

A Conceptual Framework of Role of Integrated Marketing Communication in the Promotion of Cultural Tourism

Mr. Sudip Bhattacharjee¹, Professor (Dr) Dhananjoy Datta²

¹Assistant Professor, The ICFAI University Tripura.

²Dean - Research & Development, The ICFAI University, Tripura.

Abstract

The Study establishes a conceptual framework and fully evaluates the concepts of cultural tourism, tourist and integrated marketing communication (IMC) both from a conceptual view and technical view. Extensive literature survey is done to discover the concepts of cultural tourism, tourist and (IMC) right from their origin, definitions, aspects and contexts. A special effort has been made to look at them from the point of view of the cultural tourist. The significance of these concepts to the economy, society and environment of a place is also studied. The study also tries to trace the origin and implementation of these concepts in the Indian context. Definitions which are suitable to establish a suitable integrated framework or link between cultural tourism and IMC have been identified. Importances have been given to those definitions which can be put to quantitative assessment, measured and evaluated. The relations between cultural tourism and IMC concepts and their interdependences have also been a focal point of the study.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Cultural Tourist, Tourist, Integrated Marketing Communication, Promotional Tools, Integrated Marketing Strategy.

Introduction

In framing the conceptual framework of the study it is very important to get a current view of the Cultural Tourism of the eight states of North East India. During the study it could be inferred that the eight states of the North East India do not form a homogeneous block in terms of policies and implementation of promotion strategies but are rather heterogeneous. Thus, it becomes essential to study the states and their policies separately. Each state has its own unique Cultural Heritages which are promoted in unique manners by the respective State Governments, Local bodies, Tourism related organizations etc. In proceeding with further study let us first clarify some definitions of some important terms like origin, definitions, aspects and context of Cultural Tourism and Integrated Marketing Communication.

Origin of Cultural Tourism:

In the context of India, where cultural tourism especially in the form of pilgrimage can be traced back to Vedic times, where earliest sources of information can be found from holy texts like Rig Vedas, Atharva Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas etc. The approximate origin of Vedas is from 1700 BC to 1100

BC. The great epic of Mahabharata mentions around 300 places of pilgrimage which may be mentioning a period of around 350 BC approximately. The Puranas mention a considerable higher places of pilgrimages spread around wide areas of the sub continent right from Afghanistan in the west to Indonesia in the east, and from the Himalayas in the north to Srilanka in the south. The 51 “Shakti Peethas”, where the Mother Goddesses is worshipped, the 12 “Jyotirlinga”, the symbol of Shiva, where the supreme God Shiva is worshipped, the “Kumbh Mela”, the largest congregation of humans on earth etc are among the most popular pilgrimage which is continuing till Vedic times. Thus, Cultural Tourism especially in the form of pilgrimages is continuing from ancient times. Cultural Tourism in form of pilgrimages has been popular in other parts of the world too and references can be found in holy texts like Bible, Koran, Buddhist holy texts etc. But in modern times cultural tourism as we understand today originated with the “Grand Tour” in Britain in the 17th Century ((Hibbert, 1969, Feifer, 1985). The word tourism is also derived from the word “Tour”. Towner (1985) defined the Grand Tour as, "A tour of certain cities and places in western Europe undertaken primarily, but not exclusively for education and pleasure". Mostly, the aristocrat people of the society participated in such Tours mainly for education and pleasure. In the 1780's with the growth of the British middle class, the Grand Tour witnessed participation from wider sections of the society. The emphasis of such Tours from education also shifted gradually from education to pleasure and entertainment. The proliferation of museums, exhibitions and other cultural manifestations for public consumption led to further growth of cultural tourism in Europe. The growing participation of the middle class led to the advent of “Package Tours” to European destinations. Thomas Cook was a pioneer in the field and started offering “Package Tours” as early as 1860's. After the First World War, cultural tourism flourished with the advent of the concept of “paid holidays” although it remained confined to the section of privileged middle class. After the Second World War, Europe experienced a long period of economic boom which also allowed cultural tourism to flourish. The cultural tourism scenario became more commercialized and standardized with the advent of mass international tourism in the 1960's. In the 1970's and 1980's the cultural tourism increasingly became more segmented into different niche markets. The tourism as a product got segregated based on four main factors –

1. Time – Winter sun holidays etc.
2. User group – Youth, senior citizens, students etc.
3. Destination – Tour operators offered packages for specific countries and regions.
4. Travel Motivation – Activity holidays, honeymoon, education tours etc.

