
UNIT 23 WRITING FOR TOURISM

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23.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- know what writing for tourism means,
- familiarise yourself with the basic skills required in this area,
- learn about the various themes to write upon, and
- get the knowledge about the media where such write ups appear.

23.1 INTRODUCTION

The earlier Units of this Block stressed upon the importance of communication in tourism. Here we have chosen writing as an important skill in communication for a detailed discussion. An itinerant tourist is unfamiliar with the product (destination and services) unless it is experienced. It is always to be remembered that howsoever good the tourism product may be, the **first time visitor is a total stranger** to its environs. Moreover, it is not necessary that the experience will always be the same for a repeat visitor. Similarly, what is true of some one else's experience may not hold good in the case of another. This is because **preferences are far too personal**. The would be tourist fancies—

- what makes for the holiday,
- an enjoyable destination,
- satisfactory accommodation, and
- the attraction of frills like a bit of adventure, variety of food, entertainment and some amount of shopping.

In other words, a planned holiday, especially for the first time traveller, is a dream. This is where communication in the mode of writing plays an important role. In fact, it is seen that in most of the cases the write ups **influence tourists choice and demand**. These write ups (in newspaper, magazine, brochure or journal etc.) seem to reassure the tourist about his/her dream becoming a reality—if not in full measure atleast to the maximum extent. The level of satisfaction increases if it is also told what to expect and what not to expect at the destination. For example if a tourist is told in advance that a blanket would

not be provided she will be equipped with one before venturing on the journey. A failure to provide this minor information (as some writer may feel) can spoil an entire holiday or prejudice a person's entire view of an otherwise good destination.

Besides looking at the history of travel writing briefly, this Unit also attempts to examine the present status of tourism writing in contemporary context. The various aspects dealt with include the qualities of a writer in the field, objectives of such writings, themes, promotional literature, do's and don'ts etc.

23.2 TRAVEL WRITING: PAST AND CONTEMPORARY

Travelogues date back to ancient times and exist mostly in the form of stories of merchants or pilgrims travelling to distant lands. Be it the Jataka stories or the accounts of Fa Hein, Huan Tsang, Megasthenese, Marco Polo, Al Baruni, Ibn Battuta, Bernier and many others—all provide not only the missing links in history but information also to the would be travellers. For example the Indica of Megasthenese remained a source of information about India to the western world for several centuries. However, such accounts were meant for posterity unlike today's travel writing which has a market among the contemporary travellers. The development of organised tourism and its becoming a major economic activity has made travel writing an increasingly specialised area. Hence, we use the term Writing for Tourism. The emphasis is more and more on providing information. The readers want it not only for the sake of knowledge or interesting reading but also for utilising it during their own tourist activities. The market in this specialised area is constantly increasing as more and more of media (print as well as electronic) incorporates travel and tourism as a part of its presentation. For example, more newspapers, especially the economic ones allot at least one weekly page for travel and leisure. There are journals that specialise in tourism and travel; all leading hotels and airlines have their own magazines; tourism departments or corporations have their magazines or newsletters. Holiday serials are a favourite viewing on the television. Although the emphasis here is on the visuals yet one needs a script that is the staple of the print media. Promotion literature in the form of shopping directories, Brochures, advertisements and commissioned writing is common to all the constituents of tourism industry—travel agents, tour operators, hotels, shops and emporiums, airlines, transporters, tourism organisations etc. Thus, in the contemporary world there is ample scope in the field of writing for tourism.

23.3 PRE-REQUISITES, TOOLS AND QUALITIES

The basic requirements of travel writing are:

- lucidity,
- capability for description, and
- a keen sense of observation—especially of the environment.

A travel writer should always bear in mind that the write up would influence the reader to:

- undertake a journey to a particular destination,
- decide on the mode of travel,
- look for sources of entertainment,
- taste the cuisine, and
- spend money on shopping, etc.

Hence, it is not only the image of the writer at stake but also an individual's entire holiday and savings kept for this purpose. This makes the task of the writer more responsible.

23.3.1 Objectives

Writing on tourism and travel has several objectives. Some of them are listed below :

- motivating travel to a destination,
- describing a destination,
- cautioning the traveller,
- analysing government policies,
- detailing the impacts,
- asking for improvements,
- making future predictions,
- sharing experiences,
- marketing and promotion,
- recreating the past, and
- providing information, etc.

These are linked to the:

- target audience to be addressed, and
- the type of publication one is writing for.

The diversity of tourism constituents also segments the **target audience**. For example an article on "Ice Skating in Shimla" may get less readership than "Trekking in Shimla". A write up on "Hotel Tariffs" or "Airlines Performance" may attract a larger readership than a piece on skiing. A writer has to be very clear about **who is being addressed** (target audience): Whether the write up is meant for a high budget tourist or for people of any particular age group or is meant for all.

The writer has also to keep in mind the **publishing space** as write ups vary in size, nature and content etc. as per the publication. For example, a newspaper article may be more descriptive but a brochure has to be very crisp or a research article more analytical and critical.

