

BANS 183: TOURISM ANTHROPOLOGY

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

(TMA)

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Total Marks: 100

There are two Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all questions in all the Sections.

Assignment – I

1. Answer the following in about 500 words each.

2X20= 40

a. Define anthropology. Discuss the history of tourism.

Anthropology is the scientific study of humanity—past and present—encompassing human behaviour, biology, linguistic practices, cultural systems, and social structures. As a holistic discipline, it seeks to understand human existence across temporal and spatial dimensions by integrating insights from multiple subfields—biological (or physical) anthropology, social and cultural anthropology, archaeological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology—that together offer a comprehensive view of how humans evolve, adapt, interact, and express meaning

- **Biological anthropology** explores human evolution, variation, and the influence of genetics and environment on the human body.
- **Social and cultural anthropology** focuses on how societies organize themselves, including belief systems, norms, values, and institutions.
- **Archaeological anthropology** reconstructs past human life by studying artifacts and material remains—a practice that supplements written history, especially where records are absent
- **Linguistic anthropology** examines how language functions as a cultural vehicle and shapes social life and identity

Tourism, though often viewed today as leisure travel, has a long anthropological history both as a human activity and as an area of academic study.

Ancient and Early Tourism

Human travel for leisure, curiosity, or spiritual purposes stretches back millennia. Societies such as those in ancient Mesopotamia built roads and rest stops for travellers. Roman elites frequented spas and coastal resorts like Baiae, and Chinese nobles travelled to sacred sites—demonstrating early forms of tourism

The Rise of Academic Focus: 1970s–1980s

It wasn't until the 1970s that tourism began to be treated as a serious subject within anthropology. Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976)

introduced the idea that tourism functions as a modern ritual where tourists seek authenticity, often finding staged versions instead. This pioneering work shifted anthropology's gaze toward tourism as a cultural phenomenon rather than a purely economic one.

Valene Smith's edited volume *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977) consolidated the study of tourism by examining interactions between tourists (guests) and local communities (hosts), framing these encounters as complex, negotiated cultural exchanges.

Expanding Perspectives: 1980s–1990s

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the scope of tourism anthropology broadened. Nelson Graburn described tourism as modern pilgrimage—ritualistic journeys that shape identity (i.e., "tourism as ritual"). Meanwhile, John Urry introduced the notion of the "tourist gaze," emphasizing how cultural expectations shape the way visitors perceive places and experiences.

Critical and Contemporary Approaches: 1990s–Present

From the 1990s onward, tourism anthropology evolved into a more critical field, exploring how tourism perpetuates inequalities, commodifies culture, and reflects post-colonial dynamics. In recent decades, the discipline has taken an interdisciplinary turn—examining ecotourism, heritage tourism, sustainable practices, and the environmental and social implications of tourism development.

Ethnographic and Holistic Contributions

Anthropology's core methodological strength—ethnographic fieldwork—has been instrumental in tourism research. Through immersive observation and engagement with both tourists and host communities, anthropologists reveal power dynamics, negotiations of authenticity, the commodification of culture, and how meanings are constructed and contested in tourism settings.

b. What is authenticity in tourism? Explain with suitable examples?

Authenticity in tourism refers to the **perceived genuineness** of an experience—how truthful, credible, and representative a place's culture, environment, or history feels to the visitor. This concept is complex and spans multiple dimensions, each adding nuance to the notion of "realness" in tourism.

1. Types of Authenticity

a. Objective (or Material) Authenticity

This refers to the authenticity inherent in tangible objects or sites—those that are original, preserved, and historically intact. Think of UNESCO World Heritage landmarks or heritage monuments visited in their original form.

- **Example:** The Maasai Mara in Kenya, where visitors encounter genuine Maasai cultural practices and untouched landscapes, offering a deep sense of authenticity.