The cultural tourism emerged as a major global industry by the late 1970's and increased focus was given to both positive and negative consequences of tourism development. (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). The growing demand of cultural tourism and need for creating new jobs resulted in created a new urban short break markets mainly based on cultural tourism (Law, 1993). Tourism also from an elite pursuit became a basic leisure need of masses and one of the largest employment generating sectors. The cultural institutions are also shedding their elitist tag and throwing their doors open to the masses.

Definitions of Cultural Tourism:

Table 1:

Author	Year	Definition
World Tourism Organization	1985	“Cultural tourism includes movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other

		cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages”.
Tighe	1986	the term ‘cultural tourism’ refers to ‘... historical and heritage sites, arts and crafts fairs and festivals, museums, the performing and visual arts; and is interested in experiencing the culture of the destination’.
Tighe	1991	Examined three components of cultural tourism: travel, the tourist and the sites. In particular, in terms of travel, he stated that ‘cultural tourism is travel undertaken with historic sites, museums, the visual arts, and/or the performing arts as significant elements’. In relation to cultural tourists, he is ‘... one who experiences historic sites, monuments, and buildings; visits museums and galleries; attends concerts and the performing arts; and is interested in experiencing the culture of the destination’.
Hall and Zeppel	1990	Defined cultural tourism from an experiential approach, stating that cultural tourism is an experience ‘... based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts, and festivals’.
Fridgen	1991	‘... for outsiders, the culture of an area can represent an attraction in and of itself. This is sometimes called cultural tourism’.
Fridgen	1991	Identified the partially what cultural tourists experience and went on to note that ‘... frequently, an area’s culture is displayed through stage presentations often for pay. Because tourists generally stay in an area for a short time, what the tourist actually sees is just a faint reflection of the true culture’.
Bonink	1992	Identified two basic approaches, the first, the ‘sites and monuments’ approach, concentrates on describing the type of attractions visited by cultural tourists, and is clearly related to a product-based definition of culture. The other view is activities and motivations of tourists though intangible but essential to understand cultural tourism especially the expectation of the tourists and the way they perceive culture.
Silberberg	1995	Cultural tourism is part of cultural heritage tourism. Visits by persons from outside the host community are motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution.”
Stebbins	1996	“Cultural tourism is a genre of special interest tourism based on the search for and participation in new and deep cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, or psychological.”
Richards	1997	Cultural tourism is the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.
Richards	1997	Cultural tourism includes ‘all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence’.

ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism)	1997	“Cultural tourism can be defined as that activity which enables people to experience the different ways of life of other people, thereby gaining at first hand an understanding of their customs, traditions, the physical environment, the intellectual ideas and those places of architectural, historic, archaeological or other cultural significance which remain from earlier times. Cultural tourism differs from recreational tourism in that it seeks to gain an understanding or appreciation of the nature of the place being visited.”
Canadian Tourism Commission	1999	“Cultural tourism occurs when participation in culture or heritage activity is a significant factor for travelling.”
Borley	2001	“that activity which enables people to explore or experience the different ways of life of other people, reflecting the social custom, religious traditions and the intellectual ideas of the cultural heritage which may be unfamiliar.”
Richards	2001	Suggests that cultural tourism covers not just the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the ‘way of life’ of a people or region. Cultural tourism can therefore be seen as covering both ‘heritage tourism’ (related to artifacts of the past) and ‘art tourism’ (related to contemporary cultural production).
International Council on Monuments and Sites	2002	"The cultural and cultural-cognitive tourism actually is this form of tourism, which focuses on the cultural environment, which in turn may include cultural and historical sights of a destination or cultural-historical heritage, values and lifestyle of the local population, arts, crafts, traditions and customs of the local population. Furthermore, cultural and cognitive routes may include a visit or participation in cultural activities and events, visit museums, concerts, exhibitions, galleries, etc.
Malek	2003	“Cultural tourism comprises all forms of travelling, which are primarily motivated by a desire for contact with broadly understood culture”
Gaworecki	2003	“Cultural tourism is movement of people from places of their permanent residence to places of cultural attractions in order to acquire new information and experience and satisfy their own needs.(...) Cultural tourism comprises artifacts of culture from the past and works of contemporary culture, life-styles of specific populations or regions; it comprises travels focusing on cultural heritage and travels focusing on art. The concept of cultural tourism comprises all forms of tourism which contain culture-related products on offer.”
Barbier B.	2005	Cultural tourism comprises journeys which are mainly motivated by cultural heritage. Heritage is understood here in two ways: 1) Narrowly defined heritage, i.e. landmarks and works of art – culture in this sense is strictly related to general history and history of arts; 2)

