

Tourism, Museums and Monuments

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The three terms, viz. Tourism, Museums and Monuments, being inseparable, form a trinity. Their scope and nature may vary but the aim remains the same, i.e. entertainment and education of the onlooker.

A Tourist : The Statistical Expert Committee of the League of Nations, in its report, submitted to the Council on January 22, 1937 defined the tourist as under :

1. a person travelling for pleasure, domestic reasons or health;
2. a person travelling to attend meetings;
3. a person travelling for business purpose;
4. a person joining the sea cruise even for a brief duration.

The same report does not recognize a man as a tourist who :

1. arrives in a country for an occupation;
2. establishes a residence;
3. students staying in boarding houses or schools;
4. residing in a frontier zone and crossing the boundary for livelihood;
5. passing through a country without a stoppage.

The above norms are still followed to a large extent throughout the world; but in the Indian context, these have to be reviewed. The motivating factors of tourism in the ancient time were supposed to be trade and commerce, religious merits and political factors; and all these three were of universal importance. At the same time, learning or education and curiosity are of same significance and India has its own meritorious record in this regard. Movement of man has been an essential feature of the society. People have been travelling and settling in different places and making their imprints from times immemorial. There has been a passion of crossing the barriers of nature, facing climatic adversities in mountains, forests and seas. And this passion aimed at discovering and unfolding the mysteries of nature and learning a lot from the varied circumstances.

Early Stage : The pre-historic man looked for fruits, roots, meat, drinking water and a safe place to rest and spend night. The concept of tourism had not evolved till he reached the second stage and started cultivation, looked for pastures for grazing animals and forest to obtain timber to put up dwelling. The plentiful of agricultural growth necessitated the device for storage, and with the passage of time, he gave a ceremonial look to his life and invited the neighbours to the festivities. This type of movement may be considered as the dawn of tourism. The third stage came when he, as a social entity (not animal) in true sense, undertook journeys in the adjoining areas to dispose

of his stored grains in exchange of the products of other daily requirements. This agrarian stage transformed the nomadic man into a conceptual tourist. Use of animals for transporting agricultural yield and later, the invention of wheel-cart was found to be very useful and the movement became easier. With the introduction of new devices, i.e. bullock-cart, horse-cart (*rathas*), etc. tracks and pathways were developed and tourism ascended to another step in its long journey.

Literature : The problem of security arose as the beasts and robbers often attacked. It was, therefore, found necessary to travel in a group of caravans with adequate arrangements. The *Atharvaveda* (12.1.47) furnishes an interesting testimony of the journeys undertaken by merchants. This points to the fact that the land had many routes and their arteries. These were the principal means of communication of people and on these routes chariots plied. The tracks were used by all sorts of people and it was necessary to take precaution against any adversity. These wellguarded safe roads symbolize the prevailing happiness. Thus, right from the Vedic period, the concept of tourism appears to be growing with the caravans of merchants. Scholars and sages also travelled as they felt secured to move in their company and this resulted in the dissemination of cultural ethos from place to place or from country to country. We are aware of the fact that the saints and seers of Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism regularly travelled to preach the doctrines of their faith and the Buddha advised his disciples to move on - चरतभिक्षवो बहुजन सुखाय and चरैवेति-चरैवेति. This spirit helped in elevating Buddhism into a world religion. Our literature is stocked with numerous references to the journeys undertaken by the heroes and great persons. Rāma wandered from forest to forest with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa and the Pāṇḍava heroes, who were also exiled for long, visited different places and saw the excellent natural sites.

One is surprised to note that the recommendations of the World Body do not consider education and learning as the motivating force of tourism. But in India, this seems to be a basic factor. Taxila was an important university and the adjoining area developed into a big township several centuries before Christ and teachers and students thronged from distant quarters for learning. On their return to the homeland, they spread education in their neighbourhood. This was also the case with Alexandria in Egypt where existed a large library housing lacs of inscribed tablets and scholars assembled there to study and to decipher.

Another important factor for the movement of people was the political or diplomatic contact. There are several instances of pre-Alexander and post-Alexander period where these international contacts were regularly maintained. It is duly supported by the edicts of Aśoka and the Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription recording the visit of Heliodorus, a Greek ambassador to the court of the kind Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra.

Beside his political assignment, he was also initiating a big event as by installing the *Garuḍadhvaja*, he was cementing the friendship between the two countries.

The story of Bhujju reveals that the treasure from ocean was recovered and this naturally suggests the sea-navigation (RV 1.48.3). It is supported by another reference where boats are mentioned (*Ibid.* 1.131.2, 2.39.4). We do come across a group of persons who were engaged in making new roads and pathways by clearing or burning the forests and these were known as *pathika-kṛta* (RV 2.23.6, 6.21.12 & AV 18.2.53). Good roads certainly encouraged tourism and movement of people. The *Jātaka* stories provide us ample evidence to visualize adventurous land and sea voyages.

