

Geospatial Evaluation of Cultural Festivals and their Impact on Local Livelihood in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts, Nigeria

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Article history:	Abstract	Original Research Article
<p>Received: 01/03/2026 Accepted: 06/04/2026 Published: 04/05/2026</p>	<p><i>The study examined the interface between cultural festivals and rural livelihood in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts, Nigeria. Geospatial technique was used in mapping seventeen cultural festival sites across six Local Government Areas, providing precise geographical coordinates for locations like the Ndad Ekpo festival in Midim community and the Ikot Ekpene Carnival in Raffia City, establishing a foundational understanding of their spatial distribution. 357 copies of questionnaires were administered in the study area, complemented by focus group discussions, individual interviews and site observation/regular visits. It was revealed that there are numerous festive events ongoing in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, yet not widely known and patronize due to low media engagement. The study also assessed rural livelihood activities as prevalent in the various communities, it was revealed that trading mostly craft and cultural artefacts was the primary income source across the six local government areas. Certain challenges were identified that hindered the sustainability of income among cultural festival stakeholders mostly non involvement of locals in policy implementation, inadequate financial support, dominance by external investors, short-lived nature of the festival, poor branding and promotion, low capacity among planners and organisers among others. Hence, it was recommended that involvement of locals in policy implementation should be strengthened, in addition to micro-grant support from State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, empowerment of local entrepreneurs, incorporation of local entertainers and artisans, effective branding and promotion as well as training of tourism planners and organisers in the study area.</i></p>	
<p>Keywords: Geospatial Evaluation, Cultural Festivals, Local Livelihood, Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts, Nigeria</p>		
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1.0 Introduction

The cultural festivals of Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, a rural part of Nigeria's Akwa Ibom State, are ritualized collective events central to the Annang and Ibibio communities. Events like the Ekpo Masquerade, Nsibidi, and Ekpe celebrations are vital for preserving history, maintaining cultural identity, and fostering community cohesion. Despite this vibrant cultural asset—and the inherent economic potential of these festivals—the region suffers from severe rural poverty. According to the 2022 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 46% of the state's population is poor, with rural areas being hit hardest. Locals primarily rely on subsistence farming and small-scale trading, making sustainable income difficult. This situation creates a stark contrast between a rich cultural life and a struggling rural

economy, representing a significant missed opportunity to use the cultural wealth for economic gain.

The core issue is the ineffective utilization of these numerous festivals for long-term improvement of rural livelihoods. While the events attract visitors and generate some income, these gains are ephemeral and fail to reduce poverty or establish sustainable income streams for most residents. This is exacerbated by the fact that external vendors often capture the majority of the profits; a 2019 Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) study found that over 60% of revenue from similar Nigerian cultural events bypasses local artisans and producers.

This disconnect highlights a crucial knowledge gap: there is little empirical data proving a direct, causal link between

the festivals of Akwa Ibom North West and sustainable economic development. It is unclear if current festival operations successfully integrate local businesses into the value chain. As noted by the UNWTO (2018), achieving the potential 15% revenue increase from cultural tourism requires strategic planning and local empowerment, which may be lacking here. Further investigation is needed to understand how income is retained locally versus how capital leaks to external actors.

Addressing this challenge is essential for both cultural preservation and economic stability. Failure to generate tangible economic benefits may lead to community disillusionment, threatening the events' future. Economically, ignoring this potential perpetuates poverty and contributes to high rural-to-urban migration. By researching this area, the study aims to provide policymakers with the insights necessary to design strategies that maximize the festivals' economic returns and create a more resilient rural economy.

Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, a severely impoverished rural area in Nigeria (NBS, 2022), possesses a rich cultural tradition embodied in festivals like Ekpo, Nsibidi, and Ekpe. These events are crucial for community identity and cohesion but are currently not effectively leveraged to address the pervasive rural poverty stemming from a reliance on subsistence livelihoods.

The central problem is the failure to convert the vibrant cultural value of these festivals into sustainable rural economic development. Though visitors generate some activity, the economic benefits are largely short-lived and disproportionately captured by external vendors—a common issue in Nigeria where over 60% of event revenue often bypasses local producers (NISER, 2019). The aim of this research is to understudy the strength of cultural festivals and its effects on rural livelihood in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts. The objectives of the study include identification and mapping of cultural festivals that are operational within the study area, assessing the rural livelihood activities in the study area, assessing the contribution of cultural festivals to rural livelihoods in the study area.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Spatial Distribution of Cultural Festivals

Studies conducted locally within the study area on this theme include: Okonkwo and Oguamanam, (2013), Udoh (2023), Nnameti *et al.*, (2023), Imikan, *et al.*, (2022) among others. Internationally, several studies have also been reviewed along the line of this objective including Andhika *et al.* (2023), Arianis *et al.*, (2022), Vargiu and Urru (2012), Sugiarto *et al.*, (2020), Omar, Rahman and Abdullah (2023). The studies by Okonkwo and

Oguamanam (2013) and Imikan *et al.* (2022) primarily focus on the cultural significance and preservation of festivals in Nigeria, with limited emphasis on spatial distribution or livelihood impacts. In contrast, Udoh (2023) and Nnameti *et al.* (2023) explore the economic dimensions of festivals, particularly tourism and employment, but do not systematically map their geographic spread. While these studies provide insights into cultural and economic aspects, they overlook the spatial organization of festivals, a gap this study addresses by mapping operational festivals in Akwa Ibom North West to analyze their distribution patterns and linkages with rural livelihoods.

Internationally, Andhika *et al.*, (2023) and Vargiu and Urru, (2012) examined how festivals stimulate local economies, while Arianis *et al.*, (2022) and Sugiarto *et al.*, (2020) highlighted marketing and community participation. However, none explicitly map festival locations or assess their spatial-economic roles in rural settings. Unlike these studies, this research tends to combine geographic mapping with livelihood analysis, identifying where festivals are concentrated and how their distribution influences economic opportunities. By doing so, it offers a novel approach to understanding the spatial dynamics of cultural festivals and their potential for targeted rural development in Akwa Ibom State.

The methodologies used in the reviewed studies show a clear progression from purely qualitative to more advanced mixed-methods and quantitative approaches. These variations reflect different research goals and demonstrate the increasing role of technology in cultural mapping. In the qualitative and mixed-methods approaches, Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013) and Udoh (2023) relied on qualitative methods, specifically interviews and ethnographic observations. This allowed them to collect detailed, rich data on the cultural significance and context of festivals. However, their methods lacked a precise spatial component, limiting the ability to create accurate maps.

Nnameti *et al.* (2023) and Imikan *et al.* (2022) employed a mixed-methods approach. They combined traditional surveys to gather information with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to precisely plot festival locations. This blend of methods enabled a more structured spatial analysis while retaining some contextual data. Andhika *et al.* (2023) and Arianis *et al.* (2022) used a similar mixed-methods model, applying GIS and remote sensing to map cultural events.

Vargiu and Urru (2012) and Sugiarto *et al.* (2020) took a quantitative approach, using statistical models to analyze the density and accessibility of festivals. While their methods were data-driven, they tended to overlook the

essential cultural context, which can be a limitation for this type of research. Omar *et al.* (2023) successfully combined participatory mapping with spatial analytics. This method engaged community members in the mapping process, ensuring that the spatial data was culturally and geographically accurate. This dual approach effectively balanced empirical data with cultural insights for a holistic representation of festival distributions.