		broadly understood heritage including such elements as: daily living, science and technology (factories, machinery), geographical environment (landscapes and their interpretation, methods of utilizing spaces in the past and today), literature devoted to various regions, cuisine treated as an art of living, etc.
City Tourism and Culture – The European Experience, report of the European Travel Commission	2005	Distinguishes between an inner and outer circle of cultural tourism: “I. The inner circle represents the primary elements of cultural tourism which can be divided into two parts, namely heritage tourism (cultural heritage related to artifacts of the past) and arts tourism (related to contemporary cultural production such as the performing and visual arts, contemporary architecture, literature, etc.). II. The outer circle represents the secondary elements of cultural tourism which can be divided into two elements, namely lifestyle (elements such as beliefs, cuisine, traditions, folklore, etc.) and the creative industries (fashion design, web and graphic design, film, media and entertainment, etc.).”
Mikos von Rohrscheidt	2008	The term ‘cultural tourism’ may relate to all tourist expeditions taken by groups or individuals, where encounters with sites, events and other assets of high culture or popular culture, or effort aimed at improving one’s knowledge of the surrounding world organized by man are the essential part/aspect of the traveler’s itinerary or are a clinching argument for individuals’ decision on whether or not take up such a journey/participate in such a trip.
Kowalczyk	2008	“In its broad sense cultural tourism may be defined as all kinds of tourists’ behaviours, since the underlying needs and preferences always result from preconditioning of cultural nature (e.g. the tourist’s system of values), regardless of the fact whether these behaviours are a consequence of the tourists’ interest in the so-called cultural assets or other types of tourism-related (e.g. natural) assets..”
ATLAS	2009	Conceptual Definition: “The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”. Technical Definition: “All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence”.
Michalkó & Rátz	2011	“Cultural tourism is such a tourism product in which the motivation of the tourist (providing the supply side) is getting acquainted with new cultures, participate in cultural events and visiting cultural attractions and the demand side’s core element is the peculiar, unique culture of the visited destination”.
World Tourism Organization	2012	"Trips, whose main or concomitant goal is visiting the sites and events whose cultural and historical value has turn them being a part of the

(Report WTO, 2012)		cultural heritage of a community".
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A typical list of the types of sites or attractions which are considered to attract cultural tourists is provided by ECTARC (1989). The list includes:

1. Archaeological sites and museums.
2. Architecture (ruins, famous buildings, whole towns).
3. Art (sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events).
4. Music and dance (classical, folk, contemporary).
5. Drama (theatre, films, dramatists).
6. Language and literature study, tours, events.
7. Religious festivals, pilgrimages.
8. Complete (folk or primitive) cultures and sub-cultures.

The study will mainly focus on the product based definition of cultural tourism and will assume that people visiting sites of cultural importance or attending cultural events or functions are doing these for cultural motivations. Such assumption based on identifiable activities of the tourist will make the outcomes more tangible which can be quantified and measured.

