

Traveling as a Part of Education

Essay No. 01

From time immemorial traveling has been considered a part of one's education. The Englishmen, in particular, consider their schooling incomplete without a tour of the continent. Traveling is one of the most delightful experiences of mankind. People have always enjoyed going from place to place seeing men and things.

In India, unfortunately foreign travel has not been encouraged and in fact there was a time when crossing the seas was declared to be highly sacrilegious. Men like Mahatma Gandhi were actually excommunicated for going beyond seas. It was this ostrich mentality which brought about the worst type of mental stagnation in India and caused its inglorious downfall.

Travelling both inside and outside the country is a powerful aid to education. It provides and experience of the world and calls into action and practical use the various qualities of mind and intellect developed by education. Tact, firmness, engaging personality and lively conversation are some of the products of wide and extensive travelling.

However, highly educated a person may be, if he has not lived and moved amongst people with different habits, languages, social customs and morality, his different habits, languages, social customs and morality, his own outlook remains narrow. He is less accommodating in his views and fanatical in his outlook. But those, who have traveled widely, are generally liberal in outlook. They have maturity of judgment and unerring, in their understand of people and their minds.

The advantages of traveling in the narrow sense of the word "education" are equally remarkable. Geography is a dull and uninspiring subject, if it is studied in the class rooms. The Himalayas are a figment of imagination and the mightily Ganga nothing or than a snaky line running along the map. But if these places are actually visited by the student, the dull subject of geography becomes lively and absorbing. The same thing applies to History. History as it is taught today is nothing but a catalogue of dead kings and the dates of their deaths and births. If however, history is taught in relation to the achievement of these dead kings and student are given opportunities to visit frequently the scenes of the glories and defeats of the dead monarchs, history will become as interesting a subject as any other.

Similarly, to learn a foreign language it would be much easier if we meet and live with foreign people and learn the way they speak.

For broadening, the mind, growing out of narrow and parochial views, for development in international culture, traveling in one's own land and also beyond it is absolutely essential. Understanding of people of different areas will promote international peace and harmony.

Essay No. 02

Travel and Education

A couple of years ago, Indian Railways introduced. "The Palace on Wheels" –a super-deluxe train in which the compartments are like five-star hotel rooms or a palace chamber. Tourists, mostly foreigners are carried to number of historical places in Rajasthan and the carried to number of historical places in Rajasthan and the guides show them the historic sites. It is a wonderful way of educating people about the historical past of India.

Travel has been recognized as an important method of educating youth about diverse culture of their land. In the United States of America, 'Greyhound' buses carry tourists all around the country for a seasonal ticket. There are many such schemes with concessional rates in different parts of the world.

Travel is education in history, geography, culture, customs and languages. If we were to take a trip, what types of management skills would we need? Firstly, we learn about the art of preparation and packing. It is really an art to manage things. We must decide about the most necessary articles to carry. First aid kit, survival kit having important tools, clothes, entertainment items and small hand bags are some of the bare necessities. Since transportation of luggage is scarce and costly, it is better to carry items which are easily portable. Travel with a group gives lessons in human interaction and teamwork. Members of a group can share jobs according to their individual capacities and training. Some people are experts in arranging tickets and transport, others in map-reading and yet others in acting as interpreters and translators in regions where a different language is spoken.

Though people prefer to take a long journey by train, yet youths often travel on motorcycles and cycles. People have been known to tour whole continents on these cheaper means of transport. Cycles and motorcycles make us free to enjoy our tour. We stop wherever and as long as we like. We are on safer grounds at traffic jams through which we can sneak out. There are no major costs like petrol or costly spears if we travel through bicycles. Many enthusiastic globe-trotters have traversed thousands of kilometers on land on a motorcycles. When large stretches of seas divide continents, they can have a ride on a ship.

Rudyard Kipling's well-known book, 'Kim,' is a type of a travelogue. The half-caste Irish-Indian boy is a protagonist who travels from Lahore with the Buddhist Lama along the Grand Trunk Road. The reader accompanies them through the hot scorching plains of Punjab, UP and even up to Kullu in Himachal Pradesh. It is a spiritual journey. The Lama is out to seek Nirvana or salvation. They encounter the different races of India, the settlers and the various people travelling in the train. There are glimpses of British India. Kipling's vision describes the norms and customs, the colorful local dresses, the changing dialects which are full of life, the different religious communities, the flora and fauna of the mountains, the graceful kullu valley etc. Many such travel books exist which are fictional or are real accounts. Thor Heyerdahl's "Kon-Tiki Expedition" recounts the adventures of travelling across the seas on a raft.

According to a report of World Travel and Tourism Council, the average expenses of Indians on tourism and trade were nearly 4-5 percent their personal expenses nearly US\$1260. By 2011 AD, this may rise to 5.75 per cent. But the world average is 10 per cent and our figures are very low.

Whatever be the means of travel, people get strange experiences which enrich them. That is why, our vision is broader and global today. People during olden days could not travel far because of poor means of transport. Their cultures were introvert and isolated. They looked at foreigners with fear and hatred (The phenomenon is termed Xenophobia). Today, we can travel all over the world and at high speed in all the corners of the world. Business and leisure are often mixed on tours. Some business executives and diplomats' shuttle from New York to London and then, to Tokyo in a day. Travel and tourism are major revenue generating industries. In sum; we must travel around the world so that we could become better human beings.