

DESTINATION STUDIES – An Institution

Sayak Ghosh ¹

¹ Dip TT(Mgt) - MONTREAL.

Keywords

*Maps, Destination Studies
, The Institute of
Destination Studies,
Education and Tourism,
Cultural Tourism and
Employment*

Abstract

First of all, we must understand that there are various aspects of tourism with respect to its beauty, aesthetics, technical parameters, trade & commerce, training & education, innovation etc. If anyone wants to find the bondage between education and tourism, there can be various topics, concepts, factors, and parameters to portray the entity. Again, if Education is an aspect of tourism, then we can formulate a tourism course subject to beauty, aesthetics, technical parameters, trade & commerce, innovation and, last but not the least, the destinations – The prime capital for tourism; as a tourist has a destination whereas a traveler does not. So, pertaining to education and tourism, I shall focus on destination studies.

It would be better to admit that tourism is the most special segment of human geography. This subject leads us to understand our planet and the culture of the world better than any other subject. So, we must also find a scientific way of studying tourism to understand the human race better. To start with, we must focus on the different destinations of the world, their geography – how to reach there, their culture, their heritage, their history, their socio-economy, interesting places to visit there etc. Once we grab it we have almost grabbed the major portion of the subject named tourism. So, let's proceed.

MAPS

A map is the most important tool not only for destination studies but also for studying tourism and geography.

Right now let us focus on the importance of map in a destination study. I remember the very first class of my Tourism Course. That day the Director of our institute stated very clearly, “If you know maps, you know more than 60% of your course! And if you don't know then please leave the course !!”. That's how the map is the fundamental tool for Tourism Course and so very important for any destination study.

Ideally, an individual studying different destinations should passionately love maps. At the very first note, he or she invariably should get a hang of the World Map irrespective of any trainer/ teacher/mentor. Let the World Map be his or her mentor. Once this phenomenon is through to any individual or student, he or she can proceed very fast for any sort of Destination Studies.

Then automatically the student will have the culture to sit with any map e.g. a world map, any continent map, any country map, any city map etc.. After that slowly the student will gather interest to browse different books of different destinations apart from his or her curriculum books subject to an official course of Tourism.

Certainly mentoring will be required not only to complete the course successfully but also to have a strong grip on

the technical as well as the aesthetic parameters of the subject.

DESTINATION STUDIES

Geography

At the very first shot, a student studying different regions should first scan the World Map (as discussed before) in his or her retina in such a way that any destination of the world is just in his or her finger-tips. The student should be able to explain the geography of the particular destination without a second thought and without an iota of doubt. Then only he or she can proceed further.

For convenience, the students should study the map continent wise and then country wise. Then he or she should know all the capitals along with the other important cities pertaining commercial hubs and international airports. If possible the students also need to memorize the currencies of different nations, their three-letter codes along with their country, city as well as the airport three-letter codes; this study can help them to define a few things technically better in the near future.

Transportation & Accommodation

Once a person thoroughly examines the geography of a particular destination, then he or she has to know how to reach there (by air, water, rail, road etc.), what sort of amenities are there to stay (hotel, motel, inn, guest house, homestay etc.) and what are the amenities of transfers in that particular region like local cab, auto-rickshaw, tuk-tuk, bus, local train, cable car etc..

Infrastructure & Socio-Economy

Nowadays one has to be aware of the infrastructure of a particular destination i.e. how are the roads of that region, are there any sort of link roads, how are the condition of the bridges, do they have flyovers and bypasses in the busy cities etc..

One also has to be updated about the socio-economy of the destination e.g. what is the per capita income, what's the common occupation of the local people, what's the regional cum national psyche etc..

Polity

Polity is a crucial factor not only in a particular region or nation but also it is a major issue for the International Relationship. If the political environment is sound of a particular destination then it is by default a suitable place to roam as there will be less possibility of civil unrest subject to the polity. Social good being can also be expected out of it. Thereby the economy might not face any crucial challenge.

So, the socio-economy along with polity and the national infrastructure slightly portrays the overall **environment** of a particular region.

Culture

Then comes Culture; the people of a particular region. One has to know about the language the people speak, what food & beverages they prefer along with their staple food, their common dress, the common design of their houses and last but not the least the co-curricular activities associated with the mass e.g. music, painting, literature, cinema, dances etc.. There can also be any other unique kind of activities that the people are interested in.

