

## Culture and its role in tourism development

Mohammad Ebrahim Alinejad, Zahra Razaghi

Payame Noor University (PNU), Sari,Iran

[Alinejad2884@gmx.com](mailto:Alinejad2884@gmx.com)

**Abstract:** Today, culture has played a crucial role in human life and cultural tourism is the most appropriate way to better understanding of cultural interdependence of nations to each other. Tourism industry is a prism with several sides, each side of which deals with some aspects of life and needs of human communities. Tourism's human – oriented nature has made the role of human beings very remarkable and noticeable in its development. Tourism development can provide opportunities for cultural exchanges among tourists and local people so that the two parties will become more familiar with and will gradually respect each other's culture. Cultural exchanges via tourism will expand the mutual horizons of thoughts, will reduce prejudice and will bring people closer to each other. Cultural tourism is the most appropriate way to recognize cultural interdependence of nations to each other. The consequences of cultural tourism are the improvement of lifestyle, values, family relationship, attitudes, customs, traditions, behavioral patterns and many more economic and social components. Moreover, it will enhance the awareness of tourists and the host community about the features or the culture and probably historical and cultural commonalities of the nations. It will also create solidarity among peoples and nations in international environment and will connect nations culturally together. This article is aimed to study the role of culture in tourism development.

[Mohammad Ebrahim Alinejad, Zahra Razaghi. **Culture and its role in tourism development.** *Life Sci J* 2012;9(3):1593-1597] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 232

**Keywords:** Tourism - Culture - Cultural relations

### 1. Introduction

To create a comprehensive and sustainable development and to replace oil resources with new sources of income we need to make use of all facilities and capabilities. In this regard, the development of tourism industry, which is considered by the economists as the third dynamic and growing economic phenomenon after the oil and automobile industry, is introduced as the basic need of the country. Tourism development will improve economy and will reduce poverty (McKercher Bob and Hilary Du Cros.2002). It also has a great impact on income promotion and unemployment reduction and thus will improve people lifestyle and social welfare. Moreover, tourism is a factor of dialogue among cultures and civilizations and it makes the political relations between nations and states more balanced and friendly. Many religions have also emphasized on traveling around the world to get knowledge. So it is absolutely right to conclude that developing tourism industry could be profitable and it can lower the corruption in society and lead to the just distribution of wealth and income. □ One kind of tourism which can help us in this regard is cultural tourism which can play a valuable role due to its high capabilities. Cultural tourism is a general concept and finding an appropriate framework to define this cultural term is, according to scholars, a little complicated. It has various intangible variables which can be justified on cultural issues ,

but on social attitudes it is a little difficult to justify it and several researches have been done in this regard each of which clarifies a part of this issue but doesn't cover the basic principles which everybody has consensus on.

#### 1.1. Review of literature

Tourism is related to human motives, desires and dreams which are derived from culture, to the extent that it could be said tourism main stimulus is, in fact, cultural differences. (Wilson Suzanne. et. al. 2001); and without culture which makes differences, everywhere would be the same and tourism wouldn't be objectified anymore (Byrd Erick.et.al2008). Today, cultural differences have made so many tourists travel all around the world to become familiar with other cultures, gain experience and improve their knowledge. (Hall, C. M.;Lew, A. A. 1998) . More than an economic phenomenon, tourism is considered as a cultural affair around which many cultural monuments are formed. Basically, each tourist represents one culture and they not only introduce one or several behavior and beliefs and or tradition, but also show a live image of one community the other. When cultures are blended, people learn some cultural characteristics from other cultures and some from their own (Singh, L. K. (2008). In terms of culture, tourism makes the development of regional cultures, public arts and treasures possible. It contributes in rescuing all cultural values which precisely have tourism value.

