

RESEARCH ARTICLE

REGENERATION OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL TOURISM: ADAPTATION & TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

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Social changes, behavioural change, and unprecedented disruptions constitute an unparalleled challenge to civilization. Pandemics, environmental issues, civil turmoil, humanitarian issues, and regional conflicts are just a few of the unexpected changes that are strongly related to tourism. This introspection involves questioning the future role of religious festivals in society, like: Whether the future of religious festivals lays in the platform of sustainable development, or should planners think about placemaking or beyond it? How can religious festival tourism become more resilient and adaptable? Careful consideration of these and similar questions and longer-term decisions make tourism more resilient for future era and that is the major objective of this research paper. Based on the theoretical argumentation of religious festival tourism, the researcher incorporates the concept of regenerative and creative inclusive tourism as a reference idea for future study.

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Introduction:-

A significant social force in the modern world is tourism. Globally, it has a big impact on the geopolitical cultural and economic landscape. On a worldwide scale, tourism generates, reconfigures, and sustains geographic, social, and cultural regions. Pilgrimage Travel is undoubtedly a significant change-driver. Along with spending money, the millions of visitors also have a significant impact on people' life, for better or worse. Religious shrines are exploited, relished, and fermented however it is evident that the phenomena of the commodification of the cultural landscape have substantially changed everyone's way of life.

Festival Tourism is an exploitative sector that is difficult to regulate owing to its extensiveness. Conventional tourism relies on the movement of people to religious sites leveraging extensive and complicated value chain,

including transportation, accommodation, hotels, and recreation, as well as regional structural services, environmental services, and welfare services. Festival tourism is a complicated phenomenon due to these many linkages and interdependencies. (Hussain, Asif & Haley, Marie, 2022).

Festival Tourism has a manageable influence on the environment's natural resources, biodiversity, and capacity to absorb all negative effects and waste products. It is crucial to assess how sustainable development policies and initiatives affect local people and authentic cultural heritage. All tourist stakeholders shared the responsibility of resilient placemaking, yet it was challenging to identify the most appropriate solution. However, cultural tourism has evolved to include just "being in the air" of a place, experiencing local delicacies, and engaging part in local events. It has expanded beyond the traditional realm of "high culture" venues such as museums, theaters, and buildings (G.Rossana, 2007). Festivals are the events that offers real interactions with the local population, unique experiences, and environmentally friendly travel and lodging are in high demand. Festival tourism is closely associated with the notion of responsible tourism. (Galdini, R., 2007).

Sustainability, widely used in business to address low-impact activities, practiced with minimal modifications over long periods of time. As a result, sustainability does not fully incorporate the elements necessary to run a truly sustainable "total" business, so sustainability quickly became a buzzword and now a fading word, as it is used by companies as a "wash-down" to boost marketing and sales. 'Regeneration' appears to be the new buzzword in business, but the idea is still vague (Hussain, Asif & Haley, Marie (2022). A dynamic regeneration process can be facilitated by sustainable and responsible tourism, which can lessen adverse effects and enhance positive ones on the landscape of various locations (Galdini, R., 2007).

The Sustainable Tourism Development Agenda has drawn a lot of flak for being structured to foster inevitable economic expansion, which has been linked to environmental destruction and inadequate social equality. As a result, the underlying paradigm shift became more apparent, and regenerative tourism, the newest in a long line of regenerative development strategies built on indigenous perspectives, knowledge systems, and practices, emerged. (Loretta Bellato, Niki Frantzeskaki and Christian A. Nygaard, 2022).

Despite travel restrictions following the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, there remain demands that travel to go additional to "business as usual" in order to diversify our economic activities and support the adoption of resilient and regenerative practices (Jenny Cave & Dianne Dredge, 2020). The post-COVID tourist resurgence indicates how a regenerative tourism model emphasizing mindful travel may substantially reshape the way we think about, plan, and do travel. The repercussions of pandemic provide a prospect to revive the tourism sector. Experts arguing for "regenerative and inclusive tourism" sought to overcome issues that were sustainable, resilient, strengthening communities, providing jobs, promoting culture, and safeguarding heritage and its preservation. (Duxbury, N., Bakas, F. E., Vinagre de Castro, T.& Silva, S., 2020).

