

## Tourism Education and Industry Expectations- Critical Analysis of the Skills Required

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Tourism Education, a professional course, must impart knowledge and skill sets suitable for immediate employment in the tourism industry. This study aims to explore the expectations of tourism educators and industry, with respect to the important skill sets and knowledge required by the tourism students. Further, the study compares the views of tourism educators and industry representatives on the knowledge and skills imparted by tourism educational institutes in the country.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This is a Descriptive study wherein both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. For this study, data was collected from both primary and secondary data sources. In-depth interviews and questionnaires were the tools used to collect primary data while the secondary data have been collected from various university websites, journals, and tourism magazines.

**Findings:** The major finding of the study showcases that there exists a difference of opinion between the tourism teachers and industry with regard to the skill sets to be imparted to the students. While the tourism teachers stated that Communication skills, Information Technology & Computer skills and Leadership skills, respectively are the most important skills required by tourism students; the industry identified Leadership & Decision Making, ICT and Specific software, Teamwork & Ethics respectively as the important skills expected of Tourism students.

**Originality/Value:** This study has implication for the Industry, Academia and Students since it tries to bridge the gap between the academia and industry expectations with regard to the skills imparted through tourism education. This study also contributes to bridge the gap between industry and academia with regard to the shortcomings of tourism education in India; so as to minimize the hindrances faced by tourism students in getting gainfully employed by the tourism industry.

**KEYWORDS** Tourism Education | Tourism Industry | Skill Sets | Employability

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## Introduction

Tourism industry in the country has seen a rapid growth in the last four decades. The growing interest in tourism has led to calls of educational programs in tourism so as to prepare a workforce that can be gainfully employed in the industry. The increased awareness of the scope and importance of tourism has given rise to support for the extension and improvement of tourism education. To aid curriculum planners in the development of an educational program in tourism, contribution of industry is vital. Yet, till date, there exists little agreement about the scope, knowledge and skill sets to be imparted through tourism education. For several decades universities have offered programs of research and studies in tourism oriented towards the scientific and theoretical investigation of the subject rather than training of professionals to meet the need and demand of the industry. Researchers over the years have observed that what educators teach in the classroom does not match the current industry trends and needs, hence criticized educators for not preparing students adequately for employment in the tourism industry (Goh, E., 2011; Dale, C., & Robinson, N., 2001; Airey, D., & Tribe, J., 2005; Asirifiet al, 2013).

In recent years, with the surge in tourism arrivals and receipts, it's become increasingly necessary to do some serious rethinking about the state of Tourism education in the country. As observed by Dredge, et al, (2015) the tourism jobs of today are markedly different from those of yesterday, and it seems certain that the jobs of tomorrow are going to be still more different. Still students entering the tourism sector, with its high level of volatility and rapid globalization, are going to need different skills and understandings in order to achieve meaningful and successful professional lives (Dredge, et al, 2015). To prepare students for the needs and demands of the tourism industry of today and tomorrow, synergy with the industry is a must. Cooper, C. & Shepherd, R. (1997) have observed that the relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry is a complex one, characterised by a lack of trust. Therein lies the major problem of tourism education. For delivery of tourism education, it is of utmost importance to satisfy both the requirements of the industry stakeholders as well as the tourism educators. There are uncertainties and challenges in meeting the needs and expectations of tourism industry since the industry expect the tourism students to be prepared for skills and competencies at the front level along with critical thinking, decision making, emotional intelligence and innovation. Asirifi, G. H., Doku, V., Morrison, S., & Sackey, A. S. (2013) mentioned that there is a huge gap between formal training and employees demand in tourism industry. Further, tourism education is technical learning therefore practical is important to clarify theory. Consequently, industrial training is important for tourism students to understand the actual environment and business setting of the tourism industry which cannot take place without the active involvement and support of the industry stakeholders.

Overall, in the present competitive job market, tourism students have uncertainties in term of the need and expectations of tourism industry, which acts as a hindrance in employment opportunities for tourism students.

