

# A Critical Assessment of the Contribution of Tourism Education in Creating Work force for the Tourism Industry

Shashi Paul\*

Address : VPO Sapouri, Tehsil Amb, Una, Himachal Pradesh-177210

E-mail ID: shashipaultourism@gmail.com

Qualification: Master of Tourism & Travel Management

**Abstract** - Students graduating from a professional tourism program should have the knowledge and abilities that make them immediately useful to the industry. The goal of this research is to find out what kinds of knowledge and abilities tourism professors and experts think their students will need to succeed in the field. The research also contrasts the views of tourism professors and industry experts on the content and competencies taught in tourism degree programs throughout the nation. It is important to define what exactly constitutes "educational tourism," a phrase that has been used to describe trips that combine educational components with sightseeing and vacationing. Now, we are discussing such topics as what drives students to study, how informal and formal learning interacts, and how tourism might benefit local economies. Currently, this issue has been widely discussed in both developing and established countries, with an emphasis on lowering unemployment rates via training young people and making a contribution to education through the tourism industry. Given the importance of the tourism industry to the economies of developing countries, it is essential to first establish a theoretical framework for studying the industry and developing methods to empower it. We take a close look at these issues and provide some solutions that might improve the quality of instruction given to vacationers. There is a wide range of issues that need to be addressed, including but not limited to educational infrastructure, curriculum updates, educational quality, education, administration, skills, tourism education, placement, job possibilities, employment growth, and employee happiness. Colleges that focus on the tourist industry continue to suffer from a declining image.

**Keywords** - Tourism, Education, Workforce, Tourism Industry

-----X-----

## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, tourism studies have emerged as a full-fledged academic discipline at universities worldwide. In the beginning, tourism education took the form of a vocational school, but with time, it has developed into a study of more academic intricacies. Hence, tourism education has evolved to meet the larger viewpoint of managing tourism and strike a compromise between the two competing demands. There is a need for in-depth research on the tourist industry, beyond just training new graduates for jobs in the sector. This view accords with the proportional one, which states that it is crucial to strike a balance between the technical and liberal components of tourist education to create a well-rounded graduate. This harmony fosters the growth of students who are both academically well-rounded and professionally viable in the tourist industry via the acquisition of a comprehensive base of knowledge, experience, and responsibility in tourism development. A narrow focus

on vocational education deprives pupils of a well-rounded education and reduces their preparedness to react to stakeholders in a growing tourism society.[1]

Tourism studies have emerged as a serious academic discipline. Education in the tourism industry has progressed from a vocational focus to a more academic one. This suggests that the goal of tourism education is to strike a balance between the growth of the tourism industry and the larger opportunities it presents for cultural tourism. There has to be a broader examination of the sectors than just making it possible for college grads to get jobs in the tourist industry. According to this idea, "A well-rounded graduate can only be achieved by integrating the liberal arts with practical training in tourism. Students who have a well-rounded education are more equipped to handle the responsibilities that come with working in the hospitality industry. If a society is focusing primarily

on vocational training, it will be less likely to respond to the concerns of the many parties involved in the tourism industry." Education is a kind of learning in which one generation imparts its acquired information, abilities, and behaviors onto the next via formal or informal means such as classroom instruction, hands-on training, and research.

### **Tourism**

As tourist businesses put a premium on customers' satisfaction, safety, and enjoyment, the ability to adapt quickly to customers' ever-evolving wants and desires is essential to succeed in this fast-paced, cutthroat industry.[2]

For the sake of brevity, let's just say that "tourism" refers to both vacation and business travel, as well as the study and practice of touring, the industry of luring, housing, and entertaining visitors, and the business of actually organizing and leading tours. To "go beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only," the World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as "people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure and not less than 24 hours, business and other purposes." Domestic (inside the visitor's own country) and international (outside the visitor's own country) tourism both have positive and negative impacts on a country's balance of payments. There was a significant drop in tourism between the middle of 2008 and the end of 2009 as a result of the late 2000s recession and the outbreak of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, although numbers began to rise again until the COVID-19 pandemic halted the recovery. The United Nations World Tourism Organization estimates that a loss of US\$0.9–1.2 trillion in international tourism profits may occur if international tourist arrivals fell by 58%–78% globally by 2020.[3]

### **Human Resource(s)**

A company's Human Resources department handles things like recruitment, payroll, and employee development. Human resources are the individuals who work for a company, an industry, a sector of the economy, or the general populace.

