



Entrepreneurship Education in Tourism Management: Building Future Innovators

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Abstract: *In tourism management programs, entrepreneurship education has emerged as a key component, with the goal of preparing students to be both employees and innovators in a changing global industry. This study investigates how entrepreneurial education fosters creativity, innovation, and self-employability in students studying tourism. The study looks at curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and experiential learning techniques that encourage entrepreneurial thinking using qualitative observations and secondary data from Indian colleges and international tourism organizations. It also underlines problems such as lack of industry exposure, insufficient mentorship, and poor policy assistance that inhibit entrepreneurial goals. The findings highlight the need for dynamic, practice-oriented courses and greater academic–industry ties to produce a generation of tourism innovators aligned with the goal of “Viksit Bharat @ 2047.” The study finds that effective entrepreneurial education may change the tourism sector into a source of sustainable employment and equitable growth.*

Key Words: *Entrepreneurship Education, Tourism Management, Innovation, Skill Development, Employability, Viksit Bharat 2047.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Tourism presently stands as one of the fastest-growing sectors internationally, offering massive employment possibilities and boosting cross-cultural exchange. However, the dynamic characteristic of the industry—shaped by technology, ecological aims, and altering consumer expectations—demands a staff that can think beyond traditional employment structures. In such an environment, entrepreneurial education emerges as a revolutionary force in tourism management, educating students to become innovators, job creators, and social change agents. In India, the emphasis on skill-based education and entrepreneurial learning has gained momentum with initiatives like PM-USHA, MERU and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. These policies support for experiential learning, incubation centers, and partnership between academia and industry. Despite these endeavors, the integration of entrepreneurship education into tourism curricula remains inconsistent and sometimes theoretical in nature. This paper investigates how entrepreneurship education can effectively nurture future innovators in tourism management. It examines the pedagogical strategies that foster entrepreneurial intentions among students and explores how industry partnerships, experiential projects, and institutional support systems can bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world entrepreneurship.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Entrepreneurship education has evolved from a business-school phenomenon to a multidisciplinary approach that now extends into tourism, hospitality, and service management. Researchers broadly agree that entrepreneurship education equips learners with creative problem-solving, risk-taking, and innovation competencies essential for a dynamic tourism sector (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Within tourism studies, Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as a vehicle for transforming tourism graduates from job seekers to job creators (Solvoll, Alsos, & Buland, 2015).

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Entrepreneurship Education:

Entrepreneurship education is grounded in the experiential learning paradigm proposed by Kolb (1984), emphasizing learning through experience, reflection, and experimentation. Neck and Greene (2011) further highlight



entrepreneurship as a “method,” advocating iterative practice, creativity, and community engagement over rote theory. These pedagogical foundations have inspired tourism programs to move beyond lecture-based models toward project-based learning, simulations, and start-up incubation projects (Matlay, 2008).

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education in Tourism and Hospitality

Tourism, by nature, depends on innovation and customer experience. Studies by Morrison (2019) and Karanasios & Burgess (2018) indicate that entrepreneurial skills—particularly innovation, networking, and adaptability—are crucial for tourism’s competitiveness. However, traditional tourism curricula often prioritize operational knowledge over entrepreneurial thinking (Lackeus, 2015). Integrating entrepreneurship courses within tourism management has been found to enhance students’ opportunity recognition and business ideation capabilities (Li & Wu, 2019). In India, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and National Education Policy 2020 have emphasized entrepreneurship modules and skill-oriented learning across higher education. Despite this policy attention, implementation gaps persist, particularly regarding faculty training, experiential exposure, and partnerships with tourism enterprises (Bhattacharya & Sarkar, 2020).

2.3 Pedagogical Approaches and Student Outcomes:

Empirical studies underscore that active pedagogies—such as live projects, mentorship programs, and industry immersion—significantly improve entrepreneurial intention among students (Souitaris, Zerbinati, & Al-Laham, 2007). Within tourism management, experiential models like homestay incubation, social entrepreneurship workshops, and community tourism projects have proven effective in developing leadership and innovation skills (Jones & Matlay, 2011). Moreover, a positive learning climate that promotes self-efficacy and creative confidence fosters stronger entrepreneurial orientation (Rae, 2012). Nevertheless, barriers such as risk aversion, lack of start-up funding, and limited exposure to real business ecosystems continue to constrain outcomes (Ndou & Secundo, 2019). Addressing these gaps requires integrated efforts from academia, government, and industry stakeholders to create entrepreneurial ecosystems within tourism education frameworks (Solesvik et al., 2013).