## Review of literature

Tourism industry is one among the fastest growing industries within the world. Every year it creates millions of jobs across the globe. As per the estimate of UNWTO, on every eleven jobs created worldwide one is created in tourism industry. Therefore, the world has now understood its importance and all the countries are devising plans to boost their tourism industry. To tap this growing opportunity in tourism industry the institutions around The World are coming up with tourism related courses and degrees. Tourism courses and degrees attract students as it promises employment once the course or degree is completed.

Tourism higher education has been singled out by the United Nation World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 1997) as holding the potential to achieve customer satisfaction, and also to improve the competitiveness of tourism business and regions, if specific education and training are granted. Further, UNWTO reiterates the need to not only direct specific efforts at tourism training and education but also to match the curriculum design and contents of the teaching programs to the demand. Yet that there exists an apparent incompatibility between the skilled labor supply from educational institutes and the demand of tourism industry. Diplari, A., & Dimou, I. (2010) observes that the level of skills and knowledge offered in tourism education has been found to come short of the tourism industry requirements. According to Liu, A., & Wall, G. (2006) the main concern of tourism is to promote employment opportunities in the society; and the growth of tourism and its employment is limited due to lack of trained manpower in tourism and hence it separates the major economic benefit of tourism in the World. Newby (1999) observed that students should graduate not only with knowledge and understanding of the subject studied at the institution but also with 'transferable skills' essential for gaining employability in the knowledge-based economy'. While Diplari, A., & Dimou, I. (2010) gave much importance to industrial training in sharpening their skills and nurturing their future with right decision through practical exposure and practice.

The number of tourism courses available to students, especially in India, have increased considerably over the past three decades. This increase of interest is fueled by the rapid expansion of the industry as well as the support and recognition by government that tourism contributes significantly to local and national economies. 'Uncertainty among employees unrelated to tourism about the nature and content of tourism degrees can restrict employment opportunities for tourism students' (Dale, C., & Robinson,

N., 2001).Formica (1996), and Amoah, V. A., & Baum, T.,(1997) have said that the tourism education has not kept pace with the changing nature and diversity of industry and as a field of study.

The prospect for and potential of tourism education is great and the only thing which needs to be considered and taken care of is that the students should be provided with quality education which could have its applicability to the fullest extent in terms of industry requirements. The knowledge, skills, and abilities required by tourism and hospitality industry professionals are in sharp contrast to the practice of institutional program since Tourism Institutions are often criticized for emphasizing upon the theoretical concept more during the course at the expense of practical skills. Woods, R. H., & Macaulay, J. F., (1989) have recommended that 'Tourism and Hospitality program administrators and educators must seek to provide each student with what the industry requires at entry level by providing a realistic view of the work that is expected of them upon getting degree'. As per Najar, A. H., & Bukhari, S. A. M. (2017), increasing duration of and introducing parallel and continuous programmes for industry interface during entire course; shedding off unnecessary study load, redundant subjects and nugatory knowledge as per the wants of industry would very much benefit the students.

The changes taking place in the business environment have influenced every facet of the learning environment, including curricula, assessment of outcomes, and instructional practices. Kumar, S. (2013) states that although with the change in time and technology tourism education structure has improved a lot but still there are vast gaps between the expectation of industry and excellence of the personnel ready for industry. According to Kumar, M. (2014), the accomplishment of any course lies on its course curriculum and contents; changes within the tourism and hospitality industry are dynamic and therefore, the curriculum must be in accordance with the requirements of the industry. It is apparent from the above that the role of the teachers and the academician is important as they need to consult the industry on a regular basis to understand the requirement of the industry. This synergy between Industryacademia is required at all times and at all levels, i.e., course development, training, motivational& guest lectures by industry experts till the final placement of the students. Further industries could also be encouraged to be partner with educational institutions.

