

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating the impact of tourism as a subject on primary educational curriculum

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Abstract: The conventional educational system in India has significant limitations while addressing the key issues of tourism. Presently, the tourism subject is mainly introduced at the higher education level. To improve the current situation of tourism industry in India, it is important to educate the students about the power of tourism and how it plays crucial role in the development of the country's economy. India has the inherent capacity to evolve into a prominent tourism hub, with a distinct range of attractions. In this work, quantitative research design is adopted with purposive sampling in order to investigate the various factors related to tourism and its impact at primary education level. This study includes 106 respondents such as teachers (54) and students (52) from Jammu and Kashmir (UT) who belong to University of Jammu and University of Kashmir survey questionnaire is used to collect data which is analysed statistically using SPSS. This study also highlights the various aspects of tourism which directly or indirectly involved in the development of individual's growth by adopting the tourism in their education curriculum. Findings revealed that 94% of the respondents were strongly believed that tourism education has positive impact on students and must be include as a subject in primary education curriculum to meet the challenges of tourism sector and better economic growth. Finally, this paper shed light on the opportunities and challenges associated with the introducing tourism at school level and suggest some recommendations for policymakers.

Keywords: Educational curriculum, Primary education, Sustainable tourism, Tourism industry, Tourism

Introduction

India has great potential to develop the tourism sector which helps the nation to become a favoured destination for foreign tourists. Tourism refers to the activities undertaken by individuals who travel and temporarily reside in locations outside their regular environment for a duration not exceeding one consecutive year. These activities encompass various purposes, including leisure, business and other non-work-related objectives that are not associated with the economic activities conducted within the destination (Mamhoori, 2015). As a socio-economic endeavour, tourism has witnessed significant development and it has emerged as one of the biggest and most rapidly expanding industries globally (Reddy, 2008). Tourism has been categorised into various subcategories, including sports tourism, nature tourism, leisure tourism, corporate tourism, backpacker tourism, extreme tourism, hobby tourism, book-store tourism, cultural tourism, music tourism, heritage tourism, coastal tourism, garden tourism, health tourism, medical tourism, rural tourism, pilgrimage tourism and ecotourism (Arismayanti, 2019). To understand the various aspects of tourism, it is important to inculcate tourism in primary education. Education has a fundamental role in the development of a civilisation. The incorporation of tourism within the educational system is a crucial measure towards progress. The inclusion of tourism as a mandatory component within the education program is a progressive initiative that has the potential to provide a variety of advantages for students to understand the responsibilities of a host country (Cárdenas et al., 2015;

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Hsu, 2018). In the present educational landscape of India, tourism is not accorded substantial importance and the curriculum lacks emphasis on the significance of tourism in general. The incorporation of tourism as an academic discipline within the curriculum aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the tourism sector, rather than only focusing on participation in a specific activity. This enables individuals to understand the overall importance of the tourism industry and helps to improve the residents' behaviour and perception towards the visitors (Kumar et al., 2023). The fundamental hypothesis presented by the researcher is that the inclusion of tourism as a distinct and significant field of study within the educational curriculum of primary school children offers a viable and enduring resolution to the numerous challenges confronting the Indian tourism industry. The present study aims to understand the impact of tourism as a subject on primary education in India. This helps to examine the various challenges associated with tourism in India and the present scenario of education in India. Finally, this study also highlighted the importance of tourism education to meet the tourism industry challenges.

In this work, a quantitative approach was adopted to understand the prospective of teachers and students associated with the tourism sector. This study helps to understand the real challenges and impact of including tourism education at the primary school level. The rest of the paper deals with the existing work with respect to tourism education in the second section. The third section discusses the methodology adopted for this work. The fourth section provides the analysis of the collected data. Finally, the fifth section presents the conclusion and the suggestions for future endeavours.

Review of Literature

In this literature review, we examine the existing work based on tourism, tourism education, challenges related to the tourism industry.