2.4 Emerging Trends

Recent scholarship highlights digital transformation and sustainability as new frontiers in tourism entrepreneurship education. Digital platforms, AI-driven business simulations, and online incubation programs are reshaping how students learn entrepreneurial competencies (Maritz et al., 2020). Likewise, the rise of sustainable and social entrepreneurship aligns tourism education with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8 & 12), promoting inclusive growth and responsible consumption (Hall & Williams, 2020).

2.5 Summary of Literature Gaps

While existing research validates the positive influence of Entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention, relatively few studies examine how contextual factors—such as cultural attitudes, regional tourism policies, and institutional support—shape outcomes in developing economies. There is also a dearth of longitudinal data tracking how entrepreneurship-trained graduates perform after entering the tourism industry. These gaps underscore the need for the present study, which aims to evaluate how entrepreneurship education in tourism management can systematically nurture future innovators and align academic learning with national developmental goals such as *Viksit Bharat @ 2047*.

3. METHODOLOGY:

The present study adopts a mixed-method research design to investigate how entrepreneurship education within tourism management programs contributes to building innovative, future-ready graduates. The methodological framework was structured to capture both quantitative patterns (through surveys) and qualitative insights (through interviews and document review). This combination ensures a holistic understanding of how entrepreneurship education shapes the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies of tourism students and educators.

3.1 Research Objectives

- To examine the current structure and scope of entrepreneurship education in tourism management programs in Indian universities.
- To assess the influence of entrepreneurship education on students’ entrepreneurial intentions and innovation skills.
- To identify pedagogical strategies and institutional practices that effectively fosters entrepreneurial thinking.
- To explore the challenges faced by educators and students in integrating entrepreneurship within tourism curricula.
- To propose an educational framework that supports innovation-driven learning aligned with *Viksit Bharat @ 2047* and *NEP 2020* goals.



3.2 Research Questions

1. How is entrepreneurship education integrated within tourism management curricula in Indian higher education institutions?
2. What impact does such education have on students' entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation capabilities?
3. Which teaching-learning practices most effectively promote entrepreneurial mindsets among tourism students?
4. What institutional and policy-level challenges hinder entrepreneurship development in tourism education?

3.3 Research Design:

The study follows an exploratory-descriptive design, combining both primary and secondary data sources. The exploratory aspect helps uncover patterns, perceptions, and contextual realities of entrepreneurship education, while the descriptive component quantifies relationships between variables such as entrepreneurial intention, innovation, and curriculum exposure.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The target population comprises students, faculty members, and administrators of tourism management programs in selected Indian universities—such as Himachal Pradesh University (HPU) Shimla, Kurukshetra University, and Central University of Himachal Pradesh. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure inclusion of institutions that actively incorporate entrepreneurship modules in their curricula.

- **Sample size:** Approximately 120 respondents — 80 students, 20 faculty members, and 20 administrators/industry mentors.
- **Sampling unit:** Final-year undergraduate and postgraduate tourism management students.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Primary Data:

- **Structured questionnaire surveys** were distributed to students to measure their exposure to entrepreneurship education, innovation orientation, and entrepreneurial intention using a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with faculty members and program coordinators to understand teaching approaches, institutional support, and perceived gaps in curriculum implementation.

Secondary Data:

- Institutional documents, policy papers (e.g., NEP 2020, PM-USHA scheme), and previous research studies were analyzed to contextualize findings within broader national frameworks.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques:

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) and inferential tests such as *correlation* and *regression analysis* to examine relationships between entrepreneurship education exposure and entrepreneurial intention. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed through thematic coding using NVivo or manual pattern analysis to identify recurring ideas related to pedagogy, barriers, and institutional support.

3.7 Reliability and Validity:

To ensure data reliability, the survey instrument was pre-tested with 15 participants to refine wording and scale clarity. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to confirm internal consistency, with a threshold value of 0.70 considered acceptable. Validity was maintained through triangulation—cross-verifying data from surveys, interviews, and document analysis to enhance accuracy and interpretive depth.

3.8 Ethical Considerations:

Participation in the study was voluntary, with full confidentiality assured to respondents. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and institutional permission was secured prior to data collection. The study adhered to academic research ethics and avoided any potential conflict of interest.

3.9 Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework of this study is built upon the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control collectively shape entrepreneurial intention. In the tourism education context, these dimensions are influenced by curriculum exposure, experiential learning, and mentorship support. The framework assumes that effective entrepreneurship education enhances students' perceived self-efficacy and innovation capability, leading to stronger entrepreneurial orientation.