From economics, agriculture, science and then to architecture the buzz word 'regeneration' in the context of tourism, has been first used by Tourism expert Anna Pollock on the agenda with Visit Flanders and the Travel to Tomorrow Summit in 2019In both academia and culture, the word has garnered a lot of attention, but what really are we discussing? In the words of Hussain (2021), "regenerative tourism relies on the same foundation, in which suitable

circumstances are created for these businesses to remain regenerated constantly rejuvenated and reshaped naturally into an entirely novel concept with no substantial personal involvement".

It is a long-term commitment to a kind of tourism that enhances the well-being of all living things, learning from the patterns of nature that are constantly growing, evolving and adapting (Pollock, 2019). Regenerative tourism restores damaged target resources and helps the host communities thrive. All participants (guests, hosts, employees, business owner-managers, and residents) can prosper through tourism, not just in a material and financial sense but also emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually. Tourism can become a key regeneration force in communities. (Pollock, 2019). Each destination's regeneration pathway is unique and cannot be easily tracked through a standard set of indicators as is the case with sustainable tourism. , values play a key role in defining tourism regeneration pathways (Sheldon, 2021).

Cultural Regeneration and Tourism:

Cultural regeneration is a strategy widely adopted worldwide to activate urban renaissance and catalyze economic and social transformation (Jiemei, 2022). The goal of cultural regeneration is to change a city's or location's perception in order to bring skill and capital and ignite an entire resurgence.

When the tourism experts use the term regeneration, it is a diverse conceptual framework. This raises more and more questions, that is, what is the literary concept of cultural regeneration in context of tourism industry? How can developers do it and how is it different from cultural tourism and responsible tourism? Can it be applied to cultural places or cultural events? Does it only apply to natural heritage, or could other types of tourism form the challenges will planners face and basis of the idea? What how will they be overcome? Above sustainable tourism, regenerative tourism emphasises "giving back" and helps to actively regenerate communities, cultures, heritage, locations, landscapes, and other things. Approaches to regenerative tourism, seek to beyond conventional strategies sustainability. These antiquated go for practices nevertheless emphasize minimizing the damaging effects of human activity on the cultural landscape. Cultural Regenerative based approaches to adapting cultural and religious patterns are seen as a way forward and aim to craft positive outcomes, not just "do less damage." more harmful. These strategies can "restructure the economic activities of tourism" by viewing religious tourism as more than just "business as usual." In this scenario, broad community interaction is crucial for highlighting the distinctiveness of each location and delineating newly developing tales of local and communal history.

According to this viewpoint, there are two main situations where regenerative religious tourism can be very beneficial: (1) Restoring religious sites that have been negatively impacted by mass tourism; and (2) Revitalising a destination with a cultural landscape, community, or site that is not yet a popular tourist destination but has the potential to become one. In any case, these strategies are unlikely to succeed without the complete support of local decision-makers and agents for a local development strategy that forbids tourism growth to unsustainable levels and specifically takes the local community's welfare into account. (Duxbury, N., Bakas, F. E., Vinaigre de Castro, T.& Silva, S., 2020)

Cultural regeneration is an ongoing endeavor that may take a generation or more to happen. It is the change of a site (residential, commercial, or open space) that has displayed signs of social, economic, and/or environmental

deterioration. What has been explained is bringing new life and vitality to a town that is struggling and making longlasting improvements to the local standard of living, taking into account social, economic, and environmental requirements. The role of culture as an essential component, stimulant, or accelerator in the process of innovation or regeneration is being examined (Evans and Shaw, 2004). The new holistic strategy incorporates a regenerative tourism model that acknowledges the complexity of tourism systems (Hussain and Haley, 2022). This study explains how all stakeholders must be included in the transformation of tourism in order to create long-term social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being. The future of the traveller economy must be shaped by "people," therefore this will result in new travel experiences that put the welfare of destination communities at the centre of tourism marketing and management. Galdini, R. (2007) wondered how tourism might represent an opportunity to regenerate urban cities? He further explains that tourism is one of the most important social forces in the world today. Tourism planners redesign and propose the travel activities to their visitors an authentic and spectacle experience with communities engagement (T., & Silva, S., 2020). It explores the possibilities of creative tourism as a regenerative component in community development processes, contextualised by the notions of sustainable cultural tourism and regenerative tourism.

