the community has not benefited enough from the oil taken from our land. Investment in the development of coastal tourism projects, such as the Atlantic beach, will create jobs and become a source of income for the people. At the same time, it will generate revenue for the government and help improve the community's living standards".

v. How do you think such a person can benefit from the tourism activities in the area?

If the people, especially the youths who are future leaders, are actively involved in tourism through employment, this will help reduce poverty within the community. However, it is the government's responsibility to

help the community harness its potential by developing tourism, which in turn leads to job creation. There are things around this community that will help to create jobs for the local people, for example, developing the Atlantic beach to attract tourists; it will help in job creation and generate income for the people, and it will also generate revenue for the government.

vi. Do you think developing more tourism facilities to attract tourists to the coastal areas can help the poor benefit and maybe get out of poverty?

"To some extent, but when you talk about poverty, you need to bring together the population density and know the number of people who are benefiting from tourism activities. For instance, if there is a festival in a community and the population of Christians is more than the traditionalists. It will only be within the traditionalists if they generate any income during the masquerade's performance. For those of us who are Christians, it will not get to us, as Christians do not participate in this festival because of our religion and belief". However, the local people of this community generate income during the festival as the visitors from the neighbouring community may like to buy something, such as food and drinks, as they enjoy the masquerade performance. As a result of this, it will help to reduce poverty as people earn more money during the two-week festival period, but if the events and other coastal tourism-related activities take place regularly, it will help in community development.

vii. Are you happy to be contacted within 12 months if there is a need to collect additional information?

Yes

Sample Interview Transcript 2

Background Research Questions

i Name of Research Participant ……[redacted]……

ii Age group of Research Participant

(18yrs-25yrs) (26yrs-45yrs) (46yrs - 55yrs) (56yrs - 70yrs) (70yrs+)

iii Sex of Research Participant: Male/ Female

IV Marital status (Single) (Married) (Widow) (Widower) (Other)

V Ethnic group (specify) ……. [redacted]…….

VI Level of Education (Primary) (Secondary) (Post-Secondary) (University)

Vii Main occupation……[redacted]…….

Viii How long have you lived in the area? ……[redacted]…….

Ix What was the area like before tourism activities started?

X How has it changed?

Xi what do you think about these changes?

Xii How far away is your home from the (tourist) beach?

Additional Information

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Part 1

Interview Questions with Formal Stakeholders in Tourism: -

Government Agency, Tourism Related Business Owners, Local Government Representative.

1- Tourism Development

i. What is your view on how tourism is developing in River State?

The water at Abonnema is polluted, but people go deep into the water, and the mangrove is where they get the crabs. There is oil spillage on the water, but Abonnema does not have oil. It may spill when they are transporting it. If there is a leak in the badge or whatever, then some of the boat engines are leaking, and you see the sea covered with oil. The fishermen are still fishing, but they need to go deep into the sea. We need a government that will take tourism seriously in a coastal area. Coastal tourism and Marine tourism is a money spinner because you have to pay even in Dubai we went for dinner in a boat cruise, if the government provide the type of boat I'm talking about now, people just pay to enter and drive off into the sea, they are given dinner, play music, you drive and you come back. You pay the government some money, you pay the owner of the boat, and the government uses the money to develop new areas.

ii. What are the key attractions of tourists to Rivers State?

We have many tourism attractions across the state. In Bonny, there is St. Stephen's Cathedral, built by the Christians, and the church was presented to Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther as his Cathedral in 1889. He accepted, and St. Stephen's church in Bonny became the first Cathedral in Nigeria and the second Cathedral in West Africa. The Bible used by Bishop Ajayi Crowther when preaching is still there, and the one that Queen Elizabeth gave to Bonny King is still in his palace. The boat that took Bishop Ajayi Crowther to Bonny is still there. Our museum is downstairs; you will get more information from the museum director, who will take you around and give you more information about the state and different local government areas. About the resources, they will tell you they have crude oil. Oloibiri was with us when they found the oil. Oloibiri is now in Bayelsa state, and you have the idea of tourism there. Our fishing, our lifestyle, the fishing and all that was before the discovery of

oil. But tourism is not really developed here, and I work here, and I've been out of the country, and I know what it's like out there. We are not doing enough; we are not harnessing tourism opportunities, as we have a beautiful culture. We just came back from our organised annual fashion week, where people dressed in traditional local attire. Did you see the Kalabari dressing? People were liaising with the food vendors so that when people visit, they should make sure they cook only locally made food. Someone cannot travel to visit our community and give them rice. We have what we call onunu, which is pounded plantain and yams together with oil, and we also have our native soup with fresh fish.

ii What are the key attractions for tourists in the state?