Tourism is a pivotal industry within the Indian economy, holding significant importance. According to Sah, the tourism industry in India has had a consistent growth rate of 11% per year since 2013. Additionally, it plays a significant role in the nation's economy, contributing 10% to the GDP and employing 9% of the total workforce (Sah, 2014). There is a positive correlation between greater levels of education and the propensity for individuals to spend on tourist activities. Research findings indicate that families headed by females tend to allocate a comparatively lower proportion of their income towards expenditures related to tourism, in comparison to households headed by males. Sahoo discovered that there were varied impacts of travel and families' characteristics on tourist expenditure, indicating a lack of uniformity in the outcomes. The author advocated that the Indian government should focus on the improvement of tourism packages and the empowerment of women in terms of resource ownership (Sahoo et al. 2022). In addition, the economic implications of medical tourism might give rise to notable environmental impacts. Medical tourism has been shown to contribute to the economic growth of several nations by generating valuable economic resources. The practice of this particular kind of tourism has been prevalent in several nations worldwide, representing a significant facet of tourism for growth, comparable to industries such as metal production or sports. Education has a crucial role, both directly and indirectly, in the enhancement of tourism (Xu et al., 2023). The focuses on scholarly articles pertaining to the field of "Tourism Education" and the global landscape of "curriculum" in this domain. Tourism education, along with other related fields, plays a significant role in advancing knowledge and fostering the development of cumulative Tourism sector (Şimşek et al., 2023). The tourism education has its own challenges like lack of skilled faculty and practical strategies. The exercises promoted creative and active thinking among tourism students, while also enhancing their communication, collaboration, decision-making, and empathy abilities. Furthermore, it has been determined that design-based learning, a pedagogical approach that promotes experiential learning, enhances retention of information, fosters a favourable disposition towards the subject matter, cultivates collaboration among students, and promotes regular attendance in class. The study is anticipated to provide guidance to educators about the integration of the design thinking methodology into the curriculum (Doğantan, 2023). In the study conducted by Fuchs, the focused was on examining the perceptions of university students in the field of tourism education on the efficacy of their in-house training. When industry

placements are not available. To gain insights into the experiences of student interns throughout their in-house training, a research methodology using an exploratory approach was used. This study included 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants and analysed using SPSS. The empirical results indicate that the present status of the particular classroom program is not a viable long-term option for undergraduate students' tourism domain (Fuchs, 2022).

Methodology

Tourism mostly constitutes a significant field of study at the undergraduate level. Moreover, there is a noticeable increase in the levels of education across the nation. Therefore, as a result the education industry has a strong emphasis on exclusively delivering in the context of enhancing the skill set of the workforce inside the nation. This study used a quantitative methodology (Stockemer et al., 2019). Study adopted survey method as a research instrument for data collection, the structured questionnaires were distributed online to all respondents (teachers and students) associated with University of Jammu and University of Kashmir, India and purposive sampling technique is adopted to obtain valid responses from the participants. The collected data is evaluated statistically using SPSS. The primary data collecting tool used in this study is a structured questionnaire that is delivered to the participants online and offline. This work consists of 106 respondents such as teachers and students of University of Jammu and University of Kashmir. The secondary data was acquired from scholarly publications and journals, revealing that there is a lack of elementary school curriculum that includes areas related to tourism. The primary objective of the questionnaire is to ascertain perspective of the respondents on the implementation of tourism at school level. One potential area of academic focus at the elementary school level is the study of a tourism topic and its implications. The Indian tourism industry can have positive outcomes. The survey instrument consisting of a combination of "closed and open-ended" inquiries. The primary goal of the study to concentrate on the important aspects of tourism as a subject in primary education level in India. The study develops connections between the field of tourism education at school level and identifying an effective solution to address their issues. The overview of the methodology has been discussed in Figure 1.

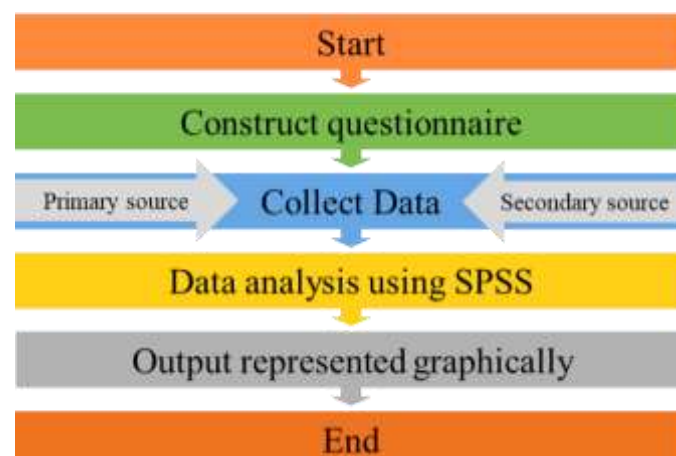


Figure 1. Overview of proposed methodology

Results and Discussion

The participants were first asked about their perspective on the need of include tourism as a topic in elementary school education. The data shown in Figure 1 provides a comprehensive overview of their feedback.

