

Bridging Gap Between Tourism and Hospitality Education & Tourism Hospitality Industry in India: Special Reference to Odisha

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Abstract

Tourism, being fastest economic driving forces of India has a great role in the nation making. When most of the population of the nation facing a great difficulties by providing occupation and balanced life to them it plays a crucial role not only by providing employment but also creates maximum job opportunity for the unskilled mass. The existing tourist destinations and new market niches encourage an upward trend of tourism. The economic impacts produced by tourism are one of the major concerns of the authorities without compromising our environment.

Academic–industry collaboration in a developing country like India, prime necessity of the Government as the life of its citizens has to decide the future of the nation. In most of the discipline, institutions–industry research collaboration in support the areas the deal with. Indian hospitality and tourism industry is also contributes but not the way of expectation. The perceptions of four key Indian stakeholder groups – Industry, Academic, Government and Non-governmental organizations – were identified via in-depth semi-structured one-to-one interviews. The research gap between Indian academic institutions and the hospitality and tourism industry is wider than suggested in the literature on academic –industry collaboration. There was consensus of the absence of a research culture in faculties of tourism and hotels where social science research was perceived as having little/no value except as a part of academic degrees or for promotional purposes, rather than for knowledge creation or to inform industry's practices. Indian faculties of tourism and hotels had not undergone the better academic revolution. There was no evidence of government interventions to drive academic–industry research collaboration for the tourism and hospitality industry, despite its undoubted importance to the Indian economy.

The study is an attempt to regenerate the importance in the minds of the policy-makers, particularly government, that unless serious attention is paid to hospitality and tourism education and research, the impact on economic and social development will be negative.

Keywords: Academic–industry gap, research-gap, collaboration, tourism-research,

Introduction

Being the oldest industries in the world, it goes back as 3,000 B.C., some of the elite in Mesopotamia, who had discretionary income, travelled to foreign destinations for leisure. In ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome,. Wealthy Romans, for example, travelled to the sites of older civilizations such as the Egyptian and Greek civilizations as early as 200 B.C. In the middle Ages, religious tourism started to grow.

However, it was not until the nineteenth century that cultural and recreational tourism became within reach of a larger number of people, particularly in Europe.

Thomas Cook, who was a Baptist Priest, who turned into a pioneer in international tourism, began a series of Bible camps and other religious excursions in the 1840s. In the 1860s, he shifted his attention to broad-based excursions.. This was followed by an around-the-world excursion in 1872. These “Cook excursions the beginning of international tourism...although such trips were... still the prerogative of the wealthy”. At present, international tourism occupies fourth place among the world’s leading industries, the other three being energy, chemicals, and automotive

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 2,570.1bn (3.2% of total GDP) in 2017, and is forecast to rise by 4.0% in 2018, and to rise by 3.8% pa, from 2018-2028, to USD 3,890.0bn (3.6% of total GDP) in 2028. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 8,272.3bn (10.4% of GDP) in 2017, and is forecast to rise by 4.0% in 2018, and to rise by 3.8% pa to USD12,450.1bn (11.7% of GDP) in 2028. In 2017 Travel & Tourism directly supported 118,454,000 jobs (3.8% of total employment). This is expected to rise by 2.4% in 2018 and rise by 2.2% pa to 150,139,000 jobs (4.2% of total employment) in 2028. In 2017, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the Visitor exports generated USD 1,494.2bn (6.5% of total exports) in 2017. This is forecast to grow by 3.9% in 2018, and grow by 4.1% pa, from 2018-2028, to USD 2,311.4bn in 2028 (6.9% of total). Travel & Tourism investment in 2017 was USD882.4bn, or 4.5% of total investment. It should rise by 4.8% in 2018, and rise by 4.3% pa over the next ten years to USD 1,408.3bn in 2028 (5.1% of total). 2028 GDP:

DIRECT CONTRIBUTION GDP: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION industry, was 9.9% of total employment (313,221,000 jobs). This is expected to rise by 3.0% in 2018 to 322,666,000 jobs and rise by 2.5% pa to 413,556,000 jobs in 2028 (11.6% of total)