History

The culture of a particular region evolves from the History. So, the student should have a brief idea about that regional history and also the philosophy that is being portrayed through the ages over there. Similarly, heritage should be cultivated simultaneously. A place may not have pyramid but a small village can easily have an ancient shrine that conveys not only the heritage but also a saga, history, school of thought, architecture, sculptor and many more concepts if we want to cultivate.

Climate

Climatic conditions of a particular region is very important to know as that's a prime information that the tourists have to know beforehand in order to pack their luggage for the entire trip subject to the destination i.e. what sort of dresses they have to carry; if it's hot then light clothes should be taken, if it's cold then winter-wears and if it's a place of monsoon or it may rain in the travel dates then the tourists have to keep an umbrella in reserve etc..

Natural calamities are inevitable. We can't fight with nature. But we can at least have the knowledge from the weather forecasts whether there will be landslides, heavy rain, snowfall etc. so that we can at least take some measures beforehand to avoid negativities subject to the planning. But definitely, we can't get rid of an earthquake or tsunami or a sudden flood etc.!

Flora and Fauna

Flora refers to plant life and Fauna refers to animal life. One should also have an idea of flora and fauna of a particular region as many tourists are also interested in the same. One should know if there is any forest nearby or if there are any unique plants, flowers or even interesting animals in the vicinity or else any presence of any zoological or botanical garden. Flora and fauna also denote the Eco-Tourism or the Green Tourism of a particular destination.

Places of Interest

The most interesting point of all is the entity of Places of Interest. This is the most important point for which the Tourism happens for a particular destination. There are various places of interest like the shrines, gardens, lakes, museums, parks, waterfalls etc.. In a macro traditional perspective, most people classify to choose destination either by sea-side or by hilly / mountain area, valleys, rift valleys, canyons, plateau, deserts, grasslands etc..

A tourist before planning the destination for his or her trips first checks this very entity and then plans accordingly subject to his or her, the family's or the group's taste.

Activities

The latest trend in tourism is the Activities that a region can provide to its tourists. So a person who is doing the Destination Study should be aware of all the activities that can be availed in the particular destination. If it's a sea-side then the tourists can avail water-sport activities. If it's a mountain area then people can go for paragliding, water rafting etc.. The Theme Park activities are there if the tourists visit a theme park. Daily many activities are also getting innovated; the students should be aware of it. Shows related to Theatre, Opera & other musical items, Traditional Dances are always there subject to the local culture of a place.

THE INSTITUTE OF DESTINATION STUDIES

Transparently I have tried to explain Destination Studies through its various modules. Again it has to be seen that the concepts portrayed so far is with respect to the entity -Education and Tourism. So, let's see whether the concepts can have a formal structure in the Institution of Tourism. Yes, it can have an elaborate structure in the institution. So, let's define the structure as the INSTITUTE OF DESTINATION STUDIES.

The institute will conduct courses subject to Destination Studies with respect to the upcoming trends of Tourism. The faculty of the institute needs to have a profound knowledge of the following subjects as portrayed before: -

- Geography
- Transportation & Accommodation
- Infrastructure & Socio-Economy
- Polity
- Culture
- History
- Climate
- Flora and Fauna
- Places of Interest
- Activities

Apart from the above subjects, the students should also be trained in the technical aspects of Travel & Tourism industry like: -

- Ticketing (Air, Rail, Cruise, Bus)
- Hotel Booking
- Itinerary Building – Formulating a Tour Package

- Visa, Documentation and other travel related formalities
- FOREX Services
- International SIM Cards

Thus, if such an institute can be built, it will usher a new wave in the Tourism World and can really elevate the value of Human Geography to its optimum extent!

EDUCATION AND TOURISM

For a region, the education is very much needed for its inbound tourism as well as a player sitting in that particular region and selling outbound tour packages. This is all about the mainstream and conventional formal education being imparted to the mass.

Unlike the introduction, let us see where we can map tourism in the realm of education. Today it's the high time to introduce Tourism in the mainstream school curriculum throughout the world. As conveyed earlier about the Institute of Destination Studies, the concept can also be tied up with the schools, colleges, universities and other institutes to impart the formal study of Tourism. The institute would definitely have its own captive students to whom the faculty would teach or preach with its entire autonomy. So, it will also act as a society to preach Tourism by Destination Studies, make awareness campaigns and mentor both the aesthetic and technical aspects of the Travel & Tourism World.