The Figures : By citing the above references, it is intended to explain that tourism is not a new phenomenon, imitated from West by India. Of course, it had not developed as an industry. Even now India is far behind the western countries in promoting tourism. In the United States of America in 1950, the turnover through tourism was 2,100 million dollars; but it swelled to ten times and reached about 28,000 million dollars in 1972. The present position is not known but certainly it must be much more, although the graph is staggering due to involvement of that country in the global conflict. The situation in India is optimistic but nothing in comparison with the other developed countries. From the Annual Report of Department of Tourism, Government of India, 2000-2001 turnover of the foreign exchange was about 15,000 crore rupees.

The graph did not ascend due to several factors, and particularly, somewhat tense situation in the region. Another reason of this static financial position is that the Indian economy is not growing in comparison with other countries. The latest figures do project a favourable picture as the number of 'tourists' is increasing. In 2002, it was 4,35,876, which became 4,54,611 in 2003. There was further upward trend in the following year. But these figures become counter-productive when we know that the increase is due to the swelling number of Bangladeshis (*Times of India*, Feb. 20, 2005, p. 11) who hardly afford to spend.

Economy : It is the affluence, which promotes tourism. Tourists also depend on the quick means of transport and aviation. There are reasons to believe that despite several efforts at the governmental and private levels, India has not been able to cope with this demand. If one government takes it up on top priority, the other government deals with it casually. The loss is of the country as it loses billions of dollars in foreign exchange, which could have been added to the state exchequer. In other countries, tourism has become a mass movement and it finds a high place on the agenda of the government, political party, industry, education and family. This kind of mass movement is missing in India it is for this reason that the travel industry is yet to become the potential force of the national economy.

Expectations : In the modern context, one is inclined to travel for one or several purposes and India is proud to fulfil almost all the expectations of the tourists. These are religious and spiritual urge, wildlife, sports, health, museums, monuments, anthropological and social inquisitiveness and the scientific and technological advancement. Some of these are interlinked and targeting one, serves other purposes also.

If a person has the religious bent of mind, he would naturally like to visit a temple, mosque, church or *gurudvārā* far or near. Many of these religious places are well known monuments too. Some of the temples, particularly in the South, developed into a big complex providing all facilities, which a tourist looks for. The site is pleasing, surroundings are panoramic, architecture is imposing, circumambulation in the vast premises takes care of health, reasonable good accommodation with boarding facility is available in the premises, the large tanks are the added attraction, row of shops or even a market equipped with necessary items of daily or specific use and a network of communication beside good souvenirs form the part of such temples. One can also peep into the society not only by seeing the chain of religious activities, but also the social and family ceremonies like weddings organized in the complex itself. Even an art gallery or museum is noticed as a component. The Golden Temple of Amritsar is a parallel citation in the North.

It has been considered highly meritorious to visit temples, the sites of twelve *vyotirlingas*, seven *puris*, four *dhāmas* and seats founded by the first Śaṅkarācārya. These shrines are situated in different quarters and cover almost the entire length and width of India. The stream of Indian Culture flows uninterruptedly in these holy places and the living culture is the most significant attraction in tourism. While Varanasi, Mathura, Ayodhya and Haridwar are the temple towns; Prayaga is known for hosting the largest fair of the world known as *Mahākumbha*. The places visited by the Buddha, Jaina *Tīrthānkaras*, the ten *Gurus* of Sikhism and other spiritual leaders developed as centres of learning and devotion.

Health Factor : Rapidly increasing health consciousness is also promoting tourism in one way or the other. India's future is quite secure in this regard. There are number of places, which provide congenial atmosphere for health. The yogic exercises have proved to be boon both for physical and mental health. Even the treatment of ailments is affordable without compromising with the expertise. The West is much more expensive and the foreign patients are now looking to India to avail of such facilities. The seed has sprouted but it has to be nourished well through proper planning and publicity.

Monuments : Coming to the monument side, India can rightly boast to be a treasure house of monuments, ranging at least from the 3rd century BCE and if we consider the

pre-historic caves with paintings, the period is pushed back to several thousand years. The Taj is of course a wonder, but there are some monuments, which are of equal importance and bespeak the wonder of architectural workmanship. The rock-cut specimens in the western India are the unrivalled examples in the world and Kailāśa Temple at Ellora is on the top of all. Same is the case of the Ajanta caves where sculptural and mural arts, both represent the zenith of the aesthetic creation. The temples of Bhuvaneshwar and Khajuraho attract the foreign visitors for more than one reason. Br̥hadīśvara temple put up by Rājarāja Cola at Tanjore is wonder in itself. Similarly, Dilwara Jaina temples on Mount Abu are known for marvellous and intricate carving in marble.