The descriptive statistics indicated that present study includes similar number of teachers (54) and students (52) associated with tourism education in Jammu and Kashmir (UT) as shown in Figure 2.

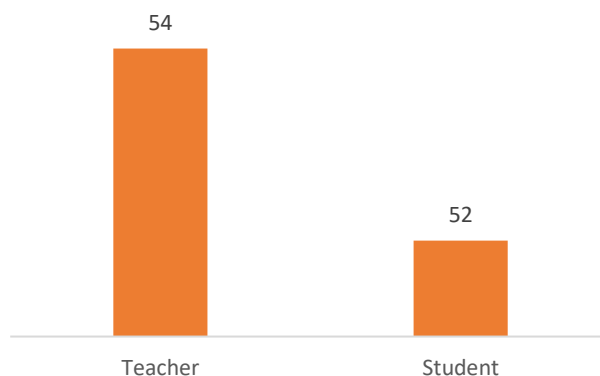


Figure 2. Respondents

It is found that study includes equal number of males and females having minimum post graduate qualification and most of the teachers hold more than 5 years of teaching experience. Further, five-point Likert scale is used to determine the perspective of respondents towards tourism as a subject in elementary education level. The Likert scale values show the agreement and disagreement related to study questionnaire. The responses were analysed based on Likert scale pointer between 1 to 5. It is noticeable in Figure 3 that a significant majority of the respondents, particularly 94%, expressed a strong agreement for the need of including tourism as a subject within the primary school curriculum followed by 6% agreement. The participants who provided unfavourable responses (2% to 3%) expressed concerns over children's comprehension abilities or the potential increase in their academic workload were minimum in number.

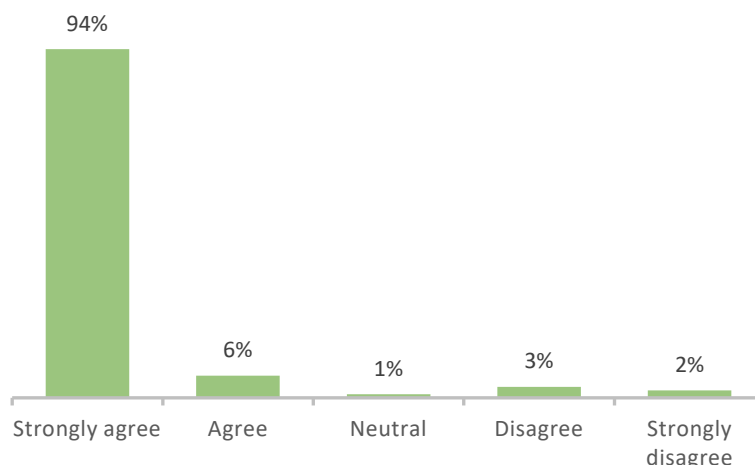


Figure 3. Tourism as a subject in primary school level

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a significant majority of educators consider it essential for youngsters to study tourism. Several participants who responded positively said that the primary obstacle for Indian tourism is lack of dedicated infrastructure, as well as individual's perspective towards the tourism. The findings highlighted the discrepancies in behavioural patterns shown by international visitors and domestic tourists inside India, as well as by Indian individuals travelling overseas. Specifically, they focused on contrasting practices related to littering, defacing landmarks, and spitting in tourist places. According to respondent's statements, it is suggested that in India, there is a lack of effective administration and enforcement mechanisms for maintaining public cleanliness standards, which are comparatively more robust in other countries. This study supports the findings of Marunda (2016) and Marunda and Chaneta (2014) who advocated the tourism as subject in primary education level in Zimbabwe.

