

**Noudou Mbiakop Nadine**

**CULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURISM AND  
THEIR IMPORTANCE**

**Case study: CAMEROON**

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**ABSTRACT**

<p><b>CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES</b> Unit for Technology and Business, Kokkola-Pietarsaari</p>	<p><b>Date</b> June 2012</p>	<p><b>Author</b> Noudou Mbiakop Nadine</p>
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<p>Cultural tourism which began in the late 1970s is today gaining grown in the tourism sector Today, many people travel not only for leisure and pleasure but gain a deeper understanding of the culture of their various destinations. The multicultural aspect of Cameroon has enabled tourists to visit the country, thus making it famous. The culture of Cameroon is mostly expressed through festival, traditional dances and rituals which can be observed in some regions of Cameroon, such as the north west, the west, the north and the littoral, as analyzed in this thesis.</p> <p>This thesis focused on cultural diversity of tourism and its importance. The main aim was to create awareness on what cultural tourism is about, and Moreover, to investigate the importance of cultural tourism for the Cameroonian community, and finally to analyze the impact of the development of cultural tourism in Cameroon. A qualitative research method was used because it enabled the author to be able to deal with a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, life history interview and observation.</p> <p>Cameroon has witnessed a considerable increase in the development of tourism most especially cultural tourism. The country hosts a number of festivities such as the Ngondo, the Nyem-Nyem and the Medumba which has been described and analyzed in this thesis. These festivities attract a large number of tourists who come to savor the rich and diversified cultural attractions. Today, tourism and particularly cultural tourism, has become a major source of income for the country and for the entire Cameroonian communities.</p> <p>In a nation where the industrial sector is not developed, tourism, especially cultural tourism, is the way to improve the economic situation of the community. Cameroon, Africa in miniature is a country blessed with different cultural diversities which makes it a touristic destination for national and international tourists. Even though the industry of cultural tourism is not free from limitation, it can still be greatly developed if proper policies and plans are being furnished and implemented.</p>		
<p><b>Key words:</b> Cultural diversity, importance, Tourism</p>		

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## **List of Abbreviations**

NGO - Non Governmental Organization

MINTOUR - Ministry of Tourism

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

FESTAC- Festival of Art and culture

WTO –World Tourism Organization

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Our different ways of life and cultural backgrounds have been seen to motivate the minds of many people to seek out novelty and experience new things. Tourism, which is not that old an industry and which dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has seen a transformation in recent years in various branches, and in constant transformation when adapting to the needs of the audience and those of the tourists. With no concise and agreeable definition on tourism, scholars in the 1990's approached tourism in terms of demand and supply. Cultural tourism has become a major "new" area for tourism demand, with almost all policy-makers being aware of the anxious need for development.

Cultural tourism is today a pillar because it serves as a strategy for growth for many countries and the local people used this as a means to boost their local culture. (Richard, 1996). In recent years, tourism has become a fast growing sector in Cameroon, as a result of the fact that Cameroon commonly known as Africa in miniature is blessed with different cultural and historical events, some of which are celebrated annually.

The government of Cameroon has in its own rights promoted the tourism industry on both national and international level. Over the past years, cultural tourism has become a source of attraction, as the country has witnessed an increase in national and community activities, which are events organized by communities, event organizers and the government with the aim of promoting tourism and attracting tourists.

Cultural event tourism is now being used by local communities to market them as destination region by exploiting the full potentials of hosting cultural event which has attracted both local and international tourists.

Cultural tourism in Cameroon is on the rise with awareness being created by the government, the private sector and the local communities. Cameroon, a country with cultural diversity, has during the past few years hosted different types of cultural events such as the Ngondo cultural event, the Nyem- Nyem annual festival, and the Medumba festival.

These various events are of major size and have attracted millions of tourists to Cameroon, and most tourists always come back to take part in such festivals whenever they are being organized. This has increased the number of tourists that enter the country every year.

Despite the fact that Cameroon is blessed with different cultural attractions, the author will focus mostly on the Ngondo festival in the littoral region, the Medumba in the western region and the Nyem-Nyem in the adamawa region. These events are the most popular one in Cameroon.

Today, the government of Cameroon greatly supports and promotes the hosting of cultural events as a part of the nation building agenda and cultural diversification program, economic development and destination marketing. Cultural tourism today is a rapidly growing niche market. This market is gaining grounds through the increasing number of domestic and international tourist, and thus, increasing the availability of global communication.

The purpose of this research is to outline the various touristic potentials in Cameroon, most especially cultural tourism and how it can boost the economic situation of the country. This can be done by looking into Cameroon's geography, ethnicity, history and cultural diversity.

The topic was chosen because of the author's interest in investigating the importance of the cultural aspect to the local people, the government and the tourist. The main aim of this study is to understand the aspect of cultural tourism. Another objective is to analyse the different problems caused by cultural tourism in Cameroon and bring some possible recommendations.



## 2 AN OVERVIEW OF CAMEROON

Cameroon known as the Republic of Cameroon is located in West Africa and bordered by six main countries, which are: Nigeria to the west, Chad to the north east, the Central Africa Republic to the east, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo to the south. Cameroon's coastline lies on the bight Bonny, part of the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean (See graph 1).

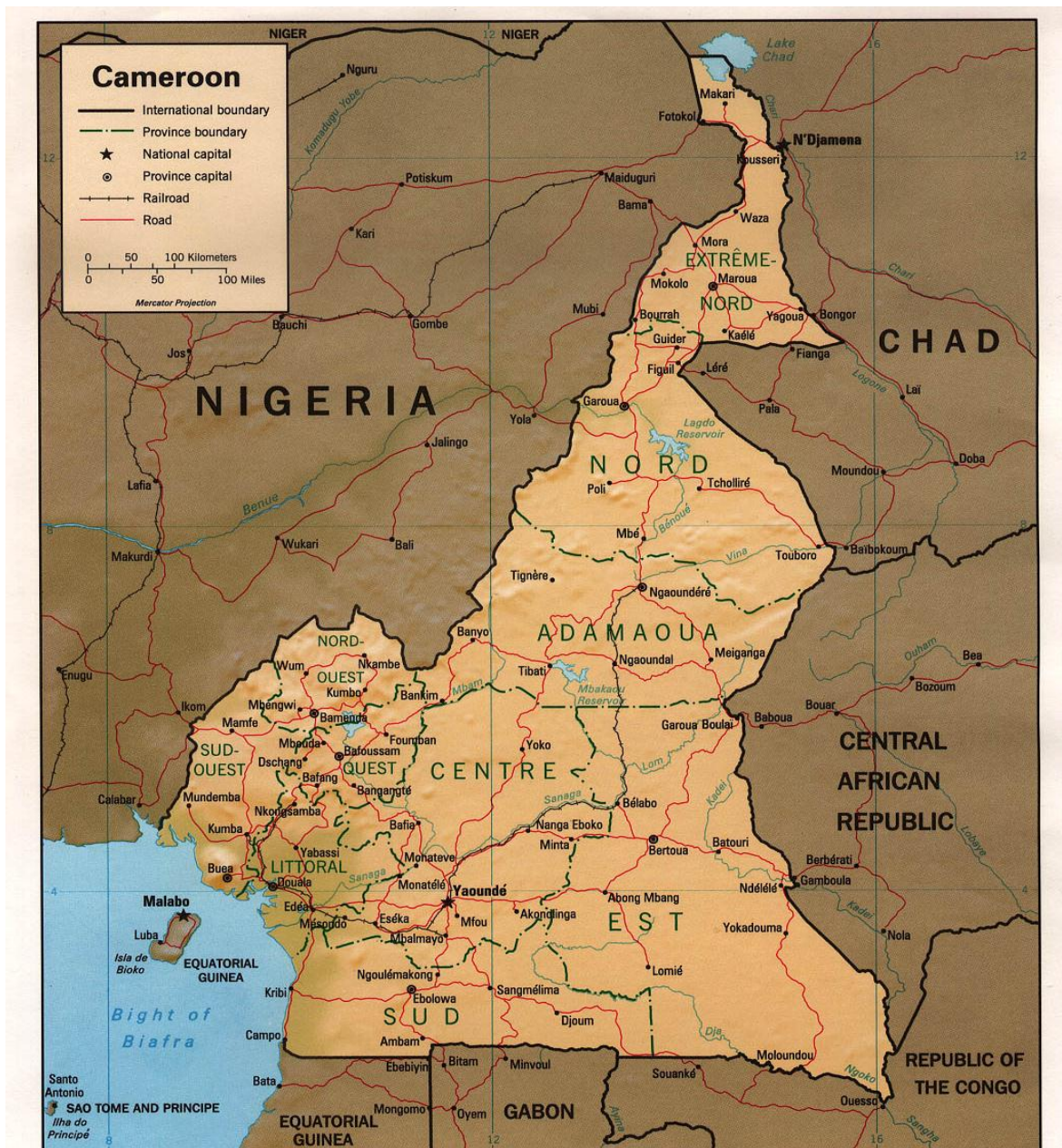
Cameroon is commonly known as "Africa in miniature" due, to its different diversities such as natural features, which include fauna and flora, beaches, mountains, rainforests savannas and its cultural diversity. It is a country with over two hundred different ethnic groups and two official languages which are English and French. It has a total area of 465,500km<sup>2</sup> and a total population of 20,129,878 statistic of July 2012 (Cameroon demographics profiles 2012)