Among the ancient monuments, Bharhut and Sanchi were the epoch making edifices. The first one, which beside being architecturally and aesthetically superb, also served as an open-air museum or sculptural gallery with captions of illustrations inscribed in the Br̥hmī script of 2nd century BCE. Some scholars like B. M. Barua conjecture the deployment of monks as guide to the monument. Thus, we have the glimpses of a tourist-based monument even before the dawn of the Christian era when the concept of tourism, in the modern sense, had not evolved. The epigraphs on several components indicate that the monument represented the mass movement of society and the donors arrived from different quarters of the country to contribute. This early religious and social building is now witnessed through the remains preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, some in the Allahabad Museum and a few scattered here and there adorning the collection of various museums in India and abroad.

The Sanchi complex is, fortunately, preserved in *situ* and the *Mahācetiya* is a glorious accomplishment of the age. The early rock-cut delicacy and efficiency are marked by the Karle *caitya* hall, which must have inspired the Western world to put up their cathedrals. Every region and period in the Indian history is typified by one or several memorable constructions.

The Muslim rulers were great builders and they have left a precious heritage of architecture spanning about ten centuries. The dome, high minarets, openness, inlay workmanship, use of marble beside red and buff stone, provision of lawns and gardens adjacent of the monuments are some of the chief characteristics of Islam build. Beside Taj, the other memorable constructions are : Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort, Jama Masjid and Safdarjung, all in Delhi. The Agra region houses some other heritage buildings accomplished by Akbar Jahāngīr and Śāhajahān, like Red Fort, Fatehpur Sikri complex, Itmaduddaula Akbar's Tomb (Sikandra) and certainly the world famous Taj Mahal. One excitingly appreciates the grandeur and glory of the great Mughals and their grand rule of two centuries.

The tradition continued without break and we do have some amazing buildings like the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata and a chain of well conceived and finished monuments like the office premises of New Delhi in the British Raj. There was some shift in the post-Independence era as the attention was focussed on the big projects like dams and steel-plants, considered to be as important a monuments and visited by thousands of people. Among the towns, Chandigarh was planned to be a unique representaion of town-planing and a step ahead of the earlier Pink City of Jaipur, which served as a model in architectural field for long.

Nature : The natural monuments are more important than the man-made buildings and for promotion of eco-tourism. These gifts of nature should not only be protected but have to be maintained well too. The man has not been able to create a better and more imposing monument than the Himālayas, or the rivers like Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā and Brahmaputra, or the sea-beaches like Kovalam, Goa, Mahabalipuram, Puri etc. It is necessary to keep the boon of nature intact, congenial and attractive.

Museums : Coming to the museums, these form integral part of culture and tourism and serve as the show-windows of knowledge as well as the great sources of healthy recreation for people belonging to any country, religion, race and age group. Going round the galleries of a few museums amounts to the covering of length and breadth of a counry. Their well-knit educational programmes, gallery and public lectures, periodical seminars, workshops, educational kits, beautiful publications and souvenirs add further attraction. Like tourism and monuments, the museums also bring people together and interact in different ways.

Although India possesses about 450 museums, yet this number is hardly adequate considering the vastness of the country. At the same time, more than fifty percent are only for namesake. These are neither permanent establishment nor opened regularly for the visitors. The departmental labs in the universities, which serve only the students for demonstration, have also been listed as museum in the Directory. Another point to be taken notice of, is that unlike the convention in developing countries, the Indian education system does not have the compulsory museum visits by the students in the agenda. As such, the museums are not on the priority and despite their immense utility, these generally suffer from the social and governmental neglect. Better care of museums will ensure good health of tourism.

In the pre-Independence era, art and archaeological museums dominated as their collection grew with th fieldwork of explorations and excavations, conducted at different sites by the Archaeological Survey, State Archaeology or universities. When museum was accepted as an effective tool for imparting education and the demand for scientific and technological subjects increased, the museology took a distinct turn. It was felt necessary

to establish the museums of science, engineering, anthropology, etc. Now we have independent and big size museums of national level in Natural History, which also deals with environment, chain of Science museums, Museum of Man (Anthropology), Handloom and Handicraft Museum and a National Rail Museum too. The Army or Defence Museum is coming up soon. All these institutions are catering a large number of domestic tourists and especially the students. The eco-museums and the idea of 'New Museology' are at the conceptual level and their aim is to serve the community even without the four walls. The zoological gardens, bird sanctuaries, wildlife habitats, etc. are now considered as para-museums. Thus, the scope of museums is growing with the passage of time and these will motivate more tourists if developed in the proper direction.