The studies by Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013), Udoh (2023), Nnameti *et al.* (2023), and Imikan *et al.* (2022) provide valuable insights into the spatial distribution of cultural festivals, albeit with varying emphases. Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013) focused on the socio-cultural significance of festivals in Nigeria, highlighting their concentration in urban areas due to population density and infrastructure. Udoh (2023) expanded on this by examining rural-urban disparities, noting that rural festivals are often underrepresented in spatial analyses due to limited data. Nnameti *et al.* (2023) and Imikan *et al.* (2022) emphasize the role of geographic information systems (GIS) in mapping festival locations, with the latter study particularly highlighting the clustering of festivals around historical and religious sites. These findings align with study's objective by underscoring the importance of spatial tools like GIS in identifying patterns and disparities in festival distribution, whether urban-centric or rural, and the influence of historical and cultural factors on their locations.

Internationally, Andhika *et al.* (2023), Arianis *et al.* (2022), Vargiu and Urru (2012), Sugiarto *et al.* (2020), and Omar *et al.* (2023) offer comparative perspectives. Andhika *et al.* (2023) and Arianis *et al.* (2022) demonstrated how tourism-driven economies, such as Indonesia, map festivals to optimize visitor experiences, often concentrating them in accessible regions. Vargiu and Urru (2012) explored European festivals, noting their alignment with cultural heritage corridors, while Sugiarto *et al.* (2020) used spatial analytics to predict festival attendance based on proximity to transport hubs. Omar *et al.* (2023) highlighted the role of digital platforms in tracking festival distribution in Malaysia. These studies collectively reinforce the relevance of spatial mapping in understanding festival distribution, whether for tourism, heritage preservation, or accessibility. This study will draw from these methodologies to analyze how cultural, economic, and infrastructural factors shape the spatial distribution of festivals within the study area, bridging local and international insights.

The recommendations from Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013), Udoh (2023), Nnameti *et al.* (2023), and Imikan *et al.* (2022) highlight the need for improved data collection and spatial analysis techniques in mapping cultural

festivals. Okonkwo and Oguamanam (2013) advocate for greater documentation of festivals in both urban and rural areas to ensure comprehensive spatial representation, while Udoh (2023) emphasized the integration of participatory GIS (PGIS) to capture localized knowledge from rural communities often excluded in traditional mapping. Nnameti *et al.* (2023) recommended leveraging advanced GIS tools to analyze clustering patterns, and Imikan *et al.* (2022) suggested correlating festival locations with historical and religious landmarks to understand their spatial significance. These recommendations align with this study's objective by reinforcing the importance of robust spatial methodologies, inclusive data collection, and contextual analysis to accurately map festival distributions. By adopting these approaches, this study can address gaps in existing literature, particularly in ensuring underrepresented rural festivals are accounted for and in examining how cultural heritage influences spatial patterns.

2.1.1 Rural Livelihood Activities

The studies by Joyashree *et al.* (2016), Dimelu *et al.* (2020), Onyim *et al.* (2021), and Beulah *et al.* (2013) each explore rural livelihood activities but with distinct objectives that provide valuable insights for this study. Joyashree *et al.* (2016) focused on the sustainability of agricultural livelihoods, examining how climate change and market access impact rural farming communities. Dimelu *et al.*, (2020) investigated the role of gender in rural livelihood diversification, particularly in agro-based economies, while Onyim *et al.* (2021) assessed the influence of government policies on rural income-generating activities. Beulah *et al.* (2013), on the other hand, analyze the socio-economic determinants of livelihood choices among rural households. These studies collectively highlight the multi-dimensional nature of rural livelihoods, encompassing environmental, economic, and policy-related factors. This study, which examined rural livelihood activities in a specific area, can draw from these varied objectives by adopting a holistic approach that considers sustainability, gender dynamics, policy impacts, and socioeconomic drivers. This would allow for a comprehensive understanding of the livelihood strategies employed in the study area of this study, ensuring that the research captures the complexity of rural economies.

Furthermore, the differences in these studies' objectives underscore the need for context-specific analysis. While Joyashree *et al.* (2016) emphasized environmental challenges, Dimelu *et al.* (2020) and Beulah *et al.* (2013) focused on social and economic dimensions, and Onyim *et al.* (2021) prioritize policy frameworks. This study can bridge these perspectives by integrating environmental,

socio-economic, and policy-related factors to examine how they collectively shape livelihood activities in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. For instance, you could explore how climate variability interacts with local policies to influence livelihood choices or how gender roles affect access to resources. By aligning objectives with these studies, the research will not only contribute to the existing literature but also provide actionable insights for policymakers and development practitioners aiming to enhance rural livelihoods in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District area.

The methodologies employed in Joyashree *et al.* (2016), Dimelu *et al.* (2020), Onyim *et al.* (2021) and Beulah *et al.* (2013) offer diverse approaches to examining rural livelihood activities, each with strengths that can inform this study. Joyashree *et al.* (2016) utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining household surveys with climate data analysis to assess agricultural sustainability, providing a quantitative-qualitative balance that captures both measurable trends and community perspectives. Dimelu *et al.* (2020) adopted a gender-focused participatory methodology, including focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, which highlighted the nuanced role of women in rural economies. Onyim *et al.* (2021) relied heavily on policy analysis and secondary data from government reports, offering a macro-level view of how institutional frameworks shape livelihoods. Beulah *et al.* (2013) employed structured questionnaires and multivariate regression analysis to identify socio-economic factors influencing livelihood choices, emphasizing statistical rigor. These methodologies aligned with this study's objective by demonstrating the value of integrating quantitative data (surveys, regression models) with qualitative insights (FGDs, interviews) to comprehensively analyze rural livelihoods. This study could adopt a similar mixed-methods approach, leveraging household surveys to quantify livelihood activities while using participatory techniques to capture local perspectives and contextual challenges.

However, the differences in these methodologies also reveal gaps that could be addressed in this study. While Joyashree *et al.* (2016) and Beulah *et al.* (2013) prioritized quantitative measures, Dimelu *et al.* (2020) emphasized qualitative depth, and Onyim *et al.* (2021) focused on policy documentation. This study could bridge these gaps by combining macro-level policy analysis with micro-level community engagement, ensuring a holistic understanding of rural livelihoods. For instance, pairing regression analysis of socio-economic determinants with genderdisaggregated FGDs could reveal how policies and social dynamics intersect to shape livelihood strategies. Additionally, incorporating spatial analysis missing in

these studies could map livelihood patterns geographically, adding a novel dimension to the research. By synthesizing these methodologies, the study can achieve a robust, multi-faceted examination of rural livelihood activities, advancing both academic and practical insights for rural development.

The findings of Joyashree *et al.* (2016), Dimelu *et al.* (2020), Onyim *et al.* (2021), and Beulah *et al.* (2013) collectively reveal the complex interplay of environmental, socio-economic, and policy factors shaping rural livelihood activities, offering valuable insights for this research. Joyashree *et al.* (2016) found that climate variability and market access constraints significantly reduce agricultural productivity, forcing farmers to adopt coping strategies like crop diversification. Dimelu *et al.* (2020) highlighted gender disparities in livelihood opportunities, showing that women predominantly engage in small-scale agro-processing and trading with limited access to credit and land. Onyim *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that poorly implemented government agricultural policies often fail to reach rural communities, exacerbating income instability. Beulah *et al.* (2013) identified household size, education level, and access to credit as key determinants of livelihood diversification into non-farm activities. These findings align with this research objective by underscoring the multi-dimensional challenges rural households face. The research can further build on these insights by examining how similar factors: climate stress, gender roles, policy gaps, and socio-economic barriers can potentially manifest in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, while also exploring localized coping mechanisms and opportunities for livelihood enhancement.