Above thought has been echoed by Kumar, S. (2013) in his paper wherein he has mentioned that in approaching tourism curriculum decision making in India, educators must be aware of the very fact that what's fitting for the tourism curriculum is directly linked to what's important for tourism development in the country. So that students can meet the demand of the industry as per the need of the talents in

hospitality and tourism related jobs. Therefore, stakeholder participation in curriculum deciding has got to be a central a part of the entire curriculum development practice if tourism education is to form a payment to the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

As per Jauhari, V., & Manaktola, K., (2009) the key employee's issues that require to be addressed within the tourism and hospitality industry in India are:

- Perceptions about the industry;
- Levels of manpower abrasion; education;
- Competencies and
- Skill development.

Tourism and Hospitality sector in India continues to grow at a significant rate. It is a fundamental contributor to India's economy and employment generation. As per Dahiya, A.,(2013) current hospitality & tourism education system in India emphasis on the supply of a labor force tend tomeet industry needs, but less interest is given on adequate development of valued human resources. It is strongly felt that there is a dire need of innovative programmes in hospitality & tourism education in India.

Accordingly, as per Millar, M., Mao, Z., & Moreo, P., (2010), during the past two decades, the rapidly expanding tourism and hospitality industry has also impacted their education requirements. This fast growth has generated intense competition among hospitality and tourism programmes for better students and teachers to increase their reputation. Stutts (1995) suggests that the excellence of faculty members is one among the important success factors within the hospitality and tourism education system. An effective programme requires a rigorous curriculum, macro- and micro-level resources, industry/alumni relationships, and a well-respected faculty. According to Najar, A. H., & Bukhari, S. A. M. (2017), faculty development programmes are perceived as redundant exercise by hospitality and tourism training stalwarts; and the school members spent most of the time reading books and imparting bookish knowledge to the students; and at the same time the shortage of infrastructure and practical exposure also plays its role in making a candidate unemployable.

Overall, literature review brought forward the lack of academic – industry synergy which has led to a curriculum that does not always meet the needs and demands of the Tourism industry in terms of skilled and valued human resource. Further, Tourism industry is dynamic in nature and is constantly changing and updating as per the policies and events. Therefore, regular faculty development programmes will ensure excellence of faculty members which is necessary for the purpose of imparting updated knowledge and skill sets to the tourism students.





## Overview of tourism education in India

Hospitality and Tourism education in India has its origin since 1950 when we see the emergence of various training programs in the field of hospitality and applied nutrition initiated by government of India. Tourism education, on the other hand was first initiated with a Diploma Course in Tourism, launched in 1970's. With the passage of time, Tourism programs gained popularity among students which led to many universities and colleges offering Tourism Education courses at various levels from certificate, diploma, post graduate diploma, graduation and post-graduation degrees level as well as MPhil and PhD Degrees in Tourism.

Travel and tourism industry is growing at a very fast pace, and in India the flow of International and Domestic tourists is growing gradually at a steady pace. As reported in the Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry Report (November, 2020) by **India Brand Equity Foundation** ([www.ibef.org/industry/indian-tourism-and-hospitality-industry-analysis-presentation](http://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-tourism-and-hospitality-industry-analysis-presentation)), during 2019, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India stood at 10.89 million, achieving a growth rate of 3.20% y-o-y. During 2019, FEEs from tourism increased 4.8% y-o-y to Rs. 1,94,881 crores (US\$ 29.96 billion). In 2019, arrivals through e-Tourist Visa increased by 23.6% y-o-y to 2.9 million.

The contribution of tourism industry to Indian GDP is also remarkable. WTTC's Economic Impact 2019 report ([wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact](http://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact)), states that India's Travel & Tourism GDP contribution grew by 4.9%, which was the third highest after China and Philippines. Additionally, the report also highlights that between 2014-2019, India witnessed the strongest growth in the number of jobs created (6.36 million), followed by China (5.47 million) and the Philippines (2.53 million). Total contribution by travel and tourism sector to India's GDP is expected to increase from Rs. 15.24 lakh crore (US\$ 234.03 billion) in 2017 to Rs. 32.05 lakh crore (US\$ 492.21 billion) in 2028. Total earning from the sector in India is targeted to reach US\$ 50 billion by 2022. We have to note here that this report is pre – COVID-19 days and therefore the numbers would be different now. Nevertheless, Tourism continues to revive and grow.