As the number of tourists and the revenues from international tourism grew, the number of favoured destination countries had also increased, with the developing and emergent economies attracting increasingly larger numbers of tourists. As Honey and Golpin pointed out, “in 1950, just 15 destinations – primarily European – accounted for 98 percent of all international arrivals. Over the years, tourism has moved from the sidelines to the center-stage of development policy. Despite this trend, international tourism, as an industry, is far below its potential in many developing countries in terms of the dollars earned. Hence, there is room for growth with more investment in the infrastructure and tourism-related businesses and more ambitious tourism management and marketing strategies. Referring to the importance of the strategic leadership role of destination country governments, Honey and Golpin noted that “tourism cannot grow into a thriving sector...without constructive leadership from the national government. Too many countries fail to reap the rewards of tourism because of poor planning, poorly thought out strategies, and fragmented policies. Strategists believe that sustainable tourism is the responsibility of all stakeholders and if so, there is a need to understand stakeholder roles and their role in sustainable tourism practices. Stakeholders are defined as any individual or group who can affect the firm’s performance or who is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. In the tourism context outlines those stakeholders consist of residents, management, government, activist groups/NGOs, employees, tourists and industry associations. Stakeholder management can be a useful way of organising, as it can respond to the concerns of stakeholders because those stakeholders can ultimately affect the plans and activities of the firm. Few destination studies have identified motives and barriers to sustainability for the growth of Tourism. These include economic considerations, political

power and salience, lack of or inadequate coordination among stakeholders, lack of or inadequate accountability of all stakeholders, lack of will and integration among government bodies along with the private participation.

If there is lack of or inadequate co-ordination among stakeholders, for example, for our purpose in this paper between tourism managers or employers and academics, attaining sustainable tourism development becomes a nightmare. According to Prominent Scholars, tourism and hospitality management are applied fields that call for close links between the tourism industry and academics, curriculum development experts and students, but strategies for industry engagement in many education institutions are often haphazard and lack focus, commitment and resources. Executives working in the hospitality industry have not developed programmes that help tourism student's move ahead in an orderly manner. Whenever job opportunities in other sectors are scarce, many graduates run to the tourism industry and seek refuge there. For them, the industry becomes a first step or temporary occupation before which they have to prove their ability and skill. Many tourism employers do not recognize the importance of education; they have a complete lack of appreciation of tourism education and underlying theories, framework and concepts that should guide tourism as a major social and economic global phenomenon. Few of them also believe that the students, who are able to demonstrate the generic skills required for a vocational or short term courses in tourism. Employers might have to equip the newly-employed staff with specialist skills that they might not have acquired during their previous training. However, there are some employers, who are only interested in having cheap labour and therefore are not interested in generic skills that the graduates might have acquired. Such steps are not in line with the aspirations of the training institutions, whose aim is to give students structured training. In view of the differing interests, training institutions and the tourism industry do not have a strategic plan in this direction.

The fact is - the need to forge a closer link between the tourism industry and the training institutions. Through such a partnership, the industry and the educational institutions would develop and meet the training requirements of course participants. The main objective of this study is to explore the extent, to which tertiary institutions offering courses in tourism and hospitality management in the county collaborate with institutions such as hotels, restaurants, tour operations as well as ticketing and travel agencies that operate within the tourism sector. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Explore the level of collaboration between tourism establishments and hospitality management training institutions/departments in the state of Odisha
2. Identify benefits that are derived through such collaboration
3. Assess constraints or challenges faced through such collaboration
4. Use the results of the study to make recommendations to help boost tourism in the India in particular and in Odisha in general. \

The information gathered, will be useful to all stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions offering tourism, hotels, restaurants, tour operating agencies, ticketing and travel agencies, municipal and district assemblies, etc. that deal with tourism. Again, the outcome of the study will provide people with the needed knowledge and understanding of the collaborative efforts that need to be scaled up to boost the tourism industry in the country..

Understanding the difficulties:

Understanding or Collaboration between academics and industry is critical in developing a knowledge-

based economy and creating sustainable competitive. Several studies have confirmed that advanced and radical innovation associated with disciplines, such as computer science and engineering, has drawn on new scientific knowledge generated in universities educational institutions and research organizations. Thus, universities or research institutes and public research centres are key stakeholders in knowledge creation for organizational innovation. However, hospitality and tourism are presently well recognized as knowledge-based industries and thus the extent to which academics–industry collaboration can benefit the hospitality and tourism industry is more expected and maximum employment can be generated.

