



Cover Page



2 2 7 7 - 7 8 8 1



CURRICULUM REFORM IN HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS OF IGNOU AND JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY MODELS UNDER NCHMCT

¹Dr. Manoj Rana,²Dr. Mukesh Rana and ³Ms Sapna Tehraik

¹Lecturer, Institute of Hotel Management, Kufri, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

²Trained Graduate Teacher (Biology), PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Hisar Cantt., Hisar, Haryana, India

³Senior Lecturer, Institute of Hotel Management, Kufri, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Curriculum reform has become a critical focus in hospitality education in India due to evolving industry demands, policy interventions, and the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Under the aegis of the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT), hospitality education witnessed a significant transition with the replacement of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)–developed study material by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) from 2023 onwards. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models to examine the nature and extent of reforms in hospitality education. Using a descriptive and comparative research design based on secondary data, the study analyses official curriculum documents, study materials, policy frameworks, and relevant academic literature. Key parameters of comparison include curriculum structure, learning outcomes, skill orientation, industry relevance, assessment mechanisms, and alignment with NEP 2020. The findings indicate a noticeable shift in curriculum philosophy from content-heavy theoretical orientation towards competency-based, industry-aligned, and student-centric learning in the JNU model. While the IGNOU curriculum demonstrates strong foundational coverage and standardized delivery, the JNU framework reflects contemporary pedagogical approaches and policy alignment. The study highlights strengths and gaps in both models and proposes recommendations for developing a balanced, future-ready hospitality curriculum. The paper contributes to academic discourse on curriculum reform and offers practical insights for policymakers, educators, and hospitality institutions in India.

Keywords:Hospitality education; Curriculum reform; NCHMCT; National Education Policy 2020; Outcome-based education; IGNOU; Jawaharlal Nehru University

1. Introduction

Hospitality education plays a pivotal role in shaping a skilled workforce capable of meeting the dynamic requirements of the tourism and service industry. In India, hospitality education under the aegis of the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades. Traditionally, academic content and study materials for Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs) were developed and delivered by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). However, in alignment with changing educational policies, industry expectations, and the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a major curriculum transition was initiated in 2023 with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) assuming responsibility for curriculum development.

The transition from IGNOU to JNU represents more than an administrative change; it signifies a shift in educational philosophy, pedagogical approach, and curriculum design. While the IGNOU model emphasized standardized, theory-oriented, self-learning material suited to distance education, the JNU framework reflects a contemporary, outcome-based, and skill-oriented approach aimed at enhancing industry readiness and learner engagement. This shift aligns with global



Cover Page



trends in hospitality education, where experiential learning, interdisciplinary integration, and employability-driven curricula are increasingly prioritized.

Despite the significance of this reform, limited academic literature exists that systematically compares the two curriculum models within the Indian hospitality education context. Most available studies focus either on hospitality curriculum design in isolation or on broader educational reforms without addressing the unique structural transition experienced by IHMs. This study seeks to bridge this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models under NCHMCT, focusing on curriculum structure, pedagogical orientation, industry alignment, and policy compliance.

By using secondary data sources such as official curriculum documents, policy frameworks, and existing academic literature, this paper aims to critically examine the nature and implications of curriculum reform in hospitality education in India. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum designers striving to develop a future-ready hospitality education framework.

This study contributes to the academic discourse on hospitality education by offering one of the first structured comparative analyses of the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models under NCHMCT. By situating curriculum reform within national policy frameworks and global pedagogical trends, the paper provides evidence-based insights for curriculum designers, policymakers, and hospitality education institutions in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Hospitality Education and Curriculum Design

Hospitality education has evolved globally from traditional knowledge-based instruction to competency-based and experiential learning models. Studies emphasize that curriculum relevance and industry alignment are critical determinants of graduate employability (Baum, 2015; Airey & Tribe, 2006). In the Indian context, hospitality education has historically followed a rigid curriculum structure, often criticized for lagging behind industry requirements (Bharwani & Talib, 2017).