However, the studies also present findings that reveal context-specific expressions. While Joyashree *et al.* (2016) and Beulah *et al.* (2013) emphasized environmental and economic constraints as primary drivers of livelihood changes, Dimelu *et al.* (2020) and Onyim *et al.* (2021) highlighted institutional and social structures as equally critical barriers. For instance, Dimelu *et al.* (2020)'s focus on gender inequality complements Beulah *et al.* (2013)'s broader economic analysis, suggesting that this study should examine both structural

2.1.2 Contribution of Cultural Festival to Rural Livelihood

The studies by Aninakwah *et al.* (2022), Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah (2016), Krisheil *et al.*

(2014), Tinuoye and Abayomi (2018), Siyabonga and Lihle (2018), Baratta *et al.* (2019), and Brunela and Durrës (2016) examined cultural festivals from diverse perspectives, offering valuable insights for new studies on their contributions to rural livelihoods. Aninakwah *et al.*

(2022) focused on the economic impacts of festivals, particularly income generation for local artisans and vendors, while Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah (2016) explored how festivals preserve indigenous knowledge and foster community identity. Krisheil *et al.* (2014) assess the role of festivals in promoting tourism and rural development, and Tinuoye and Abayomi (2018) analyze their socio-cultural benefits, such as social cohesion and youth engagement. Siyabonga and Lihle (2018) emphasize the potential of festivals to revitalize marginalized rural economies, whereas Baratta *et al.* (2019) and Brunela and Durrës (2016) adopt a comparative international perspective, examining how festivals in different cultural contexts contribute to sustainable development. These objectives align with this research focus by highlighting the multi-dimensional impacts of festival's economic, cultural, social, and developmental.

However, the studies differ in their primary emphasis, reflecting varying disciplinary and contextual priorities. Aninakwah *et al.* (2022) and Krisheil *et al.* (2014) prioritize measurable economic outcomes, such as employment and tourism revenue, while Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah (2016) and Tinuoye and Abayomi (2018) focus on intangible cultural and social benefits.

Siyabonga and Lihle (2018) and Baratta *et al.* (2019) bridge these perspectives by linking cultural value to economic sustainability, whereas Brunela and Durrës (2016) highlighted policy frameworks for leveraging festivals in rural development. These contrasts emphasize the need for new studies to adopt a balanced approach, capturing both quantitative economic contributions (income, employment) and qualitative socio-cultural impacts (identity, cohesion). By integrating these objectives, new studies can provide a nuanced understanding of how festivals function as holistic livelihood strategies in rural areas, offering evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to harness their full potential for sustainable development.

This research can further attempt to distinguish itself by examining the unique interplay of these factors in our rural context, potentially identifying gaps such as untapped economic opportunities or underappreciated cultural benefits that prior studies have not addressed. For instance, by incorporating lessons from Baratta *et al.* (2019) and Brunela and Durrës (2016), this study could propose context-specific strategies for scaling up the livelihood impacts of festivals in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, ensuring they align with both local cultural values and broader development goals.

The methodologies employed in the reviewed studies demonstrate diverse approaches to examining cultural festivals' contributions, offering valuable methodological insights for any study on rural livelihoods. Aninakwah *et al.* (2022) adopted a quantitative approach, using structured surveys and economic impact assessments to measure income generation and employment effects, while Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah (2016) utilized ethnographic methods, including participant observation and in-depth interviews, to explore intangible cultural values. Krisheil *et al.* (2014) combined both methods, employing visitor surveys alongside interviews with local stakeholders to assess tourism impacts. Tinuoye and Abayomi (2018) focused on qualitative case studies, analyzing narratives from festival participants to understand social cohesion benefits. Siyabonga and Lihle (2018) employed participatory rural appraisal techniques, engaging community members in mapping economic benefits. Baratta *et al.* (2019) conducted comparative case studies across European festivals, using document analysis and key informant interviews, whereas Brunela and Durrës (2016) applied policy analysis frameworks to examine institutional support systems. These methodologies align with the study objective by demonstrating the value of mixed-methods approaches combining quantitative economic data with qualitative insights into cultural and social impacts towards holistically assessing festival contributions to rural livelihoods.

The methodological difference between these studies highlights important considerations for the research design. While Aninakwah *et al.*'s quantitative approach provides measurable livelihood indicators, it may overlook obvious cultural aspects that Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah's ethnographic methods reveal. The international comparative approaches of Baratta *et al.* and Brunela and Durrës offer macro-level policy insights that complement the localized focus of Tinuoye and Abayomi or Siyabonga and Lihle. This comprehensive approach would address the limitations of single-method studies while providing robust evidence of festivals' multidimensional contributions to rural livelihoods in this specific context, from household-level impacts to broader policy implications.

The findings of the reviewed studies reveal both converging and diverging perspectives on how cultural festivals contribute to rural livelihoods, offering valuable insights for this research. Aninakwah *et al.* (2022) and Krisheil *et al.* (2014) found significant

economic benefits, with festivals generating temporary employment (15-30% income boost for participants) and stimulating local markets through tourism. Similarly, Siyabonga and Lihle (2018) demonstrated how festivals revived declining rural economies by creating market linkages for artisans. Agaasa and Ampa-Korsah (2016) and Tinuoye and Abayomi (2018) revealed more intangible benefits cultural preservation (85% of respondents reported stronger cultural identity) and social cohesion which while not directly economic, create the social capital necessary for sustainable livelihood systems. Baratta et al. (2019) and Brunela and Durrës (2016) added an institutional dimension, showing how festivals with strong policy support generated more stable, long-term livelihood opportunities compared to ad-hoc events.

3.0 Materials and Methods

Study Area

Akwa Ibom North West or Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District is a popular and historic enclave in Akwa Ibom. Many scholars have agreed that the people of Ikot Ekpene Senatorial district founded Ibom village in Arochukwu District after their migration from Benue valley in the present-day Benue State. They lived there in Ibom village for many years. According to (Udo, 1983:44), Ibom was their biggest village until the circumstances of the Aro-Igbo war compelled them to leave. Their leaving gave rise to their migration towards Obotme Community in the present-day Ini Local Government Area before their eventual spread to several places across the senatorial district and eventually the entire Akwa Ibom State. The old Ikot Ekpene comprising most of the Local Governments that constitute the senatorial districts is also referred to as "raffia town", largely regarded as a citadel of arts. The city derives its name from the village of Ikot Ekpene which originally was made up of ten families with a long and rich history. It is the political and cultural capital of the Annang ethnic group in Nigeria and it became the site of the experiment in local self-governance by the British in 1951 hence became the first experimental Local Government (County) in British West Africa in present day Akwa Ibom State (Nair et al., 2022).

Like most Annang communities, Ikot Ekpene has a tradition of self-improvement from its sons and daughters, both near and far. Several groups are working together to recapture and rebuild what they fondly call "The Raffia City". Ikot Ekpene has a long history of transforming the raffia fibre into cloth used in

shoes, hats, handbags, mats and with distinctive cultural carvings made out of wood. These unique arts and crafts trade have continued alongside traditional agriculture.

Significant exports also include basket weaving, sculpture, and, most notably, raffia cane furniture (hence the colloquial name of the town). By 1919 trade with Europeans opened up as the town became an administrative centre. The following companies had posts and stores in the town:

John Holt Cooperative Wholesale Society Paterson Zochonos (PZ), G. B. Olivant and the Compagnie Francaise de L'Afrique Occidentals. The establishment of these companies resulted in an exodus from the surrounding areas and made Ikot Ekpene a vibrant metropolis. In 1937, the colonial administration built the main market and separated those who sold imported European goods from indigenous articles. A slaughter house was added to allow for the inspection of meat.