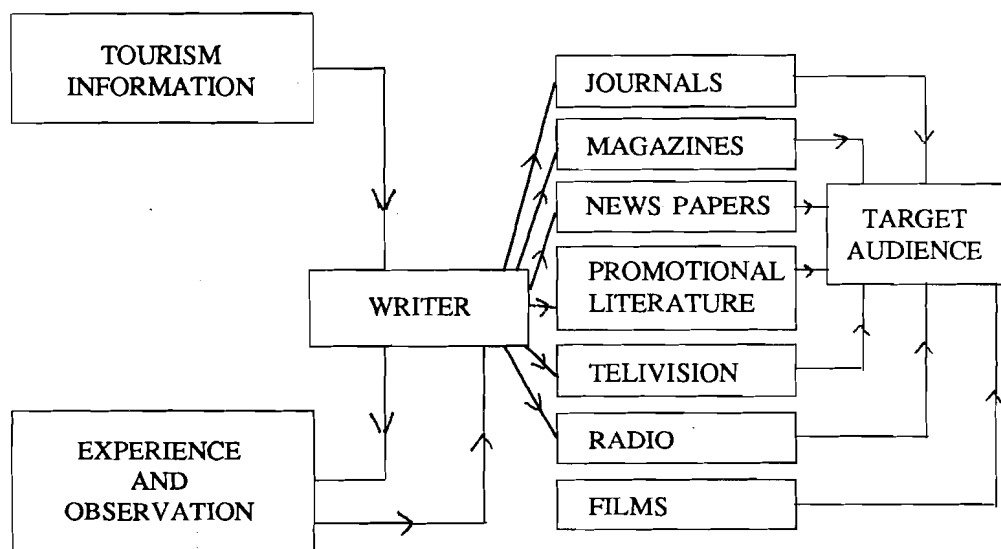
23.3.2 Qualities

The writer is both an **information gatherer** as well as **provider**. The information gathered through **keen observation**, **personal experience**, **collection of data** and **reading of already published sources**, etc. is communicated to the reader through the application of **creativity**, **imagination** and **the capacity to communicate**. In relation to this the following tips could be useful:

- i) The writer should not be **prejudiced**. One should have an **open mind** while approaching the subject. Even if there are any pre-conceived ideas they have to be **tested on the basis of ground realities**. For example a foreign writer may start with the assumption that drinking water is not easily available. But today the ground reality is that bottled mineral water or portable water is available at practically every destination.
- ii) A writer has to be **observant** even about what are generally left as minute matters. At times useful information emerges out of keen observation. Take the example of ethnic crafts. It is only keen observation that will disclose which ones are really ethnic and which ones are fake or replicas.
- iii) A certain amount of **preparatory effort** is a must for any write up like reading about the place or theme to be covered. But this should not lead to a bias. Familiarising one self with the history, geography, culture etc. is another exercise in this regard.
- iv) **Constant updating** of knowledge and information is a must for a writer. Providing outdated information in a write up would not help anyone. At times the writer has to be a **researcher** also.
- v) Facts have to be **vetted**. For example civil disturbances are an obstacle to tourism.

- vi) Not everyone can write on everything. Hence, one should attempt to discover ones **own skills and interests** keeping in view the **limitations and abilities**. The **personal style** of writing also has to be taken account of. For example hyperbole should be avoided, sentences should be short, simple words should be used and write up should be lively.
- vii) Collated information gathered from various sources forms the basis of many write ups. It is always better for the writer to record **personal experiences** and **assessment**. This gives a stamp of **authenticity** to the account.
- viii) Since visuals supplement the richness of a write up meaningful **photographs** and **illustrations** should be there. It is good for a writer to develop the skill of photography or else utilise the services of a professional.
- ix) In many cases countries, tourism organisations, tour operators, hotels, etc. sponsor writers to promote their products. Here the writer has to be very cautious and should not venture into over statements, unqualified commendation or project products/ services beyond what they actually are.

Besides these certain other qualities are related to specific themes and will be mentioned accordingly.



Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What do you understand by Writing for Tourism?

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- 2) Mention the difference between earlier travel writing and writing in today's context.

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3) Discuss the characteristics of tourism writing.

23.4 WRITING FOR TOURISM: CATEGORIES


As mentioned earlier writing for tourism involves writing for:

- magazines,
- newspapers,
- journals
- preparing brochures, posters, advertisements etc.
- scripts for films, Radio or TV,
- tourists aides like guides and shopping directories etc.

This includes informative articles, promotional literature, audio/video scripts, travel trade reporting and business. Tourism writing can be broadly divided into the following categories:


- 1) Destinations and Themes
- 2) Cuisine
- 3) Culture, Customs and History
- 4) Travel Industry and Organisations
- 5) Aviation and Surface Transport
- 6) Social, Economic and Environmental Aspects of Tourism

GLIMPSES OF INDIA...

 Since time immemorial, India has attracted travellers with an almost magnetic intensity. In the ancient world King Solomon sent quinquereemes from Nineveh to trade at Ophir, in present-day Kerala. The medieval world regarded India as a metaphor for all that was exotic and rich beyond compare. Later, Marco Polo could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes... this phenomenon continues today, as India attracts,

seduces and enchants, making willing captives of us all with a unique combination of sights, sounds and sensations. Included in the following pages you will find three specimen itineraries, each with a flavour of its own. Such descriptions, however detailed, can but hint at the extraordinary diversity presented by India, for the permutations of its dazzling attractions are endless.

ONE FROM THE HEART.

 Many travellers see India merely in terms of the Taj Mahal and the glories of Rajasthan. Spectacular though these are, there are many Indias... the India of eternal Himalayan snows, of southern beaches caressed by gentle zephyrs, of leafy hill stations, of spiritually enhancing temples. You can easily combine any or all of these on a two week trip to India, but the tour outlined here concentrates on India beyond the Taj, on Madhya Pradesh and its borders, the middle or heartland of this extraordinarily varied subcontinent.