Aspects of Cultural Tourism

On the basis of the above definitions, Cultural Tourism can be categorized based on the important factors like travel, destination, motivation, experience and activities of the tourists. Csapó. J. (2011) has classified cultural tourism into distinct seven types. The classifications are given in the table below:

Table 2:

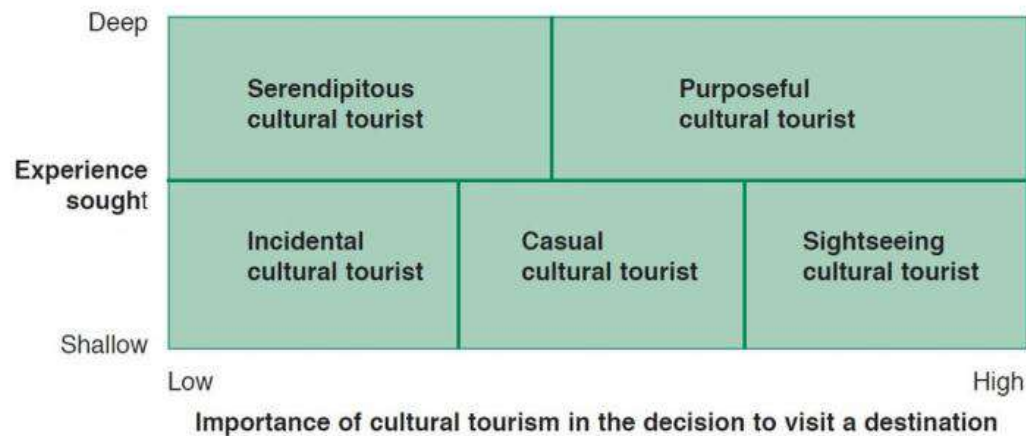
Types of cultural tourism	Tourism products, activities
Heritage tourism	• Natural and cultural heritage (very much connected to nature-based or ecotourism); • Material - built heritage, architectural sites, world heritage sites, national and historical memorials. • Non material - literature, arts, folklore • Cultural heritage sites - museums, collections, libraries, theatres, event locations, and memories connected to historical persons.
Cultural thematic routes	Wide range of themes and types: - spiritual, industrial, artistic, gastronomic, architectural, linguistic, vernacular, minority.
Cultural city tourism, cultural tours	• “classic” city tourism, sightseeing • Cultural Capitals of World or Region. • “Cities as creative spaces for cultural tourism”
Traditions, ethnic tourism	• Local cultures’ traditions • Ethnic diversity

Event and festival tourism	• Cultural festivals and events. • Music festivals and events (classic and light or pop music) • Fine arts festivals and events.
Religious tourism, pilgrimage routes	• Visiting religious sites and locations with religious motivation. • Visiting religious sites and locations without religious motivation (desired by the architectural and cultural importance of the sight). • Pilgrimage routes.
Creative culture, creative tourism	• Traditional cultural and artistic activities, performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage and literature. • Cultural industries like printed works, multimedia, the press, cinema, audiovisual and phonographic, productions, craft, design and cultural tourism.

The classification is broad based and covers almost all possible places and events which may suitably qualify to reasonably generate cultural tourism. The study will restrict its selection of places and events as generators of cultural tourism only if the place and event falls within the ambit of this broad classification of cultural tourism as proposed by Csapó. J. (2011).

Tourist: “Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.” – United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Thus, as per the definition people staying at least one night in the destination is considered as Tourist. The same day visitors are considered as Excursionist by UNWTO. The study will focus only on the study of Tourist and not Excursionist. Primarily the excursionists are people belonging to the same locality and share the existing culture. Besides excursionists do not also avail various Tourist facilities like Hotels, Tour packages, food etc. as they travel on their own from their nearby residences and will not be able share their experiences on such components of Tourism.

Mckercher & Du Cros (2002), classified cultural tourists mainly based on two essential aspects of experiential nature of cultural tourism i.e Experience Sought and Importance of Cultural Tourism in the decision to visit a place. The classification is given in *figure 1* below. The study will take into consideration all types of cultural tourists as it is very difficult to assess the motivational level of tourists while visiting cultural places or participating in cultural activities. Besides this classification of cultural tourists based on motivations of tourists is fluid in nature. The motivational levels of people keep changing and a casual cultural tourist may be attracted or interested by certain cultural aspects in a manner to get converted to a purposeful cultural tourist.