At present, there is a bilateral relationship between culture and tourism. Culture is considered as a crucial source of tourism development, and tourism contributes to cultural development as well. Culture and cultural attractions provides motives for tourists and tourism, by creating wealth and employment for local communities, becomes a strong incentive for the preservation and revival of local and traditional cultures and for the vitality of the cultures. Culture attains its life and dynamism via interaction with the environment and encounter with other cultures. Cultures which are enclosed and limited to specific social atmosphere will lose their cultural value and growth, and will be gradually ruined (Ritchie, J. R. Brent ;( 2011). In today's world the limiting factors of interaction and communication among the cultures are gradually vanishing and cultural relations are constantly expanding. In such atmosphere, cultures are forced to know and deal with each other. In other words, in such atmosphere, there is no place for cultural comfort, security and stability which existed in the pat closes environments, and culture must have a dynamic presence in the domain of cultural relations (Theobald, William F. (1998). Tourism develops cultural relations. Revival of traditional ceremonies in all countries around the world for attracting tourists is one of the strategies to develop cultural tourism. Many tourists are interested in visiting and attending cultural events and ceremonies and thus they plan their trip so that it could be simultaneous with such rituals and ceremonies .Tourism helps to restore traditional values and rituals.

### 2.1. Cultural tourism

“Farhang” (culture) is a Persian term composed of two parts “far” and “hang”. “Far” is a prefix which means “front, up, glory, dignity, and advance”. “Hang” is derived from Avestan root “ang” meaning “draw, plan and intend”. “Kultur” and “Culture” are derived from the root “Culture” meaning “inhabit, cultivate, protect, and breed”. Culture is a set of structures and spiritual and material treasures of specific ethnic group or nation. Throughout history, different movements have offered various definitions of culture. One definition of culture by UNESCO is as: “Culture is a complicated set of behavioral, intellectual, material and spiritual characteristics which represent a society or a social group. This includes not only arts and literature, but also life forms, type of construction, rights and laws, beliefs and values. “Culture is the foundation of civilization. But these two are different in all aspects. Civilization represents residence and stability, while culture represents movement and development. Civilization appears in courts and castles with armed guards, while culture appears in

solidarity and interdependence and social life. Civilization keeps the concept in mind, but culture keeps the meaning of liberty in minds. Culture will wither in isolation and won't develop anymore. Culture is a clear manifestation of social life and social life lies in the relations of human beings. The more the human's communications, the better the creation and development of the culture. Culture can be defined as a set of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and behaviors that makes up the common base of all social behaviors. Culture underlies all actions and features of life. It is culture that largely determines how a country should act (Din, K. H. (1997)). In fact, a set of human achievements to overcome nature is called nature. This set has developed by the relations among people on one hand, and has developed relations within it, on the other hand. Intercultural relations are the relations among peoples who have created and protected various cultures over time. Culture is the basic factor for a society development. Man is not just a component of his country's culture in every condition, but a unique, necessary, and irreplaceable element of it. Anthropologists have identified three aspects of culture:

First, culture is not instinctive but acquired. Second, different aspects of culture are interdependent. Third, different cultural groups are common in one certain thing and culture identifies its limits and boundaries. It's very important for each community to get along with its exclusive cultural pattern. Culture has many visible manifestations which people might be aware of, but is also had many hidden forms. The problem is to make these hidden forms explicit. Cultural tourism encourages recognition of visible and invisible elements of cultural heritage.

Cultural tourism encourages individuals and communities to get involved with tourism and to study their origins and history and its evolution and it also forces them to define their future goals. Cultural heritage is a living instrument which must show us our own images and ideas. This heritage will enable us to continue to develop our land and will set our lives in accordance with our predecessors' authenticity. It contains the necessary elements for developing cultural tourism in the community. Cultural tourism development requires familiarity with the concepts, knowledge, dimensions and different approaches. Domain of cultural tourism development is interdisciplinary and benefits from a holistic and systematic approach (Britton, S. G. (1991). When examining the behavior of human and society, the cultural dimensions are very important. Cultural dimensions are also important in international environment because there are certain

