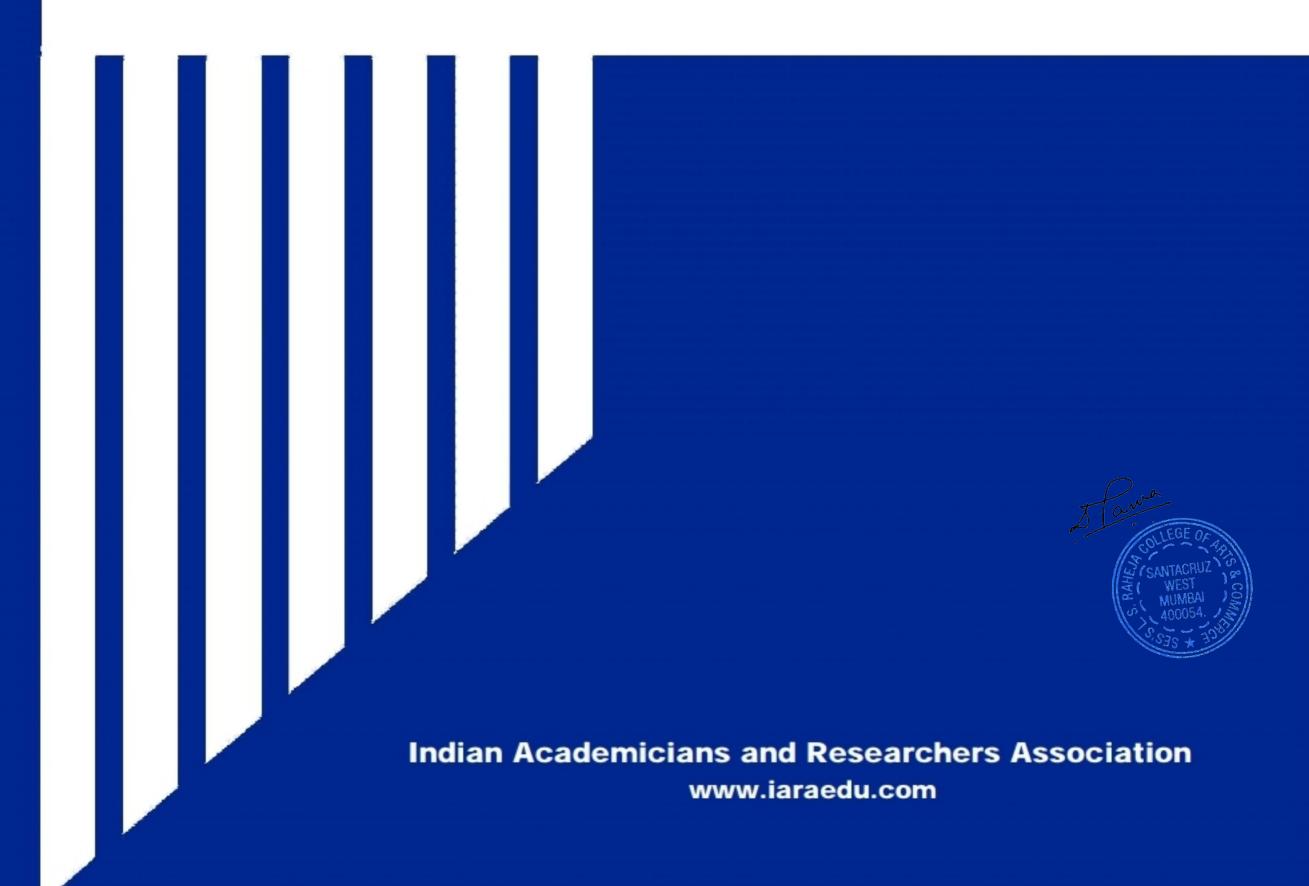
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PSYCHOLOGY OF TOURISM

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Tourism and vacation planning in contemporary times, has become more of a need than a luxury for the upper and middle class people not only in India, but also in other countries of the world. People have begun to realise that it greatly contributes to the mental health of individuals; it feeds the heart as well as the mind. People plan vacations mainly to escape the stress and monotony caused in their everyday life as a result of fixed routine, duties and responsibilities towards their near and dear ones. It is therefore natural that the heart and mind feels the need to enjoy new and positive experiences. Also, enjoying a vacation serves to pamper the self as a reward of daily hard work and execution of tasks. Tamara Jovanovic observes that "self-restraint because of social norms is relinquished when on holiday." According to Eva Simkova, it serves as an emotional investment to disseminate frustrations, to satisfy advanced human needs after basic human needs, to explore new traditions and lifestyles, and to meet people of other cultures. Some people tour to witness rarity, and to force amazement and awe into their everyday life. According to J.R. Thorpe, travel and tourism makes people more sensitive, compassionate, and tolerant in nature, it expands their boundary of empathy, and broadens their horizons. It is also evident that regular travel increases basic human happiness and has a very positive and long-term impact on the psychological well-being of the person. Being exposed to a variety of cultures and different and unconventional ways of living brings about more open-mindedness and acceptance of people as they are, and want to be. This may also lead to an understanding of what a good life means. Long-term travel may also cause significant and positive personality shifts, change in outlook, and also makes people more open to new things in life. A study by Packer and Gill in 2017 suggests that travel simply in order to escape or see novel experiences could be highly meaningful, as opposed to merely indulgent forms of behaviour. On the other hand, a study conducted by Nawigin in 2010 observes that only a very relaxed holiday leads to a further boost in tourists' happiness after they return home. Overall, he observed that post-trip happiness levels of tourists and non-tourists remained the same.