Methods

This study employed a survey design approach involving the collection of qualitative and quantitative data geared toward achieving the set objectives. It also adopted a Geographic Information Systems approach to the mapping of festival locations. The research design involve mapping the distribution of cultural festival that are no longer existing as well as those that are operational within the confines of the study area, assessing the contribution of cultural festival and its multiplier effects on rural livelihood in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, Akwa Ibom State,

The primary data was obtained from field measurements and observations as well as from experts and stakeholders via focused group discussion, spatial and attribute data of festival location, while secondary data include: Topographic and boundary dataset of Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. The nature of data was both quantitative and qualitative as the case may be and in line with the set objectives.

Data for the first objective was collected through the use of remote sensing and GIS while the rest of the data was collected through questionnaires administered to 385 respondents by the researcher alongside focussed group discussion. The study also assess the rural livelihood activities in the study area using descriptive Statistics. The contributions of cultural festival on the livelihoods of inhabitants was analysed using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Identification and Mapping the Spatial Distribution of Cultural Festivals

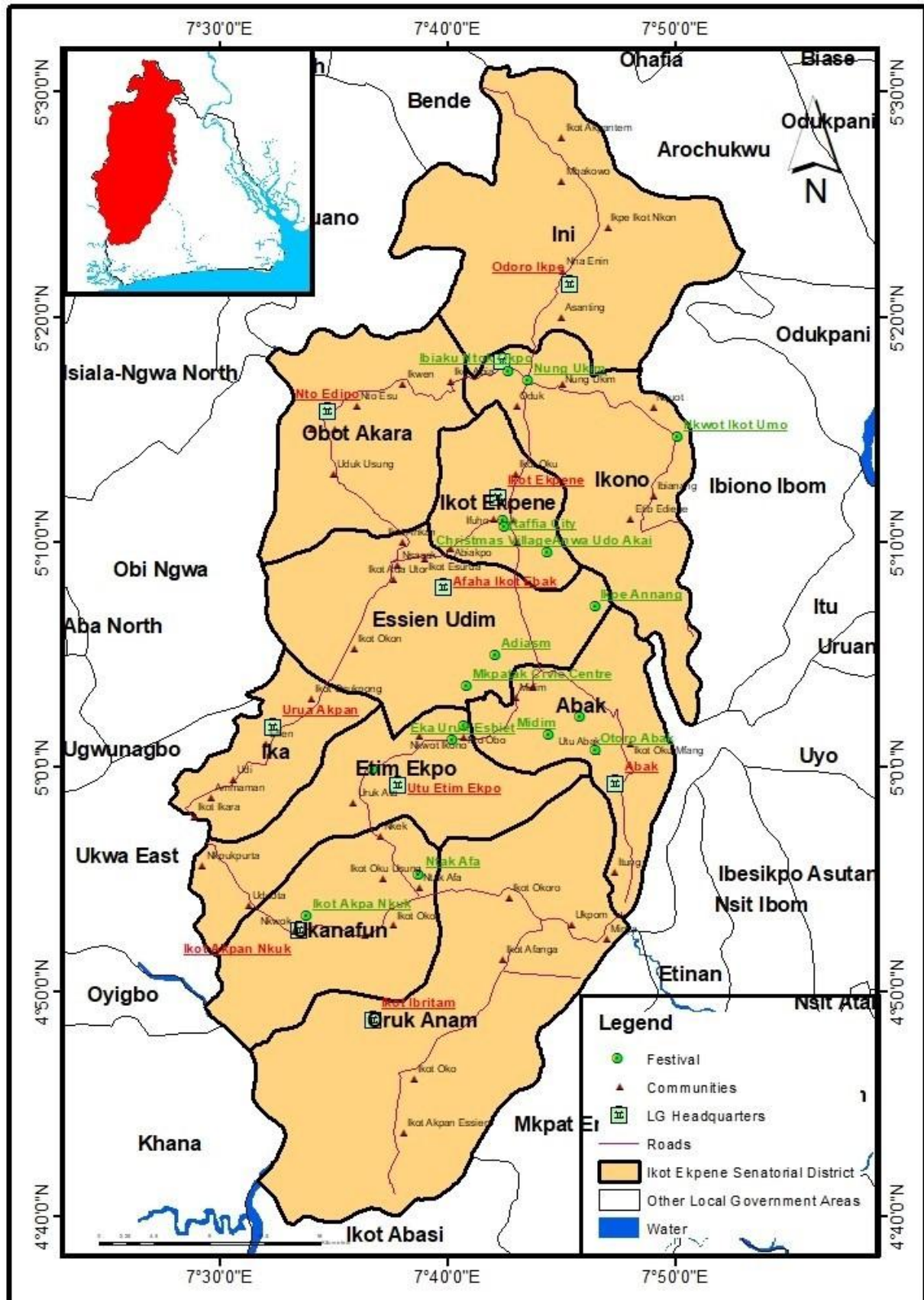


Figure 4.1: Spatial Distribution of Festival Communities in Study Area

Source: Field Work 2025

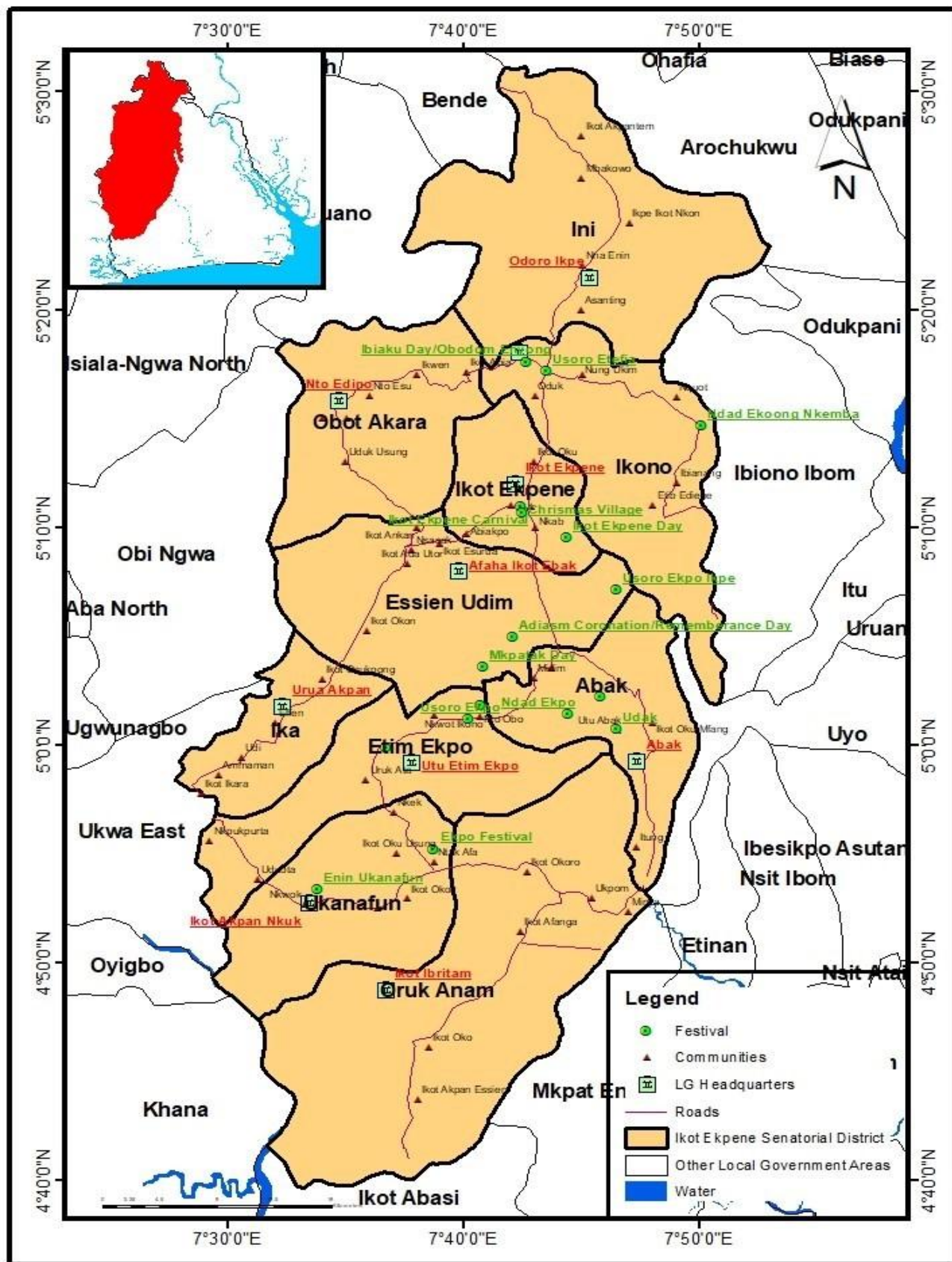


Figure 4.2: Spatial Distribution of Festivals in Sampled Locations of Study Area Source: Field Work 2025

Table 4.1: Existing Cultural Festivals in North West Senatorial District

S/N	LGAs	Communities	Existing Festivals	Other Notable Information
1.	Ikot Ekpene	Ikot Ekpene	Usoro Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
		Ibiakpan	Usoro Abasi	A religious purification ritual and symbolic re-enactment of the mysteries of the king yam which is accompanied by thanksgiving offerings
		Ikot Otu	(Uchoro Edia) New Yam Festival	A thanksgiving feast to the gods and ancestors for yam harvest in Ikot Ekpene, Ikono, Nsit Ubium, Ibiono etc. July / August
		Otoro	Feast of Anyan	For appeasement of the communal deity of Otoro clan in Ikot Ekpene. July / August
2.	Obot Akara	Nto Edino	Usoro Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
		Nto Ndang	Usoro Ekong (War dance festival)	Festival of traditional heroes and heroines and war generals. It is usually held in September and October.
		Abiakpo Nkab	Udak (Coronation) festival	This is a coronation celebration of chiefs - No particular time
3.	Essien Udim	Ikot Essien	Umo Usoro Ekong (War dance festival)	Festival of traditional heroes and heroines and war generals. It is usually held in September and October.
		Ukana	Eset (Ise) Feast	A feast to pay tribute to the warriors in Ukana Clan. July / August
		Ikpe	Usoro Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
		Adiasim	Oko festival	This is a burial or coronation celebration of chiefs, and great warriors of Adiasim community No particular time
4.	Abak	Midim	Usoro Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
		Afaha Obong	Obodom Eyong (Drum in the Sky festival)	A thanksgiving ritual to the gods performed once every seven years, in Afaha Obong November
		Otoro Abak	Udak (Coronation) festival	This is a coronation celebration of chiefs - No particular time
