CULTURAL SYMBOLS AND SLOGANS IN BRANDING ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN AS TOURISM DESTINATION IN ÌGBÈTÌ, ÒYÓ STATE, NIGERIA

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated, with praise and thanksgiving, to the

LORD JESUS CHRIST

and my late father,

Elder Joseph Ayodeji Adesuyi

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ABSTRACT

Symbols and Slogans (SaS) are increasingly becoming important in branding tourism destinations due to their ability to represent ideas, objects, and events. However, existing studies on tourism focused on potentials, types, benefits, challenges, development and tourism sustainability with little attention to how cultural SaS could be used as tools for branding tourism destinations. Therefore, this study examined the extent to which cultural SaS could be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain (IM) as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì.

Clifford Geertz's Symbolic and Interpretive Theory of Culture and Walt Whitman Rostow's Modernisation Theory served as the framework, while the mixed methods design was adopted. Data were obtained through participant observation during three annual Ìyámòpó festivals and Easter Monday Carnivals, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews and a survey of tourists. Ten sessions of FGDs were conducted with Ìyámòpó priests, men, women and youths. Twenty-five key informants comprising one traditional ruler, four priests, a chief and heads of quarters were purposively selected for interviews and insights on the cultural SaS in Ìgbẹ́tì, cultural resources on IM and the extent to which the selected cultural SaS can be used to brand IM as a tourism destination. Two hundred and twelve tourists were accidentally selected, and a structured questionnaire was administered to them to determine how SaS could be used to brand IM. Qualitative data were content-analysed, while quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

The cultural SaS are Àgbélé hill, a rock pedestal depicting a woman carrying a baby on her back and a load on her head; slogans, which are *"Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú ọyẹ́"* meaning Ìgbẹ́tì harmattan city and *"Ìgbẹ́tì Olókè mẹ́rìndínlógún* connoting the climatic condition and landscape of Ìgbẹ́tì, respectively. The IM, a rock believed to be a woman who rescued Ìgbẹ́tì forebears during wars, is a tourist site attracting tourists annually for sightseeing, mountaineering and participation in carnivals and *Ìyámòpó* annual festival that involve sacrifices and rituals to renew the covenant between *Ìyámòpó* deity, ancestors and the members of the community. The cultural resources on IM that attract tourists include *Ilé Ìyámòpó, Ilé Ṣàngó, Odò orogún mẹ́ta*, relics of a defensive wall and stones, and *Ìyámòpó* shrine. Àgbélé symbol (AS) and the slogan Ìgbẹ́tì *ìlú ọyẹ́* can brand IM due to their aesthetic values. The respondents were 56.6% male, 84.4% were non-traditional believers, 75.0% had formal education, and 3.8% were foreigners. Most of the tourists (82.4%) sampled identified AS as useful for branding IM. Additionally, 73.0% were attracted to IM by the AS, while 77.8% opined that AS brands IM and 74.0% believed that AS brands other tourism resources on IM. Similarly, 68.3% agreed that the slogan Ìgbẹ́tì *Ìlú ọyẹ́"* communicated information about the beauty and climatic condition of IM as an attractive tourism destination; 77.8% agreed with the slogan branded IM, while 68.8% believed that it advertises other tourism resources.

Cultural symbols and slogans in Ìgbẹ́tì promote IM as a tourism destination. Therefore, it is recommended that tourism destinations everywhere should be branded by employing cultural symbols and slogans as brands.

Keywords: Cultural symbols and slogans, Cultural resources, Tourism destination, Ìyámòpó Mountain.

Word count: 495

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AS: Àgbélé Symbol

IM: Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

SaS: Symbols and Slogans

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

NTDC: Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation

UNCTD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organisation

WTO: World Tourism Organisation

WTTC: World Travels and Tourism Council

UN: United Nations

NTP: National Tourism Policy

NIHOTOUR: National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism

NCMM: National Commission for Museums and Monuments

NCAC: Council for Arts and Culture

NGA: National Gallery of Art

NICO: National Institute for Cultural Orientation

CBAAC: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization

NT/NTN: National Troupe/National Theatre of Nigeria

LIST OF APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

Oke Ìyámọ̀pó	-	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
Oke Àgbélé	-	Àgbélé Hill
Oke Sin-O	-	Sin-O Hill
Oke Santo	-	Santo Hill
Oke Èrúgbà	-	Èrúgbà Hill
Oke Ọ̀kín	-	Ọ̀kín Hill
Abọ̀kẹ̀	-	The priest in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
Ẹlẹ́rúùgbà	-	The priest in charge of Èrúgbà Hill
Abọsìn-O	-	The priest in charge of Sin-O Hill
Abọsànto	-	The priest in charge of Santo Hill
Iyalode	-	Female chief in Ìgbẹ́tì
Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó	-	Ìyámọ̀pó Cave/palace
Ilé Ṣàngó	-	Ṣàngó Cave/palace
Odò orogún mẹ́tá	-	Three Interlocking Wells
Elùbọ́	-	Yam Powder
OríkìOrílẹ̀	-	Praise Poetry
ỌmọỌlóyẹ́	-	The child of Harmattan/cold
ÌlúỌyẹ́	-	City of Harmattan/cold
Olókè Mẹ́rìndínlógún	-	The owner of sixteen hills
Oke Opetolu	-	Opetolu hill

Ikoyi	-	A town in Ọ̀yọ́ state
Igboho	-	A town in Ọ̀yọ́ state
Ẹkù	-	*It is a plant/vegetable that draws like okra*
Ojúbọ Ìyámọ̀pó	-	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
Abiyamọ	-	A mother
Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì	-	Aláàfin Chief-in-Council
Ilẹ̀ Òdodo	-	Land of faithful
Àgbàtì	-	The city that cannot be captured
Baalọ́dẹ	-	The head of the hunters
Imalẹ̀	-	deity, god/goddess
Iya Ọ̀ṣun	-	Ọ̀ṣun priestess
Ilẹ̀-Ìgbẹ́tì	-	Land of Ìgbẹ́tì where the past kings of Ìgbẹ́tìwere interred

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Tourism is well-known for its capacity to improve and preserve destinations. It is a financial drive that supports a country's economy and reveals the citizens' values and culture. According to Ajake (2015), tourism is well-recognised for creating revenue and wealth for shareholders in several regions worldwide. It is a new trend and among the biggest corporations globally. In addition, it is a viable means of generating revenue in developed and developing countries. Tourism, according to Ghanem (2017), is defined as the movement of a visitor when visiting a significant location that is not within their common surroundings for reasons such as business, leisure or other personal purpose. It is an act of temporary movement from one's home or immediate environment to a particular destination for relaxation, business, religion or other functions for less than a year. Growth in the tourism industry advances destination symbols. Fonseca (2012) noted that tourism is an idea that enhances the travelling of tourists to the natural or artificial environment for relaxation and vacation. United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2019) recorded that the world traveller influx rose to 7.0% in 2017, the maximum increase ever since the 2009 international financial crisis and well above UNWTO's established prediction of 3.8% annually from 2010 to 2020. Overall, 1,326 million global tourist influxes were documented in tourism locations globally, which was 86 million more than that of 2016 (UNWTO, 2019).

World Travels and Tourism Council (2019) documented that the movement of people to places of attraction for sightseeing and leisure is a major commercial activity in most nations of the world. The total contributions of these activities to jobs, including assets, investment, and generated revenue, were 318,811,000 jobs in 2018 (10.0% of total jobs). This was predicted to increase by 2.9% in 2019 to 28,208,000 jobs (10.1% of total jobs). Despite the worldwide economic slump and corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2019, WTTC (2020) also predicts that tourism is the significant segment

that will revive the universal economy meltdown caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic by creating employment and revenue. By 2029 according to WTTC (2020), the global tourist influx is estimated to be the sum of 2,196,090,000, producing costs of USD 2, 483.9bn, with an increase of 3.8% per annum. The generated amount will sustain 420,659,000 employments, which is 11.7% of jobs (WTTC, 2020). These imply that tourism is a significant means of national development. It can also be regarded as a major fast-growing industry. According to Karim (2012), established tourism practices at destinations easily lead to growth and development in countries' service industries, company profits, job creation, international trade, the balance of payments, and social infrastructural development, such as good roads, reliable electricity, pipe-borne water, efficient airports, excellent seaports, productive rail transport, and affordable telecommunication facilities, as well as guaranteed personal security.

Therefore, there is a need for diversity of business and financial source in less developed countries due to mono business and monetary source whereby one or two products are exported to other countries and also functions as exchange (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012). Within this context, Nigeria is considered an example of a nation that can increase and redirect its financial and commercial system from oil and gas production to other product employment and income-generating opportunities. Nigeria is endowed with massive and diverse tourism resources, which are natural with scenery environment and is deficient in structural amenities. Jiboku and Jiboku (2010) discovered that in Nigeria, many attractive places in our small towns and villages can be changed into tourist destinations. Similarly, most of the tourism potential has not been harnessed due to excess dependence on crude oil. Rural tourism offers tourists opportunities to experience the culture, religion, lifestyle, and traditions of the locals in the tourist areas.

Bankole (2013) believes that Nigeria's hope for tourism is based on the variety of its ethnic groups, traditions, scenery environment, and unexploited resources and prospects. Various geographical features, such as sea, coastline, flora and fauna, forest, cascade, and diverse cold areas are important for tourism in Nigeria. He added that the main activities that draw tourists comprise customary and exceptional conduct of life normally conserved in traditional beliefs, interesting folktales and customs,

skills, and artistic works of the community. Others are stored for collecting and exhibiting things that contain logical past, and creative importance, sculptural mall, artistic, sacred and general events, shrines, edifices, sculptures, and skills. According to Bankole (2013), warm springs at Ikogosi, Ekiti State; Idanre Hills in Ondo state; waterfalls and Wikki Warm Spring at Yankari National Park; mountains, such as Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Ogun state; games/forest reserves, botanical and zoological gardens, beautiful landscape and high altitude sceneries of Obudu Cattle Ranch: Jos Mambila and national parks are natural resources in Nigeria (Bankole, 2013). Cultural attractions also define the identity of the people, while projecting their prospects for tourism development.

The growth in the tourism sector has prompted governments and tourism organisations in developed countries to place their destinations as the most important tourist site through branding. Many have adopted branding procedures to introduce a symbol and to distinguish their destination in the international market. Previously, corporate organisations often used symbols, logos, and slogans to brand and identify their product. Olins (1989) provide instances of the utilisation of symbols and their impact on a corporation, including Shell Oil and Yves Saint Laurent; these organisations adopted durable and constant business name, symbol, logo, and emblem to produce heroic and standard personality for their establishment. Businesses and other organisations allegedly utilise logos to identify and symbolise their names or brands, according to Asikhia and Binuyo (2013). Aaker (1991) defined a brand as a distinctive symbol or name that includes a trademark, logo or any device intended to categorise the product or package of a manufacturer, company, or organisation to distinguish the product or package from the rival who is likely to produce similar produce or package. Symbols and logos are essential components of a brand that form the main graphic link. Symbols are the best option for a lasting brand because they help the logo retain its meaning or significance for a longer period.

Recently, branding has been discovered to be a tool for tourism destination development. Destination branding enables a tourist to recognise and identify a tourism destination. Using branding elements, such as symbols and slogans, to brand natural and cultural resources will advertise and showcase tourism destinations. A Symbol is a sign of recognition and identification. It can represent an object, thought, or idea. According to

World Tourism Organisation (2001), a symbol is anything in the structure of an icon that represents, either by its appearance or quality, a normal thought that is accepted within a society. This shows that before any object, thought, or idea can be symbolised, there should be consensus within the community or people because objects that are symbolic to a certain group may have ordinary meaning to another group. This is why symbolism can be described as the application or ability to use objects or sounds to signify a significant thought. Sound, act, things, places, characters, and events can have a symbolic meaning when they signify more than their factual connotation.

Symbolism is fundamental to forming sexual characteristics, race, and personality. It is a major process by which individuals construct meaning, categorise information, communicate feelings, and control humanity. In most cases, symbols materialise in expression, sound, sign, thought, dream, or image; it is used to transmit new thoughts and values. It reflects cultural identities and facilitates cultural regeneration and representations of reality. Symbols, as an element of branding, can communicate and inform tourists about the tangible and intangible assets of the destination. Additionally, a slogan is an essential element of branding. It is a short phrase that transmits and interprets the destination features in a way that prepares the tourist's mind for what he will experience at the time of visit. Many tourism destinations worldwide derived their slogan from natural and geographical features and great icons that have added to the growth of a place. Tanzania - the country of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar, and the Serengeti, Tropical North Queensland - where the rainforest meets the reef; Hurunui - the alpine Pacific triangle, and others are examples of slogans. Symbols and slogans can develop tourist destinations if effectively used.

Tourism symbols are often informational or directional and are effective ways of attracting visitors to a tourist destination or rural community whereby linking visitors or tourists to the product and services, which can be nature, landscape, good weather, historical and art monuments, events, such as festivals and tourism facilities, including hotels, restaurants, bars, and motels. These symbols can be in the form of brand identity components, such as logos, signs, slogans, names, images and icons that differentiate, recognise and identify a tourism destination. In a commercial sense, identity is characterised as a group of signals or a design that allows shareholders to

recognise and discover a business or organisation (Warnaby and Medway, 2008). Dowling (2001) defines these cues as symbols and classifications that include the firm name, logo, publicity slogans, and emblem. However, Van Riel and Balmer (1995) predicted a combination of business personalities that blends behaviour, communication, and symbolism, on which the organisation's identity is visible

Brand identity is defined by Ajagbe *et al.* (2015b), Aaker *et al.* (2004), and Kapferer (1997) as a combination of visual, aural, and other sensory mechanisms that provide identification, product guarantee, discrimination, combined communications, trademark, or patent. According to the aforementioned perspectives, consumers can recognise and distinguish one product from another due to visual and brand identification in the form of symbols, logos, and slogans. Therefore, there is a need for brand identification components in tourism destinations that convey and allow travelers to recognise and distinguish one location from another. Good tourism symbols, logos, and slogans can help attract tourists to a destination, while also boosting economic development. According to Vaugeois and Stone (2007), high-quality symbols that adhere to national ideals and principles will be recognised internationally by tourists from other countries. Moreover, Melkumyan (2011) stressed the need to design a graphic identity that centred around a logo for tourism promotion, while some authors proposed visual and brand identity. This study focuses on how symbols and slogans of Ìgbẹ́tì are used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. This mountain, in the past, served as protection for the indigenes during wars and a point to launch attacks against invaders.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

In tourism research, economic development and tourist potentials in Africa appear to have received significant attention; for example, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2017) focuses on the growth of trade and industry in Africa. Furthermore, according to Yehia *et al.* (2020), tourism promotion is an inclusive growth and sustainability engine in Africa. According to the author, tourism is a great sector that provides economic, social, and environmental benefits to countries worldwide. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2017) also focused on tourism for transformative and general development in Africa, while Yang (2015) and Anderson (2014) emphasised tourism

and poverty reduction. Bankole (2013), Esu (2013 and Ayeni and Ebohon's (2012) discusses the impact of the Nigerian tourism segment on economic development and the problem of the segment. Similarly, Fonseca (2012) discussed the obstacles and opportunities in the tourism industry.

Ukpokolo and Folorunso (2019), (Ukpokolo and Okoye (2013) and (Ukpokolo and Dawodu, 2019) discuss hospitality and tourism development, tourism potentials and security and tourism development These authors argue that most African countries, particularly Nigeria, could not develop the sector due to the country's poor economic situation, political unrest, inadequate infrastructure, and security issues. Several studies have also outlined the preservation and promotion of cultural and heritage tourism. Tasie (2014), strengthening the cultural tourism business in Africa will help the continent's tourism development. According to Kumar (2017), cultural and heritage tourism is a resource for long-term growth. The significance of cultural assets in developing Awka's tourism was the subject of Ezenagu and Iwuagwu (2016). Benson (2014) investigated the contribution of cultural tourism to Nigeria's long-term growth. Aremu (1999, 2000 and 2007) discussed on the promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage and preservation for tourism development. Furthermore, Bassey and Egon (2016) investigated Nigerian tourist policy and identified areas that need reconsidering. Notably, none of the studies mentioned above goes into detail regarding how cultural symbols, such as logos, symbols, icons, slogans, and other features, might be utilised to brand tourism destinations.

Tourism and brand, place branding, nation branding, destination branding, brand image and identity, branding and marketing techniques, the effectiveness of symbols, logos, and slogans, and others have all been discussed by researchers. For instance, branding and marketing strategies and impact of brands was discussed by Elena *et al.,* (2019), Alnawafeh *et al.,* (2019), Richards and Duif (2019), Mwinuka (2017), Almeyda-Ibanez and George (2017), Madden *et al.,*(2016), and Petek and Ruzzier (2013). Masango and Naidoo (2019); Noronha *et al.,* (2017), Eduardo (2016), Zeybec and Gul Unlu (2016), Odia and Isibor (2014) and Briciu (2013) focussed on place and nation branding. Destination branding was studied by Matecic and Perenic-Lewis (2018), Verissimo *et al.,* (2017), Huang and Lin (2017), Gali *et al.*(2016), Basisic and Blazevic (2014), Perreira *et al.*(2012), Blain *et.al* (2005), Dinnie (2008) and Pike

(2005). Increasingly, the branding of destinations is gaining importance because of the competition in the tourism market. Therefore, there is a need for communication tools, such as symbols and slogans that will enable the tourist to identify and recognise the tourist destination. However, no contributions have been made on how symbols and slogans can be used to brand tourism destinations in Nigeria. Considering this background, the need for this research has become imperative.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTION

i.   What are the selected cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì?

ii.   How can Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain serve as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì?

iii.   What is the extent to which Àgbélé symbol can be used for branding Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination?

iv.   What is the extent to which Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination?

1.4   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research aims to examine the cultural symbols and branding of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Nigeria, as a tourist destination. **S**pecific objectives were**:**

i.   To Identify selected cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì.

ii.   To examine Ìyámọ̀pó mountain as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì.

iii.   To ascertain the extent to which the Àgbélé symbol can be used for branding Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination.

iv.   To ascertain the extent to which Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination.

1.5   JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

This study focused on how cultural symbols and slogans could be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Nigeria. It will serve

as a roadmap for other tourism destinations in Ọ̀yọ́ State and the country as a whole because it enlightens tourism stakeholders, such as government at all levels, tourism destination planners, tourism managers and other agencies, including Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC). It will guide tourism destination planners and other stakeholders to develop a marketing strategy that entails tourism destination branding and promotion. The study is significant because tourism destinations that are considering tourism slogans and symbols will be enlightened on how to develop their own. Hence this study helps tourism scholars in Nigeria to focus on how cultural symbol, which includes slogans, symbols, logos, and icons, among others, can promote tourist destination. The study also enables tourism managers and planners to adopt effective branding techniques that showcase and promote their destinations and products as they compete with other destinations to attract visitors.

1.6   SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in Ìgbẹ́tì, Olorunsogo Local Government, Ọ̀yọ́ State (See Fig 1.1). It focused on how the symbol and slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì can help to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì. Other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and the history associated with them were captured. The research also examined the festivals and events associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, the procedure and preparation for these festivals, and the symbolic representation of tourism resources and festivals. Though there are many tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì, research shows that 16 hills and mountains surround the town; however, the study only covered Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain because a thorough investigation has not been conducted on other hills and mountains. The study was conducted from 2015 to 2019.

1.7   PLAN OF THE STUDY

The study focused on brand and branding constructs as successful marketing techniques and communication that may inform and differentiate goods, service products, places, or destinations from competition arising from the related or comparable product, place, or destination. Globalisation was highlighted as a major aspect that leads to concerns about place branding, which might include a country, region, town, city, or any other location, among other things. The benefits and importance of branding places, destinations, products and services were also captured.

The study show how place branding and marketing is a necessary approach that can promote, develop and sustain the economic, political and social-cultural and identity of a place in this era of globalisation and competition. Furthermore, the study examined the essence of destination as a factor influencing tourists' decisions about whether or not to visit a location based on movable and immovable natural and cultural resources. Three branding components, including brand positioning, identity and image, were also emphasised as an important aspect of destination development. Furthermore, the study shows the importance of brand aspects, such as name, logo, sign, design, symbol, and slogan, and how they influence the destination's branding. The study found that many tourist destinations worldwide have device branding tools in terms of symbols, logos, and slogans, among others, to identify and distinguish their sites from other competitive destinations. Also, the study established that using Agbele symbol and Igbeti slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City" to brand Iyamopo Mountain in Igbeti will enable tourists to Identify and differentiate the mountain from other.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0   INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the concept issues including brand and branding, place identity branding and marketing, nation branding, destination branding, branding components, brand elements, destination attractions, cultural and natural tourism resources and Nigeria's tourism resources and destination. Theoretical issues are based on Clifford Geertz's symbolic and interpretive theory of culture and Walt Whitman Rostow's modernisation theory. Finally, empirical studies focus on different research and investigations on how branding and branding elements, such as symbols and slogans as a marketing strategy, support the growth and promotion of tourist attractions. The summary of the literature and gaps that the thesis addressed was also examined.

2.1   REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1.1   BRAND AND BRANDING

The goal of branding and building a brand is to distinguish a good, service product, place or destination from competition that arises from a related or similar product, place or destination. Previously, brand and branding were restricted to products, commodities and facilities by manufacturers, companies and organisations; however, recently, a brand has been associated with a place, including nation, region, destination, and city, among others. According to Hudson and Li (2018), branding used to be considered a subject of marketing and projecting the correct image through advertising and publicity. However, currently, it entails a coordinated approach to product design, pricing policies, distribution, and promotion. Furthermore, according to Zeybek and Gul Ünlü (2016), currently, the ideas of a brand are not restricted to commodities and services; it also focuses on concept, person, phenomenon, and location (country, region, and city, among others).This implies that nation, region, destination and city can be perceived as brands.

American Marketing Association (AMA, 2011) noted that a brand typically consists

of an explicit logo, fonts, colour schemes, and symbols, as well as music that can be used to communicate implicit values, beliefs, and even personality.In addition, Sonnleitner (2011) defined a brand as a name, word, design, symbol, or any other characteristic that sets one seller's goods or services apart from that of other sellers. These definitions indicate that a brand can represent a product or service that distinguishes or recognises one manufacturer or organisation's products or services from those of others. The process of using or promoting a brand is referred to as branding, which can also be regarded as a marketing strategy. Branding has become one of the most significant techniques in the marketing sector, according to Matecic and Perinic Lewis (2018:156). This is as a result of competition among the manufacturer, organisation or destination. Branding as a marketing strategy helps identify goods, products and places. Any product or destination that is well branded will be more patronised and also attract more customers.

Maden *et al.,* (2013) noted that culture drives brands and also transfers culture. According to the author, there is a reciprocal relationship between brand and culture, whereby brand impacts culture and culture influences brand. This implies that good culture that forms the identity of a country, region or city can be branded. This viewpoint is consistent with Kapferer (2008) assertion that cultural assets establish the basic values of brands, define their identities, and play a significant role in culture transmission. Shroeder (2007) demonstrated that brands endow culture with deep signals in our commercialised environment. This demonstrates how powerful companies can become cultural icons by addressing basic cultural concerns, such as national myths (Närvänen, 2011). Maden (2013) also noted that brands often transform into powerful cultural and artificial objects and can identify with a country's tradition and identity.

He further stated that these brands are one of the first things that spring to mind when thinking about that country. He used the examples of BMW and Mercedes as symbols of Germany, Gucci and Ferrari as symbols of Italy, and McDonald's as a symbol of the United States. The legal term for a brand is trademark according to Sonnleitner (2013:39). The author stated that a brand could represent a single thing, a group of items, a manufacturer's or producer's goods or product, and when it is used to represent an entire firm or establishment; it is referred to as a trade name. According

to Sonnleitner (2013), a brand is a group of products and materials that can be symbolised by a name, slogan, logo, or other visual elements.The collections of experiences with a particular item or service, as well as the effect of publicity, design, and media statements, build brand recognition and other reactions (Sonnleitner, 2013).

Branding is how a manufacturer or organisation presents a product, goods or services to consumers or clients and makes the consumers rely more on the product or services. In addition, imbuing items and services with a brand's power is the process of branding. According to Odia and Isibor (2014), branding is conventional organisational tool business managers use to generate meaningful differentiation and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. This indicates that to identify and differentiate goods and services from another, business organisers adopt marketing or branding strategies in this era of competition to gain more recognition and advantage over their counterparts. To attain these goals, Zeybek and Ünlü (2016) emphasised that branding activities entail various methods and techniques. They also suggested that businesses market a brand or service through commercials or other means.

Anholt (2007) affirmed that branding comprises developing, organising, and disseminating a company's name and characteristics. According to this author, to develop a well-structured brand, four elements must be present: brand equity, brand purpose, brand identity, and brand image. Brand identity refers to how a company seeks to distinguish itself and "convey its personality and individuality to all its relevant publics" (Nandan, 2005:265). A brand image is the "series of beliefs held about a specific brand" (Nandan, 2005:266).It is how the customer views the brand. The other two traits, brand equity and purpose, convey the goals and values of the brand (Anholt, 2007). According to Melkumyan (2011), a brand is a collection of tangible and intangible qualities that are represented by a trademark and, if effectively upheld, can add value and influence to a business or other entity. She stressed that a brand is supposed to ascertain the cordial relationship that builds and guarantees future income by increasing consumer options and loyalty.

This is evidence that a brand as a symbol, logo, or icon can represent and convey the value or essence of an organisation or firm. This will allow the consumers to make choices, and the experience can lead to mutual trust. According to Sonnleitner (2013), consumer experiences represented by the accumulation of object and content is called

brand, and these can be a symbol, such as a logo, name, slogan, and other design strategies. This implies that symbols, including logo, slogan, colour and all other schemes are components of a brand that effectively identified and recognised. When all these components are used to publicise or advertise a product or service, the product will be more popular and recognised than other similar ones. Therefore, it is expected that symbol and slogan as a component of the brand will advertise and showcase Ìyámòpó Mountain as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State, South-western Nigeria for proper identification and recognition by the tourists.

Hem and Iversen (2004) defined brand elements as the various factors that distinguish and identify brands. They claimed that these components could include signs, logos, names, symbols, phrases, designs, slogans, packages, or a combination of these, with names serving as the main points of reverence. The value of branding is identified by Bearden and Ingram (2004, in Asikhia and Binuyo, 2013:3) as follows:

i.   Buying is made easier by branding.

ii.   It gives customers psychological advantages.

iii.   It facilitates the separation of a company's goods from that of rivals.

iv.   It streamlines and concentrates the company's marketing activities.

Aaker (1996, in Asikhia and Binuyo, 2013:3) also reported some of the benefits of branding as follows:

i.   Brands can help the recognition of preferred products or commodities.
ii.   Brands can lower the probabilities of perceived risks.
iii.   Brands help to measure the level of a good product.
iv.   Brands render psychological confidence and offer.

v.   A brand can decrease the period spent shopping and allow the customer to make a decision

vi.   The brand provides indications regarding the nature of the product's supplier.

The benefits identified by Bearden and Ingram (2004) and Aaker (2006) show that any product or organisation that is not well branded or maintains good marketing

strategies cannot attract customers, compete and differentiate itself from others. Branding can also be applied to place and destination. According to Hansen (2010), branding has been used for various kinds of settings, including cities, regions, nations, and islands, in addition to corporate products and services. This indicates that a location's resources can be used as a product or identity to brand the location. Since branding applies to more than just goods and services, it is an indication that branding as a marketing strategy can promote the tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì if they are well branded with good brand elements.

2.1.2   PLACE BRANDING AND PLACE MARKETING

A city, country, nation, region, town, residence, or destination is a kind of place. According to Briciu (2013:9), the term place has a more comprehensive meaning rather than the destination. Place, according to him, indicates all economic actions and feelings that are attached or connected to it. He noted that place could also apply to a country, a city, or a region. Similarly, Hanna and Rowley (2008) described places by geographical form as regions, cities, towns, and entire countries. In addition, authors including Gibson & Davidson (2004) and Relph (2004) also recorded that landscapes are the most visual characteristic of places. However, according to Meethan (2006:7), a "place" is more than just a geographical space or a receptive vessel within which activities occur because it is a unique location that is "imbued with social significance" (Pocock, 2006: 95). According to Campelo *et al.,* (2011), locations should not be limited to sceneries because their distinctiveness is a result of various distinct elements, such as notable monuments, significant historical incidents, or cultural characteristics. This signifies that landmarks, historical events, and cultural characteristics can be referred to as the identity of a place. These distinct features vary from race, ethnicity, and culture; this is why the identity of a country, region, state, country, nation, town, or city is different. Geographical structures, such as an ocean, mountain, river, valley, and forest, and cultural features, including religion, tradition, and festival, can serve as a symbol and identity, which can be used to recognise and identify a place. In this context, it shows that the geographical structures of the study area, which are hills, mountains and rocks in Ìgbẹ́tì can serve as symbols and identity of the town.

Recently, place branding has gained popularity as a method of organising and

stimulating development resources. Thus, place branding has "remarkably changed and has attracted significant interest from policymakers, scholars, and others in the past two decades, Haas and Olson (2013:2) also noted that places, such as towns, cities, countries, regions have often been susceptible to physical process and documentary by government or authorities that has created and conceptualised the peculiarity and identity of a place. The practice of branding places is a process of inspiring constant growth or development of a place which is a result of globalisation (Hass and Olson, 2013). Held *et al.,* (2010) noted that globalisation is a collection of procedures that represents a change in the structure of social relations and t ransactions as measured by their extent, intensity, acceleration, and effect. These results in transcontinental or transnational flows and channels of activity, connection, and the use of power, where flows connote the movement of people and things and networks connote interactions between people across time and space.

This shows that globalisation is a procedure that causes changes and development. Castells and Cardoso (2006) also pointed that current patterns of globalisation have created an increase in global flow and networks that have existed in all spheres of social life. Zeybec and Ünlü (2016:27) agreed with Anholt (2004) and Hannah & Rowley (2007) that the value of diverse communication and publicity strategies had grown rapidly as a result of globalisation and the development of mass communication. According to them, countries and regions engage in various promotional activities to inform both their residents and those of other countries, mostly through the use of their country brand and communication techniques, in the hopes of promoting a positive image of their respective countries. These scholars believed that countries that use successful strategies to promote themselves would be identified and recognised in the international market.

Place branding is a necessary approach for the promotion and development of places. Fiona Gilmore, the Director of a British firm, informed that developing countries could use place branding strategies to put themselves on the map and build the ultimate development strategy. According to Pedersen (2010) and Pasquinelli (2010), place branding has succeeded because it is part of the national agenda in many locations. Likewise, Herstein (2011) agreed that place branding is progressively on in developed and developing countries. Similarly, Anholt (2004) stated that applying

branding to places will result in massive transformation and development, such as in the commercial sector. He noted that with the present-day global competition for places, promoting places is a natural and good process. This indicates that branding a place can yield a normal and positive result for a town, nation, or region. It can also build the value of a place. Promoting a place's image and reputation is the aim of place branding. This should be the purpose of branding Ìyámòpó Mountain for tourism in Ìgbẹ̀tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Nigeria. In this era of global competition of places, branding is expected to strengthen the identity, and image and also add value to Ìgbẹ̀tì town.

According to Kaplan *et al.,* (2008) place branding is the practice of employing appropriate marketing techniques to set a city, region, or country apart from its rivals regarding socioeconomic, governmental, and cultural influences. According to the aforementioned perspective, branding in today's age of globalisation and competitiveness can support and maintain a place's economic, political, social, and cultural identity. Similarly, Nilsson *et al*., (2010) highlighted the distinctions between corporate and commercial firms by asserting that location branding is determined by regional business strategies. This demonstrates the effort of location marketing to integrate and harmonise all initiatives directed at tourists and visitors, businesses, and possible new inhabitants. Although in Briciu's (2013) opinion, place marketing and branding are about enticing people who have made up their minds or can determine where to live, work, school, or visit and why they prefer to do so in a specific region. These individuals are smart, mobile ones who bring income and investment with them, according to Anholt (2009).This shows how branding may support and sustain the local economy, where this study is being conducted for subsequent years.

Place branding can assist in developing the global economy; however, it has been discovered that it can lead to the degradation of place value and culture. For example, Briciu (2013) confirmed that some experts oppose adopting a marketing strategy as a device for territories not to commercialise or sell to the community. According to Briciu (2013), these analysts argue that advertising places or regions as products will result in commodification whereby the places in terms of cities and regions may lose their original features. Thus, place branding as a marketing strategy should be controlled and well-managed by all stakeholders. Places should not be regarded as commodities, so that their natural and cultural properties will lose their value and

qualities. Govers (2013) noted that due to the complexity of places, referring to them as commodities or things is misinterpreted.

According to him, locations are the atmosphere and areas where people live and go about daily. Places provide environments where product offerings can be presented to worldwide markets; for instance, the mix of tourism products and markets, asset management, foreign commodities, artistic attractions, work and living arrangements, or the availability of overseas study programs (Govers, 2013). This demonstrates that places are regions or cities where economic, social, cultural, and other activities can be carried out often and are not solely related to tourism. Therefore, many countries, towns, and regions have developed marketing strategies to identify and introduce themselves to the public through branding elements and visual identification components, such as symbols, logos, and slogans. Regions make great use of headline-grabbing slogans and promotion initiatives to place themselves on the map (Briciu, 2013:11).

The author explained that places have succeeded in building a strong brand despite the consequences of their marketing procedures. He cited examples from North America and Western Europe, including "Austin – The Music Capital of the United States" and "Toronto – A City That Works" (Briciu, 2013:11). According to the author, community branding and place marketing are two different ideas. He noted that place marketing is a solid plan or technique to support government or institution operations to promote an area's natural and cultural resources. He added that place marketing amends the disparity between brand identity, image and reputation. The author emphasised that place branding commercialises and interprets the significance of the geographical area. Govers (2013) disagreed, contending that using common denominators can result in extremely gloomy concepts when summing locations in a straightforward graphic, symbol, or phrase. This implies that if two or more places share the same identity, it can lead to controversy or contended identity.

2.1.3   NATION BRANDING

Nation or country branding is an aspect of place branding; it is a way of showcasing the attributes of a nation or country's attributes in a greater way to compete with other nations. The term nation branding refers to a set of actions aimed at presenting a

country's image in a more positive and promising light. According to (Dinnie, 2008:15), national branding is the distinctive and beneficial mix of qualities that are the foundation of a country's cultural peculiarities. Therefore, a country's culture, which includes history, values, and beliefs, among others that distinguish it from other countries, can serve as a brand. Zeybec and Gül Ünlü (2016) emphasised that the country brand is the perception of the external people towards the entire nation. The point of view or perspective could be related to a certain region/location, tradition, cultural language, people, history, national cuisine, practice, influential person, and global brands, among others. According to Zeybec and Gül Ünlü (2016), a national brand might emerge from an already developed impression or mental image in people's minds, regardless of worldwide branding. Furthermore, Anholt (2005 in Zeybec and Gül Ünlü,2016) viewed country branding as a set of actions and procedures approved by the authorities to improve and develop culture, travelling, export commodities, international and local policy to develop an image observed by foreign citizens and its citizens by diverse ways through communication, marketing strategies, and diplomatic negotiations, among others. This shows that for a country to successfully develop and showcase its culture, value traditions, tourism, business and other images, the country needs to adopt branding strategies that will communicate it to the whole world. Anholt (2005:122) highlighted some of the functions of country branding as follows:

    i.   It aids the country in attracting tourists, investors, foreign capital, and economic operations.

    ii.   It aids the country's exporting efforts.

    iii.   It contributes to the strengthening of the identity of a country.

    iv.   It ensures that both domestic and foreign residents have a favorable perception of the nation.

    v.   It shapes an image in the minds of citizens of other countries within the context of the information that is available in any country (This might include travel to the nation, knowledge from local studies, and information from the press, among others).

2.1.4   DESTINATION BRANDING

A destination, as defined by Madden *et al.*(2016) and the UNWTO (2007), is a

location that visitors travel to according to their decision. The authors pointed out that the destination is the major motive for tourism and the ultimate product. According to these authors, it can be a town, a region, or a country. This implies that the destination significantly influences a tourist's decision to visit an area. It demonstrates that tourism is unrealistic without a destination. Urry and Rojek (1997) expanded the concept of destination to encompass out-of-the-ordinary locations that stand out from normal locations because of their artistic, historical, geological, or environmental significance. These places can be geographical sites, monuments, and heritage sites, among others. According to Berman (2005), a destination is any nation, province, area, town, or community that actively promotes it as a tourist attraction.

This indicates that destinations have to market themselves to attract visitors or tourists. According to Madden *et al*. (2016), destinations with specific characteristics referred to as attractions, facilities, and availability can all be categorised as site features. They continued by describing the various types of destinations, including main locations through which visitors can enjoy other attractions, concentrated locations that may house the tourists' resources, urban locations, ecological locations, and artificial locations, among others. Both material and intangible assets make up tourism destinations (Qu *et al., 2011*). Tangible assets are geographical features like coastlines or hills, archaeological destinations, and sightseeing, whereas intangible assets include history, tradition, heritage, and culture. Tangible and intangible assets can also be known as natural and cultural resources, indicating why tourists visit a destination.

According to Schaar (2013:2), "the tourists visiting a location are looking for visible or invisible qualities that are different from those they can experience in their environment". Morgan *et al.,* (2002) also asserted that tourists have varied objectives for visiting a region; however, as their trip progresses, they seek more information. He stated that a tourist's desire to do new things during their vacation determines the types of tangible and intangible assets he seeks. According to the author, today's consumers are anxious about what they will experience through their travel choices. These reflect that tourists wish to have an idea or knowledge about the destination before deciding to visit. Tourists can discover and know the movable and immovable resources of a site through effective visual communication and branding. Thus, through destination branding and effective visual communication, it is expected that the tourists will

discover some of the tangible and intangible resources in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Nigeria.

Recently, the issue of destination branding has been rampant because of the competition among tourist destinations. Therefore, most destinations have implemented marketing tactics to identify and differentiate themselves from competitors. Matečić a nd Perinić Lewis (2018) stated that numerous locations are threatened by substitutability due to the recent competitiveness in the travel industry. Mommas (2002), Marzano and Scott (2009), and Usakli and Baloglu (2011), among others, claimed that destination branding has developed into a common and, to some extent, very effective marketing strategy. Although branding is not a new construct, its application to the tourism industry has recently evolved and has gained the attention of many researchers and tourism organisations. According to Blain *et al., (*2005) destination branding is the process of developing a distinctive competitive identity based on the destination's fundamental characteristics that must be acknowledged and accepted by the local population and visitors.

The author noted that branding separates a destination from its rivals, transfers the requirement for a memorable experience to be associated with the destination, and combines and improves the real memories of the destination and its experience to create a perception that can influence consumers to prefer to visit a particular destination over others. Ritchie & Ritchie (1998), UNWTO (2009), Aaker (1991), and Blain *et al.,* (2005) emphasised that having favourable memories of the destination and its experience reduces the likelihood and anticipation of destination occurrences by customers. The above view shows that tourists' destination is susceptible to competition because of its common image and resources. For a destination to distinguish itself from its competitors there should be effective branding strategies that reflect the natural and cultural resources that the visitors and community members should acknowledge. Similarly, Hosani *et al.,* (2007), Babic-Hodovic (2014) and Ferreira (2014) discovered that destination branding has a significant impact in terms of reducing any perceived risks, assisting tourists in gathering sufficient information about a destination's resources, assisting tourists in deciding whether or not to visit a destination, and distinguishing a destination from its competitors. According to Manhas *et al.,* (2012), destination branding is the creation and proactive upkeep of destination brands. This highlights the importance of the brand to destination

branding. The term "Destination Brand" was first used in 1998 during the Annual Congress of the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, according to Zora (2015:24). She defined destination brand as

> Graphics or visual elements, such as logo, word mark, name, and symbol, logo, and word mark that both help to identify and differentiates location and reflect the assurance of unforgettable tourism experiences that are exclusively associated with the destination, and consolidate and reinforce the recall of delightful remembrances of the tourist satisfaction (Zora 2015:24).

This indicates that these components allow tourists to identify and distinguish one destination from another. The name of a tourism destination is essential because it allows tourists to identify, recognise and differentiate one location from another. Others, such as symbol, emblem, or word mark, are important because they reflect or symbolise the destination and convey the expectation of a pleasant trip experience. However, some researchers discovered that destination branding is a complicated phenomenon that necessitates the participation of multiple stakeholders. Matecic and Perinvic-Lewis (2018) noted that branding tourism destination activities is the most complicated and demanding procedure in marketing theory and practice. According to Matecic and Perinivic-Lewis (2018), various reasons contribute to why destination branding is difficult. Some of these reasons were that many parties and organisations are involved in destination affairs (Pike, 2007b); it is related to two or more fields of study, and can also be regulated by government policy (Kotsi *et al.,* 2016).

Therefore, to avoid some of these issues, Fadil and Hairul (2015) noted that community stakeholders' participation and involvement in branding operations is critical to ensuring the destination brand's survival. They added that forming a destination brand requires effective government policy and must conform to the views of diverse stakeholders, such as the community, indigenous industries and regional authorities. According to these authors, positioning the place and competitiveness is crucial to developing strong destination branding. This includes understanding the strategies of image perception by the demand side and prediction by the supply side. They further stated that image development and brand identity construction were critical in destination branding mechanisms that result from various contributions and

involvement in the branding procedure. Brand image, positioning, and identity are the three major components of a brand, according to Zora (2015:26).

2.1.5   COMPONENTS OF BRANDING

The three main components of a destination brand also known as brand core constructs (Pike, 2012) are brand image, brand positioning and brand identity are three of them. The impression an organisation or destination gives the public or tourists are known as brand identity. Brand positioning creates a special area for the brand, which is represented by a symbol, logo, slogan, and other elements in consumers and tourists. Consumers and tourists form impressions or notions about a destination or organisation based on the brand image. This may be negative or positive. Fadil and Hairul (2015) noted that brand identity development is the action executed by the destination managers in distinguishing the image to present to the consumers. According to this author, brand positioning is the act of aligning a brand with its identity. In contrast, the brand image is the consumer's impression, constantly changing by factors related to brand positioning and other media, including social networks, individual blogs, articles, videos, and films.

2.1.5.1 BRAND IDENTITY AND POSITIONING

Brand identity is known as the projected images that a place or establishment wants to portray to the public or market place. The main reason for tourists 'destination identity is to help a particular site position itself so that tourists will recognise its products and services (Fadil and Hairul, 2015).These authors are of the opinion that destination stakeholders cause the destination's image or identity. This is why destination managers should strive to project a positive image and identity about the destination. Pike (2009) refers to brand identity as the impression desired by marketers. In tourism destination branding, brand identity provides information about how a destination is to be perceived by the destination stakeholder, such as the host community, tourism operators, and destination managers, among others. It symbolised a collective view of these stakeholders and can help build an effective brand (Fadil and Hairul, 2015). According to Worlu *et al*., (2015:3), "brand identity is a combination of visual, auditory, and other sensory components that establish recognition, transmit the brand promise, give differentiation, create communications synergy, and are proprietary".

This shows that brand identity can help consumers to recognise, differentiate, and gather necessary information about the product through their sensory organs. Symbols, logos and other graphic elements are visual objects that can serve as the identity of a firm, destination and organisation. Consumers can recognise and distinguish these brands through the visual organ. Similarly, through auditory organs, consumers can differentiate and recognise the slogan, which is a company's brand identity, and this can result in cooperation and loyalty between the business and the client. Kapferer (2008) also noted that brand identity is a corporate identity that avails a firm or institution with the sense of orderliness, continuity and assurance of a place and tradition, which distinguish it from the competitor. Destination brand identity is referred to as a mix of material and immaterial structures that are signified in a symbol and other components of graphical structures which create significant impact. This means that material and immaterial structures can serve as symbols and slogans representing a destination's brand identity.

Another component of a destination brand is brand positioning, which can take the shape of a visual identity, such as a brand name, slogan, logo, symbol, typography, and colour. According to Pike (2009), symbols, such as a logo, tagline, and brand name, usually makes up market positioning. In tourists' perception, positioning is aimed at providing a distinctive atmosphere for the brand (Trout and Ries, 1979). Therefore, it should be built on satisfaction and loyalty, enabling the destination to compete with others. However, some researchers believe that brand positioning should be based on the personality concept. For example, De Chernatony (2001) noted that the personality concept is appropriate when designing attractive brand positioning because it can transform into informational images. Aaker and Fournier (1995) also emphasised that brands personified or symbolised people. The authors believe that personality can be in the form of a brand, e.g., attributes, benefits, and price, and in the form of a person, e.g., appearance, traits and behaviour, which is a metaphor. This indicates that brands can represent personal attributes, such as beautiful, mild, colourful, charming, radiant, and lovely, among others.

2.1.5.2 BRAND IMAGE

The brand image of a tourist destination is the perception or opinion about the site. This perception may be negative or positive based on destination attributes,

expectations and level of satisfaction by the customers. According to Blain *et al.* (2005), branding activities aim to build a favourable and appealing destination image that will entice people to visit. These branding activities may be based on the natural and cultural tourism destination image. According to Perreira *et al.* (2012), tourists may already know the tourist resources, facilities, and other things they will encounter before travelling to any destination through advertisements, media information, previous visits, and other people's perspectives, which will enable tourists to differentiate one destination from another. Therefore, the destination brand image comprises the tourists' thoughts, opinions, and perceptions of a site. According to Bigné *et al.* (2001), a destination's image is the tourist's individualized reality. The core issue of destination image subjectivity is the idea or conception of individual travellers about the places they have visited or heard about.