Dark Side : Promotion of tourism is undoubtedly essential, as it has already proved its potential through rising as an industry and gearing up the economy of a country. At the same time, its over-doing has to be controlled to arrest the after-effects. The West and some South Asian countries are over-crowded and one looks at the ocean of humanity and not the sand and the waves. His attention is caught by stalls, shops, hoardings, which are seldom in good taste. Undignified multistoreyed concrete structures in the proximity of shore mar the scenic view of nature and the skyline is disturbed by vertically raised hotels and motels to accommodate more tourists. Over-fishing is posing the problem of ecology and some beaches look barren and deserted. Another and perhaps the bigger danger is for health. Temptation for fast-food and unknown sex are resulting in different hazards, including AIDS. There have been cases when the tourist left for a resort to revitalize himself, to get rid of official and domestic tension, but on return he found that he is in a trap of horrible ailments.

It is, therefore, necessary to conceive a balanced policy in the field of tourism. Money is not the end, although it may be a super means. There are many more aspects, which are overlooked or shadowed under the growth of tourism which aims at earning, entertaining visitors, imparting of information and overall interest of tourists. But the other basic components, i.e. monuments and museums are more concerned for preserving heritage, proper interpretation, healthy recreation and arousing of cultural awakening. For this, some discipline and restrictions are desirable. There may be some persons who have an evil intention in the garb of tourists. These may be fraudulent antique dealers or lifters or terrorists, trying to do any harm to the monument and museum. As such, every tourist does not deserve a red carpet treatment. Best precautions are to be taken at all levels and some loss of dollars should be sustained for the safety of our rich heritage.

Cultural Shock : From our side, we must make the best efforts to keep our house in order, i.e. better upkeep and maintenance of museums and monuments, their surroundings and proper vigil with due courtesy. 'Cultural Shock' is a social evil and

discourages tourism. India is not an exception to it. When an affluent tourist arrives and visits a site, monument or temple, he is sometimes surrounded by beggars or unwanted elements. The dirty clothes, begging tray, etc. give him 'Cultural Shock' and he feels psychologically upset. Instead of appreciating the beauty of site, monument or rich antiquarian wealth in the museum galleries, he feels repulsion being confronted by such ugly scenes and carries a bad impression about India. We are duty bound to present ourselves in better way before our guests and avoid such cultural shocks. The weak points should not be projected before others, and especially, before foreigners.

There are different norms and rules in different countries. Such a situation creates puzzle and confusion before a tourist while planning his long voyage. In the period of globalisation a universal code of conduct relating to tourism, monuments and museums is the need of the hour. The bodies like United Nations and the UNESCO are supposed to take lead in this direction.

In the end I recollect the beautiful description by the world famous poet of an excellent and panoramic tourist and pilgrim site. I mean the appreciation of the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā at Prayāga by Kālidāsa :

क्वचित्प्रभालेपिभिरिन्द्रनीलैर्मुक्तामयी यष्टिरिवानुविद्धा।
 अन्यत्र माला सितपङ्कजानामिन्दीवरैरुत्खचितान्तरेव॥
 क्वचित्खवगानां प्रियमानसानां कादम्बसंसर्गवतीव पंक्तिः।
 अन्यत्र कालागुरुदत्तपत्रा भक्तिर्भुवश्चन्दनकल्पितेव॥
 क्वचित्प्रभा चान्द्रमसी तमोभिश्छायाविलीनैः शबलीकृतेव।
 अन्यत्र शुभ्रा शरदभ्रलेखा रन्ध्रेष्विवालक्ष्यनभः प्रदेशाः॥
 क्वचिच्च कृष्णोरगभूषणेव भस्माङ्गरागा तनुरीश्वरस्य।
 पश्यानवद्याङ्गि विभाति गङ्गा भिन्नप्रवाहा यमुना तरङ्गैः॥ रघुवंश 13.54-57

Behold, O fair one of flawless limbs, how the Ganges with its stream cleft by the Yamunā here like a necklet of pearls interwoven with sapphires that cover it with their splendour, there like a garland of white-lilies, set in the intervals with blue lotuses; here like a row of birds that love the Mānasa lake interspersed with dark-winged swans; now like sandal-paintings on the earth with ornamental leaves in dark aloes; now like moonlight chequered with darknes underneath the shades; now like a patch of white autumn clouds, where through the interstices the (blue of the) sky peeps out and in places like Śiva's body smeared with the unguent of ashes, and girt with black-snakes for ornaments.

(Translation by C.R. Devadhar)

Let us borrow this vision of Kālidāsa to appreciate the beauty and glory of our heritage.