Professionalism, investing in employees, and regular encouragement are the mainstays of a successful hotel company. Frontline employees' competency and professionalism in dealing with potential clients may be greatly improved via consistent training in the area of communication skills. The lack of proper training among hotel employees has been detrimental to the hotel industry as a whole, as seen by the widespread prevalence of sluggish performance and uninspired dedication among its workforce. In contrast, HRP development, which includes regular staff training, is a crucial aspect of HRM that needs to be properly embedded in the modus operandi of a company, but relatively few organizations pay adequate attention to this fact. Staff professionalism may be ensured if the hotel management commits to a regular training

schedule, as was stated. Human resource management (HRM) training not only complements effective management but also boosts service output and contributes to stable organizations.[4]

### **Tourism in India**

The term "tourism" refers to both the final product and the process of people going to another location for amusement, relaxation, and the consumption of goods and services. Although modern tourism can be traced back to Western Europe in the 17th century, its roots may be traced back to the ancient era (8th century BC to 6th century AD). As befits those seeking enjoyment, tourists tend to stick to well-trodden routes, make use of preexisting infrastructure, and enjoy a plethora of amenities designed with their comfort in mind. On the other side, tourism overlaps with many other pursuits and practices, including pilgrimage. Other examples of these types of trips include "sports tourism" and "medical tourism," in addition to the more common "business tourism" (international travel undertaken to receive medical care).[5]

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) launched a project from 2005-2007 to establish a common lexicon of terms related to tourism because of the wide range of ways it may be characterized. Here is a definition of tourism: Travel to other countries or other international places, whether for business or pleasure, is an important economic, cultural, and social phenomenon. The term "tourism" is used to describe the industry that thrives off of the money spent by visitors (tourists, excursionists, locals, and foreigners alike) (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008). When seen through this lens, tourism is more than simply the temporary migration of individuals from one location to another for the sake of various ends (be they professional or personal).

### **Educational Tourism**

Learning about a new culture or society, or brushing up on a language that is becoming more useful in modern life, are all examples of educational tourism. Learning about foreign customs and traditions is a primary motivation for many travelers. Education has recognized the value of tourism as a means of supplementing the learning process and amassing real-world experience.[6]

This established pattern, when coupled with cutting-edge technological advancements, provides a promising opening for introducing this kind of cultural enrichment into K-12, mandatory, and tertiary education settings. Experience gained when traveling is utilized as a learning resource. There are several institutions, including the Rail Museum in New Delhi, that incorporate both of these tendencies into their elementary and secondary curricula.

### **Basic Approaches to the Study of Tourism**

Several different strategies may be used in the field of tourism. Yet, there is seldom any consensus on how tourism should be studied. The following is a selection of techniques.



**Figure 1: Approaches to the Study of Tourism**

#### **i. Institutional Approach**

Studying tourism from an institutional perspective looks at the many middlemen in the industry. There is an emphasis on establishments like travel agencies. Customer travel agencies, airline procurement, car rental businesses, hotels, and so on must all be analyzed as part of this framework's research agenda, together with their respective organizational structures, methods, difficulties, costs, and economic locations.[7]

#### **ii. Product Approach**

The product strategy looks at how different tourist goods are made, sold, and consumed. Consider the case of an airline as a potential case study subject; one may investigate its origins, the people who purchase and sell it, its means of financing and promotion, and so on. Using this method to evaluate services like vehicle rentals, lodging, and dining, the tourism industry may be seen as a whole. As a result of its slow pace, the product approach is not well suited to helping students rapidly comprehend the fundamental ideas of tourism.

#### **iii. Historical Approach**

Most researchers avoid the historical method. From an evolutionary perspective, we examine tourism's activities and establishments. The study attempts to explain the rise and fall of new ideas and why people suddenly stop caring about them. The advent of mass tourism renders this method mostly ineffective.