Perceptual, cognitive, and emotive are the three basic components of destination image from a tourist perspective (Ferreira, 2014). The perceptual and cognitive component, according to the author is the image that is formed by the concept of destination characteristics and attractions that inspire tourists to the go-to destination. The affective component can be described as the bodily sense or any strong feelings elicited by tourism attractions. The emotional component is also greatly affected by the motivations of tourists, according to Ferreira (2014). According to Gartner (2018), the cognitive component reflects the voluntary action or intent to visit a destination, while the affective component represents sentiments and an emotion related to a destination's image. The cognitive component represents actual information about places. In addition, according to Hudson and Li (2018), the affective component entails the customer or tourist's appraisal or decision such as positive/negative or like/dislike.

Assuming that cognitive pictures were evaluated favourably during the emotional stage, a potential tourist may select a destination and begin planning a vacation. Subsequently, the procedure moves on to the cognitive component step or willingness to visit (Gartner, 2018). Tourists 'observation is that the essential qualities of a tourism site are frequently summed up as an image. Images are very subjective; however, they hugely influence tourist behaviour. Product or service image is significant when deciding on a destination, service, or product. Because of the

increased rivalry among destinations, it is necessary to create a distinctive image, and the perception of a destination is a reliable indicator of travel plans (Phau *et al.,* 2014; Remoaldo *et al.,* 2014 cited in Madden *et al.,* 2016).

Additionally, according to Sonnleitner (2011), images play an important part in destination choice, and a destination's primary goal is to influence potential tourists' travel-related decision-making and choice through marketing activities. MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997 in Sonnleitner, 2011) noted that advertisement also supports the idea that an artificial alteration in the image can arise since it has a strong influencing and conviction effect on the tourism items being promoted. According to Hem and Iversen (2004), image development is influenced by various factors, including brand aspects, publications, reports, television, movies, literature, marketing, information from travel agencies or businesses in the destinations, and utterances, among others. According to the authors, each resource could offer crucial details on a single attraction or a collection of attractions, aiding in the development of a destination's reputation.

2.1.6   BRAND ELEMENTS

A brand element can be any of the following, a name, word, logo, sign, design, symbol, slogan, package, or a combination of these with the name being the most significant. Unlike most products and services, a destination brand's name is primarily influenced by the site's physical features. These physical characteristics include the mountain, rocks, sea, rivers, forests, and caves, among others. However, brand elements can also be regarded as visual identity components. Barisic and Blazevic (2015) emphasised that visual identity is an important key element that a destination uses to showcase itself to the populace. They defined visual identity as a distinctive, visible representation of an organization's activities to facilitate public recognition. These authors pointed out that a tourist destination's visual identity is essential to its appearance to get market recognition. It is especially crucial given the growing rivalry among tourist destinations on the global market. Therefore, the name, slogan, and graphics are all visual identity components.

2.1.6.1 NAME

Keller and Sudar (1991) noted that the name is an uttered expression and symbol created from words related to auditory and visual senses. Barisic and Blazevic (2015) pointed out that name distinguish and personalise destination in business advertisement and publicity. This implies that tourists can identify and differentiate a destination through its name either by hearing, seeing or reading about it through media communication. Additionally, Ozretic-Dosen (2001) stated that a name is a very powerful communication device since it is visible, and its rationale can be gathered and activated within a limited duration. The name of a product or destination can be remembered because it is an active brand that can attract, motivate and remind consumers about the product, goods or destination. In most cases, consumers recognise a product's or destinations name more than a symbol, logo or slogan.

The name is an anchor that promotes a destination or product to the public. Names of product like Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, BMW, Ford, Nokia, Apple, Tecno, and HP among others. Destinations, such as New York, Paris, Disneyland, South Africa, Australia, Peru, China, and India, identify, distinguish and promote the product and destination. However, the name of the tourist destination is significant because it displays both the name of the company that sells consumer goods and the name of the tourist location (Konecnik and Gartner, 2013). Barisic and Blazevic (2015) informed that destinations that are far, unknown or not popular require essential brand and geographical names that are significant to the tourists. The name of Ìyámọ̀pó, in Ìgbẹ́tì, suggests a lot to the people of Southwest Nigeria. It reminds us of the headquarters of Old Ọ̀yọ́ National Park and a prominent site for tourism, marble and limestone in Nigeria.

2.1.6.2 LOGO

According to Blain *et al.,* (2005), the brand identity and image of the location are greatly influenced by its logo. They confirmed that a logo could aid in various marketing efforts and destination selection before a tourist decides to come. Van Riel and Vn den Ban (2001) also found that despite the choice of tourists amidst many destinations, logos could effectively excite consciousness and transmit desirable concepts to tourists by reducing search costs and influencing decision-making. "A sign

that is regularly utilized throughout time to achieve recognition of a location is referred to as logo. It serves as a visual shorthand or symbolic depiction of a location and is also capable of summarizing all destination brand features without becoming disorderly and unmanageable" (Barisic and Blazevic, 2014:2193).

2.1.6.3 SYMBOL

A symbol is anything that stands for or represents another thing. It can represent objects, ideas, behaviour, occurrence and condition. Symbols are a medium of communication that helps us to understand who we are, what we are, or what we can be. It signifies something and is also attached to a particular meaning. Udechukwu (2019) noted that symbols are items used to personify or personalise objects, concepts or immaterial things. A symbol can monitor and control human activity and express previous, current, and imminent events (Udechukwu, 2019). It is a communication tool that distinguishes and differentiates items, actions, places, events, and destinations from one another. According to Ofuafo (2013:394), symbols are things, deeds, connections, or linguistic inventions that represent a diversity of meanings. This means that an object or action might have diverse meanings depending on who you are and your culture. The Greek word that inspired the word symbol is *sum-bolon,* which roughly translates to a sign of recognition.

A symbol is an object or entity that has been cut in half and maybe placed back together to provide a sign of recognition. Symbols were humanity's initial means of communication (WTO, 2001). Symbols are fundamental to human thought and interaction, and it has great significance in human life. Communication would be impossible without symbols. Brandshaw *et al.,* (2011) established that symbols could be used in communication due to the interpersonally established substance, which informs that symbols can be used to designate meanings as common or insignificant objects. The term symbol has diverse meanings in different disciplines; there are various explanations and views in the field of psychoanalysis, sociology, science, religion, politics, art, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, and anthropology, among others. This coroborates with the view of Conkey and Rowntree (1980) that the term symbol suffers practical application and overuse in most disciplines, and when it is well utilised, it is relevant to many processes or scopes, such as oral communication, visual communication, conduct, creative activity, and architecture.

Additionally, Wydra, in his publication *The Power of Symbol - Communism and Beyond* (2011), noted that Social Sciences are interested in symbols due to the credibility of hierarchical power composition and that symbols are useful in politics because of the function that they help to frame social and political reality objectively. He pointed out that from the record, the construction of meaning has been conditioned on a remarkable period. He noted that symbols are the imaginative activities of authors, philosophers, artists, journalists, marketers, and business advertisers to create images and symbols of people, products, and places. Since time immemorial, according to Wydra (2011), religious symbol, pictures, and image representation were utilised to change citizens to conform to authorities. He saw Constantine's example of accepting Christianity as the empire's religion, and as a result, he brought religious symbolism to worldly authority and politicized church symbols (Wydra 2011). Otite (1979) found that symbols are active elements that are filled with communication that comply and adapt to action.

This demonstrates that symbols have mental and sensitive significance. A symbol is an object, acts, conception, or language formulation that stimulates men and motivates them to behave through sentiments and emotions, according to Cohen (1974). This suggests that when symbols evoke sentiments, it brings to one's mind memories of unreasonable or reasonable deep feelings that cause or force someone to achieve a goal. Human behaviours are symbolic, which is why we cannot live without communicating with one another, and our behaviour in life changes as a result of that relationship. It's worth noting that our language has many symbols whose intended meaning or importance is widely understood and accepted. According to Nwaolikpe (2013), people use symbols to communicate in their language through music, art, or other sorts of cultural behaviours. Language is also used as a symbol to express their thoughts and communicate with other members of the same culture. People who can communicate in more than one language (multilingualism) have a better chance of communicating with people from different cultures and societies.

This will improve socialisation, interaction and acceptance of different ideas and views. Schwartz (2015) noted that early written languages were depicted by thought and without spoken words. The first writing systems, according to him, were pictographs (graphic symbols) and counting systems (numeration) used in transactions

and hieroglyphics. Subsequently, the Greeks formulated the alphabet and developed written symbols for a phonetic language. According to Udechukwu (2019), a word is another symbol that can be in the form of printing or sound. She maintains that mythology, adages, and folktales are influential and durable symbols. However, communication can be in the form of verbal and non-verbal symbols. Nonverbal symbols that convey messages and meaning include written words, drawings, photographs, and gestures. In addition, consumer goods, such as furniture, clothing, housing, cars, and other items, serve as social status symbols.

In Nigeria, crafts are symbols and spiritual heritage that convey messages and values within the community. Some of the crafts are deeply ingrained in Nigerian culture and inextricably linked to their spiritual beliefs. Therefore, they are valuable items for tourism promotion and preservation. Nigerian crafts include textiles, pottery and ceramics, fibre crafts, bronze, brass, and ironworks, woodworking, calabash decorations, leather works, ivory works, and jewellery. These crafts often serve as symbols of recognition that distinguish one ethnic group from another. Similarly, Hoder (1978) believes that in the process of boundary creation, humanity used symbolic representation, such as natural objects, movement, architecture, and clothing components. This suggests that every race has a particular and different mode of dressing, greetings, and housing as a symbol that distinguishes them from other races. Many African ethnic groups utilize symbols to tell stories and give information.

Some of these symbols were considered sacred and only used in religious and ceremonial circumstances. The kola nut (*cola acuminate*) is very symbolic to the Igbo people of South-East Nigeria. Chidume (2014) found that the kola nut is highly honoured because it symbolises the commencement of every ceremony and is an object of communication and fellowship between humans and spirits. He also established that the kola nut signifies love, loyalty, unity, honesty and stability in the social structure. According to Ukpokolo (2011:168), the Nanka people of Anambra State in southeast Nigeria use the symbols of *oji* (kola nut) and *ofo* (staff of authority and justice) as peace signs. She claims that these items "constitute portions of instruments and procedures of conflict resolution and peace-building in the culture and are employed in ritual acts that ensure peace in the traditional community. She also stated that the earth is holy to the indigenous Nanka people and is revered as a fertility

goddess. According to her,

> Earth is a woman, and after death, Man should return to the earth. Life is both sustained by and consumed by the planet. She represents completion. (Ukpokolo, 2011:168).

She claimed that if incantation and sacrifices were not made to appease the goddess of the earth during ritual or religious ceremonies, there is always an outbreak of diseases or sickness that may request purifying and sacred cleansing of the town. Similarly, Otubah (2013) discovered that in the Igbo area in South-eastern Nigeria, when a woman leaves to dwell with her husband, she is given the following items:

1. She-goat represents fertility
2. Broom - represents the preservation of the environment.
3. Mortar and pestle - represents her husband's food preparation.

Symbols can be expressed in the following three forms, namely, "Visual symbols, diagrammatic symbols, and verbal symbols", according to Otubah (2013:176).

Visual Symbols

Visual symbols are diagrammatic and emblematic. It may be pictures, icons, images or physical objects. For instance, a cycle or round object symbolises the sun or the world, a spear symbolises the earth or the four key points, a wreath symbolises joy, death, sadness, and festival, and a cross symbolises agony (Otubah, 2013).

Diagrammatic Symbol

According to Otubah (2013), a diagrammatic symbol encapsulates and mediates any specific reality experiment. Images might depict a component of a person; for example, an eye could represent a whole person. The use of a painting to represent a religious experience has a long history. The religious cult also created sculptural representations of sacred or religious objects. They aid in the telling of a story of sacred history.

Gestural and Physical Movement

According to Otubah (2013), in religious rites and conduct, gestures and bodily movement are important; these gestures seek meaning from holy relationships. Corpus

Christi procession and masquerade procession during festivals, for example, are done not only to represent coming before the divine presence but also to augment the sacred spirit. In traditional performance, hand movement is commonly used in ceremonial and liturgical activities, such as blessing the congregation, raising the sacred bread with hands, and raising the kola nut. These are carried out under the soul's regulation of the gestures that precede prayer and blessings: for example, worshipers reach the heavenly God's realm by lifting their hands in prayer. Worshippers approach the realm under the mould by kneeling in prayer and demonstrating humility. Bowing down indicates that the leaders' sacred words have been received and accepted. Acceptance, affection, and surrendering oneself to the other symbolise kissing and embracing. Johnson (1996, cited in Ojo, 2013) noted that a wink or raising of the right hand is an example of a gesture that has meaning in particular cultural contexts. Various spoken and written words also make up language. These four categories of symbols include symbolic objects (flags, money, and goods); symbolic characteristics of objects (purple for royalty; yellow for cowardice).

Udechukwu (2019) also classified African symbols into the following categories: Animal, ritual, number, royal, ancestral, and cultural symbols are all used as representations.

*Animal symbols***:** Globally, there are different religious beliefs, mythology and symbols that are associated with animals. To Hindus, a cow or bull is an object and symbol of worship. According to Udechukwu (2019), the Langi and Turu in the Singida Region of North-Central Tanzania are linked to God by buffalo and lions. The animals symbolise God's appearance in his natural feature. Among the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria, lion, tiger, and leopard symbolise hero, champion or winner, strength and authority. The monkey and goat symbolise stubbornness, obstinacy, and self-will. Pig symbolises filthiness, dirt, pollution and impurity. Chameleon represents deception, cunning, shrewdness, and craftiness. The spider and snail represent delay, bad luck, disappointment, and frustration, whereas the spider represents wisdom to the Akan and Ashanti tribes of Ghana. Udechukwu (2019:112) also stated that *Ananse Kokroko* means "Great Spider" or "Wise One". Animals are symbolic to humans because of their nature and behaviour that connotes meanings. This is why animal symbols are frequently used as logos, emblems, and symbols by countries, regions,

public, private, corporate organizations, political parties, and groups to communicate, identify, and expose their image. For example, the image of a donkey kicking its hind legs in the logo of the American Democratic Party symbolises freedom. Furthermore, the image of an elephant in the logo of the American Republican Party symbolises authority. Similarly, the images of two white horses and an eagle in the Nigeria Coat of Arms symbolise strength.

Ritual symbols: These symbols have to do with religion; they are mostly used or found in worship or religious places. African traditional religion involves offering rituals to ancestors, gods, spirits, and deities through symbolic actions. The ideals and beliefs of one generation are passed on to the next through these actions, culture, and history (Udechukwu, 2019). According to Ofuafo (2013:395), ritual symbols are used to educate and brainwash the followers about the object of their belief, often prayer and worship. Among the Igbo and Yoruba tribes of Nigeria, ritual symbols include cowries, kolanut, cold water, white pap, beans cake, fresh palm frond, white chalk, gin, and animals, such as dog, ram, goat, rat, tortoise, snail, pigeon, fish, cow and others. During rituals, the colour of the clothes worn by the priests and the followers is also symbolic—red clothes, white clothes, black clothes, and white chalk, among others.

Number symbol: Number symbols, known as numerology, are used to express religious facts and beliefs, according to Udechukwu (2019). Ifa divination, which uses a large corpus of texts and mathematical formulas, is symbolic in Yorubaland. Basic Yoruba numbers, such as *okoo,* denote 20, *oji* denotes 40, *ota* denotes 60, and *orin* denotes 80. In addition, numbers, such as three, five, seven, and nine are important and symbolic. For example, five, seven and nine represent Yoruba market or ritual days. Similarly, according to Udechukwu (2019), some numbers have special significance and are related to the Igbo people's everyday routines and traditions. Three, four, five, and seven are some numbers that connote meanings. Udechukwu (2019) also found that three signifies strength, which is known as *Ikenga*. Four stands for the four Igbo market days, five represents confirmation during rituals, and seven represents reincarnation. The author noted that these figures are imperative in Igbo culture.

Royal Symbols: These symbols are associated with communities or society's rulers,

monarchs, or chiefs. The office of the ruler is associated with various symbols; for example, the use of sceptres represents authority. Igbo people's artefacts aesthetically exhibit a huge amount of symbolic representations of motifs, particularly on regal goods like the current throne (Ogbu, 2005). The effects of these symbolic forms can be found in various current Igbo objects, particularly on their modern thrones, as shown in Ogbu (2005). Kingdoms are also figurative images of preserving social order and ritual-based festivals, including a coronation, Yam, and Ofala celebrations.

Ancestral Symbols: Respect for older people is routinely abused and used as a symbol of tyranny and power. For instance, the elders of each family or community are accepted as representatives of the predecessors; some of the community recognise them as spiritual guardians in most traditional African societies. They are also considered the glue that holds society together and the keepers of morals within the group. Therefore, as part of African traditional ethical behaviour, young people are frequently taught to respect their ancestor symbols and not abuse their leadership to avoid punishment by their ancestors. The following are a few examples of ancestor symbols: *ofo, Ikenga, amadioha, anyanwu, and ala,* among others.

*Cultural Symbols***:** According to Nwaorgu (2001) cultural symbol can be defined as anything that expresses society's opinion, identities, characteristics, moral standards, ethical precepts, virtues, religion, symbols, sacrifices, arts, civilization, and similar things. They are signs that denote something else and are recognized as such by the broader public. Advertisers use them extensively to market products, services, and concepts, among other things. Oladumiye (2018) noted that man's nature is a cultural symbol, which is why he can express his cultural identity through symbols, such as names, art, myth, language and rituals, to mention a few. The kola nut, wooden drums, wooden gong, grey hairs, yellow palm fronds, and cowry are a few examples of cultural symbols, according to Udechuwu (2018). These have symbolic meanings in Igbo culture, including life, harmony, peace, prosperity, joy, grief, ill omen, festivals, and rites, among others.

Symbols can also be categorised as social, national, religious, political, artificial, natural and coloured symbols.

Social symbol: The Yoruba people of South-western Nigeria have used *aroko* as a

traditional nonverbal form of communication for centuries. Before the introduction of Western civilization, Yoruba indigenous people mostly communicated via the *aroko* social symbol, according to Ojo (2013). *Aroko* implies the usage of a particular physical object packed and sent to somebody or a group of people in such a way that it will inform or communicate meanings to them. Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010) categorised *aroko* due to its purpose and how it is being used at a particular time. Aroko, he claims, can be used to punish, advise, admonish, proclaim, publicize, pronounce, battle, and guide, among others. A traditional ruler, a chief, an Ifa priest, an adherent of the Ogboni cult, a hunter, an artist, a warrior, or a common person might send *aroko* to a counterpart or any other person, group, or body (Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2010 and Falola and Adebayo 2000 in Ojo, 2013). For example, sending a comb to someone signifies the end of the oneness, love, or affection between the sender and receiver; it is a symbol of separation. Sending someone a single cowries shell with string denotes a terrible scenario. If you send an empty calabash, a parrot egg, or a skull to a king, it means he should commit suicide or join his ancestors. In Yoruba, sending orange *'Osan'* means the sender is delighted with the recipient. Sending a cotton shred of *'Oja'* to someone who lives far away signifies that the person who was pregnant before the receiver left home delivered safely. The acceptance of a love proposal between the sender and the receiver is implied by sending a chewing stick to the opposite sex.

Natural Symbol: The natural symbol is the one created by nature or the environment. They can be in the form of flora, fauna, weather or climatic condition and geographical resources. A natural symbol can communicate information about a person, place, or destination or stand as an image of a place. In most cases, a natural symbol is associated with the historical background of a place. This indicates that natural symbols can convey the culture and identity of a destination. It can also serve as the natural or cultural heritage of a place. A natural symbol is neither costly nor time-consuming and is rarely subject to change or destruction. For example, the sea, river, hill, and rock cannot be easily destroyed or relocated. Using natural or geographical features as a destination symbol will create enduring memory in the tourist's mind. The Àgbélé sign (Àgbélé rock pedestal) is a natural symbol that is meant to convey information about Ìgbẹ́tì's history, culture, identity, values, and customs. In addition, the symbol is intended to create a lasting remembrance of the tourist site.

Artificial Symbol: Artificial or manmade symbols are the ones invented or built by individuals or organisations through knowledge, inspiration or technological advancement. It can be in the form of semiotics, graphics, statue, building, names, icons, and signs, among others. The artificial symbol also communicates the attributes of an individual, place or destination. This symbol is subject to change, relocation, and destruction through the condition, circumstances, and government policy, as natural and artificial disasters. For example, the name of a place can change, and natural disasters, development and technological advancement can affect the building.

Colour Symbol: Symbolism is also found in colour. In some parts of the world, colour symbols are often attached to belief and mythology. White is associated with life and purity, while red is connected to blood, passion, danger, or immorality. Black is linked with bad things or death. Purple is a royal colour, yellow is associated with aggression or destruction, and blue is associated with peace. However, Rowntree and Conkey (1980) noted that symbols are subject to change because human adaptative activities are bound by changes in natural universal concepts and technological advancement. These authors believe that symbols and their significance can be altered as social values develop to keep cultural congruence. They discovered that symbolic action or content is cast-off or altered when the limiting power is misplaced in the case when another group acquires symbols of one set of people. Mitford (1958) also noted how actions or objects of symbol that are important to the upper class are speedily neglected, especially when it is discovered that the public has acquired it. He argued that when symbols of membership are adopted by others, such as when Black Power handshakes became common among whites, similar organizations usually discard them. Additionally, Nas (1992:179) emphasised that symbols are fixed with official meanings; however, times unofficial and diverse meanings are connected to a specific symbol by various groups. He stated that,

> This is why symbols are often ambiguous, even hazy.
> A symbol can easily reverse its role, and instead of
> supporting the value intended, it can be used as a token
> of counter-symbolism (Nas, 1992:179).

Since formal symbols can be disrespected, devalued, and degraded, the author emphasised that symbols are prone to change. He noted that this incident took place in many Eastern European countries, whereby street names were changed and statues of

communist leaders, such as Lenin, were pulled from their bottom and sold. According to Nas (1992), symbolism shifts because of advancements in culture, society, and the economy. In support of this claim, Otubah (2013:172) found that "changes in cultural appreciation" can lead to changes in symbols, functions, and roles. New objects, behaviours, beliefs, or qualities may have gained symbolic importance or been restructured into new symbolic structures due to social landscapes that already exist, for example, can be imbued with symbolic meaning.

2.1.6.4 SLOGAN

Slogans are important branding marketing and advertising techniques. It is an important marketing tactic for developing a relationship with a specific brand in advertising (Keller, 2008). According to Gali *et al.,* (2017), a slogan may serve as a bridge as opposed to names and logos, which are constrained in their capacity to convey a message. Additionally, they made the point that slogans can serve as handles or hooks for expressing the distinctive qualities of a brand and capturing its essence. This demonstrates the importance of the slogan in communicating the brand's standing. Slogans were acknowledged as cultural symbols used by companies or groups to raise public awareness in the early 20th century (d'Onofrio, 1981cited in Huan and Lin, 2017). Tourist slogan literature has identified some characteristics that a good slogan should have to be popular and efficient, according to Gali *et al.,* (2017).

They believe that a good slogan should be short, amusing, credible, long-lasting, original, concise, direct, and relevant. However, they noted that these features are not always achieved. The reason is that most of the destinations are not following these features. A great slogan should be short and simple to remember and express a destination's unique attributes to potential visitors (Lehto *et al.,* 2014). Similarly, Khan (2014) is of the opinion that destination tourism slogans should elicit an emotional response from customers, attract their attention quickly, pique their curiosity, leave positive impressions, and become embedded in their long-term memory. According to Huang and Lin (2017) prior research by Letho *et al.,* (2014) showed that similar attitudes about a location and its slogans could considerably improve consumers' ability to recognize the destination from others. Huang and Lin (2017) found that slogans that make it easy for customers to find their destination are effective marketing tools.

According to Khan (2014:28), some examples of these slogans are: "Malaysia, Truly Asia", which, in three words, captures the meeting of all of Asia in one place or the "Incredible India" and many more have all increased the visibility of these destinations in the minds of the tourist market. However, Pike (2004) discovered that several issues hamper destination brand positioning. According to him, a fantastic slogan with a limited marketing budget might be nothing more than a pipe dream (Pike, 2004). Lack of destination branding research in the tourist literature, which is meant to guide Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), is one of these challenges, according to the author. He noted that there had not been much research into the relevance, history, long-term planning, and slogans used to position destinations well. Therefore, he suggests that the six questions posed in his study reflect progress toward creating an internationally approved set of slogan formulation standards. The following are some of them:

1. What is the significant proposition of the slogan? Pike (2004:117) proposed that DMOs employ the following categories of slogan proposals to position destinations.
   a. Realistic attributes: example is "Tropical North Queensland - where the rainforest meets the reef".
   b. Emotional traits include "Brisbane - it's going down" and "West Virginia - wild and fantastic".
   c. Benefits of Travel Motivation include "Hawaii - the island of Aloha" and "Ruapehu - where the adventure begins".
   d. Segmentation of the market includes "Hawkes Bay - wine country".
   e. Self-expression symbols include "If travel is your passion, Brazil is your destiny.
   f. Risk mitigation: an example is "Cuba - peaceful, safe, and healthy tourist."
   g. The leadership of a brand: examples include "Zambia - the true Africa" and "Egypt - where history began and continues".
   h. Focus: examples include "Kalgoorlie-Boulder - Australia's gold capital" and "Auckland - the city of sails" Examples of unfocused is "Take time to discover Bundaberg, the Coral Coast, and the nation".
2. Combinations of the aforementioned slogans include,
   a. "Northland Naturally - New Zealand's First Area" and "Michigan Great

Lakes, these are thrilling times to be alive" (Pike, 2004).

3. Who will be interested in the proposition? According to Pike (2004), the target market should be concerned about the slogan proposition. He stated that it should be at least openly linked to a benefit in the minds of consumers or tourists, citing instances, such as "Be inspired by Wales" as examples.

4. How does the tagline set the destination out from the rest of the field? Pike believes that each destination's slogan concept should be unique and that similarity in destination slogans could lead to competition.

5. How probable is it that the message will be remembered? According to Pike (2004), it is beneficial for the slogan proposition to be recalled straightforwardly. The slogan, limited to seven words, should communicate in simple phrases and focus on a specific value proposition that would benefit the tourists. "Cumbria - lake district" and "Arizona - Grand Canyon state" are two examples of simplicity, according to the author.

6. Has the proposal been made with the long term in mind? According to Pike (2004), slogan proposition design should be consistent. He noted that enhanced consumer-based brand equity is one of the potential advantages of long-term consistency as a result of the following:

a. Possessing the title "Virginia is for Lovers".

b. Having an identity symbol or motto, such as "I love (♥) New York."

c. Confidence for small-scale tourism businesses and travel agents that devote time and money to building sub-brands that complement the destination's umbrella brand.

d. Cost savings for a brand's investment.

7. Is the destination community able to deliver on the promise of the proposition?

Pike (2004) emphasized that slogan propositions should be deliverable for moral and controversial considerations. He suggested that some of the slogan's aspects might be considered hyperbole, such as "Barbados - just beyond your imagination" and

"Greenland - out of this world", just a few examples.

According to Pike, destination management organizations (DMOs) should be prepared to respond to the above six stakeholder questions. Similarly, Ìgbẹ́tì tourism managers are supposed to respond to the six questions posed by stakeholders such as tourists, business operators, tourism agencies, advertising agencies, policymakers, and others to generate successful, well-known, and globally acknowledged slogans. The value proposition of the Ìgbẹ́tì slogan is supposed to include functional destination traits, emotive qualities, travel motivation benefits, market segmentation, self-expression symbolism, risk mitigation, brand leadership, and emphasis. Ìgbẹ́tì's phrase is designed to be relevant and explicit enough to be associated with profit in the minds of tourists. Similarly, the slogan should be distinguishable from others because of recent competition and rivalry among locations in the south-western part of Nigeria. In addition, the Ìgbẹ́tì slogan should be memorable, stated in plain terms with a clear focus on a specific value statement that would benefit tourists.

Ìgbẹ́tì's slogan is projected to have long-term consistency and improvement of consumer equity through identity ownership symbol slogans, such as "I Love New York". Similarly, for moral as well as disputed grounds, the Ìgbẹ́tì slogan proposition must be deliverable by the community; this is important because several slogan aspects are seen as a simple exaggeration. Slogans are essential branding components that transmit and interpret the destination features in a way that prepares the tourist's mind for what he will experience at the time of the visit. Some destinations got their slogans from natural and geographical features, alttitudes, weather and climatic conditions, occurrences or happenings, and significant icons who contributed to the place's growth, among other things. Many countries around the world have slogans, including Germany - The travel destination, Egypt - where it all begins; South Africa - Inspiring new ways; Tanzania - the land of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar, and the Serengeti, Canada - keep exploring; Malaysia - truly Asia, and Tropical North Queensland - where the rainforest meets the reef, among others.

The slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì in Ọ̀yọ́ State, South-western Nigeria, "*Ìgbẹ́tì Ilu Oye",* which translates to "Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City", is designed to explain the town's tourism resources so that visitors are aware of what they will experience. Geographical factors, weather, and climatic conditions can also be used to create an Ìgbẹ́tì slogan. This

indicates that symbols and slogans are effective branding elements and marketing strategies used to identify and differentiate one tourism destination from another. Using symbols that are peculiar with the tourism destination and the slogan for branding will create ownership that can extend into the future and help to differentiate and improve the identity of a tourism destination (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2010). This shows that symbols and slogans can showcase the identity and characteristics of tourism destinations.

Ser (2022) found that, successful destination symbols and slogans are beneficial in communicating tourist destination features, particularly in today's global tourism destination rivalry. According to him, many tourism locations and agencies are always looking for new marketing techniques to set their products apart from the competition. Combining symbols and slogans as branding tools will exhibit the destination's characteristics and identity to the tourist. Similarly, Vojnovi (2020) noted that different semiotic codes and symbols can draw tourists to a particular destination for a specific experience. The author emphasised that the objective of location descriptions in promotional leaflets or media is to convey the image of something spectacular to the tourists before their arrival and to arouse their curiosity and expectations about the destination.

2.2   EMPIRICAL ISSUES

2.2.1   DESTINATION ATTRACTIONS

Attraction can be referred to as the backbone of a tourism destination. It is an essential and significant aspect of tourism. Olatunji and Ezenagu (2016:8) stated that "attractions are one of the components of tourism destination and perhaps the major reason behind tourist visit to any destination". This demonstrates that there is no tourism without attraction. "Without attractions bringing travellers to places, the demand for all other tourism-related services, including lodging, dining, and distribution, would be limited, according to Goeldner and Ritchie (2009 cited by Olatunji and Ezenagu, 2016:8). Attractions, according to Yusuf *et al.,* (2019), are what are in the middle of a tourist destination or environment. Olatunji and Ezenagu (2016:8) also found that "attractions are vital to visitor's entire satisfaction and experience inside any particular site", they believed those attractions could draw

tourists to various destinations.

Therefore, attraction is a force that draws tourists to a site to experience and absorb the natural and cultural assets of the location to satisfy their desires. According to Vengesayi *et al*., (2009), the attractiveness of a tourist location is typically defined by visitors' perceptions of the place's ability to meet their needs. They discovered that the more a destination could match the desires or wants of tourists, the more desirable it is, and the more probably will be selected over other locations. This means that destination attractions include all elements capable of luring tourists to a particular location. Some of these attractions are natural, while others are man-made. According to Olatunji and Ezenagu (2016), destination attraction is "anything about a place that draws tourists voluntarily away from their own residences.

These authors noted that all the resources within an environment, either natural or man-made, which captivates or arouses tourist curiosity, are the attraction. These are hills, caves, lakes, oceans, mountains, rocks, traditions, festivals, artefacts, historical relics and monuments that comprise tourist attractions that attract tourists to a particular site. Natural attraction creates more awareness and enduring memories in tourists' minds. Most attractions, such as rivers, hills, mountains, rocks, caves, forests, rock shelters, traditions, festivals, and customs, among others, are situated in rural places around the world. Most of these resources are regarded as sacred and are being worshipped by the community. They are preserved by myth, taboos and tradition. In Nigeria, most of these attractions are tourism potentials that are yet to be harnessed as cultural and ecotourism.

2.2.2   CULTURAL TOURISM

Tourism is the movement of people for purposes of commerce, recreation, education, or other reasons from their usual location to a particular destination for some time longer than 24 hours also includes "activities that move people temporarily away from their normal area of residence for pleasure, excitement, experience, or rest" (Falade, 2000 cited in Bankole, 2013:122). It is one of the sectors with the fastest growth rate in the globe, boosting the social and cultural status of a nation and its ability to generate foreign exchange. Tourism is one of the world's largest sectors, employing 192.3 million people. Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft, has named tourism,

education, and health as three of the most important growth areas for the next century (Jamieson, 2000). Tourism is also one of the main causes of socioeconomic advancement both in poor and developed nations. Many developing countries have identified tourism as a highly efficient means of achieving economic progress. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) noted that there were over 983 million foreign tourist arrivals globally in 2011, up to 4.6 per cent from US$ 940 billion in 2010. The UNWTO (2012) also reported that earnings from international tourism (The balances of payments of travel component) increased by 3.8 per cent in real terms to US$1.03 trillion (€740 billion) in 2011. After suffering losses during the late 2000s recession, when tourism witnessed a substantial slowdown from the second half of 2008 through the end of 2009, international travel demand improved in 2011.

The sharp decline accelerated in 2009 resulted in a global decline of 4.2% in foreign visitor arrivals to 880 million in 2009 and a loss of 5.7% in international tourism receipts, both of which were worsened in some countries by the H1N1 influenza virus outbreak (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2010). Robinson and Picard (2006) also cited forecasts made by the World Tourism Organization in 2005 that by 2020 there will be more than 1.56 billion new arrivals, with 0.4 billion long-haul travellers and 1.2 billion intraregional arrivals. With 717 million tourists expected according to WTO (2005), the most desirable travel destination will be Europe, which will be followed by East Asia and the Pacific (397 million), the Americas (282 million), Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific are anticipated to have quicker growth than the rest of the world. Tourism, according to Cvetanovska-Gugoska *et al.,* (2013), will be very important to rural people since tourism resources will attract tourists, which will help to promote the economic growth of the areas, particularly those that are experiencing severe poverty. In a similar vein, Bankole (2013:122) noted that:

> Many communities that generate tourist-related items and those that lack tangible wealth but are rich in culture, history, and heritage benefit from tourism by turning their distinctive qualities into the potential for generating revenue (Bankole, 2013:122).

Beliefs, values, conventions, customs, clothes, language, diet, roles, knowledge and skills, and everything else that people learn that makes up a society's 'way of life are

all examples of culture. It is passed down through the generations through the socialization process. According to Anderson (2014), visitors will have the chance to learn about folklore and other traditions, including ceremonies, dances, rituals, tales, arts, handicrafts, and hospitality, as well as natural and geological surroundings like beaches, mountains, waterfalls, caverns, and folklore. Therefore, tourists will be able to learn about and engage with other people's cultures. According to Benson (2014), people go to cultural manifestations that are different from where they usually live to learn new things and have new experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. Richards (1996) noted that the migration of tourists to diverse cultural areas other than their homes, such as heritage sites, museums, and artistic performances, such as dance, rituals, ceremonies, and festivals, can be regarded as cultural tourism. This demonstrates that cultural tourists might enjoy cultural attractions in their local environment. However, once they leave to participate in the culture of others, their activities have turned into cultural tourism. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005:22) claimed that cultural tourism is especially enticing because of the numerous advantages it offers, such as the following:

i. Establishing businesses and jobs.
ii. Expanding tax receipts
iii. Increasing the regional economic diversity.
iv. Developing a chance for collaboration.
v. Increasing the number of visitors who are interested in history and preservation.
vi. Increasing the income from historical sites.
vii. Preserving the culture and customs of the area.
viii. Increasing community support for historic sites.
ix. Creating a sense of historical community pride.
x. Educating the public on the importance of the place or location (OECD, 2005:22).

2.2.3   CULTURAL AND NATURAL TOURISM RESOURCES

Cultural resources are traditions, customs, crafts, arts, festivals, folklore, and historical relics of ancestors in the form of buildings and monuments. According to Ezenagu and

Iwuagwu (2016:1), "cultural resources are physical structures and both natural and man-made, related to human activities". People from different parts of the world use cultural resources to promote their culture and set themselves apart from others. Cultural resources denote historical practice and indicate man's existence in the past and present as a cultural identity. They include the many different religions practised by people, holidays, traditional building methods, dance, theatre, clothing, and handicrafts, among others, all of which are characteristics of any society, past or present (Ezenagu and Iwuagwu, 2016). Cultural resources promote peace, unity, and progress among individuals of many ethnic groups. Natural resources include those physical and man-made qualities employed by humans for specific purposes other than their natural use. Man-made resources include anything fashioned or generated by human activity. Natural tourism resources are flora, fauna, and landscape features generated by nature and the environment, such as hills, rocks, mountains, caverns, rock shelters, beaches, rivers, and woods. Many individuals are motivated to visit natural tourist resources because they are a source of attractions and communicate the destination's identity. Different forms of cultural tourism, including heritage tourism, arts tourism, ethnic tourism, and others, enable visitors to experience other people's cultures in their natural settings, including their morals, convictions, customs, norms, and traditions (Anderson, 2014). According to Csapó (2012: 209-210), cultural tourism is further divided into traditions/ethnic tourism, event and festival tourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism, cultural, thematic routes, culture city tourism/cultural tours, and religious and creative tourism.

2.2.3.1   *Heritage Tourism*

Material and immaterial elements that a set of generations inherit or receive from the past and develop for some purpose in the present day are referred to as heritage. A more comprehensive definition, according to Csapó (2012), stated that heritage "can be classified as tangible immovable resources (such as natural areas such as mountain, ocean, hills, river, sacred places, rock, and buildings, among others), tangible movable resources (such as objects in museums, documents in archives), or intangibles such as values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, and including experiences such as festivals, arts, and cultural events. According to Bankole (2013), heritage refers to the possessions people inherited from their ancestors in the past, the possessions they use

today, and the possessions they want to leave to future generations. It is evidence of how communities or the public have preserved themselves since ancient times through values and customs, such as history, traditional music and dance, art, traditional games, folklore, language, traditional cuisine, monuments, museums, traditional religion, and dressing, among others. Therefore, the movement of individuals from their existing location to view and experience cultural assets, which are tangible and intangible resources, such as customs and traditions that a generation has acquired from the past, is referred to as heritage tourism.

Cultural heritage tourism is defined by Owoseni *et al.,* (2017) as the movement of tourists to see and experience built heritage such as historical relics and people's culture in the form of lifestyles, artefacts, modern art, and culture for education and community development. National Trust for Historic Preservation's Heritage Tourism Program states that heritage tourism is a significant component of cultural tourism focused on having experienced locations and events that truly reflect an area's ancient, historical, and natural environment (OECD, 2005). According to Onyima (2016: 274), ecological and natural heritages are two types of heritages. Ecological heritages, according to the author, are natural environments that have been left undisturbed or unpolluted, with flora and fauna and geographical structures such as beaches, mountains, caves, rivers, lakes, and hills that have been preserved for research, sight-seeing, and tourism (Duke in Aremu, 2007; Eluyemi, 2002). UNESCO (2005) highlighted various forms of heritage, including monumental, mobile, intangible, and world heritage (Csapó, 2012:211).

2.2.4 NIGERIAN TOURISM RESOURCES AND DESTINATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria has various natural and cultural resources that might be leveraged to increase tourism. Some of these resources can be found in practically every state of the union, but the majority of them have not been properly utilized. Bankole (2013) asserted that Nigeria's capacity for tourism rests on the country's diversity in terms of its people, culture, environment, and untapped investment opportunities. Natural resources, according to him, include vast swaths of natural vegetation, rivers, lakes, oceans, beaches, caves, wildlife, waterfalls, and a diverse range of climatic conditions, to name a few. According to the author, major cultural attractions include culture rooted

in local customs, folklore, history, festivals, handicrafts, and other traditions. Some of these cultural resources are conserved in museums, according to Bankole (2013). National parks, game reserves, and a geographically and aesthetically pleasing terrain are among Nigeria's geographical and natural tourism resources.

Kainji Lake National Park, Gashaka- Gumti National Park, Cross-River National Park, Okomu National Park, Kamuku National Park, Old Ọ̀yọ́ National Park, Chad Basin National Park, and Yankari Game Reserves are some of Nigeria's national parks and game reserves. Zuma Rock in Niger State, Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Erin Ijesa waterfall in Ọ̀ṣun State, Idanre hill in Ondo State, Ikogosi warm spring in Ekiti State, Oluminrin waterfall, Lagos bar beach, and others in Nigeria are geographically and aesthetically attractive. River Niger and Benue, Ọ̀ṣun Osogbo sacred grove in Ọ̀ṣun State, Obudu cattle ranch in Cross River State, Jos Plateau, Plateau State's and Taraba State's Mambilla Plateau, among others. The effort to promote the tourism business in Nigeria began in 1962 (Bankole, 2013). However, this initiative was thwarted by clueless and ineffective administration, a military regime, and insufficient tourism infrastructure. Between 1990 and 1992, the federal government took massive steps to develop Nigeria's cultural heritage by establishing and formulating tourist regulations and collaborating with other countries.

The National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) in Kano, the Tourism Master Plan, and the National Tourism Council, which is presided over by the Nigerian President, were all factors in the foundation of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in 1992. In June 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo formed the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism to promote the nations vast and varied cultural heritage. This ministry aims to raise awareness of Nigeria's vibrant culture and tourism potential to eradicate poverty and advance the country's economy. This effort resulted in the Abuja 2005 Carnival, a week-long event to bring Nigerians together to celebrate their cultural heritage and habits. During the occasion, there were street carnivals, Durbars, traditional cuisine, masquerade street shows, Boat Regattas, musical fiestas, and exhibitions, among other things (Bankole, 2013). According to Bassey and Egon (2016:26), the National Tourism Policy (NTP), which was developed in 1990, has the following primary goals:

i. To protect and advance Nigeria's cultural legacy as a tool for domestic economies.

ii. To encourage regional and community tourist partnerships.

iii. To increase income redistribution, combat poverty, earn foreign exchange, and create jobs.

iv. Against the backdrop of Africa's cultural revival, promote Nigeria as an attractive tourism destination.

v. Encourage geopolitical integration, as well as healthy international collaboration and understanding.

vi. To ensure that tourism resources are developed in an environmentally sustainable way.

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and National Orientation are responsible for developing tourism in Nigeria through the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC). The duties and obligations of the Corporation include the following:

i. Encouraging Nigerians to spend their vacations there and foreigners to visit Nigeria;

ii. Promoting the provision of and improvement of tourist services and amenities in Nigeria, including the construction of hotels and associated infrastructure.

Along with the specific powers granted to the Corporation by or per the following sections of this Act, the Corporation shall have the following powers:

i. Offer information and advising services;

ii. Encourage and engage in tourist research;

iii. Provide states and city councils with tourism-related technical expertise;

iv. All hospitality and tourism businesses and travel agents shall be registered, classified, and graded.

The Corporation shall also have the authority to:

i. Implement any initiatives that the Corporation deems necessary for the growth and promotion of the tourism sector;

ii. Support the growth of (a) museums and historical sites; (b) parks; (c) game reserves; (d) beaches; (e) natural beauty spots; (f) vacation resorts; (g) souvenir businesses; and (h) provide advice to the appropriate authorities on how to improve tourist amenities.

After the Nigerian Senate voted to alter the 1992 Act, the organization was renamed the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority in 2017. This allows the agency to create a new operational firm called National Travel Bureau, which will provide services both within and outside the country. The tour operators were exposed to private-sector principles due to this Act. NIHOTOUR's main responsibilities include providing training and capacity building, conducting research for operators and practitioners in the industry, and regulating personnel's professional behaviour and the quality of service provided by enterprises. Boomie (2010) lists many other significant government organizations that are essential to the identification, advancement, and promotion of Nigerian cultural heritage, including the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), National Gallery of Art (NGA), National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), and National Troupe/National Theatre of Nigeria (NT/NTN).Tourism resources are attractions, products and procedures, both natural and man-made, which might entice visitors (Lazik, 2007).

According to Maksin Michik (2008), tourism resources are desirable because they are cultural materials and assets of a multidimensional structure that stimulate the tourism movement by satisfying a wide range of tourist desires and producing tourism packages. Natural tourist resources, such as geomorphic structures and cultural artefacts and events, can be found. Wood and ivory carvings, brass and bronze castings, grass and fabric weavings, ceramics, painting, glass and metal works, and other cultural tourist resources were discovered by Obeta and Onah (2016). According to the authors, examples include brass and bronze castings in Ife and Benin; Aso Oke weaving in Iseyin, Ọ̀yọ́ state; Ebira weaving in Okene, Kogi state; grass weavings in northern regions of the nation for manufacturing baskets, fans, tables, and floor mats; Benin and Awka, Anambra State; and pottery production facilities in Suleja. In addition, there are national museums in each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

According to Obeta and Onah (2016), museums, such as the War Museum in Umuahia, Abia State, and the University of Ibadan have already taken over the Nri Museum as research centres, drawing a sizable number of foreign researchers/tourists each year. Some examples include the National Museum in Lagos, the Igbo-Ukwu Museum and the Esie Museum in Kwara State. Adeleye and Oyekanmi (2013) discovered that tourism resources in Nigeria come in various forms and may be divided into two categories: resources for anthropogenic cultural tourism and natural tourism resources. According to these authors, Nigeria's rural areas are where most of these tourism resources are found. They added that Nigeria's vastness and tourist attractions help promote tourism there. According to Adeleye and Oyekanmi (2013), tourist resources in Nigeria are categorized into Biogenic, Water, Landscape, Festivals and Cultural Tourism Resources.