5.	Etim Ekpo	Eka Eshiet	Uruk Usoro Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
			Usoro Ekong (War dance festival)	Festival of traditional heroes and heroines and war generals. It is usually held in September and October.

6.	Ukanafun	Ibiannang	Uroso Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
			Uroso Idio (Bush burning festival)	Done between January and March.to mark the beginning of planting season. Features clearing and burning farmlands.
7.	Ika	Urua Inyang	Uroso Idio (Bush burning festival)	Done between January and March.to mark the beginning of planting season. Features clearing and burning farmlands.
		Ikot Akata	Uroso Edia (New yam festival)	Celebrated by Annang people during yam harvest.
		Achanlka	Uroso Ekpo	In remembrance of the ancestors and gods of the land. A full month's celebration, this feast is associated with Ibibio and Annang peoples. August
8.	OrukAnam		Uroso Iyak (Fishing festival)	Celebrated by parts of Anam people in November and December.
			Ekoon Akpakpa,	Ndara Celebrated November and December.

9.	Ini Ikpe	Ikot Nkoon	Uroso Iyak (Fishing festival)	Celebrated by parts of Ini people in November and December.
		Ibam	Mbre Odudu	Celebrated by parts of Ini people in August.

Edet/Ibiono

Ewura

Mbiabong Uroso Idio (Bush Done between January and March.to mark the beginning of Ikot Emiang burning festival) planting season. Features clearing and burning farmlands.

10.	Ikono NungUkim	Uroso Udia (New yam festival)	Celebrated by Ikono people during yam harvest.
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Ediene Uroso Idio (Bush Done between January and March.to mark the beginning of burning festival) planting season. Features clearing and burning farmlands.

Ndiya	Uroso Ubine (Hunting festival)	Ikot	It is a- hunting expedition and lifting of sanctions on seven-year fallow farmlands for cultivation in Ikono- Ndiya February / March
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Ndinya Mfia Feast of Etefia Deity A clan celebration of appeasement and thanksgiving to the communal deity of Uyo, Ikono and people in Ini Local Government Areas. July / August

Ibiaku Ntok Obodom Eyong A thanksgiving ritual to the gods performed once every Okpo (Drum in the Sky seven years, in Ikono and Afaha Obong November festival)

Source: www.aksgonline.com

Table 4.2: Festival Locations and the Communities that Host the Festivals

S/N	LGAs	Communities	Festivals	Longitude, E	Latitude, N
1	Abak	Midim	Ndad Ekpo	7°40'52.51" E	5°03'32.48" N
2		Afaha Obong	Obodom Enyong	7°40'43.92" E	5°01'46.73" N
3		Otoro Abak	Udak	7°40'15.10" E	5°01'08.71" N
4	Essien	Mkpatak Civic Udim Centre	Mkpatak Day	7°44'26.88" E	5°01'22.17" N
5		Ikpe Annang	Usoro Ekpo Ikpe	7°45'49.37" E	5°02'11.84" N
6		Adiasm	Adiasm Coronation/ Rememberance Day	7°46'29.43" E	5°00'41.73" N
7	Etim	Eka Uruk	Usoro Udak	7°46'29.52" E	5°07'05.34" N
	Ekpo	Eshiet			
8		Eka Uruk	Usoro Ekpo	7°42'27.49" E	5°10'57.10" N
		Eshiet			
9		Utu Etim Ekpo	Utu Etim Ekpo Day	7°42'30.71" E	5°10'39.25" N
10	Ikono	Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	Ibiaku Day/Obodom Enyong	7°42'40.11" E	5°17'35.62" N
11		Nung Ukim	Usoro Etefia	7°43'31.39" E	5°17'10.15" N
12		Nkwot Ikot Umo	Ndad Ekoong Nkemba	7°42'06.57" E	5°04'54.90" N
13	Ikot	Raffia City	Ikot Ekpene Carnival	7°36'43.57" E	4°59'51.19" N
	Ekpene	Christmas Village	Christmas Village	7°50'07.00" E	5°14'38.45" N
14		Anwa Udo Akai	Ikot Ekpene Day	7°44'22.60" E	5°09'30.47" N
15	Ukanafun	Ntak Afa	Ekpo Festival	7°38'45.51" E	4°55'10.42" N
16		Ikot Akpa Nkuk	Enin Ukanafun	7°33'49.63" E	4°53'19.70" N

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2025)