Like I said, if we can organise a boat regatta, like the Opobo boat regatta, if they can revive it, this will bring tourists in, you know this oasis that our birds can crow, especially if the government gives the matching order to the oil companies, that by having this event, you need a sponsor. They do not have a choice; they must pay a tax or sponsor an event such as World Cultural Day or World Tourism Day. We bring dances from the 23 local governments of the State to display. This is not something we see on display in Port Harcourt; there is always something spectacular, something people are looking forward to watching, as we have a cultural centre where they act out drama and play in town.

iii. How attractive is coastal tourism to the state?

There are things that are unique to us alone, look at my hair, you will not see me do foreign hair, it's always traditionally weaved hair and I always tell my friends abroad to come to Port Harcourt to make this traditional hair whenever they come to Nigeria. By doing this, I've improved tourism there and when I went to Dubai with my children, the European tourists we met were taking photographs with us and touching our hair.

They wanted to make that type of hair, and I told them they needed to visit Port Harcourt in Nigeria. So there are things that you need to go to the place to experience it. If everything can be exported, you will not enjoy it. For example, in Dubai, they said they don't want Disneyland because there is one in Florida and another in Paris. What they do in Dubai makes people not want to go to those places again. There is a lot of potentials that need to be harnessed in this state. Have you seen our green areas and the garden when you are descending from the aeroplane?

That is why they call the state a garden city, it is like a big garden, you will pass through when the plane takes off through the place where we have our palm resort park, you will see all in a line with very beautiful landscape, and people will pay for the helicopter ride to view.

Even our coastal areas are so beautiful because when I used a chopper to go to Brass, it's like God just stayed and you were drawing and drawing. It's so beautiful to look at, honestly. We are supposed to have chopper services that we just pay for and will take you around. Okay, let us go to Bonny to see the LNG plant, the beautiful site, and even the fertiliser plant in Brass. You need to see the construction going on there; it's massive. It is bigger than from here (Secretariat) to Mile 3, which is where they are building the fertiliser plant in Brass and the refinery. Private planes can take off and land in Brass, but the helicopter service that we have is at the Air Force Base, and Bristow, including Caverton helicopters, but they only work with oil companies to take their staff in and out. In some other countries, like Dubai, they have helicopter shuttles; you must pay to enter and fly you over. Dubai is making money from tourism as the money they receive from oil is now used to develop tourism infrastructure, and their electricity does not blink for one second, with shopping malls everywhere.

iv. What is the potential of coastal tourism growing into a major economic activity in the state?

So, tourists coming here will be better for the State as a revenue earner. Like in Dubai, they are making money through tourism by organising the Dubai Expo, something that will bring people; they are just ready to host a conference. So that people will come and look around, and you will be interested in what you see. The other day at one of our communities, a fisherman killed a dolphin at Oyorokoto, Andoni Local Government Area, Rivers State, on 29th October 2021. When I went to Dubai, we visited the dolphin area, where trained dolphins were dancing. The dolphins were painting as they put crayons in their mouths. One person paid for a ticket equivalent to #25,000, and I went with my children. The revenue collected will go back to the state, but here we catch fish and will say "God don better our bread", and they will kill the dolphin.

Before, in those days. Even though people used to kill elephants, they are now regarded as an endangered species that is protected. Like in Bonny, if you go far into the ocean, you will see all these animals, but they know that if they come close to where people live, they will be killed. That is why these animals prefer to stay off. There is also a hippopotamus in Bonny, and they comes out once in a while. However, our mentality is that any animal we see must be killed. Dolphins in Dubai played ball and interacted with the instructors. They are well-trained and well-fed. To take photographs with the dolphins, you must pay additional money. At the end of the day, it generated millions of dollars, and the government can use it to develop other areas. How are you involved in tourism?

With my children, we go to the park to relax and have fun, we have Garden City amusement park, and we have Pleasure Park. That is our only type of tourism; we are limited. Had it been that we had this boat cruise another day, we would've gone on that one too. If we have a dolphinarium or other aquarium where there are all kinds of fish, we can go there. Sometimes you don't need to go to the ocean to see those

species, you just go there where it is safer to see and you go, so tourism here is limited.

v. What do you think are the challenges or problems that can affect coastal tourism development in the area?

There is no development, and who would want to risk their lives to travel to that place? We don't have that type of boat I'm showing you on my phone; if we had that type of boat, you would have the confidence to enter the sea. That sea is an ocean, but we have this small wooden boat that if any little thing happens you are outside. We have a jetty, but the government and security officials sometimes don't enforce the wearing of life jackets, and you find out that during boat mishaps, people still die these days. Do you think these days people should continue to die because of boat mishaps? No, with the modern technology in boats now, you know we have a long way to go, as you will only see people with long wooden boats, and these people are selling "POFI" stolen crude oil from the pipeline because of oil spillage. They refine it in a crude way, causing suits, and we are breeding carbon monoxide and the worst. Even a lot of people with health challenges, so I don't know as there is a lot to do. The Federal government must come in, as they said, security is not in the purview of the state government. He's just being the chief security officer of the state, but he cannot control the Army, the police, or the Navy as they take their command from the Chief of Army Staff and all that.