2.2.4.1   *Festivals and Cultural Tourism Resources*

Traditional festivals, social activities, annual tribal rites, traditional celebrations, and cultural games are only some of the cultural tourism options available in Nigeria. Examples are, Olojo festival in Ilé-Ife in Ọ̀sun State, Fattening festivals in Cross River State, Moremi festival in Offa in Kwara, Ọ̀sun Osogbo festival in Ọ̀sun State, Ẹ̀yọ̀ in Lagos, Òguń in Ondo, Ṣàngó in Ọ̀yọ́, Ọ̀yọ́ State, Argungu in fishing in Kebbi State, Ojúde Ọba and Agẹmọ in Ìjẹ̀bú-Òde in Ogun State. Some of these festivities bring tourists to their destinations, while others are properly harnessed, packaged, and publicized. Most of these festivals are religious that honour ancestors, deities, spirits, and divinities. Obasola (2014) found that there are occasions worldwide when participants from many ethnic and religious backgrounds gather to commemorate a significant event. According to him, such a celebration or event is referred to as a festival since it involves the entire city or region. Festivals are essential parts of life. They are the most significant social and religious events and occasions for feasting and celebration that feature a range of shows, entertainments, celebrations, ceremonies, and rites (Obasola, 2014).

Festivals are the epitome of culture in any traditional civilisation, according to Ezenagu and Olatunji (2014). They are periods or occasions that provide chances to commemorate and learn about long-standing customs. It unifies a group of individuals and gives a means for them to be recognised. They represent a priceless and

irreplaceable heritage through which the people's image can be portrayed. Specifically, a festival can identify a people's culture or a certain destination, which is why festivals or events can function as a brand in the form of symbols and identification for a community, region, or nation. This is in line with Bonye's (2011) assertion that no matter how far back in history or where we find ourselves in the world, there has always been a cultural identity that represents our religion, customs, and ethical values when celebrating our traditional festivals.

The author noted that traditional institutions, such as festivals, are the vehicles for expressing knowledge. Nold (1998) defined traditional festivals as communal gatherings characterized by well-planned expressions of reverence, joy, or intense revelry established by custom or supported by many cultural groups or organizations. According to him, they are primarily intended to stimulate the performance, management, and preservation of traditional dance, singing, and skill. Nold (1998) also claimed that many of these festivals commemorate the conquest of some villages, such as the Feok among the Northern Ghanaian Builsas. Likewise, Bonye (2011) noted that traditional celebrations that cannot be attributed to any documented event are more difficult to comprehend because they are an approach to preserving a significant occasion. Similarly, Obasola (2014:526) noted that festivals, as an entrenched part of people's culture, always stand as an essential function in society.

The significance of festivals, according to Obasola, resides in depicting historical events, coming of age, crop harvesting, and the pacification of numerous deities for safety. The author asserted that festival protects the past and present history, which is why rituals are repeated. He further claimed that people venerate their progenitors during the celebration and pray for their assistance and protection to start the New Year with optimism and confidence and cleanse their environment. This supports Nold (2001) that the community meets annually to remember, commemorate, and express gratitude to God almighty, the deities, and the predecessors for their support and safety during traditional festivals. According to Famuyiwa (1992 in Oderinde, 2018), it is a season or day of celebration selected by a society or group for commemorating cultural festivals, holy days, or musical and ceremonial acts of special value. A traditional festival is a period of thanksgiving over a historical event or observance of a religious festival during which rites and sacrifices are made to

several deities who govern the weather, marriage and good harvest (Oderinde, 2018).

The Yorubas of South-western Nigeria have a festival as part of their culture and religion. According to Oderinde (2018), religious festivals usually include dialect, songs, performing customs, family obligations, and dress, as examples of Yoruba culture. .According to her, songs that worshippers or faithful sing during events or festivals express religious ideals, mythology, and thought. The annual celebration of deities and the adoration of ancestors, according to Akintan (2013), are also characteristics of traditional religion. She discovered that most ceremonies are held to commemorate significant religious and social events in people's lives, as evidenced by various shows, religious rites, entertainment, merry-making, and ceremonial occasions. According to her, the roots and origins of traditional celebrations are passed down from one generation to the next and divulged through folklore and myths.

Traditional or religious festivals are held all over the world in honour of gods and goddesses, geographical features such as mountains, rivers, trees, rocks, caves, and other natural features as symbols of commitment and to request fortune, favour, blessings, wealth, children, and other things from the deities. In Yoruba land, various traditional and religious festivals are held in numerous towns and villages. For example, the Ifá/Ọ̀rúnmìlà festival is celebrated across Yoruba land, whereas the Ọ̀sun festival is held in Òṣogbo and other parts of Yoruba land, and the Ọlọ́jọ́ festival is held in Ilé-Ifẹ̀. Similarly, Yoruba land's Egúngún festival is held in every town. The Agẹmọ festival in Ìjẹ̀bú land, the Ògún festival in Ondo and Ìjẹ̀sà land, the Ifá festival in Abẹ́òkúta, the Ṣàngó festival in Ọ̀yọ́, the gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ́ festival in Yewa land, the Orò festival, the Egúngún festival, and others are all very significant occasions for different Yoruba groups, according to Oderinde (2018:2). They offer chances for people to get back in touch with their deities and revitalize moral principles.

In Ọ̀sun State, Southwest Nigeria, the Ọ̀sun Òṣogbo Festival has developed to be a great attraction for both domestic and foreign tourists annually. Pre-festival activities include *Ìwópopo*, which refers to the customary cleansing of the town to fend off ills, followed by the lighting of *Iná Olójúmẹ́rìndínlógún*,' a 600-year-old sixteen-point lamp three days later. Another important event is the *Ìbòríadé,* which is headed by the town's king, Ataoja of Osogbo, the priests and priestesses, and the votary maid

(Arugba). With a calabash that can only be carried by a virgin, Arugba transports sacrifice to Ọ̀sun Ọ̀sogbo Grove. For the celebration, many adherents and tourists from home and abroad arrived at Ọ̀sun grove to commemorate the former custodian and priestess of Ọ̀sun Ọ̀sogbo Grove, Susan Wenger, a German-born devotee of the Ọ̀sun deity who is also known to worshippers as *Àdùní Olórìsà* or *Ìyá Ọ̀sun*. Worshippers of Ọ̀sun dress in white and hold the River goddess in high regard for her abilities in fertility and healing. Ọ̀sun Osogbo Grove was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2005.

Apart from Christmas, Easter, Eid-el-Fitri and Eid-Maulud festivals that are celebrated among Christians and Muslims in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ State South-western Nigeria, there are other traditional religious festivals, such as Ìyámọ̀pó festival, Ṣàngó festival, *Òrìṣà-Oko* festival, Ọ̀sun festival, Ọbàtálá/Ifá festival and Ògún festival. Ìyámọ̀pó festival is a major festival in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is an annual celebration honouring the bond between the Ìgbẹ́tìs forefathers and the goddess Ìyámọ̀pó is celebrated in June. During the event, sacrifices, thanksgiving and prayers are offered to the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess by the priests and worshippers who believe that the deity has the power to give wealth, success, progress, children, healing, guidance, peace and protection from all evil spirits in the community. Due to the general traditional concept and value that even if their ancestors are gone, their spirits persist, the indigenes seek opportunities to honour them and reaffirm their commitment to them. Ìyámọ̀pó festival draws visitors from both within and outside Nigeria.

Another traditional event in Ìgbẹ́tì is the *Òrìṣà-Oko* festival, which takes place in August. Ìgbẹ́tì celebrates the festival for three days. *Òrìṣà-Oko* is the god of agriculture and harvest; the deity is also referred to as *Àjàngèlè,* the god in charge of land fertility and cultivation, generally Ìgbẹ́tì. It is believed that *the Orisa Oko* deity should be appeased before selling and eating farm produce. According to one of the Ìgbẹ́tì indigene, *Babamọjà* is the priest of *Òrìṣà-Oko*, he is in charge of the festival and the rituals connected with the yearly celebration. *Òrìṣà-Oko* shrine is located at *Babamọjà's* compound in Ìgbẹ́tì. There are iron-staff at the shrine, which represents the deity. During the festival, newly cooked or roasted yams are offered in the *Òrìṣà-Oko* diety, while the worshippers and other good wishers consume some. The priests and priestesses wear white clothes and rub white and red chalk on their foreheads.

Ram and goat are also used for sacrifice during the celebration. The festival period is when the devotees show gratitude and renew their covenant to *Òrìṣà-Oko* for the bountiful harvest of farm produce. Prayers are offered for the town, the king, the worshippers, and the soil for the abundant rain and sunshine, blessings and more increase and harvest in the coming years.

In Ìgbẹ́tì, *Ifá* worshippers celebrate the festival in September. During this period, ifá worshipper shows their gratitude for his protection, blessing and other good they received from him (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 14/12/2018, Personal Communication). His knowledge of the previous, current and prospects and wisdom, enable worshippers to seek direction and assistance from Ifa in all of their endeavours (Oderinde, 2018). Ifá is also known as Ọrúnmìlà, and the priest of Ifá is known as Babaláwo, which means "father of cult". During the festival, the priests and worshippers normally put on white clothing. Goat, ram, dove, and kola nut are used for rituals during the annual festival. Worshippers kill a ram or a goat and pour the blood on the shrine. Prayers and sacrifices are offered on behalf of the town against sickness, diseases, war, premature death, blessing, good fortune and protection in the coming years (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 14/12/2018, Personal communication). According to Idowu (1970), the Ifa festival is a season of joy, feasting, singing, dancing, and communion between the divinity and his followers, as well as a time for particular covenant renewal.

The Ṣàngó festival is another great celebration in Ìgbẹ́tì, according to Oderinde (2018) *Ṣàngó* is a sacred deity of thunder and lightning among the Yoruba people. The festival is celebrated between October and November for 7 days. Some of the priests in charge of *Ṣàngó* worship and festival in Ìgbẹ́tì are *Baálẹ̀ Ṣàngó, Ẹlẹ́gùn Ṣàngó and Adósù Ṣàngó. The Ṣàngó* shrine is situated at the *Baálẹ̀ Ṣàngó* compound in Ìgbẹ́tì. The festival commences with the worshipper's procession to the king's palace, rivers and market square with *bàtá* drummers. The remaining days are devoted to music and dance honouring the deity. On the seventh day, the worshippers dress in red and white woven with cowries. Additionally, men and women plait their hair and dance around the town with a large pot containing a sacred flame that is believed to bring blessings to the town. Ṣàngó's shrine is splattered with the blood of a white ram. Ṣàngó's devotees pray for wisdom, protection, children, and good health, among other things.

Then singers and dancers would sing and chant praises about the deity's life histories, supernatural powers, and expectations from his followers, followed by dancing, eating, and ecstasy. Worshippers usually take advantage of the opportunity to fulfil their vows and make new ones to the god. There is also a procession of fire by different Ẹlẹ́gùn Ṣàngó from Ìgbẹ́tì and the neighbouring towns and villages. Ṣàngó is a deity that punishes evil-doers through lightning. Ṣàngó worshippers believed that thieves, criminals, traitors and evildoers could be exposed through the thunder. He's known for taking the lives of severe criminals with no human interference (Abioje 2000 cited in Oderinde, 2018:7). There was an incident where a man stole a motorcycle at Ibadan North East Local Government Area. The man denied stealing, and the Ṣàngó deity was consulted to deal with him. According to this author, after a few days, the man was killed by a thunder strike, and the motorcycle was placed on his chest. In Ìgbẹ́tì, there is a place on Okin Mountain where worshippers gather with bowls of Àmàlà, gbẹ̀gìrì and bush meat to feed their members and visitors during the Ṣàngó festival.

In Ìgbẹ́tì, the Ògún festival takes place between November and December. The god of iron is a frequent name for the deity. It is celebrated annually by hunters, farmers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, welders, drivers, carpenters and those that deal or work with iron with the belief that Ògún will protect them from an accident in the bush during hunting, on the roads, in their workshop etc. Ògún festival is also a big festival in Ìgbẹ́tì. There are a series of preparation and rituals for the festival by the officiating priest which is Olúọ́dẹ, other priests and the family head which is Saàgbọ̀n, in Ìgbẹ́tì. They have to abstain from immoral behaviours and abide by the norms of the cult. According to Mbiti (1970:79), the Ogun priests and officiating household heads morally and physically prepare themselves before the festivities to be suitable servants of the Ògún. They are not allowed to curse, fight, have sexual relations, or eat specific foods (Mbiti, 1970:79).

Ìjálá night is important in the preparation of the Ògúń festival in Ìgbẹ́tì; it is the night before the festival day. The hunters sing praises in honour of Ògúń all the night to appease the god for protection and blessings. Ogun festival day is great; the Ogun worshippers gather at the Ogun shrine in the market to invoke the deity's spirit through praises, songs, chanting, and dancing. Palm wine, palm oil and cold water are poured

onto a big black stone, an Ogun shrine. Other sacrificial materials are snails, pigeons, rats, fish, tortoises, and kola nuts. These symbolise softness, smoothness and calmness (Oderinde, 2018). The main sacrificial animal during the Ogun festival is a dog. Before the sacrifice, *Oluode* invokes the spirit of *Ogun* through incantations and praises.

Subsequently, four men draw the dogs' fore and hind legs while another man, Abore of Ogun, cuts the neck with a sword stroke. If the head of the dog can be cut once, the worshippers will shout *Ògún yè;* this indicates that the god will accept the offering. The animal blood is split between the shrine and iron materials, such as cutlasses, guns, axes, hoes, knives, swords, iron rods and other available iron equipment. After the sacrifice, the meat is shared among the worshipers, and the ceremony continues with songs, dancing, and feasting. In Ogun worship, the blood of animals, particularly dogs, symbolizes the remission or elimination of guilt, particularly transgressions done against the god or neighbours, to win back the goodwill of the offended and to mend the bonds of unity between the deity and his devotees (Abe, 1986 in Oderinde, 2018:7).

The *Egúngún* festival is held in August at Ìgbẹ̀tì. The *egúngún* institution is headed by *Alápìíni* and *Alágbáà,* similar to any other Yoruba town and village. According to (Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí, 14/12/2018). *Alágbáà* appears to be in charge of the social and spiritual aspects of *the egúngún* festival, while *Alápìíni* is in charge of the political. But for the mere fact that the office of *Alápìíni* has been vacant for some time, *Alágbáà* appears to be the sole custodian of all that pertains to *Egúngún* at the Pan-Ìgbẹ̀tì town level. The name of the popular egungun in Ìgbẹ̀tì are, *Ọbádiméjì, Arígbánlá, Súgùdù, Aríkéyanjó, Lagboókú, Asòroókò, Lékèéwọ̀gbẹ́, Sòdó, Apérú, Ọbadùnjà, Mobọ́mobọ́* etc. Cultural events can be branded because they are tourist attractions that occur in tourist sites. The combination of marketing efforts used to differentiate a cultural festival from other festivals through the use of a name, marks, words, symbols, product or service, etc., creates a favourable perception of the festival in the eyes of the public and influences their decision (Awaritefe, 1960).

However, the effectiveness of destination branding elements, such as symbols, slogans, logos and other branding elements as marketing strategy tools is being emphasised by some scholars. Matečić and Perinić Lewis (2018) examined the

relationships between Hvar's Island's key tourism attractions and the island's outlying areas by creating the destination image development through historical, contemporary marketing strategies. The study looks into the identities of island towns and villages to help with the starting point in the four-stage destination branding process. The authors propose that branding should be used to create a consistent destination image based on the island's distinctiveness and to strengthen particular island identities to give a diverse tourism offering. In ten Asian destinations, Huang and Lin (2017) observed the impacts of tourism slogans on public awareness.

These researchers discovered that effective tourism slogans promote locations and assist customers in accepting and remembering marketing material. Therefore, they recommend that destination names be included in slogans and that they be placed at the beginning of the phrases so that consumers may quickly and readily connect the slogan to its marketing destination. Also, slogans should be basic and brief so that they may be remembered easily. Slogans could be offered in various languages so that people worldwide can read and comprehend them. Slogans should be exhibited frequently alongside other marketing messages so that customers become familiar with them and make connections between the marketing destinations. On a national, regional, and local level, Gali *et al.,* (2016) examined the tourism slogans of 150 of the most well-known tourist destinations in the globe. Because of territorial competition, the writers emphasized the employment of slogans as part of a general tourist strategy. They discovered that geographical branding utilizes the least amount of words (and pictures associated with the words) as possible and that slogans have a unique appeal, focusing on the emotive component of the message.

In their study, Worlu *et al.,* (2016) examined how the brand identity of tourist destinations on the supplier side influences tourists' spending in Nigeria. They discovered that developing and maintaining a brand identity benefited tourists' perceptions of Nigeria and their decision to visit the country. Zeybec and Gül Ünlü (2016) investigated the perspective on nations' tourism logo design, taglines, items, and gestural features within the concept of country identity, with the conclusion that country branding makes it simpler, quicker and more reliable to prefer and choose which nation to visit, what to purchase, plan a work trip, and gather experiences about a nation. Croatia's visual identity was the focus of Barisic and Blazevic's (2014) study. They made the case that visual identity enables places to stand out from rivals, get

more visitors, and change their reputation. The study by Petek and Ruzzier (2013), "Brand Identity Development and the Role of Marketing Communications in Slovenia", concluded that Slovenian brand specialists, regardless of the market orientation or type of their brands, are aware of recent environmental changes and can adapt to them.

2.3   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.3.1   CLIFFORD GEERTZ SYMBOLIC AND INTERPRETIVE THEORY OF CULTURE

Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, which began in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s, investigates symbols to their social and cultural environment. According to symbolic and interpretive theory, culture encompasses symbols that can be interpreted to find meaning. It's the study of cultural symbols and how they might be used to learn more about a particular society. Clifford Geertz (1973), the founder of Interpretive Anthropology, is a major figure. In the second part of the twenty-first century, he was the most important anthropologist on the planet. In Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology, Geertz asserts that culture is not a model in people's thinking but is expressed through public symbols and deeds. He added that symbols are used to direct culture and action. Geertz defined symbolism as a system of inherited ideas portrayed in symbolic forms by which humanity informs, sustains, and enriches their understanding and perspectives toward existence. He asserted that culture's main function is to explain and give meaning to the world. The symbolic and interpretive theory is the study of cultural symbols and how they may be employed to better understand a civilization.

Geertz argued that members of the same culture can recognize one another's symbols. Although he claims that symbols are cultural vehicles, which implies that they have cultural significance and worth, they also have meaning and help people understand how to view the world and respond to it. According to him, people employ the signs and symbols that society has created to shape their behaviour patterns and give meaning to their experiences. Therefore, symbolic and interpretive anthropology aims to research how people interpret their environment and how cultural symbols represent it. Symbolic Anthropologists examine and interpret symbolic meaning in the context of the culture they are studying. To address fundamental questions regarding human

social life, symbolic anthropology looks into symbols and the processes through which people give them significance, such as myth and ritual. Therefore, the Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology theory applies to the Ìgbẹ́tì symbol. The symbol of Ìgbẹ́tì communicates the culture, history, identity, and nature of the community. Àgbélé symbol represents the culture and rich tourism potential of Ìgbẹ́tì. The symbol is easier to identify by the indigenes and non-indigenes unfamiliar with it.

2.3.2 MODERNISATION THEORY

The idea of modernisation is the change from a traditional to a modern culture due to globalisation and development. The development of modernisation theory may be traced back to the intellectual and political elites of the United States' response to the post-World War II global environment. A capitalism-based economic ideology characterized the modernization movement of the 1950s and 1960s.The entire transitional and drastic transformational process that a traditional civilisation must go through to become contemporary is referred to as modernization (Hussain and Tribe 1981; Lenin, 1964). "Stages of Economic Growth" by Rostow, published in 1960, is a statement of the idea that societies can advance by passing through particular growth phases. The phases described by Rostow corresponded to the stages of Great Britain's transformation into a modern industrialized nation. According to one definition of modernization, the full transformation of traditional or pre-modern culture into technological forms is accompanied by a social organization that defines the advanced, economically prosperous, and generally politically stable nations of the Western world (Moore 1967). Theories of social transformation contend that international trade helps societies become more advanced.

The modernisation hypothesis can be used to investigate the issue of transitory migration of individuals from industrialized to underdeveloped countries. Traditional and transitional societies make up traditional or non-modern societies. Traditional and modern cultures are at opposite extremities of a continuum, whereas transitional societies are defined as emerging societies that fall somewhere in between. Many ideological presumptions regarding the nature of development are also made by modernization theory. The idea that traditional cultures cannot be transformed into contemporary ones without the support of institutions and technology from more advanced societies is perhaps the most crucial one. The underlying tenet of economic

growth, which is frequently dependent on investment from metropolitan centres, the premise that modernization is inevitable, Western ethnocentrism and the absence of local involvement in the development process are all criticized in modernization theory. But it most closely resembles the development process for the tourism industry, which is typically measured in terms of economic benefits (Wall, 1997).

The Ìgbẹ́tì tourism industry can benefit from modernization theory. The local community modernized and translated some of the natural and tourism potentials into symbols as in developed countries to promote tourism in this region. The increased rivalry in the global tourism business was the driving force behind this decision. The symbols can draw domestic and foreign visitors, raising the community's quality of life. This relates to modernization theory because efforts to improve the standard of living for the impoverished sometimes entail disseminating knowledge and information about more productive industrial procedures. Rebranding entails the transformation of a nation.

2.4   METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Numerous methods have been used to analyze destination branding. The fact that tourism and branding are related to different fields has made this attainable. Multiple approaches help research not to be biased. The nature of the research, purpose, objective and scope of the study are considered in determining the approach. Some researchers on tourism destination branding have used quantitative and qualitative approaches; this has assisted in taking advantage of spectacular aspects of the two approaches and backing up the findings of one approach with another. However, some tourism researchers used a qualitative approach, such as in-depth interviews, key informants, semi-structured interviews, participant observation focus groups interviews, case studies, and quantitative approaches, such as questionnaires, to draw preliminary conclusions and gather primary data in the study of tourism destinations. Quantitative data are often analysed using descriptive and inferential methods, while qualitative use content analysis. When research combines qualitative and quantitative, it is a multi-approach.

Zeybec and Gül Ünlü (2016) observed a perspective on countries' tourism slogans, contents, logos and gestural aspects within the idea of nation identity using

qualitative and quantitative techniques. The cultural, historical, artistic, unique, and tourism aspects of the content of 47 European countries' logos were examined in this study, and the research questions were based on variable coding. Both a descriptive method and a content analysis were used to analyze the data. Matečić and Perinić Lewis (2018) looked at island branding as a tool for reaffirming local island identities in the case of Hvar. The paper is a case study investigating the process of creating a destination's image by examining the words and visual identities used by driven and autonomous image creation entities in historical and Modern Island advertising campaigns. A historical, diachronic, and descriptive analysis was used to examine the identities and images of well-established tourist destinations and small municipalities. The study by Elena Ruiz *et al.*, (2019) was titled 'Sustainable Tourism and Residents' Perceptions of the Brand: The Case of Malaga (Spain)'. The researcher uses a descriptive methodology to examine residents' perceptions of the Malaga brand through a quantitative opinion survey. The information was gathered through a survey in which 1230 people took part. Descriptive and Pearson correlations were used to analyze the data. Petek and Ruzzier (2013) used a qualitative technique to explore the development of Brand Identity and the Role of Marketing Communications in Slovenia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, and content analysis was used to analyze the data.

The study by Gali *et al.,* (2016) was based on an analysis of tourism slogans in popular tourist destinations. National locations and their accompanying slogans were obtained from a list compiled for the World Tourism Barometer. The data was analyzed using various methods, including content analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlations. Worlu *et al.,* (2016) examined tourist destination brand identity from a supply-side viewpoint and how it affects patronage in the Nigerian tourism industry. The study uses a quantitative method for data gathering, with 120 questionnaires distributed and an approximate response rate of 83%. This study's data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, such as tables, frequency, and simple percentages. To test the research hypotheses, linear regression and Pearson correlation were used. In their study, Barisic and Blazevic (2014) focused on Croatia's visual identity elements. The study uses a quantitative method of data collecting by disseminating questionnaires. The data were analyzed using frequencies and standard deviation.

Huang and Lin (2017) studied how tourist slogans affected public awareness in 10 different places. A quantitative approach was taken in the investigation. A questionnaire was used to collect the information. The data were analyzed using T-tests and ANOVA. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. The indigenes, who are traditional rulers, priests, and heads of quarter's chiefs in charge of Ìyámòpó Mountain and other hills, men, women, youth, and some of the tourists who visited during the Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámòpó festival, provided qualitative data through key informant interviews, participant observation, focused group discussions, and unstructured interviews. Quantitative data was collected from tourists through a structured questionnaire.

2.5 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE AND IDENTIFIED GAPS THAT THE THESIS ADDRESSES

The literature has explained a symbol as an object, image, act and linguistic expression representing one thing or another. The brand and branding construct as an effective marketing strategy that can distinguish a good, service product, place or destination from competition that arises from a related or similar product, place or destination. Branding is considered to be the process through which a company, business, or organization presents a good or service to customers or clients that encourage them to depend on it. Globalisation, according to scholars, is a major aspect that leads to concerns about place branding, which might include a country, region, town, city, or any other destination. Tourism decisions are heavily influenced by the region's tangible and intangible resources, such as its natural and cultural resources. According to the literature, there is competition among destinations, and this prompted the majority to adopt marketing strategies to identify and distinguish their destinations from others. Three dimensions of branding, which are brand identity, brand positioning, and brand image, are also emphasized in literature as significant aspects of destination development and demonstrate the importance of brand features, such as name, logo, sign, design, symbol, and slogan, among others, as well as their impact on destination branding.

The literature shows Nigeria's rich tourism resources, potentialities, and economic impact on the country's development. However, numerous researches established that

Nigeria's natural and cultural tourism resources remain unexploited despite the great benefit of this sector. Furthermore, the literature shows that the study on tourism destinations using branding as a marketing technique in Nigeria is limited. Many tourism destinations across the world have device branding tools in terms of symbols and logos to identify and distinguish their site from other competitive destinations, according to the survey. However, the study on how to use Agbele symbol and Igbeti slogan to brand Iyamopo Mountain as tourism destination in Igbeti, Oyo state, Nigeria is still limited. This is the reason why this study is necessary.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The technique and research design employed to conduct this study are the main topics of this chapter. Such data-gathering methods as primary and secondary sources are discussed. Primary sources include focus group discussions (FGD), unstructured interviews with key informants (KII), participant observation, and questionnaires. Secondary sources include journals, past projects, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, and the internet. Sample and sampling procedures are also represented. Descriptive and interpretive analyses were employed in analysing the data. The research is a descriptive ethnographic one that is anchored on the qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry. The data provided solutions to the selected cultural symbols in Ìgbétì, Ìyámòpó as a tourism destination, the extent to which Àgbélé symbols can be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and the extent to which slogan can be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed a mixed-methods research approach that combined an ethnographic method and a structured questionnaire to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative research aims to investigate and comprehend the subjective experiences, meanings, and viewpoints of individuals, while quantitative research entails gathering and analyzing numerical data to detect patterns, relationships, and statistical significance. Qualitative data is examined by researchers through methods like thematic analysis, content analysis, or discourse analysis to identify shared themes, patterns, or relationships. During the interpretation stage, the qualitative and quantitative findings are merged, comparing and contrasting the results to identify instances of agreement or divergence. The mixed methods approach provides researchers with the flexibility to collect and analyze various types of data, resulting in a more nuanced and comprehensive comprehension of intricate research questions or phenomena.

Traditional rulers, priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills, chiefs and heads of quarters, men, women, youth, and some of the tourists who visited during Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival provided qualitative data through the use of key informant interview, focused group discussion, participant observation, and unstructured interview. A structured questionnaire was distributed to tourists who visited Ìgbẹ́tì during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival to collect quantitative data.

3.2   DATA REQUIREMENT AND SOURCES

3.2.1   STUDY AREA

Ìgbẹ́tì, which is a town in Ọ̀yọ́ State's north, is the subject of the study. It serves as the Ọlọ́runsògo Local Government Area's headquarters (Fig 3.2). In the 2006 census, 81,759 people lived there in a 1,069 km^2 area. It is located in Ọ̀yọ́ State's, Ọlọ́runsògo Local Government Area between latitudes 8° 40' and 9° 05'N and 3° 45' and 4° 15'E (Fig 3.4). It is located on the savanna of Northern Guinea in southwest Nigeria (LRS, 1976). Yearly, the bimodal rainfall trend runs from late February to late October (Adewole and Adesina, 2011). Old hard rocks and dome-shaped hills that rise slowly from 500 m above sea level in the southern section to 1,219 m in the northern part make up the landscape. Olorunsogo Local Government was created from the former Irepo Local Government, with its headquarters at Kisi on 4 December 1996 with Ìgbẹ́tì town as the headquarters (Fig 3.5). Irepo Local Government, Kisi, is to the north, Orire Local Government, Ikoyi, is to the south, Kwara State is to the east, and Oorelope Local Government, Igboho, is to the west (Fig 3.3). Onìgbẹ́tì I, Onìgbẹ́tì II, Agbeni, Seriki/Abọsìno/Okin, Àgbélé, Elehinke/Sagbo/Elèrúgbà, Ikolaba/Obadino, Aboyun ogun/Abòkè, Apata Alaje, and Odo Amo are the 10 wards of the local government. Within the local government territory, there are 400 (four hundred) villages and communities (Abubakar, 2005).

The people's primary occupations are farming and trading. The vegetation is a savannah, and the environment is conducive to cultivating crops, such as yam, maize, guinea corn, cassava, and cashew. The local government benefits from the Ọ̀yọ́ State Agricultural Development Programme, a rural-based agricultural organization formed by the Ọ̀yọ́ State Government to promote effective agricultural productivity. The local government includes Christians, Muslims, and traditional worshippers. However, Islam is the most widely practiced religion. Ìgbẹ́tì is a semi-urbanized town; Yoruba and a few other tribes, such as Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, Tiv, Idoma, and Tapa live there.

Non-Nigerians from West Africa countries live, work, and trade in the local government area. There are 14 primary schools, and Senior School Certificate Examinations are offered by three secondary schools in Ìgbẹ́tì. There is one state general hospital and thirteen local government health clinics. Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, Àgbélé Hill, and the "mother of all rocks", Ìgbẹ́tì, are just a few of the region's many tourist attractions that must be promoted (Rockpedestals).
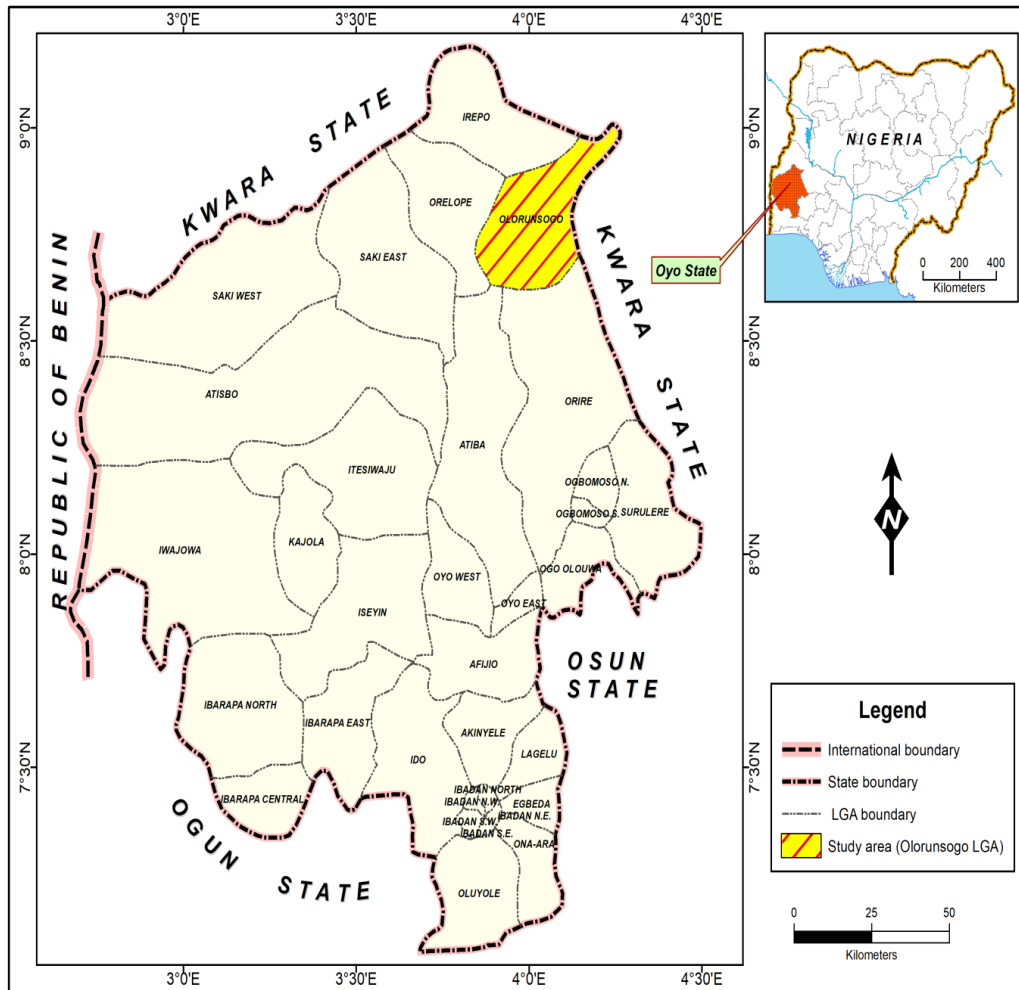
Figure 3.1: Map of the 33 Local Government of Ọ̀yọ́ State Nigeria, showing Olorunsogo Local Government.
Source: Department of Geography, University of Ibadan (2021)
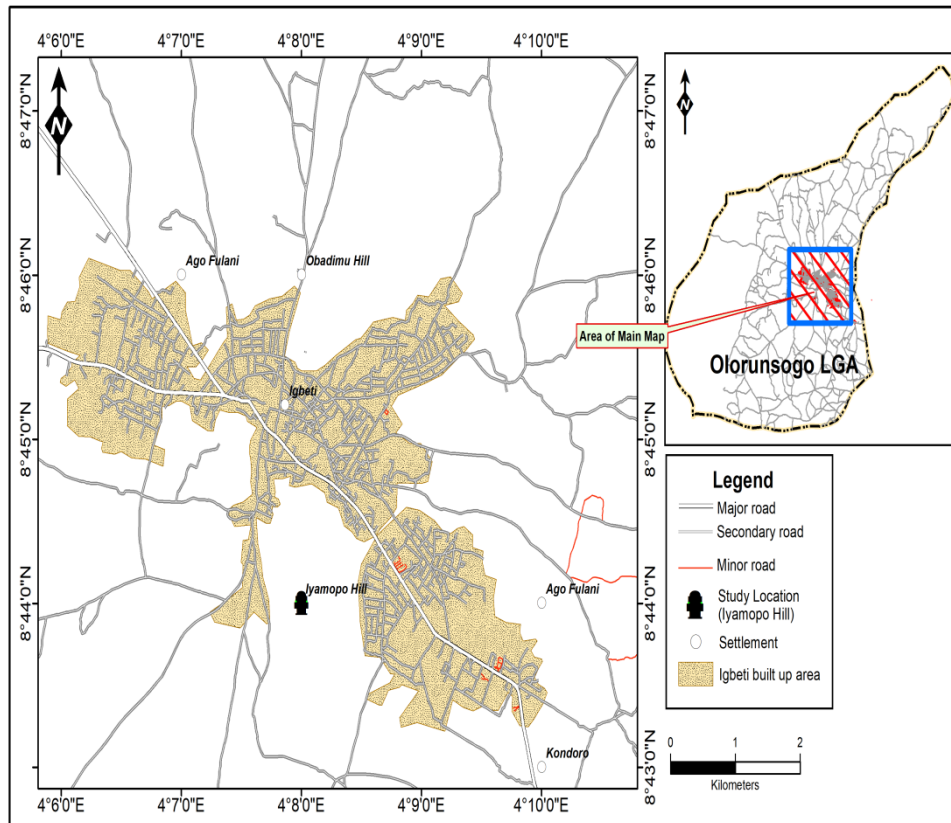
Figure 3.2:   Map of Ìgbẹ́tì town showing Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

Source: Department of Geography, University of Ibadan (2021)

Plate 3.1:   Aerial view of Ìgbẹ́tì town
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

3.2.2 STUDY POPULATION

A portion of the target population is referred to as the population or study population. Samples are taken from the population that is easily accessible by researchers. The word "target population" describes the entire group of individuals or objects researchers are interested in using to extrapolate their findings. While the accessible population is the group under investigation to whom the researchers can apply their findings, the target population, also known as the theoretical population, has many characteristics. Researchers take samples from the readily available population. Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population (Polit *et al.,* 2001). It is the Population's subset. To conduct studies on community members and derive conclusions applicable to the entire population, researchers can employ samples. The study's target population was the tourists, the chief and heads of quarters, the priests in charge of the Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills, the traditional ruler, women, men, and youths in Ìgbẹ́tì, Ọ̀yọ́ state.

3.2.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The purposeful sampling approach was used in selecting 76 indigenes that comprised a traditional ruler, 5 heads of quarters and priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills, 20 women, 30 men, and 20 youths in the community. They were purposely selected based on their experience, knowledge, and information they have on the selected cultural symbols and slogans in Ìgbẹ́tì, how these cultural symbols and slogans can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, festivals and events that are associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination and the symbolic representation of cultural tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. The tourists were chosen using the accidental sampling technique. According to Singh and Masuku (2014), only the elements the researcher can reach are included in the accidental sampling technique. Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed, but 212 were returned. Primary and secondary data collection techniques are available.

3.2.4 PRIMARY METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Focus group discussions, key-informant interviews, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and questionnaires are the key approaches for gathering data for primary methodologies.

3.2.4.1 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

The study relies mostly on key informants identified within the community who serve as resource persons through which relevant data were received. Key informant interviews entail having one-on-one interviews with individuals who have specialized knowledge or expertise on a particular topic or community. Key informants are chosen based on their in-depth comprehension and experience related to the research area. These interviews seek to gather detailed and rich information, insights, and perspectives from the informants. Key informant interviews are often semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and probing of specific topics or areas of interest. This method is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain expert insights or to provide context and depth to a study. An appropriate introduction to the key informants was conducted with the help of two indigenes, Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí and Mr David Idowu and with the aid of a letter of introduction from the Director, Centre for Sustainable Development and my school identity card.

 The key informants for this study were purposely selected because they have information about the selected cultural symbols and Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì. They are 25, and their age ranged from 22 to 70 years. Interviews with each of the informants lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour. As a form of scheduled activities, appointment was booked with informants at least 3 to 4 weeks before the interview. Lists of topics discussed during the interview were drafted and were strictly followed. Yoruba was the language used for the interviews. An interview was conducted with Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì, His Royal Highness, Oba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi, on 12 December 2015 at his palace with the assistance of Director of Town Planning, Olorunsogo Local Government, Mr Sola Amao. The interview lasted for 1 hour. The interview was also conducted with Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, and Elèrúgbà of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú on the same day at their various residences. The interview with Elèrúgbà lasted for 1 hour, while the one with Abòkè lasted for 2 days on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

The information about the selected cultural symbols and slogans, other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, historical background and festivals that are associated with the Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and how symbols and slogans can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourist destination were discussed. To confirm this

information, another indigene, Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí was also interviewed on 12 December 2015 (plate 3.3); his information correlates with other findings. In 2018 there were interviews with Abòkè on 22 October and Elèrúgbà on 23 October. These interviews were based on the festival and events that are associated with Ìyámòpó Mountain, the preparation for the festival and their roles towards and during the events. Likewise, the interview was conducted with other chiefs in charge of other hills on 14 December 2018 at their various residences. They include Iyalode of Ìgbẹ́tì; Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé (Plate 3.2), Abọsìn-Ó of Ìgbẹ́tì; Chief Rahmon Ajadi (Omo Baba) and Abọsànto of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu. Each of them was asked about the festivals that are associated with Ìyámòpó, the preparation and their roles in the festival.

Interviews were conducted with the following other key informants during Easter Monday Carnivals on Ìyámòpó Mountain on 22 April 2019: Hon. Bòṣun Oladele, a former member of the Federal House of Assembly, Abuja, Prince Yunus Olaide Oyekunle, Pastor E. A. Adedeji, Mr David Idowu and Mr Eniola. They gave information on how symbols and slogans can promote tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì. They highlighted the resources on Ìyámòpó Mountain, the festival and events that are associated with the mountain, the inflow of tourists during the events and festivals and the efforts of some of the indigenes in promoting the tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì. Pastor E. A. Adedeji gave information about the genealogy of the Easter Monday service on Okin and Ìyámòpó Mountain and the role of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Ìgbẹ́tì branch. Mama Hannah Olaokun, the 65 years old woman, also gave information about the Easter Monday Carnival and the inflow of tourists at Ìyámòpó. Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin, Prince Sarafadeen Abioye, Prince Kabiru Abioye and Mrs Toyin Olabimtan were also interviewed personally at the Ìyámòpó shrine about the Ìyámòpó festival.

Plate 3.2:　　Researcher interviewing one of the Key Informants, Iyalode of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 3.3:   Researcher interviewing one of the Key Informants, Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

3.2.4.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research method that entails bringing together a small group of participants (usually 6-12 people) to engage in a guided discussion on a specific topic of interest. The group interaction permits participants to share their experiences, opinions, and perceptions in response to questions or prompts provided by the researcher. The dynamic nature of FGDs can generate abundant data and insights by capturing the participants' collective perspectives, group dynamics, and interactions among participants. Focus group discussions allow participants to discuss a topic in a setting where they are free to agree or disagree with one another. Additionally, it enables researchers to look into the diversity of viewpoints and ideas and the contradictions and variances in beliefs, experiences, and behaviour that occur within a particular community. Seventy-five indigenes were interviewed. Among these were 4 priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills, 5 heads of quarters, 20 women, 25 men and 20 youth. The purpose was to sample the opinion of the indigenes on how the symbol and slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, the festival and events associated with the mountain and other tourism resources available on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. Some of the questions raised in the unstructured interview were also discussed to ensure the credibility of the responses and information that was given. The FGD was conducted in English and Yoruba.

The question guide in FGD is shown in appendix II. Eleven sessions were arranged with three to ten people in each group. Each session lasted for about 45 minutes. There was a focus group discussion with the priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills on 14 December 2018 at Elèrúgbàs compound, Oja oba, Ìgbẹ́tì. These priests are, Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì; Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, , Elèrúgbà of Ìgbẹ́tì; Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú , Abọsìn-O of Ìgbẹ́tì; Chief Rahmon Ajadi and Abọsànto of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu. On the 15th of December 2018, another focus group discussion for heads of quarters was held in Onìgbẹ́tì's palace in Ìgbẹ́tì with Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí, Iyalode of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé, Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin, Prince Olajide Oyekunle, and Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin. Focus group discussion with women in the community was organised in three sessions. The first one was conducted on 22 April 2019 during Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì (Plate 3). The second was conducted on 22 June 2019 in the

Abòkès compound, while the third was conducted on 29 June 2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, Ìgbẹ́tì. Each session comprised a minimum of four and a maximum of eight respondents and lasted for approximately 30 minutes.

Focus group discussions with men were organised in five sessions with a minimum of three and a maximum of 10 people. The first session was conducted on 21 April at United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì. The second FGD was conducted on 22 April 2019 on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain during Easter Monday Carnival. The third FGD was conducted on 25 June 2019 at the Elèrúgbàs compound, the fourth FGD was conducted on 26 June at the king's palace, and the fifth was conducted on 29 June at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine. FGD for the youth was also organised in three sessions. The first one was conducted on 22 April 2019 during Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì. The second was conducted on 22 June 2019 in the Elèrúgbàs compound, while the third was conducted on 29 June 2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, Ìgbẹ́tì. Each session comprised a minimum of four and a maximum of eight respondents and lasted for about 30 minutes. The researcher observed and noted as each of the respondents indicated "No" or "Yes" to the questions they were asked, and it was rated according to their responses.

Plate 3.4:   Focus group discussion with some men of the community at Ìyámòpó Mountain
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 3.5:   Focus group discussion with the women of the community at Ìyámòpó
          Mountain
          Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 3.6:   Focus group discussion with some youth of the community at
                  Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain during Easter Monday Carnival
                  Source: Fieldwork (2019)

3.2.4.3   IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

In-depth interviews are personal conversation conducted with participants to investigate their experiences, opinions, beliefs, or knowledge about a particular subject. Unlike key informant interviews, in-depth interviews are not limited to experts but can include a range of participants with various backgrounds and perspectives. In-depth interviews are typically open-ended and enable participants to elaborate on their responses, providing detailed narratives and insights. Researchers use in-depth interviews to acquire a comprehensive understanding of individuals' viewpoints, experiences, and subjective meanings attached to specific phenomena or topics. In-depth interviews for this study were conducted in an unstructured, flexible manner. The schedule was drawn in a flexible way to accommodate the convenience of the interviewees. In-depth interviews   (unstructured) were organised with 20 respondents who were 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 4 priests, 5 men, 3 women and 2 youths that were indigenes. The intention was to further probe the information gathered to be sure whether it is true or not about the cultural symbols and slogans in Ìgbẹ́tì, how symbols and slogans can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì, other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains and hills as tourist's attractions, festival and event that are associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountains as a tourism destination. The interview was conducted in a convenient language for the interviewee, such as Yoruba and English. The duration of each interview was between 30 and 45 minutes. The in-depth interview was conducted from 16 to 22 April 2019.