Figure 4.2: Raffia City Carnival Souvenirs
Source: Field Work 2024



Figure 4.2: Raffia City Carnival at Ito Road
Source: Field Work 2025

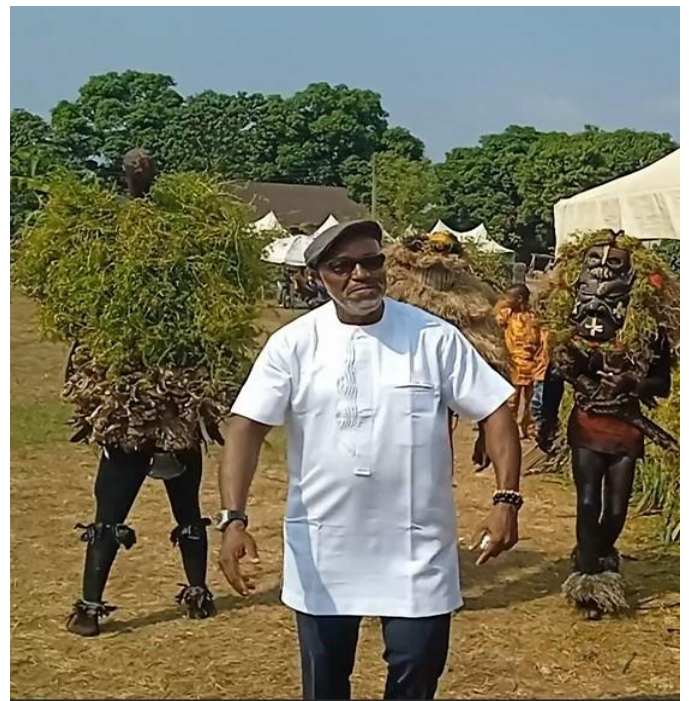


Figure 4.4: Ibiaku Ntok Okpo Day (Ikono LGA)



Figure 4.5: Raffia City Carnival at Ito Road

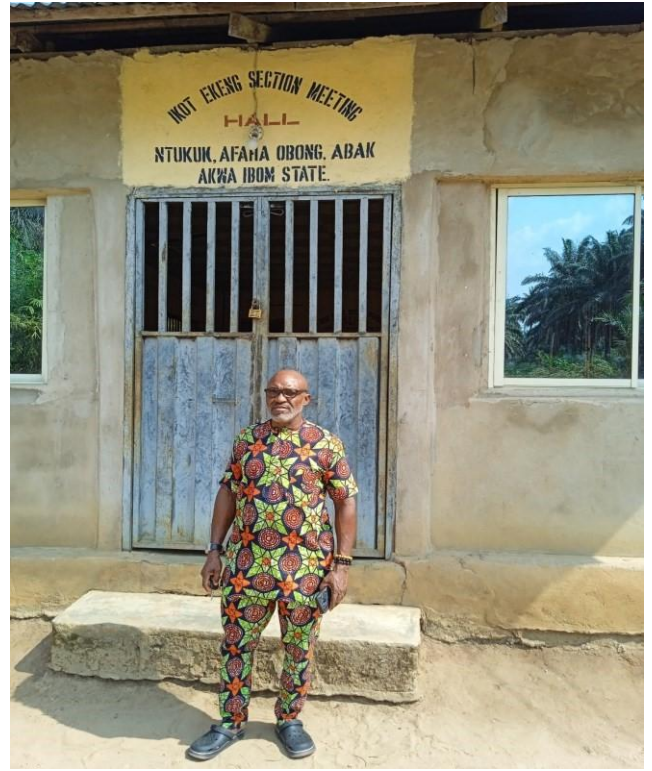


Figure 4.6: Ntukuk, Obodom Onyong Festival Venue



Figure 4.7: Christmas Village Food Exhibition Festival Venue
Source: Field Work 2025



Figure 4.8: Raffia City Dance Carnival Venue
Source: Field Work 2025



Figure 4.9: Enin Festival (Ikot Ekpene LGA) Food Festival Venue Source: Field Work 2025

Table 4.3: Primary Income Source

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Civil service	Farming	Trading	Artisan	Labour	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	1	5	5	4	2	2.89	1.82
Afaha Obong	20	1	7	3	5	4	3.35	2.24
Otoro Abak	18	2	6	5	2	3	3.25	1.82
Mkpatak	22	3	7	4	3	5	4.17	1.67
Ikpe Annang	23	1	9	6	4	3	3.65	3.05
Adiasm	20	3	8	2	3	4	3.57	2.35
Eka Uruk	21	2	12	3	2	2	3.10	4.38
Eshiet 1								
Eka Uruk	22	2	13	2	3	2	3.15	4.83
Eshiet 2								
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	2	8	5	3	3	3.73	2.39
Ibiaku Ntok	23	1	12	5	3	2	3.25	4.39
Okpo								
Nung Ukim	22	1	12	5	2	2	2.99	4.51
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	3	11	3	5	1	3.46	3.85
Raffia City	22	2	13	5	2	0	2.99	4.51
Christmas Village	21	2	11	3	3	2	3.31	3.83
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	12	3	5	1	3.25	4.39
Ntak Afe	19	4	7	5	2	1	3.09	2.39
Ikot Akpa	20	2	11	3	3	1	2.88	4.00
Nkuk								
Total	357	34	164	67	54	38		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.4: Secondary Income Source

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Farming	Trading	Civil Service	Artisan	Labour	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	2	2	3	4	5	2.99	1.30
Afaha Obong	20	1	4	3	5	7	3.35	2.24
Otoro Abak	18	2	3	5	2	6	3.25	1.82
Mkpatak	22	2	5	4	4	7	4.07	1.82
Ikpe Annang	23	1	3	6	4	9	3.65	3.05
Adiasm	20	3	4	2	3	8	3.57	2.35
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	2	2	3	2	12	3.10	4.38
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	2	2	2	3	13	3.15	4.83
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	2	3	5	3	8	3.73	2.39
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	1	2	5	3	12	3.25	4.39
Nung Ukim	22	1	2	5	2	12	2.99	4.51
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	3	1	3	5	11	3.46	3.85
Raffia City	22	2	1	5	2	13	3.04	4.93
Christmas Village	21	2	2	3	3	11	3.31	3.83
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	1	3	5	12	3.25	4.39
Ntak Afe	19	4	1	5	2	7	3.09	2.39
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	2	1	3	3	11	2.88	4.00
Total	357	34	39	65	55	164		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.5: General Income Level

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Low N1.00N50,000	Medium N50,001N100,000	High N100,001 and above	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	4	8	5	5.43	2.08
Afaha Obong	20	4	13	3	5.38	5.51
Otoro Abak	18	2	11	5	4.79	4.58
Mkpatak	22	3	15	4	5.65	6.66

Ikpe Annang	23	4	13	6	6.78	4.73
Adiasm	20	3	15	2	4.48	7.23
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	6	12	3	6.00	4.58
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	7	8	7	7.32	0.58
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	2	14	5	5.19	6.24
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	4	14	5	6.54	5.51
Nung Ukim	22	4	13	5	6.38	4.93
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	3	17	3	5.35	8.08
Raffia City	22	2	15	5	5.31	6.81
Christmas Village	21	4	14	3	5.52	6.08
Anwa Udo Aka	23	5	11	7	7.27	3.06
Ntak Afe	19	4	10	5	5.85	3.21
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	6	11	3	5.83	4.04
Total	357	67	214	76		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.6: Income as Part of Festival