cultural differences between countries. The concept of cultural perspective encompasses the geographical patterns of human-learned behaviors. These patterns, within the framework of transmitting ideas and myths and imagines from generation to generation or from one group to another, form the cultural perspective at any geographical environment based on the heritage and mental, social and technical facts (Goeldner, C. R. et al. 2000). Cultural perspective reflects the environment adaptation of local knowledge, including the notions that appear within intergeneration imagination, and is about new ways of thinking and understanding the world. Therefore, cultural perspective encompasses several layers of cultural levels. While globalization is growing, maintaining and sustaining local cultural landscapes requires introduction and advertisement. That is we should think globally and act regionally and locally and while respecting the global laws, we should care about local and indigenous cultures, too. Moreover, logical and material, intellectual and emotional access to cultural development is both a right and a privilege. Therefore, knowing other cultures and their heritage has become necessary. This is parallel to developing strategies toward the economic approaches of culture and has formed the cultural tourism in relation to cultural and economic needs (Mathieson, A. and Wall, G. (1982). In conceptual term, cultural tourism has been defined as human's traveling and leaving his typical place of residence to visit cultural attractions and to gain new information and experiences for satisfying his cultural needs. Technically, cultural tourism involves people's traveling to see particular cultural attractions such as cultural heritage sites, aesthetic and cultural values, arts and plays, which are located outside of their normal place of residence (Milne, S. and Ateljevic, I. (2001). Based on these definitions, cultural tourism includes visiting cultural attractions such as historic museums of fine arts and architecture, cultural customs and traditions, and other cultural aspects. In a new approach, tourism is considered as a cross-cultural communication. This attitude might be followed by issues which are very important in policy making and planning in this area. Cultural tourism formation in one region depends on cultural provision and offering of the existing attractions, local and regional support of cultural tourism in concept of social and organizational structure and also the existence of cultural and natural attractions blended together and the formation of cultural perspectives. Therefore the formation of such tourism together with improving local resident's awareness about the advantages and disadvantages of cultural tourism could be useful. Supporting the cultural heritage and providing the necessary conditions for keeping the

regional population is another requirement (Dogan, H. (1989). Cultural tourism has existed in mankind world as a cross-cultural communication and has had many effects on establishment and development of civilizations. It has the possibility to develop everywhere, because all regions have their own culture. UNESCO has introduced it as one of the elements of the World cultural heritage protection. European Commission supports it as a major industry and in many parts of the world calls it as a vital tool for economic support of local activities and customs and traditions. Accepting this point can be followed by a logical conclusion which is the necessity of defining and classifying tourist again and this time based on its cross-cultural features. In this case, other types of cross-cultural communications which are common with it in subject, methodology, and policy, will be covered by this definition. This attitude can consider tourism as a cross-cultural communication prior to a recent economic activity. With remarkable cultural and communicational features like other intercultural communications, a divine status will appear which always has accompanied human being from the beginning of life on Earth. In a general approach and its importance in the tourism and the method of cultural exchange and cooperation in tourism issues, with the release of the 1980 Manila's declaration in General Assembly meetings, World Tourism Organization (WTO) was basically paid attention to. This statement counted on positive cultural and social impacts of domestic and international tourism; it also asked the governments to try to preserve cultural resources, so that continuous use of them will not ruin them. In 1982, Tourism Organization General Assembly paid more detailed attention to the principles of Manila's statement and thus Acapulco document was released.

### **3.1. Theoretical Foundations of Cultural Tourism**

Some believe that tourism growth and development and its conversion to an organized industry, will develop people's culture spiritually and materially. The development of industries and specialized services such as marketing techniques, flight services and transportation, will be specially followed by the development of small industries. Also tourism growth and development will reduce conflicts and will increase innovations and development in communities. Tourism will contribute to better comprehension of the world various cultures and cultural development. Based on this approach, tourism development is a path to cultural interaction and communication among different nations and tribes which, in turn, leads to cultural development and, economic and social growth in contrast, opponents of this group believe that with the arrival of tourists, cultural challenges