Plate 3.7: In-depth interview with some men of the community at the Onìgbétì's palace
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

3.2.4.4 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation is a qualitative research method where the researcher immerses themselves in a specific social setting or community to witness and participate in the activities and interactions of the participants. The researcher becomes an active participant-observer, engaging in firsthand observation and documenting detailed field notes. This method enables researchers to gain an insider's perspective, understand social dynamics, and explore the meanings and behaviors of the participants in their natural environment. Participant observation is often used in ethnographic research and can provide rich contextual data and in-depth insights into cultural practices, social interactions, and group dynamics. In this study, participant observation was the main methodology employed. The researcher participated, experienced, and shared as much as possible in the lives and activities of the people.

The involvement aimed to gain an insider's perspective on what was happening. The researcher did not only observe but also participated in the actions. During this study, I observed, photographed, and participated in the Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámòpó festivities held at Ìyámòpó Mountain and Ìyámòpó Shrine in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Easter Monday Carnival is an event that attracts both indigenes and tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain. The 2019 Easter Monday Carnival started on Sunday, 21 April 2019. I participated and observed in Easter Sunday service at the United Mission Church of Africa (UMCA), Ìgbètì. On Monday, 22 April, at 6.00 am, I observed and participated in Easter Monday service organised by a different Christian denomination at Oke-Okin (Okin Mountain) in Ìgbètì where special thanksgiving and prayers were offered for individuals, families, churches, Ìgbètì town and the country.

Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámòpó Mountain commenced by 10.00 am. Many tourists from Lagos, Ilorin, Ogbomoso, Osogbo, Ibadan, and other neighbouring towns and villages were sighted on Ìyámòpó Mountain. Some of the tourists, especially those in groups, organised prayers, Bible quizzes and many interesting programmes where I also participated. Many were observed at Ìyámòpó cave, *Odo Orogun Meta* (three interlocking wells), Ṣàngó cave and Relics of Defensive wall. There were many programmes, such as a musical competition, mountain climbing, dance competition and raffle draw sponsored by Nigerian Breweries Plc, Ilorin branch. The researcher observed that many indigenes within and outside the country, Christian, Muslim and

traditional worshippers, witnessed this great event. It was also found that the event was a reunion for the friends and families that have seen themselves for many years. It was an opportunity for different groups, societies and associations to gather, invite, and welcome new members.

The researcher also observed and participated in the week-long Ìyámọ̀pó festivals of 2019. These gave me opportunities to learn that the Ìyámọ̀pó festival is associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. Some of the preparation and activities for the festival, the roles of Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì, the chief and the priests, hunters, and the indigenes were captured. It was observed that the hunters went to the forest on Thursday, 27 June, to kill antelope as part of the preparation for the festival day. On Friday, 28 June, the indigenes gathered at Onìgbẹ́tì's palace to welcome the hunters that came with big antelopes and baboons in the evening. It was a great occasion. Saturday, 29 June, was the Ìyámọ̀pó festival. The festival started at 9.00 am with visitation by the king's family, different groups and associations to the house of Abọ̀kè, Elèrúgbà, Abọsànto and Abọsin-Ó where they were entertained with *Àmàlà, Gbẹ̀gìrì* and bush meat.

By 4.00 pm, the priests, chief, worshippers, indigenes and visitors moved to Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and Ilẹ́ Ìgbẹ́tì where the past kings were buried to appease and offer sacrifices to the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and the spirit of the ancestors. Kolanuts, cold water and a white ram without a spot were used for rituals. The head of the white ram was cut, and the blood was sprinkled on the Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and the tomb of the past kings. Prayers were offered for the king, worshippers, indigenes, Ìgbẹ́tì town and the country. Sacrifices were also made to the past kings at Ile Igbeti. The researcher was not permitted to enter and capture some of the events because it is forbidden for a woman to enter.

3.2.4.5   QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is a kind of data collection tool that entails a list of inquiries intended to elicit responses from respondents. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data for this study from tourists. The questions were categorized into Sections A, B, and C. Age, gender, religion, marital status, level of education, ethnicity, state of origin, local government, community/town, occupation, and nationality were among the demographic questions asked in Section A. Sections B and C sought input on how

the Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan may be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and its tourism resources. During the Ìyámòpó event in June 2019, a total of 250 questionnaires were administered to the tourists. The questionnaire was distributed in Olorunsogo Local Government, Ìgbẹ́tì, with the help of 10 Yoruba NYSC corps members. Before administering the questionnaire, these corps members were trained for a week. They assisted non-literate tourists in understanding and filling out the questionnaire and retrieving and collating the information. Overall, 212 questinnaire were returnned which is 84.8% of the initial number given out.

3.2.5   SECONDARY SOURCES

Data were collected using the secondary method.

These data collection methods refer to sources gathered from earlier studies or documentation related to the study area. These sources include journals, textbooks, past projects, magazines, encyclopedias, newspapers, government publications and Internet sources.

3.3   DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and content analysis, were used to analyze the data. Content analysis is a research technique used to systematically analyze and interpret the content of various forms of communication, such as texts, media, or visual materials. It involves classifying and categorizing the content to identify patterns, themes, and trends. During content analysis, the information obtained through various methods, including focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews, was transcribed and converted into data. According to the research objectives, they were sorted, classified, and categorised.

Four objectives were stated. The method of data collection and analysis applied for each were as follow:

Objective I: To identify the selected cultural symbol in Ìgbẹ́tì

Data were gathered from 76 respondents through a descriptive (qualitative) approach, including focus group discussions, key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. Out of these 76 indigenes, 25 key informants, including a traditional ruler (the king), 4

priests, 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 5 men, 5 women, and 4 youths in the community, were interviewed. Focus group interviews were organised with respondents, which comprised 4 priests, 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 25 men, 20 women and 20 youths. In-depth interviews (unstructured) were organised with 20 respondents who were 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 4 priests, 5 men, 3 women and 2 youths that were indigenes. Data were analysed using content analysis.

Objective II: To identify Ìyámòpó Mountain as a tourist destination.

Through a descriptive (qualitative) technique that included focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and in-depth interviews, data was acquired from 76 respondents. 25 key informants, including a traditional leader (the king), 4 priests, 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 5 men, 5 women, and 4 local teenagers, were questioned out of these 76 indigenous people. Focus group interviews were formed with respondents, who included 25 men, 20 women, 20 youths, 6 chiefs, 6 priests, and heads of quarters. 20 respondents, including 6 chiefs and heads of quarters, 4 priests, 5 men, 3 women, and 2 indigenous youth, participated in unstructured in-depth interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

Objective III: To ascertain the extent to which the Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain.

Data were gathered through questionnaires from 212 tourists and 76 indigenes through a focus group interview. A descriptive statistical model was used to analyze the data, and the results were presented using frequency, mean, percentage, tables, and content analysis.

Objective IV: To ascertain the extent to which the Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain.

Two hundred and twelve tourists and 76 indigenes were surveyed, and data was gathered through focus group interviews. The data were examined using a descriptive statistical model, and the findings were presented using frequency, mean, percentage, tables, and content analysis.

3.4   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The questionnaire satisfied face and content validity requirements set by experts in the fields of tourism, anthropology and archaeology, test and measurement. The questionnaire was also subjected to a pilot sample test among the non-participant population, and the questionnaire yielded the following internal consistency coefficient values: symbols and branding (α =.640); slogans and tourism development (α =.653). Two types of questionnaires were used as instruments for two different types of respondents that were identified in the field. These are structured and unstructured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was used for the tourists while unstructured was used for the indigenes during focus group discussion which provided responses that are very important and salient that might not be easily diffused to ordinary people. The questionnaire was sufficient to provide both qualitative and quantitative data that gave detail inference for all the objectives highlighted in terms of research outcome and expected result as well as recommendations that tourism destinations should be branded by employing cultural symbols and slogans as brands.

3.5   REFLEXIBILITY AND POSITIONALITY

Reflexivity is the researcher's acknowledgment of their personal biases, assumptions, and subjective stance concerning the research subject. It involves critically examining how the researcher's background, beliefs, and experiences can impact the research process and outcomes. By recognizing and reflecting on these factors, researchers can strive for greater objectivity and produce research that is more nuanced and self-aware. On the other hand, positionality acknowledges that researchers bring their own perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds to the research. It emphasizes that different researchers may have varying access to, interpretations of, and experiences with the subject matter, leading to diverse understandings and findings. Being aware of one's positionality enables researchers to critically engage with their biases and understand the potential impact on their research.

Ukpokolo (2021) argues that the insider/outsider debate associated with the positivist tradition raises concerns about the positionality of research if objective outcomes are to be achieved in qualitative research. According to her, individuals possess multiple identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, and religious affiliation. In the case

mentioned, the researcher's gender, ethnicity, sex, religious affiliation, and educational background do not influence the objectivity of the research. The researcher belongs to the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria, which grants her opportunities to communicate and interact with Yoruba respondents during informant interviews, focused group discussions, in-depth interviews, and participant observations to gather sufficient data. Despite being familiar with the culture, religion, and norms of the respondents, she maintains her position without compromising the objectivity of the research.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was carried out by making sure that interviews were conducted with the informed consent of the respondents/informants during data collection. This study does not intend to hurt anyone or produce incorrect information. Additionally, the research is mindful of reducing risk to people and their reputations. As a result, this research is impartial in the design and execution of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis, findings, and discussion. The findings of a qualitative study on a few key Ìgbẹ́tì cultural symbols, such as Àgbélé Hill and the Ìgbẹ́tì slogans, are presented. The chapter also presents data on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, the historical records and the tourism resources on the mountain, which are *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó cave/palace), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó cave/palace), *Odò orogún mẹ́tá* (three interlocking wells) relics of defensive wall and relics of stones, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine. Similarly, information on how the Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination was also documented. Other information on the symbolic meaning of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and the tourism resources, the value and significance of the annual Ìyámọ̀pó festival, and Easter Monday Carnival that are associated with the mountain are also presented.

4.1   SELECTED CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN ÌGBẸ́TÌ

4.1.1   ÀGBÉLÉ HILL

Àgbélé hill is one of the selected cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is located in the centre of Ìgbẹ́tì town. It is approximately 85 m in height. Àgbélé hill is a rock pedestal that resembles a woman carrying a load on her head and with a baby on her back (Plates 4.1). There are four various narratives on Àgbélé. According to an informant, His Royal Highness, Ọba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi, and Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tìland, Àgbélé hill was a woman before she turned into a rock. In the time past, the people of Ìgbẹ́tì usually spread yam powder on rocks. Àgbélé, a woman, went there one night and stole pieces of processed yam for *Èlùbọ́* (yam powder). When she discovered that the security guards were around and there was no place to hide, she was ashamed and quickly turned to rock. The stone on her head is the tray of yam powder, and the one

on her back is the baby she backed (His Royal Majesty, Ọba Emmanuel Oyèkàn Oyèbísí, Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tìland, 16/12/2015. K.I.I). Another informant, Mrs Hadijat Odebode, a 32 years old woman of Ìgbẹ́tì and a teacher, explained that:

> When I was a little child, my mother told me that Àgbélé was a woman. She said when Àgbélé gave birth to a baby, she could not go to the farm like other women, and she was hungry. At night, according to my mother, Àgbélé will go to the rock where people spread pieces of processed yam for elubo (yam powder) to steal from it. However, there is an adage in Yoruba that says, *(ọjọ́ kan ni tolè, ọjọ́ kan ni tolóhun)* there is a day for the thief, there is also a day for the owner. Àgbélé was almost caught by the town guard. When she noticed their movement, she turned to rock because of shame (Mrs Hadijat Ọdẹ́bọ̀dé, K.I.I. 26/06/2019).

Another version of the story, according to Ìyálóde of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Mary Ògúndélé, is that Àgbélé was the fifth wife of the Ifá priest who maltreated her. There was the allegation that some women stole pieces of processed yam powder in the town. Therefore, everybody was vigilant. One day Àgbélé went to the rock where the processed yam for *Èlùbọ* (yam powder) was spread and packed some into her calabash. When she looked back, she saw her husband, and she was ashamed because of mockery. She immediately turned to rock with her child and the calabash she put on her head (Chief Mary Ògúndélé, 14/12/2018, K.I.I). Another informant, Mr Yekini Oladele, a farmer, also narrated that Àgbélé was a wealthy woman in Ìgbẹ́tì that was fond of stealing. She was going one day, and she saw processed yam for *Èlùbọ* (yam powder) spread on the rock. She packed the processed yam inside a basket and unknowingly put it on her head that an Ifa priest, who was the owner, had seen her. The Ifa priest cursed her, and she became a stone, just like Lot's wife in the Holy Bible, who became a pillar of salt (Mr Yẹkini Ọládélé, 24/04/2019, K.I.I).

Plate 4.1:   Àgbélé Hill

            Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4. 1. 2   ÌGBẸ́TÌ SLOGAN

Language is the most symbolic aspect of culture. According to one of the priests, Elèrúgbà of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Amos Ọlágbajú, apart from the name of the town, which is Ìgbẹ́tì, the town can also be identified by her *Oríkì-Orílẹ̀. Oríkì* means praise poetry, while *Orílẹ̀* is a totem. *Oríkì-Orílẹ̀ is* a means of identification among the Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria. Praise poetry is the name given in the form of characteristics, traits or features. It can be a single praise name and lengthy series of traits, appellations, or lineage praises that can be recited in lyrical form. Totem is the lineage or descendant name. There are single praise names, including *Àjàó, Àlàbí, Àdìsá, Àtàndá, Àjọké, Àbẹ́bí, Àdùké,* and *Àbèké,* among others. The totem, such as *Opó, Ìkọ́, Ẹ̀dú, Àró, Ògún, Ọ̀gọ̀, Ọ̀kín* are common in Yoruba land. Currently, someone can be recognised by his name and surname. In the time past, the Yoruba were known by their name, single praise name and totem. For instance: *Àyọ̀dèjì Àlàbí Ẹ̀dú. Àyọ̀dèjì* is the name, *Àlàbí* is the praise name, and *Ẹ̀dú* is the totem of the family or lineage name. Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyánlọlá Ọládùnní noted that his father normally recites the lineage praises of Ìgbẹ́tì in the form of poetry as follows:

> *Mo fẹ́ relẹ́ àwọn ìjì olele, ilé àwọn ìjì ọlóyẹ̀ moyin, ẹ̀yin ni ọmọ Ọlóyẹ́ ìjì lele. Ọmọ Ọlóyẹ́ tó ti ìgbàró Ọ̀yọ́ wá, ìjì ọmọ ẹkùn tín fi patapata. Ọmọ ọlóyẹ̀ ni yín tó tẹ Ìlú Ìgbẹ́tì dó. Ìgbẹ́tì ọmọ Olókèmẹ́rìndínlógún. Mẹ́rin à dúró bọ, Mẹ́rin a dúró bọ, mẹ́rin à bere bọ, mẹ́rin à kunlẹ̀ bọ, mẹ́rin tó kù lọyẹ́ ti ń wá.*(Olóyẹ̀ Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 22/10/2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

> I want to go to the house of Ìjì *olele, the house of Ìjì Ọlóyẹ́ moyin;* you are the child of *Ọlóyẹ́* (harmattan) iji lele. Child of harmattan that came from *Ìgbàró Ọ̀yọ́, Ìjì* the child of leopard that shakes scrupulously.You are the child of harmattan that founded Ìgbẹ́tì, Ìgbẹ́tì the child of sixteen hills. Four are worshipped while standing; four are worshipped while bending, four are worshipped while kneeling, and the remaining four is where harmattan comes from (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 22/10/2018, K.I.I).

Findings show that the slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City" and *Ìgbẹ́tì ọmọ Olókè Mẹ́rìndínlógún* meaning, 'the child of who owns 16 hills

emanated from Ìgbẹ́tì praise poetry (*Oríkì*) and totem of Ìgbẹ́tì. Ìgbẹ́tì praise name is known as *Ọlọ́yẹ́,* meaning the owner of the harmattan or cold weather. The child of harmattan, storm and 16 hills from Ìgbẹ́tì poetry showed the climatic condition of the town. Observation also showed that the town is extremely cold between December and March yearly because the town is surrounded by 16 hills. The slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì is an important cultural symbol that communicates the rich climatic condition of the town to the tourists

4.2   ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain is precisely located on longitude 4º 7′ and 59” E and latitudes 8º 44′ and 0.4” N in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is located in the town's southern part, away from the built-up area (see Plate 4.2). It is 3 km long and 1,023 meters above sea level (Department of Geography, University of Ibadan). Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain is dome shaped in nature (see Plate 4.2); however, at the top, there are other rock formations formed by nature that stabilise on top of one another. It is rocky, rough and steep-sided. The mountain is the biggest and is normally referred to as the mother of all the hills in Ìgbẹ́tì. Findings show there are different versions of written and oral history associated with the origin of Ìgbẹ́tì and Ìyámọ̀pó. Ajayi and Ganiyu (1996) noted that there was a small community at the foot of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain headed by *Akínyẹlé* '*Àjàkáàjì*'. One day, he received two visitors, they are *Ọkọ́sẹ́* and *Ọláhànmí*. They are hunters and princes from *Igbọ́n*, one of the then-thriving communities in the Southern part of Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé. The brothers agreed to stay with *Akínyẹlé* since the place is suitable for hunting. One day, *Ọkọ́sẹ́* noticed that there was smoke coming out from a spot nearby. He traced the smoke and found that there were other settlements, which were *Ẹ̀hìnkè* (the back of the mountain), *Ságbó, Saàgbọ̀n,* and *Sànto* that were suspected to be of Nupe origin. Sometimes around the 18th Century, at the inception of internal wars in the Ọ̀yọ́ Empire, the brothers from *Igb-n* suggested to *Akínyẹlé* that there is a need to form a community with his neighbours to attack marauders or enemies. These communities were called, and they agreed with *Akínyẹlé, Ẹ̀hìnkè* and *Ságbó* were the first communities that joined *Akínyẹlé* at the feet of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

To confirm this story, one of my key informants, the Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì land, His Royal Majesty Oba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi, explained that his forefathers came from Ọ̀yọ́Ilé to settle at the feet of Ìyámọ̀pó. According to the monarch:

*Iṣẹ́ ọdẹ ni àwọn bàbá ńlá wa n ṣe, wọn a máa dègbé
ọdẹ wá láti Ọyọ́ ilésí ẹsẹ̀ orí òkè Ìyámọ̀pó ní ibi tí wọ́n
ti ṣe alábàápàdé Ìyámọpó tí ó sọ fún wọn wípé kí wọ́n
máa bá òun gbé* (Ọba Oyèkàn Oyèbísí, Afaṣẹ́gbèjò III.
16/12/2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

Our forefathers were hunters; they normally hunted
from *Ọ̀yọ́-ilé* to the feet of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, where
they met Ìyámọpó that persuaded them to be living
with him (Ọba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi, Afaṣẹ́gbèjò
III, 16/12/2015, K.I.I).

Another version of Ìgbẹ́tì and Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain was recorded by Ogunbiyi
(2018) *Historical Development of Ìgbẹ́tì Town (1750-2011)*. Ogunbiyi noted that the
town Ìgbẹ́tì according to the Historical records by Oral Traditional and the History of
Yoruba written by Samuel Johnson (1921) stated was first settler around this area was
Aláàfin Ṣàngó Olùfìràn Àjàká Ìji around the 18th Century. *Ṣàngó* was the third *Aláàfin*
of *Ọ̀yọ́*. History has it that *Ṣàngó* settled in this area when *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* refused to put
Ṣàngó on the throne as predicted before the death of their father *Ọ̀rányàn*. Instead his
brother called *Dàda Àjàká Ìji* was selected. He grew annoyed as he was a highly-
tempered man. He left Ọ̀yọ́ town in annoyance with the support of his followers to go
to IIé-Ifẹ̀ to consult his late father *Ọ̀rányàn*, who was buried there. On his way to IIé-
Ifẹ̀, he got to the foot of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and saw a thick smoke beside the
mountain. He instructed his followers to sit somewhere to trace the smoke. As he
moved nearer the smoke, the smoke also moved away.

Ṣàngó traced the smoke to an open space where he met a black, tall and huge woman
who told him that she was the goddess of the mountain (Ìyámọ̀pó) and her name was
Ìyá tó mọ òpó ènìyàn(a mother who knows the genealogy of people). She advised
Ṣàngó to stay with her and forecasted that sooner *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* would recall him to the
throne of his father. *Ṣàngó* agreed, and both of them made a solemn agreement
together. The place where *Ṣàngó* met lyamopo and where he made solemn agreements
is called *Ilẹ̀ Òdoodo* (Land of faithful) today. *Ṣàngó* and his team settled on Ìyámọ̀pó
Mountain. *Ṣàngó* had his palace a little distance from Ìyámọ̀pó palace. The two
palaces are a tourist attraction on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. *Ṣàngó* stayed on the mountain
with Ìyámọ̀pó for 7 years before *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* called him back to the throne, as predicted
by lyamopo after the death of his brother Àjàká Ìji. *Ṣàngó* ruled as *Aláàfin* for

approximately 14 years in Old Ọ̀yọ́. When he was at Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé, he usually sent his followers to make a sacrifice to the lyamopo goddess (Ogunbiyi, 2018).

Mr Babáyẹmí, a native of Ìgbẹ́tì has this to say:

> *Ìjà oyè ṣẹlẹ̀ ni Ọ̀yọ́ ilé nípa tani yóò jẹ Aláàfin, èyí ló mú kí Ṣàngó ọmọ Aláàfin ìgbà náà kúrò ní Ọ̀yọ́ Ilé nígbà tí wọn kò fi jọba. Nígbà tí ó dé ẹsẹ̀ òkè Ìyámọ̀pó, ó tẹ́dó sibẹ̀. Ní ẹsẹ̀ òkè yìí ni ó ti ṣe alábàpàdé obìnrin kan tí ó sọ pé òun ní Ìyámọ̀pó, ẹbọra tí ó wà ní orí òkè ibi tí ó tẹ̀dó sí. Ó ṣe ìlérí fún Ṣàngó wípé, wọn yóò pèè padà ní Ọ̀yọ́ Ilé àti wá jọba. Lóòtọ́ wọn pe Ṣàngó padà, ó sì jọba, Ṣàngó kò gbàbgé ìlérí tí ó ṣe fún Ìyámọ̀pó, ọdọọdún ni ó máa ń rán àwọn ìránṣẹ́ rẹ̀ láti rúbọ fún Òkè Ìyámọ̀pó (*Babáyẹmí, D. O, 16/12/2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

> There was a crisis in Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé about who will become Aláàfin. Ṣàngó, who was one of the sons of Aláàfin left Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé because he was not enthroned as a king. When he got to the feet of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, he settled. At the feet of the mountain, he met a woman, and she called herself Ìyámọ̀pó. She told Ṣàngó that she was the spirit of the hill where he settled. She promised Ṣàngó that he would be a call back to Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé and would become a king, truly Ṣàngó was called back, and he became a king in Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé. He did not forget his promise to Ìyámọ̀pó. He sent his emissaries every year to make sacrifices to Ìyámọ̀pó (Babáyẹmí, D. O, 16/12/2015, K.I.I).

Additionally, Ajayi and Ganiyu (1996) recorded that from 1800 to 1900, there was a disagreement between Aláàfin Aólẹ̀ Arógangan and Prince Àfọ̀njá who was based in Ilorin. According to Ogunbiyi (2018), Àfọ̀njá invited Alimi, the leader of Jihadists from the northern parts of the country, to Ilorin to fight against Aláàfin Aólẹ̀ Arógangan. This led to the death of Aláàfin Aólẹ̀, who cursed Yoruba before his death in 1811. Before the death of Aláàfin Aólẹ̀ Arógangan, the Ìgbẹ́tì people had merged at the foot of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, preparing for war and building a defensive wall from Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain to Paaga across to Opetolu hill. They made many war tools, such as guns, cutlasses, swords, and axes of various types. In addition, during this period, tents and huts were built on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, and the people rolled a huge stone to the top of the mountain while other defensive mechanisms were prepared. Ìyámọ̀pó

goddess, according to Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí promised the forebearers of Ìgbẹ́tì that in as much they are with her on the mountain, they will not be conquered and no war will ravage the town (Babáyẹmí, D. O.16/12/2015, K.I.I).

Ògúnbìyí (2018) further noted that Àfọ̀njá and Álímì later had a disagreement and Àfọ̀njá was killed while his army dispersed into various Yorùbá cities. When Alimi saw this, he quickly mobilised his men to wage war on Yoruba land. He started the war in 1817 by attacking surrounding cities and towns around Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé, such as Ìkòyí, and Ìgbòho, among others. The army was led by Abdul Salam, the son of Alimi, who attacked Ìgbẹ́tì around 1821–1824 after destroying Ìgbòho and the neighbouring towns. This is the reason why Ìgbẹ́tì forefathers organised themselves. They sprayed the feet of lyamopo Mountain with the water of a vegetable called sesame leaf (*Cerathoteca sesamoides*), also known as *Ẹkù* in Yoruba. They also rolled big stones from the top of the mountain, killing many Fulani invaders and Jihadists and the remaining fled in different directions. According to Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, the second war was led by Abu Mayaki. His armies camped around Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain for several days with the hope that the people of Ìgbẹ́tì would surrender.

During this period, the forefathers commanded big dogs from *Ọbadìmọ* hill and bees from *Sàǹto* hill, and they moved to the enemies' camp. Furthermore, there was heavy rain followed by a thunderstorm and invisible armies from *Ọmọ Sànda* hills demolished their camps. The armies and their horses fled in different directions, and many of them perished in *Aruru* River, which is renamed *Fẹdòmu* River in Ìgbẹ́tì. This war ended in favour of the Ìgbẹ́tì people around 1828–1830 according to Ogunbiyi (2018). According to Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí, the Fulani army came back to wage war against Igbeti; however, they could not capture the town. In 1833 according to Ajayi and Ganiyu (1996), the army attacked Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé town and killed *Aláàfin Olúewu* and his followers. Subsequently, *Aláàfin Àtìbà* moved Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé to the present site. He nominated *Olúyọ̀lé* of Ibadan as his *Baṣòrun* and *Kúnrunmí* as *Ààrẹ Ọ̀nàkakanfò* of Yoruba land. Jihadist army was finally attacked in the Osogbo area in the town called Ijabe in 1940 by the Ibadan army, according to Ogunbiyi (2018).

Ajayi and Ganiyu (1996) noted that there were many chieftains, warlords and visitors who came to settle with Ìgbẹ́tì forebearers on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain because Fulani army

displaced them. Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní also confirmed that, 'Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé and many other towns in Yoruba land was scattered by war. Our forefather moved to the top of Ìyámọ̀pó hill and Ìyámọ̀pó delivered them from their enemies. Currently, it is a pride that Ìgbẹ́tì is one of the towns in Yorubaland that was not captured and conquered by war' (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 23/10/2018, K.I.I). Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, according to the indigenes, is the abode of the Ìyámọ̀pó deity who symbolises a woman that is imbued with spiritual power. The mountain is referred to as a deity and is worshipped by Ìgbẹ́tì ancestors because they believe that it protected them from a series of wars in the 19th Century. Findings showed that an annual festival that involves sacrifices and rituals is organised as a remembrance and to renew the covenant between the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and the community.

Plate 4.2: Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

　　　Source:(Fieldwork, 2015)

There are tourism resources on top of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. These resources include *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó palace/cave), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó palace/cave), *Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta* (three interlocking wells), relics of the defensive wall, and relics of stones and *Ojúbọ Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó shrine). According to His Royal Highness, Ọba Emmanuel Oyèkàn Oyèbísí, Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì confirmed these findings. He noted that:

> *Ẹlẹ́dàá fi àwọn òkè ké wa ní Ìlú Ìgbẹ́tì òkè mẹ́rìndínlógún ló yí Ìlú yìí ká Òkè Ìyámọ̀pó ni ìyá gbogbo wọn, Ihò tí a gbàgbọ́ wípé ó jẹ́ ilé Ìyámọ̀pó àti àwọn oníṛúrú ibùdó ló wà lórí Òkè Ìyámọ̀pó. Gbogbo àwọn ibùdó yìí ni àwọn àlejò máa n wà. Ìyámọ̀pó ni obìnrin alágbára tí ó gba Ìlú Ìgbẹ́tì lọ́wọ́ ogun Fúlàní. Ìyámọ̀pó túmọ̀ sí ìyá tí ó mọ ọ̀pọ́ ènìyàn* (Ọba Oyèkàn Oyèbísí, 15/12/2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

> The creator blesses us with hills, mountains and rocks in Ìgbẹ́tì town; the town is surrounded by 16 hills. Ìyámọ̀pó is the mother of all hills and mountains. We

believe that Ìyámòpó cave is the abode of the goddess and other resources on top of Ìyámòpó Mountain.Tourists visit these hills and mountains. These mountains are symbolic; we also believe that Ìyámòpó is a powerful woman who rescued the Ìgbétì's from the Fulani war. Ìyámòpó symbolises a woman who knows one destiny (Oba Oyèkàn Oyèbísí, 15/12/2015, K.I.I).

The monarch further explained that the town was on Ìyámòpó Mountain for many years because of wars. He added that Ìyámòpó Mountain also symbolises *Abiyamo,* which means goddess of fertility and women'. Providing further insight into other cultural symbols on Ìyámòpó Mountain, Chief Amos Oláyanjú, Elérúgbà of Ìgbétì explained that:

Yàtò sí òkè Ìyámòpó àti àwọn òkè míràn, àwọn onírúurú ibùdó ló wà ní orí òkè Ìyámòpó tí ó ún tóka sí wípé àwọn bàbá ńlá wa tèdó sí òkè Ìyámòpó. Àwọn ihò tí à ún pè ní Ilé Ìyámòpó, Ilé Sàngó, Odò Orogún Méta, Odi Àlàpà, àti Òkúta wéwé tí àwọn bàbá wa fi pa àwọn Fúlàní. Ìyàlénu ló máa ún jé fún àwọn àlejò láti rí àwọn ohun mèremère yìí lórí òkè Ìyámòpó. Gbogbo àwọn Ibùdó yìí ló ní oun pàtàkì tí wọ́n túmò sí (Olóyè Oláyanjú 2015, K.I.I)

Translation:

Apart from Ìyámòpó Mountain and other hills, there are many places on Ìyámòpó that signify that our forefathers settled on Ìyámòpó Mountain. There are Ìyámòpó palace, Sàngó palace, three interlocking well, mud wall relics, stones that our ancestors threw on Fulani invaders, Ìyámòpó shrine,Ìgbétì land, Bata Èrúgbà on Èrúgbà Hill. All these places on Ìyámòpó are symbolic (Olóyè Oláyanjú, 2015, K.I.I).

4.2.1   Ilé Ìyámòpó

Ilé Ìyámòpó is a cave located on the right side of Ìyámòpó Mountain second stratum (Plates 4.3 and 4.4). The cave symbolises the house or palace of the Ìyámòpó deity, according to the indigenes. The entrance of the cave is wide; it measures approximately 3.7m in height and 4.5m in width (Oládùńní 2015, K.I.I). Ìyámòpó cave has a corridor that links to the outer and inner chambers. The corridor and the

outer chamber can occupy up to 50 tourists at a time, while the inner chamber cannot occupy many tourists because it is narrow. It was observed that the inner chamber is darker than the outer chamber. The temperature of the cave is normal. Animals, such as cats, rats, rabbits and some birds, including bats and owls were sighted inside the cave. Ìyámòpó serves as an abode and ecological conservation for these animals. There are histories associated with *Ilé Ìyámòpó* according to one of our key informants, Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí. He explained that *Ilé Ìyámòpó* or *Ìyámòpó* palace is symbolic because it is where the spirit of Ìyámòpó lives. According to him, "some hunters who missed their way met Ìyámòpó on the mountain top, and after showing them the way to pass, she asked them not to look back; however, one of them looked back but found that Ìyámòpó had entered the cave. The indigenes believe that the cave is Ìyámòpó's room till today (Babáyẹmí, D. O. 2015. K. I. I).

Plate 4.3:   Ìyámòpó cave
              Source: Fieldwork (2015**)**

Ilé Ìyámòpó also attracts tourists to the Ìyámòpó mountain top. It was observed that many names with dates are written on the wall of Ìyámòpó cave. Chief Àyánlọlá Ọládùnní, a custodian of Ìyámòpó Mountain and one of the key informants, explained that "it is a tradition that when tourists enter *Ilé Ìyámòpó*, they write their names with the date of visit on the wall as a remembrance. Some of the tourists also prayed inside the cave with the belief that it would be granted by Ìyámòpó". Many tourists were sighted at *Ilé Ìyámòpó* on 2019 Easter Monday (Plate 4.2). Some of these tourists expressed their satisfaction with Ìyámòpó as a tourist destination. According to Mr Àfònjá, a tourist:

> I visit Ìyámòpó Mountain every year during the Easter period; climbing Ìyámòpó Mountain without entering *Ilé Ìyámòpó* is not complete. When I entered the first time, I was scared; it was as if the mountain would fall on me; however, it is interesting (Afonja 2019, personal communication).

Another tourist Mr Gafar who hails from Ilorin, also confirmed that Ìyámòpó cave is a tourist destination of repute. He noted that:

> If you are looking at the cave from a distance, you will be scared; however, if you enter, the place is cool. I wrote my name and request to indicate that I had entered the cave. There are many prayer requests written on the wall of the cave. It is believed that the god of Ìyámòpó Mountain will answer all our prayers (Gafar 2019, personal communication).

It was observed that *Ilé Ìyámòpó* (Plate 4.2) is one of the tourism resources that can attract more tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain in Ìgbétì if it is well branded. There are many caves and rock shelters in Nigeria that are historical and symbolic. However, most of these resources have not been adequately utilized to promote tourism. Some of these caves are *Ogbunike* cave (Anambra state), *Agbaku* cave (Ọ̀yọ́ state), *Imoleboja* rock shelter (Kwara state), *Iho Eleeru* at Isarun, 24km East of Akure (Ondo state) *Owa* cave (Ekiti state), *Aba* and *Fegbele* cave (Ondo state), *Kinihun* cave (Ekiti state),*Gwoza* cave (Bornu state), and *Agu-owuru* cave (Enugu state), among others.

Plate 4.4: The tourists entering *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* during the 2019 Easter Festival

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.2 Ilé Ṣàngó

Ilé Ṣàngó is another cave on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. It is located on the left-hand side, not far from Ìyámọ̀pó palace (Plate 4.5). It is the house of *Ṣàngó*. The indigenes believed that the *Ṣàngó* cave was sacred and anybody cannot enter because they believed *Ṣàngó* was a powerful magician and he is the god of thunder. *Ṣàngó Olúfihàn Àjàká Ìji*, according to history, was the first person to dwell on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain before becoming Aláàfin of the Old Ọ̀yọ́ Empire in the 12th or 13th century AD. Ogunbiyi (2018) also confirmed that through oral records and the history of Yoruba written by Johnson (1921), *Ṣàngó Olúfihàn Àjàká Ìji* was the first settler of Ìgbẹ́tì around the 8th Century. According to the author, the third Aláàfin of Ọ̀yọ́ was Ṣàngó. He settled at Ìgbẹ́tì when his family and *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* declined to instal *Ṣàngó* as king as forecast before the death of their father *Ọ̀rànmíyàn. Dàda Àjàká Ìji,* Ṣàngós brother, was appointed as a king; because of this, he grew annoyed and left *Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé.* One of the key informants, Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí, 64 years old retired civil servant, affirmed that *Ṣàngó* and his follower left *Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé* with the intention of consulting his father at Ife (Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí , 12/12/2015, K.I.I).

Oral history had it that when Ṣàngó was going to *Ilé-Ifẹ̀,* he got to the feet of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and saw a thick smoke beside the mountain. He told his follower to wait as he traced the smoke. The more *Ṣàngó* traced the smoke, the more the smoke moved away. Finally, he followed the smoke into an open space where he met a tall and huge woman who introduced herself as Ìyámọ̀pó, the goddess of the mountain. The goddess persuaded *Ṣàngó* to stay with her, and she prophesied that sooner *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* would recall him to the throne. *Ṣàngó* agreed, and both of them made a covenant together. According to Abọ̀kẹ̀ of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, the place where *Ṣàngó* and lyamopo met and made a covenant is called *'Ilẹ̀ Òdodo'* (Land of faithful) today. He explained that *Ṣàngó* and his team settled on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and had their palace (*Ṣàngó* cave), which was not far from Ìyámọ̀pós palace (Ìyámọ̀pó's cave). *Ṣàngó* stayed on the mountain with Ìyámọ̀pó for approximately 7 years before the *Ọ̀yọ́ Mèsì* called him back to the throne, as predicted by lyamopo after the death of his brother *Àjàká Ìji.*

Ṣàngó ruled as Aláàfin for approximately 14 years with strong hands and defeated Ọ̀yọ́'s enemies. While at *Ọ̀yọ́-Ilé, Ṣàngó* did not forget the covenant between him and

lyamopo. He always sent his followers to make a sacrifice to the goddess of lyamopo and to other hills that assisted him (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 12/12/2015, I. D.I). Some years after *Ṣàngó* death, he was recognised as a deity, and his priest returned to serve Ìyámọ̀pó, who helped Ṣàngó to become Aláàfin in the sixteenth century. It is only *Ṣàngó* priests that enter *Ṣàngó* cave, and before they do that, there are rituals they perform to appease the god of *Ṣàngó*. Informants noted that if anybody apart from *Ṣàngó* priests entered the *Ṣàngó* cave, thunder could strike and kill the person. It was noticed that the *Ṣàngó* cave still attracts tourists even though they cannot enter. Some of the tourists were found looking at *Ilé Ṣàngó* from a distance. Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, the custodian of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain explained that:

> *Ilé ṣàngó kò tóbi tó Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó àti wípé àwọn ènìyàn kìì sáábà wọ inú rẹ̀ lọ. Wọ́n máa ún bẹ̀rù pé Ṣàngó jẹ́ alágbára, ẹni tí yoo wọ inú Ilé Ṣàngó ní láti jẹ̀ ẹni tí kò ní inú méjì tàbí ìwà burúkú ní ọwọ́. Àwọn tí ó n bọ òkè gbàgbọ́ wípé ti ẹni burúkú bá wọ inú Ilé Ṣàngó, àrá lè sán paá* (Ọládùnní 2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

> Ṣàngó's palace is not as big as Ìyámọ̀pó palace. People do not enter Ṣàngó's palace because of the fear that Ṣàngóis powerful; any person that will enter the cave should be faithful and decent. Mountain worshippers believed that if people that are not faithful enter the cave, thunder may strike and kill them (Ọládùnní 2015, K.I.I).

Plate 4.5:   Ṣàngó cave on Ìyámòpó Mountain

       Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.3   *Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta*

Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta (Three Interlocking Wells) is another tourist destination on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain (Plate 4.6). They are located adjacent to Ìyámọ̀pó cave. *Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta*, according to oral tradition, symbolise the three powerful women. According to a key informant, the three women and their husbands were some of the forebearers that lived on the mountain in the past. There was a dispute between them, and in an attempt to settle the dispute by their husband, one of the women in annoyance turned to a well. When other women noticed what happened, they felt the husband supported her, and because of envy, the other two women also turned to wells. It was observed that there was no water in one of the wells because it was during the dry season. However, the information gathered was that in the olden days, the wells flowed even in the dry season; conversely, due to the inflow of tourists to the mountain, the wells have been polluted because some of the tourists threw refuse inside the well (Idowu 2015, K.I.I). This has a detrimental effect on tourism. It was also made known that the wells are interlined. Another key informant explained that it is believed that the water of the three wells should not mix. The indigene believes that when their water is put in the same bottle, the water will not settle, and the bottle will burst (Abioye 2017, K.I.I). The custodian of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and one of the key informants, Ọladunni (2015), also explained that:

> *Obìnrin ni àwọn kànga mẹ́tẹ̀ẹ̀ta tí ẹ rí yìí, ẹ ó ri pé wọ́n ta kété sí ara wọn. Wọn kìí sàn pàdé. Ní ayé àtijọ́, omi kìí gbẹ nínú wọn ní ìgbà ẹ̀ẹ̀rùn. Ní ayé àtijọ́, Ìgbàgbọ́ àwọn ará Ìlú ní wípé, tí wọ́n bá bu omi kànga mẹ́tẹ̀ta sí inú ìgò, ìgò náà yóò fọ́. Wọ́n gbàgbọ́ wípé ọkùnrin kan ni ó fẹ́ àwọn obìnrin náà kí wọ́n tó di kánga. Ìjà orogún tí wọ́n bá ara wọn jà ni àwọn ará Ìlú fi gbàgbọ́ wípé, omi inú kànga mẹ́tẹ̀ta kò gbọdọ̀ fi ojú kan ara wọn. Àwọn àlejò fẹ́ràn láti máa wo àwọn kànga mẹ́tẹ̀ẹ̀ta yìí* (Ọládùnní 2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

> The three wells are women. You will notice that they are far from each other. They donot link others. In the olden days, water flows even in the dry season because they do not dry. If you put the water from these three wells inside the same bottle, it will burst. It is believed that they are still fighting to date. These women turned to wells through envy and jealousy. The well started drying when people threw all sorts of things inside them. The wells attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain (Ọládùnní 2015, K.I.I).

Most of the tourists seen at *Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta* were excited that such a feature can be found on Ìyámòpó Mountain. One of the tourists from Ogbomoso promised to come with his family on the next visit (Adeloye 2017, personal communication). Another tourist, Abegunde Abiola, a student of Federal Polytechnic, Offa, in Kwara State, confirmed the findings.

> This is my first time visiting Ìyámòpó Mountain. I thank God that I am here. This is interesting; you will not know if you do not climb the hill. There are other tourist attractions (Abegunde 2017, personal communication).

Plate 4.6:   Tourists at Odò Orogún Mẹ́ta (Three Interlocking Wells) during the 2019 Easter Festival

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.4 *Relics of the defensive wall*

Finding show that Ìyámòpó Relics of Defensive wall is a cultural symbol that was built with mud, grasses and stone. The wall was built by the Ìgbètì ancestors to protect them against Fulani attack when the town was on Ìyámòpó Mountain, according to one of the key informants. A similar wall is the Koso wall in old Òyó-Ilé, according to Aremu (2007). He explained that the wall was constructed to deter a potential military attack. Oral history established that Ìgbètì ancestors settled on Ìyámòpó Mountain during the Fulani Jihadist war before moving to the present site between 1815 to1890 (Ogunbiyi, 2018). The relics of the defensive wall on Ìyámòpó are evidence of oral traditions that people settled on the mountain in the past. Ìgbètì relics of the defensive wall (Plate 4.7) symbolise how powerful and wealthy the town was at that time. Iyamopo defensive wall was high in the past; however, it has lost form, shape and value due to corrosion and dereliction, turning it into a relic. The relics attract tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain. Chief Àyánlolá Oládùnní, Abòkè of Ìgbètì narrated that:

> *Àwon bàbá nlá wa tèdó sí orí Òkè Ìyámòpó ní ìgbà ogun, wón kó odi yí òkè Ìyámòpó ká láti dá àábò bo ara won lówó ogun àwon Fúlàní. Odi yìí ga télè ní ìgbà àtijó, sùgbón ó ti rè sílè. Àwon Àlejò máa n wá láti wá wo odi yìí bí ó tilè jé wípé ó ti rè sílè* (Oládùnní 2015, K.I.I).

Translation:

> Our forefathers settled on Ìyámòpó Mountain during the war, and they built walls around Ìyámòpó Mountain to protect themselves from attack by the Fulani Jihadists. The walls were high in the past; however, it has reduced. Tourists still visit the relics (Oládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Plate 4.7:   The relics of wall on Ìyámòpó Mountain

   Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.5 *Relics of stones*

The relics of stone are also another tourist attraction and cultural symbol on the Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain top (Plate 4. 8). The relics were in the form of pebbles. Some of these stones were found scattered, and some in heaps on top and around Ìyámọ̀pó mountain. According to oral traditions, these are stones that were thrown by Ìgbẹ̀tì ancestors to fight invaders that came to attack them from Ilorin. These are some of the oral traditions and information about Ìgbẹ̀tì town that was passed from one generation to another through their grandfathers and grandmothers, according to our key informantAccording to oral history Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain serves as protection for the ancestors because the goddess promised them that as long they were on top of the mountain; no war would conquer them. According to *Abọ̀kè* of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, no war has ever conquered Ìgbẹ̀tì, Ìgbẹ̀tì was coined from *Àgbàtì,* which is *Ìlú tí a gbà tì,* meaning the town that has not to be taken by war'. Relics of stones attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. According to Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní,

> *Kété léyìn ogun agánnigàn ni àwọn ará Ìlọrin náà gbé ogun ti wọn dìde. Wọ́n sì ún wá láti kó Ìlú Ìgbẹ̀tì lẹ́rú, gégẹ́ bí ẹ ti mọ̀ àrékérekè àwọn ará Ìlọrin, òru ni wọ́n máa ún wá. Nígbà tí àwọn bàbá wa kíyèsí bí wọn ṣe ún wá ní òru, wọ́n tójú ekù, ewébẹ̀ẹ̀ tí ó máa ún yọ̀, wọn á fi omi pòó, wọn a sì dá sí ọ́ókán ibi tí òkè ti ṣe pẹ̀tẹ̀ tí ènìyàn lè ba gun òkè. Wípé bí àwọn ará Ìlọrin bá dé kí wọ́n le yọ̀ lulẹ̀, kí wọ́n sì subú sí orí òkúta. Àwọn Ìlọrin kò mọ eléyìǐ, nígbà tí wọ́n bá dé lóru láti gun òkè, ẹkù yìǐ ni ó ú gbé wọn ṣubú. Àwọn bàbá nlá a wa ní ẹṣin funfun méjì, tí wọ́n bá ti gun ẹṣin yìǐ tí wọ́n sì kọ orin tí wọ̀n máa n kọ, àwọn oyin á tú síta, wọn á sì ta wọ̀n, bẹ̀ẹ̀ni ẹkù náà yọ̀ wọ́n subú. Bákan náà ni àwọn bàbá wa n ju òkúta òkúta lu wọ́n. Bí o bá lè gun òkè Ìyámọ̀pó, ìwọ yóò rí ipa odi àti òkúta tí àwọn bàbá wa jù ní àkókò ìgbà náà. (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, K. I. I. 2015).*

Translation

> After the Agan-ni-gan war, the Ilorin people started a war. They were looking for ways to capture Ìgbẹ̀tì town. When Ìgbẹ̀tì forefathers noticed how Ilorin invaders usually came at midnight, they mixed water with *eku* leaf *(ppakia biglobosa)* and spread it around Ìyámọ̀pó hill. *Ẹkù* is a kind of vegetable that draws. The invaders wanted to climb the mountain at night, and they fell on the rock. Our forefathers had two horses, which they normally rode. They started singing,

and the bees trooped out and stung the Fulani invaders. Our forefathers also threw stones to drive them away. If you get Ìgbẹ́tì Mountain, you will notice the traces of walls that our fathers built during that time and the heap of stone they threw to the invaders *(*Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, K. I. I. 2015).