Cameroon's early inhabitants were the Sao civilization around the Lake Chad and in the south east rainforest were the Baka hunters. The name Cameroon come from the Portuguese explorers who arrived at the coast of Cameroon in the 15th century and named the area Rio dos camarões meaning "River of Prawns" After the Portuguese explorers, came the Germans in the 19th century with aim of colonizing Cameroon they established powerful chiefdoms and fandom in various regions, such as the north, the west and the northwest region. In 1884, Cameroon became a German colony. (Africa history 2012)

After the first world war, Cameroon territory was divided between two countries France and Britain and became known as the League of Nation mandates. The long years of Europeans colonization in Cameroon brought about revolt between Europeans and the local communities and by so doing the idea of advocating for independence came into place and this was through a movement known as UPC (Union des Population du Cameroun). In 1960, the French administered part of Cameroon gained her independence as the Republic of Cameroon under president Ahmadou Ahidjo while on the other hand in 1961, the southern part of Cameroon that is British Cameroon merged with the French part to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1972 the country was renamed the United

Republic of Cameroon and in 1984 the Republic of Cameroon (African history 2012).

After a comparative study with other African countries it can be clearly stated that Cameroon enjoys a relatively high political and social stability and these positive aspects of the country has brought about the development of agriculture, infrastructures, large petroleum resources, timber industry and above all tourism.



GRAPH 1 .Cameroon map (adapted from Cameroon shaded Relief 1998)

## 2.1 Tourism in Cameroon

Cameroon tourism is a growing but relatively minor industry which stands out with a genuine identity expressing diversity and stability. It is also known for its modernity, traditional dynamism and calmness. Cameroon has all the beauties of Africa and this explains the author feels no explorer could really discover Africa without having visited Cameroon.

The country's melting and contrasting views provide tourists with unique spectacles, such as the ancestral land laying on the sea, deserts, waterfalls, Sahara zone and the temperate climate in the south, and its great heat in the north.

The different aspects of Cameroon, such as the relationship between tribal societies and modern cities, the diversity in fauna and flora, and the cohabitation of traditional and democratic leadership, gives tourists the impression that they are visiting different countries at the same time. When tourists visit Cameroon, the feeling of harmony is created by arts, the nature of the people, and sometimes, the tourists go a long way to experience the soul of Africa. The unique and multiple aspects of Cameroon greatly represent the values of Africa.

In the 1970s, the government of Cameroon came to realize the importance of tourism which aimed at encouraging investment by airlines, hotels and travel agencies. Cameroon's government to increase the investment in tourism began on 3 December 1974 when the former president Amadou Ahidjo issued an order that set the tourism industry aside as having special status. During this period, a General Commissariat of tourism was being established and in 1975, the president reconstituted the body as the General Delegation for tourism. (Travel and Tourism in Cameroon 2012)

The birth of the new delegation improved the tourism infrastructure, such as roads and today, the country has different means used by tourists to ease their movement between various destinations. A majority of tourists visiting Cameroon mostly uses road transport followed by air and finally marine. Moreover, the large number of tourists arriving to Cameroon usually land at the Douala international airport, the economic capital of the Country followed by the international airport of Yaoundé –Nsimalen

Yaoundé being the capital. (See table 1)

TABLE 1. Different transport means of tourist arrival in Cameroon 2006-2010 (Adapted from Africa in one Cameroon 2010)

**Arrivées des touristes au Cameroun par mode de transport de 2006 à 2010**

Mode de transport \ Année	2006	2007	2008
Aéroport international de Douala	165 890	179 642	188 601
Aéroport international de Yaoundé -Nsimalen	32 483	36 257	34 770
Aéroport international de Garoua	647	768	600
Port de Douala	10 989	9 846	6 418
Quai Boscam	990	1 742	1 395
Port de Limbé	744	883	1 048
Frontières terrestres	239 698	247 698	243 698
<b>Total</b>	<b>451 441</b>	<b>476 836</b>	<b>486 530</b>

Mode de transport \ Année	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Terre	239 698	247 698	243 698	253 485	280 924
Air	199 020	216 667	223 971	217 857	238 198
Mer	12 723	12 471	18 861	26 958	53 607
<b>Total</b>	<b>451 441</b>	<b>476 836</b>	<b>486 530</b>	<b>498 300</b>	<b>572 729</b>

Cameroon offered 37 hotels with 599 rooms in 1960, in 1976 the number rose to 203 hotels with 3,229 rooms, and in 1980, it again increased to 7.500 hotels rooms and the majority of these rooms are in the two major cities Douala and Yaoundé.

In 1971, tourism in Cameroon became known by many tourists and during this year, 29,500 tourists visited the country the number rose to 100,000 tourists in 1975, and 130,000 tourists in 1980. The majority of tourists visiting Cameroon came from France, the United Kingdom and Canada. In 2008, Cameroon received 298,000 tourists and today, Cameroon is being recognized as a tourist destination by the world tourism organization (WTO) since it attracted 500,000 tourists in 2010. (History of Cameroon) (See table 1. Different transport means of tourist arrival in Cameroon 2006-2010)

## 2.2 Touristic attractions in Cameroon

The urge of tourists to travel is based on the different attractions that exist in a particular destination and its diversity. The variety in people, nature and culture in Cameroon has brought about various forms of tourism over the years. A destination is being defined as not just a site or an event but as an integral part of large tourism system that act as tourist and markers. The definition of an attraction varies depending on how it is being viewed either as an aspect of marketing or as that of planning purposes. Though an attraction is the principal motivation for tourist to visit, no site or event is an attraction in itself unless a tourism system is created to designate and elevate it to the status of attraction. This aspect can be seen with the case of the Founban palace of Cameroon which was being constructed as a shelter for the Fon but due to its rich nature it is recognized as a world heritage (see graph 2) (Jafari 2000 ).