will increase. They believe that tourist expects more comfort from the host community on his vacation which will have social and cultural destructive effects on the host; for example it causes conformity and will ruin community's sacred rites and values and beliefs. In 2002, in a research in this case, Rats Tamara believed that the most important effect of cultural interaction between tourist and the host family was the imitation of tourist's behavior by local people. The consequences of such imitative behavior are changes in the use of language, dress, and culture and also contribution to increasing social chaos and corruption such prostitution and gambling and changes in material and non-material forms of local culture. Poor cultures often are easily influenced by tourists' cultures and get whatever good or bad from them and will gradually vanish. But tourism interactions among communities which have many cultural commonalities will lead to fewer damages. In other words, tourism development opponents' point of view about countries with lots of cultural commonality is not acceptable, because negative social and cultural effects of tourism are the result of poor planning and management. If tourism is managed with appropriate planning and management, its destructive effects are very small and insignificant. On the other hand, cultural commonality has creative and spontaneous elements and a powerful foundation so that if it is well planned and implemented, while keeping its own identity and integrity, can take advantage of the features of other cultures and develop proper cross-cultural planning and management through updating issues.

#### **4.1. Principles and Charter of Cultural Tourism**

In 1999, The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMAS) passed the principles of cultural tourism charter in Mexico. This charter is composed of six main principles:

1. Since domestic and international tourism is one of the most important means of cultural exchange, its conservation should provide opportunities for members of the host community and visitors to primarily experience and understand the culture and heritage of that community.
2. In order to achieve a sustainable future for cultural heritage and tourism, the dynamic relationship between these two must be managed.
3. Tourism security and planning for heritage sites must guarantee that the visitors' experiences would be valuable, satisfactory and enjoyable.
4. Host communities and indigenous people should be involved in planning conservation and tourism.
5. Tourism and conservation activities should be profitable for the host community.
6. Tourism developing programs should support and promote the features of cultural heritage.

#### **5.1. Cultural tourism motivation**

Although in this thesis it is attempted to introduce tourism as a cross-cultural communication, it does not necessarily mean that tourists in their tours are just motivated to understand other cultures. On the other hand, it means that this activity is conducted with different incentives, and it is a cross-cultural communication in essence, based on which studying and policy making must be done. However, in any communication, different motivations and goals can be defined. In a primary classification, we can distinguish between the tourists' motives and goals on one hand, and the reasons or interests upon which a country develops tourist attraction, i.e. the hosts' goals, on the other hand. Usually tourist attraction is done to achieve two main goals: first, to earn income and to create economic prosperity which was mentioned earlier and which is the main policy of most tourist countries for attracting tourists. But if we have a cultural look at tourism, cultural goals will be the main policy of tourism. These goals might include promoting cross-cultural relations among people, demonstrating solidarity in different levels, introducing domestic culture and or expanding it all around the world. Cultural attractions have more diversity, since human being has interfered in creating them, and also due to various human cultures. These attractions can be divided in 7 main groups:

1. Historical and cultural attractions, such as monuments and museums;
2. Religious attractions, such as mosques, holy places, Imams' shrines, which are also placed in historical attractions from another perspective.
3. Social attractions, such as public culture and governments' characteristics.
4. Demographic and folkloric attractions, such as cultural ceremonies and traditions of various ethnic groups.
5. Technological attractions, such as tall buildings and innovations displayed in various exhibitions.
6. Research and educational attractions, such as famous universities and libraries.
7. Sports attractions, like stadiums and sports events such as Olympic Games.

But if we want to examine cultural tourism more professionally, we must know its components. The typology of cultural tourism attractions is classified into eight main element including: Archeological, historical, and cultural sites and certain cultural patterns, arts and crafts, attractive economic activities, attractive urban places, museums, festivals and cultural events and finally hospitality customs and traditions of residents. Each of these attractions has its own characteristics.