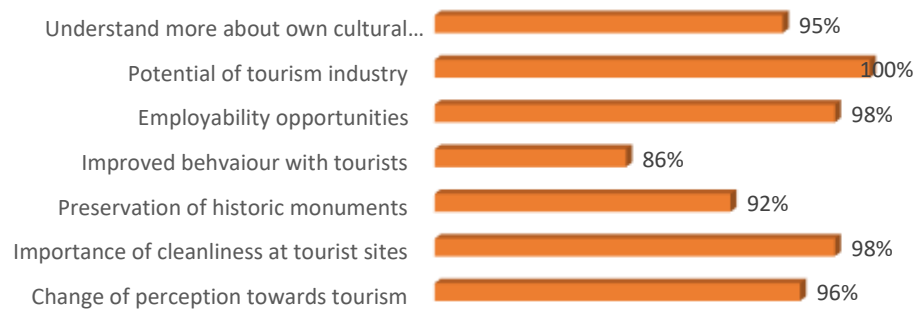


Figure 4. Impact of tourism education in school curriculum

Figure 4 displayed the various positive impacts of tourism education at schools. It is important to educate the children related to tourism. A better understanding of tourism and its key motivating factors helps the nations to develop economically. Furthermore, it is said that the police and relevant authorities have challenges in effectively enforcing the existing norms and regulations pertaining to cleanliness. In this particular situation, the only means of attaining elevated levels of cleanliness is to encourage a sense of "awareness and understanding" among the general public. The individuals held the idea that initiating such awareness at the school level is vital, as it would enable young children to comprehend the reasons for discouraging actions such as littering and spitting in public.

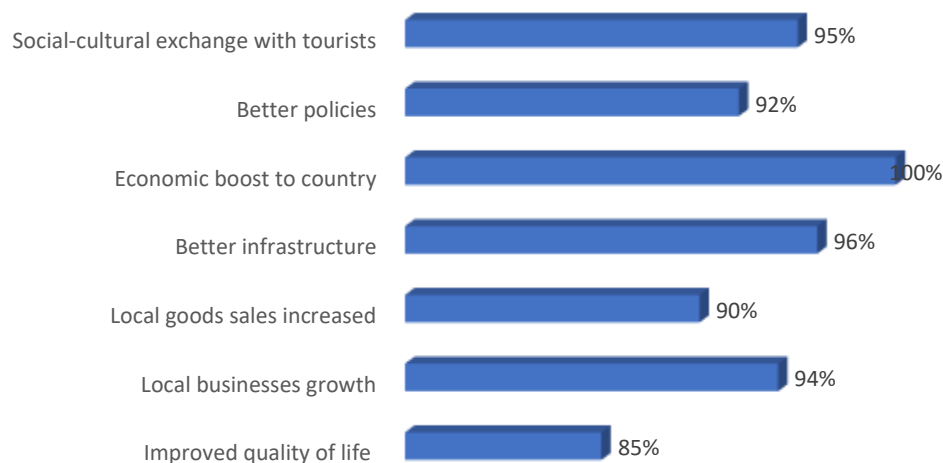


Figure 5. Impact of tourism as subject on tourism sector

The respondents also share their opinion related to the other benefits which are directly or indirectly associated with sustainable tourism within the country. In Figure 5, various alternative merits of sustainable tourism have been depicted which helps to create more awareness among the citizen related to tourism sector. The education improves the quality of tourism services which have been delivered by the organisations, tourist guides and local businessman. This improves the interaction of residents with foreign tourists which helps to communicate with each other in more generous way. However, present study found that the Indian educational system disregards the relevance of tourism as a subject in primary school level and fails to emphasise its overall value. Incorporating tourism as an academics may provide students with an extensive understanding of the sector, enhancing local attitudes and perceptions towards tourists. This research supports the findings of Kumar et al. (2023) which indicated that tourism as a subject has significant impact on primary education in India, to mitigate the tourism challenges and spreading awareness among the students.

The respondents highlighted that several existing challenges such as “government indifference, unfavourable perceptions regarding safety and security, inadequate planning, inefficient development of tourist infrastructure, and the absence of suitable tourist experiences” in the tourism industry in India as shown in Figure 6 which can be potentially addressed through educational initiatives. The tourism education to children helps to play the role of ambassadors for the promotion of India's national image, specifically lobbying for improved infrastructure, enhanced safety standards, and more investment in the tourist industry. By highlighting the potential risks associated with unsustainable techniques often used in the context of tourism, individuals are encouraged to support and promote activities that effectively balance economic success with environmental preservation.

