Contemporary Cultural Issues and Policies for the Region

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Introduction

Culture is important tool for the tourism development in any region to benefit with visitors to area. The cultural experiences can enhance tourism and attract tourist to local area. Tourists are attracted to the area for local products, heritage and local community experience as a motivational factor to local region.

The term 'culture' has been debated intensely over the last two decades and no clear definition of the concept has yet been accepted by the community as a whole. Culture, in modern day terms, is largely seen as a product of governments, large organisations and individuals who are aiming to develop their own standing in the given market (Raj et al, 2009). Culture is closely linked to our national identity and the importance that individual people place on local and national social organisations, such as local governments, education institutions, religious communities, work and leisure.

This paper therefore offers discussion points on the Contemporary Cultural Issues and Policies for the Region and the role of cultural tourism in the creation of opportunities and strategies for the region. It will also contest how local communities benefit from the cross-cultural festivals and increase the tourism in to the area.

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Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourists visit heritage, religious and art sites and take part in cultural activities in order to develop their knowledge of the way in which other communities live. There are a very wide range of cultural tourist experiences, including, for example, performing arts; festivals; visits to historic sites and monuments; educational tours; museums; natural heritage sites; and religious festivals.

The meaning of culture has constantly changed throughout history, meaning that there is not a universally accepted definition. Tomlinson (1991) explains that hundreds of definitions exist, meaning that culture can encompass all of the definitions. Culture is wide ranging; Yeoman (2003) says that culture ranges from high culture such as the arts to popular culture such as contemporary culture which embraces diverse subjects as football, music and television.
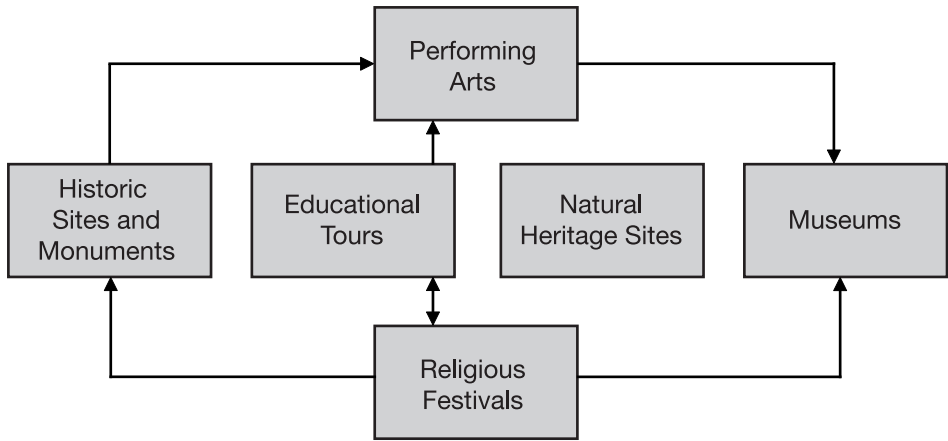
The culture is an identity and the importance that individual people place on local and national social organisations, such as local governments, education institutions, religious communities, work and leisure. Cultural tourism describes tourist who take part in the cultural activities while away from their home cities. Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose purpose is to discover heritage sites and cultural monuments on their travels. The theme of culture has grown over the last two decades but no clear definition of culture has been accepted by the community has whole. Culture in modern day terms is seen as a product by governments, large organisations and individual people to develop their own standing in the given market. Wyman states that culture plays important part in the society:

"...In an economic climate where we hear so much about crisis in health and education, it is important to remember that culture, too, is an essential element of a healthy society. It's not an either-or situation. Health is necessary for life; culture makes life worth living...."
http://www.culturematters.ca/index.html

Moreover, cultural tourism relates to those individual groups of people who travel around the world, individual countries, local communities and individual events that seek to experience heritage, religious and art sites to develop knowledge of different communities' way of life. This can include a very wide range of cultural tourist experiences. The model below shows the process that culture tourism is driven by different destination and famous heritage sites to attract visitors. Therefore, is important for the government to control and enhance the development of culture tourism.

Types of cultural tourism

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                    ┌──────────────┐
          ┌────────▶│  Performing  │─────────────┐
          │         │     Arts     │             │
          │         └──────────────┘             │
          │                ▲                      ▼
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│   Historic   │   │ Educational  │  │   Natural    │  │              │
│  Sites and   │   │    Tours     │  │Heritage Sites│  │   Museums    │
│  Monuments   │   │              │  │              │  │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
          ▲                ▲                                   ▲
          │                ▼                                   │
          │         ┌──────────────┐                          │
          └─────────│   Religious  │──────────────────────────┘
                    │   Festivals  │
                    └──────────────┘
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Raj et al (2009)

The Cross-Cultural Festivals

Culture is very complex and problematic to define. Over the years number of different definition have been presented by the literature. In modern day, culture is being viewed in a broad holistic way to express a set of social interactions, rules, values and beliefs linked to national or local identity. Tylor (1924, p.1) define the classic definition of culture as:

> **That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.**
>
> Sited in Reisinger and Turner (2003)