Regenerative Religious festival Tourism

Festivals are place specific events with public celebrations concerning a specific theme, held annually or twice a year. More specifically, religious festivals are often a mixture of local handicrafts, food, and local traditions. (: Giaccone, S.C. and Galvagno, M., 2021). They revive local traditions and attract tourism flows, thus playing significant role for the economic development of regions. These religious festivals represent important opportunities

for creative and memorable tourist experiences, through an immersion of attendees in the local life and culture. Festivals are becoming a crucial aspect of religious tourism, drawing large crowds of visitors and impacting local economies. As travel becomes more accessible and globalized, festivals are also drawing in those looking for novel entertainment and cultural experiences. The study intends to examine and evaluate how festivals have contributed to the growth of event tourism while taking into account contemporary sociocultural and economic patterns and also challenges like overtourism (AKHUNDOVA, 2024)

Various local and global cultures, communities, identities, and lifestyle narratives are examined in relation to one other as they are created and experienced within the festival setting in The Festivalization of Culture. The cutting-edge carnival has grown in reaction to trends of cultural pluralization, mobility, and globalisation in a world where ideas of culture are becoming more and more splintered. It also conveys significant arguments about one's identity, neighbourhood, the setting, and connection (Taylor, Jodie & Bennett, Andy & Woodward, Ian, 2014).

It is commonly accepted that festivals as well as special occasions play a significant role in the financial stability of their local communities by offering alternatives for tourism promotion, commercial results, and a surge in foreign investment in host locations. Furthermore, the impression of locations and the feeling of being a part of a community can be altered by memorable occasions. Because of the increasing significance of cultural industries in today's economic climate, cities and territories all over the world embrace festival branding for both locals and tourists.

Promoting religious tourism as a way to support local sustainable development, wellness, and regeneration can make it a restorative aspect of tourism and elevate it beyond "business operations as normal." In many cases, tourismrelated activities contribute in the preservation of the region's rich cultural heritage, the revival of long-lost events, and the revival of disappearing spiritual practices. These activities are being developed with the collaboration and recognition of involvement of local communities. In the context of planning and making decisions regarding strategy, this sets them at the forefront with regard to how to capitalize on tourism to boost local economies, ways to conserve artistic resources for future events, and the best ways to increase the sustainability of arts and cultural assets. (Duxbury N.,et al ,2020).

The cultural practices, costumes, performing arts, and cuisines of the local community were traditionally portrayed during religious festivals or celebrations. According to Getz and Page (2016), these events and festivities play a significant role in the tourist experience in numerous regions. considering its ability to attract travellers to a local site and improve its economic and social stability, religious festivals and celebrations are given emphasis in many tourism programs and projects (Mair and Whitford, 2013). For this reason, they are becoming a viable policy option for tourism-related regional development (Moscardo, 2007; Robinson et al., 2004). Additionally, it is challenging for academics and practitioners to identify knowledge gaps and the present status of the field due to the scattered nature of current research.

Some festival forms are broadly identified by a festival typology: "home-grown" (community place-based festival), "tourist-tempter" (to attract visitors, mostly place-based), and "big-bang" (large-scale organized festival) (O'Sullivan, Diane, and Marion Jackson, 2002).

These festivals serve as advertising platforms that support entertainment and sustainable, community-based economic growth. Following is the list of festivals with its typology that are celebrated in South east Rajasthan. The analysis shows that these potentials are typically neglected even though they have the capacity to generate alternatives for sustained local economic growth. However, some festival environments do fit the concept of sustainable local economic development activities better than others.

Community and Communication

Religious pilgrimages are crucial to building community and spirituality (Árvavölgyi & Sági, 2019). These pilgrimages unite people of different backgrounds and religions around a common goal and longing for transcendence. In this sacred world, individual boundaries dissolve, creating a profound sense of oneness that joins searchers in a communal dedication and introspective pursuit of the divine. The pilgrims create strong bonds and find solace and resilience in each other on the difficult and life-changing voyage. Pilgrimage is a transforming event when personal enlightenment and spiritual connection with the divine coexist. Pilgrims typically travel together on their sacred trips to find spiritual enlightenment. The harmonious convergence described above creates a close-knit group with a common goal. This group shares the expedition's struggles and accomplishments, building

companionship. Communion is strongly related to the idea that pilgrims are part of a larger spiritual community that is deeply interrelated. This concept underpins communion.