Research on the academic–industry research collaboration in hospitality and tourism context evidence, unsurprisingly, a focus on developing countries like India will needs more strategic planning as because its maximum youth will be employed. However, hospitality and tourism Academics– industry collaboration in developing countries is very important and a topic to which more attention should be paid by researchers, so that economic and social benefit may flow in the form of knowledge dissemination, better education, funding opportunities and more innovative society. Urgent need of research on the area of sustainable tourism development, research collaboration between university and industry in India with regard to the tourism and hospitality industry which has not been investigated is more essential.. To address this gap, it has been identifies the factors contributing to the academics–industry research gap and highlights the barriers that researchers face in the hospitality and tourism discipline and impact on research quality; and provides practical recommendations for institutions offering educations, industry and government policy-makers. It is among the first attempts to focus on university–industry research collaboration on hospitality and tourism in developing countries like India.

1. **Lack of interest** in, and commitment to, collaboration between academics and industry – universities are non-profit institutions with a mission to create knowledge, educate future generations and conduct basic research. It is not their job to research for industry. In contrast, the main aim of industry is to profit through developing marketable products/services for customers.
2. **confidentiality** – universities are not good places to keep secrets as academic staff are valued and promoted by publishing and industry does not generally want to share operational detail with university researchers.
3. **Intellectual property rights** (IPR) – universities often require ownership of IPR to allow their staff and students to continue work in the area, meet joint sponsorship obligations, ensure commercialization and license new technologies on a non-exclusive basis. However, industry wants ownership so they might manufacture, use and sell products based on the research.
4. **Lack of mutual trust** – Institutions believes that industry does not value academic research; industry argues that universities researchers lack professional experience and do not understand the needs and nature of industry.
5. **The research aim** At – institutes see that research mainly develops/extends new knowledge in an absolute way – acquisition of knowledge is of value for its own sake, whereas for industry, knowledge is only of value if it can be commercialized.
6. **The research type** – research in universities is an open activity where every-one can access the information; in industry it is a closed activity and new developments require protection (patents, etc.).
7. **The research activity** – university research is a part-time activity, whereas industrial research is a full-time activity.

8. **Nature of research** – university research is predominantly pure, undirected and fundamental, whereas industrial research is strategic, directed, applied and ad hoc.

Despite evidence to suggest that industry and university with their different cultures and missions are not natural partners some studies have identified several motivational factors that encourage research collaboration and bridge the gap between the two partners. For universities, it is gaining access to external sources of funding and expertise. There is an urgent need for financial support, particularly in India where the government is the only source of funding. Collaboration could help universities make use of sophisticated and expensive industrial facilities and broaden the experience of their staff and students to support industrial links that could develop into sponsored research ventures and consulting opportunities which would help universities develop new knowledge and educate the next generation.

For industry, research collaboration with universities could help access expertise not available in corporate laboratories, use universities to expand the network of external contacts for industrial laboratories, utilise university talent and facilities, maximizing the benefit in the renewal and expansion of a company's technology and leverage internal research capabilities. Liaison with universities provides industry with a window into innovative scientific research. There are also benefits from academic– industry collaboration for government, especially in developing countries. Research collaboration creates job opportunities through joint ventures. It also facilitates the shift to a knowledge-based economy, innovation in wider society and national growth. The interaction between government, industry and university in collaboratively developing roadmaps and foresight strategies can lead to more sustainable economic growth and competitive advantage.

The hospitality and tourism research context

The key issues relate to academic–industry collaboration around hospitality and tourism. First and foremost is hospitality and tourism are not perceived as knowledge-based industries and thus there are few knowledge-related problems likely to drive hospitality and tourism organizations to seek university collaboration. In India, tourism and hospitality research are feature amongst priorities areas of research, due to its contribution to the Indian economy.

Tourism and hospitality research is a relatively not a new discipline in India. The dominance of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism and hospitality industry – most tourism and hospitality firms worldwide are small- or medium-sized enterprises and their numbers are growing due to governmental emphasis globally on SMEs as a result of their potential contribution to socio-economic growth and job creation which is critical to developing countries. However, SMEs are less likely to invest in Research and Development (R&D) due to their lack of infrastructure and financial resources and so they are less likely to seek research collaborations with institutions / universities than larger firms. However, there are few studies that argue that small firms are more eager for external cooperation than large firms, as they lack of internal resources, especially financial, R&D capacity or facility. Unlike other industries, there is no barrier to entry as hospitality and tourism business can happen anywhere and every-where without the need for particular qualifications. Most of the current industry leaders have no tourism qualification and have no idea about or interest in tourism degrees or what happens inside universities. Lots of them have come up through ranks but do they really understand the academic contents and value the research collaboration with universities.