 It really begins at Fatehpur Sikri, easily reached from Delhi or from the

Taj Mahal at Agra, just off the road to Gwalior. Founded by Akbar the Great as his capital, the city's population, grandeur and wealth overawed the first Englishmen who visited the emperor.

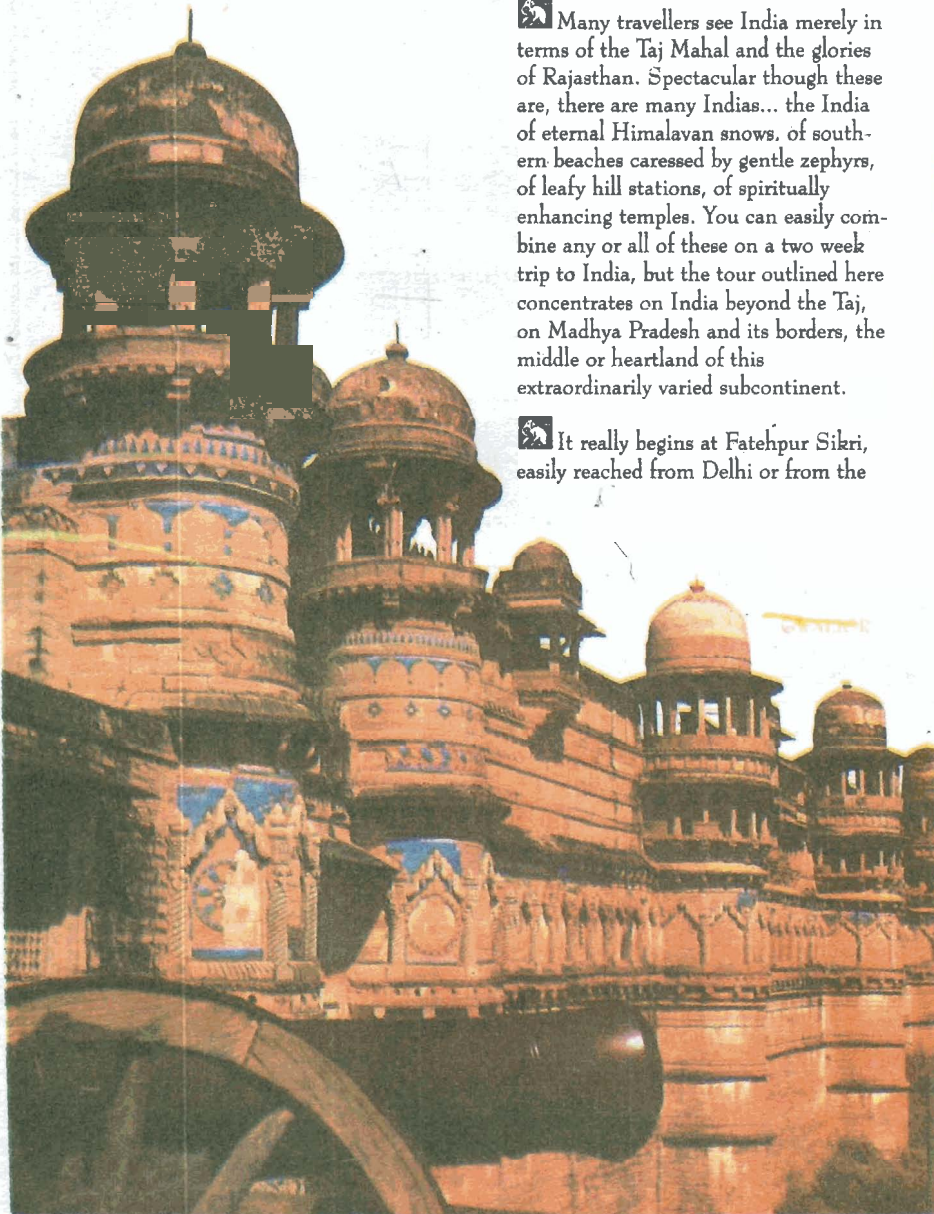


KHAJURAHO

Within three years all but the buildings had fled. Only its architectural grandeur lives on in what is arguably the world's most impressive ghost town.

 High, wide and handsome is the only way to describe the massive Gwalior Fort. Akbar was so taken with it he added it to his collection. The Man Mandir, a six-towered palace, forms its eastern wall; temples, mosques and museums lie in its capacious embrace. Deserted it certainly isn't, nor ever has been. In 1857 it became the centre of the Indian Mutiny against British rule, the last stand of which was heroically led by the Rani of Jhansi. (The walled city of Jhansi is quieter now and the Rani's picturesque old palace near the battlemented Jhansi fort now houses exquisite sculptures.)