During an interview with one of the key informants, *Ẹlẹ́rúùgbà* of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Ọláwálé Ọláyanjú, he expressed that relics of stone on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain symbolises cooperation, steadiness, strength and resiliency among Ìgbẹ́tì forefathers to stand against and conquer the warlords and invaders that waged war against the town in 18th Century.

Plate 4.8:   The relics of stone on Ìyámòpó Mountain

    Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.6   *Ìyámọ̀pó shrine*

Ìyámọ̀pó shrine called *Ojúbọ Ìyámọ̀pó* is another tourist destination that is associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. It is located 5 km away from Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. It is where the rituals and sacrifices to the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess take place (Plate 4.9). Ìyámọ̀pó shrine is a sacred place where the priests commune with the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and the spirits of other mountains and hills. There are other shrines like *Èrúgbà, Sànto and Sin-ó* shrine where weekly rituals and sacrifices take place; however, annual festivals and rituals to Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills take place at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine according to *Ẹlẹ́rùgbà* of Ìgbẹ́tì (Olawale Ọláyanjú 2018, K.I.I). Idowu (1982) also stated that a shrine is just a local meeting point between the deity and the man, according to Yorùbá belief. One of our key informants, *Abọsin*–O of Ìgbẹ́tì, explained that no ritual could take place on Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills because it is taboo to shed blood on these hills (Ajadi 2018. K.I.I). It was observed that the Ìyámọ̀pó shrine attracts many tourists and worshippers within and outside the country during the 2019 Ìyámọ̀pó festival. Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì maintained that no sacrifice could take place on Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains and hills because it is taboo to shed blood on them.

> *Ojúbọ wà fún Ìyámọ̀pó, Sànto, Sin-ó àti Èrúgbà. Ojúbọ yìí ni a ti máa ń ṣe ìrúbọ fún àwọn òkè yìí. A kò gbọdọ̀ ta ẹ̀jẹ̀ sílẹ̀ lórí òkè Ìyámọ̀pó àti àwọn òkè yókù, nítorí wípé àwọn òkè yìí kò fẹ́ oun ẹlẹ́gbin. Torí ìdí èyí ni ojúbọ àwọn òkè yìí fi ta kété sí àwọn òkè* (Ayanlola Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

> There is a shrine for Ìyámọ̀pó, Santo, Sin-o, and Èrúgbà. We perform rituals to appease these mountains and hills at the shrine. Shedding of blood is not allowed on Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains because they cannot abhor unclean things. This is the reason why the shrines are not far from these mountains (Ayanlola Ọládùnní, 2018, K.I.I).

Abọsànto of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Rahman Ajadi explained that due to the sacredness attached to Ìyámọ̀pó and other shines, Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes reverence these places. 'No illegal or human activities like farming or hunting are expected to occur at shrines because they symbolise holy and sacred places. We also believe that the spirit of Ìyámọ̀pó, other deities and their ancestors reside at the shrine' (Ajadi, 2019. K. I. I).

Plate 4.9:   Ìyámòpó Shrine

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.2.7   EASTER MONDAY CARNIVAL ON ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN

Easter Monday Carnival is one of the symbolic events that attract tourists and indigenes to Ìyámòpó Mountain for recreation, leisure, picnic, mountaineering and relaxation. Easter is celebrated among Christians across the world in April. It symbolises the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I participated in the last Easter Monday Carnival, which was held on the 22 of April 2019. Investigation shows that the events were organised by the CAN, Ìgbẹ́tì Branch and Ìgbẹ́tì Social Clubs in conjunction with Nigerians Breweries Limited, Ilorin. The programme started from 9.00 am till 10.00 pm. There was morning and afternoon session. The morning session programme was from 9.00 am till 12.00 noon. Churches from Ìgbẹ́tì, Ilorin, Ogbomoso, Ọ̀yọ́, Osogbo, Ọ̀yọ́, and Lagos were sighted on Ìyámòpó Mountain. Additionally, families, groups, societies and individuals came for picnic and relaxation, among others. The table below shows morning and afternoon programme of Easter Monday Carnival on Iyamopo Mountain.

Table 4.1: Programme of events for the 2019 Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

S/N	Morning session	Afternoon session
1.	Praise and worship	Praise and worship
2.	Prayers	Prayers
3.	Film show	Cultural dance
4.	Picnic	Mountain climbing
5.	Mountaineering	Raffle draw
6.	Free for the individual group programme	Music competition; Juju music; Dancing competition and Quiz competition

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 4.10:   Tourists at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain during the 2019 Easter Festival
              Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Focus group discussion with some men at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain (Plate 3.4) revealed that the primary goal of Easter Monday Carnival is to attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources and to strengthen peace and unity between different ethnic and religious groups in Ìgbẹ́tì (FGD 2 (men), 22-04-2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain). Prince Olayide Oyekunle, an indigene and former staff of the Federal Ministry of Tourism and Culture, also confirmed that Easter Monday Carnival is one of the avenues to showcase the numerous tourism potentials of the town. He said the indigenes are making an effort to promote tourism so that government can support the development. He narrated that:

> Festival as a cultural symbol is part of the history of Ìgbẹ́tì town. It is believed that Ìyámọ̀pó is a goddess and symbol of fertility. We indigenes are trying to promote our tourism potential so that the government can help us. The tourism potentials of this town are numerous. Therefore, we urged the Nigerian government to diversify the economy to tourism. There are many tourism resources in this country. Easter Carnival is one of the avenues to showcase Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourist destination (Prince Olaide Oyekunle, 22/04/2019, K.I.I).

Observation shows that the 2019 Easter Monday Carnival was attended by many sons and daughters of Ìgbẹ́tì from Nigeria and overseas. Tourists' from Ọ̀yọ́, Ondo, Ọ̀sun, Ekiti, Kwara, Lagos, Kogi, Niger and Benue and outside Nigeria witnessed the occasion. Groups and churches rendered special songs; the Nigerian Breweries Limited also invited a juju musician. In-depth interview with Mr Olu Rahji one of the executives of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Igbeti Branch show that Easter Monday Carival originated from Easter Monday Gallile

He explained that:

> Easter Monday Carnival originated from Easter Monday GalIlée Service by all the Christian churches at Ìyámọ̀pó and Okin Mountain. During this period, Muslim and traditional worshippers used to celebrate with us on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. We also shared food and drinks.When other groups and social clubs in the town noticed that the events attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì, they keyed into it. Easter Carnival is a time when Ìgbẹ́tì people from all over the world gather for fun and games (Mr Olu Rahji, 22/04/2019, I. D. I).

Corroborating these findings, one of the informants, Mr David Idowu, explained that there are many festivals in Ìgbẹ̀tì. But Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival are the most popular among them. Mr Idowu stated that only Easter Monday Carnival does not require rituals and sacrifices. According to him, it is a Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus asked his disciples to meet him at Galilee in the Holy Bible; this is the reason why we Christians gathered on Easter Monday to celebrate Galille on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain with our families, friends and relatives. When other religious and social groups noticed that many people gathered on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain every year, they started a carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in 1985. This carnival aims to showcase the cultural tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and others to local and international tourists. Since that period, Easter Monday Carnival has been celebrated by religious and social groups in conjunction with some corporate organizations (Idowu 2019, K.I.I).

Another informant, Pastor Emmanuel Adedeji, also confirmed that Easter Monday Carnival is an important event in Ìgbẹ̀tì. He explained that the event is celebrated not only by Christians but other religions, town associations and groups. According to him, the Christian Association of Nigeria, Ìgbẹ̀tì branch organised the 2019 Easter Monday carnival in collaboration with Ìgbẹ̀tì town groups and associations.(Pastor Emmanuel Adedeji, 22/04/2019, K.I.I). In an in-depth interview with Mr Eniola Olawale, an indigene of Ìgbẹ̀tì that resides in Òṣogbo, he explained that many years back, Christians normally gathered on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain with families and relations for Easter Monday Galilee service. According to him, it is a time of merriment and relaxation; he narrated that

> I remember in my younger days, during the Easter period, we used to gather on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain during the festival, such as Easter Monday for Galilee to eat rice, porridge, and beans brought by families and relations. Some years later, the politicians and church organizations changed it to Easter Monday Carnival. Many activities were introduced, including picnics, relaxation, a mountaineering, music competition, a raffle draw, and dancing competition (Mr Olawale, 22/04/2019, I. D. I).

Plate 4.11: A cross-section of tourists on Ìyámòpó Mountain during the 2019 Easter
Festival
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

In a focus group discussion with some men at United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì, it was found that Easter Monday Carnival originated from Easter Monday GalIlée by Christians on Ìyámòpó Mountain and other mountains in Ìgbẹ́tì. They explained that when social groups and clubs noticed that Easter Monday Carnival attracts tourists to Ìyámòpó, they also keyed into it about a few years ago. Social organisations and groups also organised interesting programmes in conjunction with a corporate organisation as sponsors (FGD 1 (men), 21-04-2019 at UMCA, Ìgbẹ́tì). One of the informants, Hon. Bọ̀sun Oladele, a former member of the House of Representatives and campaigner for the development of Ìgbẹ́tì tourism resources, expressed that the town is blessed with abundant tourism resources that attract tourists. However, he lamented why the Ọ̀yọ́ State Government and Olorunsogo Local Government in Ìgbẹ́tì are not attempting to promote the town's tourist resources. According to him, tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì will improve the economy of the town, state and country in general. He noted that:

> The tourism resources, which are the symbols of Ìgbẹ́tì remain untapped; I started a tourism campaign in this town and am happy that it is now yielding fruitful results. We usually come here every Easter Monday for a picnic. People came from Lagos, Port-Harcourt, America and London in the previous years because the carnival was tagged Ìyámòpó Jeans Carnival two years ago. Most of the people that climbed Ìyámòpó Mountain wore jeans. This is to create awareness about the 16 mountains and hills and other tourism resources to attract national and global interest (Hon. Bọ̀sun Oladele, 22/04/2019, I. D. I).

Plate 4.12: A cross-section of the people of the community and tourists at Ìyámòpó Mountain during the 2019 Easter Festival
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

In another focus group discussion with some women on Ìyámòpó Mountain (Plate 3.5), it was gathered that Easter Carnival fostered peace and unity among the indigenes and non-indigenes and different religious groups. The women claimed that the carnival is not for only Christians and indigenes because other religions like Muslim and traditional worshippers participate. They confirmed that the festival attracts many tourists to Ìgbètì (FGD 1(women), 22-04-2019 at Ìyámòpó Mountain). In an in-depth interview with Mrs Hannah Olaokun, she noted that Easter Carnival is an opportunity for her to see her friends and relations she has not seen for a long time. According to her:

> *Ayeye ọdún àjínde tí a máa n ṣe ní orí òkè Ìyámòpó lódọdún jé èyí tí ó mú ìrépò wá láàarín gbogbo ẹlẹ́sìn onílé àti àlejò. Àsìkò ọdún yìí ni a máa ń ní ore ọ̀fẹ́ láti rí àwọn ẹbí, ará àti ọ̀rẹ́ tí a ti rí tipẹ́. Mo ti rí àwọn ọ̀rẹ̀ẹ̀ mi méjì tí wọ́n wá láti ìdálẹ̀ lónìí, a ti rí raw a tó ọdún márù ún* (Ìyáàfin Hannah Ọláòkun, 22/04/201, I. D.I).

Translation:

> Easter Monday Carnival that we normally celebrate on Ìyámòpó every year is the kind of festival that unites all religions, indigenes, and non-indigenes. Therefore, there is grace to see family, relations, and friends that we have seen for a long time. I have seen two of my friends that came from a far distance. We saw 5 years ago (Mrs Hannah Ọláòkun, 22/04/2019, I. D. I).

This indicates that Easter Monday Carnival foster peace and unity among Christian, Muslim and traditional worshippers in the town. One of the key informants, Mrs Àjàó Janet, also confirmed that Easter Monday Carnival allows her to meet some of her secondary schoolmates she has seen for a long time (Mrs Àjàó Janet, 22/04/2019, K.I.I). She explained that Easter Monday Carnival is just like a reunion. Focus group discussion (FGD 1 (women), 22-04-2019 at Ìyámòpó Mountain) also confirmed that Easter Carnival is an event that attracts tourists within and outside the country (plate 4.10). They explained that the Ìyámòpó festival is a cultural festival that attracts tourists to the town in June every year.

Plate 4.13:   Indigenes and tourists dancing at Ìyámòpó Mountain during the 2019
Easter Monday Carnival
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

There was a focus group discussion with some of Ìgbẹ́tì youth at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain (Plate 3.6). Findings show that Easter Monday Carnival in the town is a big celebration. According to them, the Easter Monday Carnival of 2017 in Ìgbẹ́tì was tagged Oke-Ìyámọ̀pó Jeans. It was great fun. We all wore jeans to climb Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. Hon. Bọsun Oladele coordinated the Carnival that year. He invited many people from Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ilorin, Ibadan, and Abuja, among others intending to popularise the event. Look at the Easter Monday Carnival this year, Nigerian Breweries from Ilorin came with the Juju band and organised a Raffle draw so that people could win prizes, this is amazing. They also explained that the Carnival is an opportunity to see old friends and relations and to make new friends. (FGD 1 (youth), 22-04-2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain). In an in-depth interview with Biodun Kehinde, an okada rider in Ìgbẹ́tì, he explained that he made more money during Easter Monday Carnival due to the turnout of tourists.

He added that Easter Monday Carnival is an avenue to gain more by transporters, restaurants, food vendors, hotels and other businesses (Kehinde 2019, I. D. I). Mukaila Ogundiran is another youth that believes that though Easter Monday Carnival is improving every year government should make an effort and develop Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other resources in Ìgbẹ́tì to attract more tourists (Ogundiran 2019, K.I.I). Findings show that the economy of the community improves during Easter Monday Carnival. Hotels, guest houses, restaurants, transportation, supermarkets, food vendors, petty traders and many other businesses made many gains, according to some youths. This indicates that festivals can improve the socio-economics of a tourist's destination. According to the data, such occasions typically positively impact the local economies of the villages. Despite the economic gains and profit made by members of the community during Easter Monday Carnival, it was observed that the tourism potential of Ìgbẹ́tì has not been fully harnessed.

Plate 4.14: Dancing competition at Ìyámòpó Mountain during the 2019 Easter
Monday Carnival
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.3 ÌYÁMỌ̀PÓ FESTIVAL AND TOURISM

Ìyámọ̀pó festival is an annual event that is celebrated in June in Ìgbẹ̀tì. In a Focused Group Interview with the Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tìland, Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé and the four priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and festival. It was established that the Ìyámọ̀pó festival is symbolic because it is associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. More facts were gathered about the origin of the festival, preparation for the festival, mode of worship, the roles of Onìgbẹ̀tì and his chiefs and the inflow of tourists. According to oral history, Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain serves as a protection for Ìgbẹ̀tì town during a series of Fulani wars encountered by the Ìgbẹ̀tì ancestors in the past. Ìyámọ̀pó goddess assured Ìgbẹ̀tì forefathers that in as much they are on top of the mountain, no war will ravage the town. According to one of the priests, Chief Amos Ọláyanjú, Elérúgbà of Ìgbẹ̀tìland, the covenant was made between the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and Ìgbẹ̀tì ancestors.

Nígbà tí àwọn bàbá ńlá wá gún orí òkè Ìyámọ̀pó nítorí ogun Fúlàní, wọ́n bá òrìṣà Ìyámọ̀pó dá májẹ̀mú wípé tí ó bá lè gba àwọn tí ogun kò kọ́ Ìlú ìgbẹ̀tì, gbogbo òun tí ó bá béèrè ni àwọn yóò máa fún un ní ọdọọdún. Ìyámọ̀pó béèrè fún àgbò funfun, obì, ègbo àti omi tútù. Òun tí a fi n bọ Ìyámọ̀pó nínú oṣù kẹfà ni èyí (Amos Ọláyanjú, 22/10/2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

When our forefathers moved to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain because of the Fulani's war, they made a covenant with Ìyámọ̀pó goddess that if she could deliver them so that Ìgbẹ̀tì town would not be captured, she would be given anything she requests annually. Ìyámọ̀pó requested white ram, kolanut, egbo, and cold water. We use all these to sacrifice and appease her in June every year (Amos Ọláyanjú, 22/10/2018, K.I.I).

Corroborating the findings, another key informant, Abòkè of Ìgbẹ̀tìland, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, also stated that the Ìyámọ̀pó festival is celebrated every year as a remembrance and to renew the covenant between the ancestor and Ìyámọ̀pó deity. During the event, sacrifices, thanksgiving, and prayers were made to the goddess Ìyámọ̀pó, who is said to have the capacity to grant wealth, success, progress, children, healings, guidance, peace, and protection from all evil spirits in the society, according to him. We also use the opportunity to pay homage to Ìgbẹ̀tì land to renew our allegiance with our ancestors because of the cultural belief and value that though they

are dead, their spirit still exists (Ọládùnní, 2018. K.I.I). It shows that Ìyámọ̀pó festival is celebrated in remembrance of the covenant between the Ìyámọpó deities and Ìgbẹtì ancestors.

Findings from the FGD arranged with some women and family members of Abòkè at Abòkès compound indicate that Ìyámọpó festival is the period when the devotees and other indigenes show appreciation and gratitude to the Ìyámọ̀pó deity and the ancestors for blessings, protection, and provision of the past years. They explained that Ìyámọ̀pó is a goddess of fertility, and it is believed she can give children to the barren. According to them, women bring children to the Ìyámọ̀pó shrine for thanksgiving, testimonies, dedication and protection (FGD 2 (women), 22-06-2019 at Abòkès Compound). Additionally, another FGD organized for men that are family members of Elérúgbà at Elérúgbàs compound also confirmed that Ìyámọpó festival is celebrated to fulfil the covenant between Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and their ancestors for protecting the town from being ravaged by Fulani and other wars that would have threatened the town (FGD 3 (men), 25-06-2019 at Elérúgbàs compound).

Ìyámọ̀pó festival is a cultural symbol because it reflects the identity, value, faith and ties they have to Ìyámọ̀pó deities and their ancestors. A Festival is a religious period where the community or worshippers renew the ancestral bond with the assurance that they are the source of protection from battles, sicknesses, diseases and calamities. In traditional African religion, hills, rocks and mountains are regarded as sacred because they are connected with spirits or divinities. Apart from Ìyámọ̀pó Festival in June, sacrifices are made to the deities of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills every 5 days after Ìgbẹtì market day. One of the key informant's and the priests, the Abòkè of Ìgbẹtìland, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, confirmed that,

> *Òsọ̀ọ̀sẹ̀ ni a máa n bọ Ìyámọ̀pó àti àwọn òkè tí ó kù. Ọrọọrún tíí ṣe àdàbọ̀ ọjà tí à máa n pè ní jàkúta ni a máa n bọ wọ́n. Ọjọ́ karùn ún ni a máa n náa ọjà Ìgbẹtì. Ọjọ kejì ọjà ni a máa n bọ àwọn òkè yìí. Abo ni Ìyámọ̀pó, abo adìyẹ ní a fi máa n bọó lósọ̀ọ̀sẹ̀. Akọ ni Èrúgbà, Sànto àti Sin ó, àkùkọ adìyẹ ni a fi n bọ wọn. Aṣọ funfun ni àwọn abòkè máa n wọ̀. Inú oṣù kẹfà ọdún ni à n ṣe ọdún Ìyámọ̀pó àti àwọn òè tí ó kù. Obì, omi tútù, ègbo àti àgbò funfun ti ko ní àmì kankan lára ni a fi n bọ wọn (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I).*

Translation:

129

> We make a sacrifice to Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills every week. Every 5 days is Ìgbẹ̀tì's market; the next day is the day we make rituals to these hills. Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain symbolises female, and we use hen for rituals every week. Èrúgbà, Santo and Sin-o hill symbolise male, and we use cockerel for their rituals. The priests normally wear white clothes during sacrifice. We celebrate Iyamopo festival with other mountains and hills in the month of June every year. Kolanut, old-water, egbo, and pure white ram are used for the sacrifice (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 18/06/2018, K.I.I).

Findings indicate that rituals are done weekly to appease the four mountains and hills which are Ìyámọ̀pó, Èrúgbà, Sin-Ó and Sànto. One of the priests, Chief Rahmon Ajadi, Abọsìn-ó confirmed that Èrúgbà, Sin-ó and Sànto hills symbolize males and that is the reason a white cock is used for their sacrifices, while Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain symbolises females and a white hen is used for her sacrifice. He explained that 'of the 16 hills in Ìgbẹ̀tì, they worship only four. He stated that he is in charge of Sin-ó hill, Elérúgbà is in charge of Èrúgbà hill, Abọsànto is in charge of Sànto hill, and Abòkè is in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, which is the biggest and mother of all mountains and hills in Ìgbẹ̀tì. We observe weekly sacrifices to the gods and goddesses of the mountains a day after Ìgbẹ̀tì market days (Ajadi, 2018, K.I.I). FGD arranged with some women and family members of Abòkè at Abòkès compound and the one organized for men that are family members of Elérúgbà at Elérúgbàs compound also confirm these findings (FGD 2 (women), 22-06-2019 at Abòkès Compound) and (FGD 3 (men), 25-06-2019 at Elérúgbàscompound).

There are several preparations towards Ìyámọ̀pó annual festival, without observing some of these necessary arrangements,Ìyámọ̀pó festival cannot be announced. The priests revealed that before Ìyámọ̀pó Festival day is announced in June, the Ifá oracle is consulted three times before the actual date is chosen. Immediately a day is chosen, His Royal Highness, Onìgbẹ̀tì of Ìgbẹ̀tì, and the chief in council will be informed by the chiefs and council, and the preparation for the ceremony begins. Elérúgbà of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Amos Olagbaju narrated that:

> *Ẹ̀ẹ̀mẹta là a dífá ọdún Ìyámọ̀pó, Ifá ilé Ọba ni a sì máa ń dá, ẹ̀ẹ̀mẹta ni a máa ń yẹ̀ẹ́. Àkọ́kọ́ tí a bá dá ifá, a ó yẹ̀ẹ́, a ó sọ wípé ó ku ọjọ́ márùn ún. Lẹ́ẹ̀kejì, a ó yẹ a ó sọ pé ó ku ọjọ́ márùn ún, ọjọ́ tí a bá mú ni ẹlẹ́ẹ̀kẹta ni*

130

ọjọ́ ọdún Ìyámọ̀pó. Ní ìgbà yí ni a ó tó sọ fún kábíyèsí wípé ọdún ku ọjọ́ báyìí tí àwa náà yóò sì ránsẹ́ sí gbogbo àwọn mọ̀lẹ́bí wa nítòsí àti lọ́nà jínjìn. Kábíyèsi yóò ránsẹ́ sí Baalọ́dẹ láti gbaradì. Láti ìgbà tí a bá ti mú ọjọ́ ni a óò ti máa ṣe ètùtù (Ọláyanjú 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

We consult the oracle three times before Ìyámọ̀pó festival. It is the oracle of the palace we consult, and we change the date three times. On the first contact with the oracle, we will change that date and say it remains5 days. The second time, we also say it remains 5 days. The third date chosen by the oracle is the Ìyámọ̀pó day celebration. The king will be informed about the actual date, and we will also inform our family, far and near. The king will invite the head hunter (Baalode) to get prepared. The rituals begin when the day is fixed (Ọláyanjú, 2018, K.I.I).

To confirm these findings, the researcher observed and captured the last Ìyámọ̀pó festival, which was celebrated from June 25 to 29, 2019. The preparation for the festival started the first week in June when *Ifá* oracle was consulted three times according to the Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyánlọlá Ọladunni,

Inú oṣù kẹfà la máa ún bọ Ìyámọ̀pó, a ti bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí ní dá ifá láti ibẹ̀rẹ̀ oṣù kẹfà. Ẹ̀ẹ̀mẹta ni a dá ifá kí á tó mú ọjọọdún Ìyámọ̀pó (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 28/06/2019. K.I.I).

Translation

Ìyámọ̀pó festival is being celebrated in June.We started consulting the oracle at the beginning of June. The oracle was consulted three times before a date was eventually chosen (Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní, 28/06/2019, K.I.I).

According to the priests, Ìyálóde is crucial to the Ìyámọ̀pó festivity. She carries any sacrifice the oracle requests to the market shrine. In an interview with Mrs Mary Ògúndélé, Ìyálóde of Ìgbẹ́tì, she explained that:

Èmí ni mo máa ń gbé ètùtù lọ sí ìdí igi eégún ọjà, oun tí Ifá bá sọ wípé kí á fi ṣe ètùtù ni a gbọ́dọ̀ lò (Ògúndélé 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

I normally carry the sacrifice to the masquerade tree at the marketplace. We have to use things Ifa oracle

demanded for rituals (Ògúndélé 2018. K. I. I).

Carrying sacrifices to the masquerade tree at the market, according to Iyalode, symbolises cleansing the town from all sins and evils during the festivals. The findings established the role and involvement of Yoruba women in religious festivals.

The priests claimed that *Baálódẹ,* the chief hunter, also has an important role in the Ìyámòpó festival. Elérúgbà of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Amos Ọlágbaju disclosed that:

> *Gẹ́gẹ́ bí àṣà, ìṣẹ̀ṣe àti gbogbo ètùtù tí ó rò mọ́ ọdún Ìyámòpó, tí ọdún bá ku òtúnla, àwọn ọdẹ gbọ́dọ̀ lọ sí inú igbó láti lọ dègbẹ́. Ọjọ́ yìí máa n bọ́ sí ọjọ́ ọjà Ìgbẹ̀tì ku òla. Ẹran tí wọn gbọ́dọ̀ pa gẹ́gẹ́ bí àṣe ni ẹran ìgal àti ẹran míràn bíì ìjímèrè àti òbọ. Tí ó bá dí ìrọ̀lẹ́ ọjọ ọjà ni àwọn ọdẹ yóò darí ìgbẹ́ dé, wọn á sì gbé ẹran tí wọ́n bá pa wá sí ààfin. Orí ọ́tò ni wọn á gbé ẹran náà sí, gbogbo àwọn ará Ìlú á máa kí àwọn ọdẹ káàbọ̀ pẹ̀lú ìlú àti orin, wọn á máa ṣe àdúrà wípé, à sèyí sàmọ́dún. Àṣẹ ni gbogbo èyí jẹ́* (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní 2018. K. I. I).

Translation:

> In line with the culture, tradition and rituals in connection with Ìyámòpó, 2 days before the festival, the hunters should go to the bush for hunting. This day is a day before Ìgbẹ̀tì market day. The animals' hunters suppose to kill, according to the custom, antelope; however, they can also kill other animals. On the evening of Ìgbẹ̀tì market day, the hunters should arrive from the forest and deliver the slaughtered animal to the palace. The animals will be displayed, and people will go to the palace to meet the hunters.We worshippers will also be at the palace. People will welcome them with songs, dance and jubilation; prayers will also be the offer that the hunters will witness more festivals. All these are the traditions of people (Ọláyanjú 2018, K.I.I).

In an in-depth interview with one of the hunters, Mr Hakeeb Odeyale, it was found that before the hunters move to the forest, they have to congregate at the palace of Onìgbẹ̀tì for prayers and royal blessings for successful hunting, safety and unity.'We are supposed to hunt till daybreak; in the evening, we will assemble all the animals that were killed ceremoniously, with dancing, singing, and shooting at the king's palace' (Mr Hakeeb Odeyale, 14/12/2018, K.I.I). The animals killed by the hunters, according to Abọsìn-O of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu are always roasted and

shared among the family of Onìgbẹ́tì and the four priests in the palace. This symbolises a cordial relationship between these families. All these are preparations for the Ìyámọ̀pó festival, according to one of the informants (Chief Babatunde Saliu, 14/12/2018, K.I.I). It was observed that on Friday, 28 June 2019, at 5:00 pm, a crowd gathered at the king's palace waiting for the hunters. It was found that the hunters went to the bush on Thursday, 26 June, to hunt for animals. In-depth interview with one of the indigenes, Pa Sunday Adesola, confirmed that according to the tradition, the hunters should go to the bush for 2 days to hunt for antelopes and other animals. In another in-depth interview with Mr Jubril Afolabi, he also confirmed that the hunters had gone to the bush to hunt for animals in commemoration of Ìyámọ̀pó festival. He narrated that:

> *Àwọn ọdẹ ti lọ sí ìgbẹ́ láti àná, ìròyìn tí ó tó wa létí ni wípé wọ́n ti ún bọ̀ lọ́nà. Bí àwọn ọdẹ ṣe máa ún lọ pa ẹran nínú igbó ní ọdọọdún ni èyí. Àṣẹ ni èyí jẹ́* (Jubril Afọlabi, 29/06/2019, I.D.I).

Translation:

> The hunters have gone to the bush since yesterday. The news has reached us that they are returning; it is customary for hunters to go to the bush every year. This is tradition (Jubril Afolabi, 29/06/2019, I. D.I).

FGD with community men at Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace revealed that the hunters should come with antelopes and other animals; they explained that the cooking and preparation of the animals is between the Onìgbẹ́tì (king), the chiefs and the four priests (FGD 4 (men) 26-06-2019). Chief Mary Ògúndélé, Iyalode of Ìgbẹ́tì, informed that the king and other chiefs are already waiting at the palace to receive them. I observed that the hunters arrived at the palace with one big antelope and baboon around 5.45 pm (Plate 4.16). They were gladly received by Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì, the chiefs, the mountain worshippers, the indigenes and other well-wishers. It was jubilation because people were singing, dancing and praising the hunters. It was observed that the animals were handed over to the king, and later the king handed the animals to the four priests, Abòkè, Elérúgbà, Abọsànto and Abọsìn-O and Iyalode. The preparation of these animals was done in the palace and was supervised by the four priests and Iyalode (Plate 4.17). In a focussed group interview with the priests and Iyalode, they informed that the meat would be shared between kabiyesi's family and the four priests, and it

would also be used to entertain visitors and other traditional worshippers on Ìyámòpó Festival Day.

Plate 4.16:   The picture showing the arrival of the hunters and the animals killed in the forest

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Apart from sanctifying the town and other sacred places, the priests and adherents use the time to prepare and sanctify themselves from all sins and immoralities. Abòkè of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní revealed that sanctification is part of the preparation for the festival. According to him:

> *Tí ọdún bá Ìyámọ̀pó bá ku ọjọ́mẹ́rìnlá ni a gbọ́dọ̀ ya ara wa sí mímọ́. A kò gbọdọ̀ fi ẹnu kan ọtí líle, a kò gbọdọ̀ di ara wa sínú, a kò gbọdọ̀ bá obìnrin ṣe. A gbọdọ̀ sọ́ra fún gbogbo oun tí ó bá jẹ mọ́ èdè àìyedè, ìjà àti ìkórira. A kò sì gbọdọ̀ lọ sí ìrìn àjò* (Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

> We have to sanctify ourselves 14 days before Ìyámọ̀pó festival. We do not drink alcohol, keep malice and have sexual intercourse with a woman. We are to careful with things that have to do with striving and hatred. We do not travel *(Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I)*.

In an attempt to know the reasons for the sanctification of the priests towards the Ìyámọ̀pó festival, one of the priests, Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú confirmed that it is necessary to abstain from all immoralities to be pure before the deity and the ancestral spirit (Olawale Ọláyanjú 2018, K.I.I).

Plate 4.17:   The four priests at the king's palace supervising the preparation of the animals at the palace

            Source: Fieldwork (2019)

On Ìyámòpó day, the four priests, *Abòkè, Elérúgbà, Abọsànto* and *Abọsìn-Ó* will entertain visitors including traditional worshippers like *Ògún, Sàngó, Eléégún* and different societies with food and drinks in their various houses. An informant, *Abọsìn Ó* of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Rahmon Ajadi explained that:

> *Ilé Abòkè ni àwọn ìdílé Ọba yóò kọ́kọ́ lọ pẹ̀lú àwọn onílù, Ìyálóde ni yóò saájú wọn láti da obì Ọba ní ibẹ̀. Wọ́n yóò ṣe àdúrà fún Ọba Ìlú Ìgbẹ̀tì, Ìpínlẹ̀ Ọ̀yọ́ àti Orílẹ̀-èdè Nàìjíríà. Wọn yóò jẹ oúnjẹ tí wọ́n bá gbé fún wọn. Bákan náà ni wọn yóò lọ sí ilé Abọsin O àti Abọsànto láti da obì àti láti sàdúrà. Ilé Ẹlẹ́rúgbà ni wọn yóò darí sí pẹ̀lú Ìyálóde àti àwọn ìdílé Ọba láti ṣe ètò tí wọ́n ṣe ní ilé àwọn tí ó kù. Ilé Ẹlẹ́rúgbà ni Abòkè, Abọsin Ó àti Abọsànto ti máa pàdé láti lọ ṣe ètùtù tí ó kù ní ojúbọ Ìyámòpó, nígbà tí kábíyèsí yóò máa dúró dè wọ́n ní ààfin* (Àjàdí 2018, K.I.I).

Translation

> Abòkès house is the first place the king's family will visit with the drummers. There will be libation and prayers for the king and Ìgbẹ̀tì town, Ọ̀yọ́ state and Nigeria. They will eat at Abòkès house. The same events will take place in Abọsìn o and Abọsànto houses. Elérúgbà house is the last place that will be visited before moving to Ìyámòpó shrine while the king will be waiting at the palace (Ajadi 2018, K.I.I).

On Saturday, 29 June 2019, it was observed there was a celebration in the house of *Abòkè, Elérúgbà, Abọsànto and Abọsìn- Ó*. Other traditional worshippers, including ogun, Sàngó, egungun and other well-wishers were noticed visiting the houses of the four priests. They were entertained with amala, gbegiri, and ewedu with assorted meat and drinks. It was also observed that Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tì led the king's family to visit the four priests in their various houses. It was a big celebration because many associations, societies and groups were sighted singing, dancing and feasting around the town. The meal for entertainment during the Ìyámòpó festival symbolizes relationship and communion. Ogunleye (2015) confirmed that the food taken during the Yemoja festival symbolizes communion and fellowship with the goddess. The four priests, the worshippers, the indigenes and the tourists will move in convoy, singing and dancing to the Ìyámòpó shrine in *Ilẹ̀-Ìgbẹ̀tì* where prayers and rituals to Ìyámòpó and other gods of the mountain were offered. The priests and the worshippers should appear in white clothes (Plate 4.19).

In addition, ritual items, such as kola nut, *ègbo* (processed maize), cold water and white ram used during the Ìyámòpó festival are symbolic. Ukpokolo (2011) found that the kola nut, also known as Oji, is important among the Nanka people of Anambra state of Nigeria as it symbolises love and hospitality. According to the author, a species of kola nut, which is *Oji ugo (cola acuminate),* is for ritual and social purposes; it symbolises treasure, success and good fortune. She notes that *Ugo* is referred to as the eagle bird among the Igbos of South-Eastern Nigeria; the eagle symbolises wealth, splendour and exceptional life. Similarly, Kolanut is also used in Yoruba social and cultural activities in Southwestern Nigeria. In Yorubaland, the fruit is one of the items utilised in religious ceremonies by the gods, deities, and ancestors. Kolanut, known as *obi,* is cast during festivals and ceremonies as it symbolises good omen, success and fortune. On the significance of Kolanut in the Ìyámòpó ritual, Abòkè of Ìgbètì, Chief ÀyànlọláOládùnní, expressed that:

> *Obì dídà ṣe pàtàkì nínú àwọn èlò ìrúbọ sí Ìyámòpó, obì dídà ni a fi ún wá ojú rere Ìyámòpó àti àwọn alálè Ilè yí. Tí a bá ti da obì, a ní ìgbàgbó wípé gbogbo ohun tí a bá bèèrè lówó òrìṣà Ìyámòpó ni yóò ṣe fún wa. Obì wà lára àwọn èròjà tí ó máa ún jé kí ẹbọ rú* (Oládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

> The casting of kolanut is important in ritual items to Ìyámòpó Mountain; we cast kolanut to seek the face of Ìyámòpó and our ancestors. When we cast kolanut, we believe that the goddess will grant our entire request. Kolanut is part of the items that make the sacrifice to be acceptable (Oládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

This shows that without casting kola nut, sacrifice to Ìyámòpó diety will not be acceptable. It means that the kola nut is a bond that connects the worshippers to the deities. It indicates that the kola nut symbolises unity, harmony and covenant. According to another informant, Iyalode of Ìgbètì, Chief Mary Ògúndélé, confirms that without casting kola nut, people cannot request anything from Ìyámòpó. She said that during the Ìyámòpó festival, the worshippers that do not have the opportunity of attending usually send their kola nut to the Ìyámòpó goddess for the request (Ògúndélé 2018, K.I.I). Other cold-water items, *ègbo* (processed white maize), symbolise smoothness, purity and softness. Chief Àyánlọlá Oládùnní, Abòkè of Ìgbètì explained the steps and the process of rituals at IléÌgbètì as follows:

Yàtò sí obì àti àwọn èròjà tí a fi ún bọ Ìyámòpó àti àwọn òkè tí ó kù ní ọ̀sọ̀ọ̀sẹ̀ àgbò funfun tí kò ní àmì lára ni a fi máa ún bọ ọ́. Kábíyèsí ló máa ún fi àgbò ọdún Ìyámòpó sílẹ̀. Bíbẹ́ la gbọ́dọ̀ bẹ́ orí àgbò ọdún Ìyámòpó, a sì gbọ́dọ̀ fi ẹ̀jẹ̀ rẹ̀ sí ojú oórì àwọn Ọba tí àwọn bàbá ńlá wá sin sí Ilẹ̀ Ìgbẹ́tì ní ìgbà ogun (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Translation:

Apart from the kolanut and other items used for the sacrifice of Ìyámòpó and other hills every week, a white ram without any blemish is used for sacrifice during the festival. The king normally donates it. The head of the ram must be cut off once, and the blood should be sprinkled on the tomb of the past king that our forefathers buried in Ìgbẹ́tì land during the war (Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní 2018, K.I.I).

Findings indicate that the pure white ram is another significant object in the worship of Ìyámòpó (Plate 4.20). The ram symbolises power, strength, action, energy, authority, and boldness in literary meaning. Ram without spot or blemish symbolises the blameless or guiltless condition of the object of sacrifice. However, the hand laid upon its head symbolises an individual's sin and is transferred to it. Therefore, it is believed that when the animal is slaughtered as a sacrifice, its blood will remit the person's sin. Similarly, another informant Chief Rahmon Ajadi, Abọsìn-o of Ìgbẹ́tì responded that the neck of the sacrificial lamb must be cut off once. He explained that the aspect is the most sacred part of the Ìyámòpó shrine during the festival because it is taboo for the head of the white ram not to be cut off once with a cutlass. According to him:

Tí a bá fẹ́ bẹ́ àgbò ìrúbọ ọdún Ìyámòpó, a gbọ́dọ̀ sokùn móọ ní ọrùn kí á tó dèé mọ́ igi. Ọkùnrin méjì ni yóò fa àgbò náà (Plate 4.18). Ẹnì kínní á dúró ní iwájú láti fa igi, ẹnikèji á dúró láti fa ẹsẹ̀ ẹ̀yìn kí àgbò yí náa tòtọ. Nígbà yí ni eni tí yóò bẹ á sáré jáde pẹ̀lú àdá tí ó mú. Ẹ̀ẹ̀kan ṣoṣo ni ó gbọ́dọ̀ bẹ́ orí rẹ̀ (Rahmon Àjàdí, 2018, K.I.I).

Translation*:*

If we want to slaughter the ram for Ìyámòpó festival, we have to tie it to a stick. Two men should stretch the ram (Plate 4.18). One will hold the stick while another will stretch the hindlegs. Finally, the slaughter will run to the ram with a sharp cutlass to cut off the neck once **(**Rahmon Ajadi 2018, K.I.I).

Plate 4.18: The four priests and Iyalode performing rituals at Ìyámòpó shrine during the 2019 Ìyámòpó festival
(Source: Fieldwork 2019)

Furthermore, one of the priests, Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu, Aḅọsànto of Ìgbẹ́tì noted that immediately the neck of the ram is cut off once from the body, the priests, devotees, and the indigenes will start jubilating and chanting Ìyámọ̀pó praises.This demonstrates that the ancestors and Ìyámọ̀pó deity accepted the sacrifice. In a case where the neck of the ram cannot be cut off at once, it means the sacrifice is not accepted, and the implication is that the deities and the ancestors are angry, and great calamities, sickness, famine, drought and death can befall the town (Saliu 2018, K.I.I). According to one of the priests, Chief Amos Ọláyanjú, the blood of the ram would be sprinkled on Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and the tomb of the past kings while the head would be placed on the shrine. Shedding of blood is significant and also symbolic in the worship and Ìyámọ̀pó festival. According to Elérúgbà of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Amos Ọláyanjú, he said, it is believed that the blood symbolises the remission of sin and iniquity and also brings harmony among the divinities and the adherents (Ọláyanjú 2018, K.I.I). Shedding animals' blood during festivals for remission of sins and iniquity is not only peculiar to African traditional religion. It is also common in other religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Hindu, and Jewish, among others.

Plate 4.19:   The four priests and Iyalode watching as the head of the white ram for
rituals will be cut at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine during the 2019 Ìyámọ̀pó festival

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Chief Ọláwálé Ọláyanjú explained that head, heart, and neck would be separated. According to him, Abòkè will take the head to *oórì àwọn ọba,* where the past kings are buried for other rituals and prayers. The remaining parts of the animal will be cut into pieces; the heart is normally taken to the king's palace, while some parts will be cooked and shared among the priests and some of the chiefs in the town. He added that sharing of the meat symbolizes the cordial relationship between the ancestors, the king of Ìgbẹ́tì, the priests, and other chiefs that should not be broken. There are many taboos associated with Ìyámòpó festival and worship; in an in-depth interview with one of the priests, Abòkè of Ìgbẹ́tì, Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùńní, some of the taboos related with Ìyámòpó festival are:

i. Ìyámòpó priests and worshippers must not eat pig and vulture because they are regarded as unclean animals.

ii. The Priests must not wear red clothes except white during the festival and days of worship.

iii. The priests and devotees must not see a dead body.

iv. They should not visit anyone with serious ailments or diseases.

v. Guns should not be shot in the town during the Ìyámòpó festival.

vi. Alcohol should not be taken to the Ìyámòpó shrine except water, kola nut and other items.

vii. Farming, hunting, cutting and other activities must not be done in and around the Ìyámòpó shrine.

viii. Ìyámòpó Priests must not quarrel or have any malice against others.

Chief Ọládùnní further explained that violation of the above rules and regulations could cause drought, pestilence, famine, and death, among others in the town. It was observed that there is no farming, hunting or any activities around Ìyámòpó shrine. He added that the indigenes are aware that no farming, hunting or any activities should take place around Ìyámòpó shrine and Ìgbẹ́tì land because of the wrath of the deities and ancestors (Oladunni 2019, I.D.I).