Tourism industry is also great employment provider of both skilled and unskilled manpower in India. According to the Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry Report (November, 2020) by **India Brand Equity Foundation, in the Financial year 2020**, 39 million jobs were created in the tourism sector in India; this accounted for 8.0% of the total employment in the country. Apart from various human resource challenges, the future of tourism industry looks quite promising.

Therefore, to cater the requirements of present tourism industry there is urgent need of skilled and trained manpower

in different parts of the country. There are many Educational Institutes in India providing tourism education and many institutions and existing universities are offering full time Tourism Studies /Management courses. Subsequently, various graduate and under - graduate courses are started in tourism and travel by University Grant Commission pan India. The post graduate level programs were started in various universities across India but Kurukshetra University was the first one to launch a Master Degree Program in tourism in the early 1990's. Later on, Institute of Vocational Studies, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla; Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna University Garhwal; Jammu University; and many other universities started master degree program in tourism. The successful launch and management of tourism education programs across universities eventually saw the launch of such tourism education related programmes by many private colleges, Universities, and Deemed Universities. The requirement of skilled human resource was and still is the need of the hour, human resource / employees who can provide services of great value to the guests and tourists visiting our country or a destination.

One of the steps and policy decision of the ministry of Tourism was to start an institute dedicated to the imparting of knowledge and skills to Tourism professionals. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India started an autonomous Institute known as Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management(IITTM) during 1980's. As an autonomous organization under Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management (IITTM) till date offers, education, research, training and development, and consultancy services in various fields of tourism and travel.

Govt. Institutes/ Universities running tourism courses	Private Institutes/ Universities running tourism courses	Total
132	89	221

**Table1.1** Tourism Education Institutions in India  
Source: IITTM website

There are around 221 Government and private education institutes in India which provides tourism education. Yet the number of students gainfully employed in the tourism industry post a degree in tourism seems to be a problem with tourism industry stating that the students who pass out of these institutes are not ready to join the workforce as soon as they join duty. The students require further training from industry before they can be gainfully employed.

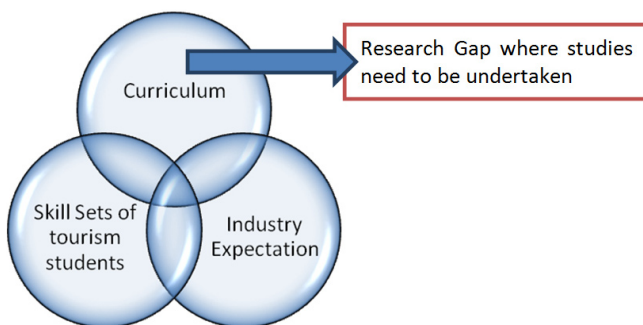
### Research Gap:

Tourism be a complex phenomenon crossing many disciplines, researchers and academicians tend to approach tourism studies from within the precise borders of the main

discipline in which they have been skilled. Researchers have studied tourism and hospitality higher education curriculum design, but the degree to which tourism higher education meets industry skill requirements has not yet been closely studied, especially in India. We have many studies on the academic curriculum and human resource requirements in the Hospitality industry but any such study in the field of tourism industry is missing from within India.

After detailed review of literature in India and international context researchers have found that, tourism higher education faces great challenges in the development of human capital for the tourism industry. In case the tourism curriculum neglects to incorporate the needs and requirements of the tourism industry, then the tourism education will not be justifiable; and eventually it will not support the development of the tourism industry.

Literature review of the available tourism educational literature brings forth the criticism of tourism education by the tourism industry, for not preparing people to be gainful employment in the tourism industry. There exists a research gap since it is not yet studied what are the skill sets that are being imparted to the students and what is the requirement of the industry in terms of skills of tourism studies graduates. The curriculum through which skill sets are being imparted will be studied in this paper to bridge the gap in research.