When the warriors of the past laid down their weapons and allowed



23.4.1 Destinations and Themes

Writing on destinations is perhaps the most common form of writing in tourism industry. A destination can be taken to be a whole country, a part of it i.e. a city, beach, mountain, forest, village, or even an **ashram**, not to talk of monuments, temples, mosques, shrines, forts, palaces and in some cases even a hotel. An American writer can, for instance, choose to write on India as a single destination. Conversely an Indian can likewise make USA the subject for writing. The same American can also pick Delhi as the subject of destination writing while a writer visiting Agra can devote his entire effort to the architectural aspects of the Taj Mahal or the Red Fort. Another writer may be fascinated by the people of Delhi and how the capital city has become a mini India inhabited, as it is, by Indians of all hues and cultural backgrounds. Chandni Chowk and its bylanes can also become a destination for writing as can the spice market or the sabzi mandi. Bombay's **dibbawala** who carries lunch boxes for office goers has been a popular subject for foreign writers as part of the metropolis as a destination. The colonial architecture of Bombay and Calcutta is a good subject for destination writing as is Lutyen's Delhi. A temple in Panna city in Madhya Pradesh with the exterior of St. Paul's Cathedral is a writer's delight as is the discovery that the majestic North and South Block complexes on the Raisina Hill have an older likeness in the South African capital of Pretoria. Destinalional writings can also cover nature's bounty, the scenic splendours of mountains, falls, rivers, sunset, forests, flora and fauna. The surviving Asiatic lion in the Gir forest in western India, the saved-from-extinction tiger in many sanctuaries, the foolhardy Siberian Crane that flies all the way every winter to Bharatpur and the mighty One-Horned Rhinoceros in Kaziranga all become the focal points of a destination.

Writing on a destination can be all encompassing. Anything from a place to people, history, legend, monuments, buildings, temples, shrines, customs, dress, food, climate, accommodation, transport, shopping, entertainment, health, local systems of medicine, religion, cinema, life styles, parks, educational institutions, museums, sport, fashion and even the later day concerns about environment, carrying capacity, and sustainable tourism. Tourist services too are a part of destination writing. Today's traveller needs to know not only all about the destination of his choice but also how to get there, where to stay, what and where to eat, what to wear and do's and don'ts.

As a matter of professional ethics and responsibility to the readers a writer should not write about a destination which he has not visited. Already published informative sources like guide books, brochures etc. are to be used as secondary sources coupled with one's own experience.

Writing on a destination could thus virtually cover anything and everything under the sun, but writing on themes would involve specialised effort requiring more than general knowledge of a subject. For example, the **sari** could be the subject and the writer will need to know more about it than the general awareness as a mode of Indian dress. A writer will have to go into the origins of the **sari**, its place in society—both as a formal dress and a working woman's attire, its length (nine yards in some parts of India), the fabrics used (cotton and dozens of varieties of silk, handlooms), regional varieties like **Kota**, **Chanderi**, **Tangail**, **Bandhini**, **Batola** and so on. There are colours for auspicious occasions and for mourning. Similarly one could pick on the theme of wild life of a whole country or what is found in one national park or it could be one particular species even an extinct one like the **cheetah**. And, how the **cheetah** could be brought back to the wilds of India learning from the fascinating story of a South African woman, Ann Van Dyke who by breeding 400 **cheetahs** in the last fifteen years has virtually scored this animal off the list of endangered species. There is no dearth of themes. Take Golf for example. Most tourism conscious countries are gearing themselves up to provide golf courses for visitors who find it cheaper to indulge in this sport in other destinations than in their own country. The Japanese are a classic example. Golf is also becoming an integral part of travel itineraries and this country has the distinction of possessing the world's highest golf course (at 1200 feet in Leh) or one of the oldest (in Calcutta). And there is much scope for writing on the upcoming greens in the neighbourhood of Delhi, mostly in Haryana. Marine life around India's long coastline or exotic islands like the Andamans and Lakshadweep could be another choice for theme writings as could be life or life styles of the tribal

people. Fashions and jewellery, Indian cosmetics, flowers, trees, leaves and herbs are among the wide spectrum to choose from. Architecture offers an unending area of writing. It could cover periodic architecture, foreign influences, engineering contributions (such as at Ellora), sculpture, inlay work, design elements, ancient technologies of plumbing hygiene and beating the elements; blends of architecture such as Indo-Saracenic and contributions by various dynasties like Cholas or Mughals. The precursor to the Taj Mahal is to be found in the middle of a road intersection close to Humayun's tomb in Delhi. Or, take Nalanda where every dormitory distinctly bears the imprint of centuries apart. The Qutab Minar, the world's tallest straight gravity structure, can be another theme.

Hotels could be another choice for theme writing. There are historic hotels like the Waldorf Astoria in New York, the Taj in Bombay (built for Indians when they were not allowed to enter British run properties) or the Ashok in Delhi which has been a home to many a head of state and other celebrities. Gardens and parks like the Moghul gardens also make an excellent subject. Keeping these examples in mind you can pick such themes in the areas you reside or regions you have travelled.

23.4.2 Cuisine

After accommodation, food is the most important need of a traveller. Some cuisines can be special attractions and add to the destination pull of a country while the absence of certain cuisine could be a deterrent to travel. The Japanese for instance, tend to avoid visiting places where there are no restaurants specialising in their cuisine. Many destinations have gone out of their way to set up Japanese eateries to increase the flow of travellers from Japan. A plus point for New York is the wide choice of foods of scores of countries available in its eating houses from Mexican to Brazilian, French, Chinese and even Indian. New Delhi now boasts of good Chinese, Thai, French, Italian and the lone Japanese restaurant. Again, in this area of specialised writing one can write on the history and development of various cuisines, culinary skills, chefs who have acquired reputations of master craftsmen, famous and good restaurants, the joys of eating out, health foods, fitness foods and diets. Recipes and cook books help improve the quality of life. There is hardly a newspaper or magazine in India which does not have a regular food column featuring either a restaurant, a chef, a recipe or something new in fitness food. The role of Indian spices in adding to taste, flavour and presentation of food has unlimited scope for writing. No television network can afford to miss out on a serial on food with the additional advantage of demonstration of how to do it over the print media. Organising food festivals of national cuisines (like the Hyderabadi treat in Delhi or Chatinnad food in Calcutta) is a common practice of hotels and tourism promoters providing citizens with an opportunity to sample and enjoy culinary skills of other parts of the country; it is also a feast for the food writer. International food festivals are even greater hits. A leading chain once brought out French chefs to India not on a conventional trip to give Indians a taste of good French delicacies but for the European culinary experts to get introduced to Indian cooking. The innovation did not stop there. The chefs were accompanied by half a dozen of the world's best known food critics who went back and wrote volumes on the finer points of Indian cooking, spices, vegetables and meats.