2.2 Role of Curriculum Reform in Higher Education

Curriculum reform is widely recognized as a mechanism to address skill gaps and enhance learner outcomes. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), outcome-based education ensures constructive alignment between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. NEP 2020 further reinforces this approach by advocating flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and skill-based education.

2.3 IGNOU Model of Hospitality Education

IGNOU's contribution to hospitality education in India has been significant, particularly in standardizing academic content across IHMs. Research highlights the strengths of IGNOU's self-learning material in terms of depth, academic rigor, and accessibility (Singh & Kaur, 2018). However, scholars have also noted challenges such as content overload, limited industry linkage, and slower curriculum updates (Sharma, 2020).

2.4 JNU Model and NEP 2020 Alignment

The adoption of JNU as the academic partner for IHMs reflects a strategic shift toward research-oriented and policy-aligned curriculum development. Early discussions suggest that the JNU curriculum emphasizes learning outcomes, skill mapping,



Cover Page



and contemporary hospitality practices (UGC, 2021). The integration of sustainability, digitalization, and management perspectives aligns with global hospitality education trends.

2.5 Research Gap

While individual studies discuss hospitality curriculum design and education reforms, a direct comparative analysis of IGNOU and JNU curriculum models under NCHMCT remains unexplored. This study addresses this gap by offering a structured, secondary-data-based comparison of the two models.

2.6 Theoretical Framework for Curriculum Reform

The curriculum transition examined in this study can be theoretically anchored within the framework of **Outcome-Based Education (OBE)** and **constructivist learning theory**. Outcome-Based Education emphasizes constructive alignment between learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment mechanisms (Biggs & Tang, 2011), ensuring that graduates acquire measurable competencies relevant to professional practice.

From a constructivist perspective, learning is viewed as an active process wherein learners construct knowledge through experience, reflection, and interaction. This theoretical orientation underpins the JNU curriculum's emphasis on experiential learning, internships, case-based instruction, and continuous assessment.

Additionally, the reform may be interpreted through the lens of **human capital theory**, which conceptualizes education as an investment in workforce capability and employability. In a service-intensive sector such as hospitality, curriculum relevance and skill alignment directly influence graduate productivity and industry readiness.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **descriptive and comparative research design** to examine curriculum reform in hospitality education in India through a systematic comparison of the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models implemented under the aegis of the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology. The study is exploratory in nature and relies exclusively on **secondary data sources**, as the focus is on curriculum frameworks, policy alignment, and pedagogical orientation rather than stakeholder perceptions.

3.1 Research Design

A **descriptive-comparative approach** was selected as it is particularly suitable for analysing institutional frameworks, curriculum structures, and policy-driven reforms. This design enables the identification of similarities and differences between two curriculum models while situating them within the broader context of higher education reforms and industry requirements. The comparative method facilitates an objective assessment of curriculum evolution over time, especially in response to policy interventions such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

3.2 Research Objectives

The present study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. To examine the structural and pedagogical features of the IGNOU curriculum model for hospitality education under NCHMCT.



Cover Page



2. To analyse the key characteristics of the JNU curriculum framework introduced for Institutes of Hotel Management from 2023 onwards.
3. To compare the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models in terms of curriculum structure, learning outcomes, skill orientation, and industry relevance.
4. To evaluate the extent of alignment of both curriculum models with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
5. To propose policy-oriented recommendations for developing a balanced and future-ready hospitality education curriculum in India.

3.3 Data Sources

The study is based on **secondary data** collected from multiple authoritative and credible sources to ensure validity and reliability. These include:

- Official curriculum frameworks and syllabi issued by Indira Gandhi National Open University for hospitality programmes under NCHMCT
- Revised curriculum documents, course outlines, and learning outcome frameworks developed by Jawaharlal Nehru University for IHMs (from 2023 onwards)
- Policy documents such as NEP 2020, University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, and skill development frameworks
- Published research articles, journal papers, books, and conference proceedings related to hospitality education, curriculum design, and higher education reforms
- Government reports and official notifications relevant to hospitality and tourism education in India

Only authenticated and publicly available documents were considered to maintain academic rigor.