- **Example:** Historic sites like the Statue of Liberty, Stonehenge, or national monuments in the U.S., which attract cultural tourists seeking real, unaltered artifacts.

b. Constructive (Existential) Authenticity

Here, authenticity is subjective and resides in the visitor's emotional or personal connection what scholars call "existential authenticity." It's about the internal, transformative experience a tourist undergoes when connecting with a place or culture.

- **Example:** Tourists seeking a spiritual journey on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) or Gotland may feel authentic engagement even if the culture has been partially adapted for tourism.

c. Staged vs. Backstage Authenticity

This concept explores whether cultural presentations are performed for tourists (staged) or naturally occurring (backstage).

- **Staged Example:** Papua New Guinea's Mask Festival, presented as a cultural fair, is organized to attract tourists, making it partially staged.
- **Backstage Example:** The Nachi Fire Festival in Japan is an actual Shinto purification ritual, not altered for tourists—it retains cultural authenticity.

2. Illustrative Examples of Authentic Tourism

Cultural Immersions

- **Homestays in local communities:** Staying with a family in rural or indigenous areas lets visitors immerse themselves in daily life, customs, cuisine, and craftsmanship.
- **Traditional culinary experiences:** Participating in cooking classes or food tours led by local chefs gives an authentic glimpse into local tastes and cultural traditions.
- **Festivals and rituals:** Participating in local festivals or ceremonies especially those not adapted for tourism offers a window into living traditions.

Environmental and Heritage Tourism

- **Ecotourism and natural sanctuaries:** Wildlife safaris and nature walks in untouched environments help foster environmental authenticity.
- **Historical and archaeological sites:** Visiting UNESCO heritage sites or ruins leads to an authentic understanding of a place's history.

Community-Led and Indigenous Experiences

- **Penglipuran Village (Bali):** This Balinese village manages tourism collectively, shares community culture via homestays, and preserves authenticity through rotational hosting and traditional behaviour briefings.

- **Indigenous tourism certifications (e.g., Sámi culture):** Organizations like the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada promote authenticity via labels identifying Indigenous-led tourism, ensuring cultural integrity and community benefit.

3. Why Authenticity Matters

- **Meaningful experiences:** Visitors gain deeper, more memorable experiences through authentic engagement that transcends superficial sightseeing.
- **Cultural preservation:** Genuine cultural representation especially when led by local or Indigenous actors helps preserve traditions rather than commodify them.
- **Economic equity:** Authentic tourism, especially community-based models, ensures that local communities benefit economically and retain cultural agency.

Understanding authenticity in tourism isn't just academic, it helps guide sustainable tourism practices, deepen visitor engagement, and respect cultural heritage. If you'd like examples within India or specific cultural contexts, I'd be happy to tailor further!

Assignment – II

Answer the following in about 250 words each. (Write Short Notes) 3X10=30

a. Define and discuss eco-tourism with suitable examples.

Definition of Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism, or ecotourism, is a form of sustainable travel devoted to experiencing natural environments responsibly while conserving resources and enhancing the well-being of local communities. It emphasizes minimizing environmental impact, offering meaningful and educational experiences for both visitors and hosts, and actively supporting conservation of natural and cultural heritage through community engagement

Key Principles of Eco-Tourism

1. **Environmental Conservation:** Prioritizing preservation of ecosystems, wildlife, and habitats.
2. **Minimal Impact:** Activities are designed to avoid ecological degradation, reduce carbon footprint, and promote sustainable practices.
3. **Local Community Involvement:** Empowering residents in tourism planning and ensuring they benefit socially and economically.

4. Education and Awareness: Providing visitors insight into ecological and cultural significance to foster advocacy for conservation.