Plate 4.20:   Bata dance at Ìyámòpó shrine during the 2019 Ìyámòpó festival

(Source: Fieldwork 2019)

On Saturday, 29 June 2019, at 4:00 pm, *Abọ̀kè, Abọsàǹto and Abọsìn-O* met *Elérúgbà* at the market (*Elérúgbà* house is beside Ìgbẹ́tì market), and they all moved in convoy to Ìyámọ̀pó shrine in white regalia. Ìyámọ̀pó devotees, indigenes and many tourists also follow them with songs and dancing. Before the ritual started at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, the researcher observed that *Elérúgbà* and *Abọsin-Ó*, Chief Olawale Ọláyanjú and Chief Rahmon Ajadi moved towards the left side of the shrine. One of the key informants, Chief Olaoye Folarin, explained that *Èrúgbà* and *Sin-Ó* shrine is not far from Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and these priests should make rituals at these shrines before they finally gathered at Ìyámọ̀pó shrine. Chief Folarin also informed that it is only the *Sàǹto* shrine that is far from Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, and *Abọsàǹto* would have to make rituals at the shrine before coming to Ìyámọ̀pó shrine. At *Èrúgbà* shrine, the family of *Elérúgbà* and some indigenes were singing and chanting the praises of Èrúgbà. *Elérúgbà* made incantations before casting the kolanut. After casting four lobes of kolanut, there was a tumult voice and jubilation. Some of them were shouting

> *Ẹbọ fín, ẹbọ dà*
> *Adúpẹ́, ẹbọ rú, ẹbọ dà*
> *Èrúgbà gbẹbọ*
> *Èrúgbà gbẹbọ*

Translation:
> The sacrifice is accepted, the sacrifice is received
> We are grateful, sacrifice is accepted, the sacrifice
> is received. *Èrúgbà* accepted the sacrifice, *Èrúgbà*
> accepted the sacrifice

Members of *Elérúgbà* family and some devotees also cast their kolanuts. They chanted the praises of *Èrúgbà* as follows

> *Ẹ pòkè*
> *Ẹ pèrúgbà*
> *Ẹ pòkè*
> *Ẹ pèrúgbà*
> *Èrúgbà oníbàtá àrà*
> *Ẹ lu bàtá Èrúgbà, mo fẹ́ jó*
> *Ẹ lu bàtá Èrúgbà, mo fẹ́ jó*

Translation:
> Call the mountain
> Call *Èrúgbà,*
> Call the mountain
> Call *Èrúgbà,*
> Èrúgbà, the owner of wonderful *bàtá*
> Beat *bàtá Èrúgbà,* I want to dance
> Beat *bàtá Èrúgbà,* I want to dance

Elèrúgbà and his family moved to Ìyámòpó shrine with singing and dancing. At Ìyámòpó shrine, the priests, Iyalode, worshippers, indigenes, tourists and well-wishers gathered to worship and make rituals to Ìyámòpó deity and the ancestors. Parts of the items for sacrifice were kola nut (four lobes), cold water egbo (processed white maize) and white ram. The ram was provided by Onìgbẹ̀tì of Ìgbẹ̀tì (king). The rituals were performed by the four priests, *Abòkè, Elérúgbà, Abọsantó, Abọsin Ó* and Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tì (Plate 4.17). Before the rituals, the presence of Olodumare (supreme God) was invoked. Iyalode presented Onìgbẹ̀tì of Ìgbẹ̀tì (king) kola nut for sacrifice to Abòkè and chanted prayers while the audience responded by saying, *Àṣẹ* meaning Amen.

Abòkè:	*Ìyámòpó Ọlóyẹ́, Ìyámòpó ìjí, obì Ọba Oyèbísí rèé o, ó mú obì wá láti bọ ọ́ gégé bí èjé rẹ̀. Ẹ̀yìn alálẹ̀ Ìgbẹ̀tì, ẹ̀yin ọmọ Ọlóyẹ́ moyin, ẹ̀yin ọmọ Abòkèdè,Ẹ jẹ́ kí ẹbọ ó rú*
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Ẹ jẹ́ kẹ́bọ ó dà.
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí ìlú tó tùbà tùṣẹ
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí ilé wa ó rójú
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí òdẹ̀dẹ̀ wa ó tòrò
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí Ọba wa ó tẹlẹ̀ pẹ́
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí ìlú Ìgbétì kó rójú
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí ìpínlẹ̀ Ọ̀yọ́ ó tòrò
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*
Abòkè:	Kí orílẹ̀-èdè Nàìjíríà o wà lálàáfíà
Response*:*	*Àṣẹ*

Translation:

Abòkè: Ìyámọ̀pó, the owner of the harmattan, Ìyámọ̀pó the Iji, this is the kolanut of king Oyebisi, he brought kolanut for rituals according to his vow.The ancestors of Ìgbẹ́tì, the children of oloye moyin, the children of Abòkède, let these sacrifices be acceptable.

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let these sacrifices be acceptable.

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in this town

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in this town

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in our house

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in our family

Response: Amen

Abòkè: May our king live long

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in Ìgbẹ́tì

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in Ọ̀yọ́ State

Response: Amen

Abòkè: Let there be peace in Nigeria

Response: Amen

After the prayers, Abòkè sprinkled the cold water and *ègbo* on Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and also chanted prayer. Worshippers, indigenes and well-wishers also cast their kolanuts. There was jubilation. Worshippers gave thanks and testimonies of how Ìyámọ̀pó granted their previous request. They also made supplication to the diety and the ancestors. Subsequently, the white ram was taken around the shrine three times by Abòkè. It was later tied to a stick, and a man held the stick tightly; someone drew back the hind legs firmly while another person cut the neck with just a stroke of the cutlass.Immediately, the worshippers and the crowd raised a joyous shout. They danced, sang andchanted Ìyámọ̀pó praises and Ìgbẹ́tì oríkì (cognomen).

The blood of the ram was sprinkled on the Ìyámòpó shrine and the grave of the last king of Ìgbẹ́tì that was buried at the top of the mountain (Plate 4.19). It was observed that the remaining parts of the ram were cut into pieces and shared by the priests. After the end of the sacrifice and ceremony at the Ìyámòpó shrine, it was observed that the four priests, *Abòkè, Elérúgbà Abọsin-Ó, and Abọsànto* returned to the palace of Onìgbẹ́tì. According to Iyalode of Ìgbẹ́tì, Mrs Mary Ògúndélé, the four priests and some of their family members were supposed to visit the king, Onìgbẹ́tì to give him information about the success of the ceremonies and some other things. At the palace, the monarch prayed for the priests, their families, the town, Ọ̀yọ́ state and Nigeria (Plate 4.22).

Plate 4.21: Some of the devotees dancing at Ìyámòpó shrine during the 2019 Ìyámòpó festival

Source: Field work (2019)

Plate 4.22: Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì praying for the four priests at the palace during the 2019 Ìyámòpó festival

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.4 TOURIST'S EXPERIENCES ON EASTER CARNIVAL AND ÌYÁMÒPÓ FESTIVAL

Most of the tourists interviewed on Ìyámòpó Mountain during the Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámòpó festival expressed their satisfaction with the way the carnival was organised. They explained that climbing Ìyámòpó Mountain is a healthy exercise that needs endurance and fitness. Some of them were amazed when they saw some of the other tourist resources, including Ìyámòpó cave, *Odò Orogún Mẹta* (Three Interlocking Wells), Ṣàngó Cave and Relics of Wall, among others on the mountain. Mr Túndé Àdìgún, a tourist from Lagos, expresses delight about his visit to Ìyámòpó Mountain. In his report, he said:

> I came to Ìgbẹtì to celebrate Easter with my cousins. When I heard about Easter Monday Carnival at Ìyámòpó Mountain, I decided to follow my friends. Ìyámòpó Mountain is a natural and cultural attraction. I was excited to see many other tourists' resources on this mountain. Ìgbẹtì town is blessed with lots of tourism resources (Mr Túndé Àdìgún, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Among the group of tourists that visited during Easter Monday Carnival were the Children and Youth of the Sunday School Section, Chapel of Light, University of Ilorin, Kwara State (Plate 4.15). The coordinators, Mrs Bola Adigbole and Kemi Oyeyinka, narrated that the Easter picnic outside Ilorin is a yearly programme organised for the children and youth by the management of the chapel. According to them, 'we brought children and youth here last year, when we asked them to suggest where to go for this year's Easter picnic, they suggested Ìyámòpó Mountain again this year (Adigbole and Oyeyinka 2019, Personal communication). Most of the children and youth were excited and shared their opinion about the Easter Monday festival at Ìyámòpó Mountain. One of the youth, Folashade Williams from the University of Ilorin, said she was delighted to be on Ìyámòpó Mountain. She promised to inform her friends and colleagues about the tourism resources in Ìgbẹtì. In her report, she said:

> I am delighted to be here for Easter Carnival. Ìyámòpó Mountain is one of the best places to go for a picnic; climbing Ìyámòpó Mountain is fun. I really enjoyed it, and I will be here next year. I will also tell my colleagues about Ìyámòpó Mountain (Folashade Williams, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

153

Faith Benjamin is another youth from the University of Ilorin; he stated that he always looks forward to coming to Ìgbètì on Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámòpó Mountain. He noted that Ìgbètì town is blessed with natural resources that can attract tourists to the site. He said,

> I like coming to Ìgbétì because of the attractive mountains and hills, such as Ìyámòpó, Àgbélé, Okin and other resources, including Ìyámòpó cave and three interlocking wells (Faith Benjamin, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Tomiwa Bello, a 10-year-old girl, expressed her delight in being able to climb Ìyámòpó Mountain. She said:

> For the first time, I am ascending Ìyámòpó Mountain. I was terrified; however, my sister assured me that I would not fall; therefore, I entered Ìyámòpó cave. My name was written down. I will inform my classmates that I entered Ìyámòpó cave (Tomiwa Bello, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Similarly, Paul Alabi, a 12-year-old boy, shared his experience with the Easter Monday picnic. He said

> I came last year for the Easter Monday picnic, and I am also here for this year's picnic. I am delighted. When we were coming, we saw many mountains and hills. I could not climb Ìyámòpó Mountain last year; however, I will climb this year (Paul Alabi, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Mr Henry Aguri is another tourist from Benue state who visited his brother in one of the villages around Ìgbètì. He narrated his experience on Easter Monday Carnival. He said:

> I am here for the first time; I came from Benue State to visit my brother, who is living in Ogboru village; he said I should follow him to Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámòpó Mountain. I also climbed the mountain, and it is a big Mountain. I will come with my family from Benue State next year (Henry Aguri, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

The above findings show that Easter Monday Carnival attracts tourists to the resources on Ìyámòpó Mountain. This shows that festivals and events can encourage tourists to

utilize the destination's tourism resources. In addition, Easter Monday Carnival creates opportunities for the indigenes to showcase the town's symbol, identity, cultural heritage, and historical background.

Plate 4.23: Researcher with some of the tourists at Ìyámòpó Mountain during the 2019 Easter Carnival

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Apart from the fact that Easter Monday Carnival attracts tourists and also showcases the tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills, some of the tourists could not hide their feelings; they lamented how government refuses to pay attention to the tourism potential in Ìgbẹ̀tì. They suggested that the three tiers of government should endeavour to expand and invest in the town's tourism resources. Mr Adebayo Bako, a tourist from Ilorin, Kwara State, said he has been attending Easter Carnival at Ìyámọ̀pó hill for over ten years. He said:

> I have been coming for a picnic on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain for the past 10 years. Hon. Bọṣun Oladele is one of the indigenes that are making an effort to promote the Easter Monday Carnival. Therefore, I urge the government to come to the aid of the town by developing the tourism potential, such as Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills as tourism destinations (Adebayo Bako, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Similarly, Yinka Afonja, Ademola Isola, Yemi Ajibola, Adegbite Afonja and Adeolu Ogunrinde (Plate 4.23) from Ọ̀yọ́ and Ilorin are among the tourists that also urged the government and corporate bodies to help develop the abundant tourism resources of Ìgbẹ̀tì. They expressed their satisfaction with the few hours they spent and would have loved to spend 2 to 3 days if there were accommodations and other amenities on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. They asked corporations, individual investors, and the government to invest in Ìgbẹ̀tì's tourism resources to attract more visitors. Likewise, Ayokunle Aremu, a youth and student of the University of Ilorin, supported that Ọ̀yọ́ State should develop the tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì to attract foreign tourists. He said:

> I like how the Easter Monday Carnival is being organised on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. The town is blessed with both natural and cultural features that attract tourists. It is high time the federal and state government declare Ìgbẹ̀tì tourism site as a heritage site in Nigeria. This will attract more tourists, making the town more popular (Ayokunle Aremu, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Olujide Ojewola, a student of the University of Ilorin, also urged the organisers of Easter Monday to partner with a corporate and business organisation to improve and publicise the carnival. He said:

I am delighted to be here, we have been dining and wining together. This town is richly blessed with many tourists' attractions. I urged the organisers to partner with a corporate and business organisation to help to showcase and publicise the carnival and the tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì. I am happy to see companies, including Nigerian Breweries here. Other communication companies, such as MTN, AIRTEL, GLO, ETISALAT, Coca-Cola, Cadbury, Indomie, Oil companies, Banks, PZ, and Pepsi, among others, can be consulted to sponsor Easter Carnival and other festivals to promote Ìgbẹ́tì tourist's attractions (Olujide Ojewola, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Mrs Margaret Anifowose, who travelled from Lagos with a friend who is an indigene of Ìgbẹ́tì, asked the Ọ̀yọ́ state government to diversify into tourism to enhance the country's economy. According to her:

This is a real carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain; I enjoyed climbing the mountain. Ọ̀yọ́ State government should develop the tourism potential of the state. I travelled to Jerusalem in 2015 for a holy pilgrimage. The governments of Isreal, Saudi, America, Italy, Canada, Paris, and Australia develop the tourism potentials of their countries, which is why people travel to those countries. Imagine the population of tourists travelling to Mecca and Jerusalem for religious tourism worldwide. These countries' economies keep booming because they do not depend on one resource. Our leaders in Nigeria should develop our tourism resources to improve our economy (Margaret Anifowose, 22/04/2019, Personal communication).

Another tourist, Mr Yusuf Arole from Kogi state, said he found it difficult to climb Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. He expressed that the mountain is too slippery. He suggested that elevators or steps should be constructed on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, including Olumo rock in Abeokuta, Ogun state, for those who found it challenging to climb Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. He narrated that:

If you are not familiar with mountain climbing, you cannot climb Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. I noticed that many tourists found it difficult to climb because there were no steps or elevators. This mountain is too slippery; I crawled before I got to the top. Those in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó should make an effort to construct steps and lifts similar to that of Olumo Rock in Abeokuta (Yusuf Arole, 22/04/2019, Personaal communication).

Many tourists were also sighted at Ìyámòpó festival of 2019 at Ìgbètì. Some of the tourists interviewed came from Kwara, Ekiti, Ondo, Kogi, Òyó, Lagos, Benue, Katsina, Kaduna, Bauchi, Edo, Delta, Anambra and Cross River States. Others were from neighbouring countries, including Togo, Benin Republic and Ghana. Some of the tourists explained that they visited Ìyámòpó festival for the first time, while others indicated they were regular visitors. Most of these tourists expressed their satisfaction and also encouraged the government and private sector to sponsor the festival in Ìgbètì. Mr Moses Agbedu, a tourist from Kogi state, urged the federal and state governments to support Ìyámòpó and other festivals in Ìgbètì for the development of the town (Agbedu 2019, Personal communication).

Mr Abubarkar Audu is another tourist from Katsina; he expressed his delight towards Ìyámòpó festival. According to him:

> *Yayana Yagai yaceni wurin kallon wasan aladan yar bawa na Ìyámòpó. Abin mamaki dafarin ciki da ya dawkihankalina danashadi shine ya ddasuke rawa daraw-sayawa a dandalin Iyamapo daga mazanhar matan dakuma yara kananamkowasai rawa da murna suke* (Abubarkar Audu 2019, Personal communication).

Translation

> My brother invited me to Ìyámòpó Festival.What enticed me was the way the indigenes danced at Ìyámòpó shrine. Men and women, old and young are dancing, and they are happy (Abubarkar Audu 2019, Personal communication).

Mrs Abilani Jato is from Okenne in Kogi state, from a nearby village called Olorunda. She attends Ìyámòpó festival every year because she is also a traditional worshipper. According to her:

> Ìyámòpó festival resembles a festival in my village, Okenne.We also worships mountains and hills because we believe some of these mountains rescued our forefathers from the enemies in time past. My grandfather was also a priest and custodian of hills. The only difference is that we use dog for sacrifice instead of ram. We also put on white clothes during the Ajokuta festival in my village. I am always glad when I come to Ìyámòpó festival because it makes me remember my grandparents. Unfortunately, the Ajokuta festival is no more celebrated in my village because of the Christianity and Muslim religions. Immediately after my forefathers died, people left the shrine (Jato

Abilani 2019. Personal communication).

This shows that foreign religions, including Christianity and Islam, greatly influence African traditional religions. With the advent of foreign religions, most of the shrines in the rural community have been abandoned. African culture, customs and values arecurrently regarded as sin and abomination. Onuzulike (2008) found that African culture and traditional religion are entwined. Some Christians may find it challenging to uphold certain aspects of African traditional culture since their faith contradicts African traditional religion.Many African Christians who wished to keep parts of their customs have been confused by this. The fact that Christians occasionally destroy lives and property and demolish the antiquities and groves of the populace was also noted by Okeke *et al.,* (2017). Therefore, traditional religionists' sources of income have decreased, and many Igbo communities no longer have as many tourist attractions as they once did, and the author claims that this has caused social fragmentation and a lack of cohesiveness among the populace.

Another tourist, Mr Adebare Olukunle from Ọ̀ṣun State, said he attended Ìyámọ̀pó festival for the first time; he expressed his delight at the way the Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes are still faithful to the cultural and traditional religion. According to him:

> A festival is a component of cultural tourism that advances national development. Apart from Ọ̀ṣun Osogbo festival, Ojude oba, Olojo festival, Calabar Carnival, and Argungu festival, among others, many festivals in our rural areas can be harnessed for tourism development in Nigeria. The government and private sectors can assist in harnessing some of these festivals for tourism promotion (Adebare Olukunle, 29/06/2019, Personal communication).

These findings established that the Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival attract tourists to some of the cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì. Although the carnival attracts tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourist resources in the town, it was observed that Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain lacks infrastructural facilities that can attract more tourists. Some of the tourists urged the state and federal government to assist in developing tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì by providing infrastructural facilities, which include good roads, electricity, accommodation, hospital and health facilities, security and some other amenities that will enable tourists to enjoy their stay on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

Odeleye and Oyekanmi (2013) also noted that poor tourist infrastructures affect tourism developments in some tourist destinations in Nigeria

Similarly, some visitors want the Easter Monday Carnival organizers to partner with more corporate organizations to help sponsor some of the events, such as the dancing competition (Plate 4.13 and 4.14), raffle draw, music competition, mountaineering, and other activities, to attract more tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills in Ìgbẹ́tì for tourism development. Government can also encourage and assist private investors who may want to build accommodations, such as hotels, guest houses, restaurants, resorts, chalets, bars, multipurpose halls, shopping malls, recreational parks, public toilets and parking lots by giving them loans at a low-interest rate. This will allow foreign and local tourists to stay longer than a day, generating revenue for the community and boosting the state and federal government's economic development. Furthermore, the Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival should be given more publicity by advertising them on radio and television stations, in newspapers, in magazines, on social media and with other advertising media.

4.5 THE EXTENT TO WHICH ÀGBÉLÉ SYMBOL CAN BE USED FOR BRANDING ÌYÁMỌ̀PÓ MOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION IN ÌGBẸ́TÌ

Most of the respondents agreed tourists can identify Ìgbẹ́tì through symbols, while few disagreed. The majority that agreed noted that because of the competition among tourism destinations, the symbols will enable tourists to identify the kind of resources and services a particular destination intends to offer. This indicates that symbols as one of the elements of branding can inform more tourists about the tourism resources of the town, such as Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other resources, including Ìyámọ̀pó Cave/Palace, Ṣàngó Cave, Three Interlocking Wells, Relics of Defensive Wall, Relics of Stones, and Ìyámọ̀pó Shrine, among others, even before a visit and this can influence whether to visit or not. Additionally, most of the respondents agreed that Àgbélé symbol could attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì. They believe that since Àgbélé symbol is attractive, it can attract tourists to the tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì. One of the key informants, Chief Amos Ọláyanjú noted that Àgbélé rock is a prominent and attractive rock that can motivate tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì. He explained that many tourists visit Àgbélé purposely because of its structure. He noted that:

> *Òkè Àgbélé jẹ́ òkúta pàtàkì ní Ìlú Ìgbẹ́tì. Àwọn àlejò fẹ́ràn láti máa lọ sí òkè yí nítorí wípé ó jọ ènìyàn. Ìrísí rẹ̀ jọ obìnrin tí ó gbé ẹrù sí orí, tí ọmọ tún wà lẹ́yìn rẹ̀ (Ọláyanjú 2019, K.I.I).*

Translation:

> Àgbélé hill is an important rock in Ìgbẹ́tì. Tourists like to visit Àgbélé because of how it resembles a human being. Its appearance resembles a woman carrying a baby on her back (Ọláyanjú 2019, K.I.I).

The above findings proved that Àgbélé symbol could attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì because it depicts a human being. Likewise, most of the women interviewed in a focus group discussion confirm that Àgbélé symbol can attract tourist to Ìgbẹ́tì. For example, one of the respondents, Mrs Taiwo Àyànlọlá, a trader, explained that, according to oral traditions, Àgbélé was a woman; she turned to rock because of shame. Mrs Àyànlọlá narrated that:

> *Ìtàn sọ fún wa wípé obìnrin ni àgbélé. Ó lọ jí èlùbọ́ ká lórí àpáta tí wọ́n sáa sí ní òru. Nígbà tí ó gbúròó àwọn ọlọ́dẹ, ó yíra padà, ó di òkúta, nítorí ìtìjú àti ẹ̀gàn (Taiwo Àyànlọlá 2019, K.I.I)*

Translation:

> According to oral history, Àgbélé was a woman. She stole yam powder that was spread on a rock at midnight. When she noticed that she was seen she turned to rock because of shame and mockery (Taiwo Àyànlọlá 2019, K.I.I).

She explained that despite the historical background and oral tradition of Àgbélé hill, the indigenes prefer using it as a symbol because of the attraction. This indicates that attractive symbols can attract and motivate tourists to visit a destination. Similarly, most of the indigenes agreed that Àgbélé symbols can brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills in Ìgbẹ́tì. During an FGD with a few men, most of them agreed that Àgbélé symbol can brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains because the symbol is important to them. Some of them explained that though there are many mountains and hills in Ìgbẹ́tì but Àgbélé hill is unique in many ways. Mr David Idowu explained that the symbol of Àgbélé can be seen everywhere in Ìgbẹ́tì. He claims that the Àgbélé symbol can be

found on the Olorunsogo local government logo, letterhead paper, the palace, and other prominent locations (Idowu 2019, K.I.I). Additionally, some of the youth that are respondents believe that since Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains are geograhical destinations, Àgbélé as a popular symbol will brand these resources.

Similarly, in Ìgbẹ̀tì, most of the respondents felt that the Àgbélé symbol can help promote Ìyámọ̀pó festival and the Easter Monday Carnival.This implies that Àgbélé symbol can promote Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Some of the respondents explained that Ìyámọ̀pó is a major festival in Ìgbẹ̀tì just like festival of Ọ̀ṣun Osogbo held at Osogbo, Ọ̀ṣun State, and other major festivals in Nigeria. They expressed that since the symbol of Ọ̀ṣun goddess can brand Ọ̀ṣun Osogbo festival and Ọ̀ṣun River and the grove, Àgbélé symbol can also brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival and other festivals. In an FGD with the four priests in charge of Ìyámọ̀pó and other hills in Ìgbẹ̀tì. They believe that if Ìyámọ̀pó festival and other events are also branded, they that can attract and promote tourism development in Ìgbẹ̀tì town. The respondents added that Ìyámọ̀pó festival is symbolic in the town because it reflects the origin and identity of Ìgbẹ̀tì indigenes. Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní noted that:

> Ọdún Ìyámọ̀pó jẹ́ ọdún kan gbòógì ní Ìlú Ìgbẹ̀tí. Kò sí ohun tí ó burú tí a bá fi àmì ìdánimọ̀ Ìlú Ìgbẹ̀tí polówó ọdún yìí àti àwọn ọdún míràn. Èyí yóò túbọ̀ mú kí ọdún yìí tún gbajúmọ̀ láti mú kí èrò máa pọ̀ si. (Ọládùnní 2019, K.I.I).

Translation:

> Ìyámọ̀pó is the most important festival in Ìgbẹ̀tì. There is nothing wrongwith using Àgbélé symbol to brand the festival and other festivals. This will make the festival to be more popular to attract more tourists (Ọládùnní 2019, K.I.I).

The above findings indicate that symbols can promote Ìyámọ̀pó Festival in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Additionally, most of the respondents agreed that symbols could reflect the identity of Ìgbẹ̀tì.They opine that through symbols, the tradition, religions, values, beliefs, customs and mythology of Ìgbẹ̀tì can be reflected in the tourists. During an in-depth interview with Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Chief Mary Ògúndélé, noted that Ìgbẹ̀tì is known by mountains, rocks and hills because the town is surrounded by 16 mountains and hills, which serves as protection for their forefathers during Fulani invasion. These

mountains and hills form the history and identity of the town. She further explained that using Àgbélé symbol to brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains and hills will enable tourists to distinguish Ìgbẹ̀tì from other destinations with similar features (Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tì, Mary Ògúndélé 2019, K. I. I). Most of the respondents believe that Àgbélé symbol will enable tourists to identify, recognise and differentiate Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills in Ìgbẹ̀tì from other similar destinations and this will enable them to decide on whether to visit or not. Therefore, a symbol is an effective tool capable of branding a destination for tourists to recognise and differentiate it from others. Most of the respondents also agreed that Àgbélé symbol could promotrtourism development in Ìgbẹ̀tì. They view that if Àgbélé symbol can brand all the tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì, it will attract many tourists to the town. This suggests that the inflow of tourists to Ìgbẹ̀tì will enhance the development of the town.

4.6 THE EXTENT TO WHICH ÌGBẸ̀TÌ SLOGAN CAN BE USED FOR BRANDING ÌYÁMỌ̀PÓ MOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION IN ÌGBẸ̀TÌ

Qualitative data show that most of the respondents agreed that the eslogan could communicate information about Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism potentials while few respondents' disagreed.The respondents agreed that the slogan could convey a message about countries, cities and places. Prince Sarafadeen Abioye explained that "Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan communicates about the cold weather of the city because the town is surrounded by many mountains and hills. He also noted that Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan is the tool that can publicise Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources, such as Ìyámọ̀pó Cave, Ṣàngó Cave, Relics of Defensive wall, Relics of Stones, and Bata Èrúgbà on Èrúgbà mountain, among others, in the town" (Abioye 2019, K.I.I). These findings support Keller's (2000 and 2008) argument that slogans are essential marketing tactics for creating a link to a particular brand when promoting tourism destinations. In addition, most of the respondents agreed that tourists could identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ̀tì through a slogan while few disagreed. This indicates that tourists can recognize Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain Ìgbẹ̀tì, among other destinations, through the slogan. One of the respondents observed that Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan would have more advantage in branding since it is shorter and starts with the name of the town, it will be easy to memorise. Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí explained that:

Ìgbétì slogan resembles 'I Love New York', a country slogan. New York slogan is one of the world's greatest slogans because it is short, easy to memorise and attached to the name of a place.Thus, tourists can identify and recognize New York from other destinations. Likewise, tourists will be able to distinguish Ìgbétì slogan from other destinations, and this will publicise the tourism resources of the town (Babáyẹmí 2019, K.I.I).

Most of the respondents agreed that the slogan, "*Ìgbétì Ilú Ọyẹ*", meaning "Ìgbétì Harmattan City" can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills while few respondents disagreed. These respondents believe that recognition and identification of the tourism destination through slogan will publicise Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other mountains as they attract tourists to Ìgbétì. Nevertheless, most of the respondents agreed that the slogan "Ìgbétì Ilé Ọyẹ́", meaning "Ìgbétì Harmattan City" is a true reflection of the Ìgbétì town, while few disagreed. Most respondents believe that slogan portrays and represents the image that the town is always cold during rainy and harmattan seasons. During a focus group discussion with some town men, they explained that during the cold season, the temperature is 22∘C. One of them, Mr David Idowu, noted that:

Apart from the fact the town is surrounded by many mountains and hills, it is located in the northern part of Ọ̀yọ́ State. Besides, Old Ọ̀yọ́ National Park is not far from this town. The geographical formation and forest contribute to this region's weather conditions (Idowu 2019, K.I.I).

Most of the respondents agreed that the slogan could brand Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì. Similarly, most of the respondents agreed that the slogan could develop tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì while only a few disagreed.

4.7   PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Table 4.2   DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE RESPONDENTS (TOURISTS)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	56.6%
Female	91	42.9%
Missing	01	0.5%
Total	212	100%
Age		
20–25	57	26.9 %
26–35	47	22.2%
36–44	46	21.7%
45–55	39	18.4%
56 and above	17	8.0%
Missing	06	2.8%
Total	212	100%
Religion		
Christian	89	42.2%
Muslim	98	46.2%
Traditional	20	9.4%
Missing	5	2.4%
Total	212	100
Marital Status		
Married	61	28.8
Single	143	67.5
Divorce	2	0.9
Widow/Widower	4	1.9
Missing	2	0.9
Total	212	100
Educational Status		
Primary	30	14.2
Secondary	41	19.3
NCE/ND	17	8.0
HND/B.Sc/B.Ed	63	29.7
Postgraduate	08	3.8
No formal education	51	24.1
Missing	02	0.9
Total	212	100

Ethnic Status		
Yoruba	122	57.5
Igbo	15	7.1
Hausa/Fulani	39	18.4
Egun	09	4.2
Igede	04	1.9
Idoma	04	1.9
Tapa	04	1.9
Others	08	3.8
Missing	07	3.3
Total	212	100
Occupation		
Farming	51	24.1
Trading	61	31.7
Civil/Public Servant	38	17.9
Others	53	25.0
Missing	03	1.4
Total	212	100
Nationality		
Nigeria	203	95.8
Benin Republic	05	2.4
Togo	03	1.4
Missing	01	0.5
Total	212	100

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

The above table shows that 56.6% and 42.9% of the respondents were male and female, respectively, and 0.5% did not specify their gender. This indicates that both sexes responded and participated during the Iyamopo festival in Igbeti; however, males participated more than females. Additionally, 26.9%, 22.2%, 21.7%, 18.4%, and 8.0% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25, 26 and 35, 36 and 44, 45 and 55, and 56 and above, respectively. This shows that respondents between the ages of 20 and 55 participated in the Iyamopo festival. Furthermore, according to the table above, 42.0% of respondents were Christians, 46.2% Muslims, and 9.4% Traditionalists, while 2.4% did not specify their faith. This indicates that Muslims and Christians responded more than traditional worshippers. The table also indicates that 28.8%, 67.5%, 0.9%, and 1.9% of the respondents were single, married, divorced, and widowed, respectively, while 0.9% failed to indicate their marital status. This shows that most of the respondents were married.

Furthermore, the above table shows that 14.2% of the respondents had primary education, 19.3% had secondary education, 8.0% had a National Diploma/National Certificate of Education, 29.7% had a Higher National Diploma/Bachelor of Science and Education, 3.8% had Postgraduate education, and 24.1% had no formal education while 0.9% did not indicate their educational status. This indicates that most of the respondents are literate. Similarly, 57.5%, 7.1%, 18.4%, 4.2%, 1.9%, 1.9%, and 3.8% of the respondents were Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa/Fulani, Egun, Igede, Idoma, Tapa, and other ethnic groups, respectively, while 3.3% did not indicate their ethnic group. It shows that Yorubas responded more than other ethnic groups. This is justifiable because Igbeti is a Yoruba community in Oyo State. Moreover, 24.1%, 31.6%, 17.9%, and 25.0% were farmers, traders, civil servants, and other occupations, respectively, while 1.4% failed to indicate their occupations. It implies that many of the respondents were traders/business managers. The table also shows that 95.8%, 2.4%, and 1.4% were from Nigeria, Benin republic, and Togo, respectively, and 0.5% of the respondents did not indicate their nationality.

4.7.1 TOURISTS' RESPONSE ON HOW SYMBOL CAN BE USED TO BRAND ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Table 4.3 indicate that 31.6% and 46.2% strongly agreed and agreed that *Àgbélé* symbol could be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and the tourism resources in Ìgbétì, 9.4% and 6.1%, strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 6.6% were neutral. This implies that Àgbélé symbol can brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and the tourism resources in Ìgbétì. The symbol is one of the brands destinations used to identify and recognise their tourism resources to distinguish them from others. The result further shows that 24.0% and 56.0% strongly agreed and agreed that Àgbélé symbol could be used to attract tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain in Ìgbétì while 9.4 and 13.6% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This indicates that Àgbélé symbol can attract tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain in Ìgbétì. A popular and attractive destination symbol, icon, or logo can be used as a promotional plan to brand and draw visitors to the destination's natural and cultural resources.

The result also indicated that 34.4% and 38.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Àgbélé symbol could be used to advertise Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources on top of it and other mountains, while 7.5% and 14.1% strongly disagreed and disagreed. This implies that Àgbélé symbol can publicise Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources on the mountain top, including Ìyámòpó cave/palace, Ṣàngó Cave, Three Interlocking Wells, and Relics of Wall, among others in Ìgbétì. This may be so because the symbol is a tool of communication. However, 22.6% and 30.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that tourists could visit Ìyámòpó Mountain, Ìgbétì without the knowledge of Àgbélé symbol, 22.6% and 11.7% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 12.2% remained undecided. They believe that some tourists can visit a destination through friends, family, invitation, word of mouth etc.

Likewise, 31.1% and 46.2% strongly agreed and agreed that using Àgbélé symbol to brand Ìyámòpó and other mountain will attract tourists to Ìgbétì those that strongly disagreed and disagreed were 8.4% and 8%. This implies that Ìyámòpó Mountain and other hills in Ìgbétì can be branded through Àgbélé symbol in Ìgbétì. This is true because there are many destinations with natural and geographical formation, such as Ìgbétì, but with Àgbélé symbol, which is a strong brand, Ìyámòpó and other

mountains and hills will gain more recognition by local and international tourists. In this regards, Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other resources are products while Àgbélé symbol is the brand that will make them more attractive to local and international tourists.The result further shows that 39.6% and 52.3% strongly agreed and agreed that foreigners could visit Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism sites through Àgbélé symbol, while 2.3% and 3.7% strongly disagreed and disagreed. According to the respondents, Àgbélé symbol is a communication tool that can provide information about facilities, products, or what tourists might expect in Ìgbẹ́tì. The study also shows that 27.8% and 53.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that symbols could promote tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì, 7.0% and 7.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Furthermore, 29.2% and 31.1% strongly agreed and agreed that they visit Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain through the symbol of Àgbélé, and14.6% and 13.2% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 11.7% were not sure. This shows that these respondents noticed Àgbélé symbol, and this attracted them to visit Ìyámọ̀pó in Ìgbẹ́tì. The result further established the findings when 18.3 and 20.7% strongly agreed and agreed that they did not notice any symbols before visiting Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and 20.7% and 25.0% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 15.0% of them remained undecided. This indicated that the population of tourists that saw Àgbélé symbol before the visit was more than those that did not see the symbol. This shows that Àgbélé symbol reflects the image of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other resources in Ìgbẹ́tì and therefore attract visitor to visit.

Similarly, 27.8% and 40.5% strongly agreed and agreed that Àgbélé symbol could brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì, 9.9% and 13.2% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 8.4% were not sure. This means that the Àgbélé symbol can be used to promote and attract tourists to the Ìgbẹ́tì Easter Monday Carnival. Likewise, 32.0% and 43.8% strongly agreed and agreed that Àgbélé symbol could brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì, 8.4 and 9.9% strongly disagreed and disagreed while 5.6% were undecided. Additionally, 15.0% and 12.2% affirmed strongly agreed and agreed that Àgbélé symbol cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ́tì, strongly disagreed and disagreed were, 27.3% and 28.7% while 16.5% of them remained neutral. Therefore, because the grand mean of 2.5 is equivalent to the acceptable mean of 2.5, the Àgbélé symbol

171

can be utilized to promote Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism potentials in Ìgbẹ́tì, as shown in the table below.

Table 4.3: Symbol and Branding of Ìyámọ̀pó and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì

SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, SD- Strongly Disagree, D- Disagree

S/N	VARIABLES	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	MEAN
1.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì.	67 (31.6)	98 (46.2)	14 (6.6)	20 (9.4)	13 (6.1)	2.86
2.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì.	51 (24.0)	106 (50.0)	6 (2.8)	20 (9.4)	29 (13.6)	3.12
3.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to advertise Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and the tourism resources on the mountain top.	73 (34.4)	82 (38.6)	11 (5.1)	16 (7.5)	30 (14.1)	2.64
4.	Tourists can visit Ìgbẹ́tì without the knowledge of Àgbélé symbol	48 (22.6)	65 (30.6)	26 (12.2)	48 (22.6)	25 (11.7)	2.43
5	Tourists can identify Ìyámọ̀pó mountain Ìgbẹ́tì, through symbol	72 (33.9)	103 (48.5)	5 (2.3Ò)	15 (7.3Ò)	17 (8.0)	3.22
6	Using Àgbélé symbol to brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains will attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì	66 (31.1)	98 (46.2)	13 (6.1)	18 (8.4)	17 (8.0)	2.71
7.	Foreigners can visit Ìyámọ̀pó mountain through Àgbélé symbol	84 (39.6)	111 (52.3)	4 (1.8)	5 (2.3)	8 (3.7)	3.26
8	Without using symbols, tourism can develop in Ìgbẹ́tì	44 (20.7)	53 (25.0)	19 (8.9)	47 (22.1)	49 (23.1)	2.11
9	The symbol can promote tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì	59 (27.8)	114 (53.7)	8 (3.7)	15 (7.0)	16 (7.5)	2.93
10	I visited Ìyámọ̀pó mountain, Ìgbẹ́tì through Àgbélé symbol	31 (14.6)	28 (13.2)	25 (11.7)	62 (29.2)	66 (31.1)	2.14
11	I did not notice any symbols before I visited Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains	44 (20.7)	53 (25.0)	32 (15.0)	39 (18.3)	44 (20.7)	1.96
12.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì	59 (27.8)	86 (40.5)	18 (8.4)	21 (9.9)	28 (13.2)	2.23
13.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	68 (32.0)	93 (43.8)	12 (5.6)	18 (8.4)	21 (9.9)	2.53
14.	Àgbélé symbol cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	32 (15.0)	26 (12.2)	35 (16.5)	58 (27.3)	61 (28.7)	1.32
Grand Mean							**2.53**

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Table 4.4: Aggregated table for how Symbol can brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì Town
A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree (Percentages in bracket)

S/N	VARIABLES	A (%)	u (%)	D (%)
1.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì.	165 (77.8)	14 (6.6)	33 (15.5)
2.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì.	157 (74)	6 (2.8)	49 (23.2)
3.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to advertise Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and the tourism resources on the mountain top.	155 (73)	11 (5.1)	46 (21.6)
4.	Tourists can visit Ìgbẹ́tì without the knowledge of Àgbélé symbol	113 (53.2)	26 (12.2)	73 (34.3)
5	Tourists can identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain Ìgbẹ́tì, through symbol	175 (82.4)	5 (2.3)	32 (15.3)
6	Using Àgbélé symbol to brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains will attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì	164 (77.3)	13 (6.1)	35 (16.4)
7.	Foreigners can visit Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain through Àgbélé symbol	195 (91.9)	4 (1.8)	13 (6)
8	Without using symbols, tourism can develop in Ìgbẹ́tì	97 (45.7)	19 (8.9)	96 (45.2)
9	The symbol can promote tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì	173 (81.5)	8 (3.7)	31 (14.5)
10	I visited Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, Ìgbẹ́tì through Àgbélé symbol	59 (27.8)	25 (11.7)	128 (60.3)
11	I did not notice any symbols before I visited Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains	97 (45.7)	32 (15.0)	83 (39)
12.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì	145 (68.3)	18 (8.4)	77 (23.1)
13.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	161 (75.78)	12 (5.6)	39 (18.3)
14.	Àgbélé symbol cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	58 (27.2)	35 (16.5)	119 (56)

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

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4.7.2 TOURISTS' RESPONSE TO SLOGAN AND THE BRANDING OF ÌYÁMÒPÓMOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Table 4.2 indicates that 19.8% and 17.9% strongly agreed and agreed they were familiar with the slogan 'Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Ọyẹ', meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City, 27.8% and 24.0% strongly disagreed and agreed, while 10.3% remain undecided. This specifies that some of the respondents were not familiar with the slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì. This may be so because most of them were not indigenes. Furthermore, the result also shows that 27.8% and 24.5% strongly agreed and agreed that "Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Ọyé", meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City' is new to them, 21.6% and 19.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 6.6% were undecided. This implies that tourists were not attracted to Ìgbẹ́tì because of the slogan since the percentage of the tourists that indicated the slogan was new to them was more than those that indicated it was not.

The result further confirms these findings because15.6% and 17.45 strongly agreed and agreed that the slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì attracted them to the tourism resources of the town, 28.7% and 25.0% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 13.2% could not decide. This indicated that many tourists were not attracted by the slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì, and this may be because they are not familiar with it. A tourist needs to be aware of a slogan of a destination because it helps in Identification, recognition and making a decision on going. Therefore, a well-known slogan to the tourists will communicate the destination image and theme and enhance the site's effective promotion. Additionally, 26.4% and 41.9% strongly agreed and agreed that Ìgbẹ́tì slogan could communicate information about Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources on it, while 10.3% and 10.3% strongly disagree and disagree, respectively.

Likewise, 17.9% and 33.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they visited Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism sites without any knowledge of the slogans, while 15.0 and 18.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. This means that more respondents visited without the knowledge of Ìgbẹ́tì slogan. This may be so because they are not familiar with the slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì. However, 32.2% and 39.6% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Ìgbẹ́tì slogans could brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and other mountains, and 7.0 and 9.4% of them strongly disagree and disagree, respectively, while 5.6% remained neutral. The result further revealed that slogan could develop Ìyámòpo Mountain and other tourism resources because

175

15.0% and 20.7% strongly agreed and agreed that Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì could be developed without slogans, while 21.6 and 29.2% strongly disagree and disagree, respectively.

Likewise, 29.7% and 41.9% strongly agreed and agreed that *"Ìgbẹ̀tì Ilu Ọyẹ́"* and "Ìgbẹ̀tì Harmattan City" can brand Ìyámòpó mountain tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì, and 7 and 11.7% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, while 9.4% remained neutral. Additionally, 29.7% and 34.9% strongly agreed and agreed that the slogan could brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ̀tì, 12.2% and 15.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed while 7.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. Likewise, 24.5% and 41.0% strongly agreed and agreed that the slogan could brand Ìyámòpó festival in Ìgbẹ̀tì, 9.9% and 18.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 5.6% were undecided. Moreover, 17.9% and 9.9% affirmed strongly agree and agree that the slogan cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ̀tì, strongly disagree and disagree were 24.5 and 33.9%, respectively, while 13.6% were undecided. These results show that slogans can brand Ìyámòpó festival and Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Finally, the table below shows that Ìgbẹ̀tì slogans can be utilized to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources for tourism destinations as the grand mean of 2.46 is nearly equivalent to the acceptable mean of 2.5.

Table 4.5: Slogan and Branding of Ìyámòpó and other resources in Ìgbétì
SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, SD- Strongly Disagree, D- Disagree

S/N	VARIABLE	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	MEAN
1	I am familiar with the slogan 'ÌgbétìIlé oye', meaning 'Ìgbétì Harmattan City'	42 (19.8)	38 (17.9)	22 (10.3)	59 (27.8)	51 (24.0)	2.14
2	Ìgbétì slogan can communicate information about Ìyámòpó mountain and other tourism resources	56 (26.4)	89 (41.9)	23 (10.8)	22 (10.3)	22 (10.3)	2.83
3	I visited Ìyámòpó mountain without any knowledge of the slogans	38 (17.9)	71 (33.4)	32 (15.0)	32 (15.0)	39 (18.3)	2.56
4	Ìgbétì slogans can brand Ìyámòpó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbétì	81 (38.2)	84 (39.6)	12 (5.6)	15 (7.0)	20 (9.4)	3.61
5	Slogan of Ìgbétì attracted me to visit Ìyámòpó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbétì	33 (15.6)	37 (17.4)	28 (13.2)	61 (28.7)	53 (25.0)	2.94
6	'Ìgbétì Ilé oyé', meaning 'Ìgbétì Harmattan City' is new to me	59 (27.8)	52 (24.5)	14 (6.6)	46 (21.6)	41 (19.3)	1.62
7	The tourism potentials in Ìgbétì can be developed without slogans	32 (15.0)	44 (20.7)	28 (13.2)	46 (21.6)	62 (29.2)	1.13
8	"Ìgbétì Ilé Oyé" can be used to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbétì	63 (29.7)	89 (41.9)	20 (9.4)	15 (7.0)	25 (11.7)	3.12
9	Slogan can showcase Ìyámòpó Mountain and other mountains in Ìgbétì.	52 (24.5)	94 (44.3)	5 (2.3)	29 (13.6)	32 (15.0)	3.03
10	Slogan can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbétì	63 (29.7)	74 (34.9)	16 (7.5)	26 (12.2)	33 (15.5)	2.89
11	Slogan can brand Ìyámòpó festival in Ìgbétì	52 (24.5)	87 (41.0)	12 (5.6)	21 (9.9)	40 (18.8)	2.64
12	Slogan cannot brand any festival in Ìgbétì	38 (17.9)	21 (9.9)	29 (13.6)	52 (24.5)	72 (33.9)	1.12
Grand Mean							2.46

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Table 4. 6: Aggregated table for Slogan and Tourism Development in Ìgbẹ́tì

A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree (Percentages in bracket)

	VARIABLE	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)
1	I am familiar with the slogan 'Ìgbẹ́tìIlé oye', meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City'	80 (37.7)	22 (10.3)	110 (51.8)
2	Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can communicate information about Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other tourism resources	37.7 (68.3)	23 (10.8)	44 (20.6)
3	I visited Ìyámọ̀pó mountain without any knowledge of the slogans	109 (51.3)	32 (15.0)	71 (33.3)
4	Ìgbẹ́tì slogans can brand Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì	165 (77.8)	12 (5.6)	35 (16.4)
5	Slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì attracted me to visit Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì	70 (33)	28 (13.2)	114 (53.7)
6	'Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé oye', meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City' is new to me	111 (52.3)	14 (6.6)	87 (40.9)
7	The tourism potentials in Ìgbẹ́tì can be developed without slogans	76 (35.7)	28 (13.2)	108 (50.8)
8	"Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Oye" can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì	152 (71.6)	20 (9.4)	40 (18.7)
9	Slogan can advertise Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other mountains in Ìgbẹ́tì.	146 (68.8)	5 (2.3)	61 (28.6)
10	Slogan can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì	137 (64.6)	16 (7.5)	59 (27.7)
11	Slogan can brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	139 (65.5)	12 (5.6)	61 (28.7)
12	Slogan cannot brand all festival in Ìgbẹ́tì	59 (27.8)	29 (13.6)	124 (58.4)

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

4.8   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain is a tourist site attracting numerous tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì annually. The mountain contains *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó cave/palace), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngo cave/palace), *Odo orogún Mẹ́ta* (three interlocking wells), relics of defensive wall and stones, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and *Ilẹ̀ Ìgbẹ́tì,* where past kings were interred. These are cultural symbols that attract indigenes and tourists outside Ìgbẹ́tì to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain for picnics, recreation, leisure and mountaineering. Ìyámọ̀pó cave (see Plate 4. 2), which is on top of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, symbolises the abode of the Ìyámọ̀pó deity. From time immemorial, caves have represented a natural shelter where indigenes keep items and seek security. A cave symbolises refuge and shelter. Genov (2017) noted that caves represent life, death, and fertility. It is seen as a portal to the afterlife, as a location that receives the souls of the deceased while also serving as a location from where they are reborn into new life. Gumo *et al*., (2012) observed that in many societies, including the Akamba of Kenya, it has been noted that God brought the first humans out of a hole or cave.