A pilgrimage fosters a deep connection with the divine and a sense of communal consciousness and fraternity among the brave souls who embark on this profound path of personal growth. While on a difficult journey, people often verbally support each other, forming deep and lasting friendships. These extraordinary people showed significant reciprocal aid during the voyage. Pilgrims are often expected to do acts of service or philanthropy during their sacred journey. Customs requirements range from simple to sophisticated and subtle. This practice serves to build the community link that pilgrims share with one another and highlights how important it is to make a contribution to society.

In essence, the kinship and fraternity that are experienced by pilgrims go beyond the physical features of their journey. This serves as an illuminating monument to the interdependence of all devotees and the collective spiritual desire that brings them together. Pilgrimages to sacred sites instill participants with a profound sense of belonging to a community and a shared sense of purpose, both of which contribute to the experience's capacity to be profoundly important and formative for many people.

| Fair | District | Festival Grade (given by Rajasthan Govt.) | No. of tourist | Type of Festival |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------|------------------|
| Ganesh Fair | Sawai Madhavpur | A | 5 Lakhs | Home Grown |
| Sawaliya Seth Fair | Chittorgarh | Α | 40-50 thousand | Home Grown |
| Kaila Devi fair | Karauli | Α | 25-30 thousand | Home Grown |
| Mahavir ji fair | karauli | А | 25-30 thousand | Home Grown |
| Shivratri Fair | Chittorgarh | В | 3 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Dol Mela | Baran | А | 5 lakhs | Tourist temper |
| Kajli Teej | Bundi | В | 3-4 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Dussehra Festival | Kota | В | 10 Lakhs | Tourist Temper/ |
| | | | | Big bang |
| Chandrabhaga | Jhalawar | С | 4 lakhs | Tourist Temper |
| Bundi Festival | Bundi | В | 7 lakhs | Tourist Temper/ |
| | | | | Big Bang |
| SitaBari tribal fair | Kelwara, Baran | С | 3 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Sita Mata Mela | Pratapgarh | В | 4-5 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Chaitra Jogiyamata mela | Chittorgarh | A | 7-8 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Hanuman Jayanti | Chittorgarh | С | 2 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Chawth mata mela | Sawai Madhavpur | С | 7 lakhs | Home Grown |
| Kartik Mela | Keshwapatan, Bundi | С | 15 lakhs | Home Grown |

Case Analysis of South East Rajasthan (Districts under study area: Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar, Baran, Bhilwara, Sawai Madhopur, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh)

Source: Rajasthan tourism department: Published booklet, 2023-24

Creative Tourism Strategy at Religious festivals

The festivals listed above are hosted by the State government. These festivals were once mostly attended by locals or those from adjacent areas, but they are now events because of marketing and participation by tourist stakeholders. While local vendors benefits economically from such well-publicized events, devotees are offended since tourists are come to enjoy the event rather than to practice their faith. In both directions, it can occasionally become a question of communal resilience. A place of faith and a congested location that encountered everyday, essential problems. Sustainability cannot be the answer to every problem. One solution that could lessen communal resilience is regenerative activities.

While regenerative tourism transforms the notion of tourism but it brings significant challenges. Incorporating all social-ecological system components into a self-organizing system that accepts uncertainty and change in response to global shocks and trends is suggested by the "Regenerative Tourism Model." (francesc & hussain, 2022). Additionally, the model has created regenerative tourism indicators to gauge how sustainable and regenerative a given tourism product or service is.

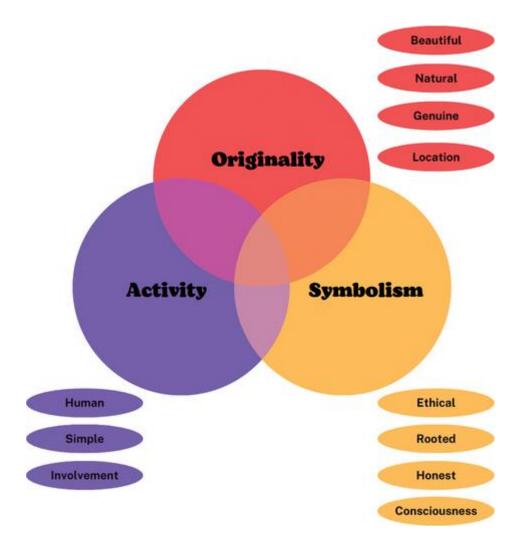


Figure 1: Regenerative Tourism Model given by francesc & hussain, 2022

The concept places emphasis on the actions that are integrated with symbolism and authenticity. Religious festivals must adopt a paradigm that might resolve the issues of overtourism and community resilience. Activities that engage guests in an organic way must be simple, natural, and grounded. Religion is a matter of faith, and it requires simply a regenerative model. The sustainability model does not address corporate profitability and has a restricted scope. To be sustainable means to be able to endure. Conversely, "regenerative" refers to "the capacity to bring into existence again," therefore if a system or object is regenerative, it has the innate ability to re-create itself.