Any object real or intangible may be designated as having some special quality which can be elevated only by creating awareness through advertisement in order to acquire the status of an attraction. The only intrinsic requirement of the object is that it is associated with a location. The location of an attraction is what makes the differentiates it from other consumable goods, the reason being that tourists go to the attractions to experience them while, on the Other hand goods are being designed to suit the taste of consumers and distributed to reach them at various destinations. The purposes for which attractions are created are typically environmental and cultural resources. The tourism industry is seen as a sector which turns resources into products, which gives the tourist the opportunity to view and have good memories. Attractions are classified into different way, they can be clustered in a single location or distributed in a linear or dispersed pattern and these differences are very important in the planning and management of attractions. A linear attraction requires circuit touring by automobile, rail and accessibility is the major issue in the planning and development. While with cluttered destination a good planning for proper mix of activities is provided, there should be variability and stimulation in order to encourage longer visitors to stay and repeat visitation. (Jafari 2000).

Furthermore, attractions can also be classified into cognitive or perceptual categories. Examples of cognitive attractions are authenticity, educational, adventurous and recreational attractions. They are classified into isolated or clustered, urban or rural, low



or high capacity and finally seasonal or year round attractions. Cognitive approach to attractions is mostly used when the destination image is of primary interest for marketing purposes. More so, it is also used when undertaking community planning and controlling the development process of tourism. (Jafari 2000).

### **2.3 Cultural tourist attractions**

The aspect of cultural tourism in Africa is interrelated, but Cameroonian culture is represented on its own and enriched with different cultural diversity. The culture of Cameroon is recognized as the best in Africa. Its exceptional heritage offers a multitude of different cultures for the satisfaction of tourists. The outstanding originality of the country is expressed through its cultural diversity. Cameroon's local areas are being ruled by traditional chiefs and they play an important role in the cultural and political fields of the country. They also have the main aim to maintain the moral and religious order in their various localities. The admirable aspect of Cameroonians is the fact that they accept value and are proud of their cultural heritage. This aspect makes them what they are today.



GRAPH 2. Illustrates the cultural wealth of Cameroon Founban palace today recognized as a world tourism attraction (adapted from image of founban palace 2012)

### 2.3.1 Eco-tourist attractions

Cameroon's eco-tourism is a growing industry promoted by the government in order to preserve natural surroundings. Though Cameroon's ecotourism industry is small, its promotion by the government allows a larger number of tourists to discover its natural riches and provide tourists with different views, such as mountains, and the ecosystem with a variety of wildlife, flora, crater lakes and waterfalls. Cameroon's ecotourism is now experiencing growth because safety conditions are being put into place to guarantee tourist security. Today, Mount Cameroon is registered as a world heritage site. The country is being nick named "heaven of ecotourism" due to his numerous parks and natural reserves (see graphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 5)



GRAPH 3. Menchum fall in the northwest region of Cameroon (adapted from image of menchumfall 2012)

### 2.3.2 Seaside resort tourist attractions

Cameroon's coastline has a total area of 400 km where parallels the Atlantic ocean .The country is blessed with a conducive terrain that enables resort tourism and it is surrounded with mangrove forest and falls that go directly into the sea, and natural sandy beaches such as Kribi , and Limbe



GRAPH 4. Seme beach Limbe adapted from Global bush travel and tourism agency 2012)

### 2.3.3 Altitude (mountain) tourist attractions

The presence of mountains in Cameroon greatly contributes to the mystifying beauty of the country. Cameroon is today recognized as a natural paradise this is because it is blessed with magnificent mountains, spectacular beaches, dense forest and soothing climate perfect for a great vacation in the country. The chain of mountains in Cameroon lies to the west of the region with unique beauty which charms and attracts many tourists to come and see their enigmatic peaks of 4095m above sea level. There are several mountains in Cameroon, namely Mount Cameroon, Mount Mandara, Mont Manenguba and Mount coupe. Mount Cameroon lies near the Gulf of Guinea and is prone to volcanic eruption with the most recent on March 28, 1999 as well as that of May 28, 2000. It is also noted for its highest elevation of 1,224 m. Cameroon is also well known for its chain of



mountain ranges and volcanoes which are all together called the Cameroon highlands.  
(Geography of the mount Cameroon region)



GRAPH 5. Mount Cameroon (photographer Tami Tamsia Leo 2011)

#### **2.3.4 Sports tourist attractions**

The aspect of sport tourism in Cameroon refers to different games played by people of the country as well as other activities, such as hiking, trekking, swimming, golf, football, tennis, fishing, rock climbing and mountaineering some other sports include mountain racing, horse –riding clubs of Yaoundé , Douala and Garoua which are included in the tourism sector . Cameroon sport formed an integral aspect of the country and it is also a popular form of leisure. The sport sector in Cameroon is being directed by the ministry of sport.



GRAPH 6. Mount Cameroon race of hope (adapted from Race of hope 2012)

### **2.3.6 National parks for safari tourist attractions**

The National park for safari tourism in Cameroon has taken “the lion part”, made up of modern parks and reserves and the beautiful fauna which makes the area being called “the heaven of birds”.

Cameroon has many different parks, such as Waza Park, Benoue Park, Bouda Ndjah Park, Faro Park, Korup Park, and Campo Ma’an Park. (See table 2)

Table 2. List of national parks in Cameroon and their surface areas in hectares (Adapted from Africa in one country).

LISTE DES PARCS NATIONAUX

	NOMS	SUPERFICIE (ha)
1	PN Benoué	180,000
2	PN Bouba-Ndjida	220,000
3	PN Campo-Ma'an	264,064
4	PN Faro	330,000
5	PN Kalamaloué	4,500
6	PN Korup	125,900
7	PN Lobéké	217,854
8	PN Mbam et Djérem	416,512
9	PN Mozogo Gokoro	1,400
10	PN Mpem et Djim	97,480
11	PN Vallée du Mbéré	77,760
12	PN Waza	170,000
13	PN Boumba Bek	238,255
14	PN de Nki	309,362
15	PN de Bakossi	29,320
16	PN de Takamanda	67,599
17	PN Mont Cameroun	58,178
18	PN de Deng Deng	52,347
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,860,531</b>

The Waza park is the most famous one in Cameroon with 170 000 hectares. It is located in the far north and it comprises Eden of lions, hosting hordes of mammals such as elephants, giraffes, gazelles, and a large variety of birds, hyenas, antelopes, buffaloes, leopards, gorillas and black rhinos. (Waza national park 2012).

Korup Park is another well-known National park situated in the south west region of the country and covers a total area of 1,260km square. Korup National park is the oldest humid

and tropical forest of the world and because of this, it is considered as a real living museum of more than 60 million years old. The park is rich with flora and fauna and it is a unique site which was being reported to have dated from ice Era. Korup Park it made up of 400 different species of plants which also serve as medical plants.