Examples Around the World

- Galapagos Islands, Ecuador: A UNESCO World Heritage site where strict visitor guidelines, licensed naturalists, limited group sizes, and tourism revenues fund conservation and education initiatives
- Bhutan: Implements a “high-value, low-impact” tourism policy with daily fees that finance conservation and social programs within a sustainable framework
- Costa Rica: Often hailed as a global model for eco-tourism, with over 50% forest cover, a comprehensive system of national parks and reserves, and thriving biodiversity—all leveraged for sustainable tourism and local livelihoods
- Madidi National Park, Bolivia (Chalalán Ecolodge): Managed by the indigenous San José de Uchupiamonas community, this ecolodge uses solar energy, promotes environmental interpretation with indigenous guides, and reinvests profits into community health and education
- Community Baboon Sanctuary, Belize: Locals conserve forest corridors vital to the endemic Yucatán black howler monkey, while benefiting from tourism and environmental education initiatives
- Küre Mountains National Park, Turkey: A WWF-supported ecotourism project engaging local communities in sustainable development, creating ecotourism infrastructure and jobs, while preserving rich biodiversity
- Cinque Terre National Park, Italy: Combines cultural heritage and environmental protection by promoting ecologically conscious hiking and local traditions in a UNESCO-listed coastal area; residents and park authorities collaborate to maintain cultural and ecological integrity

Emerging Models and Community Recovery

- Mesetas, Colombia: Once mired in violence, this community now leverages ecotourism for biodiversity conservation and socio-economic recovery. Initiatives like reforestation, wildlife conservation, and birdwatching (with a guide detailing 800 bird species) are transforming the region—though rising regional tensions pose challenges
- Mission Blue "Hope Spots": Marine areas like the Florida Keys, Laamu Atoll, and Misool Marine Reserve offer marine ecotourism that supports conservation efforts by protecting critical ocean habitats through sustainable tourism practices

Why Eco-Tourism Matters

- **Conservation Funding:** Tourism revenue supports environmental protection, restoration, and education—as seen in Galapagos, Costa Rica, and Bolivia.
- **Community Empowerment:** Ecotourism ventures like Chalalán prove that indigenous and local communities can lead sustainable tourism and benefit directly from it.
- **Awareness and Stewardship:** Tourist learning experiences—focusing on ecology, culture, and conservation—foster long-term environmental advocacy.
- **Resilience and Development:** Eco-tourism can help communities recover from conflict, preserve cultural landscapes, and establish equitable economic models—as witnessed in Mesetas.

Conclusion

Eco-tourism unites responsible travel and conservation by promoting low-impact exploration, ecologically-sensitive experiences, and community-led stewardship. Whether exploring Bolivia's rainforests, trekking in Italian hills, or witnessing Colombia's environmental revival, eco-tourism demonstrates that travel can nurture both nature and humanity. Let me know if you'd like examples from a particular region or further insights into ecotourism theory or practice!

b. Discuss museums and arts as cultural heritage with suitable examples from India.

Museums and Arts as Cultural Heritage in India

Museums and arts serve as essential custodians of India's cultural heritage, preserving and showcasing its vast artistic, historical, and traditional legacy. These institutions not only maintain tangible artifacts—from ancient sculptures to historic textiles—but also foster intellectual engagement, cultural awareness, and community identity. Let's explore some prominent examples across India that exemplify this role.

1. National Museum, New Delhi

One of India's largest museums, established in 1949, it houses an extensive collection of Indian artifacts across numerous periods—Indus Valley relics, manuscripts, Mughal paintings, and sculptures. It functions as a comprehensive repository of India's historical narrative.

2. Indian Museum, Kolkata

Established in 1814, it is Asia's oldest and one of its most significant museums. With diverse galleries encompassing archaeology, art, anthropology, geology, and zoology, visitors can view Egyptian mummies, fossils, Mughal paintings, and more—a testament to both Indian and global heritage.

3. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai

Founded in 1922 and formerly the Prince of Wales Museum, this iconic Indo-Saracenic structure houses around 50,000 artifacts, including ancient sculptures, coins, decorative arts, and relics from the Indus Valley and medieval periods.

4. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad

Established in 1951 from the private collection of Salar Jung III, this museum is among the largest globally, with over a million items. Its eclectic collections span Indian, European, Middle Eastern, and Far Eastern art, such as the famed sculpture *Veiled Rebecca*.

5. Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad

Housed in a historic haveli, this museum beautifully marries architectural heritage and textile conservation. Its exhibits include Mughal court textiles, regional embroideries, and folk fabrics, preserving India's centuries-old fiber artistry in a thoughtful environment.

6. Tribal Museum, Bhopal

Opened in 2013, this museum celebrates the cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh's tribal communities through immersive exhibits on tribal life, beliefs, and artistry—providing both representation and preservation for indigenous cultures.

7. DakshinaChitra, Chennai

This “living-history” heritage village museum, established in 1996 by the Madras Craft Foundation, features 18 authentic South Indian homes relocated and reconstructed onsite. With folk performances, craft demonstrations, workshops, and an extensive archive, it offers a vibrant engagement with southern Indian traditions.

8. Goa Chitra Museum, Goa

Founded by artist-curator Victor Hugo Gomes in 2009, this ethnographic museum showcases over 4,000 artifacts from Goa's traditional agrarian past—tools, vessels, and craft implements. It presents culture as a living narrative, not a static display.

9. Partition Museum, Amritsar

Located in the historic Town Hall, it memorializes the human stories of the 1947 Partition through personal artifacts and narratives, emphasizing the resilience of communities and the importance of preserving recent but pivotal history.

Why These Museums Matter

- **Preservation of Material Culture:** Institutions like the National Museum, Salar Jung, and Calico Museum safeguard global and regional artifacts—from ancient seals to centuries-old textiles.
- **Living Heritage:** Museums such as DakshinaChitra and Goa Chitra support active cultural practices, demonstrating how traditions persist through hands-on interaction.

- **Inclusivity in Cultural Narratives:** The Tribal Museum and Partition Museum give voice to historically marginalized communities and preserve lesser-known yet vital aspects of India's heritage.

In Contemporary Context

Recent efforts underscore the evolving role of museums and art galleries as active cultural spaces:

- The Govt Museum & Art Gallery in Chandigarh, housed in a Le Corbusier-designed building, now attracts over 100,000 visitors annually and enriches its collection with Gandharan sculptures and miniature paintings.
- The Veer Bharat Museum in Ujjain promises immersive 3D exhibits—such as Shivaji's war room and Chandragupta's court—restored using traditional materials, and merging historical artefacts with modern storytelling technologies.
- The IGNCA's conservation of engineering archives and rail blueprints from the National Rail Museum highlights conservation of industrial heritage in documentary form.

Conclusion

In India, museums and art institutions do more than archive the past—they foster cultural continuity, support diverse voices, and invite immersive engagement. From grand national museums to vibrant heritage villages and thoughtful memorials, these institutions reflect the richness of India's civilization and uphold its heritage as a vital, living legacy.

c) What Is Commodification in Tourism?

Commodification refers to the process of packaging cultural practices, spaces, artifacts, rituals, or natural experiences into commodities designed for tourist consumption. While it can boost economic benefits, commodification often simplifies, alters, or even disrespects the original meaning, turning living heritage and authentic experience into performances or consumables

Forms of Commodification:

- **Material Culture Commodification:** Crafts, clothing, or food items become merchandise—often mass-produced and stripped of cultural significance
- **Experiential Commodification:** Rituals or spiritual ceremonies are staged as tourist experiences—shortened, repackaged, and explained in simplified ways
- **Spatial Commodification:** Traditional or sacred spaces are converted into tourist zones—crowded with souvenirs, galleries, and entry fees, often diluting their original context

Notable Examples from India

1. Nizamuddin Dargah, Delhi

This Sufi shrine has evolved from a purely spiritual site into a tourist attraction. Tourists are often accommodated through scheduled qawwali performances (Sufi devotional music), sometimes tailored to visitor timings and explained in English—shifting communal devotion into performance