#### **iv. Managerial Approach**

Management has a firm-oriented (microeconomic) view, with an emphasis on the planning, research, pricing, promotion, and control that are essential to running a successful tourism business. It's a common strategy since it draws on the knowledge of several fields. The administrative perspective is emphasized throughout this work, but readers will also notice the inclusion of various viewpoints.

#### **v. Sociological Approach**

Travel is often done with friends or family. As a result, sociologists have examined tourist patterns, the effects of tourism on communities, and other aspects of tourism's influence on society. This method takes into account the host and guest's socioeconomic status, lifestyle choices, and cultural norms. While the study of leisure is still in its infancy as a sociological discipline, it has great potential for fast growth and widespread application.[8]

#### **Tours and Travel Industry in India**

At the tune of nearly \$247 billion US dollars, the travel and tourism industry in India will be one of the country's most significant economic drivers in the next years. While other sectors of the economy have encountered rough seas in recent years, the tourism sector has expanded to become a significant contributor to the country's foreign currency reserves. And it's helped the local economy by providing both direct and indirect employment opportunities.

For the United States, the commencement of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020 came as a complete and utter surprise. The government was forced to implement a rigorous lockdown, with the suspension of all non-essential travel as a first step. The tourism and travel sectors were among the worst hit around the globe, and India was no exception. During the second and third quarters of 2020, the hotel industry saw a decline in key metrics such as occupancies, average daily rate, and revenues per available room. Millions of Indians' chances of finding work were diminished.

Limits were gradually removed during the year in various regions throughout the nation. If India's tourism and travel sector can get its act together by the end of 2020, the country will have a fighting chance at attracting foreign visitors. After a rough year, hotels throughout the nation estimated it would take two years to return to their pre-pandemic levels of business.[9]

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Singh P.K. (2017)** Based on a comprehensive review of the literature on educating tourism, this study summarises the opinions of those who have studied the role that HEIs may play in fostering local growth in education tourism. These results highlight the fact that overseas students exist and suggest that we may all benefit from their presence. The University should aggressively encourage interactions between tourists and local stakeholders to improve education and local economic sustainability. We think it is essential for every organization that creates or oversees a learning program to take into account the role that tourism may play in facilitating the program's stated goals. This research focuses on the phenomenon of

educational tourism as it relates to higher education institutions (HEIs) taking part in international mobility programs, as educational tourists, as the whole of their experience there is comprised of tourism and leisure activities. Until more is known, it will be difficult to create effective intervention models.[10]

**Kelliher, C. (2015)** One of the most dynamic and quickly growing sectors worldwide is the tourist and hospitality sector. It's a win-win for everyone involved, since it promotes development, helps the hosts, and creates new prospects for work in a wide range of fields. A total of one in eleven persons are employed in the tourism and hospitality industries. Due to the nature of the "skill-based" economy, formal education and experience are typically given less weight than practical training and experience. Nonetheless, in recent years, many universities and colleges have increased the variety of courses they offer. It's rare to find a field of work where so many enjoyable pursuits are possible, but that's the case in the gaming industry. You could do things like travel, explore packaged excursions, go on a culinary tour, or even cook at home if you didn't want to work a typical 9-to-5. But, just like any other profession, individuals in this industry need to possess a certain set of abilities. Specialists in this sector encounter challenging operations, many consumer alternatives, and, perhaps most significantly, a wide spectrum of cultural backgrounds.[11]

**Roberts S, Tribe J. (2018)** To build a global learning community and close the educational gaps that exist between various cultures, this article offers readers transformational information, human experiences, and tools to consider how educational tourism may work. Studies show that the world has gotten less closed and more borderless. With this kind of momentum, it's clear that educators and leaders at all levels will need to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary to address challenges that span generations and cultures, inspire meaningful conversations, and motivate their students to take action. Graduates of today will join a world that is more interconnected than ever before. Studies show that nearly one in five U.S. occupations is in the field of international commerce and needs knowledge of the English language. As a result, there needs to be more research into the role of international cooperation in the expansion of global education to improve the quality of teaching and the language and cultural fluency of educators.[12]