Early research has reported that a liana with positive effect against cancers and aids have recently been discovered at the site .In addition to its history, there also exist 400 species of birds ,174 species of reptiles,98 amphibians,1000 species of butterflies,160 mammals and finally 130 different species of fishes stocked in the river surrounding the park.

Cameroon is a country with its own large reserves and two inviolate sanctuaries where gorillas live in peace. (Waza national park 2012)



GRAPH 7. Waza national park (adapted from famous wanders 2012)

### 3 AN OVER VIEW OF CULTURAL TOURISM

Today life, we are being distinguished by our culture and tradition that is why most communities owned some form of heritage that can identify them. Heritage can be defined as “anything that a person wishes to conserve or collect, so as to pass on to future generations” (Howard 2003, 6). Cultural tourism is a subset to heritage and may include tangible practices, oral traditions and knowledge (Mc Kercher and du Cross 2002; Heritage council of Western Australia 2005). Sometimes, the community identification may or may not be the focus of attention for tourism activities and tourists. However, it is important to be able to identify the local cultural heritage within a defined region as a first step toward developing cultural tourism.

Tourism, which started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by a grand tour organized by Thomas Cook, created a big urge in the mind of those undertaking the journey for a need to identify different cultural aspects. Today, culture has become the major object of travel. According to Urry, (1990) culture has ceased to be the objective of tourism in the sense that tourism is culture.

Furthermore, major attractions are being identified as cultural such as the British museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, and the metropolitan museum in New York, and all these sites attract millions of visitors, thus leading to the display of culture.

Moreover, in the year (1988-1997), the UNESCO World emphasized on the important of conserving cultural heritage as a means not only to stimulate economic development but also as a means of promoting identity and cultural diversity. The effort of UNESCO toward the promotion of cultural development enables visitors and tourist to understand culture as a factor of attraction which also played a leading role in cultural policy When talking about culture, emphasis should be placed on the conservation of culture Some aspects of heritage, such as languages, are in danger of extinction. In addition to this, historical monuments are often seen as endangered species. The importance of culture in society has raised awareness within the European Union. Culture is viewed within this body as an essential resource that does not only provides jobs but which also enables the

development of cultural harmony within the European Union.

In the past, the European Union did not consider cultural tourism or tourism as an element in their policy, while today it is a great aspect of conservation. This can be proven through the numerous cultural attractions around Europe for example France is being known for its 400 ecomuseums and Italy for its 500 ethnological collections. Moreover, in 1993 it was estimated by the WTO that 37% of international trips are being motivated by cultural elements and this will increase annually by 15% to the end of the century. (Richards, G.2001, 13)

Professor John Akama and Patricia Starry stated that cultural tourism in Africa is mostly based on African living culture; greatly depending on traditional festivals, art performances and dance exhibition.

In addition to that, professor Donald Reid in his article “Development of Cultural Tourism in Africa: A Community Development Approach”, said that cultural tourism needs to be considered from the “inside out” rather than from the “outside in” approach. He further explained his thought by giving an example from events organized in North America where the communities do not present their cultural events for tourist exhibitions but instead as a cultural celebration in its own right and primarily for the aboriginal people. During cultural manifestations, outsiders are only invited as secondary participants and not as the masters of the event. (Akama & Starry, 2000, 28).

The concept adopted by the North American aboriginal communities brings out a great guarantee of the authenticity of their events and its elements, such as traditional dances, singing, craft and food exhibition which are not entirely offered for outsider consumption.

Reid (2002) goes further by describing that the method adopted by the aboriginal celebration “prohibits the event from being completely commoditized and turned into an inauthentic touristic spectacle which can result in the isolation of people from their own culture”. (Akama, & Starry, 200, 13) He went on concluding that “the development of cultural tourism is established on a development method rather than being based on a pure growth model”. (Akama & Starry 2000, 14) The difference between these two terms brings about a greater understanding of cultural tourism.

Growth, is defined as an increase in size or number, while development is an increase in the ability and desire to satisfy one' own needs and legitimate desires taken into consideration that of others.

The development model conceived by Reid (2002) does not exclusively rely on economic growth; it also includes equal distribution of wealth within the region and the entire communities that are actively engaged in producing and exposing tourism products.

The sustainability and the stability of successful cultural tourism can only be possible from local control of the tourism enterprise, the participation of the community in the activities organized and the equal distribution of wealth between the stakeholders and the local community. (Akama & Starry 2000, 37).

### **3.1 The emerging aspect of cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism is a sector that has spread to all corners of the globe, followed by the study of cultural phenomena. This area of tourism has begun to raise awareness of different regional styles of cultural tourism. This aspect of tourism does not only relate to culture being consumed, but also to the organization and management of the consumption.

The beautiful image of cultural tourism still has a stronger status in Europe due to the European model of passive consumption of historic sites and museums compared to other areas of the world, most especially countries where built heritage are more considered as treasures.

Recent reviews have been conducted by ATLAS Africa (Akama & Sterry 2000,36) in their work "Cultural tourism in Africa: strategies for the new millennium", underlined the current concentration of cultural tourism products on traditional village life and natural resources, which greatly made them sources of attraction particularly in terms of wildlife.

Today, destinations which have in the past relied on other forms of tourism, such as leisure tourism or conventions, are now including cultural tourism into their portfolio seeing the economic benefit and advantages derived from this sector of tourism. This indicates the high level of interest for cultural tourism not only to tourists but for investors as well. A

good example can be illustrated through a Florida (2004) study which stated that various tourist who enjoy Florida's arts and cultural programming (cultural tourist) have a larger economic impact compared to other tourists. (A.G. Richard. 2001, 24) Statistic shows that cultural tourists spend an average of 348.84 dollars each while on visit to Florida, while other individual tourists spend 291.16 dollars. The big difference in the amount spent is simply due to the fact that cultural tourists spend longer periods of time at their destination compared to other tourists.

Cultural tourism has grown in Latin America as well, thus leading to a crucial development for international tourists. A recent study by the W T O (2004) pointed out that Peru classifies 93% of its visitors as cultural tourists. The growth of cultural tourism in Latin America has pushed the Latin American countries to develop cultural routes in order to facilitate the penetration and movement of tourists to various attraction sites, especially those linking cultural and archaeological features in rural and natural environment. This can be seen through routes built in Peru known as Inca trail or Mayan route linking Mexico to Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. (Akama & Starry 2000)

### **3.2 The present and the past evolution of the tourism industry**

Cultural tourism as the fastest growing segment in the tourism sector began 2,700 years ago when Herodotus of Halicarnassus, a cultural tourist, first set eyes on the Egyptian pyramids. However, his comments about the graffiti on the monuments indicate to him that he was far from being the first tourist to visit these monuments and by so doing he tried to gain some understanding about those who built them. Much written history today thinks that tourism was related to humankind's insatiable curiosity. Another essential motivator was the desire to travel to learn about other people and their culture. Hunziker and Kraft expressed this well when they pointed out that "There is no tourism without culture" (W T O 1995, 6).

Tourism is a growing business industry, research has shown that every year millions of people travel and spend billions of dollars for pleasure and leisure. This aspect has become such an important element of everyday life in the developed world that even the staying home for one annual vacation is considered unusual. This aspect of frequent travel



is now a recent phenomenon. However; it should be remembered that it is only after the Second World War that tourism emerged as a major economic and social force in the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to enable the reader to understand the tourism industry as a whole while on the other hand it will focus on cultural tourism as a specific niche market. This chapter will subsequently be directed toward the changes that have occurred in the tourism industry from 1960s onwards, as a means of providing a necessary background and understanding of the appearance of new forms of tourism, namely cultural tourism. Much attention will be focused on the emergence of cultural tourism as a distinct market segment, followed with definitions of tourism, cultural tourism and cultural tourists.