- **The purposeful cultural tourist**
Cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination and the tourist has a very deep cultural experience;
- **The sightseeing cultural tourist**
Cultural tourism is a primary reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is less deep;
- **The serendipitous cultural tourist**
A tourist who does not travel for cultural reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience;
- **The casual cultural tourist**
Cultural tourism is a weak motive for travel and the resulting experience is shallow;
- **The incidental cultural tourist**
This tourist does not travel for cultural reasons, but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences.

Figure 1: Typology of Cultural Tourist: Source: Mckercher & Du Cros (2002).

Cultural Tourism in context to Indian economy:

Travel and Tourism is the largest services sector in India. The tourism sector in India is expected to grow at the rate 7.8 % yearly in the period 2013 – 2023 in terms of its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India. The Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) is also rising due to higher connectivity to tourist destinations and better lodging facilities. (ASA & Associates, 2015). The low cost Airlines have a major role to play in promotion of tourism by increasing accessibility to many tourist destinations. The Tourism industry is mainly interrelated with the three sectors Hotels & Restaurants, Travel Industry and Tour operators. The various stakeholders in the Tourism industry has been summarized by International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics, 2008 in the below table:

Table 3:

Products	Activities
1. Accommodation services for visitors	1. Accommodation for visitors
2. Food and beverage serving services	2. Food and beverage serving activities
3. Railway passenger transport services	3. Railway passenger transport
4. Road passenger transport services	4. Road passenger transport

5. Water passenger transport services	5. Water passenger transport
6. Air passenger transport services	6. Air passenger transport
7. Transport equipment rental services	7. Transport equipment rental
8. Travel agencies and other reservation services	8. Travel agencies and other reservation services activities
9. Cultural services	9. Cultural activities
10. Sports and recreational services.	10. Sports and recreational activities
11. Country-specific tourism characteristic Goods	11. Retail trade of country-specific tourism characteristic goods
12. Country-specific tourism characteristic Services	12. Other country-specific tourism characteristic activities

Source: International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics, 2008

Thus, the tourism sector has got a multiplier effect in number of interdependent sectors in terms of job creation and revenue generation. As per the International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics, 2008, the cultural services can be of the following types as illustrated in the below table:

Table 4:

Cultural services
<i>1. Performing arts event production and presentation services.</i>
<i>2. Services of performing artists.</i>
<i>3. Museum services except for historical sites and buildings.</i>
<i>4. Preservation services of historical sites and buildings.</i>
<i>5. Botanical and zoological garden services.</i>
<i>6. Nature reserve services including wildlife preservation services</i>

Cultural Tourism has got the maximum impact in generating revenue, as various studies shows that culturally motivated tourists tend to be more from affluent sections of the society and developed countries. Thus purchasing powers of cultural tourists are significantly higher than other types of tourists. Expansion of employment opportunities is an outstanding contribution of tourism industry. Particularly the hotel and restaurant sector employs a good number of *skilled and semiskilled personnel*. In addition, the transport sector also requires a number of personnel, besides, the tourist organization employs suitable persons. Thus, the total employment generated by this sector is the total employment generated by its different segments. Further, the generation of indirect employment opportunities is it's another feature. It is a highly labour intensive industry in which we find different types of employment to *skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled persons*. The direct employment generated by the tourism industry in India is to the tune of 10 million, which makes about 2.5% of the total labour force in the country. *The labour-capital ratio is one of the highest in this sector.* The generation of jobs for an investment of rupees 1 million (at 1985-86 prices) in the tourism sector is estimated to be around 50 against a figure of around 12 recorded by the manufacturing sector. (Goussous and Haddad, 2014)

Thus, the ability of creating jobs is very high with the tourism sector and this may be of very high interest to policy makers. In a country like India with a growing younger population and growing aspirations it will be one of the primary focuses of the Government to facilitate the growth of jobs to keep social harmony. Statistical reports shows that tourism had 9% share of global GDP and employees

around 3% of the total employment share around the world during 2009 according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) annual economic impact report 2014 for India shows that travel and tourism's economic contribution is expected to grow by 7.3% this year, outperforming the general economy by 2.5% points. Thus in India Tourism sector is doing exceptionally well in the present scenario and more and more opportunities are coming up.