## Objectives:

It has been ascertained through literature review that tourism post graduates are not meeting the skill sets as desired by the tourism industry for gainful employment of these tourism graduates. This research is being taken up to study whether any gap exists between what education institutions provide in their postgraduate curricula in the way of tourism skills sets, and the skills sets are required by the tourism industry. Researchers in this paper have conceptually tried to explore why tourism students face hindrances in term of need and expectations of the tourism industry. This study tries to identify gaps between the education and training provided to tourism students at higher education level and the human resource needs of the tourism industry. In short, the objectives of this paper are to:

- i. identify the important skills that are required to be imparted through post graduate degrees in tourism education as per the view of academia and industry.
- ii. find out the gaps between tourism education and industry expectations in terms of skill sets of students passing with tourism post graduate degrees.

## Research Methodology:

This is a Descriptive study wherein both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. Data was collected from both primary and secondary data sources. In this research there is a comparison of the views of tourism educators and industry representatives on the perceived importance of knowledge and skills provided by tourism education institutes in Northern India. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from academicians (19 in number) of 06 selected universities of Northern India. Review of literature and the qualitative data collected from academicians was the basis for preparing the questionnaires for the industry representatives. A total of 150 questionnaires were circulated among industry representatives, using simple random sampling technique, of which 109 were useable data. The secondary data have been collected from various websites, journals, tourism magazines and newspaper.

## Scope of the study:

This study has implication for all the Industry stakeholders, Academia as well as Students. The study tries to perceive the gap between the academia and industry expectations as far as skills required to be imparted through tourism education is concerned. Moreover, this study also contributes to bridge the gap between industry and academia about shortcomings of tourism education in relation to the skills imparted to the students of Master's Degree Programme in Tourism; and therefore, try to identify and minimize the hindrances faced by tourism students while trying to be gainfully employed and successful in the tourism industry.

## Results and Findings

The responses from respondents, both academicians and industry representatives elucidate that the gap between industry expectation and tourism education imparted in the institutions exists. To ensure a sustainable growth of tourism industry one requires sustainability-based work, operational practices, culture, professional ethics and growth as well as a proper development strategy for all its stakeholders, including the valued human resource is important. The tourism industry, therefore, needs good professionals and hence the role of institutes providing tourism education and creating future tourism professionals comes into play.



Skills
Knowledge of IT and computer along with modern technologies
Communication and personality are most important skills
Knowledge of latest trends and marketing techniques in travel trade
Personality and marketing skills
Multi-lingual and teamwork
Leadership as it is important to lead the team
Latest awareness about customer needs and wants with the help of Research and innovation
Knowledge of foreign language and modern technological innovations
Ethics, Research and innovation
Communication skills and knowledge of local languages
Knowledge of local, national and international tourism resources
Communication skills and practical knowledge of tourist destinations
Interpersonal and IT skills
Knowledge of latest travel trade software and modern technological innovations
One must have Leadership and Decision-Making skills
Knowledge of travel agency working
Punctuality and commitment about work is one of the key expectations
Decision making and problem solving are important for growth
Communication and Leadership

**Table 1.2:** Academicians views on the important skills required by tourism students

**Source:** Researchers, Compiled from the data

From the above-mentioned, the skill sets can be listed as per their importance - Communication Skills, Research and innovation, Leadership Skills, Information Technology and Computer Skills, Awareness of Latest Trends, Knowledge and Operational Skills, Ethics, Personality, and Team Work respectively.



**Table 1.3:** Academicians views on the important skills required by tourism students

**Source:** Researchers, Compiled from the data

It is necessary to note that the academicians have listed the skill sets as that they deem necessary to be imparted to the students passing out of the tourism programmes and does not necessarily reflect upon the actual skill that are at present being imparted through different educational institutes. The views of academicians may not match the curriculum that is being followed in the respective institutes since most of the institutes need to follow the syllabus as approved by the educational bodies like UGC and AICTE or other governing bodies of the state and country.