**Teo, P. and Chang, T. C. (2017)** The purpose of the research were to provide a comprehensive picture of the tourism education institutions in India. It is important to note right off the bat that all of the information used in this analysis came from secondary resources. Moreover, qualitative data has been analyzed using qualitative methods. Articles from academic journals, tourism-related textbooks and tomes, and corporate and public sector report all made up the secondary data used in this study. The results of the research indicate that the development of

tourism education in India is at an early stage. There are still many problems that hurt the reputation of tourism education in India. Some of these problems include outdated curricula, unqualified teachers, a hostile learning environment, ineffective management, a lack of practical application in the classroom, inadequate preparation for the job market, and unsatisfactory working conditions.[13]

**Theuns, H. L. and Rasheed, A. (2016)** The goal of this paper is to get insight into the perspectives of recent tourism school grads and working professionals on the most crucial information and abilities for the field. The research used a mixed-method strategy that included both quantitative and qualitative strategies in a sequential explanatory fashion. However, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases highlight the importance of possessing the requisite knowledge and skills. It seems that both groups have similar views on what kinds of information and expertise are necessary. According to the study's findings, the most important skills and knowledge needed in the tourism industry are those related to customer service, ethical behavior and attitude on the job, oral communication, accepting and understanding accountability, paying attention to detail, working under stressful conditions, time management, and motivation. Graduates in the tourism field and industry professionals had vastly different views on the importance of corporate, administrative, educational, and talent traits.[14]

## METHODOLOGY

This research, which falls under the descriptive category, used qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary and secondary data were used to complete the picture. The importance of the knowledge and skills taught in tourism programmes throughout Northern India is compared from the viewpoints of tourism educators and industry representatives. The data was gathered via in-depth interviews with academics (n = 19) from 6 different institutions in Northern India. The questionnaires given to those in the business world were based on a review of the relevant literature and qualitative information gathered from academics. Simple random selection was used to distribute 150 questionnaires to industry representatives, with 109 yielding usable information. The secondary sources include the Internet, academic journals, travel publications, and newspapers.

## Scope of the study

Every person involved in the Industry, in the Academic world, and the Student body may learn something from this research. The purpose of this research is to have a better understanding of the skills that should be taught in tourism programs and the expectations of the tourist sector. The study's overarching goal is to help bridge the gap between the tourist industry and academic institutions by highlighting and addressing the challenges that



students experience when they seek employment and further their careers in the field.

## RESULT

It is clear from the replies of academics and professionals in the tourist sector that there is a chasm between what the business needs and what is taught at universities and colleges. The future prosperity of the tourism business depends on a well-thought-out strategy for the improvement of all of its constituents, most importantly the invaluable human resource. So, it is important for there to be educational institutions that specialize in tourism and produce qualified individuals to work in the tourist business.

**Table 1: Expert opinion on what knowledge and abilities are crucial for a career in tourism**

Skills
Ability to use and understand today's technological systems
Abilities that students in the tourist industry need
A familiarity with cutting-edge advertising strategies in the tourism industry
Capabilities in salesmanship and personality
Communication in many languages and the ability to work together
The success of each team depends on its leader.
The most up-to-date understanding of client requirements, as uncovered by means of study and experimentation
Fluency in many languages and familiarity with cutting-edge technology
Integrity, Science, and New Ideas
Ability to communicate and fluency in the target language
The ability to access and use regional, national, and international travel resources
Capacity for verbal and written expression, as well as familiarity with tourism hotspots
Communication and computer savvy
Familiarity with cutting-edge hardware and software used in the tourism industry
Effective leaders are decisive leaders.
The ability to understand how a travel business functions
One of the most important prerequisites is a consistent and reliable attendance record and work ethic.
The ability to make choices and solve problems is crucial to development.
Leadership and the Art of Communicating

Source: Researchers, Compiled the data

The above considerations may help determine the relative importance of the following sets of talents: communication, research and innovation, leadership, information technology and computer skills, awareness of new trends, knowledge and operational skills, ethics, personality, and collaboration.



**Figure 2: Expert advice on tourism majors' knowledge and skills**

Source: Researchers, Compiled the data

It's crucial to remember that the academics' list of competencies reflects what they think students graduating from tourism programmes should know, rather than what is really being taught in today's classrooms. While universities are required to follow the curricula approved by educational authorities like UGC and AICTE or other governing bodies of the state or country, the views of academics may not coincide with the curriculum that is being followed in the specific universities.