Revenues gained from domestic tourism rose by 5.1% in 2013 and is expected to increase by 8.2% in 2014. The amount that international visitors spent in India rose by 6.2% in 2013 but is forecast to slow to a 2.9% growth rate in 2014. Moreover, tourism seems to be more effective than other industries in generating employment and income in the less developed often-outlying regions of a country where alternative opportunities for development are more limited. (Ganesh and Madhavi, 2007) An expert of ESCAP says, "Exploitation of rural areas and the less developed interiors becomes significant in this very context. The development of outdoor, treks, beaches, hills and, mountains, resorts etc. particularly in the rural and backward areas has constructive effect on re-distributing the earnings." The development of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Kovlam in Kerala and Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir give positive evidences for contribution of tourism to the development of backward areas in India. If we turn our eyes on their past, it is apparent that till a few years ago, all of them were relatively unknown villages, with dismal economic activities, inhabited by traditional rural folk. Of late, these places fare internationally known (Ganesh and Madhavi, 2007). A good number of skilled and semiskilled or even unskilled local people are found employed in tourism or other ancillary industries furthering socioeconomic justice with the help of equitable distribution of economic benefits.

Cultural Tourism in Context to Environment & Society in India:

Generally, the manufacturing industries pollute water, air and sound and make the environment unhealthy for the living beings. This is an important negative effect of industrialization, which necessitates development of nontraditional industries in general, and the tourism-industry in particular. With the development of tourism industry, we find ample scope for making the environment pollution free. The tourist centers like national parks, hill stations, wild life and bird sanctuaries, and gardens etc. helps in maintaining the ecological balance. Thus, we find here two-tier positive impact; first the environment is kept free from the smoke or other industrial hazards and second, the tourist centers directly contribute to the ecological balance. Mawlynnong Village in Meghalaya touted as the "Cleanest Village in Asia" is an example how conservation of local eco system, fauna and flora can be incentivize by the Tourism industry. Domestic tourism can act as an integrating force strengthening national sentiment. Traditionally pre-occupied people in outlying areas can travel to other parts of our country and can begin to experience pride in their national heritage. A sense of nationality may help to prevent regional fragmentation. Mixing of peoples from different regions of a country can produce a better understanding of each other's way of life and a better appreciation of problems specific top particular region.(Ganesh and Madhavi, 2007). Tourism can also promote Women Empowerment as participation of women in Tourism sector is high. Some positive and negative aspects of cultural tourism were summarized by Horvath, 1999 as given in the Table below:

Table 5

Positive Effects	Negative Effects
The development of the regional culture.	- Culture become commercialized - Destruction of the environment

• Protection of the natural habitat • The accentuation of tourism regions • Strengthening of the local traditions and culture • Less seasonal, can extend the tourism season • Can be an important form of sustainable tourism	• Investments in tourism that act against the state of the environment • Architecture not characteristic to the local customs • Carrying capacity problems • Cultural tourism has only a dependent role (need for package) • Conflict source
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Horvath, 1999.

But most studies agree that overall socio – environment impact of Cultural Tourism is positive if the local population is made privy to the benefits and special attention is paid to respect local sentiments and ecology. Thus, significant participation of local populace is a must in creating sustainable cultural tourism.