Surrounding the shrine, rows of souvenir vendors sell ritual items—garlands, incense sticks, attar, and “maanaat ke daage” (wish threads)—transforming sacred offerings into commercial transactions. The shrine also mediates visitor behavior through separate donation boxes for tourists and devotees—a subtle spatial and relational commodification

2. Heritage Sites & National Parks

- Taj Mahal and Agra's Marble Market: While the Taj Mahal remains a UNESCO heritage marvel, its replication through marble souvenirs and the rise of luxury hotels in Agra showcase commodification of both material culture and locale
- National Parks (Ranthambore, Jim Corbett, Kaziranga): Tiger safaris transform wildlife into spectacles—tourist-focused flagships whose visibility drives management priorities, sometimes at the expense of broader ecosystem health. Local tribal knowledge may be repackaged as “authentic narratives” for tourists, while some indigenous groups face displacement to curate pristine wilderness environments

3. Commodification of Yoga in Rishikesh

Originally a spiritual and devotional practice, yoga in Rishikesh has become a highly marketed tourism product. Ashrams and classes geared toward international tourists often frame yoga as spiritual but not religious, commodifying it in detached, market-minded forms. Critics—including Prime Minister Modi—warn that commercialization risks diluting yoga's sacred roots.

Other Illustrative Examples

- Slum Tourism in Mumbai: Tours through slum neighborhoods draw criticism for “selling poverty”—turning living spaces of deprivation into voyeuristic tourist experiences, though some operators attempt to channel proceeds into local households.
- Jarawa “Human Safaris” in Andamans: Despite legal restrictions, tourists are sometimes taken close to indigenous Jarawa settlements for photo opportunities, commodifying human life while violating rights and protocols .

- Disney Parks as Commodified Cultural Spaces: Though not in India, they serve as global benchmarks—designing cultural simulacra around entertainment, with minimal educational depth and strong profit motives

Answer the following questions in about 150 words each.

6X5=30

a. Bhimbetka

Bhimbetka, located approximately 45 km south of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, is a prehistoric archaeological marvel nestled in the foothills of the Vindhya Range. Discovered in 1957 by archaeologist V. S. Wakankar, the complex features over **700 natural rock shelters**, with around **400** of them showcasing ancient paintings that span multiple prehistoric eras.

These rock artworks, some dating back more than **30,000 years** to the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, depict vivid hunting scenes, dancing figures, animal imagery, ritualistic activities, and early farming—offering a rich tapestry of early human life and cultural evolution. The paintings are distinguished by bold use of natural pigments—red, white, green, yellow, and black—applied directly onto the sandstone surfaces, which helped them endure through the ages.

One of the most striking shelters is the **Auditorium Cave**, with towering quartzite formations and a "cathedral-like" ambience. Its entrance is marked by the prominent boulder known as "Chief's Rock".

Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2003, Bhimbetka offers an invaluable, open-air chronicle of human settlement—from hunter-gatherers to agrarian societies—and continues to be a vital destination for archaeology and heritage tourism.

b. local environment versus tourist sites

Local environments are delicate ecosystems and community habitats that sustain biodiversity, provide essential ecosystem services, and support the livelihoods and culture of local populations. They are inherently balanced and integrated with their surroundings.

In contrast, tourist sites are developed or modified spaces designed to attract visitors. While tourism can drive economic growth and infrastructure development, it often puts pressure on local ecosystems. Construction of hotels, roads, and recreational facilities can lead to deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and soil erosion. Increased visitor numbers can increase waste generation, strain water and energy resources, and generate pollution—air, water, and noise—that can degrade the environment and harm wildlife.

For instance, resorts near protected forests with bright lights are found to contribute to declining insect populations, disrupting food chains. In regions like Kodagu, overflowing waste, water contamination, biodiversity loss, and soil degradation reflect how tourism without adequate planning threatens local ecological integrity.