3.4 Parameters of Comparison

To ensure systematic and structured comparison, specific parameters were identified based on existing literature and policy directives. These parameters form the analytical framework of the study and include:

1. **Curriculum Structure and Organization** – semester design, course distribution, and credit allocation
2. **Pedagogical Orientation** – theoretical versus experiential and competency-based approaches
3. **Learning Outcomes and Skill Mapping** – clarity, measurability, and industry relevance
4. **Industry Alignment** – integration of contemporary hospitality practices, internships, and practical exposure
5. **Assessment and Evaluation Mechanisms** – formative and summative assessment patterns
6. **Flexibility and Interdisciplinarity** – scope for electives, multidisciplinary learning, and choice-based education
7. **Alignment with NEP 2020** – compliance with policy objectives such as skill orientation, student-centric learning, and employability

These parameters allow a holistic evaluation of curriculum reform beyond mere content comparison.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analysed using **qualitative content analysis** and **comparative interpretation**. Curriculum documents were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes, learning objectives, pedagogical strategies, and assessment



practices. The IGNOU and JNU models were then compared across the identified parameters to highlight shifts in curriculum philosophy, instructional design, and policy alignment.

A comparative table was developed to summarize key differences and similarities, followed by a detailed narrative discussion to interpret the implications of these changes for hospitality education.

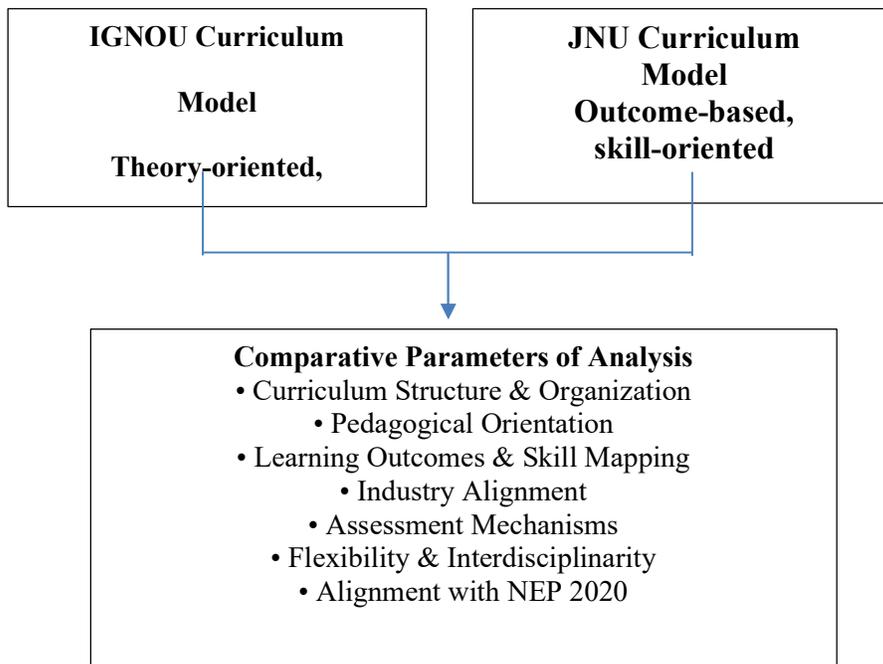
3.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is confined to **undergraduate hospitality programmes** offered by Institutes of Hotel Management under NCHMCT. The analysis focuses on curriculum frameworks rather than implementation outcomes or student performance. While the study does not include primary data from faculty, students, or industry stakeholders, it provides a strong conceptual and policy-oriented understanding of curriculum reform.

3.7 Conceptual Framework for Comparative Analysis

The study adopts a structured conceptual framework to analyse curriculum reform in hospitality education. The framework positions curriculum reform as the independent construct, examined through key analytical dimensions including curriculum structure, pedagogical orientation, learning outcomes, industry alignment, assessment mechanisms, flexibility, and policy compliance under NEP 2020.