Origin of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC):

The concept of IMC as we understand today started in the 1930's when sales executives started to integrate their communication with the advertising people. The scholars recommended IMC and identified its benefits as early as the 1960's like synergy and clarity. The marketing people began to dominate and control the information flow by the 1980's which also resulted in some differences among the academics especially those from public relations. But due to its inherent benefits gradually "New Advertising" whereas various promotional tools like advertising, public relations etc propagated a similar message as decided by the marketing team became the norm (Thorson and Moore, 1996). According to Pickton and Broderick (1995), in order to break the clutter due to overflow of information in the world through multiple mediums and from preventing the message from getting lost, need to integrate market communication to reach the target segment was required. Finally, in 1993, IMC was introduced as a new discipline and it generated great interest among researchers as well as corporate people (Kerr et al., 2008 ; Holm, 2006). The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), through the integration of the messages, strengthens its position in the market and makes advertising powerful. The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) was introduced at Northwestern University in 1998 for the first time.

Definitions of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC):

Author	Year	Definition
American Association of Advertising Agencies	1989	"A concept of marketing communications planning that recognises added value in a programme that integrates a variety of strategic disciplines – e.g. general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines in order to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact"
Schultz	1991	"The process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed and which, behaviorally, moves the customer toward a sale and maintains customer loyalty"

Keegan	1992	“The strategic coordination of all messages and media by an organization in order to influence its perceived brand value collectively”.
Kotler	1999	“IMC is the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its message”.
Belch	2001	The concept of marketing communications planning which identify added value of a comprehensive program and evaluate the key role of various communication tools, such as advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations and integrate these tools to achieve transparency, consistency and the maximum communication impact.
Pelsmacker et al.	2001	With use of IMC, a consistent set of messages is conveyed to all target audiences by all available forms of contact and message channels.
American Marketing Association	2001	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a concept of a marketing communications plan which evaluates strategic roles of a variety of communication tools such as advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion in the form of a comprehensive program of communication, and integrates these tools to maximize the impact of marketing communications.
Duncan	2002	“IMC is a process for managing the customer relationships that drive brand value. In addition, it is a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue”.
Clow & Baack	2002	In IMC, traditional communication instruments are combined in such a way that a synergetic effect can be reached and the resulting communication efforts become “homogeneous.” Based on the customer-centric and data driven method of communicating with consumers, IMC focuses on consumers’ attitudes, needs and motivations.
Schultz and Schultz	2004	“IMC is a strategic process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programmes over time with consumers, customers, prospects and other targeted, relevant internal and external audiences”
Pike	2004	The IMC utilizes cross-functional marketing communication tools, for example, advertisement, direct

		mail, public relations, and word-of-mouth, to achieve its brand communication goals effectively.
Kliatchko	2005	“IMC is the concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centered and results-driven brand communication programmes over time”
Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald.	2005	IMC could potentially create the greatest persuasive effect on consumers’ encounters with brand contacts.
Du Plessis & Jooste & Strydom.	2005	The integrated marketing communications of comprehensive marketing communication plan that combines and evaluates a variety of strategic communication disciplines – general advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact.
Pitta, Weisgal, & Lynagh	2006	IMC is not only a powerful tool in reaching target markets with persuasive messages, but also effectively decides on promotion mix elements.
Holm	2006	Effectively implemented IMC strategy can increase marketing benefits and reducing costs based on changing customers’ behavior.
Duncan and Ouwersloot	2008	"Integrated marketing communications is a concept coordinating and directing the process of planning, execution, and supervision of brand messages, which establish the relationship of customer with brand".
Shimp	2010	Integrated marketing communication represents the planning, creation, integration and implementation of all contact points which a consumer has with a certain brand, as potential distribution channels, for messages which may influence directly or indirectly the purchasing process.

The study has taken into consideration the definition given by Shimp (2010) i.e ***integrated marketing communication represents the planning, creation, integration and implementation of all contact points which a consumer has with a certain brand, as potential distribution channels, for messages which may influence directly or indirectly the purchasing process.***

Since with the advent of social media and promotional tools and the ways consumers come in contact with organizations are continuously evolving. Thus this definition will give a wider scope to study the evolving promotional tools and in the process study the effectiveness of new promotional tools in influencing the cultural tourists.

