

Stemming the Decline of Cultural Festivals as a Way of Preserving the Nigerian Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of Kuteb and Idoma Cultural Festivals

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Abstract : A cultural festival is characterized by feasting and celebration, with a day or period that has been set aside solely for this reason. Often expressed by an organized series of acts and performances, it forms a very important part of man's cultural heritage. Nigeria is a country with many ethnic groups and diverse languages. Each of these ethnic groups has a plethora of festivals that depict their culture which is exhibited in many forms ranging from dancing to feasting and celebration. Being a very important aspect of man's life, it is pertinent to document and optimally harness it. However, there is a significant decline of these practices in some areas in Nigeria while some areas have registered a total loss of same. It is the aim of this paper therefore, to appraise the factors responsible for this and also, to project ways of resuscitating these festivals which by the way are viable tools for revenue generation through tourism. Not only do festivals serve as a source of revenue, they also aid in national integration which in turn further enhances sustainable development. The interest of this paper will focus on the Kuteb people of Taraba State and the Idoma people of Benue State. The methodologies applied include primary (oral interviews) and secondary (consultation of written records on the subject matter) sources of data. It finally concludes by comparing the approaches that are in use by the ethnic groups in Nigeria who have successfully preserved this aspect their culture and suggestions are made as to how to apply same approaches to these two communities that form the subject of this paper.

Keywords : festival, cultural heritage, Nigeria, national integration, sustainable development

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