23.4.3 Culture, Customs and History

Although India is emerging as a multi-appeal destination drawing a growing number of tourists who prefer beaches and adventure sports, the bulk of travellers come for a cultural experience. This country is perhaps unique in having preserved a continuing civilisation of over five thousand years. While visitors to Athens, Rome and Cairo can only see the ruins of once great civilisations, in India they can experience a continuity of thousands of years. As one writer put it; in India you can see several centuries living together, perhaps in promiscuity. This continuity offers the writer an unlimited ocean of ideas of centuries old traditions preserved and practised with only minor changes. Take for example marriage. The rituals have remained exactly the same after thousands of years. Only the oil lamp has been replaced by the electric bulb and in some cases the *shahnai* has given place to a brass band. An atomic power station now forms the backdrop for a peasant ploughing his field with a bullock. A sleek jet takes off the runway in a desert city while alongside on a dirt road camel-driven carts slowly wend their way to a village. At several points the twenty-first century gets blended into the twentieth or the nineteenth: A modern concrete and glass hotel is comfortable with Indian beads, bangles and artefacts, handloom-bed covers, floor level devans and tandoori food served without forks and knives; Major

We're creating a different kind of harmony.

Bringing diverse people to a harmonious whole. Providing an exposure of the life, language, rites and rituals of one Indian to another. His costumes and attires, his festivals and celebrations, his cuisine, legends and ethos. Creating, as tourism does, a common sense of integrity, a common rhythm.

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In fact, ITDC itself is a fusion of diverse people. Over 9,000 people from different sections of the society who make one entity that is ITDC.

India Tourism Development Corporation



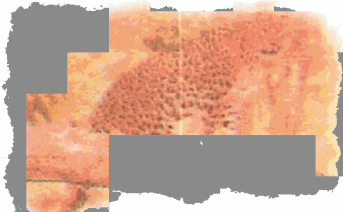
I N D I A ' S H O S T T O T H E W O R L D

Samples of advertisement write ups



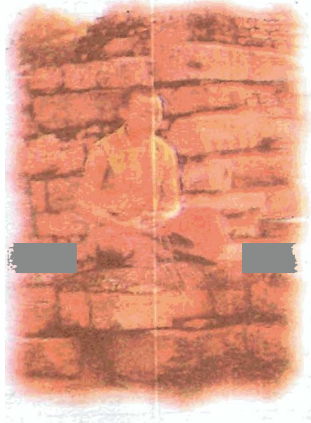
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government decisions being kept for 'auspicious hour' (indicated by astrologers); journeys being governed by auspicious days; *haram*; pujas being performed for the state-of-the-art five star hotels. It is not uncommon to see these star hotels tuned temporarily into a village one evening to give the foreigner the experience of rural India or for some British group to provide a Victorian night with period costumes, horse drawn carriages and candlelights. Not that there are no contemporary events, Pierre Cardin brings his latest summer or winter collection or Martha Graham Company performs in the capital or the national film awards given in Calcutta. All these provide good pastures for writers.

Quaint customs which form a new part of everyday life are good material for a writer. Pujas to ward off evil; Pujas at the start of a new venture; Thanks giving visits to temples and shrines; Getting your head shaven off on the death of mother or father or as an offering to the gods on the fulfilment of a wish; Donating a cow for salvation; a *haldi* (turmeric) bath for the bride and the groom adorning a sword during his marriage procession. The survival of the arranged marriage is a puzzle for a westerner as is the hold of the family.

The history of India, like the rest of the world, is replete with the era of progress, achievements and worthy dynasties as also of decay and misfortunes all of which make absorbing reading. For tourists, recounting of conquests of yesteryears may or may not be of interest but the heights attained in quest of knowledge and achievements in the realm of architecture, arts, music, education and sports like archery or polo are always fascinating. Ancient temples, sculpture, monasteries and the finest examples of Mughal architecture from Taj Mahal to the Red Forts and British contributions like the Rashtrapati Bhawan complex and institutions like clubs can for ever inspire writers. The Portuguese influence in Goa, Daman and Diu, the French connection in Pondicherry and Chandernagore and the British touch to the whole of India provide an unending list as subjects for writing. India's independence and the struggle that went into achieving it is another great source for writers.