So, they should bring security first before tourists can go somewhere; they must be assured that there is security, and it is safe to visit the place. When I went to Lagos at the beach, I saw companies taking the white sand, and I wondered if they were going to use it for building, but I was told that they use it to make glass. We have that white sand in Kula that I told you about, in Bonny and in Soku and 90% of the glass used in the new building in Lagos is made from the sand. They have a factory close to Ogun State, the West Africa Glass Company we had in Rivers

State has been closed, this is where they have the raw material, and they don't need to import but its shutdown.

2 - Tourism and Community Development

i. How do the local communities participate in tourism activities in the area?

I think, first, it has to do with policy and public sensitisation. You talk to the people, and there are tourist agents. As a matter of fact, the government should organise seminars regularly with the federation of hoteliers and musicians, you know, music is another form of tourism. When you have a concert as a tourist and you pay for a hotel, you have generated revenue for the state. When the tourists look for food to eat, you have generated revenue. There should be sensitisation, and then we should host and organise more sporting activities. That is why in the UK, for the ticket that you bought to watch Manchester United, you paid a certain percentage to the government as tax, as not all the money goes to the club.

ii. How are the local communities involved in the planning of tourism

development in the state?

We told the local government that we supposed to have cultural and tourism officers in Port Harcourt but when you come to the ministry, they assign one or two officers but in the local area those are where the tour guides are, they know the roots; they show people around and if they cannot speak the language you go with an interpreter who will narrate what happened.

Before this ministry was created, we had a shuttle bus that took people from the airport when they arrived. Do you know that the state-owned hotel is presidential? We give flyers, they mostly have foreign visitors because of the oil and gas, they give you flyers and we have the tour

guides that will take the visitors to the hotel and will ask the visitors which place they want to see on their free days, whether is the tourist beach or take them to Agajah or Andoni, the tour guide will take visitors around with the shuttle bus. However, now they've stopped this type of business.

During the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) that was held in 2018, Port Harcourt tourist beach was the venue of the Boat Regatta but when you go there now, there are some people that will scare visitors away, you know what, a real beach is like Oniru beach not one small river that is called a beach. A beach has white sand, it has waves, and that is my beach, but they just call it a tourist beach. The beach is at Soku, Bonny, Kula and Andoni but how do we get there, that is the question.

iii. How sustainable are tourism activities in the area?

(By sustainable, I am thinking about tourism not only contributing economically but also putting into consideration aspects of community and the natural and cultural environment, with a long-term vision in terms of development.)

The transportation to go there is not safe, and if it's raining, people will just take a trampoline to cover themselves at this time and age. We should have boats that are using steering, and in my town, when my uncle, who lived abroad, comes home for Christmas, they come with their jet ski and cold bike, as the masquerade is performing, we are riding the bike from one part of the beach to another. We had a sand-filled beach that was used for beach parties, but it's now overgrown with grass because they haven't organised any beach parties.

3 – Tourism and poverty alleviation

I. What are your views about poverty in the state?

Somebody is poor because they don't have decent accommodation. They cannot eat a balanced diet, and even twice a day, they cannot afford a good education. They cannot afford most of the basic needs like shelter, food, good clothing, and other amenities required for day-to-day survival. There are people sleeping under bridges, which is poverty. What are the challenges that are preventing these people from coming out of poverty?

Unemployment is one of the reasons, if they are healthy and strong, and there is a job available for them to do, like working on a construction site. Some of these people you see are mentally challenged, and the government is not taking care of them. When I went to Dubai, my children asked me whether there were any mad people there. I'm like, the government will not allow them to walk around without taking care of them. Unemployment is the number one cause of poverty. If people have work to do, they will go and work, unlike in America, where some people are not willing to work but rely on the government to pay them for staying at home with stimulus checks and all that. When the Rivers State government announced that it would employ 5000 civil servants, this place (secretariat) was full of people. That was the day I knew that we didn't have enough buses, as people came from different local government areas of the state. The secretariat is so full that you cannot even pass from one place to another, even though the pay is not much, but it's better than nothing. Some people have been unemployed for 10 or 20 years after they graduated from school, but they end up in menial jobs with no job security. It is only a civil service job that has job security; the governor cannot sack a civil servant, it must go through a process and before the process is complete, the governor too is also out of office.

ii How have the local people (particularly the disadvantaged groups such as women and the youth) benefited from tourism?