### **3.3. Definition of culture**

Each day we are faced with countless temporary occurrences which affect human beings and make culture an inseparable part of our life. Culture is a word that has different meanings in different fields like philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism, anthropology and sociology. This sector in tourism is being used as a way to portray our different culture. This aspect of tourism pushes people to travel long distances either for pleasure or leisure. An example of this cultural event in Cameroon is the Ngondo annual festival event and the Nyem-Nyem annual festival event. Efferent scholars have been able to define the meaning of event tourism so as to make us understand what cultural events are and how they impact.

Raymond, (1983, 87) considered culture as the most complicated word in the English language due to it different usages in distinct systems of thought. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1963,181) defined culture as that which comprises people's patterns of behaviour and their particular achievements, including some other aspects such as their artifacts, their ideas, and their values.

Campbell defines culture as the web of information that a person learns and which guides each person's actions experiences, and perception (2000, 38). Whereas Banks defines Culture as t h e behaviour, patterns, symbols, institutions, values a n d other human

components of the society (1984, 52).

### **3.4 Cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism is being considered as one of the oldest forms of travel in the world and it constitutes a continuing debate because the word culture means different things to different people. In order to more easily understand cultural tourism, great scholars made different definitions.

Adams (1995, 32) defined cultural tourism as travel for personal enrichment but it is also defined as a commercialized manifestation of people's want to see how others live. This aspect is based on satisfying the demand and the curiosity of tourists to view other people in their authentic environment and to discover the physical manifestations of their life style through their arts and crafts, music, literature, dance, handicrafts, language, rituals food and drink.

Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Program defined cultural tourism "as the practice of travelling in order to experience historic and cultural attractions and at the same time learn about the community heritage in an enjoyable and educational way".( The power of cultural tourism 1999 ,3)

Lord Cultural Resources defined cultural tourism "as a visit by people from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, and scientific or lifestyle heritage offering of a community, region, group or institution".( 1999,3)

## **4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

During recent years, there has been a growth in cultural tourism research. This is because many researchers have come to realize that it is a leading motivation for people to travel. This sector of tourism has attracted a growing number of researchers and policy makers. This has highly increased the rate and quality research. The interest to research the tourism field increased during the 1980s and this same reflection can be seen in the field of cultural tourism.

This chapter aims at clarifying the goals of this research, the method used, and how data has been collected and designed. The main aim of this study is to understand the various aspects of cultural tourism. Secondly, to investigate the importance of these cultural aspects for the general community and most especially for the local people.

Richards (2001) pointed out that cultural tourism studies are increasingly using qualitative methodology and this is because the research is involving the social and cultural aspect of cultural tourism production and consumption especially as the class - based nature of cultural tourism production became evident.

### **4.1 Research methods**

For this study, the author made use of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2) defined qualitative research as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied of used and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, materials , introspective, life history interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual text that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals ‘life.

The reason for using a qualitative research method is due to the fact that it enables the author to gather information using personal observation, knowledge, experiences and photos about the country. Moreover, the use of qualitative research during the study will enable the author to gain an insight into people's attitude, behaviour, values, systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture and lifestyle.

#### **4.2 Research analysis**

Cameroon is a country rich in culture. In this thesis, the author has studied some tribal cultures such as, the littoral, the west, the north regions and the tourism potentiality of these cultures. Every year these tribes organized annual festivals which attract a large number of tourists who are always amazed with the natural beauty of these tribal festivals. Tribal festivals, especially traditional festivals and marriage ceremonies, are the main festivals which attract tourists from different parts of the country, as well as the world. The presence of tourists during these different festivals is an advantage to the local population since during their stay tourists spend money and thus, the income of the local people increases. Several studies have identified tribal culture as a main tourist attraction.

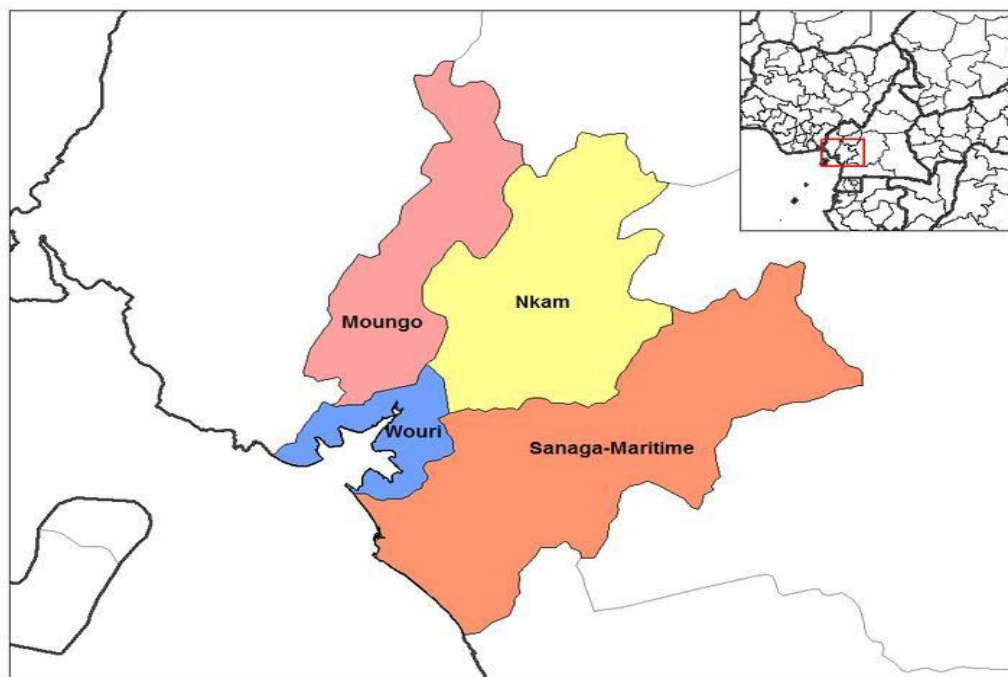
Cultural tourism is a sector in Cameroon with great financial potentiality, thus proper policies and financial support are required to develop this industry. Cameroon is a country blessed with annual festivals which bring about a variety of carnivals and colourful dances. The country celebrates ceremonies and feasting which encompass birth, death, sowing of seeds and harvesting as well as the commemoration of ancestors. These festivals offer vibrant musical ceremonies which are an aspect of tourist satisfaction in a destination. These events include the Ngondo festival of the Sawa, the coastal dwellers of Cameroon extending from Limbe to kribi with the Wouri River being the central point of the festival. The feast is held in Douala in the first week of December and the mystery of this festival is surrounded around the water of river Wouri. (Festival and Events in Cameroon).