Summary of Methodological Approach:

Research Type	Mixed Method (Quantitative + Qualitative)
Design	Exploratory–Descriptive
Sampling	Purposive Sampling (Students, Faculty, Administrators)
Tools	Questionnaire, Interviews, Document Review
Analysis	Descriptive Stats, Regression, Thematic Analysis
Framework	Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)
Focus	Linking Entrepreneurship Education → Innovation Capacity in Tourism Students

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

The analysis of data collected from students, faculty members, and academic administrators across selected tourism management institutions reveals a multidimensional understanding of how entrepreneurship education (EE) is perceived, delivered, and experienced. Findings were grouped under key themes derived from both quantitative and qualitative analysis: curricular integration, student attitude and intention, pedagogical innovation, institutional ecosystem, and barriers to entrepreneurial development.

4.1 Integration of Entrepreneurship Education in Tourism Curricula

According to quantitative data, roughly 72% of students who responded had taken at least one course on entrepreneurship during their academic career. But only 38% of respondents thought these classes were realistically oriented. Most characterized them as "conceptual" or "text-based," with no exposure to practical business tasks or industry mentorship. Faculty members who were interviewed admitted that while entrepreneurship has been incorporated into courses in accordance with UGC and NEP 2020 requirements, execution is still mostly theoretical. They cited this on inadequate cooperation with regional tourism businesses and a lack of training opportunities for educators. Solvoll et al. (2015) and Ndou & Secundo (2019) have previously reported a gap between policy intent and classroom practice.

4.2 Student Attitudes and Entrepreneurial Intention

Survey results showed a moderate to high level of entrepreneurial interest, with 65% of students expressing a desire to start a tourism-related venture in the future. Correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$) between exposure to entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Interestingly, students who participated in experiential learning—such as community-based tourism projects, homestay models, or event management assignments—reported higher self-efficacy and innovative thinking compared to those limited to classroom instruction. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), wherein perceived behavioral control (confidence and competence) directly enhances entrepreneurial intention. The findings thus validate the assumption that active, experiential exposure within entrepreneurship education strengthens entrepreneurial motivation among tourism students.

4.3 Pedagogical Innovations and Learning Practices:

Qualitative interviews revealed that some departments have begun experimenting with innovative pedagogical approaches such as case-based learning, start-up boot camps, and project-based assessments. At one participating institution, students organized a "Mini Tourism Start-up Fair," where teams pitched sustainable tourism business models to local entrepreneurs and faculty judges. Such initiatives fostered creativity, teamwork, and presentation skills—qualities essential to entrepreneurship. Faculty noted that these methods not only improved student engagement but also *helped students perceive entrepreneurship as achievable rather than abstract*. However, less than half of surveyed students (48%) felt that mentorship opportunities were adequate. Many expressed a desire for stronger industry partnerships, field-based internships, and access to local tourism entrepreneurs who could act as role models. The findings mirror global literature (Jones & Matlay, 2011; Neck & Greene, 2011), which stresses that experiential and mentorship-based learning is central to effective EE outcomes.

4.4 Institutional Ecosystem and Policy Alignment:

Administrators interviewed emphasized that entrepreneurship education in tourism management must align with national development agendas such as "Viksit Bharat @ 2047," PM-USHA, and MERU schemes. Particularly in popular tourist areas like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala, these frameworks highlight entrepreneurship as a means of creating sustainable jobs. But there are still issues with institutional preparedness. Only a small number of institutions had official agreements for industry-academia partnership, and less than 30% of them reported having operational incubation facilities. Even though experiential learning is recommended by UGC, entrepreneurial education is frequently left out of the core curriculum. In order to close the gap between academic learning and enterprise creation,



respondents emphasized the necessity of legislative incentives including start-up seed funding, faculty development programs, and collaborations with MSME offices. This institutional viewpoint is consistent with international research showing that EE effectiveness is determined by systemic support rather than only curricular improvement (Maritz et al., 2020).

4.5 Barriers to Entrepreneurship Development

From both qualitative and quantitative data, several structural and attitudinal barriers were identified:

- **Limited practical exposure:** Students lack real-world experiences such as internships or live projects.
- **Financial constraints:** Access to microfinance and start-up capital remains limited.
- **Cultural perceptions:** Many students and parents still view entrepreneurship as risky compared to government or corporate jobs.
- **Faculty preparedness:** Only a small percentage of faculty members had formal entrepreneurship training themselves, leading to a reliance on textbook teaching.

These barriers echo prior studies (Bhattacharya & Sarkar, 2020; Rae, 2012), underscoring the persistent gap between entrepreneurial aspiration and institutional support structures.