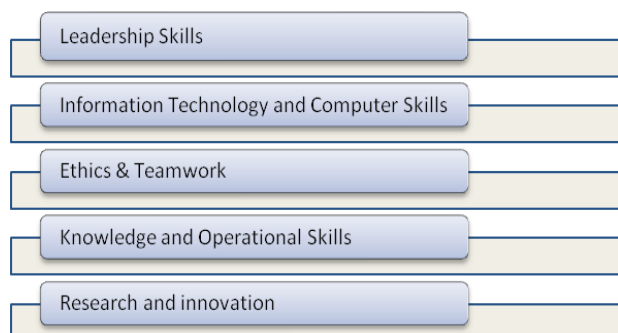
Members of the tourist business ranked the significance of the various skills needed by workers in the field. Students and aspiring professionals in the tourist industry rank the importance of various skills from one to ten, with competence at the top of the list. The highest and least valuable skills for tourism majors were determined using a mean score.

**Table 2: Tourism specialists advise students to acquire the following skills**

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

Source: Researchers, compiled data

Based on the above, the top three most in-demand talents for tourism graduates are shown to be (in no particular order): leadership and decision-making; information and communication technology and specialized software; and teamwork and ethical principles. The following are the most sought-after abilities for any prospective tourism professionals, as determined by a comparison of academic recommendations and industry representatives.



**Figure 3: Abilities that students in the tourist industry need**

Source: Researchers, compiled data

Findings from the literature study on tourism education reveal that the tourist sector has voiced concerns that universities are not doing enough to prepare their students for careers in the field. Based on the data, this research concludes that academics and professionals in the tourist business have quite different perspectives. The primary areas where they disagree are:

- The significance of the lessons being presented.
- The most in-demand abilities in the travel business.
- The importance of a college education in the travel industry.

These results show that the current tourist education curriculum fails to adequately address the demands of the business. Hence, it is recommended that individuals responsible for establishing curricula continue to collaborate with representatives from the industry to guarantee a greater link between practical and theoretical. Higher education tourism programs should continue to take into account industry feedback to produce graduates who are well-equipped to meet the demands of the tourism industry and find successful careers.

Education in the field of tourism plays a crucial role in helping destinations improve their tourist industries and better serve the needs of their target markets. India's tourism business might be the most successful in the world if it had better education and training opportunities and more creative minds at the helm. This is a major challenge for sustainable tourist growth since it slows down the cultivation of the skilled workers the business needs. Former students, placement officers, human resources managers, and

other professionals in the tourist sector have all expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum and the quality of their students' work. The following table is a summary of:

- The pedagogy, content, and skills are often taught in tourism-related degree programs.
- What employers want from tourism majors.
- Disparities between what is taught in tourism programs and what is needed in the field.

**Table 3: Gaps between teaching and industry needs**

The common teaching methodology used in Tourism Institutes	Industry requirements as identified by Industry Representatives	Gaps between teaching and industry requirements
• Presentation and Lecture method	Information technology skills	• Lack of leadership skills
• Discussion, Case Studies, Seminars, Group discussions	Leadership & Decision Making	• Poor decision-making skills
• Practical, Exposure to events, On the job training	Teamwork & Ethics	• Poor Communication and operational skills.
• Computer and IT Knowledge	Multilingual skills	• Inadequate Computer training.
• Field trips and tours,	Multi-tasking and Operational skills	• Inability to solve problems.
• Assignments	Good operational skills, professionalism	• Multilingual barriers,
• Examinations	Critical Thinking & Analysis	• Less exposure to the industry due to short periods of internships,
• Personality Development and Communication skills	Communication, Customer Services	• Less knowledge of practical work,
	Interpersonal skills	• Less knowledge of current trends
	Research & Innovation	

Source: Researchers, compiled data

If the skill sets needed by the tourist industry are not taken into account during the construction of the tourism curriculum in India, the program will not be sustainable or helpful for the demands and requirements of the tourism sector. If the tourist sector is to continue expanding sustainably, it is essential that the knowledge gap between what is taught in schools and what is needed in the workplace be closed. Several potential solutions are listed below:

- Since coursework in the field of tourism has such a direct bearing on future career chances, there have to be strong ties between the academic world and the business world of tourism.
- The tourism business is always evolving, thus academic institutions must include the latest trends and best practices in their curricula. This necessitates constant communication between professionals in the tourist sector and academics in the field of tourism studies.
- Being a professional field of study, tourism education necessitates that its students have practical experience in the field. There has to be more time built into curricula for students to get

practical experience in the workplace to better prepare them for future careers.

iv. Students and experts in the tourist business need to communicate often to ensure that students are receiving up-to-date information and training. In addition, taking students on field excursions will provide them with exposure to cutting-edge developments in the business world.

## CONCLUSION

The needs of the tourism sector and the curriculum that prepares future workers have been out of sync for some time. A survey of the relevant literature reveals that tourism education in India has yet to achieve a balance between what employers want and what universities can provide their students. To successfully cultivate its human resource, the tourist sector requires a tourism curriculum that is both well-defined and widely disseminated. As the success of the tourist industry is founded on the competence and professionalism of its service providers, tourism education must prioritize the growth of students' abilities in management, communication, research, and innovation. It has provided a transparent picture of the courses and topics studied to improve tourist education. To gain an appreciation for the many conceptual frameworks used in the tourist industry, as well as some potential avenues for enhancing the quality of tourism education. Having the option to study abroad opens up new doors for local entrepreneurs, boosts the economy for small businesses, and creates employment opportunities for the local population. Locals' opinions may change if they have contact with exchange students from other countries.

## REFERENCES

1. Kumbhar, V. M. (2015). Growth and Performance of Tourism Industry in India. Int. Conference on Recent Trends in Commerce, Economics and Management, February
2. Malihah, E., & Setiyorini, H. P. D. (2015). Tourism education and edu-tourism development: Sustainable tourism development perspective in education. The 1st International Seminar on Tourism (ISOT).
3. Ms.v.rajni prasad. (2020). Role of Soft Skills in Enhancing the Employability in Tourism and Hospitality Sector in India. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 11(1).
4. Papanis, E., & Kitrinou, E. (2016). The role of alternative types of tourism and ICT strategy for the tourism industry of Lesvos. Tourism.
5. Rahman, M.S., Osman-Gani, A.M. and Raman, M. (2017). Destination selection for education tourism: Service quality, destination image, and perceived spirituality embedded model. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 8.
6. Rosenberg, Stuart & Heimler, Ronald & Morote, E. S. (2018). Basic employability

skills: A triangular design approach. Education + Training

7. Sumit Kumar Singh, S. C. K., and atul kumar sharma. (2019). An overview on tourism education in India- An evaluative study. International Journal of Current Advanced Research, 8(12).
8. Wakelin-Theron, Nicola & Ukpere, W. & S. (2018). Perception of tourism graduates and the tourism industry on the important knowledge and skills required in the tourism industry.
9. Sharma, J. K. (2020), Tourism Planning and Development, Kanishka Publisher, Distributor, New Delhi. p- 17.
10. Singh P.K. (2017), Hotel, Lodging, Restaurant, and Resort Management: A Service Quality Perspective, Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi. ISBN 81- 7391-824-4
11. Kelliher, C. (2015) Economic determinism and human resource management practice in the hospitality and tourism industry, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 2(2), 118–128
12. Roberts S, Tribe J. (2018) Exploring the Economic Sustainability of the small Tourism Enterprise: A case Study of Tobago. Channel View Publications, Journals of Sustainable Tourism 16 (5), pp. 575-594.
13. Teo, P. and Chang, T. C. (2017) Critical Issues in a Critical Era: Tourism in Southeast Asia. Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography 19(2), pp. 119-129.
14. Theuns, H. L. and Rasheed, A. (2016) Alternative Approaches to Tertiary Tourism Education with Special Reference to Developing Countries. Tourism Management, 4(1), pp. 42-51.

## Corresponding Author

### Shashi Paul\*

Address : VPO Sapouri, Tehsil Amb, Una, Himachal Pradesh-177210

E-mail ID: shashipaultourism@gmail.com

Qualification: Master of Tourism & Travel Management