These dimensions collectively influence educational quality, skill development, and graduate employability outcomes in hospitality education. The framework enables systematic comparison between the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models and provides a policy-oriented lens for interpretation.



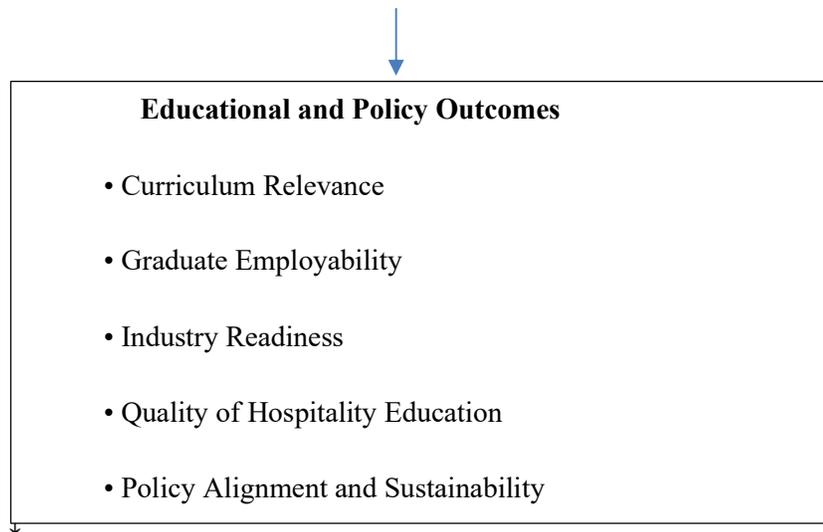


Figure 1: Conceptual framework adopted for the comparative analysis

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework adopted for the comparative analysis of the IGNOU and JNU curriculum models under NCHMCT. The framework illustrates how differences in curriculum design and pedagogical orientation are examined through defined analytical parameters, which in turn influence educational quality, employability, and policy alignment in hospitality education.

3.8 Limitations

As the study is based solely on secondary data, it does not capture experiential feedback from learners or educators. Additionally, since the JNU curriculum is relatively recent, long-term outcomes related to employability and industry impact cannot yet be empirically assessed. These limitations, however, do not undermine the relevance of the comparative insights generated.

The use of secondary data is appropriate for this study as curriculum reform is a policy-driven and document-intensive phenomenon requiring institutional-level analysis rather than individual perception-based data.

4. Comparative Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Curriculum Transition

The transition from the IGNOU-developed curriculum to the JNU framework under NCHMCT represents a **paradigm shift in hospitality education in India**. This shift is not merely structural but reflects a broader transformation in educational philosophy—from content transmission to competency development. The reform aligns with global trends emphasizing experiential learning, employability, and policy-driven education.



4.2 Comparative Analysis of IGNOU and JNU Curriculum Models

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of IGNOU and JNU Curriculum Models under NCHMCT

Parameter	IGNOU Curriculum Model	JNU Curriculum Model
Curriculum Philosophy	Knowledge-centric, theory-heavy	Outcome-based, competency-driven
Curriculum Structure	Rigid and standardized	Flexible and modular
Learning Outcomes	Implicit and content-oriented	Clearly defined and measurable
Pedagogical Approach	Self-learning and lecture-based	Experiential, participatory, and blended
Industry Alignment	Limited and indirect	Strong, explicit, and contemporary
Skill Orientation	Secondary to theory	Central focus
Assessment Methods	End-term examinations dominant	Continuous and diversified assessment
Interdisciplinarity	Minimal	Integrated and encouraged
NEP 2020 Alignment	Partial	High

4.3 Curriculum Structure and Organization

The IGNOU curriculum was designed primarily to support **distance and open learning**, resulting in a standardized and uniform structure across IHMs. While this ensured consistency and academic depth, it often limited institutional flexibility. Courses were content-heavy, with extensive theoretical coverage that sometimes exceeded practical applicability.