23.4.4 Travel Industry and Tourism Organisations

Tourism is already the world's largest industry after oil and is fast growing. It is expected to overtake oil in a few years. These figures tell the story clearly: In 1950 only 25 million people crossed international borders; by 1970 the figure had jumped to 160 million and in the year 1993 the magic figure of half billion (500 million) was reached. Tourist expenditures in the same period grew from \$ 2 billion in 1950 to \$ 324 billion in 1993 or in simpler terms almost one billion dollars were spent by tourists every day of the year. Not just statistics (and there is the vast sea of domestic travel) but the social, technological, economic and political determinants of tourism are among the vast array of subjects for writing. That Spain with a population of 34 million should be hosting 50 million tourists a year or the tiny island of Singapore should be receiving four times the number of visitors to India or Indonesia should be able to treble its arrivals in three years are subjects of great interest for writers on the industry. India's seemingly dismal share of 0.4 per cent of the world's traffic becomes respectable when translated into bednights with an average stay of 28 days. Or take some other interesting contrasts. Some seventy per cent of the world movements are shared by just fifteen countries. Ninety per cent travel within regions that is within North America or within Europe or between Europe and North America. India gets 52 per cent of all visitors to South Asia. Singapore city alone has more than 30,000 rooms against the all-India figure of 48,000. New Delhi has more five star hotels than the whole of Spain (but the number of mid market hotels must be legion). Hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, guides, transport, shopping (and shopping commissions) packages, add ons, off-season bargains, stop overs, sops for frequent fliers or loyal hotel guests are all part of the wide fare for the writer. Achievers like the famous Rai Bahadur who rose from a hotel clerk in Shimla to an internationally acclaimed industry leader, the little boy from Peshawar who introduced the tandoori chicken to Delhi and the rest of the world. Dale Keller who blended raw concrete finish with cottage industry beads, bangles, swords and shields or the humble potters of villages whose creations adorn the lobbies of star hotels; how the desert safari came etc. are all interesting themes in the area.

No industry is complete without the regulating authorities. Travel has the departments and ministry of tourism whose policies or lack of them are always subjects of the writer's scrutiny. Their role in tourism promotion, especially abroad, has always had a mixed response from writers from critical to so-so. Tourism officials' pleadings with other

segments of government, the finance ministry on matters of taxation, home and external affairs on immigration and visa hassles, the inadequacy of statistics and data, the lack of transparency in the working of officialdom can keep writers busy even in lean periods. The industry's performance, its contribution to employment, foreign exchange earning, modernisation and claims of "the friendly travel agent" can be attractive subjects for not only travel trade magazines but for economic writers contributing to business newspapers and periodicals as well as business programmes on television. The role of the public sector (ITDC is a good example) is another subject of interest. In such cases the writings are not just informative but analytical and critical also.

Tourism has given rise to a number of trade associations which have long offered a platform for national debate. The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) are the oldest such trade bodies which in the recent past have been joined by the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and the Indian Association of Tourist Transporters (IATT). But the industry still lacks an apex body where all segments could meet together for a common objective. TAAI conventions have however become a kind of a national forum and they are now appropriately titled Indian Travel Congress.

The various trade bodies which keep pressing the authorities for this or that concession or amendment of rules and regulations provide a lot of copy for industry writings. The lack of unity in the industry is itself a subject on which many writers devote attention. The annual conventions of the trade associations are major media events as both government representatives and industry leaders get an opportunity to state their views on current issues concerning tourism.

Apart from trade organisations the state tourism corporations, (virtually every state now has one) are good sources of information and subjects to write on. Many state corporations have opened up new destinations and built infrastructure. They even offer tour packages. A hot subject for media discussion is whether these enterprises should now be privatised. A few state corporations have on their own offered their hotel properties on lease to the private sector. At the central level, the India Tourism Development Corporation has also been toying with the idea of joint ventures.

At the international level there are a very large number of organisations which are always in the news. There is the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) a United Nations affiliated body on which governments are represented. Among other things it provides vital statistics and offers technical aid in tourism projects. Then there is the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) on which are represented national tourist offices, airlines, hotels, travel agents and others in travel related activities. This too provides tourism agencies and the industry with statistical information and technical assistance. Its annual conference, held in a different country every year, draws worldwide participation and the accompanying travel mart witnesses millions of dollars worth of business where buyers and sellers meet across the table. The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) is another trade body whose world congress held in different parts of the world draws the largest participation—7,500 delegate participants attend its meetings both for promotional work as well as for direct business. There is also the International Air Transport Association (IATA) which brings together international air carriers regulating fares and other matters relating to aviation.

Apart from these organisations there are many trade events held annually which draw big crowds of industry professionals. The International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin is perhaps the biggest gathering of travel agents and tourism promoters. It is held in the first week of March every year. There are many similar meets but not on that scale held in other parts of the world like the World Travel Mart in London or the Incentive Travel Mart in Switzerland. Media attendance at such gatherings is always of high order. ITB attracts no less than 4,000 travel writers.

23.4.5 Aviation and Surface Transport

The aircraft appeared in the skies a long time ago. Even the jumbo is two decades old. But the sight and sound of an aeroplane still has a certain romance and attracts the attention of all age groups. So does air travel. And for that matter rail and road travel. For served in flight or the movies shown (and now even BBC newscasts), the goodies given to business and first class passengers, the plethora of fares ranging from full economy to excursion to group and glaring anomalies like London-Sydney-London being cheaper than London-

Delhi-London all make good subjects for writers. Bilaterals, royalties, pilot exodus, strikes, airhostesses, services all make good copy as to technological advances like bigger fuel efficient aircraft, skyphones, pay by credit card or fly your spouse free. The emergence of air taxis offers a new canvas to writers.