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Yes	No	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	9	8	8.49	0.71
Afaha Obong	20	7	13	9.54	4.24
Otoro Abak	18	7	11	8.77	2.83
Mkpatak	22	7	15	10.25	5.66
Ikpe Annang	23	10	13	11.40	2.12
Adiasm	20	5	15	8.66	7.07
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	9	12	10.39	2.12
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	14	8	10.58	4.24
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	7	14	9.90	4.95
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	9	14	11.22	3.54
Nung Ukim	22	9	13	10.82	2.83
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	6	17	10.10	7.78
Raffia City	22	7	15	10.25	5.66
Christmas Village	21	7	14	9.90	4.95
Anwa Udo Aka	23	10	13	11.40	2.12
Ntak Afe	19	9	10	9.49	0.71
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	9	11	9.95	1.41
Total	357	141	216		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.7: Main Attraction or Activities offered During these Festivals

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Religious	Cultural	Entertainment	Economic	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	5	2	9	1	3.08	3.59
Afaha Obong	20	6	6	6	2	4.56	2.00
Otoro Abak	18	6	3	8	1	3.46	3.11
Mkpatak	22	6	4	9	3	5.05	2.65
Ikpe Annang	23	7	3	10	3	5.01	3.40
Adiasm	20	4	7	7	2	4.45	2.45
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	7	3	10	1	3.81	4.03
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	6	5	11	1	4.26	4.11
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	5	2	13	1	3.38	5.44
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	6	5	10	1	4.16	3.70
Nung Ukim	22	7	3	10	2	4.53	3.70
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	9	2	9	3	4.70	3.77
Raffia City	22	5	3	13	1	3.74	5.26
Christmas Village	21	3	3	14	1	3.35	5.91
Anwa Udo Aka	23	4	3	15	1	3.66	6.29
Ntak Afe	19	7	2	8	2	3.87	3.20
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	2	10	3	4.16	3.56
Total	357	98	58	172	29		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.8: Festivals usually Create Valuable Number of Temporary Jobs for Locals

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	1	3	4	3	6	3.59	1.82
Afaha Obong	20	4	5	3	3	5	3.00	1.00
Otoro Abak	18	3	3	1	4	7	3.50	2.19
Mkpatak	22	4	4	3	5	6	3.23	1.14
Ikpe Annang	23	5	5	4	5	4	2.91	0.55
Adiasm	20	2	4	1	4	9	3.70	3.08
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	3	3	2	4	9	3.62	2.77
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	3	3	3	6	7	3.50	1.95

Utu Etim Ekpo	21	4	6	1	4	6	3.10	2.05
Ibiaku Ntok	23	3	4	4	6	6	3.35	1.34
Okpo								
Nung Ukim	22	4	5	2	3	8	3.27	2.30
Nkwot Ikot	23	4	4	1	2	12	3.61	4.34
Umo								
Raffia City	22	3	4	4	1	10	3.50	3.36
Christmas	21	3	3	2	3	10	3.67	3.27
Village								
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	4	2	4	11	3.78	3.71
Ntak Afe	19	6	3	3	3	4	2.79	1.30
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	4	4	3	4	2.85	0.71
Total	357	59	67	44	63	124	56.96	36.89

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.9: Festival Usually Generate Income for Local Transporters

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	1	3	1	5	6	3.75	2.28
Afaha Obong	20	4	2	3	6	5	3.30	1.58
Otoro Abak	18	1	3	1	6	7	3.83	2.79
Mkpatak	22	4	4	3	5	6	3.23	1.14
Ikpe Annang	23	3	3	4	7	6	3.43	1.82
Adiasm	20	2	4	1	4	9	3.70	3.08
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	3	3	2	4	9	3.62	2.77
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	3	3	3	6	7	3.50	1.95
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	4	6	1	4	6	3.10	2.05
Ibiaku Ntok	23	3	4	4	6	6	3.35	1.34
Okpo								
Nung Ukim	22	4	5	2	3	8	3.27	2.30
Nkwot Ikot	23	4	4	1	2	12	3.61	4.34
Umo								
Raffia City	22	3	4	4	1	10	3.50	3.36
Christmas	21	3	3	2	3	10	3.67	3.27
Village								
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	4	2	4	11	3.78	3.71
Ntak Afe	19	6	3	3	3	4	2.79	1.30
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	4	4	3	4	2.85	0.71
Total	357	55	62	41	72	126	58.28	39.81

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.10: Festivals Usually Generate Income for Local Food Vendors and Other Small Businesses

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	1	3	1	5	7	3.82	2.61
Afaha Obong	20	4	2	3	6	5	3.30	1.58
Otoro Abak	18	1	3	1	6	7	3.83	2.79
Mkpatak	22	4	4	3	5	6	3.23	1.14
Ikpe Annang	23	3	3	4	7	6	3.43	1.82
Adiasm	20	2	4	1	4	9	3.70	3.08
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	3	3	2	4	9	3.62	2.77
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	3	3	3	6	7	3.50	1.95
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	4	6	1	4	6	3.10	2.05
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	3	2	4	8	6	3.52	2.41
Nung Ukim	22	4	5	2	3	8	3.27	2.30
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	4	4	1	2	12	3.61	4.34
Raffia City	22	3	4	4	1	10	3.50	3.36
Christmas Village	21	3	3	2	3	10	3.67	3.27
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	4	2	4	11	3.78	3.71
Ntak Afe	19	6	3	3	3	4	2.79	1.30
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	4	4	3	4	2.85	0.71
Total	357	55	60	41	74	127	58.53	41.20

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.11: Festivals Usually Generate Reasonable Income for Hospitality Related Businesses

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	2	3	1	5	5	3.50	1.79
Afaha Obong	20	4	2	3	6	5	3.30	1.58
Otoro Abak	18	1	3	1	6	7	3.83	2.79
Mkpatak	22	6	4	3	5	4	2.86	1.14
Ikpe Annang	23	3	3	4	7	6	3.43	1.82
Adiasm	20	2	4	1	4	9	3.70	3.08
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	3	3	2	4	9	3.62	2.77
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	3	3	3	6	7	3.50	1.95
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	4	6	1	4	6	3.10	2.05
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	3	2	4	8	6	3.52	2.41
Nung Ukim	22	4	5	2	3	8	3.27	2.30
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	4	4	1	2	12	3.61	4.34
Raffia City	22	3	4	4	1	10	3.50	3.36
Christmas Village	21	3	3	2	3	10	3.67	3.27
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	4	2	4	11	3.78	3.71
Ntak Afe	19	2	3	3	3	7	3.56	1.95
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	4	4	3	4	2.85	0.71
Total	357	54	60	41	74	126	58.60	41.03

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4.12: Festivals Contribute to Community Cohesion and Social Capital

Community	Number of Questionnaire Sampled	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Mean	Standard Deviation
Midim	17	5	3	1	5	3	2.88	1.67
Afaha Obong	20	4	2	3	6	5	3.30	1.58
Otoro Abak	18	1	3	1	6	7	3.83	2.79
Mkpatak	22	4	4	3	5	6	3.23	1.14
Ikpe Annang	23	3	3	4	7	6	3.43	1.82
Adiasm	20	5	3	3	4	5	3.05	1.00
Eka Uruk Eshiet 1	21	3	3	2	4	9	3.62	2.77
Eka Uruk Eshiet 2	22	3	3	3	6	7	3.50	1.95
Utu Etim Ekpo	21	4	6	1	4	6	3.10	2.05
Ibiaku Ntok Okpo	23	1	2	6	8	6	3.70	2.97
Nung Ukim	22	4	5	2	3	8	3.27	2.30
Nkwot Ikot Umo	23	4	4	1	2	12	3.61	4.34
Raffia City	22	3	4	4	1	10	3.50	3.36
Christmas Village	21	3	3	2	3	10	3.67	3.27
Anwa Udo Aka	23	2	4	2	4	11	3.78	3.71
Ntak Afe	19	2	3	3	3	7	3.56	1.95
Ikot Akpa Nkuk	20	5	4	4	3	4	2.85	0.71
Total	357	56	59	45	74	122	57.87	39.39

