

## ABSTRACT

### Festival Tourism: An Innovation in the Caribbean Development Paradigm

Nicola Rawle

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy. The Caribbean has benefited from this trend as reflected in rising share of GDP, and foreign exchange earnings. However, the tourism industry has been plagued by external dependency, high import reliance, low-value-added and high capital leakage.

The study examines the developmental impact of cultural tourism with a specific focus on festival tourism. Festival tourism is focused on as a possible area for innovation to enhance competitiveness in the tourism sector and facilitate indigenous development. The Trinidad Carnival, considered to be one of the premier festivals in the region, is examined as a case study of the efficacy of festival tourism.

The findings from the thesis suggest that cultural tourism is a dynamic component of the global tourism economy and that festival tourism is a major contributor in that regard. The case study of Trinidad carnival illustrates how a festival can add an additional filling to the tourism economy as well as related and ancillary sectors like entertainment, transport and food and beverage. The study concludes that there is a lacuna in the literature with respect to the contribution of festival tourism to local Caribbean economies.

Keywords: Nicola Rawle: Tourism; Festival; Culture; Carnival; Caribbean