The railways too have maintained their newsworthiness. The steam engine and the coaches of yesteryear are still operated on certain routes to lure tourists and railbuffs; many have been consigned to museums again for tourists to view. Old Maharaja saloons have been turned into Palace on Wheels and new such trains are being crafted with modern chassis but old princely charms. Then there are fast trains, Shatabddi, Rajdhani and Deluxe. The Indian Railways have for the first time offered well designed weekend packages taking in historic places like the Sabarmati Ashram or famous pilgrim centres. There are plans to let the private sector run some of the train circuits.

And for those looking for stories on road travel there is no dearth of ideas. There are local sight-seeing tours by sleek airconditioned coaches and limousines and the ambassador taxi or its more modern brother the Contessa or the Maruti 1000. There are inter city coach services (the Pink Line between Delhi and Jaipur) and enterprising transporters offer tours from Delhi to Trivandrum and back for LTC travellers. That consumer protection courts have decided to intercede on behalf of those who are cheated is another area of writing that has opened up. And, of course the taxation on inter-state road transport and the agonising wait at border crossings make good reading. Also of interest are moves to let the private sector spend on infrastructure like building highways, the lack of which makes road travel so much less comfortable and enjoyable. The wayside tourism pioneered by Haryana continues to be a talking point as the other states (barring a few) have been slow to follow suit.

23.4.6 Social, Economic and Environmental Concerns

Remember the first ever mass agitation by the public in Goa was against the presence of hippies on the state's beaches. The social impact of tourism has been a matter of concern for government ever since the adverse effects started showing on local values and traditions in the Caribbean and some Southeast Asian Countries. Although the Indian culture has shown tremendous resilience in standing up to foreign cultural invasions and influences there are fears in some quarters and they would like the authorities to be vigilant. This watch or monitoring offers serious writers a subject of great importance.

On the economic side the benefits of tourism are obvious: earning valuable foreign exchange, employment, multiplier effect on the economy, international understanding (and in India's particular case national integration). But there can be imponderables or 'hidden' aspects. For instances the net outgo of foreign exchange (this is not true of India) can leave very little net earnings for a country. Haphazard or unplanned growth of tourism could create developmental imbalances in the country. Too much tourism movement and related activities could create local resentments as could cornering of the best of facilities like beaches and parks for 'tourists only' kind of segregation.

Environmental concerns, though recent in origin, are perhaps going to have a far greater impact on the future development of tourism than anything so far. In a way India being a late starter in the quest for tourism and still accounting for a miniscule share of the world market has an advantage. **It can learn from the mistakes of others and can take preventive measures now for the future.** The decision not to permit construction on beaches closer than 200 metres (the earlier stipulation was 500) from the high tide will be a great safeguard not only for the ecological balance but also for preserving the natural beauty of the coastline. There is also considerable concern for sustainable tourism and the carrying capacity of each destination will have to be determined before any permanent damage is done. Hotels are being forced to control pollution and travel agents are talking of eco-friendly tours. Each of these issues matter at the local as well as regional levels and needs attention of writers.

23.3.7 Promotions, Tourist Literature and Video Scripts

Promotions are integral to any commercial activity. Especially so when India is one of the one hundred and twenty developing nations competing for a mere ten per cent of the international tourists. The promotional efforts are handled by the:

- national carriers
- travel agents
- tour operators, and
- hoteliers

The tools they use are tourist literature, advertisements, posters, audio-visuals, films, lectures and personal contacts, and of course, the media.

Tourist literature accounts for the biggest area of creative writing. This literature can vary from an attractive poster, a bird's eyeview brochure on a whole country or a part of it, a brochure on a city or a monument (like the Gwalior fort) or on a theme like folk dances, tribal life, food or golf. Though in varying degrees they may give some details but by and large it is a soft sell. For hard sell there are brochures which indicate prices, choice of hotels, details of eating places and shopping centres. The national tourist offices (or the departments of tourism) usually produce this soft sell literature which can be backed by audio-visuals and films. Travel Agencies and hotels offer hard sell material with rates and commissions although they too have to introduce an element of soft sell like the destination in which their hotel is located for the circuit the travel agency is promoting. The target audience in such cases is the would be tourist or a company intending to have a convention or meeting. In many cases these brochures are addressed to various other constituents also. For example a tourist office abroad addresses on two sort of brochures—one for would be tourists and another for tour operators. This depends on the marketing strategies. Advertising skills are needed for such write ups.

Outside of this area is a vast field of tourist aids like city and country maps, guide books and shopping directories and survival kits. There are more guides to India or specific regions like Delhi-Agra-Jaipur written by foreigners than Indians. Marketingwise this may have helped Indian tourism because these publications are available in the originating markets and in their own languages. But it is time the Indian-writers and publishers produced guide books which are acceptable overseas. There is a growing scope for coffee table books on travel.

Tourism films have been in vogue for a long time and this has led to a crop of good film writers. Television has opened up a much bigger area for writers especially networks like CNN, BBC, Star TV, Doordarshan and Zee. Video scripts on tourism deal with information as well as promotion. There is scope for practically every theme listed in earlier Sub-sections to be used in video scripts also.