They also discovered that the Kenyan Bukusu myth claims that God originally resided in a cave on Mount Elgon. Ìyámọ̀pó cave also serves as an abode and ecological conservation for animals. According to Lobo and Morreti (2009), caves are crucial parts of a karst system because they intervene in the surface and subsurface processes of the physical environment and provide habitat for various species. Cave has mythology, historical, and cultural significance to the community. From time immemorial, the various cultures around the universe believed that some of the geographical features, such as mountains, hills, caves, and rivers, are symbolic and sacred and have to do with a town's historical background. Mountains, hills, and caves, in many cases, had served as shelter and protection during wars. Similarly, Tatay (2021) recorded that from the ancient time, caves have been used by different religions across the universe as housing, meditations, reflections, sculptures and funerals.

According to the author, several caves were used before the advent of Christianity as abodes, interment, religious sites and refuge for movable pastoral. He claimed that after Christianisation, most of the caves were venerated and worshipped. Okonkwo, Ezekaka and Igwemadu (2017) also pointed out that properly developed and utilized

caves are essential to the tourism industry. These increase the host community's economic, social, and environmental benefits. According to Rindam (2014), caves are a type of ecotourism that can draw tourists from all over the world. He found that cave tourism effectively motivates approximately 250 million tourists annually with probably USD2 billion incomes, offers 200,000 jobs and produces USD100 million household income per year. Ṣàngó cave (see Plate 4.5) was also located on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, symbolising the abode of Ṣàngó, the God of thunder and attracting tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

According to oral tradition, the three interlocking wells (see Plate 4.6) symbolise three women, Ìgbẹ̀tì ancestresses, who lived on the mountain when the town was still on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. These three women turned to wells after a disagreement between them and their husbands. The history is similar to the story of the three Ṣàngó's wives, *Ọya, Ọ̀ṣun* and *Ọbà. Ṣàngó* loved *Ọya* more than the other two wives, *Ọ̀ṣun and Ọbà, because Ọya* was powerful similar to *Ṣàngó.* According to Abimbola (2016), when Ṣàngó lost everything to inferno through the thunder that struck his palace, *Ọya, Ọba* and *Ọ̀ṣun* left the palace and turned to various rivers. Ọya retreated to the forest in Nupeland, where she met Ṣàngó and evolved into the goddess of *Odò-Ọya,* while Ọ̀ṣun and Ọbà became the gods of the rivers Oba and Ọ̀ṣun (River Niger). The results corroborate Gumo *et al.,* (2012) noted that people frequently believe that spirits or deities dwell in the beaches, oceans, rivers, and permanent lakes and that they must be appeased when they use the water in any way.

Tatay (2021) also found that the survival of sacred wells and sacred springs is a universal matter that interests religion, culture and geographies. The author stated that sacred wells have existed for a longer time and signify knowledge, purity, restorative spiritual and powerful woman, life and death, and underworld residents. He emphasised that the histories, rites and dedications around sacred wells are typically about the efficacy of its water. These three interlocking wells, findings established, attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. Also Kumar (2017) confirmed that cultural and natural resources are vital for tourism because they serve as cultural attractions. Similar findings were made by Adejuwon (1993) that the quantity and quality of an environment and natural, cultural, historical, and economic resources impact how quickly tourism develops there.

However, it was discovered that the wells had been polluted due to the inflow of tourists to the hill because some of the tourists threw many things inside the well. This can be regarded as the negative impact of tourism. Indeed, previous studies by Sunlu (2003) documented that destination with a high inflow of tourist and attractive natural resources are likely to experience inadequate refuse dumping, which can result in the pollution of serene environment, waterways, beautiful sites, and walkways. This indicates that uncontrolled tourism can threaten and pressure tourism destinations. According to Onah (2007) cited in Edim and Osaji (2014), if an appropriate inspection plan is established for visitors, it will overcome the disadvantages of tourism, including its harmful effects on the environment, lawlessness, security issues, transportation congestion, and insufficient electricity, among others.

Relics of defensive walls located on Ìyámòpó Mountain (see Plate 4.7) were built in 18 Century by Ìgbétì forebearers for protection against Fulani attack in the 19th Century. The word wall means to defend or protect. There are important and well-known vestiges of walls worldwide, such as the over 2,000-year-old Great Wall of China, which is still visible today. In 1985, UNESCO designated it a World Heritage Site. This great wall symbolises the nation and rich culture of China. Previous studies, by Saliu *et al.,* (2018) and Banister (1996), found that walls are used as a shelter, guard and defence against attackers. Saliu *et al.,* (2018) stated that many African nations built walls for several reasons. According to the authors, there are histories of the city walls in African countries, such as Ethiopia's Harare city gate, Mali's Hamdallahi, and Togo's Quarcoopome, among others. In Nigeria, there are Koso wall in Old Òyó Empire, the Benin wall, the Zaria wall in Kaduna, the Kano wall and others.

Saliu *et al.,* (2018) recorded that the Benin walls, the world's second-longest artificial structure after the Great Wall of China, were built between 800AD and mid-1400 AD. They pointed out that the wall was built as a protection against bordering opponents like the Òyó Kingdom and Sokoto Caliphate. According to the authors, the Benin wall is approximately 2,000 square miles and has a range of 10,000 miles. Saliu *et al.,* (2018) also found that the Kano city walls and the gate were built 900 years ago, between 1059 to1134 AD. According to these authors, the walls were purposely built for protection against attackers. Aremu (2017) also claimed that the Kòso wall in Old

Ọ̀yọ́ Empire, which is approximately 150 m, also provided safety against intruders. These indicate that ancient walls have served as protection from time immemorial. Apart from security purposes, Ìgbẹ̀tì relics of the wall serve a historical function because it is evidence of early settlement by Ìgbẹ̀tì forebearers.

Ìgbẹ̀tì relics of the defensive wall also symbolise how powerful and wealthy the town was in the past. Fortification, as noted by Aremu (2007) represents the size, wealth, and significance of the town or city it guards. Saliu *et al.* (2018) pointed out that city walls have diverse purposes: mystical, commercial, safety, historical tourism and artistic function. Ìgbẹ̀tì relics of the wall attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. Many tourists were sighted during Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival. Anon (2013 in Saliu *et al.*, 2018) recorded that in France, there are walls which include Guérande, Laon, Carcassonne, AiguesMortes Avignon, La Couvertoirade, Besançon, Brouage and others that attract many tourists and are already in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

Relics of stone on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain represent the pebbles that Ìgbẹ̀tì ancestors used to conquer the Fulani invaders (see Plate 4.8). It symbolises cooperation, steadiness, strength and resiliency among Ìgbẹ̀tì forefathers to stand against and conquer the warlords and invaders that waged war against the town in Eighteenth Centuries. It is a cultural heritage that stands as the history and identity of Ìgbẹ̀tì. A study by Tatay (2021) recorded that rocks and pebbles in most tourist sites and sacred areas have historical and religious significance. This agrees with Ekechukwu's (1990) findings that cultural sites and resources include historical cities and locations, museums, monuments of all sizes, sacred groves and shrines, festivals, and other artefacts from the past that serve as a reminder of the past of Nigerians. Bankole (2013) also discovered that cultural heritage is proof of how a community or group of people can defend their existence in the universe and is established over basic aspects of life, including handicrafts, language, customs, games, gastronomy, art, music, and traditional musical instruments; museums, monuments; places that serve as visible reminders of a people's past; World Heritage Sites (if any); business ventures; architecture; religious and national festivals; and the way of life generally. Relics of stone as a cultural heritage attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

Findings revealed that *Ojúbọ Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó shrine) located at the feet of

Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain (see Plate 4.9) is a sacred place where the priests commune with the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and the deities of other mountains and hills in Ìgbẹ́tì. This is in line with Ezenagu and Iwuagwu (2016) that a shrine is a religious centre where man communes with the gods. Weekly and annual rituals during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival are performed at the Ìyámọ̀pó shrine. Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes reverence Ìyámọ̀pó and other shrines because of the fear that the spirit of the deities and spirit reside there. Therefore, illegal farming, hunting, poaching and felling of trees are forbidden at Ìyámọ̀pó and other shrines. It is a sacred location set apart for the veneration or worship of a particular deity, ancestor, hero, martyr, saint, demon, or other like-minded characters of awe and devotion (Nwankwo and Agboeze, 2016).

Gumo *et al.,* (2012) also found that categories of shrines, which include family shrines, are linked with the family burial ground. According to them, a community shrine can be located in the forest, mountains, hills, rocks, caves, rivers and other places, and the public respects the holy and sacred places. The authors further explained that men and animals are forbidden to hide in shrines and holy places because of death, while animals, including goats, sheep, rams, dogs, birds, food and among others, are offered as sacrifices. To them, sacred groves are protected from all sorts of human activities because it is regarded as where human commune with God. Human groups put in place measures in the form of taboos to guard against human activities which include farming, hunting, deforestation, construction of roads and other illegal activities (see also Ukpokolo and Lameed, 2016).

Therefore, plants (flora) and animals (fauna) within Ìgbẹ́tì land are protected from environmental degradation. According to Singh *et al.,* (2017), landscape and natural resource preservation has long been a part of cultural belief in many regions of the world, including India, particularly in isolated rural and indigenous groups. The writers stressed how people considered themselves as part of a mystical network with their biophysical surroundings and how they view nature, beasts, lakes and rocks as forefathers that must be defended. Additionally, Diawuo and Issifou (2015) recorded that the several plants within the Bonab and Nnoo shrines at Kpatari, Ghana, are prevented from being used for wood, charcoal or bio-fuel) because of the mythology that spirits and deities are within the shrines. Likewise, Gumo *et al.,* (2012) emphasised that African religion is articulated in shrines and sacred places where

rituals are performed.

The authors stated that the graves of the forefathers often stand as shrines and are protected because of the anger of the ancestors. Groves and sacred places are protected by principles and laws by the custodian of the sacred places. *Ojúbọ Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó shrine) reflects the culture, values, religion and beliefs of the Ìgbẹ́tì people because these resources have traditional histories and cultural heritage and values. Additionally, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine has helped in the protection of the plants and animal species in Ìgbẹ́tì forest. This is in consonance with Adeyemi and Oyinloye's (2020) study that sacred forests all over the universe are connected series of ancient and traditional beliefs associated with groves, religious rites and prohibitions. The authors discovered that Ọ̀sun, the fertility goddess, one of the pantheon of Yorùbá gods, resides in Ọ̀sun Ọ̀sogbo Grove in Ọ̀sogbo, Ọ̀sun State has many cultural histories and cultural heritage that are being protected by taboos and bans to protect the flora and fauna that live in the grove.

Anoliefo *et al.,* (2015:10) also noted that the sacred groves in Uli town, Anambra State, Nigeria are *'Attammiri', Ogwugwuoba', 'Ihualaumuoma' and 'Ndiegungwu'.* According to the authors, these groves are connected with family shrines which are conserved by traditional and indigenous measures, which are rules, bans and restrictions that the local community uses to guard sacred forest to prevent the anger of the deities that reside there. The authors maintained that groves assist in the conservation of dominant and threatened flora and fauna species. During the annual Ìyámọ̀pó festival, the blood of the ram was sprinkled on the tomb of past kings to appease and renew the bond between the community and their ancestors. Gumo *et al.,* (2012:535) emphasise that the purity of a sacred grove in the African tradition is from time immemorial, and it is from one age to another. The sacrifices and rituals offered at the grove are assumed to be a request from ancestors.

According to the authors, the inability to offer such rituals and sacrifices from the people of the community is dangerous because it is believed that calamities will happen in the town. The authors also note that the destruction of sacred spaces by the community will provoke the ancestors, ironically supporting the conservation and sustainability of ecological zones. It was observed that the Ìyámọ̀pó shrine attracts many tourists and worshippers within and outside the country during the 2019

Ìyámòpó festival. Okpoko (1990) agreed that religious centres had been major cultural resource centres throughout human history. He stated that there were temples and shrines in ancient Greece and Rome that attracted followers from all over their empires. Okpoko further explained that numerous shrines in Nigeria had attracted devotees and lovers, such as the Omo Ukwu temple in Ohaofia and the Oshun shrines in Osogbo.

Ìyámòpó Cave, Ṣàngó Cave, Three Interlocking Wells and Relics of Defensive Walls on Ìyámòpó Mountain are suitable for picnic, recreation and sightseeing. There is a need to develop these resources to attract more tourists. For instance, there should be a slab on the hole between the 2nd layer of Ìyámòpó Mountain and Ìyámòpó cave. The hole is wide and hinders some of the tourists, especially young ones, from entering the cave. Solar light should be provided inside Ìyámòpó cave; this will allow tourists to move around the cave because the inside is dark. There should be a shed and seats in front of Ìyámòpó cave and Three Interlocking Wells for the visitors to sit and relax. Additionally, there should be a kiosk or selling booth where tourists can buy snacks, drinks, icecream, chocolates, souvenirs, and other things. There should be proper maintenance of Relics of Defensive Walls for posterity to maintain the cultural and historical features. Mobile toilets should be situated on top of Ìyámòpó Mountain to avoid the environment being defecated.

Easter Monday Carnival is an annual event that attracts tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain. It is a Christian religious celebration commemorating our Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection. The discovery stems from the fact that the carnival was initially known as the Easter Monday Galilee but was later renamed carnival to draw more indigenes and tourists to Ìyámòpó Mountain. In Ìgbétì, Easter Monday Galilee in the past was restricted to Christian worshippers but to attract local and international tourists, it was modernised to Easter Monday Carnival to allow other religions and non-indigenes to participate. This was achieved through the collaboration of the CAN Ìgbétì, with the town social groups and clubs. Former member of the Federal House of Representative of Nigeria and campaigner for the development of Ìgbétì tourism resources informed that Easter Monday Carnival of 2017 was tagged "Òkè Ìyámòpó Jeans Carnival" to sensitise both indigenes and non-indigenes about the tourism resources on Ìyámòpó Mountain and Ìgbétì. This attracted many Ìgbétì indigenes and many tourists from all

over the country.

Also, Nigerian Breweries from Ilorin came with the Juju band and organized a Raffle draw so that people could win a series of prizes. Other activities, which include a picnic, relaxation, mountaineering, music competition, and dancing competition, among others, were also introduced to transform the carnival and make it more attractive than how it was being organised in the past. Omotoso and Ogundiran (2016) also emphasised that Nigeria's cultural heritage is revealed in various viable and non-viable ceremonies, comprising song and dance, cultural fighting, and glimmers tournaments for kids and performances during festivals and events. Furthermore, Easter Monday Carnival fosters peace and unity among indigenes, non-indigenes, Christians, and other religions. Some of the informants revealed that Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ̀tì is not only celebrated by indigenes that are Christian alone but non-indigenes and other religions. Previous studies by Ogbenika (2020) also confirmed that festivals are normally employed to reinforce the connection of harmony between diverse societies in Yoruba land.

He noted that the Egúngún festival is not only celebrated by traditional worshippers alone but other religions participate because of the attraction. Lawrence-Hart (2014) also corroborated that the festival pulls people from different places together because it creates peace and harmony whereby people of different religions and ethnicities meet together to feast. She pointed out that festivals promote peace and togetherness between Christians and Muslims, particularly in Nigeria's southwestern region, where Christians join their Muslim relatives and friends to celebrate Eid-Fitri and Eid-Kabir, while Muslims join Christians to celebrate Christmas and Easter. The Ojúde Ọba Festival in Ogun State; Ògún Festival in Ondo State; Ọ̀sun Osogbo Festival in Osogbo, Ọ̀sun State; Ṣàngó Festival in Ọ̀yọ̀, Ọ̀yọ́ State; Ọlọ́jọ́ Festival in Ifẹ̀, Ọ̀sun State; the Eyo Festival in Lagos; the Abuja Carnival in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria; the Calabar Carnival in Cross River State; the New Yam Festival in the Eastern part and some other notable festival and events in Nigeria promote peace and unity because it attracts different religions and people from all works of life.

The 2019 Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó mountain, Ìgbẹ̀tì was attended by other ethnicities like Hausa, Igbede, Ebira, Igbos, Fulani, Kanuri, Tapa, Tiv, Egun and non-Nigerians from Benin Republic, Togo, and Ghana, among others. Ìyámọ̀pó festival is

symbolic and is associated with Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. It is an annual festival that is being celebrated in June in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is the period when Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes renew the covenant between the ancestor and Ìyámọ̀pó goddess as a remembrance of how the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess protected the forbearers of Ìgbẹ́tì from a series of wars when they were on the mountain. This shows that festival is a religious period where the community or worshippers renew the ancestral bond with the assurance that they are the source of protection from battles, sicknesses, diseases and calamities. In traditional African religion, hills, rocks and mountains are regarded as sacred because they are connected with spirits or divinities.

Ogbenika (2020) also found that cultural festivals are linked between the Yorubas and the spiritual being. In Yoruba land, according to the author, normal objects or geographical features that are significant and have an implication on people's lives can be worshipped as gods. Orga (2015) also claimed that the Ọ̀ṣun Ọ̀ṣogbo festival is associated with the Ọ̀ṣun, the goddess of the Ọ̀ṣun River in Ọ̀ṣun State, Nigeria. Fayose (1990:46) also confirmed that people pay homage to god and their ancestors during religious festivals. Ìyámọ̀pó festival is a traditional religious event that is observed with the assurance that is embedded in the cultural belief and the customs of the Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes. The study found that the Ìyámọ̀pó festival is based on rituals and sacrifices to the Ìyámọ̀pó goddess and the ancestors. Rituals are performed to celebrate those who have passed on to the world of their ancestors, according to a previous study by Ogbenika (2020).

They also provide a space for individuals to explore the profound and experience phenomena. Similarly, finding shows that preparations towards Iyamopo festival are very important in Igbeti. Akintan (2013) stated that females partake in festivals and sacred ceremonies among the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria. She maintained that in traditional festivals, Yoruba women are in charge of how sacred places of worship are purified. According to her, this indicates how Yoruba women have been able to display their functions in society through sacred activities. Findings also reveal that preparation for a traditional festival is important. This preparation precedes the beginning of traditional festivals in Yoruba land. Preparation varies from one place to another. Preparation symbolises the purification of the town, the priests and the worshippers against any form of sin, immoralities and evil.

Festival preparation in Ijebuland's Female-oriented Cults, Southwestern Nigeria, begins as soon as the chief priestess casts kola nut to confirm the day from *Imalẹ̀,* the day will be fixed, and the king, devotees, worshippers, and other well-wishers will be informed, according to Akintan (2013). In addition, according to Orga (2015), the Ọ̀ṣun Òṣogbo 12 days festival includes (Iwopopo) the physical and ritual cleaning of the pilgrimage route from the palace in the town's centre (*Gbáemú*) to the grove by the royal priestess (*Iyá Ọ̀ṣun*) and the priest (*Àwòrò*), who accompany the Oba's household with traditional chiefs, high chiefs, and other notables with dancing and singing. Most of the items for rituals during Ìyámọ̀pó festivals are symbolic. Indigenes believed that without these items, the goddess and the ancestor would not accept their requests. Kola nut is important in the ritual aspect of Ìyámọ̀pó worship.

It symbolises a good omen, fortune and every good thing. Chidume (2014) stated that the significance of the kola nut to the Igbo people is socio-ritualistic. It exceeds natural and carnal spaces; it ranges above the physical to the spiritual realm of the ancestors, mystical and divinities. He expressed that the kola nut goes beyond the symbol of generosity: For *ndiiche* worship, it is a sacred connection between the living and the deceased (forefathers). Similarly, Ukpokolo (2011) found that the kola nut, also known as Oji, is important among the Nanka people of Anambra state of Nigeria as it symbolises love and hospitality. According to the author, a species of kola nut, which is *Oji ugo (cola acuminate),* is for ritual and social purposes; it symbolises treasure, success and good fortune. She notes that *Ugo* is referred to as the eagle bird among the Igbos of South-Eastern Nigeria; the eagle symbolises wealth, splendour and exceptional life. Cold water, *ègbo* (process white maize), symbolises smoothness, purity and softness.

From time immemorial, the animal has been an object of sacrifices and rituals among different religions worldwide. Animals, such as cows, sheep, rams, goats, dogs, tortoises, pigeons, doves, rats, snails, cock, and hens, among others, are normally used for rituals during ceremonies and festivals. The white ram is the animal used for sacrifice during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival. It symbolises power, strength, action, energy, authority, and boldness. Ram without a spot or blemish symbolises a blameless or guiltless condition. It is believed that when the animal is slaughtered as a sacrifice, its blood will remit the sin of the person. Akintan (2013) noted that blood is a sign of

purification of sin and union among the deities and the adherents. According to Nabofa (1985), life is in the power of the blood, and the life or essence of the animal sacrifice is what the divinities take and consume, while the corpse is left behind or cooked and consumed by those participating in the ritual.

According to Nabofa (1985 cited in Akintan, 2013), the followers of African traditional religion believe that every drop of blood contains a mystical power because of its close connection to the vital life energy that permeates all things, both living and inanimate. Shedding animals' blood during festivals for remission of sins and inequities is not only peculiar to African traditional religion. It is also common in other religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Hindu, and Jewish, among others. There were singing and dancing at the residences of the four priests, namely, Abòkè, Elérúgbà, Abọsìn-Ó and Abọsànto. At Ìyámọ̀pó shrines, there were singing, dancing and chanting of Ìyámọ̀pó praises by Ìyámọ̀pó worshippers. Other worshippers, including Ògún, Ọbàtálá and Ṣàngó worshippers, also came to the shrine with bata drum to celebrate with Ìyámọ̀pó worshippers.

These findings are in line with Ogbenika (2020) that African cultural festivals and events are known by dance and music. Traditional instruments, such as the drums, native flute, gong, balafon, kora, and native guitar, give the music. Male or female, or both sexes in various circumstances, dance depending on the celebration and civilisation. Ìyámọ̀pó Festival promotes Ìgbẹ̀tì identity and heritage. According to Ezenagu and Olatunji (2014), festivals have a long history and are passed down from generation to generation. They are an expression of culture in any tradition. They are exciting celebrations that offer possibilities to remember and discover lifelong traditions. It unifies a group of individuals and gives a means for them to be recognised. They represent a priceless and irreplaceable heritage through which the people's image can be portrayed.

Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival draw both foreign and domestic tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and the tourism resources on it. Many tourists were observed during the 2019 Ìyámọ̀pó Festival and Easter Monday Carnival on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. This shows that festivals and events as cultural tourism attract tourists to Ìgbẹ̀tì. This confirmed Esu *et al.,* (2011) findings that events and festivals are facilitators for attracting tourists, particularly to destinations with high tourism potential. Raj and

Vignali (2010) stated that festival has a major influence on the growth of cultural tourism in communities and is perceived as a key instrument for recruiting visitors and establishing a community's image. According to Essien and Anthony (2019), many countries claiming to have the world's largest carnival celebration, such as the Caribbean, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, and Nigeria, among others, are deeply ingrained in society and are among the most significant exporters of culture.

Esu (2008) discovered that the 2007 Calabar Carnival attracted approximately one million viewers in Nigeria. 85.1% of the overall population was Nigerian, compared to 14.9% of non-Nigerians. Locals made up 46.6% of the crowd, while tourists and overnight trips made up 45.7% and 7.7%, respectively. According to Raj and Vignali (2010), the Leeds West Indian Carnival has recently become a popular annual event for the local community. Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival strengthen peace and unity between different indigenes, non-indigenes and different religious groups in the town. Other ethnic groups and different religious worshippers were seen during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival interacting and celebrating together. This shows that festivals and events in Ìgbẹ́tì bring harmony and cohabitation among the indigenes, non-indigenes, Christian, Muslim and traditional worshippers.

According to Esu *et al*. (2011), cultural events play a vital role in enhancing social contact in society. Likewise, Omotoso and Ogundiran (2016) documented that traditional celebration has helped stimulate community peace and unity. To these authors, the festival is a period when indigenes travel to their home town and join their communities to be in harmony. According to the authors, a festival is also an opportunity when matters concerning the progress of the community are deliberated upon, and the effort has benefitted many communities. Furthermore, they expressed that many cities and towns have infrastructural development because of the festival. Ìyámọ̀pó and Easter Monday Carnival serve as tools that showcase the image of Ìgbẹ́tì for tourism development. This shows that festivals and carnivals allow the host community to show their pride and enable the tourists to experience the culture, history, beliefs, identity, customs, religion and values of indigenes.

Tourists that visited during the 2019 Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival had opportunities to visit some of the tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó and other

mountains, which include the Ìyámòpó cave/palace (*Ilé Ìyámòpó*), Ṣàngó cave/palace (*Ilé Ṣàngó*), Three interlocking well, (*Odò orogún méta*), relics of the defensive wall, relics of stones and Ìyámòpó shrine (*Ojúbọ Ìyámòpó*). The experience of the tourists and their interaction with some of the community members during the Ìyámòpó festival and their visit to some of these resources gives them opportunities to experience the culture and Identity of the community. This agrees with Raj and Vignali (2010), that events and festivals can reveal community identity, particularly at multicultural events and festivals in the United Kingdom. Esu *et al*. (2011) found that events give local communities a chance to develop and exhibit their culture, leading to a sense of value and belief (by individuals) in the community and chances to exchange experiences and knowledge.

4.8.1 ÀGBÉLÉ SYMBOL AND ÌGBÉTÌ SLOGAN AS TOOLS FOR BRANDING ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

A symbol is any object, action, image, or linguistic expression (such as a slogan), assigned meaning to represent things, locations, ideas, thoughts, and concepts that are distinct from their literal meanings. Clifford Geertz (1973 in Ukpokolo, 2011) affirmed that symbols can refer to things, events, qualities, or relationships and can serve as a vehicle for perception. For example, rain is a climatic condition or natural occurrence which also symbolises great blessing, abundance, comfort, and relief in Africa (Gumo *et al.,* 2012*)*. The symbol has played a significant role in human life from time immemorial. Human actions, deeds, thoughts, beliefs, religion, rituals, culture, values, and norms, among others, are filled with symbolic meanings, indicating that a symbol can stand for a multiplicity of meanings. This is why Bynum (1986), as cited in Ukpokolo (2011), stated that a symbol is 'polysemic,' meaning that it has multiple interpretations. For example, the dove symbolises peace and Holy Spirit to Christians; however, to the ordinary person, it is a bird.

Similarly, the red colour symbolises love. February 14 of every year is Valentine's Day, when people wear red cloth to celebrate lover's day. To some people, red connotes danger, hazard, perils and evil. To Christians, red signifies the blood of Jesus Christ. Symbols can also be vocal, nonverbal, written, or unwritten and can take the shape of words, noises, gestures, concepts, or visual representations to express ideas and thoughts. This indicates that verbal and non-verbal symbol influences human

notions and opinions. This is why, according to Ukpokolo (2011), symbols are visible in various aspects of man's existence, whether written or unwritten, because they impact man's attempt to comprehend his environment. Nonverbal symbols that carry messages and meaning include words on the page, drawings, photographs, and gestures. The greatest symbolic method of human communication is language. Language is used to communicate with one another as well as to express one's thoughts and ideas. Beliefs, identities, personalities, moral standards, ethical ideals, virtues, religion, signs, sacrifices, arts, and civilizations are examples of cultural symbols.It also includes any object, image, icon, or linguistic communication that signifies or represents a people's customs and traditions.

Gonzalez (2018) and Oladumiye (2018), documented that cultural symbol is a physical expression that communicate a group of people's beliefs or simply connotes meanings among them. According to the authors, Christianity employs the cross as a cultural symbol. In contrast, Islam utilizes the moon and star, and the Star of David is a cultural symbol used by Jews. Each culture uses a unique set of symbols that are distinct. Cultur al symbols can be traits or aspects of a destination in the form of geographical and natural resources, such as hills, mountains, rocks, rivers, forests, caverns, waterfalls, and climatic conditions, when they are infused with meanings by the people of a community through social consensus. Jaffe (1964) confirm that symbols can be in the form of natural objects like mountains, rocks, rivers, hills, wind, sun, star, stones, plants, animals, men, valley or artificial, such as motor car, bicycle, ladder, houses, boat or immaterial like circle, square, triangle, numbers because human being in their symbol making tendency always converts things into symbols, thus conferring object with cultural meaning, mostly in sacred and graphic arts.

 It can also be festivals, events, ceremonies, monuments, history, folklore and traditions that are peculiar to a destination. Cultural symbols are used to identify a group or people. They can also be used to conserve, change, strengthen, and reject culture in various ways. Cultural symbols often serve to sustain cultures that are on the verge of extinction by establishing borders that stratify and discriminate. Objects cannot do any of this on their own; symbols can only have meaning if they are imbued with human thoughts, beliefs, ideas, and emotions. It is fairly common for people to use symbols to convey their inner visions and mystical or religious experiences.

Myths, language, proverbs, and rituals are all potent cultural symbols. Oladumiye (2018) also claims that humans can express their cultural self through myth language, rituals, names, and other symbols. Recently, cultural symbols have been used to communicate the resources and characteristics of a place or tourism destination.

Some of the cultural symbols in the form of the natural, geographical and climatic conditions that represent and give information about a destination are being used to distinguish a tourism destination from another. Tourism symbols are acts, objects, images, and verbal communication that represent and attract visitors to tourism destinations to enjoy tourism resources and services, which can be natural landscapes, including hills, rocks, mountains, rivers, caves, waterfalls, rock shelters, good weather, historical and art monuments and events like festivals and tourism facilities like hotels, restaurants, bars and motels. This is illustrated in the use of the natural landscape of Ìgbẹ́tì, which include hill and the cold weather as tourism symbol that communicates the tourism resources of the town to attract tourists. Increasingly, the emergence of the tourism industry has prompted governments and tourism organisations in developed countries to position their countries and destinations as main tourism sites through branding. Several nations have turned to brand techniques to establish a brand and distinguish a desirable travel destination on the international level.

According to Barisic and Blazevic (2014), branding is the process of identifying or differentiating a good or service through a brand. A brand can be a name, word, sign, symbol, or any combination of these things that are used to identify a good or service and set it apart from the competition. Blain *et al.,* (2005) defined destination branding as any advertising practice that enables the creation of a competitive identity based on a branded destination. According to these authors, competitive identity distinguishes places from one another, conveys the assurance of notable knowledge that is distinctively related to the destination, and aids in the association and strengthening of pleasant recollections of the destination and knowledge, to construct a positive image that will allow customers to choose or prefer to visit one destination over others. The decision will eliminate the difficulty of finding a destination or danger (see UNWTO, ETC (2009); Blain *et al*. (2005); Ritchie & Ritchie (1998) and Aaker (1991). As a component of branding, symbols can communicate and inform tourists about the

destination's tangible and intangible aspects. Additionally, as an essential component of branding, the slogan can transmit and interpret the destination features in a way that prepares the tourist's mind about what he will experience at the time of the visit. It is a short linguistic expression that represents destination characteristics.

Many tourist sites worldwide have adopted geographical landscapes, flags, animals, plants, flowers, arts, and words as their symbol and slogan. Examples of some countries' tourist symbols are sunshine, light, and the kangaroo are symbols of confidence, strength, excitement, dynamism, and vitality in Australia. The sign has aided Australia's marketing efforts in the tourism sector (Melkumyan, 2011). Belarus symbol is a plant that symbolises uniqueness and familiarity. The flag of the United Kingdom represents a wide range of hospitality. Bulgaria is represented by a plant and a sun, which represent nature, warmth, and welcome. Canada is a flag that represents a diverse history, natural beauty, friendliness, and honesty. Thailand is a plant that represents cultural variety. Examples of slogans of some countries, according to Barisic and Blazevic (2014), are Canada - "Keep Exploring"; Florida - "When You Need It Bad, We Got It Good"; Croatia - "The Mediterranean as it Once Was"; Costa Rica - "No Artificial Ingredients" and others (Barisic and Blazevic, 2014).

Selected cultural symbols of Ìgbẹ́tì in the context of this study are Àgbélé symbol (see Plate 4.1) and *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* (Ìgbẹ́tì slogan), meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì the harmattan city'. These cultural symbols are peculiar to the people and represent the town's rich cultural tourism resources and climatic conditions. Àgbélé Mountain is currently used to represent Ìgbẹ́tì in a different forum. It symbolises the rich cultural tourism and landscape of the town. Àgbélé was a woman that turned into a rock. Though the story of Àgbélé may be obnoxious according to the king and other members of the Ìgbẹ́tì community, a version of the story shows the position of women in African traditional society. In Yoruba land, women's roles within the family are embedded in ethics, customs, and regulations. She provides her children with food, water, shelter, and education because she will not want them to suffer. Àgbélé might have decided to steal the yam powder to feed her children because of poverty. Àgbélé's husband was a polygamist, according to a version of the story, and he might not be able to take care of all the children and his wives because African family structures are based on polygyny.

Men have the right to marry many wives and bear many children. Women are frequently left to care for themselves and their children alone. Therefore, many African women are in charge of their children's well-being and are willing to go to any length to meet their requirements, putting them in a position of great responsibility. According to Ukpokolo (2018), the Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria noted that *ìyá ní wúrà means* 'mother is gold'. Atlas in travel (2017) recorded that there are some rocks and hills that depict man and animal. They are Mount Tibrogargan, which resembles an older man or gorilla in Glass House Mountain National Park in Australia. Pedra da Gavea in Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, resembles a human face with a crown on the head. Mount Loura, or the Lady of Mali Guinea, resembles a beautiful woman. Hong and Huang (2001) also pointed out that pedestal rocks are called Thousand Heads, mushroom rocks and Queens Head in the Peace Island and Yehliu area of Keelung city, Taiwan, because they are interpreted as the formation of a stone object formed under acute or critical condition.

The history, mythology, and belief about Àgbélé rock pedestals contradict the scientific findings that rocks are formed by the climate, storms, high temperature, and corrosion into rare and uncommon forms that depict humans, animals and other nature. An Àgbélé rock pedestal is a mushroom-shaped rock that is formed by weathering, which is caused by wind, water or salt intrusion at the rock base. Bourke and Viles (2007) noted that pedestal rock is a natural rock whose shape resembles a mushroom. It is formed from wind erosion or when running water of rocky boulders persists for many years from the bottom to the top. Despite the aesthetic quality and significance of the Àgbélé symbol to the Ìgbẹ́tì community, some members of the community do not recognise its importance. The negative attitude of some of the community members might be a result of various historical beliefs that Àgbélé is a woman that stole yam powder. Nevertheless, this has not in any way affected the use of Àgbélé symbol. The elite of Ìgbẹ́tì recognises Àgbélé hill as an attractive symbol that can showcase the image and identity and promote tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì.

Ọ̀yọ́ State Tourism Board has declared the Àgbélé symbol as the Ọ̀yọ́ State tourist centre to attract more tourists. Àgbélé symbol was sighted at the king's palace (see Plate 4.24); it is the logo of the Ọ̀yọ́ State Tourism Board and Olorunsogo Local Government, Ìgbẹ́tì (see Plate 4.25), the statue of Àgbélé symbol at the Total Filling

Station round about Ìgbẹ́tì (Plate 4.26). Àgbélé symbol in front of Ìgbẹ́tì town hall (see Plate 4.27), the symbol of Àgbélé in front of one of the hotels in Ìgbẹ́tì (see Plate 4.28), Àgbélé symbol and the slogan, Ìgbẹ́tì Onílé Ọyẹ́ appears on the souvenir distributed by one of the indigenes, Prince Oyekunle (see Plate 4.29), and most of the societies and groups in Ìgbẹ́tì (see Plate 4.30). These points to the significance of Àgbélé rock pedestals to the people of Ìgbẹ́tì.

Plate 4.24:   Àgbélé symbol at the palace of Onìgbẹ́tì of Ìgbẹ́tì
              Source: Fieldwork (2015)

Plate: 4. 25: The Logo of Olorunsogo Local Government with Àgbélé symbol in the middle

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 4.26:   Statue of Àgbélé symbol at the Total Filling Station roundabout Ìgbẹ́tì
                    Source: Saint Capture, Ìgbẹ́tì (2020)

Plate 4.27:   Àgbélé symbol in front of Ìgbẹ́tì town hall
Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 4.28: Àgbélé symbol in front of one of the hotels in Ìgbẹ̀tì

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Plate 4.29: Àgbélé symbol and the slogan, Ìgbẹ́tì Onílé Ọyẹ́ appears on the souvenir distributed by one of the indigenes, Prince Oyekunle

Source: Fieldwork (2019)
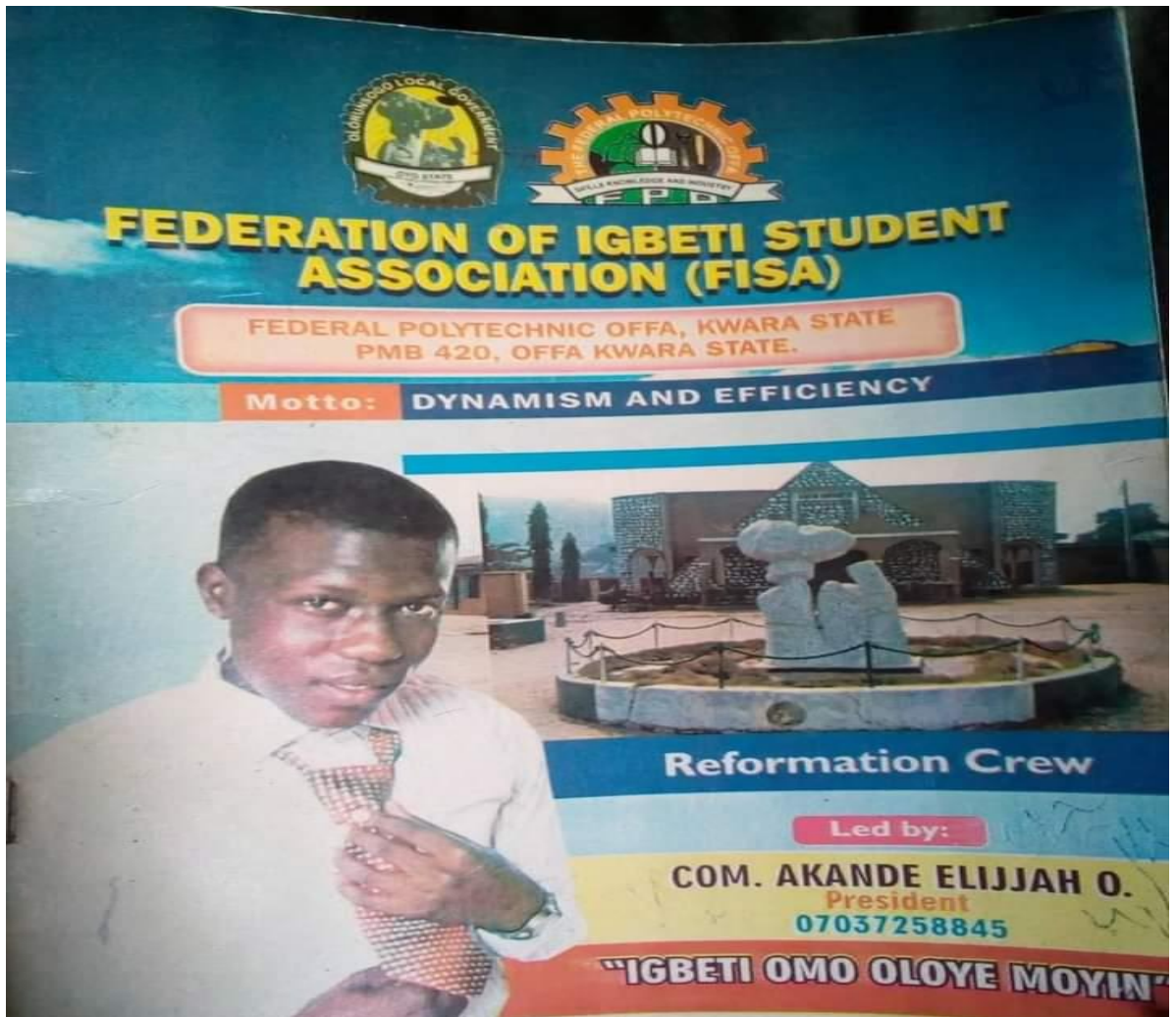
Plate 4.30: Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbétì slogan is the logo and slogan of the Federation of Ìgbétì Student Association of the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

This shows that Àgbélé symbol can contribute to tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì because of its extraordinary aesthetic quality. Kolawole and Anifowose (2011) discovered that globally, beautiful rock formations have served as economic resources in destinations due to their aesthetic and visual attractiveness. Àgbélé rock is suitable for picnics, relaxation and leisure. Àgbélé symbol has a higher possibility of making tourists more aware of Ìyámòpó. In Nigeria, Iyakwari and Lar (2012) found that Riyom rock in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria is an attractive rock of a magnitude that weathered to form a particular shape of the rocks that look as if they are arranged on top of the other. Riyom Rock is the pride and symbol of Plateau State, according to Iyakwari and Lar (2012). These points to the values and meaning of Àgbélé symbol in promoting tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì.

Findings indicate that tourists can identify Ìgbẹ́tì as a tourism site through Àgbélé symbol because most of the respondents agreed with this position. They believe that there is competition among tourism destinations with similar resources. Once a tourist identifies a destination through symbols, he/she will be able to differentiate it from another, enabling him to decide whether to visit or not. According to these respondents, many tourist destinations have hills, mountains, rocks and caves like Ìgbẹ́tì in Nigeria. However, since Àgbélé symbol is distinct and unique in Ìgbẹ́tì, tourists will be able to differentiate Ìgbẹ́tì tourism resources from another. This finding is consistent with Matečić and Perinic-Lewis (2018) that identification and differentiation are two important branding activities. Olumo rock is a symbol of tourism in Nigeria. The symbol is peculiar to Abeokuta, Ogun State, and tourists can identify the tourism resources in Ogun state through the Olumo symbol, while Riyom rock in Plateau State is the tourism symbol of the state. Therefore, Àgbélé symbol is an essential component that can identify and distinguish Ìgbẹ́tì tourism resources.

Findings also established that many tourists visit Àgbélé rock whenever they come to Ìgbẹ́tì because of the attraction. They explained that Òyọ́ State Tourism Board chose Àgbélé as a logo because of its uniqueness and attraction. Attraction is comparable to bait that draws tourists to a destination; without attraction, tourists cannot be motivated to a tourist site. Vengesayi *et al.,* (2009) also found that for tourism to thrive there should be attraction within a destination. Olatunji and Ezenagu (2016) validate that attractions are the basic features of tourist sites and the main purpose of

tourists visiting any destination because tourists search for fascinating and stimulating tourist features that will bring satisfaction and significant memory. According to these authors, Attractions mainly comprise artificial structures, natural landscapes or events. According to Okpoko & Okpoko (2002), the basis of our tourism destination is provided by cultural attractions. Therefore, the Àgbélé emblem as a cultural attraction can help Ìgbẹ́tì boost tourism. Most of the respondents believe that the Àgbélé symbol is a brand that can identify and differentiate Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain from other related mountains and hills in Nigeria. A destination brand is a symbol, logo name, phrase, sign, or expression that identifies and distinguishes the destination while also bringing the capability of remarkable tourism knowledge that is notably linked to the place, according to Manhas *et al.,* (2012).The finding is in line with Almeyda-Ibánez and George (2017), Barisic and Blazevic (2014), Yuan (2014) and Sonnleitner's (2011) that geographic areas can be branded, just like products, to raise awareness of the region among tourists and attract them to a particular destination. Therefore, Àgbélé symbol helps tourists to locate Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other resources for tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì.

Similarly, Àgbélé symbol promotes Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì because the majority of the respondents revealed that they are major festivals like Ọ̀sun Ọ̀sogbo in Osogbo, Ọ̀sun State, and other major festivals in Nigeria. They believe that if these festivals are well branded by Àgbélé symbol, it will attract more tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì. Esu and Arrey (2009) noted that cultural festivals should be branded as destination attractions. According to these authors, cultural festivals that are effectively marketed by Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) will attract, increasing the number of tourists and revenue.They also found that a well-branded event benefits from co-branding with the sites**.** This indicates that if Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival are branded with Àgbélé symbol, it will publicise and showcase Ìyámọ̀pó Mountainin Ìgbẹ́tì.

