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INTRODUCTION

Education refers to participants' experiences of formal, qualification based and off job study (Mallon and Walton, 2005, p- 473).

The term education tourism or edu-tourism refers to any “program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location”(Rodger, 1998, p-28).

According to Patterson (2006:184), “educational tourism involves travel as part of the learning experience”.

CETA (2010) defined educational tourism is travel undertaken by an individual to a unique location for the purpose of formal or informal learning in various forms such as sork experience, training in a new language.

Iso Ahola (1983) noted that tourism can provide an outlet not only for escaping or avoiding something, but also for seeking something which provides inner rewards such as self fulfilment, education and learning.

Educational tourism is not a homogenous group; it can vary from person to person or their interests. The number of international students has been steadily increasing over the last 30 years and China, India and the Republic of Korea are the top three global student providers.

The most popular destinations for educational tourism are United States, UK, Germany, France, Australia and Japan.

MOTIVATION BEHIND EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

- For higher studies
- Curiosity about foreign countries, people and culture
- Interest in art and music, architecture, folklore
- For the sake of prestige and status
- Pursuits of hobbies
- Conferences and meetings
- Visiting places for religious and spiritual knowledge
- Travelling to “find oneself”
- To learn about the geographical features, like rivers, mountains, vegetation
- For learning foreign languages
- As school/ college excursion programmes
- Inter-culture exchange programme

Source: Mathieson and Wall (1982)

HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

The notion of travelling for educational purposes is not new and according to some scholars, its popularity is expected to increase. India too has acknowledged its share in education sector domestically and globally and was one of the most favourable educational destination in the ancient times. Taxila University (5th century B.C to 5th century A. D) and Nalanda University (from 427 to 1197 A.D) in the ancient India were the significant educational destination for the students and scholars Tibet, Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia, Turkey, Sri Lanka and South east Asia.

Followed by Taxila and Nalanda, Odantpuri in Bihar, Somanpura in Bangladesh, Jagaddala in Bengal, Nagarjunkonda in Andhra Pradesh, Vikramshila in Bihar, Sharada Peeth in modern day Kashmir, Valabhi in Gujarat, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, Pushpagiri, Ratnagiri in Odisha, Manyakheta in Karnataka in different periods were the centres of education. In fact from the above mentioned examples it is clear that Indian Sub-continent has been a place of origin of edu-tourism rather than just an educational destination.

In the western countries, educational tourism gained popularity after the Renaissance. Grand tours were initially undertaken by the scholars and aristocratic British youth as a part of their education during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The purpose of grand tours was to teach and civilize participants through series of tours lasting up to several years.

Educational tourism has been perceived by differently by the scholars and institutions, one of them is Canadian Tourism Commission (2001), educational or learning forms of tourism can be viewed along a continuum ranging from 'general interest learning while learning' at one end to 'purposeful learning and travel' at other (see Figure 1.1)

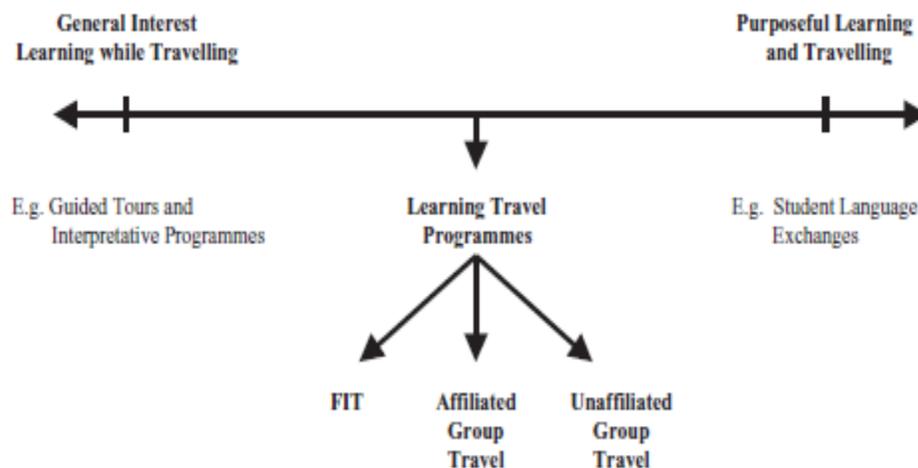


Figure 1.1 The learning/travel continuum

Source: Modified from CTC (2001)

Model illustrating a number of potential educational tourism market segments:

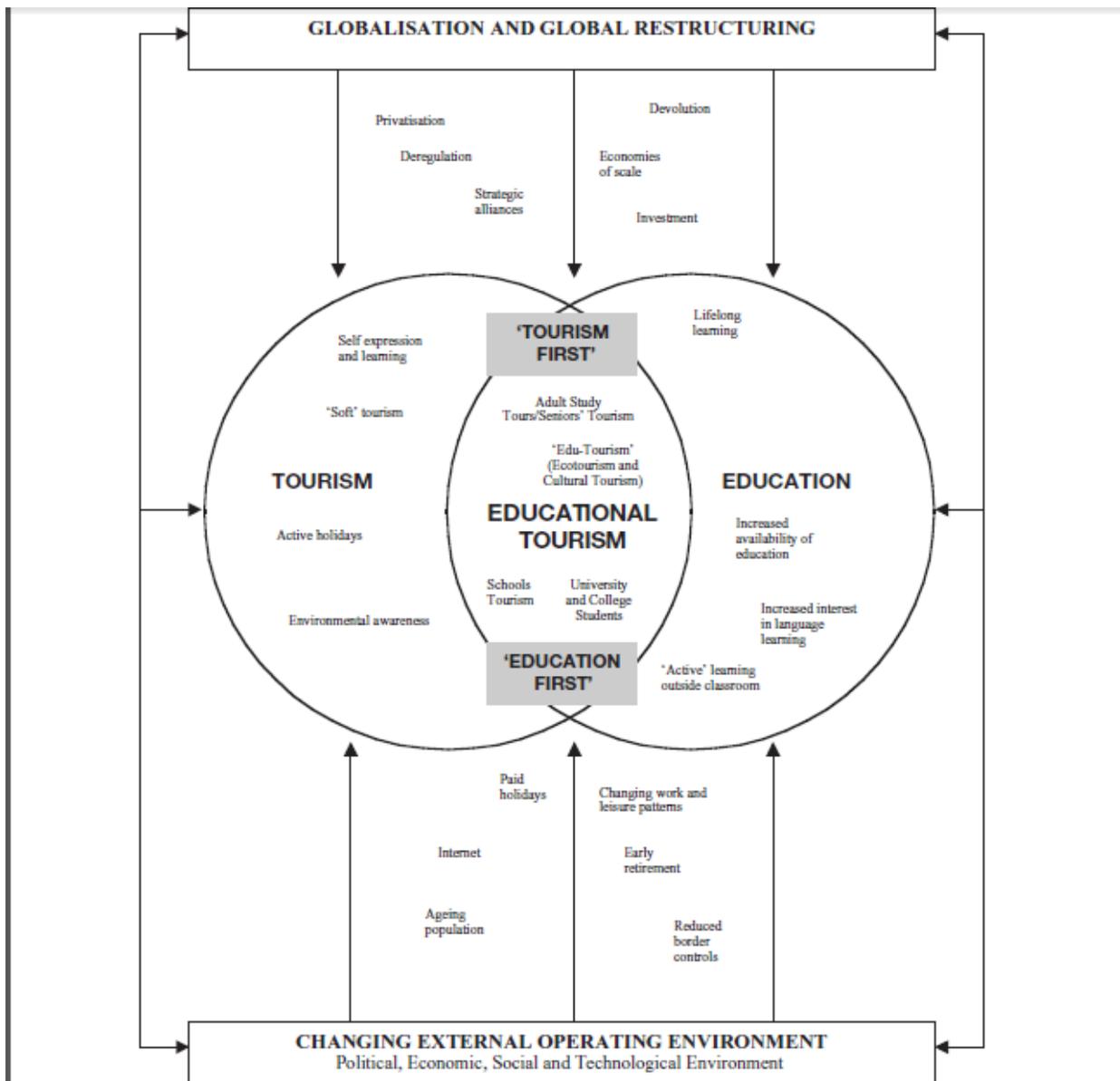


Figure 1.2 Conceptualising educational tourism: a segmentation

(Source: Brent, W. Ritchie et.al, 2003: Managing Educational Tourism, Frankfurt, Channel View Publications)

- **BENEFITS OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISM**

- **Effective Learning-** Practical implementation of classroom theories and laws on a real cultural and natural landscape makes the learning more exciting.
- **Exchange of Ideas-** visit to new places and discussions with new people, incorporate new cultural lifestyle, learn ways of adaptation in remote wilderness from local dwellers.
- **Personal Development-** Away from home and household facilities encourage the students to be self-reliant, independent, foster leadership qualities and communication skills.
- **Enhance Perspective** – it develops a new perspective among the students to see every social and cultural issues differently.
- **Global Networking-** Interacting with local and foreign students on educational tour they develop amazing networking and social skills.

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- **CHALLENGES OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISM**

In spite of being the fastest growing industry, it faces some challenges which limits its growth, and these are:

- High cost is involved in setting up such an infrastructure which imparts knowledge along with enjoyment;
- Political issues can adversely affect the educational tourism both on local as well as international level;
- Maintain quality of learning and education, not just by visiting places, but also by exploring the reason behind visit;
- Lack of government support and negligence of civil society, fails to impart knowledge and generate awareness among the common mass.

- **CONCLUSION**

The increasing awareness and importance of education and learning is fostering the tourism industry towards growth. New education methods, teaching and research techniques has motivated the growth of educational tourism across the world. The main aspect which

encourages the growth of educational tourism is owing to advantages of education with travelling. It has raised the interest of students and scholars in gaining practical knowledge, apart from classroom teachings.