Aspects of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC):

Marketing communications mix is a collection of communications, used to communicate a customer value and build relationships. In the past companies favored the mass communication to communicate

standardized products to masses of customers. New media tools enable marketers to target small segments of customers and communicate tailored messages (Kotler et al. 2008). The various promotional tools that are commonly used are: ***Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Public Relations and Personal Selling.***

They can also be considered to be the Primary Instruments:

1. Advertising - “Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor” (Kotler et al. 2008, p. 737). Advertising has many forms, but a typical characteristic is a possibility to reach huge audiences, however the products or services must be standardized to reach public attention to the greatest extent. Advertisement is also necessary when building up a long-term image. Advertising involves a one-way communication means and thus cannot provide much feedback (Kotler et al. 2008).

2. Sales Promotion – Sales promotion creates additional value and includes many communication tools as coupons, samples, premiums, demonstration activities, price reduction, point of purchase material, competitions, games and others. Main purpose is to attract customers, encourage them to purchase and boost sales (Kotler et al. 2008).

3. Personal Selling - Personal communication or personal selling involves interaction, which enables identification of buyers’ needs and creation of long-term customers relationships. Personal selling usually provides immediate feedback and valuable information for marketers (Kotler et al. 2008).

4. Direct Marketing - Direct marketing establishes relationships with customers by communicating a message to a specific person. Messages can be tailored to meet customers’ specific needs and thus build a one to-one customer relationship (Kotler et al. 2008). Nowadays mobile and internet technologies enabled direct marketing in places like Facebook, Twitter, Google, TripAdvisor and others (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2012).

5. Public Relations - Public Relations (PR) build a program and strategy for getting public recognition, understanding and acceptance. PR communicates trustworthy activities believable for readers. These could include news, references, speeches, special events, articles, corporate identity material or public service activities. Word-of-mouth remains the most workable marketing communications tool. Consumers inform about products or services by sharing their opinions and experiences in their communities and companies are monitoring their opinions and interacting with them online (Kotler et al. 2008, Czinkota & Ronkainen 2012).

Conclusion

The paper, has thoroughly explored the multifaceted dimensions through which Integrated Marketing Communication serves as a critical driver in promotional strategies. The conceptual framework presented underscores that effective promotion, irrespective of the industry, hinges on the strategic alignment of all communication efforts to deliver a cohesive and impactful message to the target audience (Singh et al., 2024). This alignment is not merely an operational task but a strategic imperative that influences everything from brand perception to customer loyalty and organizational responsiveness. At its core, IMC in promotion emphasizes **brand coherence and message consistency**, ensuring that all promotional activities, whether advertising, public relations, or digital marketing, speak with one unified voice (Rehman et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2024). This consistency is crucial for building and maintaining a distinct brand image and identity in the minds of consumers (Rehman et al., 2022). A unified

promotional front avoids fragmented initiatives, fostering a clearer brand identity and stronger customer relationships (Singh et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the framework highlights how IMC shapes **consumer perception and experience**. The strategic coordination of messages across various touchpoints allows organizations to create a "maximum persuasive impact" on customers, influencing their attitudes and behaviors towards the promoted offering (Khattab et al., 2015). This extends to building **trust and loyalty**, as consistent and credible information fosters consumer confidence and encourages positive word-of-mouth (eWOM). When consumers perceive a brand's communication as trustworthy and consistent, it strengthens their emotional and cognitive attachment, leading to greater brand loyalty (Singh et al., 2024).

Finally, an effective IMC framework mandates **organizational responsiveness** through customer-oriented communication and continuous adaptation and improvement. By actively integrating feedback and adapting strategies, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and evolving market demands. The benefits of a well-executed IMC strategy in promotion are extensive, including enhanced brand equity, increased customer satisfaction, and improved promotional effectiveness, which ultimately translates into a stronger market position (Desta & Amantie, 2023; Singh et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the conceptual framework posits that IMC is indispensable for achieving promotional excellence by systematically integrating communication functions to deliver a unified, consistent, and compelling brand message. Future research could further explore the dynamic interplay between digital IMC tools and evolving consumer engagement patterns, particularly in diverse cultural contexts, to refine strategies for building trust and cultivating lasting brand loyalty in an increasingly complex and competitive global market.

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