Most of the respondents believe that further employment of cultural symbols to brand tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì will raise awareness of the town's tangible and intangible resources. They also believe that an attractive symbol, such as Àgbélé distinguishes Ìgbẹ́tì from other competing destinations, providing travellers with a unique and remarkable experience while also increasing tourist inflow. Tourists will boost the

local economy, attract local and international businesses, create jobs for youth and women, protect the environment and cultural heritage, and help to alleviate poverty. This follows previous research by Morgan *et al.,* (2002), who discovered that using a symbol to brand a destination helps distinguish it from the competitors while also lowering additional costs for tourists. Similarly, Mikić *et al.,* (2017) discovered that if a tourist site has a good and appealing brand, its tourist product may be efficiently promoted and appeal to prospective tourists, increasing foreign investment. According to the author, a visually appealing symbol might aid travellers in deciding how to visit a destination.

Despite the visual quality and importance of Àgbélé symbol to the Ìgbẹ̀tì community, findings revealed that the rock is not well developed. It was found that community members have turned the base and the surroundings into a waste site and public toilet. There seems to be a division between the elites and rural dwellers on the value placed on Àgbélé hill. Interestingly, while the elite class see Àgbélé as a symbol of beauty that can promote tourism in Ìgbẹ̀tì, rural dwellers continue to make the inglorious historical belief that Àgbélé represents a woman that stole yam powder. Nevertheless, this has not in any way affected negatively the use of the Àgbélé symbol as a tourism logo by Ọ̀yọ́ State Tourism Board, Olorunsogo Local Government, hotels, associations and groups in Ìgbẹ̀tì.

Ìgbẹ̀tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́, meaning (Ìgbẹ̀tì the Harmattan City), a cultural symbol of Ìgbẹ̀tì, is a short phrase that communicates about the climatic and landscape of the town. It originated from Ìgbẹ̀tì *oríkì (*praise poetry). *Ìgbẹ̀tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́,* meaning "Ìgbẹ̀tì the Harmattan City", possesses the potential to brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Findings from the respondents (indigenes) revealed that whenever they hear '*Ọmọ ọlọye'* meaning 'the Child of Harmattan', it means the people are referring to Ìgbẹ̀tì. Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan can communicate and advertise about Ìyámọ̀pó hill and other tourism resources, including *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó palace/cave), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó palace), *Odo orogun meta* (Three interlocking well), relics of the defensive wall, relics of stones, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, *Ilẹ̀ Ìgbẹ̀tì* (Ìgbẹ̀tì Land). Huang and Lin (2017) argued that public messages could be conveyed through symbols, such as slogans. (Doyle, 2014) also found that slogans are the verbal or written text used in marketing and advertising. The purpose of advertising and marketing a product is for the consumer to

be aware of purchasing such a product.

Advertising a tourism destination through a slogan informs tourists about the resources of a destination to decide whether to visit or not. The slogan also allows tourists to remember the experience of a destination. Ìgbẹ̀tì's slogan communicates about the cold weather of the city because the town is surrounded by many mountains and hills. These findings agree with the previous study of Eduardo (2016) that landscape structures can pull tourists to destinations. The author opines that for such a site to be well known and to attract tourists, it should be vested with images and symbolic meanings. In advertising tourist attractions, Keller (2002) emphasized that slogans are important marketing tools for creating a connection to a particular brand.

It was also discovered that visitors could recognize Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ̀tì by its slogan. Tourists can quickly identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, according to the respondents, because the name Ìgbẹ̀tì is in the slogan. According to Foster (2012), brand names should be incorporated in slogans to avoid tourists mixing them with rival companies. According to Huang and Lin (2017), customers remember an effective tagline increasing their willingness to buy. Therefore, tourists will not make a bad judgment if they can identify resources or tourism destinations through slogans. This result corroborates Letho *et al*., (2014)'s claim that if the destination is unknown, including the name in the slogan will help the tourists to identify it. Huang and Lin (2017) also support the idea that slogans should begin with the site name to help travellers connect with the destination. This indicates that when a tourism destination is branded with a slogan, it will attract tourists and improve the site's socio-economic status.

Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan can brand the Easter Monday Carnival and the Ìyámọ̀pó festival. The majority of indigenes believe that publicizing the Ìyámọ̀pó festival and the Easter Monday Carnival will bring more tourists to Ìgbẹ̀tì, which will benefit the Ìgbẹ̀tì's economic and socio-cultural development. Previous findings by Getz *et al.,* (2018) confirm that festivals can support a place's economic and cultural development. Raj and Vignali (2010) also claim that festivals significantly influence the growth of cultural tourism in a particular location and are important tools for attracting tourists and building a community's image. During festivals and events, tourists have opportunities to experience a new culture that is different from the ones they are

familiar with. *Pasya et al.,* (2016) also claimed that visitors are attracted to see events that sometimes have proximity to their culture or even new culture and values, which are not known before.

From the findings of this study, one can rightly affirm that Àgbélé symbol and the slogan, *Ìgbẹ̀tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* (Ìgbẹ̀tì Harmattan City) reflect the rich tourism potentials of Ìgbẹ̀tì. The use of Àgbélé symbol is widespread in Igbẹ̀tì, suggesting its acceptability as the mark of the cultural identity of the people and a symbol of tourism. Using Àgbélé symbol with Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan, which symbolises the climatic condition of the town to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourist destination, stands to enable the tourist to recognise Ìgbẹ̀tì as a tourism destination. While Àgbélé symbol is currently extensively used in the promotion of tourism and Ìgbẹ̀tì people's identity, *Ìgbẹ̀tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* used concurrently with Àgbélé symbols whenever it appears either as a picture, statue, logo, emblem, and sign, among others, will further reinforce the tourism potential of Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ̀tì as a tourism destination. This position agrees with what is obtained in many countries where symbols and slogans are used concurrently in promoting tourism destinations.

Typical examples that can be cited here include the tourism symbols and slogans of Tanzania. The slogan, "Tanzania, the land of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and Serengeti", is used together with the symbol of Mount Kilimanjaro, palm tree and Giraffe, which represents the rich tourism potential of the country. Similarly, the tourism symbol of Canada is a maple leaf with the slogan, "Glowing Heart". Maple leaf represents the cultural values and Identity of Canada. Australia's tourism symbols are kangaroo and sunshine, light with the slogan, "Tourism Australia". Sunshine, light, and the kangaroo are symbols of confidence, strength, excitement, dynamism and vitality Melkumyan (2011). The author further pointed out that symbol has aided Australia's marketing efforts in the tourism sector. Additionally, Malaysia's tourism symbols are hornbill and hibiscus flower, with the slogan, "Visit Truly Asia, Malaysia" representing the country as tourist destination. Malaysia was once more promoted using the new slogan "Visit Truly Asia Malaysia," with Truly Asia as the keyword. The logo for the 2020 campaign is also quite different from earlier versions. It's the first time that Malaysia's destination logo includes both natural and cultural components.

The logo depicts the country's flora and wildlife in a Malaysian batik style, emphasizing Malaysia as a country with a diverse culture and natural history (Ser, 2022). In the same vein, Vojnovi (2020) noted that distinctive slogans and symbols could draw tourists to a particular destination for a specific experience. The above instances lend support to the position of this study that *Ìgbéṭì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* and the Àgbélé symbol are excellent key strategies for the promotion of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination in Ìgbéṭì. There is no doubt that Àgbélé symbol is more popular than Ìgbéṭì slogan in the promotion of tourism in Ìgbéṭì as most of the tourists agreed that they are not aware of the slogan before they visit Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourist's attractions in Ìgbéṭì. Nevertheless, concurrently using the two cultural symbols will reinforce each other in promoting tourism.

4.9   ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN ÌGBÉṬÌ

The economy of Ìgbéṭì town improves during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival. Hotels, guest houses, bars and restaurants, transportation, supermarket, food vendors, petty traders and many other businesses made many gains in Ìgbéṭì. Some of the youth, namely, okada riders and some of the guest houses and hotel operators, confirm that there was high patronage during the festival and carnival in the town. This shows that festivals can boost the economy of a tourist site. The two most significant tourism-related events in Nigeria's Cross River State, according to Ukwayi *et al.,* (2012), are the Calabar Carnival and the Leboku new yam festival. The authors claim that the two events have made their entire state a popular tourist location in recent years. Additionally, the events have helped the state's government, community members, and other market competitors, especially in revenue production, employment creation, and supporting the expansion of other regional businesses. According to Essien and Anthony (2019), carnival activities significantly influence the economic growth and expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The findings further revealed that small and medium-scale businesses like photography, recharge card retailers, make-up artist, and rentals were patronised due to the influx of tourists during Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbéṭì. These generated lots of income for the owners of those businesses. According to Attah (2019), the Calabar carnival fiesta is significantly associated with poverty reduction in terms of income production in the Calabar Metropolis. Similarly, Muresherwa *et al.,*

(2017) stated that cultural tourism provides various benefits to the hosting community, which cannot be overstated because it enhances the destination's image value, produces jobs, and fosters skill development findings of this study back up. Esu *et al.,* (2011) noted that event tourism is a catalyst for destination economic development. Through cultural events, according to Ismail (2011), revenue flow into the country as the total gross domestic product (GDP) from tourists through renting out parks and recreational centres and the 5% sales tax, amounting to several thousands of naira going into government coffers. British Council and Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (2016) reported that UK festivals and cultural events are worth £1.1 billion and music festivals generate £1.3 billion, which both cost £2.4 billion for the UK economy.

Similarly, this study revealed that the symbol and slogan could develop tourism in Ìgbẹ̀tì. This is possible because effective destination branding can enhance the promotion of tourism sites. Slogans can communicate and create awareness about Ìgbẹ̀tì's rich and beautiful landscape, weather, climate, sunshine, beautiful scenery and historical relics to the tourists to attract them. When a destination experiences a higher turnout of tourists, it will improve the environmental growth of the region's economy and society. Saliu *et al.,* (2018) recorded that the growth of tourism is considered an important tool in supporting economic progress, employment creation, poverty alleviation, promoting cultural values and sustaining national development goals. Tourism is significant to the sustainable economic growth of both developing and developed nations. Tourism's growth is considered an improvement in well-being (Mirimi, 2016).

According to Hankinson (2015), the tourism industry grew rapidly after World War II because of its ability to boost economic growth by creating jobs, attracting international and foreign investors, increasing gross domestic product, conserving biodiv ersity and ecosystems, promoting local cultural values and heritage, and developing rural communities. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD, 2017), tourism has been gradually promoting Africa's development since the 1990s. According to this organization, global tourism to Africa increased by 6% annually. From 1995 to 2014, tourism export income increased by 9% per year. From $69 billion in 1995–1998 to $166 billion in 2011–2014, tourism's

overall GDP contribution to Africa's GDP grew from 6.8% to 8.5%. (UNCTD, 2016) also discovered that between 2011 and 2014, tourism generated more than 21 million jobs on average, accounting for 7.1% of total employment in Africa. This shows that the tourist industry provided 1 out of every 14 employment between 2011 and 2014. Additionally, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD, 2016), Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12, and 14 strongly emphasise the contribution that tourism makes to economic growth, job creation, and cultural promotion. Since tourism is a cross-cutting issue affecting many different industries, it affects many SDGs, including infrastructure development, decent work, gender equality, and poverty.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study examined the cultural symbols and slogans in Ìgbẹ́tì and how they can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourist destination. The study presented the background in Chapter One. The viability of tourism as a source of income was emphasized in both advanced and developing nations worldwide, as well as the need to diversify the country's economy, notably Nigeria's, away from oil and gas to maximize employment and income generation opportunities. Nigeria has enormous tourism potential that is mostly untapped, with most of this potential located in rural areas. Competition among tourism destinations necessitates that tourist destinations and local communities should identify and develop their tourism resources in the face of globalization, to establish local identity by utilizing branding as a tool. The chapter also explained that tourism symbols offer informational or directional and effective ways of attracting visitors to tourism destinations or rural communities. This viewpoint serves as a starting point for presenting the problem statement, which states that tourism research has not paid enough attention to the use of symbols for tourism development in Nigeria, and hence the necessity to use symbols and slogans as promotional tools for tourism destinations. The study concluded that Ìgbẹ́tì symbols and slogans should be used as feasible instruments for promoting Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì as a destination. This is tied to the study's specific aims, which are:

    i.   Identify selected cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì.

    ii.   Examine Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì.

    iii. Ascertain the extent to which the Àgbélé symbol can be used for branding Ìyámọ̀póMountain as a tourism destination.

    iv. Ascertain the extent to which the Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountainas a tourism destination.

Chapter Two presented a review of a collection of literature on the topic of the current study. The review was conducted under the under-listed subheadings: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues, Methodological Issues, and Summary of Literature and Identified Gaps that the thesis addressed. A review of Conceptual Issues exposed the definition of brand and branding, place and destination branding, image branding, cultural tourism, cultural and natural resources, festivals and carnival, contributions of festivals to tourism, tourism promotion in Nigeria and tourism potentials of Ìgbẹ́tì. A review of Theoretical Issues was also explained by adopting Clifford Geertz's Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology (1973) and the Modernisation theory of Rostow's Economic Growth (1960). A review of Methodological Issues was also discussed; this entails the similar methodologies different authors used for the studies in terms of qualitative and quantitative, sample, data methods and questionnaire design. Finally, the review of Empirical Studies was also discussed by analyzing the findings of this study with those of earlier investigations. All these reviews led to gaps in the literature review, which justified the need to conduct this study. The methodology used for this research is a descriptive ethnographic one that is anchored on the qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry. Quantitative data were collected through focus group discussion, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and participant observation, while a quantitative structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from 212 tourists randomly selected to determine the use of Àgbélé symbols and Ìgbẹ́tì slogans to brand Ìyámòpó Mountain. Tables, frequencies, and percentages were utilized to report the quantitative data, while content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data.

Chapter Four presented the data and discussion of findings: Cultural symbols in Ìgbẹ́tì include the Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City. Àgbélé symbol is a hill approximately 85 m in height in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is a rock pedestal resembling a woman carrying a load on her head and a baby on her back. There are different historical versions of Àgbélé hill that Àgbélé was a woman before he turned to rock because she stole a yam powder. Despite the negative belief about Àgbélé hill, the beauty and aesthetic value of Àgbélé has transcended the negative belief of some members of the Ìgbẹ́tì community because the elites have used it to project the image and identity of Ìgbẹ́tì. For instance, the symbol of Àgbélé is used as a logo of the Olorunsogo local government in Ìgbẹ́tì and Ọ̀yọ́ State Tourism

Board logo. Language carries values and is used to project how men view their environment. Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City emanated from Ìgbẹ́tì praise poetry *(oríkì)* and totem of Ìgbẹ́tì. Ìgbẹ́tì's praise name is known as *Ọlóyẹ́,* meaning the owner of the harmattan or cold weather. The totem is *Ìjí,*which can be interpreted as a storm. The child of harmattan, storm and sixteen hills from Ìgbẹ́tì poetry show the climatic condition of the town.

Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain attracts tourists due to the tourism resources on top and around the mountain, such as *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó palace/cave), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó palace), *Odò orogún mẹ́ta* (Three interlocking wells), relics of the defensive wall, relics of stones, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine and festival and event, including Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival that are associated with Ìyámọ̀pó mountain. Some of the Easter Monday Carnival programmes include praise worship, sermon, prayers, and film show and mountaineering, cultural dance, a music competition, mountain climbing, a raffle draw, Juju musical dance and a quiz competition. Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain has appeased annually during the Ìyámọ̀pó festival through sacrifices, rituals, and prayers as a remembrance of the covenant between her and her Ìgbẹ́tì ancestors. The relationship between Ìgbẹ́tì ancestors and Ìyámọ̀pó deity form the traditional and religious practices, customs, norms and belief system in the town. Findings from qualitative and quantitative data show that the Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City' can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination. These symbols have already been used to project the image of Ìgbẹ́tì, and tourism in Ọ̀yọ́ State.

5.2   CONCLUSION

Destination branding enables tourists to recognise and identify tourism destinations. Using branding elements such as symbols and slogans to brand natural and cultural resources in tourism destinations helps to advertise and showcase tourism destinations. The act of representing or imbuing objects with a symbolic meaning or character is known as symbolism. In contrast, symbolism uses objects, acts, images, and linguistic expressions to signify things, places, ideas, thoughts, and concepts by giving meanings that are different from their particular meanings. Any object, picture, icon, or verbal communication that denotes or depicts a people's customs and traditions, such as principles, identities, attributes, Moral principles, ethical standards, qualities, religion,

symbols, offerings, the arts, and civilization, among others, is referred to as a cultural symbol. Cultural symbols can be traits or aspects of a location in the form of geographical and natural resources, such as hills, mountains, rocks, rivers, forests, caverns, waterfalls, and climatic conditions, when they are infused with meanings through social consensus from a community's inhabitants. The study also concludes that symbols as a branding component can communicate and inform tourists about a place's physical and metaphysical characteristics. Additionally, the slogan as an essential component can transmit and interpret the destination features in a way that prepares the tourist's mind about what he will experience at the time of visit. It is short linguistic expressions that represent destination characteristics. Many tourism destinations worldwide derived their symbol and slogan from the geographical landscape, flag, animals, plants, flowers, arts and words. Various authors recognized the contributions of many authors on symbols and slogans as branding and marketing strategies for promoting tourism resources in tourism destinations (see, for instance, Ruiz *et al.,* 2019; Matecic and Perinic Lewis, 2018; Khan *et al.,* 2018; Huang and Lin, 2017; Zeybec and Unlu, 2016; Zhang *et al.,* 2016; Letho *et al.,* 2014; Khan, 2014; Perreira *et al.,* 2012, among others). Additionally, Ser (2022) and Vojnovi (2020) noted that using the symbol and slogan of a destination simultaneously can attract tourists for a specific experience.

Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* (Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City) are strong tools for branding Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain. The Àgbélé hill is the symbol of Ìgbẹ́tì, which symbolises the landscape and the rich cultural tourism of the town. Àgbélé is an 85-metre-high rock pedestal representing a woman carrying a child on her back and a load on her head. Àgbélé symbol was sited in many places in Ìgbẹ́tì. It is also the logo of Ọ̀yọ́ State Tourism Board, Olorunsogo Local Government Ìgbẹ́tì and most of the Ìgbẹ́tì town societies and groups. This study established that tourists can identify Ìgbẹ́tì as a tourism destination through Àgbélé symbol, attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì, brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources, such as Ìyámọ̀pó Cave/Palace, Sàngó Cave, Three Interlocking Wells, Relics of Defensive Wall, Relics of Stones, Ìyámọ̀pó Shrine, promote Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì and develop tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì. The study also concludes that *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì the Harmattan City", is a short phrase that communicates about the climate and landscape of the town. It originated from Ìgbẹ́tì praise poetry *(oriki)*.

The study further concludes that *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* can communicate and advertise about Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources like *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó palace/cave), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó palace), *Odò orogún mẹ́ta* (Three interlocking well), relics of the defensive wall, relics of stones and Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, it can also communicate about the cold weather of the city, brand Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and other hills, that advertising Ìyámọ̀pó festival and Easter Monday Carnival and develop tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì. The study further concludes that Ìyámọ̀pó mountain is a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì that attracts tourists to other tourism resources like *Ilé Ìyámọ̀pó* (Ìyámọ̀pó palace/cave), *Ilé Ṣàngó* (Ṣàngó palace), *Odó orogún mẹ́ta* (Three interlocking well), relics of the defensive wall, relics of stones, Ìyámọ̀pó shrine, *Ìgbẹ́tì* (where past kings were interred) and festival and event like Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival. The study also established that Ìgbẹ́tì indigenes believe that Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain served as protection for Ìgbẹ́tì forbearers in the 19th Century against a series of wars.

From the qualitative data, the study emphasised that 82.4%, 73%, 77.8% and 74% of the respondents agreed that tourists could identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain through Àgbélé symbol, Àgbélé symbol can attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó, Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources, respectively. Similarly, 68.3%, 77.8%, and 68.8% agreed that *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* could communicate information about Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and can advertise other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain, respectively.

The study concludes that using Àgbélé symbol with Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, which symbolises the climatic condition of the town, to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourist destination, stand to enable the tourist to recognise Ìgbẹ́tì as a tourism destination. Branding tourism destinations, using local symbols and slogans, can advertise tourism destinations.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that the Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ́tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́* are cultural symbols that are effective for branding Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain as a tourism destination in Ìgbẹ́tì. In light of the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

i.   There is a need to design a new tourism logo that will integrate Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan, *Ìgbẹ̀tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́*. This will make the slogan to be more popular and attract local and international tourists to Ìgbẹ̀tì.

ii. It is necessary for Ọ̀yọ́ State and Olorunsogo Local Government to give Àgbélé symbol and Ìgbẹ̀tì slogan more publicity by advertising it on radio, television, magazines, newspapers, fliers and social media to attract and enhance patronage of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain by local and international tourists.

iii. There is a need for the tourism agencies in Nigeria to formulate policies that will authorize stakeholders of tourism destinations to develop branding strategies in the form of symbols and slogans that are peculiar to their destinations which can interpret and advertise the tourism potentials of their tourism sites.

iv. Awareness and maintenance of Àgbélé symbol and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì are poor. Therefore, there is a need for the Ọ̀yọ́ State Government and Olorunsogo Local Government to develop and educate the community about the cultural potential of the Àgbélé rock pedestal, which is the symbol of Ìgbẹ̀tì and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Furthermore, the administration should make efforts via the media and telecommunication to inform the community about the importance and benefits of tourism potential in their environment and particularly about Àgbélé rock which is the symbol of Ìgbẹ̀tì.

v.   Olorunsogo local government needs to set up a committee that will be responsible for the supervision, cleaning and sanitation of the tourism destination in Ìgbẹ̀tì.

vi. There should be a shed and seats in front of Ìyámọ̀pó cave and Three Interlocking Wells for the visitors to sit and relax. Additionally, there should be a kiosk or selling booth where tourists can buy snacks, drinks, icecream, chocolates, souvenirs and other things. Proper maintenance of Relics of Defensive Walls is necessary to maintain the cultural and historical features.

vii. The deficit of infrastructural facilities hinders tourism development, as noticed in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Absence of infrastructure, including decent roads, electricity, lodging, bars, restaurants, hotels, guest houses, supermarket, gift shops, health centre, water, security post/station, good network service, car park, mobile toilets, and other facilities in the study area are major barriers to tourism development. The road that leads to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain is in bad condition. Therefore, there is a need for Ọ̀yọ́ State government to rehabilitate the road to enhance tourists' patronage of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ̀tì. Furthermore, the state government should provide and also encourage private investors and organisations to provide the aforementioned infrastructural facilities for the tourists that wish to stay more than a day on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

viii. The present security situation in Nigeria has adverse effects on tourism destinations. Ọ̀yọ́ state government and Olorunsogo local government should provide solid security arrangements to safeguard the tourists' lives and property.

ix. Currently, Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains are managed by the local custodian and the chief in charge, *Abọ̀kè, Elérúgbà, Abọsin-Ó and Abọsànto.* There should be government-trained staff that can serve as tour guides so that tourists would have opportunities of visiting other tourist resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain.

x. Climbing Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain is difficult and slippery. Therefore, the Ọ̀yọ́ State Government should build an elevator, rails, or steps to allow more tourists to climb to the top of Ìyámọ̀pó.

xi. There should be a committee in Ìgbẹ̀tì community that is concerned about the development of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in the town. These individuals should be in charge of raising funds for the growth of the town's tourist attractions.

xii. To attract more international tourists, the Ìyámọ̀pó celebration and the Easter Monday Carnival should be advertised on television, radio,

newspapers, leaflets, handbills, and websites for social networking, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

xiii. To promote ecotourism in the area, the killing of wild animals during Ìyámòpó festival should be discouraged. People need to be educated that using wild animals for sacrifice to deities will affect biodiversity and ecotourism in the area. Other ritual activities that are shrouded in secrecy, especially for women in Ìyámòpó festival and Ìgbéṭì land, should be modernized to allow other religions to participate and to also increase the turnout of tourists.

xiv. Organisers and different societies in Ìgbéṭì should consult and partner with telecommunication companies, including MTN, GLO, and AIRTEL and corporate organisations like Cadbury, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nestle, Indomie, YALE, and Nigerian Flour Mill, among others, to sponsor programmes and activities,such as Raffle draw, cultural dance, music competition and others during Ìyámòpó festivals and Easter Monday Carnival.

5.4   LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The researcher was not allowed to enter and capture some of the events at *Ilé-Ìgbéṭì* because it is forbidden for a woman to enter where Ìgbéṭì former kings were interred.

5.5   CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

According to this study, branding tourism destinations in Nigeria will make it easier for tourists to recognize and distinguish one location apart from another. Previous research on tourist sites in Nigeria has concentrated on the resources for tourism, developing tourism potentials, heritage tourism, and cultural tourism. The findings of this study show that destination branding promotes and showcases its attractions.

This study also found that a destination's cultural tourism resources, such as its mountains, hills, rocks, rivers, trees, and climatic conditions, might be employed as slogans and symbols for the location. However, earlier research on branding has concentrated on nation branding, identity and image, nation branding and rebranding, the brand identity of tourism destinations, and the impact on patronage, which is based

on the construction of an infrastructure for a tourist destination in Nigeria. The Àgbélé Rock represents Igbeti's symbol and identity. Similarly, Igbeti's slogan, *Ìgbẹ́tì Ìlú Ọyẹ́,* which depicts the town's climate, also attracts more tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì.

The potentials, exploitation, and marketing of traditional festivals and events are the foundation of several studies on cultural festivals and events in Nigeria.This study contributes to knowledge because it shows that branding cultural festivals with distinctively local slogans and symbols will increase tourist patronage. Iyamopo festival and Easter Monday Carnival attract more tourists due to Àgbélé symbol and Igbeti slogan.

5.6   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings show that apart from Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì, the town is surrounded by other mountains, hills, rocks and other cultural tourism resources. Therefore, further research should investigate other tourism resources' potential for tourist attractions. Furthermore, the tourism potential of other festivals apart from Easter Monday Carnival and Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì should also be investigated.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TOURISTS
CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, NIGERIA

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SYMBOLS AND BRANDING OF ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN FOR TOURISM DESTINATION

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Instruction: Please answer the following questions by ticking the boxes against the option(s) that truly reflect your choice.

1. Gender: (a) Male (b) Female

2. Age: (a) 20-25 (b) 26-35 (c) 36-44 (d) 45-55

     (e) 56 and above

3. Religion: (a) Christianity (b) Islam (c) Traditional

     (d) Others………………………….

4. Marital Status: (a) Single (b) Married (c) Divorced

     (d) Widow

5. Educational status: (a) Primary (b) Secondary SSCE (c) ND/NCE

     (d) HND/ B.Sc (e) Postgraduate

     (f) Non-formal Education

6. Ethnic group: (a) Yoruba (b) Igbo (c) Hausa/Fulani

     (d) Egun ()(e) Igede ()(f) Idoma (g) Tapa

     (h) Others ------------------------------

7. State of Origin………………………………………………………………

8. Local Government ………………………………………………………….

9. Community/Town …………………………………………………………

10. Occupation: (a)   Farming ()(b) Trading ()(c)   Civil Service/ PublicService ()(d) Others……………………..

11. Nationality: (a) Nigeria ()(b) Ghana ()(c) Senegal ()

(d) Benin Republic ()(e) Togo ()

(f) Others …………………

SECTION B: SYMBOLS AND BRANDING OF ÌYÁMÒPÓ MOUNTAIN FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ÌGBẸTÌ

Àgbélé Hill (Rockpedestals) is a symbol of Ìgbẹtì(see plate 1 below), it is one of the sixteen hills in the town. The physical appearance of Àgbélé hill resembles a woman with a basket on her head and a child strapped to her back. Symbols is a visual image representing an idea and takes the form of words, sounds, gestures, ideas or visual images and are used to convey other ideas and beliefs. Tourism symbols are effective ways of attracting visitors to tourism destination or rural community thereby linking tourist to the product and services which can be landscape, historical and art monuments, events like festivals and tourism facilities.

ÀGBÉLÉ HILL THE SYMBOL OF ÌGBẸTÌ

Instruction: Kindly look at plate one above and tick as appropriate. KEYS: SA –

Strongly Agree, A – Agree, U- Undecided, SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree

S/N	VARIABLE	SA	A	U	SD	D
1.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì.					
2.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to attract tourists to Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain in Ìgbẹ́tì.					
3.	Àgbélé symbol can be used to advertise Ìyámọ̀pó mountain and the tourism resources on the mountain top.					
4.	Tourists can visit Ìgbẹ́tì without the knowledge of Àgbélé symbol					
5	Tourists can identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain Ìgbẹ́tì, through symbol					
6	Using Àgbélé symbol to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain will attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì					
7.	Foreigners can visit Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain through Àgbélé symbol					
8	Without using symbols tourism can develop in Ìgbẹ́tì					
9	Symbol can promote tourism development in Ìgbẹ́tì					
10	I visited Ìyámọ̀pó mountain, Ìgbẹ́tì through Àgbélé symbol					
11	I did not notice any symbols before I visited Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains					
12.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì					
13.	Àgbélé symbol can brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì					
14.	Àgbélé symbol cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ́tì					

Field survey, 2019

SECTION C: SLOGAN AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ÌGBẸ́TÌ

Ìgbẹ́tì people have a slogan which states, "*Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Oye*" meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City". Slogan is short phrases which communicate descriptive information about product, service or brand, serving as central advertising theme. slogans communicate and deliver the theme and image of tourist destination to tourists.

Instruction: Kindly tick as appropriate. KEYS: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, U- Undecided, SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree

S/	VARIABLE	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	I am familiar with the slogan '*Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé oye*', meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City'					
2	Ìgbẹ́tì slogan can communicate information about Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources					
3	I visited Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain without any knowledge of the slogans					
4	Ìgbẹ́tì slogans can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì					
5	Slogan of Ìgbẹ́tì attracted me to visitÌyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì					
6	'Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé oye', meaning 'Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City' is new to me					
7	The tourism potentials in Ìgbẹ́tì can be developed without slogans					
8	"Ìgbẹ́tìIlé Oye" can be used to brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other tourism resources in Ìgbẹ́tì					
9	Slogan can showcase Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other mountains in Ìgbẹ́tì.					
10	Slogan can brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì					
11	Slogan can brand Ìyámọ̀pó festival in Ìgbẹ́tì					
12	Slogan cannot brand any festival in Ìgbẹ́tì					

Field survey, 2019

APPENDIX II
Questions Guide for the Respondent (Indigenes)
Symbol and Branding of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

SN	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Can tourists identify Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain through Àgbélé symbol?		
2.	Can Àgbélé symbol attract tourists to Ìgbẹ́tì?		
3.	Do you think Àgbélé symbols can brand Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other mountains in Ìgbẹ́tì?		
4.	Can Àgbélé symbol promote Ìyámọ̀pó Festival in Ìgbẹ́tì?		
5.	Can the Àgbélé symbol promote Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì?		
6.	Do you think Àgbélé symbol can brand other tourism resources on Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other mountains?		
7.	Can symbol reflect the identity of Ìgbẹ́tì?		
8.	Can symbol develop tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì town?		

Field Survey, 2018.

Slogan and Branding of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other mountains

SN	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Slogan can communicate information about tourism destination.		
2.	Tourists can identify Ìgbẹ́tì through slogan.		
3.	The slogan, "Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Oye" meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City" can brand Ìyámọ̀pó and other mountains.		
4.	Is the slogan "Ìgbẹ́tì Ilé Oye" meaning "Ìgbẹ́tì Harmattan City" true reflection of the Ìgbẹ́tì town?		
5.	Can the slogan brand Easter Monday Carnival in Ìgbẹ́tì		
6.	Can Ìgbẹ́tì slogan brand Ìyámọ̀pó Festival in Ìgbẹ́tì?		
7.	Can slogan develop tourism in Ìgbẹ́tì town		

Field Survey, 2018.

APPENDIX III

List of Key Informants and the interviews between 2015 -2019

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Gender	Age	Place of Information
1.	His Royal Highness, Oba Emmanuel Oyekan Oyebisi	Traditional ruler	12/12/2015	M	70	Palace of Onìgbẹ́tì
2.	Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní,	Priest	12/12/2015 18/06/2018 22/10/2018 06/12/2018 14/12/2018 28/06/2019	M	62	Abòkè compound
3.	Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú	Priest	12/12/2015 22/10/2018 23/10/2018 14/12/2018 28/06/2019	M	64	Elèrúgbà's compound
4.	Chief Rahmon Ajadi	Priest	14/12/2018 28/06/2019	M	42	Abọsànto's compound
5.	Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu	Priest	14/12/2018 28/06/2019	M	45	Abọsìn-O compound
6.	Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé	Chief	14/12/2018 28/06/2019	F	62	Onìgbẹ́tì Palace
7.	Hon Bòṣun Oladele	Former member, House of Representative, Abuja	22/04/2019	M	56	Ìyámòpó Mountain
8.	Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin	Farmer	24/06/2019 29/06/2019	M	54	Folarin compound
9.	Prince Olajide Oyekunle	Retired Civil Servant	22/042019	M	65	Ìyámòpó Mountain
10.	Prince Sarafadeen Abioye	Business/Student	10/04/2017 24/06/2019	M	35	Palace of Onìgbẹ́tì

11.	Prince Kabiru Abioye	Business	10/12/2018	M	38	Palace of Onìgbétì
12.	Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí	Retired Civil Servant	12/12/2015	M	64	Àgbélé hill
13.	Mr David Idowu	Civil Servant	13/12/2018 22/04/2019 24/06/2019	M	52	Olorunsogo Local Government Secretariat
14.	Pastor E. A. Adedeji	Clergy	22/04/2919	M	56	Ìyámòpó shrine
15.	Mrs Toyin Olabimtan	Trader	29/06/2019	F	46	Ìyámòpó shrine
16.	Mrs Hannah Olaokun	Trader	22/04/2019	F	65	Ìyámòpó Mountain
17.	Mr Biodun Kehinde	Student	22/04/2019	M	22	Ìyámòpó Mountain,
18.	Mr Mukaila Ogundiran	Business	22/04/2019	M	24	Ìyamòpó Mountain,
19.	Mrs Ajoke Afolabi	Trader	22/042019	F	58	Ìyámòpó Mountain
20.	Mrs Taiwo Àyànlọlá	Trader	22/06/2019	F	46	Abòkè Compound
21.	Mrs Alaba Ojelola	Tailor	22/06/2019	F	32	Abòkè Compound
22.	Mr Gbenga Oladele	Farmer	25/06/2019	M	44	Elèrúgbà's compound
23.	Mr. Kunle Egbewole	Farmer	25/06/2019	M	52	Elèrúgbà's compound
24.	Mr Jubril Afolabi	Photographer	29/06/2019	M	26	Ìyámòpó shrine
25.	Mr Kehinde Okesiji	Business/ Okada rider	29/06/2019	M	24	Ìyámòpó shrine

Field Survey: 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

APPENDIX IV

Focused Group Discussion with the priests and custodians of Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain and other hills on 14/12/2018 at Elérúgbà's compound, Ìgbẹ̀tì

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Age	Gender	Place of Information
1.	Chief ÀyànlọláỌládùnní,	Priest (Abọ̀kèof Ìgbẹ̀tì)	14/12/2018	62	M	Elérúgbà's compound
2.	Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú	Priest (Elérúgbàof Ìgbẹ̀tì)	14/12/2018	64	M	Elérúgbà's compound
3.	Chief Rahmon Ajadi	Priest Abọsànto of Ìgbẹ̀tì)	14/12/2018	42	M	Elérúgbà's compound
4.	Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu	Priest (Abọsìn-O of Ìgbẹ̀tì)	14/12/2018	45	M	Elérúgbà's compound

Field Survey, 2018.

Focused Group Discussion with the Chief and Heads of Quarters on 15 Decemberat Oja-Oba Ìgbẹ̀tì

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Age	Gender	Place of Information
1.	Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé	Iyalode of Ìgbẹ̀tì	15/12/2018	62	F	Oja-Oba, Ìgbẹ̀tì
2.	Prince Olajide Oyekunle,	Retired civil Servant	15/12/2018	65	M	Oja-Oba, Ìgbẹ̀tì
3.	Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin	Farmer	15/12/2018	60	M	Oja-Oba, Ìgbẹ̀tì
4.	Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí	Retired civil Servant	15/12/2018	64	M	Oja-Oba, Ìgbẹ̀tì

Field Survey, 2018.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 1) with community women on 22 April 2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Age	Gender	Place of Information
1.	Mrs Hannah Olaokun	Trader	22/042019	65	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
2.	Mrs Janet Ajao	Teacher	22/042019	48	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
3	Mrs Abake Sarumi	Fashion Designer	22/042019	35	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
4.	Mrs Ajoke Afolabi	Trader	22/042019	58	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
5.	Mrs Esther Obilana	Teacher	22/042019	54	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 2) with community women on 22 June 2019 at Abọ̀kẹ̀'s Compound

6.	Mrs Taiwo Ayànlọlá	Trader	22/06/2019	46	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
7.	Mrs Abibat Salako	Trader	22/06/2019	52	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
8.	Mrs Olapeju Idowu	Trader	22/06/2019	56	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
9.	Mrs Afusat Ọládùnnî,	Hairdresser	22/06/2019	36	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
10.	Mrs Serifat Ige	Trader	22/06/2019	40	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
11.	Mrs Alaba Ojelola	Tailor	22/06/2019	32	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀ Compound
12	Mrs Aina Rabiu	Trader	22/06/2019	50	F	Abọ̀kẹ̀

	Olajire					Compound

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 3) with community women on 26 June 2019 atÌyámọ̀pó Shrine

13	Mrs Toyin Olabimtan	Trader	26/06/2019	46	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
14	Mrs Hadijat Odebode	Trader	26/06/2019	32	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
15	Mrs Abike Alade	Hairdresser	26/06/2019	29	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
16	Mrs Taibat Rabiu	Tailor	26/06/2019	32	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
17	Mrs Abosede Oladire	Teacher	26/06/2019	42	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
18	Mrs Ebun Ogundejo	Civil servant	26/06/2019	45	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
19	Mrs Saudatu Ogundokun	Teacher	26/06/2019	43	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
20	Mrs Nihinlola Alade	Trader	26/06/2019	50	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 1) with community men on 21 April, 2019 atUnited Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Age	Gender	Place of Information
1.	Mr Matthew Ogunleye	Teacher	21/042019	45	M	United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì
2.	Mr Abraham Ajala	Farmer	21/042019	38	M	United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì
3.	Mr Abiola Oguntoye	Farmer	21/042019	47	M	United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì
4.	Mr Ojo Owolabi	Teacher	21/04/2019	54	M	United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì
5.	Mr Simeon Awolola	Civil servant	21/042019	60	M	United Mission Church of Africa, Ìgbẹ́tì

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 2) with community men on 22 April, 2019 atÌyámọ̀pó Mountain

6.	Mr Olaleke Oparinde	Farmer	22/04/2019	53	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
7.	Mr Kehinde Adeniran	Farmer	22/04/2019	54	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
8.	Mr Yekini Oladele	Farmer	22/04/2019	55	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
9.	Mr. Babajide Adesola	Farmer	22/04/2019	47	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
10.	Mr Tunde Oyekunle	Farmer	22/04/2019	42	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 3) with community men on 25 June, 2019 at El Èrúgbà's Compound

11.	Mr Gbenga Oladele	Farmer	25/06/2019	44	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
12.	Mr. Kunle Egbewole	Farmer	25/06/2019	52	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
13.	Mr Dapo Oketunbi	Farmer	25/06/2019	48	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
14.	Mr Hakeeb FagbIlé	Farmer	25/06/2019	54	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
15.	Mr Taiwo Ojediran	Farmer	25/06/2019	52	M	Elèrúgbà's compound

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 4) with community men on 26 June 2019 at Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace

16.	Prince Sunday Adesola	Farmer	26/06/2019	46	M	Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace
17.	Prince Kabiru Abioye	Trader	26/06/2019	42	M	Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace
18.	Mr Abidemi Ọ̀ṣunyale	Farmer	26/06/2019	51	M	Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace
19.	Mr Oyeyemi Adewale	Farmer	26/06/2019	53	M	Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace
20.	Mr Saliu Ramoni	Farmer	26/06/2019	50	M	Onìgbẹ́tì's Palace

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 5) with community men on 25 June, 2019 at Ìyámọ̀pó Shrine

21.	Mr Saka Alimi	Farmer	29/06/2019	54	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
22.	Mr Mutiu Anjorin	Farmer	29/06/2019	46	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
23.	Mr Ridwan Lasisi	Farmer	29/06/2019	48	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
24.	Mr Jelili Folarin	Farmer	29/06/2019	45	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
25.	Mr Wakili Aremu	Okada Rider	29/06/2019	45	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
26.	Mr Saka Alimi	Farmer	29/06/2019	43	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
27.	Mr Mutiu Anjorin	Farmer	29/06/2019	40	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
28.	Mr Ridwan Lasisi	Driver	29/06/2019	42	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
29.	Mr Jelili Folarin	Carpenter	29/06/2019	38	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
30.	Mr Wakili Aremu	Farmer	29/06/2019	45	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 1) with the community youth on 22 April, 2019at Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

SN	Names	Occupation	Date	Age	Gender	**Place of Information**
1.	Mr Biodun Kehinde	Student	22/04/2019	22	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
2.	Mr Olatunbọ̀ṣúnÒṣundare	Carpenter	22/04/2019	24	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
3.	Mr Sunday Odeyemi	Business	22/04/2019	25	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
4.	Mr Mukaila Ogundiran	Business	22/04/2019	24	M	Ìyamọ̀pó Mountain
5.	Mr Ropo Alabi	Bricklayer	22/04/2019	24	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
6.	Miss Rukayat Okediran	Fashion designer	22/04/2019	19	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
7.	Mr Opeyemi Adepoju	Student	22/04/2019	20	M	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain
8.	Miss Taiwo Oladunjoye	Student	22/04/2019	22	F	Ìyámọ̀pó Mountain

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 2) with the community youth on 22 June, 2019at El Èrúgbà's compound

9.	Mr Remilékun Adeyori	Student	22/06/2019	23	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
10.	Mr Basit Raheem	Student	22/06/2019	20	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
11.	Mr Kabiru Adisa	Student	22/06/2019	22	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
12.	Mr Akinkunmi Ṣàngólana	Okada rider	22/06/2019	23	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
13.	Miss Basirat Ebedi	Student	22/06/2019	19	F	Elèrúgbà's compound

Field Survey, 2019

Focused Group Discussion (FGD 3) with the community youth on 29 June, 2019at Ìyámọ̀pó Shrine

14.	Mr Alaba Oke	Student	29/06/2019	20	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
15.	Mr Jubril Afolabi	Photographer	29/06/2019	26	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
16.	Mr Kehinde Okesiji	Business/ Okada rider	29/06/2019	24	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
17.	Miss Adeola Adeniran	Student	29/06/2019	19	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
18.	Mr Akeem Odelola	Business	29/06/2019	22	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
19.	Mr Musiliu Adisa	Business	29/06/2019	21	M	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine
20	Miss Mutiyat Odebode	Student	29/06/2019	22	F	Ìyámọ̀pó shrine

Field Survey, 2019

APPENDIX VII

In-depth interview with the selected member's of the community on 16 to 22 April, 2019.

SN	Names	Position	Date	Age	Gender	Place of Information
1.	Chief Àyànlọlá Ọládùnní,	Abọkè of Ìgbẹtì	23/10/2018	62	M	Abọkè compound, Ìgbẹtì
2.	Chief Amos Olawale Ọláyanjú	Elèrúgbà's of Ìgbẹtì	23/10/2018	64	M	Elèrúgbà's compound, Ìgbẹtì
3.	Chief (Mrs) Mary Ògúndélé	Iyalode of Ìgbẹtì	17/04/2019	56	F	Iyalode's Quarter, Ìgbẹtì
4.	Chief Rahmon Ajadi	Priest	28/06/2019	42	M	Abọsànto's compound
5.	Chief Lateef Babatunde Saliu	Priest	28/06/2019	45	M	Abọsìn-O compound
6.	Hon Bọsun Oladele	Heads of Quarters	22/04/2019	56	M	Ìyámọpó Mountain
7.	Prince Olayiwola Olaoye Folarin	Heads of Quarters	24/06/2019	54	M	Folarin compound
8.	Prince Olajide Oyekunle	Heads of Quarters	22/042019	65	M	Ìyámọpó Mountain
9.	Prince Sarafadeen Abioye	Heads of Quarters	24/06/2019	35	M	Palace of Onìgbẹtì
10.	Prince Kabiru Abioye	Heads of Quarters	10/12/2018	38	M	Palace of Onìgbẹtì
11.	Mr Dauda Babáyẹmí	Member of the community	17/04/2019	64	M	Èrúgbà hill, Ìgbẹtì
12.	Mr David Idowu	Member of the community	17/04/2019	52	M	Ìyámọpó Mountain, Ìgbẹtì
13.	Mr Eniola Olawale	Member of the community	22/04/2019	58	M	Ìyámọpó Mountain, Ìgbẹtì
14.	Pastor E. A. Adedeji	Clergy	22/04/2919	56	M	Ìyámọpó shrine
15.	Mr Gbenga Oladele	Farmer	25/06/2019	44	M	Elèrúgbà's compound
16.	Mrs Iyabode Ọláyanjú	Member of the community	21/04/2019	50	F	Elèrúgbà's Ìgbẹtì
17.	Mrs Taiwo Àyànlọlá	Member of the community	20/04/2019	48	F	Abọkè compound, Ìgbẹtì
18.	Mrs Toyin Olabimtan	Member of the community	21/04/2019	46	F	Ìgbẹtì's Market
19.	Mr Kehinde Okesiji	Member of the community	22/04/2019	28	M	Ìyámọpó's Mountain
20	Mr Jubril Afolabi	Photographer	29/06/2019	26	M	Ìyámọpó shrine

Field Survey: 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.