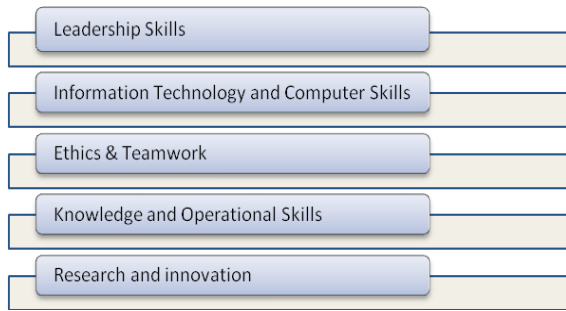
The skills required by the tourism professionals was given ranking as per their importance by the industry representatives. The number 01 being the most important skill and 10 being the least important skill among the tourism students and future tourism professionals. Mean was used to calculate the most important and least important skill of tourism students.

Skill Set	Mean	Importance (1= most important, 10= least important)
Leadership & Decision Making	1.339	1
ICT and Specific software	1.956	2
Teamwork & Ethics	2.174	3
Office Automation	2.383	4
Multi-tasking and Operational skills	2.461	5
Research & Innovation	3.107	6
Critical Thinking & Analysis	3.324	7
Communication	3.589	8
Interpersonal skills	3.783	9
Personality	4.012	10

**Table 1.4:** Industry view on most important skills required by tourism students

**Source:** Researchers, compiled from data

From the above, as per industry respondents, the three (03) most important skills required by tourism students are Leadership & Decision Making, ICT & Specific software; and Teamwork & Ethics respectively. Comparing the skill sets as proposed by the academicians and industry representatives, we can identify the following as the most desirable skill sets in any aspiring tourism professionals featuring in both the lists i.e as mentioned by academicians as well as by the industry representatives -



**Table 1.5:** Skills required by tourism students

**Source:** Researchers, compiled from data

The review of tourism educational literature shows that there is a criticism of tourism education by the tourism industry for not preparing tourism students for employment adequately. After analyzing both the responses, this study finds that there is substantial difference between the views of tourism educators and industry professional. Their opinion varies mainly on the points

- i. Importance of subjects being taught,
- ii. The skills best required for the tourism industry, and
- iii. Value of Higher Education degrees in tourism.

From the finding we observe that there is a gap between needs of tourism industry and contemporary curriculum of tourism education. Therefore, it is suggested that those involved in curriculum designing must carry on working with industry representatives to ensure a stronger relation between practical and theory. Tourism education should continue to consider the suggestions of industry for curriculum improvements and updating so that the requirements of the industry are met, which will further improve the likelihood that tourism students of Higher Education institutes will pass out with the knowledge and skills associated with the need and expectations of tourism industry; thus, leading to their gainful employment.

For any destinations to develop tourism and to meet the need of market professionally, it first requires to prepare and develop human resources wherein tourism education has a major role to play. Tourism industry of India has the potential to become number one industry of the world but it lacks original thinkers, as well as good quality education and training

programs. This is one of the main hindrances in developing the talent required by the tourism industry and hence is a problem for long-term successful tourism development. After the discussion with old students of tourism educational Institutes, placement cells, HR of tourism industry and industry professionals it has been observed that they are not very much satisfied with curriculum and performance of tourism students. The following table summarizes:

- i. The common teaching methodology used, knowledge and skills imparted in Tourism Institutes.
- ii. The expectations of industry from tourism students.
- iii. Gaps between the knowledge and skills imparted by tourism institutions as comparison to that expected by industry.