In contrast, the JNU curriculum adopts a **modular and flexible structure**, allowing better alignment with semester-wise learning outcomes and skill progression. The inclusion of electives, project-based learning, and industry-linked modules reflects a learner-centric approach advocated by NEP 2020.

4.4 Pedagogical Orientation

Pedagogically, the IGNOU model relied heavily on **self-learning material and summative assessments**, which were effective for conceptual clarity but less responsive to dynamic industry needs. Practical exposure existed but was not always pedagogically integrated with theory.

The JNU model marks a shift towards **active and experiential learning**, emphasizing case studies, simulations, internships, and real-world problem-solving. This approach enhances learner engagement and bridges the gap between classroom learning and industry practice.

4.5 Learning Outcomes and Skill Mapping

One of the most significant reforms under the JNU model is the explicit articulation of **learning outcomes**. Each course is mapped to specific skills, competencies, and employability indicators. This reflects the principles of outcome-based education advocated by Biggs and Tang (2011).

The IGNOU curriculum, while academically rigorous, often lacked explicit outcome statements, making it difficult to assess skill acquisition systematically.



4.6 Industry Relevance and Employability

Industry relevance is a critical differentiator between the two models. The IGNOU curriculum emphasized foundational knowledge, which remains valuable; however, updates were relatively slow, limiting responsiveness to emerging trends such as digital hospitality, sustainability, and revenue analytics.

The JNU curriculum explicitly integrates **contemporary industry practices**, including sustainability management, digital tools, entrepreneurship, and service innovation. This alignment enhances graduate employability and industry readiness.

4.7 Assessment and Evaluation Mechanisms

Assessment under the IGNOU model was predominantly **examination-oriented**, with limited scope for continuous evaluation. While objective and standardized, this approach often under-assessed practical and soft skills.

The JNU framework adopts continuous and diversified assessment, including assignments, presentations, projects, and practical evaluations. This allows holistic assessment of knowledge, skills, and professional competencies.

4.8 Alignment with NEP 2020

The JNU curriculum demonstrates strong alignment with NEP 2020 through its emphasis on flexibility, interdisciplinarity, skill development, and student-centric learning. The IGNOU curriculum, developed prior to NEP 2020, aligns only partially with these objectives.

4.9 Strengths and Gaps in Both Models

The IGNOU model's strength lies in its academic rigor, standardized delivery, and comprehensive coverage. However, it requires modernization to enhance flexibility and industry linkage.

The JNU model excels in policy alignment, skill orientation, and contemporary relevance, though it may benefit from incorporating the depth and structured clarity characteristic of IGNOU materials.

4.10 Discussion and Implications

The comparative analysis indicates that curriculum reform under NCHMCT reflects a broader transformation in Indian higher education. A hybrid curriculum model, combining IGNOU's academic depth with JNU's competency-driven approach, could offer a balanced and future-ready framework for hospitality education.

5. Policy Implications

The findings of the study have important implications for higher education policy and hospitality education governance in India:

- **For NCHMCT:** The results support the need for a hybrid curriculum approach that balances academic rigor with competency-based learning while ensuring national uniformity.
- **For UGC and Ministry of Education:** The study demonstrates how NEP 2020 principles can be operationalized within professional education frameworks.



Cover Page



- **For IHMs:** Greater institutional autonomy in curriculum delivery and assessment design may enhance responsiveness to regional and industry-specific needs.
- **For Skill Development Ecosystems:** Alignment between hospitality curricula and national skill frameworks can improve employability and workforce mobility.