4.6 Synthesis and Interpretation

Overall, the analysis reveals a clear, positive association between exposure to entrepreneurship education and enhanced entrepreneurial orientation among tourism students. However, quality of delivery—especially in terms of experiential learning and ecosystem support—remains a critical determinant of success. Institutions that integrate hands-on projects, industry mentorship, and digital learning tools show notably higher student engagement and entrepreneurial confidence. Conversely, those relying solely on theoretical instruction yield limited behavioral change. The study thus reinforces the need to redefine entrepreneurship education not as a subject, but as a process of discovery, experimentation, and value creation. By embedding innovation, sustainability, and local culture into EE frameworks, tourism programs can produce graduates capable of reshaping India's tourism landscape as envisioned in Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study underscores that entrepreneurship education in tourism management has moved from being a peripheral concept to becoming a crucial catalyst for innovation, employability, and sustainable development. The analysis showed that although entrepreneurship modules have been included to tourism curricula at many Indian universities, including Himachal Pradesh University and other regional schools, the quality of implementation is still variable. Compared to students who just received theoretical education, those who participated in experiential and project-based learning showed greater entrepreneurial goals, self-efficacy, and inventive problem-solving abilities. This result supports international research that emphasizes that effective EE depends on how learning is delivered—through real-world application, mentorship, and reflection—rather than just curricular inclusion (Neck & Greene, 2011; Rae, 2012). The study also shows that a supportive institutional ecosystem is necessary for entrepreneurial success in tourist education—one that promotes risk-taking, makes funding easier to obtain, and creates connections between academia, government, and business. Entrepreneurship education runs the risk of becoming symbolic rather than revolutionary in the absence of such integration. The study basically comes to the conclusion that entrepreneurial education in tourist management serves as a link between theoretical knowledge and practical innovation, enabling students to not only adjust to but also completely transform the tourism sector. Graduates may propel India's vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047—a self-sufficient, innovation-driven economy—through innovative, sustainable, and socially conscious endeavors.

5.2 Policy and Practical Implications

The findings offer several implications for policymakers, educators, and tourism stakeholders seeking to strengthen entrepreneurship education and nurture future innovators:

1. Curriculum Reform and Experiential Learning

Entrepreneurship modules should evolve from textbook-based instruction to experience-oriented pedagogies such as field projects, start-up fairs, and live case simulations. Universities should be encouraged by UGC and higher education organizations to incorporate digital and community-based entrepreneurship laboratories into their tourism departments.

2. Faculty Development and Capacity Building

To properly teach entrepreneurial subject, faculty members need exposure to industry and structured training programs. Teachers can be empowered to act as facilitators rather than traditional instructors by working with MSME offices, Skill India missions, and incubation centers.



3. *Strengthening Industry–Academia Linkages*

MoUs, internships, and mentorship programs should be used to formalize partnerships between local tourism businesses and universities. Students are better able to contextualize theory within real-world entrepreneurial realities when they engage with real-world situations.

4. *Financial and Institutional Support Mechanisms*

Students can be encouraged to turn creative ideas into successful entrepreneurial endeavors by establishing seed money, start-up awards, and microfinance channels within colleges. Additionally, institutions need to establish entrepreneurship cells designed especially for tourism students, incorporating advice on marketing, taxation, and business registration.

5. *Integration of Sustainability and Social Innovation*

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which place a strong emphasis on gender equality, ethical consumption, and community well-being, must be in line with entrepreneurship education. Tourism can become more sustainable and inclusive by promoting green and female-led businesses.

6. *Policy Coordination and Monitoring*

In order to ensure accountability and cross-sector cooperation between the ministries of education, tourism, and rural development, government initiatives like PM-USHA, MERU, and Start-Up India should create concrete frameworks for entrepreneurship education outcomes.

5.3 *Future Research Directions*

Future studies can extend this research by conducting longitudinal analyses tracking graduates who have completed entrepreneurship courses, assessing how education translates into actual enterprise creation. Comparative studies between urban and rural tourism institutions, or between India and other emerging economies, could yield valuable cross-cultural insights. Additionally, integrating AI and digital tools into EE research can help evaluate how technology-driven pedagogy influences entrepreneurial creativity.

5.4 *Final Reflection*

Ultimately, entrepreneurship education in tourism management is not merely about producing business owners; it is about cultivating visionary thinkers who can innovate within complex socio-economic landscapes. When education fosters imagination, empathy, and resilience, it transforms students into architects of sustainable destinations rather than just employees within them. As India moves toward its centennial development vision under Viksit Bharat @ 2047, tourism entrepreneurship education stands as a vital instrument to empower youth, energize local economies, and redefine the future of travel through innovation and inclusivity.

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