In addition to that, there exist other events such as the Nyem-Nyem annual festival celebrated in the Adamawa region. The festival is centered around the Ngaoundere and traces back the heroic resistance of the people against German penetration into their

land. The festival takes place every year in January as it is commonly held around caves on the top of Mount Djim midway between Ignore and Tibati, near Galim. Cultural tourism is a sector in Cameroon with great financial potentiality, thus proper policies and financial support are required to develop this industry. (Festival and Events in Cameroon)

#### 4.2.1 The Ngondo cultural festival

The Ngondo festival event is being hosted in the town of Douala. Douala which is the largest town in Cameroon and the economic capital is located at the bank of river Wouri. The littoral region is being divided into four departments; namely the Moungo with its capital Nkongsamba, the Nkam with its capital Yabassi, the Sanaga Maritime with its capital Edea and the Wouri which forms the area around the major city of Douala where the Ngondo festival usually take place and attracts a great number of tourists(See graph 8 ).



GRAPH 8. Map of the Littoral region with its various departments (adapted from Littoral Cameroon 2006)

The city is divided into two major quarters namely Akwa being Douala night life center, and Bonanjo, the center of commerce and administration. Douala is being known as

the 27<sup>th</sup> most expensive city in the world (2009 statistics) and the 32<sup>nd</sup> most expensive in Africa overtaking Lagos, Nigeria. The city of Douala is known for its tropical monsoon climate, with relatively constant temperatures throughout the course of the year. (Douala, Cameroon 2012).

In addition to that, the city has a warm and humid climate and high rainfall during the course of the year. Douala is being recognized as a tourist attraction due to the Ngondo festival that is being organized every year in the first week of December, at the beginning of the dry season on the bank of river Wouri.

The Ngondo is a Sawa traditional celebration which brings together all the coastal people including the Douala, Bassa, Bakoko, Batonga and Yabassi. The Ngondo festival is an event which attracts a large number of tourists, both national and international. Many visitors believe the festival is mysterious because of the fact that during the event, appointed people enter river Wouri in body and soul and return unwedded. This is the first remarkable feature which leaves all tourists amazed.

Moreover, during the emerging in water, it is also believed that there is an ancestral communication with those on earth and the spirits in the water. The belief that life exists under the waters of river Wouri leaves all tourists more and more amazed. (Ngondo 2012).

The mystery about the communication in the water is accompanied by the ritual with a boat whereby a woman and a man enter the river Wouri from the middle surface of the river and spend a few minutes there where by during the process it is expected by all Sawa people to receive messages on succession and others delivered by the Sawa ancestors which are believed live under the water of river Wouri (see graph 9).

During the festival, other traditional activities are arranged, such as fighting games undertaken by two muscular and energetic young men on a sandy pitch who partake in goat-style wrestling, and also the canoe race undertaken by men (see graph 10). Other entertainments include traditional dances and the election of the miss Bodiman and Bell.

Furthermore, the singing of Banadoo and Bodiman anthems is also executed under the watchful eyes of the traditional chief and other rulers. During this event, children are not allowed to be present.



GRAPH 9. A message from the ancestors to the Sawa people (adapted from the blog photo of Cameroon 2012)

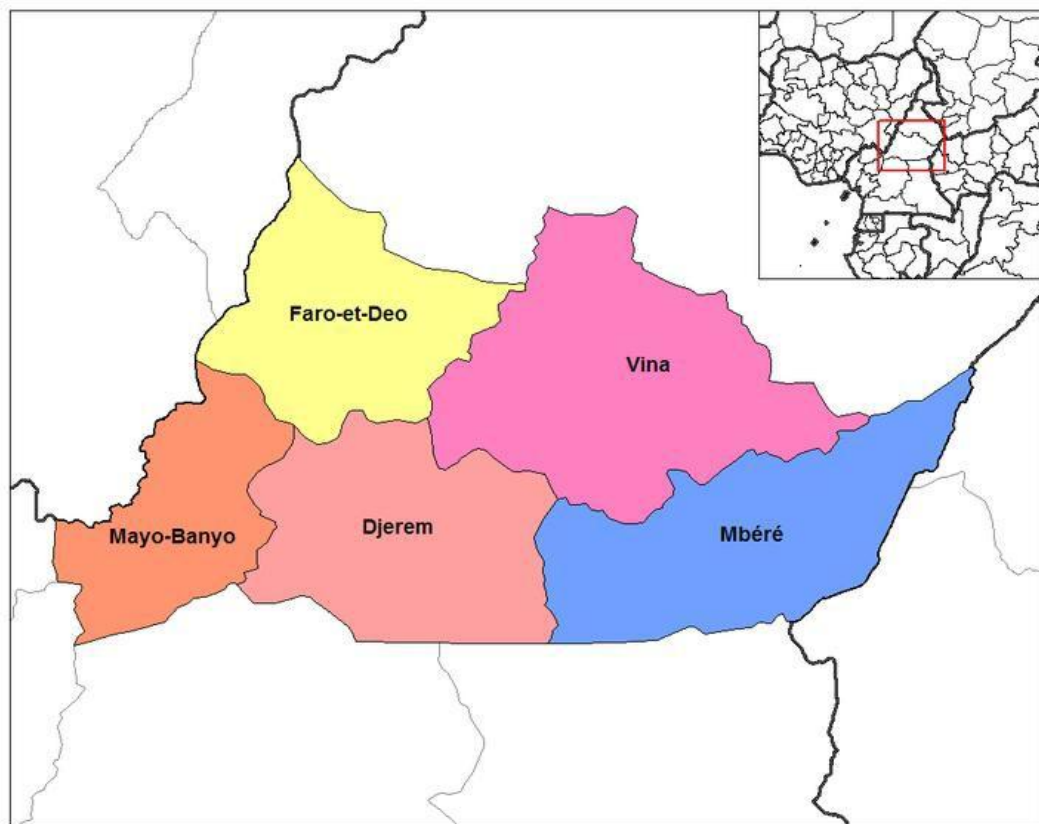


GRAPH 10. The Canoe race competition during the Ngondo festival (adapted from C'est la vie and now Cameroon 2012)



#### 4.2.2 The Nyem-Nyem cultural festival

The Nyem-Nyem festival is an event from the north region of Cameroon, more precisely Adamawa. The region is being boarded from the center and east region to the south, from the north west region to the southwest, Nigeria to the west, the central Africa republic to the east and the north region to the north. The region has a total area of 64 000km<sup>2</sup>, a population density of 449,185 and the capital is Ngaoundere. The region is the third largest city of Cameroon and it is endowed with tremendous touristic potencies, among them a rich diversified culture of over 50 different ethnic groups. The most populated area of this region includes the Fulani, the Bantoid and Manbita. The population of this area speaks French, Bantoid and Fulfulde as common languages. The Adamawa region just like the littoral region has four departments, namely Djerem with capital Tibati, Faro-et-Deo with headquarter in Tigere, Mayo-Banjo with capital Banjo, Mbere headed from Meiganga and Vina governed from Ngaoundere (C'est la vie and now in Cameroon see graph 11)



GRAPH 11. The various departments in the Adamawa region (adapted from Adamawa province ethnic groups.2006)



In addition to this, the region has an equatorial climate and the Guinea type with four seasons namely the long dry season from December to May, the short, wet season from May to June, the short, dry season from July to October and the long wet season from October to November. (Adamawa region)

The Nyem-Nyem festival is an annual cultural event celebrated in remembrance of the local resistance against the German penetration and domination over their land, more precisely the Mount Djim. The treasures of the mount Djim are the existence of endless caves; this natural feature served as a refuge to the people of Nyem-Nyem during the war. This area also served the people who escaped the slave trade raids which existed in Adamawa during the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The rocky mountain of Djim is made up of a series of polished and carved stones (see graph 12). One of the most famous stones was the Nong, the biggest flat stone on which the Nyem-Nyem people used to poison their spears to arrows to fight against their enemies. During an attack, the gong whose sound is easily decoded by the local people was a sign of warning in case of any danger. After many years of bondage, they finally succeeded in recovering their land and their joy was followed by songs of horses and war dance which is today a source of attraction to many tourists all over the world (see graph 13 and 14).