Common teaching methodology used in Tourism Institutes	Industry requirement as identified by Industry Representatives	Gaps between teaching and industry requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and Lecture method</li> <li>• Discussion, Case Studies, Seminar, Group discussions</li> <li>• Practical, Exposure to events, On job training</li> <li>• Computer and IT Knowledge</li> <li>• Field trips and tours,</li> <li>• Assignments</li> <li>• Examinations</li> <li>• Personality Development and Communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information technology skills</li> <li>• Leadership &amp; Decision Making</li> <li>• Teamwork &amp; Ethics</li> <li>• Multilingual skills</li> <li>• Multi-tasking and Operational skills</li> <li>• Good operational skills, professionalism</li> <li>• Critical Thinking &amp; Analysis</li> <li>• Communication, Customer Services</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Research &amp; Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of leadership skills</li> <li>• Poor decision making skills</li> <li>• Poor Communication and operational skills.</li> <li>• Inadequate Computer training,</li> <li>• inability to solve problems.</li> <li>• Multilingual barriers,</li> <li>• Less exposure to industry due to short period of internships,</li> <li>• Less knowledge of practical work,</li> <li>• Less knowledge of current trends</li> </ul>

**Table 1.6:** Gaps between teaching and industry needs

**Source:** Researchers, compiled from data

Tourism education in India will not be sustainable or beneficial for tourism Industry's needs and requirements if the designing of tourism curriculum ignores the skill sets as required by the tourism industry. It is pertinent that the gap between education imparted and skill sets required by the industry is bridged to ensure Sustainable growth tourism industry. Few **suggestions** for bridging the gap are as below:

- i. Tourism curriculum is closely related to employment prospects; therefore, Tourism education and industry should be closely linked.
- ii. Tourism is a dynamic industry; therefore, the curriculum should be updated regularly with suggestions and inputs from the industry. This calls for regular and frequent interactions between the tourism industry and tourism educationists.
- iii. Tourism education is a professional learning course and consequently, industrial training is important for tourism students to understand the actual environment and business setting of the tourism industry. Curriculum





- must ensure more time for on – the - job training so that students are able to learn and experience more about work culture of industry.
- iv. For imparting current knowledge and skills to students there is a need of continuous interaction between tourism students and tourism industry professionals. Moreover, organizing field trips will also enable students to learn more about the latest trends in the industry.
  - v. Exposure to more workshops, seminars and conferences will strengthen the innovative thinking among students and teachers.
  - vi. Adequate importance should be given to communication skills, multilingual skills and personality development.
  - vii. More focus on skill development rather than theoretical development with an emphasis on essential transferable skills to become more employable.
  - viii. Classroom assignments need to be made more scientific and valuable with a more flexible curriculum to bring new and fresh inputs about innovative ideas.
  - ix. To improve infrastructure of Institutes with respect to industry requirements; such as building modern computer and language labs, and libraries which have both books and digital information.
  - x. Tourism education must keep the pace with the changing nature and diversity of tourism industry, which means continuous training for educators/teachers; as well as appointment of few teachers with good industry exposure and knowledge.
  - xi. International exchange and interaction programs through online and offline mode for both students and educators. National and international collaboration and funding for industry-oriented research & development work is essential for development of the discipline of Tourism.
  - xii. Tourism educators must try to impart more realistic view of tourism industry along with appropriate technical abilities.

### Conclusion:

Tourism education and industry requirements have not been in sync for some time now. Literature review have shown that although the skill sets desirable in any Tourism Master Programme student needs to match the skills as deemed necessary by the industry; it is yet to be seen in the case of tourism education in India. Tourism industry requires a well-structured, articulate and a well implemented tourism curriculum to achieve a meaningful development of human resource for this developing industry. Tourism is practical, skill oriented and dependent on the quality of the service providers; hence focus of the tourism curriculum must be on developing leadership, decision making, multilingual, information technology and research and innovation among tourism students. Few skill sets identified by industry representative and also mentioned by academicians seem to

be the most desirable skills sets in a Tourism Master’s Degree Programme student since they have featured on both the lists. The skill sets and supporting skills are given below:

<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decision-Making skills</li> <li>•Problem Solving</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge of IT and Computer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Latest Travel Trade Software</li> <li>•Modern Technologies</li> <li>•Software</li> </ul>
<b>Ethics and Team Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Punctuality</li> <li>•Commitment About Work</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge and Operational Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Travel Agency Working</li> <li>•Knowledge of tourism resources</li> <li>•Practical Knowledge of Tourist Destinations</li> </ul>
<b>Research and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Modern Technological Innovations</li> <li>•Customer Needs and Wants</li> </ul>
<b>Communication Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>•Multi lingual - Local / Foreign language</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness of Latest Trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Destination knowledge</li> <li>•Marketing skills</li> <li>•Marketing Techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Personality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Well Groomed</li> <li>•Active</li> <li>•Good attitude</li> </ul>