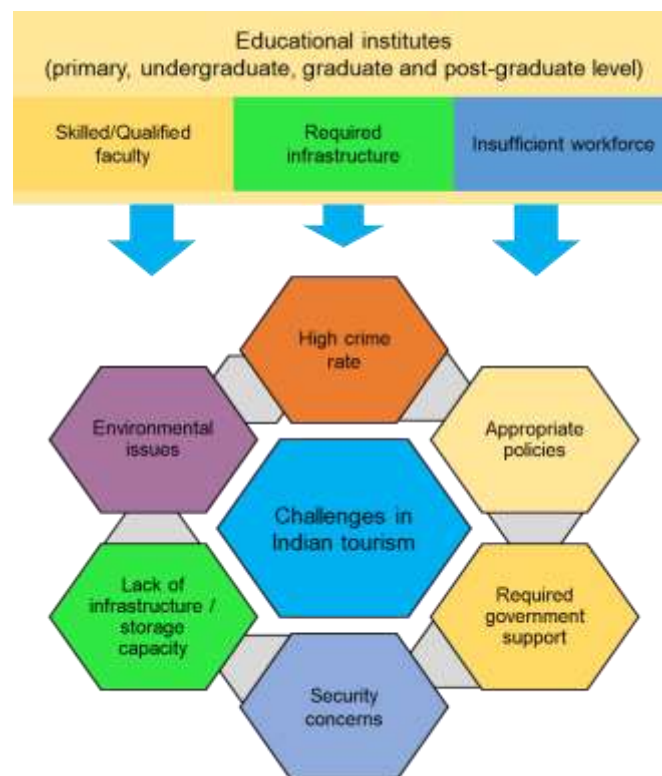


Figure 6. Challenges in Indian tourism and education institutes

This study found different outcomes from (Sahoo et al. 2022), who advocated for tourism expenditures and packages were the significant factors in India. This study showed that tourism education is significant factor that helps increase economic growth by encouraging Indian government to provide better infrastructure, tourism facilities and empowering youth in tourism sector by educating them in primary school level. Further, present study supports the findings of (Xu et al., 2023), who advocated for tourism education is highly crucial for industry development and ethical tourism by generating valuable resources through skilled faculty and implementation of practical strategies. This study also in line with the findings of (Şimşek et al., 2023) and showed that tourism education plays a significant role in advancing knowledge and fostering the development of cumulative Tourism sector. Finally, this study also aligns with the findings of (Fuchs, 2022; Doğantan, 2023), who advocated for promoting tourism as subject with the help of communication, collaboration, decision-making and effective classroom program for undergraduate students of tourism domain.

The respondents of this study expressed that offering an early introduction to the tourist industry would address another significant issue, namely the shortage of skilled personnel. By providing education to young kids on the field of tourism, this industry opens the new avenues for pursuing a career. It has been observed that in the present scenario, the field of tourism is not considered a favoured career option in India, as the emphasis is mostly placed on professional degrees such as engineering, medical, or law. By familiarising

young individuals with the demands and expectations of the tourist industry, it is possible to incentivise those with the appropriate disposition to choose for a vocation that maximises their likelihood of achieving success. Early induction programs may play a crucial role in mitigating the prevalence of misinformation and misunderstandings around the career prospects in the field of tourism. According to their statement, the provision of education in the field of tourism has the potential to cultivate entrepreneurial skills in young people. This is particularly significant for the government's emphasis on the 'Make in India' initiative. Young individuals might also be encouraged to engage in research pertaining to tourism-related subjects in order to discover novel approaches for enhancing the overall experience of tourism in India. This research can further lead to the identification of untapped tourist prospects, the introduction of innovative tourism services, and the enhancement of training and development initiatives.

Conclusion

The economic advancement and prosperity are significantly influenced by the presence of tourism. The tourism education helps to enhance the underlying societal structures and develops fundamental values among students in order to provide many positive outcomes by accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals. This study significantly concluded that incorporating tourism as subject in primary education level significantly improves the mindset of the students towards tourism industry and help to improve awareness regarding tourism sector, ethical tourism and factors associated with tourism development. Study found that majority of the respondents (94%) strongly agreed that tourism must include as a subject in primary school curriculum, for increasing the students' knowledge related to Indian and global tourism landscape. Further, findings revealed that apart from positive impact such as improved understanding with tourist and residents, socio-economic development, employability opportunities. There are some limitations like high crime rate, violence threat, issue of cleanliness, traffic congestion and environment. Tourism is significantly important in terms of environmental aspects, including carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions. These impacts are expected to be amplified by the increasing global tourist industry and the persistent needs for materials, amenities, and goods. In future, primary education can also focus on sports tourism which helps to keep the students healthy and competitive. The new opportunities in terms of sports tourism can be included in the tourism subject at school level which helps to boost the tourism sector to greater extent. This study also provide some important recommendations for the policymakers that includes (1) tourism should be included as a mandatory topic in elementary school curriculum, (2) the primary education should extend beyond the traditional curriculum like propagation of historical, artistic, cultural, and architectural knowledge about India, (3) the courses pertaining to tourism should have a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical experience and raise awareness, (4) the introduction of tourism as a vocational subject at school level which improves the skill of the students.

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