## 2. Discussions

Tourism is one of the best ways to access historical and cultural experiences of societies. Through traveling we can closely recognize the factors of progress and decline among nations and societies. By visiting historical monuments and landmarks in tours, such as urban ruins and cultural heritage in museums, we can closely comprehend wonderful and excellent experiences of nations and their fall and collapse. Developing tourism industry and attracting tourists in every society, makes it possible to introduce the historical and cultural sites of that society and leads to its cultural growth and development. In other words, the cultural strengths and weaknesses become more obvious which ultimately leads to the Cultural Revolution and development. If the culture of societies is rich, tourism will blend ideas, cultures and civilizations together and makes a whole in which each component, while maintaining its own independency, will have an inseparable relation with other components. In fact, one of the most significant results of cultural tourism is preservation of historical and cultural monuments. Moreover, development of handicrafts and local products, preservation of local values, and growth and development of employment are some other consequences of tourism growth and development. Nowadays, many countries with rich cultural background, have contributed to their local and national cultural growth and development through the rehabilitation and restoration of ancient structures of historic cities. Moreover, tourism revenue provides the chance to preserve historical and cultural centers, to attract more tourists and to keep historical and cultural monuments dynamic.

### Acknowledgements:

Authors are grateful to the Payame Noor University (PNU), for financial support to carry out this work.

### Corresponding Author:

Mohammad Ebrahim Alinejad  
Payame Noor University (PNU), Sari,Iran  
E-mail [Alinejad2884@gmx.com](mailto:Alinejad2884@gmx.com)

### References

1. Britton, S. G. (1991). *Tourism, Capital, and Place: Towards a Critical Geography of Tourism Development*.
2. Byrd Erick T.,David A. Cárdenas, Jerusha B. Greenwood.2008. Factors of Stakeholder Understanding of Tourism: The Case of Eastern North Carolina. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*. 8 no. 3 192-204.
3. Dahles, H. (2001). *Tourism, Heritage and National Culture in Java, Dilemmas of a Local Community*. Surrey: Curzon.
4. Din, K. H. (1997). *Tourism Development: Still in Search of a more Equitable Mode of Local Involvement*. In C. Cooper and S. Wanhill (Eds.), *Tourism Development, Environment and Community Issues*. (Pp153-162). West Sussex: John Wiley.
5. Dogan, H. (1989), "Forms of adjustment:Socio-cultural impacts of tourism",*Annals of Tourism Research* , Vol. 16, No.2, pp. 216-236.
6. Sanders NJ, Moss J, Wagner D. Pattern of ant species richness along elevational gradients in an arid ecosystem. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 2003; 10(2):77-100.
7. Goeldner, C. R., Ritchie, J. R. and McIntosh, R. W. (2000). *Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. New York:John Wiley and Sons.
8. Hall, C. M.;Lew, A. A. 1998. Sustainable tourism. A geographical perspective. 0-582-32262-6.
9. Rawat YS, Singh JS. Forest floor, litter falls, nutrient return in central Himalayan forests. *Vegetatio*, 1989; 82(2):113-29.
10. McKercher Bob and Hilary Du Cros.2002. *Cultural tourism: the partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*, Routledge.
11. Milne, S. and Ateljevic, I. (2001). Tourism, Economic Development and the Global-Local Nexus. *Tourism Geographies*,3(4), pp369-393.
12. Ritchie, J. R. Brent ;( 2011). Amaya Molinar, Carlos Mario; Frechtling, Douglas C. "Impacts of the World Recession and Economic Crisis on Tourism: North America".
13. Singh, L. K. (2008). "Issues in Tourism Industry". *Fundamental of Tourism and Travel*. Delhi: Isha Books. p. 189. ISBN 978-81-8205-478.
14. The impact of culture on tourism. 2009. OECD Publishing, France.
15. Wilson Suzanne, Daniel R. Fesenmaier, Julie Fesenmaier, John C. Van Es. 2001. Factors for Success in Rural Tourism Development. *Journal of Travel Research November vol. 40 no. 2 132-13*.

7/30/2012