23.4.8 Special Interests

This is yet another area of writing to cater to the needs of those travellers who have special interests. These could range from mountaineering and trekking to fishing, golfing, cycling, skiing, heli-skiing, museum hunting, ashram hopping, mystique tours, meditation and yoga, and even desert safaris. In this kind of communication the writer needs to have an in depth knowledge of the special interest, preferably be a keen participant in the activity. First person accounts of mountaineers have been best sellers and the tales as told by achievers to professional writers easily come next. In the past, writers used to accompany mountaineers; now many mountaineers themselves have become writers. No accounts of a trek can be the same. For example, a writer fond of trees will be talking of foliage he noticed. One interested in birds will recount the varieties watched. An odd hamlet or a recluse living at a great height could be the central point for a trekker. The nimble footed goat or the yak will fascinate an animal lover. An angler will tell you how adventurous it can be to catch a mahseer; you may have to run a kilometre along the Beas before you can subdue this sturdy fighter. The nature lover will tell you where, when and how you should tee-off in the rarefied atmosphere of Ladakh, the temperate climate of Bangalore, the mellow winter sun of Delhi or the Scottish countryside course in Shillong or Ooty. Enterprising tour operators have put together cycling tours within a city, inter-city or city-desert circuits. The curiosity of wayside villagers, children and the inevitable hospitality of the people make for good copy. Skiing and the recently introduced heli-skiing in India have brought hordes of writers to share their experiences with those who would come later. Museums provide material for a quick article, a book or a treatise. The materialistic west finds props in the deep religious traditions of the old world; Indian gurus and their ashrams, yoga centres and herbal health clinics attract a growing number of writers as do desert safaris with the excitement of sailing on the desert ships and

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Mention some aspects that you will cover in writing on the entire country as a destination.

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- 2) How do brochures help in tourism promotion?

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- 3) Why do Indian customs and culture form interesting themes for writing?

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23.5 LET US SUM UP

Communication is the life of any service-oriented industry. This maxim holds good of tourism too. There are several means of communicating with an itinerant tourist, but writing is certainly the most commonly used mode. Here you have a wide range of subjects to write on and also have ample choice of the place where you may like your piece to appear in print form. We strongly emphasize that writing for tourism purposes

india

This time!

The Traditional Splendour of South India.

The Beauty of India awaits you.

Come South to Madras — the seat of Hindu Orthodoxy, where festivals abound and traditional music and dance flourish.

Come South to Mahabalipuram, noted for its famous Shore Temple and cave sculptures.

Come South to lush Kerala. India's paradise. One vast sylvan landscape, interspersed with groves of coconut, cashew nuts and snaking backwaters.

Come South to spell-binding Karnataka. To the spectacular Mysore Palace. To Brindavan Gardens. To Belur-Halebid, for its renowned temples and sculptures.

All these and more in India. Make it India, this time!



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURIST OFFICE.**

5th Floor, Ming Court Hotel,
Singapore 1024. Tel: 2355737.

Mahabalipuram: Shore Temple.



Kerala: Kathakali Dancer.



To: The Government of India Tourist Office.
Please send me colour brochures on interesting places to visit
in India. (PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Sample of a write up

must arouse interest in a prospective traveller about the destination as well as its additional attractions. In most cases a first hand experience becomes very useful in such writings. You add to it a certain lucidity of language and style and be confident to win a tourist.

23.6 KEY WORDS

Aviation: Relating to flying

Cuisine: Specialities of Food

Customs: Manners of people of a place

Destination: Place which one plans to visit

Ethics: Morality

Itinerant: One who intends to travel

Recipe: Method of Cooking

23.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sec. 23.2.
- 2) Earlier travel writing was a record for the posterity. The modern travel writing is meant for today's tourist. For details see Sec. 23.2.
- 3) Lucidity, descriptive capability and a keen sense of observation are the main characteristics. Also see Sec. 23.3.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) You may, for example, cover the geography of the country, the details of its capital town and the wealth of its architecture. See Sub-Sec. 23.4.1 for more details.
- 2) The brochures give, in a nutshell, important details of a tourist site. See Sub-sec. 23.3.7.
- 3) See Sub-sec. 23.4.3.

Tourism industry's Himalayan woes

Taj Mahal undergoes a facelift

NEW DELHI: Visitors would have to pay more to see the shining new face of the Taj Mahal to be opened to public a few weeks from now. The entry fee to the Taj Mahal would be raised from Rs 2 to Rs 10 per head after the extensive cleaning and sprucing up operations of the Taj Mahal complex undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are over. It is estimated that the increase in the entry fee would be of Rs 100 crore in the next year. The Taj has been above the Rs 30-odd lakh mark, which has been the bane of Himalayan, say tour organisers, for years.

Kilimanoor, the cool riverside of Kannur, the hustle bustle of Kozhikode and the green panorama of Kochi revealed the metamorphosis of what were once palaces that housed the royalty. The one fact which most of us are unaware of is that the small state of Kerala has an abundance of palaces literally strewn across the state. Among these, all but one still retains the air and power of

HIKESH, Sept 25

permits and inconsistent schedules of domestic tour operators have been the bane of Himalayan, say tour organisers, for years. The palace premises sprawl across acres of green fields. It ranks amongst the first 10 rich families in India.

The bus left us where the narrow sand trail began its way to the Kilimanoor palace, in Kilimanoor. The sun is on its last lap of the day. The Victorian palace with arcades and tinted glass windows stands in all its grandeur away from the gateway.

based tour organiser said world class equipment for adventure tourism should be made in India. These are now imported and though the duty is only 30 per cent, it is a big burden as the price of equipment is very high.

The multiplicity of permits, sometimes permission of the Irrigation Department, that of Forest Department, Government, Home and External Affairs ministries are for foreigners.

Mr Sahi, an adventure enthusiast said with the opening up of areas in the Himalayas to tourists, the tourist flow will pick up.