Communities in the last decade have become more disjointed and social frameworks are determined by the individual interest or standard of living rather than society in general. The cultural events can play a major role in developing local communities to become more globalised and enhance the destination for prospective visitors. Fam et al., (2004) stated that "Cultural dimensions are very dynamic in society", which creates great dimension for society to enjoy the positive cultural interaction which occurs when tourists visit the cultural festivals to cure the self belief of individuals. Moreover, in the last few decades the cultural festivals have developed a culture of their own. The researches and visitors now treat culture as terms of traditions, rituals, practices and

journey of expressions. In western society if you are involved in tourism or festivals it is treated as part of every day life and it is part of cultural belief Urry (1990). The theme of culture has grown over the last two decades but no clear definition of culture has been accepted by the community has a whole. Culture in modern day terms is seen as a product by governments, large organisations and individual people to develop their own standing in the given market. Wyman (2003) states that culture plays important part in the society:

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There has been a significant interest in the cultural festivals. Before cultural festivals were associated with key calendar moments, linked specifically to particular seasons and heritage sites. The development of cultural festivals has a considerable impact on local community development and regeneration of cities. In the last ten years festivals have contributed considerably to the cultural and economic development wealth of the western countries. A cultural festival in its various different forms has a huge economic impact on development of cultural tourism, management and planning to the local community. The festival organisers are now using the historical and cultural themes to develop the annual events to attract tourism visitors and create cultural image in the host cities by holding festivals in the community settings. The desire for festivals and events is not specifically designed to address the needs for any one particular group. The hosting of events is often developed because of the tourism and economic opportunities additional to social and cultural benefits. Many researchers have contested that local communities play vital roles in developing tourism through cultural festivals, sporting events and hall mark events.

On the other hand, in spite of tremendous increase in tourism and events, cultural festivals are now assessed by visitor numbers attending the event and tourist experience is disregarded and treated as economic tool to generate income for events managers and organisers.

Over the last decade these have been changed and developed upon, there is now a broad and diverse range of festival events taking place all over the world. However, the primary purpose of celebration of culture festivals through concerts or carnivals is developing economic impact for the local economy. There are also opportunities, though a district, town, or city may not directly benefit in a balance sheet profit from a festival, the event will yield an important economic impact. An example being Liverpool's Matthew street festival which runs every year at the end of August at a cost to Liverpool City Council but generates £30 million for the local economy. (Source Liverpool Culture Company, 2005)

Cultural Strategies for Iripinia Region

The future of cultural tourism in developing cities or countries relies significantly on event tourism strategies. Therefore it is important for governments to develop clear and effective event tourism strategies. It is also important for destinations and countries to understand the potential customer's / tourist's needs and expectations and introduce the consumer decision-making process for events. In addition, the aim is to encourage event tourism by developing complex and extensive event tourism planning strategies should be in place for the future. Relying on events to generate tourism in the future is difficult to predict.

Therefore, it is essential that Governments and other related authorities do not rely on certain events to attract tourists, but have a variety of future event tourism strategies in place to increase the culture tourism in the 21st century.

Strategic decisions made by a variety of Governments in the past have resulted in poor support from the local community. Therefore, it is important for governments to work with local communities to attract visitors to cultural and heritage sites. Also they need to improve transport, accommodation and food facilities in the tourism areas. The Governments should provide tax breaks for those companies which are catering for the local and international tourist to the destination.

Cultural Strategies

- Develop regional heritage sites for tourist attractions.
- Improve the standards of services to facilitate the selling of culture and performing arts as tourism products.
- Promote the provision of authentic cultural experiences and artefacts.
- Develop joint strategy with regional governments to foster more sustainable cultural and environmental policies for region.
- Regional governments should assist and facilitate participation in developmental issues.
- Regional Government of Irpinia needs promote and encourage local cultural events as well as community initiated cultural programmes.
- Develop district level cultural festivals to promote wider cultural participation.

Cultural Policies for a Iripinia Region

- Establishment of cultural objectives for the area/region
- Development and implementation of a plan based on concrete objectives;
- Development of a monitoring system
- Ensure a regular programming of quality

- Develop and consolidate cultural habits in residents
- Develop partnerships with Key stakeholders
- Integrate in national and international networks
- Create a privileged space of debate and discussion about culture and local tourism.
- Cultural products should be conceived and offered to visitors to the area.
- Market new cultural products to visitors increase customer demands and competition.
- Development of other management paradigms and supply solutions.

Conclusion

Local government of Iripinia Region should allow locals to become independent and get engaged with cultural tourism development. The Government laws allow the locals to make and sell handicrafts, rent rooms from their own housing as well as cook for tourists. This is an advantage both to the local community as well as the country's economy. The Government strategies, with support from locals, involve regular improvements on heritage buildings, such as museums, churches and large sport facilities. They provide facilities for visitors, which ensure that the locals are not disturbed during their time in the area. Events can be used to develop community pride, self-sufficiency as well as intercultural communication.

- Manage a strong alliance scheme with all stakeholders involved.
- Understand the complexity of the cultural system.
- Identify potential conflicts inherent to proposed local projects.
- To resolve areas of conflict and counterbalance existing patterns of interaction.

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