**Table 1.7: Skill Set and supporting skills for Tourism Students**

**Source:** Researchers, compiled from data

Tourism education, needs to be focused on what knowledge and skill it is imparting to the students. It is very difficult for a tourism student to learn all the skills required within the time of degree completion and hence puts him / her under a lot of pressure. Sometimes this pressure to learn a lot many skills in 2-3 years makes a student jack of all trades and master of none. The balance of imparting knowledge and skill sets needs to be addressed by the educator. One way of doing it would be to allow the students to choose courses as a form of choice so that they

For designing an ideal curriculum, it is suggested to take tourism industry professionals on board for giving inputs and suggestions. Further, regular Faculty development programs with special focus on industry needs and expectations are the need of the hour. The lack of infrastructure and practical knowledge also plays a major role in making students less employable since they are lacking in some areas of their required skills. Sometimes educational institutes provide more knowledge from books rather than practical knowledge which keeps students away from contemporary practices, this is a considerable gap between what is learnt in the classroom and what is required by tourism industry.

Considering the dynamic nature of the tourism industry, Tourism institutes must provide the skills which enable the students to manage the rapidly changing demands in tourism industry. Tourism industry operates in a very competitive



atmosphere as the consumer trends keep on changing. Therefore, tourism curriculum must be especially dedicated to adapt these changes, responding to them with educational content and programs. Tourism education programs must shift continuously to meet the changing demands of tourism industry. Let us not forget that Tourism industry dependent on the service providers, people and the satisfaction of each tourist is as good as the service providers. Therefore, developing the people i.e. valued human resource as per the requirement of tourism industry is essential to the growth of tourism industry in India and world.

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- [wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact](http://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact)

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## Annexure 1

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### Reviewers Comment



**Reviewer's Comment 1:** The paper throws light on the skill set required by the tourism students to excel in the industry. The requirements of the industry have clearly been highlighted. The suggestions of the study will be of importance to the academic instructor as well as the students. The use of interview as a tool of data collection has added the strength to the paper.

**Reviewer's Comment 2:** The paper is a descriptive study. The author has used both primary and secondary data for the purpose of data collection. The findings of the study reflect the academic approach toward tourism and the requirements of the industry. The use of in-depth interviews have come across as a tool to give a detailed report. The limitations of the study leaves a scope of further research.

**Reviewer's Comment 3:** The study bridges the gap between academics and industry. The author focuses on the skills and knowledge required by the industry. The paper focuses on the realities of the industry and gives a good approach for the student pursuing tourism to get a reality check. The paper will help the academia to frame the syllabi according to the industrial requirement.

### Editorial Excerpt



The article has 01% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for the publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the author (Surrender, Paramita and Prashant ) and accordingly all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "**Tourism Education and Industry Expectations**" both subject-wise and research-wise. The paper explores the expectations of tourism educators and industry, in context to the skill sets and knowledge required by the students pursuing tourism. The study is descriptive one which compares the views of tourism educators and industry representatives on the knowledge and skills imparted by tourism educational institutes in the country. The findings of the study indicate that there exists a difference of opinion between the tourism teachers and industry with regard to the skill sets to be imparted to the students. The study aims at bridging the gap between academia and industry expectations with regard to the skills imparted through tourism education. After comprehensive reviews and editorial board's remarks the manuscript has been categorised and decided to publish under "**Theme Based Paper**" category.

### Acknowledgement



The acknowledgment section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analyzed in this paper by (Surrender, Paramita and Prashant) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The author is highly indebted to others who had facilitated in accomplishing the research. Last but not least endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in a present issue.

### Disclaimer



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