GRAPH 12. Cave climbing in Mount Djim (adapted from C'est la vie and now in Cameroon 2012)



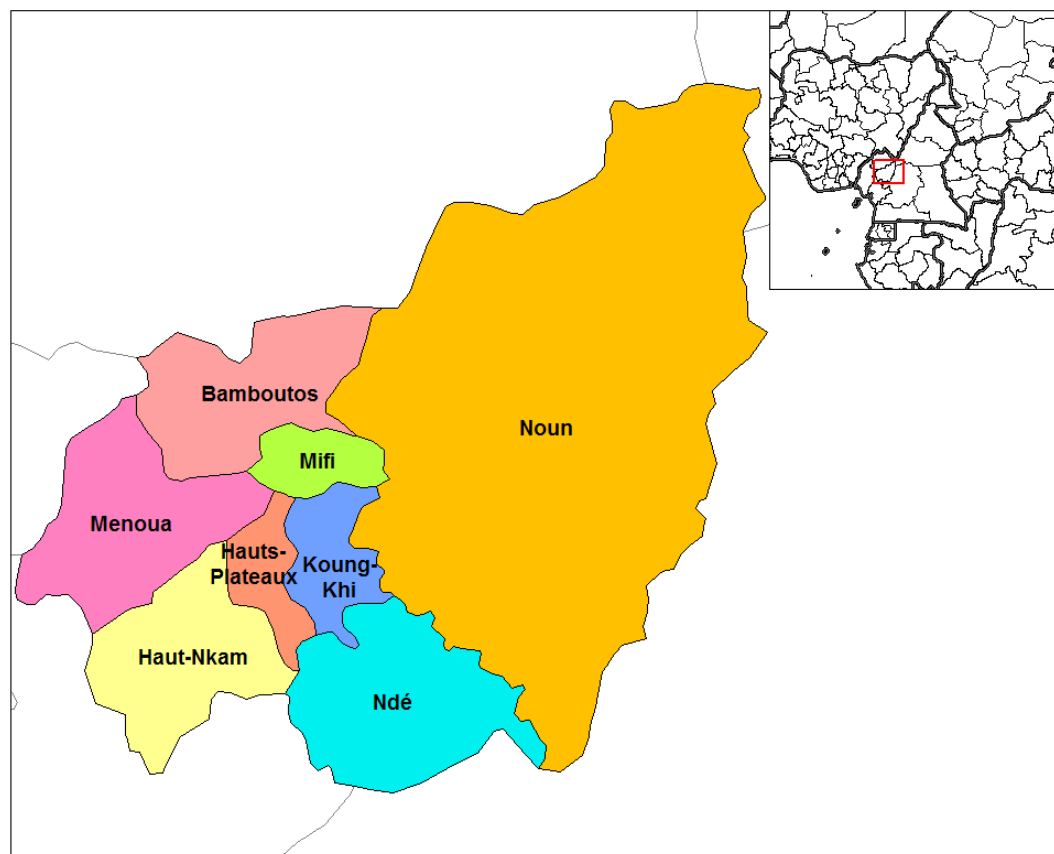
GRAPH 13. Nyem-Nyem war dance (adapted from *C'est la vie and now in Cameroon* 2012)



Graph14. The fantastic music of horse (adapted from *C'est la vie and now in Cameroon* 2012)

### 4.2.3 The Medumba cultural festival

The Medumba festival is an event that takes place in the west region of Cameroon, which comprises of eight departments namely; the Noun departments with the headquarter Founban, it is followed by the Nde department with the capital Bangangte where the festival takes place. The Haut-Nkam is another department with the capital Bafang, the Menoua department with the capital Dschang, the Mifi department with the capital Bafoussam. (See graph 15). The Bangangte region has latitude of 5.14091, a longitude of 10.51975, and a population of 65.385. It is the capital of Nde division which covers a surface area of 1,524kms square. (West region Cameroon)



GRAPH 15. The various departments in the western province of Cameroon (Adapted from west province ethnic groups 2006)

The people of this area are known as the bamileke people. The region offers education facilities to its local population with the university known as Mountains University, a private institution of health and technology programs. The locality of Bangangte

has the common language Medumba. The Bangangte fonom is endowed with enormous tourist potentials among them, the famous Bangangte palace with its beautiful traditional structure, colourful traditional dance and above all the friendly and hospitable population. The Medumba festival is abbreviated (FESTAC) meaning the Festival of Art and Culture. The festival is an event which occurs every two years on the heights of Cameroon in the western region in Bangangte. In addition to that, the Medumba festival is an event that has not only been celebrated in Cameroon over the years, but has grown in popularity and today it goes beyond national borders. “Medumba” meaning “we refuse slavery” saw the light in 1995 as the Christian faith and its cultural meaning is the development of Man in his mind and being. The FESTAC has brought a turning point in the sector of cultural tourism in Cameroon and this has transformed and embraced all types of development activities.

In 2010, the FESTAC celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> edition with the theme “The Medumba cultural development”. This aimed at bringing innovation especially towards the intensity of royal days, the caravan of FESTAC, the Oscars of Medumba, the strong involvement of young people and most especially the elite. FESTAC has offered new opportunities for companies to participate as an opportunity of tradeshow where several traditional dances and different attires are being exhibited (see graph 16, 17 and 18), industrial and agro-pastoral display. In this year, the FESTAC celebrated its 11<sup>th</sup> edition with the theme “Guarantee of the preservation of our cultural heritage”. (Festival and Event in Cameroon)





GRAPH 16. A view of the palace and traditional attire (adapted from Festival of art and culture 2012)



GRAPH 17. Yonkeu Kuita Jean Marie king of Bangoulap (adapted from Nos project et realisation en image-Festival Medumba 2012)



GRAPH 18. Traditional dance (adapted from Nos project et realisation en image-Festival Medumba 2012)

### 4.3 The importance of cultural tourism for Cameroon

Festivals and events play an important role in tourism, most particularly cultural tourism. The presence of different cultural festivals and events are being enjoyed and celebrated by the local people and international tourists. Tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a global market and this creates an organic and interdependent system whereby supply and demand see significant changes both in time and space and this is also seen in the perspective of the quantitative and qualitative component.

Richard (2009) described culture and tourism as the two major growth industries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and towards the end of the century the combination of these two sectors had generated one of the most desirable development options for all countries and regions worldwide.