Thus, there is general assumption that hospitality and tourism business can be run without the need of expertise or collaboration with universities. Tourism and hospitality is a 24/7 industry which implies that

industry has little/no time for research. When industry leaders seek collaboration with Institutions offering relevant education,, they demand things instantly and they expect education to change and response very quickly which often does not happen due to the procedures and routines in Institutions.

Tourism and hospitality education first started in India in 1980 when two disciplines (one for tourism studies and the other for hotel studies. These two disciplines were spread over the years to cater the need of the Industry. Over the years nearly 600 institutes offers the education in tourism and hospitality education. Nearly 210 institutions offer Tourism Educations in India. In Odisha 9 institutes offers Tourism Education. . Challenges faced by educational institutions and the tourism sector to cooperate and create needed manpower from the available resource instituted to avoid hiring expensive manpower. The stakeholders in the tertiary institutions and those in the tourism industry were faced with a number of challenges, including environmental problems in the attractions, criminal activities, inadequate number of personnel speaking foreign languages such as French, poor infrastructure in the attractions, lack of highly trained personnel to man the attractions, etc.

The industry is faced with a number of challenges one among the fact that there was lack of institutional collaboration. Some interviewees felt that the training provided in the tertiary institutions was too theoretical. Experienced academicians mentioned, with a Bachelor's Degree in tourism at the University had proceeded towards higher study and research. In order to effectively deliver in the tourism industry, one needs to have skills in ticket reservation, guard operations, hospitality law, etc., but such important courses were not taught during our training. The result is that when one went out to look for a job and produced a transcript that did not indicate that one had done those courses, it is often rejected. A female supervisor talked about difficulties faced by students when they have to carry out research: Sometimes students come to collect data for research purposes, but we are unable to provide them with the requisite materials they need. Existing library is not well-stocked with books. Availability of few books, but students have to buy them, and most of them are not able purchased them as of high cost.

Collaboration between the tourism industry and Hospitality institutions

Some of the respondents indicated that there was some degree of collaboration between the tourism industries and the educational institutions, but the majority of them agreed that quite apart from the attachments that students did, and the honouring of invitations by some personnel from the tourism industry to the tertiary institutions to give talks on what pertained in the industry, there was very little or no collaboration.

It is worth mentioned that the graduates from most of the institution, absorbed or employed by the tourism industry as collaboration

It was also felt there was a degree of collaboration, largely depends on the profit and working capacity of the firms. By constituting an advisory committee made up of professionals from both the tourism industry and the educational institutions to draw a plan geared towards making the courses more practical, good knowledge of operations exposure to industry or Industry oriented so that more train people to be absorbed by the tourism industry.

Fact and Reality

The study set out to ascertain the level of collaboration between tertiary institutions that teach tourism and hospitality management and the tourism industry, what benefits each of them derive from the collaboration and what challenges they are confronted with. The results of the study revealed that there

was some amount of collaboration. As part of the training of the tourism students, they go to attractions on attachment to gain some practical experience. On graduating from the institutions, the graduates are employed by the tourism industry. As indicated above, this is one of the benefits derived from tourism. However, the challenge here is that many of the graduates, who are employed, and the students, who go on attachment, are not able to fit well into the industry because they are not able to apply what they learn in the institutions on the job. There is a lack of proper academic understanding and focused theoretical framework of most tourism studies. This engenders a lack of provision of clear directions in the teaching of tourism courses. Another challenge that the results of the study revealed was that many employers in the tourism industry do not see the importance of education. Some employers engage the services of their own kith and kin. They do this because they would not want to employ professionals, whom they would have to give higher remuneration. One strategy that needs to be adopted to ensure, as the country, survives the competitive market place is that highly-skilled persons are trained to serve as managers in the industry. The continuous appointment of people, who are unqualified, would collapse the industry. The challenge can only be faced squarely, if educational institutions offering courses in tourism and hospitality management collaborate more closely with the tourism industry. In the last 70 years of tourism development in country, it was the partnership of the public and private sectors and not the competition among them that contributed to the rapid growth of the industry. The tourism industry should be seen to be contributing to the development of curriculum for tourism students. Seminars and workshops aimed at exchanging ideas should be organized on regular basis. They would gain a lot of both theoretical and practical knowledge. In this way, the graduates from the institutions would not be square pegs in round holes, when they enter the world of work in the tourism industry.