Balancing tourism and conservation demands thoughtful planning: managing visitor numbers, implementing robust waste systems, encouraging sustainable resource use, and engaging local communities in tourism governance. Only through such integrated approaches can

tourist development coexist with the preservation of local environments and the well-being of their residents.

c. sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is an approach to travel that aims to minimize negative environmental and cultural impacts while maximizing benefits for local communities and economies. It rests on three intertwined pillars: environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability. This means managing tourism so that destinations flourish without depleting natural, cultural, or human resources.

A key advantage is community empowerment—sustainable initiatives generate local employment in hospitality, guiding, craftsmanship, and services. By supporting local products, businesses, and infrastructure, tourism revenues stay within the destination and foster economic resilience. It also fosters cultural preservation, encouraging respect for traditions, heritage, and authentic encounters rather than commodified performances.

Environmental stewardship is central—sustainable tourism promotes conservation through eco-friendly practices such as renewable energy usage, waste reduction, habitat protection, and ethical wildlife experiences. Tourists and operators alike become advocates for sustainable practices, helping to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

Moreover, sustainable tourism enhances visitor experience, offering more meaningful, immersive travel while educating both travelers and host communities about environmental and cultural issues. This fosters empathy and long-term stewardship behavior.

In this model, tourism becomes a balanced force that supports livelihoods, preserves identities, and protects nature—ensuring that destinations remain vibrant for generations to come.

d. Host and guest in tourism

The host–guest relationship forms the foundational interaction in tourism, representing the encounter between local communities (hosts) and visitors (guests). Hosts—whether individuals, service providers, or entire communities—are responsible for welcoming and facilitating visitor experiences, providing services, information, and cultural context. Guests, in turn, arrive with expectations—seeking comfort, authenticity, and meaningful engagement.

This relationship has evolved from traditional hospitality, grounded in reciprocity and social obligation, to a commercial model where tourism becomes a transaction. Guests are treated as consumers, and hosts as providers of services and experiences. This shift has shaped modern tourism interactions.

Anthropologists such as Valene Smith emphasized this paradigm in the 1970s, highlighting how tourism interactions often involve cultural commodification, power asymmetries, and negotiated meanings. The concept also reflects how tourism can both preserve and distort local traditions, depending on how hosts adapt or repurpose cultural elements for tourist consumption.

The quality and frequency of host–guest interactions influence tourists' overall experience. Positive interactions can enhance perceptions, emotional bonds, and place attachment, while negative dynamics may lead to cultural misunderstandings or resentment. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering respectful, equitable, and enriching tourism, where both hosts and guests benefit.

e. Art as cultural heritage

Art, as cultural heritage, embodies the creative expressions and identity of a society across time. It preserves traditions, beliefs, and spiritual values through tangible and intangible forms—ranging from folk paintings and temple carvings to dance-drama and festival rituals.

In India, folk traditions like *Madhubani*—with its vibrant natural dyes and intricate mythology-based motifs—and *Pattachitra*—elaborate cloth paintings of mythic scenes—celebrate regional spirituality and continue ancient aesthetic practices. Tribal *Warli* art captures community life and nature using simple geometric icons that reflect a deep connection with the environment.

Iconic ancient masterpieces such as the Ajanta cave murals portray vivid narratives rooted in early Indian society, spirituality, and daily life, revealing both artistic mastery and historical insights. Similarly, the stone reliefs of the Konark Sun Temple showcase storytelling through monument-scale sculpture—capturing mythological tales, human activity, and sacred themes in high artistic detail.

These art forms—whether crafted on walls, cloth, or temple stone—are not just aesthetic creations; they serve as living repositories of culture. By conserving and celebrating them, societies maintain a dynamic link to their past, ensuring that heritage continues to inspire, educate, and enrich present and future generations.