Source: Field Data (2025)

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The following discussion were made from the result of the findings. In total, 357 questionnaire samples were collected across 17 communities to identify prevalent cultural festival types. The survey revealed that Masquerade Festivals were the most frequently identified, with 110 mentions. Harvest Festivals followed with 58 mentions, while Remembrance and Coronation festivals each garnered 66 mentions. End of Year festivals were the least identified, with only 57 mentions. Community-wise, Anwa Udo Aka showed the highest mean identification of festival types at 4.32, closely followed by Nkwot Ikot Umo at 4.28 and Raffia City at 4.22, suggesting a broader range of recognized festivals in these areas. Conversely, Ntak Afe had the lowest mean of 2.93, indicating fewer types of festivals were commonly recognized there. The standard deviations, which ranged from 1.14 (Midim) to 3.16 (Ikot Akpa Nkuk), indicated varying levels of consensus within communities regarding festival types. This data implied that Masquerade festivals were a dominant cultural practice across the surveyed communities, and while some communities had a richer tapestry of recognized festival types, others were more limited in their identification,

impacting the overall understanding of the region's diverse cultural landscape.

The survey on festival frequency across 17 communities, with a total of 357 respondents, revealed a strong preference for annually held festivals. Out of 233 respondents who indicated a specific frequency, a significant majority of 233 (65.3%) reported that festivals in their communities were held annually. This contrasted sharply with the 58 (16.2%) who observed biannual festivals and the 66 (18.5%) who reported festivals occurring more than once per year. For instance, communities like Nung Ukim and Nkwot Ikot Umo showed the highest annual frequency with 17 respondents each, while Midim had the lowest at 12 annually. The mean frequency values varied, with Mkpatak, Ikpe Annang, and Anwa Udo Aka exhibiting the highest means at 6.60, 6.32, and 6.32 respectively, indicating a slightly higher overall reported frequency in these areas despite the prevalence of annual events. These findings suggest that annual festivals are deeply embedded in the cultural practices of these communities, which has implications for tourism and cultural preservation initiatives; efforts to promote local culture might best capitalize on these established annual rhythms rather than attempting to

introduce more frequent events, which appear to be less common.

Local community leaders confirm that cultural festivals are eagerly anticipated annual events, primarily serving as a significant draw for younger generations returning from abroad. For instance, Chief Akpabio Ibanga of Nung Ukim emphasized this point, noting that these yearly gatherings provide an opportunity for their children to enjoy their holidays at home after working overseas. This sentiment was echoed by Mr. Ekpenyong Okon from Anwa Udo Aka, who readily affirmed Chief Akpabio Ibanga's observation. Both leaders highlighted the consistent yearly occurrence of these festivals, making it clear that they are a well-established tradition driven by the desire to reunite families and celebrate cultural heritage

At Ibiaku Ntok Okpo, Ette Idung Atai Ekpi agreed that festivals are excellent at creating a significant number of temporary jobs for locals. These events have diverse needs, ranging from setup and breakdown crews to hospitality staff, security, and technical support. Locals often fill roles as food vendors, cleaners, ticket takers, and even drivers for shuttles and deliveries. This provides valuable short-term employment, especially for students, seasonal workers, or those looking to supplement their income. Festival organizers frequently prioritize hiring from the host community, maximizing the economic benefit within the region. The wages earned by these temporary workers are then spent locally, generating a positive multiplier effect that further boosts businesses and creates indirect job opportunities, making festivals a vital source of local economic activity.

The survey data on whether festivals generate income for local transporters, as presented in Table 4.14, showed a generally positive sentiment across the sampled communities. Out of 357 total respondents, a significant majority either agreed (72 respondents) or strongly agreed (126 respondents) that festivals generated income for local transporters, collectively representing 55.46% of the total. Conversely, 55 respondents strongly disagreed and 62 disagreed, totalling 32.77% who perceived little to no income generation. The overall mean score of 3.42 (58.28 divided by 17 communities) indicated a moderate agreement. Communities like Otoro Abak (3.83 mean) and Anwa Udo Aka (3.78 mean) exhibited stronger agreement, with 7 and 11 respondents, respectively, strongly agreeing. In contrast, Ntak Afe (2.79 mean) and Ikot Akpa Nkuk (2.85 mean) showed lower agreement, with 6 and 5 respondents, respectively, strongly disagreeing. This suggests that while festivals were generally seen as beneficial for transporters, the extent of this perceived benefit varied considerably among different communities,

implying that the local economic impact of festivals on transportation was not uniformly distributed.

Another local stakeholder, Chief Etim Akpan confirmed that cultural festivals significantly boost income for transporters at Anwa Udo Akai. They attract a large influx of attendees, both local and international, directly increasing demand for public transport, ride-hailing services, and traditional taxis. Furthermore, transporters are essential for the logistics of the festival itself, moving supplies like food, equipment, and decorations to and from the event. This surge in activity creates a substantial economic ripple effect, benefiting various transportation sectors and contributing to the local economy beyond just vendor profits.

Local stakeholders confirmed that cultural festivals significantly promote social cohesion within our community. He said they serve as vital gathering points, bringing together diverse age groups, families, and individuals who might not otherwise interact regularly. These shared experiences foster a strong sense of belonging and collective identity, reinforcing communal bonds and shared values. Through traditional performances, communal meals, and collaborative activities, festivals help bridge divides, encourage mutual understanding, and strengthen the social fabric, reminding everyone of their connection to the wider community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This assessment confirms that cultural festivals within the Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial Districts are not merely customary events but constitute a vital, deeply embedded dual engine for cultural preservation and rural livelihood enhancement. The dominance of Masquerade Festivals and the overwhelmingly preferred annual frequency (65.3% of events) underscore a consistent and reliable cultural rhythm, which is instrumental in fostering social cohesion and driving the seasonal return of younger generations from the diaspora. These festivals demonstrably support local livelihoods through several mechanisms. They serve as a significant generator of temporary employment, fulfilling roles from hospitality to technical support, and create a verifiable, positive economic multiplier effect. Based on the findings that cultural festivals are annual, dominant, and economically beneficial, the following policy recommendations are proposed to maximize their positive impact on rural livelihoods and cultural sustainability:

➤ Formalize Temporary Festival Employment and Skills Transfer

The Senatorial District or State Ministry of Culture and Tourism should establish a formal registry for festival service providers (e.g., sound technicians, hospitality staff,

vendors, security). As such, capacity building involving basic, short-term training and certification in areas like food safety, event management, and customer service to local youths.

➤ **Establish the "Annual Cultural Calendar and Diaspora Engagement Fund"**

There should create a small grant fund, accessible to the communities with higher cultural diversity (e.g., Anwa Udo Aka, Raffia City), dedicated to infrastructure upgrades (e.g., public event space, accessible roads) and focused promotion aimed at the Nigerian diaspora to maximize their return and subsequent economic spending.

➤ **Optimize Logistics and Economic Distribution for Transporters**

The region should develop localized transportation plans for major annual festivals, including designated parking/pickup zones and public awareness campaigns, which ensures even the less central communities benefit from the logistics and attendee flow, thereby achieving a more equitable distribution of festival-generated income.

➤ **Promote and Document Cultural Diversity**

Launch a cultural mapping initiative to document and promote the variety of less dominant festival types (Remembrance, Coronation, End of Year) and those only recognized in certain rich communities.

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