Conflict Assessment:**Academic failed to cater the need of the Industry:**

There are specific requirements are mandatory for each industry. A candidate must possess required qualifications. The requirements are needed for the productive functioning of any industry by the prospective worker whose contribution will lead the industry into more productive and beneficiary. It was found graduates from the Tourism and Hospitality industry are mostly incapable when they started working in the Industry effectively, as they have been trained to work. Consequently, some of the students share their views on the reasons why they were not able to meet industry needs after graduations. Most of the students said that inadequate computer training, multi-lingual barriers, and short period of internship done when they were in school were not enough for them to meet industry needs. Other reasons include: Less exposure to the industry, practical knowledge of work, outmoded lessons, inadequate modern equipment for practical lessons at institutional level, more emphasis on theory, inability to apply what was learnt into the job place, inadequate modern text books, inadequate work shop for both teachers and students and so forth. The hospitality education places much emphasizes on theory with less practical. It was noticed some hospitality programs are faulted as being too theoretical. Inability of graduates/ students to apply their knowledge related to learnt subject relevance to supports at work place. There is a lack of proper academic understanding and focused theoretical with the job culture in the framework of most hospitality and tourism studies.

Bridging Gap between Tourism and Hospitality Education and Tourism and Hospitality Industry:

It has been identified that a gap is existing between tourism and hospitality education and the tourism an

d hospitality industry. Need to establish a proper understanding or a bridge the gap between tourism and hospitality education and the tourism and hospitality industry for the benefit of the student's community as well as the industry in general. It can be suggested that there should be collaboration between educators and industries.

In addition, other equally important suggestion made by the industry personnel to bridge the gap between hospitality and tourism education and hospitality & tourism industry includes: fieldtrips to industry for teachers and students, longer internship periods, more practical lessons, modern equipment for practical lessons, regular in-service training for teachers, personnel regular review of the curriculum, competence based training, much attention be given to language training, strengthen communication courses and so forth. The finding confirms the study of several researchers that the use of fieldtrips in hospitality education can enhance student and staff learning through experiential learning.

CONCLUSION:

A hospitality & tourism graduate of Odisha needs to cater the requirement of the industry with important skills par with world of hospitality & tourism industry. Research has to find out that of why graduates from hospitality tourism education, are not able to meet the industry needs and how to bridge the gap between hospitality education and the industry. It is observed that being a small state with huge tourism potential, it attracts more than 50000 international tourists those directly contributes to the state economy.

Mainly it was found, communication skill, multi lingual, operational skills and skills in computing as the most prominent skills that are needed by the students to fit into the industry. However, graduates are unable to deliver owing to inadequate possession of the required skills and it affects their performance in the industry.

To successfully handle the demand of the industry, there should be a close collaboration between the educators and the industries.

SUGGESTIONS

- There should be a close collaboration between the educators and the industry so that students leave school knowing industry expectation. This will go a long way in improving the quality of service delivered to guests.
- There should be regular conferences, seminars and workshops aimed at exchanging ideas. During such gathering, students and teachers would be well-equipped. They would gain a lot of theoretical and practical knowledge. In this way, the graduates from the institutions would not be square pegs in round holes, when they enter the world of work in the industry.
- Students should be exposed to fieldtrips to industry. Tourism and Hospitality institutions should organize regular fieldtrips for students and teachers to industry as a form of exposing them to current industry trends and best practices.
- There should be an extension period of internship or on the job training mandatory to complete the curriculum. Students on internship should spend about twelve weeks and there should be a way for the students to rotate in different sections in order for them to acquire skills in all areas of the department. Also, students should be closely supervised and be made to write a report after completion.

- Tourism and Hospitality institutions should strengthen the study of communications skill in both written and orally. It is because communication skills are needed in every important aspect of managerial activity such as, recruiting, defend and argue a case convincingly, make a business presentation, conduct staff briefing interview, training, orientation, interacting with guests and writing effective business memo, letters, e-mails, reports and many other managerial responsibilities that require communications skills.
- Adoption or requirement of Infrastructural development and modernizing teaching materials necessary to improve quality learning.

Academic institutions must have been understand the need of quality education and should build modern food laboratory, computer laboratory, language laboratory centre and modernized library or e-library with well equip modern equipment for practical lessons and well stock modern books for effective research work. However, building such laboratories requires considerable funds, which cannot be gained without the government's support. Government should increase the funds for tourism and hospitality institutions to support them in building laboratories for practical lessons. Besides, institutions should find appropriate means to generate internal funds to support developmental projects in their schools. For teaching materials, the textbook should be updated as industry develops and teachers should introduce new materials and impart new information to the students in class.

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