Due to recent changes in tourism trends, it is obvious that visitors are more involved in mass tourism than before, where the 4s: sun, sand, sex and sea are their principal motivation but cultural activities still dominate. On the other hand, research has shown

that new generations of visitors involving in the tourism market are more interested in the 3s: sport, spectacle, and satisfaction. The motivation for tourists to search for cultural diversity has brought about positive effects within the industry; an example can be the case of Cameroon. (Richard, S. 2009, 24)

#### **4.4 The impact of cultural development in Cameroon**

The rapid growth of globalization has affected almost all the part of the world and by so doing, also the culture is being affected. The development of cultural tourism in Cameroon has motivated young Cameroonians to earn money easily, and thus refuse to take their seriously but prefer to serve as guides to tourists who in return provide them with gifts or money. Moreover, the rate of crime among the youth has become alarmingly high since the youth are gradually adopting to the tourist habit of alcohol, drug, sex and smoking. In addition to this, the presence of tourists and their interaction within the country has greatly had negative impacts. This is because sometimes, tourist fails to respect the norms of the Cameroonians society and their values such as sacred places, rituals and totems. Furthermore, during tourists visit, authentic ritual objects which are meant for tradition are sold to tourists for money. Traditional dances which are supposed to be exposed during festivities are being organized for tourist convenience and outside traditional period.

The major attractions of the Cameroonian culture are mostly areas of rituals, sacred places, which are not supposed to be seen by non-initiated people, most especially by women and children, but because of money some people violate the tradition and take tourists to unauthorized places, thus leading to the extinction of the culture.

Cameroon known as a country of hospitality has almost lost this positive aspect due to development of cultural tourism. The main reason is because everything is focused on money. Even though the development of cultural tourism has brought about some negative impacts on the Cameroonian society, it has also had some positive ones, which greatly contributes to the wellbeing of the Cameroon society. Cultural tourism has brought about a high development of the regional culture, this is because the people are conscious of the benefit they can derive from it and thus make sure to create awareness in order to promote their culture.

In addition to that, cultural tourism has also led to the protection of natural habitats in order to enable tourists to view features in their natural state, thus creating excitement in the mind of the tourist.

Moreover, cultural tourism has also contributed to the strengthening of the local traditions and culture. As globalization is spreading all over the world, the aspect of culture also changes. The promotion of Cameroonian culture to the world is a way of marketing the different cultural aspects of the country. On the other hand, there are also some aspects such as radio, television, the literature internet that enable the marketing of culture and thus give a country like Cameroon the opportunity to sell its tourist potentials.

Moreover, the development of cultural tourism in Cameroon is a positive thing to the Cameroonian people since the community has been able to promote their culture and traditional beliefs, which in turn enables future generations to learn, practice and be proud of their own culture, and by so doing, easily inherit the traditions of the ancestors. Also the development of cultural tourism in Cameroon has helped to preserve some traditional practices that were threatened by Christianity and Islam such as rituals and arts that today are being exhibited for tourist view.

Cultural development in Cameroon has also brought about employment, for many people are being employed as guide, photographers, and conservers thus leading to an increase in the standard of living of the people. Furthermore, cultural tourism has also brought about cultural exchange seen in the dressing, languages, differences between the Cameroonians and tourists visiting the country.

#### **4.5 Problems facing cultural tourism in Cameroon**

Cameroon has faced some difficulties which need to be taken into consideration in order to have a good cultural sector. The lack of awareness is a big problem that needs to be solved in order to promote the culture in Cameroon. Most tourists visiting Cameroon are unaware of the cultural riches of the country. Moreover, they do not even have a clear idea of what cultural tourism is about the tourists that visit Cameroon think that the lack of awareness is the issue that needs to be resolved when talking about cultural tourism in this part of the world.



In addition to that, another problem affecting cultural tourism in Cameroon is the lack of promotion. When talking of tourism and cultural tourism in particular, promotion should be taken into consideration because it plays a vital role in tourism. Without promotional activities, cultural tourism cannot be successfully developed.

Furthermore, the insufficient laws and policies of Cameroon are another problem faced by cultural tourism, and in order to sustain this sector, appropriate laws and policies must be developed. The insufficient laws and policies in Cameroon are a hindrance for the development of cultural tourism and protection of cultural components.

Moreover, inadequate infrastructures to support tourism activities in Cameroon are also a problem faced by cultural tourism as: accommodation, restaurants, electricity and water supply for tourists who are on a longer stay in Cameroon and these hinder the development of cultural tourism.

Lack of security is another significant factor that prevents the development of cultural tourism in Cameroon. Communication problems are also a factor faced by cultural tourism. Inadequate transportation facilities such as roads, railways, sea transport are major issues which should be taken into consideration in order to promote cultural tourism in Cameroon. More so, the lack of training personnel such as tour guides, drivers, and hoteliers is greatly affecting the development of tourism in Cameroon.

Unequal distribution of profit and lack of the community to participation in tourism and particularly cultural tourism is another major issue hindering the development of cultural tourism. Cameroon's communities, especially the local communities, are always ignored when the planning, designing, developing, and managing of their respective cultural resources for tourism are being carried out.

Moreover, the Cameroonians' society, especially the indigenous, are not always involved when their local cultural resources are being transformed into cultural products to be presented and sold to tourists who are also known as consumers of the product. The absence of local participation in the planning process of their ethnic attraction is an aspect that needs to be revived by the government of Cameroon in order to avoid hostility on the part of the local community.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

Cameroon is a country rich in different diversity especially in terms of religions, cultures, rituals and festivals. The concept of cultural tourism in Cameroon is new and consequently not free from limitations. The following recommendations should be put into place by the promoters of this sector in order to overcome those problems.

Proper initiatives should be taken in order to create awareness regarding cultural tourism through the spreading of information about Cameroon's culture, rituals, and festivals.

Moreover, the government, stakeholders, and other private investors as well as the media, newspaper can take effective steps to promote cultural diversity of Cameroon by ensuring a good tourism management and marketing of tourist attractions within the country. Furthermore, tour operators should be able to play a great role in this sector by educating tourists to respect the beliefs and traditions of the people avoid touching or entering sacred places without proper guidance informed them on how to interact with the local community before and during the trip. They also need to focus on creating more and new attractive packages for the local and the international tourists. Instructions should be given to tourists not to distribute gifts or money to children which might transform them into beggars.

In addition to this, the security in Cameroon should be taken into great consideration by the government. This can be done by introducing special security forces or by creating a secured zone for the tourist. Moreover, the government has to ensure that the tourists visiting the country are not harassed by local artifacts dealers and policemen on the way.

The prevention of children to beg must be taking into great consideration by the authority of Cameroon in other to enable them to concentrate on their education rather than following tourists as guides in exchange for money.

More so, in order to remediate the accommodation problem, more standard hotels and motels need to be established. Moreover, private initiatives in this sector should be encouraged and private operators should operate in different strategically and culturally important locations.

Training schools should be put into place in order to form experts and develop promotional plans in this field. Seminars and training programs should be initiated with other tour operators in order to promote cultural tourism.

Cultural tourism, which is defined as our different way of life and cultural background, is an emerging sector in Cameroon since the country is blessed with different cultural diversities which make the area more significant and interesting for the local as well as international tourists. Although the industry of cultural tourism is not free from limitation, it can still be greatly developed if proper policies and plans are being furnished and implemented.

Although culture is the main aspect of this study, there are many features that make up a culture, such as celebrations and festivals, religious beliefs and taboos, marriages, dresses, houses, food and drink. All these aspects are of great interest to tourists whenever they visit a particular destination, especially Cameroon.

Cultural tourism is a sector which requires a great deal of construction work and creates employment thus, leading to the improvement of the living standard of the people and the government of the country. In a nation where the industrialization sector is not yet developed, tourism industry is solution which can be seen in countries like Kenya, whose economy is mostly based on tourism.

Cameroon, Africa in miniature will in the coming years be able to use the opportunity of its existing and great potentials for cultural tourism in the development of its economy.

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