Authentic experiences are essential to modern travel. There are two components to authenticity: knowledge and emotion. While religious or faith is an emotion, festivals with customary practices are celebrations with knowledge and experience, which again call for honesty and consciousness.

Creative Tourism Strategy at Religious festivals

In addition to stimulating new ideas and ways of doing things, innovative tourism initiatives can increase the community's existing dynamism and potential regeneration processes. As an extension of related endeavors, they can produce new insights and benefit the orgaisation as well as the community where it is based. Integrating culture, innovation, and new technology is essential to driving prosperity. The methods developed by the artistic and creative sectors are essential to cultural revitalization in many western regions (Melanie K. Smith, 2007).

The safeguarding of local cultural heritage and the resuscitation of endangered arts, crafts, and traditions are often supported by creative tourism efforts. The beginning of these kinds of initiatives and strategic considerations and choices about the application of tourism for regional growth, historical preservation, and cultural life ought to incorporate communities in a proactive manner. (Duxbury, N., Bakas, F.E., Vinagre de Castro, T., & Silva, S., 2020).

If one analyses why creative tourism strategy considers as most restorative therapy for social and economic wellbeing of communities, the results demonstrates that it is based on exchange between tourists and residents- the exchange of knowledge, skills, ideas, culture, etc. In the early forms of creative tourism this was often encapsulated in specific learning experiences such as workshops and courses, but it is increasingly now bound up with the idea of immersion in local culture and creativity, or the concept of 'living like a local' (Greg Richards, 2014). There are numerous theoretical interpretations of what it means to be "local." What appears to be a very basic concept, the "local," is actually quite complicated and entails the investigation of a variety of psychological and spatial phenomena, as Urry (2002) contends. The "local" has essentially taken the place of authenticity. Living like a native also means that the visitor develops existential authenticity. Additionally, this approach suggests a connection between the local and the visitor.

Being a local means more than just having experience. Hence, the relationship between tourists and locals is not merely one of host and guest, with distinct positions; the two sides must validate their respective authenticity. The tourist bears testimony to the authenticity of the local lives they lead for a while, and the local witnesses to the fact that this is a local life. We may have assumed, rather essentially, that people were using tourism to seek out "authentic" experiences. The emerging integrated approach to place making offers novel opportunities. When curators of art moved to tourism to transform artistic treasures into commercial assets, that marked the beginning of

the transition to cultural tourism. However, we now observe how local customs and cultural commercial capital have transformed tourism products.

Worship is the urge of people and festivals are one of the medium of worship. The festival as tourism product attracts people from far and near for social entertainment as is reflected on the eve of the festival day. (OK Emmanuel (2014). Festivals can assist destinations to develop their tourism industry through increased visitor numbers and usually extending the normal length of stay and the spending in the local community. Festivals are also known to make use of existing facilities and infrastructure, thereby minimising the capital investment required for their development and organization.(Nyikana, S., 2017). Religion is an important dimension of cultural life; it is closely linked to the national history, and in many cases it defines local identities and traditions. Visiting pilgrimage sites and attend festivals are a way to reinforce local identity. (Alvarado-Sizzo, I, Frejomil, EP, & Crispín, ÁS, 2017).

Ritual is an essential part of religious festivals that exhibits how social groups maintain their identity and adapt to change and this modification can serve as a critical vantage point to explore ways to promote sustainable development. (Kapoor, V.,2024).

The ceremonies, traditions, and theology are integral to the society and serve to unite its members. As a result, they are simple to adopt and modify. They also serve as a way to maintain one's traditions and convictions. Indigenous art and artistry have its roots in religion (Babu N, Aiswarya. (2022). These religious celebrations frequently feature genuine handicrafts and regional folklore. These religious festivals are special in that they foster individual growth, community identification, and capacity building. In their strategy and execution, community members and religious administrators can work together to minimize the adverse impacts and optimize the beneficial ones.