The theme for World Tourism Day 2021 was "Tourism for Inclusive Growth" and how local people can benefit from tourism and increase their participation. Inclusive Tourism gets more people involved. I was on the committee that was promised to bring a resource person from academia to deliver lectures and create awareness. Organised a rally and invited the local people to attend and educate them on how they can benefit from tourism activities.

When tourists visit, you can take the crabs and seafood to sell to them, you can organise a cultural dance group to perform and get paid, cook local food for the visitors to enjoy during a weekend visit and increase the capacity by creating employment opportunities and generating income for the local community and revenue for the government. When you increase the capacity and you cook local dishes for the visitors, it will lead to repeat patronage. If you go to the museum now, you will see some souvenirs made by River's people, right now, where we have those souvenirs at the Hotel Presidential. There is a stand where private individuals can have souvenirs, but the one at the museum centre is for viewing purposes. In the aspect of participation, the local people can also make a stand where they sell the seafood because that seafood is peculiar to our area, land crabs, sea crabs, prune, oysters and a very big fish which they sell for N30,000 at creek road markets and they caught those big fishes from our sea here, we need trawlers from the government that they will use to get those fishes from the sea so that it can be cheaper and affordable for people to buy.

iii. How do you think coastal tourism can help in reducing poverty in the area?

Money is spent every day by tourists, and the government is making money. This is how Dubai generates revenue, and tourists also pay the tourism tax. it's on your receipts as you pay whenever you go from one

amusement park to another. The revenue collected in the form of taxes by the government is used to build and maintain the infrastructural facilities. That is tourism, but here we are not harnessing this opportunity, as we don't want to monetise tourism activities because we have not really developed it. Many people don't know that local artisans can make money from selling artwork that was painted for visitors. They will just relax in the house, blaming one uncle for making them poor; they don't even realise their potential, like my traditional hairstyle, and the food we eat is part of tourism. Our traditional clothes (attire), such as Ankara, are exported to Europe and America, and my cousin sends these clothes to Dubai and gets paid in foreign currency, US dollars. If we have good transportation and an agreement with the shipping companies, the seafood can be exported, and it will create jobs for many people in the village. We just need to go to the mangrove to pick the seafood, wash, boil, and remove it from the shell, while some people cook it and eat it from the shell. They can even pick the snail and other seafood to sell.

iv. What can be done to make the local people ready to participate and benefit from the opportunities coastal tourism may create in the area?

The government should create jobs, and if it cannot create enough jobs, it should create an enabling environment for private investors to come and set up companies and businesses where people will be employed and work. But if the place is not conducive, you don't provide security, and the tax is high. There is no infrastructure, there is no electricity, no good roads, and the investors will not come. They will go somewhere else, and they will check your taxes if it is higher than what they can get in Ondo state (another state); they will prefer to go and settle (invest) in Ondo. There is no security; the community boys are another issue we have in this area. They will come to you to settle them. For goodness' sake, you are constructing a road for them that they will benefit from, and they say you should come and settle.

Our former governor, Amechi, stopped it, and they call him matching ground. He said how can I do the road for you, and you want me to pay. What I expect from you is to tell me to employ one or two boys from the area, and work, and not to bring all the workers from outside of the community. When there is persistent trouble from the community boys, the government cancelled the project and moved it to another peaceful area. If you don't have a good road network, which company will come to your community, like what they are doing now in Dubai? You need a strong infrastructure before you set up your organisation, because it is the infrastructure that will drive development. That is what they don't know, we went on a train ride, a fast tube ride around the city or the skyscrapers, sometimes you don't want to go anywhere, just to see how those things are, you bought the ticket, and the government received a certain percentage of the ticket fees and the trading companies.

v. Are you happy to be contacted within 12 months if there is a need to collect additional information?

Yes, I am happy to be contacted at any time.

NOTE: The personal data of the participants has been removed to ensure their privacy and confidentiality

LIST OF PHOTOS - Study Site 1- Asuk-Ama/Ikuru Town

Figure 1 Atlantic Beach Asuk-Ama Junction

Figure 2 Atlantic Beach Ikuru Town

Figure 3 Ikuru Town

LIST OF PHOTOS - Study Site 2 – Abonnema

Figure 4 Abonnema

Figure 5 Old Seaport- Abonnema

LIST OF PHOTOS - Study Site 3- Port Harcourt

Figure 6 Port Harcourt Tourist Beach

Figure 7 Port Harcourt Tourist Beach

Figure 6 Wazobia Beach Bar

Figure 7 Port Harcourt Tourist Beach

Figure 8 Port Harcourt Pleasure Park

Figure 9 Pleasure Park Lake

Figure 10 Researcher - Rivers State Government Secretariat