An interesting study by Tamara Jovanovic explores the relationship between individual values and holiday preferences. She finds that:

- a) People who prefer seaside for their holiday are focussed on personal success and stability. They prefer to travel to familiar, secure destinations, and are more focussed on themselves than on other people.
- b) Mountain tourists are helpful, loyal, and forgiving people, and believe that all people are equal. They are interested in others' well-being.
- c) City tourists believe in freedom of thought and action, and are focussed on self-interest. They also seek prestige and social status, which is apparently gained when visiting cities.
- d) People who visit villages, value benevolence, universalism, and tradition. They are concerned for others, but are rigid, and dislike change and novelty.
- e) Lakes and rivers attract people with less rigid opinions, those that need active participation, but not much excitement.
- f) People who travel abroad value other people, and are tolerant. They seek adventure, novelty, and social acknowledgement of others.
- g) Those who travel local, are more rigid, and love their country and customs.
- h) Longer, active holidays are for social people who prefer independent thought and creativity, who look for experiences, and strive for success.
- i) Short holidays attract selfless people.
- j) Those who travel in large groups, enjoy life's pleasures, and seek stimulation.
- k) Relaxing holidays attract people who need enjoyment in life and who like to feel powerful.
- Solo travellers are those who like to postpone life's pleasures, in order to achieve something in life.

J.R. Thorpe identifies that solo travellers are on the rise for reasons of personal indulgence, and to remain free of constraints, which they hold in higher priority over togetherness, relationship building, or budget.

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It has been observed that package tours and group trips are mainly undertaken by older tourists so that they experience a sense of safety in a group, and are also free of the trouble of deciding and making any arrangements on their own. They prefer to hand-over the responsibility of appropriate identification of places of tourist interest (that would suit their age) of their tourist destination, and scheduling day-wise itinerary of travel, in the hands of responsible and cost-efficient tourist companies. Youngsters, on the other hand, customize their travel as per their interests, and are less tolerant towards physically less active people who they may find in package tours. One category of youngsters book less expensive places of stay as they keep roaming outside till they drop, another category are back-packers who enjoy street-food, are not particular about accommodations, and can stay almost anywhere, and make their travel as adventurous and least expensive as possible. A slightly older group of tourists prefer to book a good property, and enjoy indoors as well as outdoors. Another mature group of tourists prefer to just stay indoors to enjoy the property and to bask in the pleasant climate of their tourist destination. Nevertheless, they enjoy landscape experiences, watching serene and blissful sunrise and sunsets, or they may just have a cool walk along a nature trail. They enjoy complete relaxation, may go in for spa massages, read books, write poetry, or simply connect with the self, with Mother Nature, meditate, and experience transcendence.

Where tourism is generally perceived as a form of connectivity with other people and other environments, Polat explores the socio-psychological dynamics of the relationship between alienation and tourism. The alienated and mechanized individual, under the influence of modernization and capitalism, seeks to satisfy his desire for authenticity and self-realization (being faithful to his own nature). His spiritual deprivation and lack of spiritual values, as a result of being absorbed in his monotonous life, removes him from himself and his essence. He tries to escape meaninglessness and alienation imposed on him by daily life, and perceives tourism as a means of escape. Through leisure and tourist activities, he feels consistent with his real personality, his feelings and thoughts, which were perhaps absent in his everyday life. He now acts in accordance with his values, beliefs, and wishes. The self-fulfilled man is now more flexible – can easily adapt to the environment and people around it, is happy and grateful. His gratitude makes his life worthwhile and makes him more conscious. He exhibits more natural and simple behaviour. However, all types of tourism (mass tourism and business tourism for example) do not activate existential authenticity. Moreover, the traveller's feeling of alienation as a result of being the tourist as a foreigner at the tourist destination, may be explored as an area of further study.

To conclude in the words of Don DeLillo,

"To be a tourist is to escape accountability. Errors and failings don't cling to you the way they do back home. You're able to drift across continents and languages, suspending the operation of sound thought. Tourism is the march of stupidity. You're expected to be stupid. The entire mechanism of the host country is geared to travellers acting stupidly. You walked around dazed, squinting into fold-out maps. You don't know how to talk to people, how to get anywhere, what the money means, what time it is, what to eat or how to eat it. Being stupid is the pattern, the level and the norm. You can exist on this level for weeks and months without reprimand or dire consequence. Together with thousands, you are granted immunities and broad freedoms. You are an army of fools, wearing bright polyesters, riding camels, taking pictures of each other, haggard, dysenteric, thirsty. There is nothing to think about but the next shapeless event."

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