The most beautiful and crucial factor that this very institute should be ideally doing is to formulate a non-profit approach for the aspect of Travel and Tourism for the mass i.e. the people who are having the dream to roam the planet can do so without the constraint of their so-called economic incapability. The institute has to make a mandatory drive to do so in order to promote the wellness and happiness factor of the society thereby of the whole world!

Raja Ram Mohan Roy who is referred as "The Father of the Indian Renaissance" by the Nobel Laureate (a great poet) Rabindranath Tagore (Literature / 1913 / INDIA) was very much popular in the United Kingdom and rest of Europe. While in Europe he discussed many International Sociological points in the first half of the nineteenth century IN DIFFERENT FORUMS. Among them, he raised an argument that why a civilized person has to procure a passport, get the visa and pass through all the immigration formalities subject to the nations traveling from and visiting. This particular thought was adored by the diplomats, creative thinkers and many other eminent personalities of Europe as well. He also emphasized on Education and its holy light to ignite the blind faith from any sociological system. Till date, we are still following those strict external affair policies subject to multiple nations throughout the world. The contemporary terrorism throughout the globe is also conveying that the flame of education is still not been able to illuminate and show the mass the huge mountain of the vice of blind faith inside the global demography.

Unlike Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose the great revolutionary for the Indian Struggle for Independence also formed multiple non-profit societies with different European Nations while he was in Europe in the early 1940s. His insight was to develop deep cultural exchanges and important dialogues between India and Europe. But his activities remained unfinished as he was not traceable after a few years or died due to an air-crash; the incident is still a controversy cum mystery! What an irony?

Here the Institute of Destination Studies can really act as a vital aspect for the Institution of Tourism; to educate, to make people visit different nations and ideally the entire planet and in turn, the mass by themselves can go for building a system and develop an intense culture that deals with peace, harmony, and prosperity !!

Once an individual and subsequently a mass travels and gradually gathers knowledge of different regions of the world, slowly acquaints with their culture, exchange dialogues and try to feel the oneness among all, really there will be no negativities left with the entire Human Race.

CULTURAL TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT

Since the institution – Destination Studies is a special aspect of Travel & Tourism and thereby of the Human Geography, so it is not only a utility factor of the industry but also an integral part of the Global Culture as well.

It has been already portrayed that Culture – local as well as global is a module in order to define tourism. It is also certain that today's industry is not only running on commercial tour packages but also there is a huge demand rather space for Niche or Special Interest Tourism. This realm is huge with different offbeat forms. Cultural Tourism is one of the forms and is an upcoming trend that will very shortly be very popular yet niche.

Destination Studies will mainly cultivate the ground or local culture subject to a particular destination. Numerous cultivations of different regional cultures will add a new dimension to the Global Culture; this is the aesthetic part of the form. Once this trend comes into the functionality, it will not only deal with the beauty and aesthetics but it is also going to usher the technical parameters of the trade i.e. right away generate employment. What a beautiful idea!

There are some forms that are already existing like Music Concert, Opera, Film Festival, Theatre Festival etc.. These are already treated as activities pertaining tourism in a few regions of the world like Mozart Concert in Austria, Opera Events in Sydney Opera House in Australia etc. that have already become popular as people visiting these regions do conventionally attend the programmes. Apart from Austria and Australia all the other countries of the world have their own form of music both regionally as well as nationally. But they have not been cultivated yet for the persons visiting the region to be catered to. If it is done then the local music professionals can get involved in the matter and earn surplus revenue not only to oneself but adding a source to his or her national income. The same phenomenon also holds true for other art workers as well. Similarly, few Film Festivals as in Cannes have gained bit tourist popularity but there are many other film festivals that are not that marketed from a tourism perspective. Theatre Festivals are still a very niche segment. There are also many other segments like Food Festivals, Cultural Fairs, Handicraft Workshops, Workshops related to regional occupation etc.; though they have a bit of local presence they are not that marketed to gain the inbound tourism. *So, it is very much transparent that lot of work has to be done to nurture the huge untouched **cultural sustainable** space.*

Cultivating any specific regional culture not only promotes a specific cultural event but also attracts people to come to the particular region to also speculate the place along with the cultural activity. So, Cultural Tourism is not only bound to a particular cultural event, programme or activity but also develops a culture to know a place where the event takes place and usher the local employment simultaneously. Thus, it integrates all the local cultures of different regions of the world to escalate the quality of the global culture. Hence it is so evident that how tourism adds on to a new dimension of CULTURE and thereby generating employment throughout the world just by cultivating one's own culture.