This research confirms that although sacred ceremonies have historically been effective means of spreading teachings (in many cultures), they also evolve with changing times. This could be a single element or a few; it doesn't indicate that the entire process is altered. The custom or ritual "must" change in some situations since failing to do so could have disastrous results. (Kapoor, V., Belk, R., & Goulding, C.,2022).

The focus of creative tourism is on the distinctive and genuine aspects of travel destinations, co-creation, and the growth of social agents' cultural and creative capital in the creative ecosystem—where festivals and events can be crucial. Before and during the event, all event organizers, attendees, and local communities may have the chance to establish a specialized consumption of creative experiences through creative and cultural activities and festivals. The author views these festivals and events as educational venues and artistic endeavors as educational chances, leading to instances of reflexive tourism consumption. (Carvalho, Rui, 2020)

A key factor of creative heritage tourism is heritage interpretation (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). And creative festival tourism is storytelling. Such stories are based on the religious mythology or historical ground. These stories have reflection of past and present, religious faith and scientific reason of having fairs at particular place and season. However, when tourists and tour guides engage with locals at places of worship, they gain fresh perspectives and insights from these encounters. The interpretation style might range from a positivist interpretation style that stresses the passive absorption of relevant in religious studies to a participative interpretation method that encourages creative expression among tourists (Ross, D. (2020).

In heritage tourism, participative heritage interpretation is a form of co-creation (Prebensen et al., 2014). While participating in religious festival, tourists interpret cultural traditions or customs and construct a narrative based on their values, beliefs, knowledge and motivations. In this case, creative tourism strategy helps to break the thin lines between the customisation and authenticity of local traditions, religious customs, interact with the regional artisans, crafting the local treasures which simultaneously providing a personalized meaningful tourism experience.

The argument of this paper assessed the creative tourism strategies in religious festival tourism with particular focus on the regeneration of cultural and religious traditions with participative interpretation on the outcome of the overtourism experience.

5. Conclusion:

Millions of people around the world are still enthralled with religious tourism, a centuries-old custom. The experience of earthly paradise is nonetheless a concept that contradicts monotheism, thus while tourism is undoubtedly a materialist phenomenon, it is also ultimately a sort of paganism. Offering experiences like yoga and meditation in Ashrams and "healing" retreats in monasteries can make it seem like a new religion. On the other hand, religious practice is increasingly incorporating tourism logistics (travel agencies, flights, hotel chains, standardized catering) tourist regulations for travel.

In this chapter we were discussing about the religious festival tourism that focus on the mass tourist, facing challenges of overtourism and community resilience. The paradigm shift toward regeneration and a retreat from scientific thinking toward the concept of holistic cognition will have an impact on tourism. Small, grassroots efforts are currently occurring in many parts of the world, eventually coming together to create a revolution.

Regenerative tourism's theoretical underpinnings come from a variety of fields, primarily capital, urban, and cultural regeneration. Researchers discovered it to be a driving force behind placemaking and cultural planning techniques for a creative, democratic, and integrated future for tourist revitalization. (Melanie K. Smith, 2007). Although religious activity can take many different forms across each time frame, civilization, and environment, religion is a significant part of human history and is backed by a plethora of evidence. As the connections between tourism and religion grow stronger, the lines between notions are becoming less clear. (Srivastava and Kulshreshtha, 2023).

By highlighting a variety of local specialties in addition to the traditional, ethnic, and aesthetic splendor found in the area, local spiritual celebrations have the potential to attract tourists. This could result in the creation of new jobs and a positive ripple effect on the local economic climate. In addition to improving national image, these well-known events attract countless travellers from around the world, which has a major positive economic and social impact on the host nation. Festival events that utilize the wide variety of local artistic endeavors and heritage assets are competing internationally as the importance of local festivals for strengthening community credibility, advocating revenue generation, and delivering employment for locals becomes more widely acknowledged (Kanghwa Choi, Hee Jay Kang, Changhee Kim, 2021).

The analysis and observations presented in this chapter enlighten and fuel a much wider discussion about the ways in which regenerative festival tourism might be developed, operationalized, and contribute to developing creative tourism approaches among rural and urban communities.

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