6. Conclusion

Curriculum reform in hospitality education has emerged as a strategic necessity in India due to rapid industry transformation, changing learner expectations, and policy interventions such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The present study examined this reform through a comparative analysis of the curriculum models developed by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for Institutes of Hotel Management under the aegis of the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

The findings reveal that the transition from the IGNOU model to the JNU framework represents a paradigm shift in curriculum philosophy rather than a mere administrative realignment. The IGNOU curriculum demonstrated strong academic foundations, comprehensive theoretical coverage, and standardized delivery, which contributed significantly to the institutionalization of hospitality education in India. However, its limited flexibility, content-heavy structure, and slower responsiveness to emerging industry trends constrained its effectiveness in addressing contemporary skill requirements.

In contrast, the JNU curriculum reflects a competency-based, outcome-oriented, and industry-aligned approach, consistent with NEP 2020 objectives. The explicit articulation of learning outcomes, integration of experiential learning, emphasis on continuous assessment, and incorporation of interdisciplinary and sustainability perspectives indicate a forward-looking educational framework. These features enhance learner engagement, employability, and alignment with global hospitality education standards.

Despite these strengths, the study also highlights that the JNU model, being relatively recent, faces implementation challenges related to faculty preparedness, institutional readiness, and the need for long-term outcome assessment. The analysis underscores that neither model is independently sufficient to address the complex demands of hospitality education. Instead, a balanced integration of academic rigor and skill orientation is essential.

Overall, the study contributes to the academic discourse on curriculum reform by offering empirical and conceptual insights into the evolving landscape of hospitality education in India. It provides a policy-relevant framework for understanding how curriculum transitions can enhance educational quality, industry relevance, and learner outcomes.

7. Recommendations

Based on the comparative analysis and discussion, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, curriculum designers, and hospitality education institutions:

7.1 Development of a Hybrid Curriculum Model

A blended curriculum framework should be developed that combines the theoretical depth and standardized structure of the IGNOU model with the competency-based, flexible, and industry-aligned approach of the JNU curriculum. Such integration would ensure both academic robustness and practical relevance.



Cover Page



7.2 Strengthening Industry–Academia Collaboration

Formal mechanisms should be established to enhance continuous collaboration between IHMs and the hospitality industry. Industry participation in curriculum review, guest lectures, live projects, and internship design would ensure real-time relevance and skill alignment.

7.3 Capacity Building for Faculty

Regular faculty development programmes should be introduced to equip educators with skills in outcome-based education, experiential learning methodologies, digital pedagogy, and assessment innovation. Effective curriculum reform depends heavily on faculty competence and adaptability.

7.4 Continuous Curriculum Review and Updating

A dynamic curriculum review system should be institutionalized under NCHMCT to ensure periodic updating of course content in response to technological advancements, sustainability imperatives, and evolving service standards in the hospitality sector.

7.5 Emphasis on Assessment for Learning

Assessment mechanisms should increasingly focus on continuous, formative, and competency-based evaluation, rather than being dominated by end-term examinations. This would promote holistic skill development and reflective learning.

7.6 Longitudinal Impact Studies

Future research should undertake longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of the JNU curriculum on graduate employability, career progression, and industry satisfaction. Primary data-based studies involving students, faculty, and employers would further strengthen empirical understanding.

Declaration

This study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from publicly available sources. No human participants were involved, and no ethical approval was required. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References:

- Airey, D., & Tribe, J. (2006). An international handbook of tourism education. *Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann*.
- Baum, T. (2015). Human resource management for tourism, hospitality and leisure: An international perspective. *Cengage Learning*.
- Bharwani, S., & Talib, P. (2017). Competencies of hospitality graduates: Industry expectations. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(2), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2016.1202733>
- Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). Open University Press.
- Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education.
- Sharma, R. (2020). Challenges in hospitality curriculum design in India. *International Journal of Hospitality Education*, 12(1), 45–56.



Cover Page



-
- Singh, A., & Kaur, H. (2018). Role of distance education in hospitality studies: An IGNOU perspective. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education*, 8(2), 21–34.
 - University Grants Commission. (2021). *Guidelines for outcome-based education and learning outcomes*. UGC, New Delhi.
 - OECD. (2021). *Reimagining higher education: Skills, employability and lifelong learning*. OECD Publishing.
 - UNWTO. (2022). *Tourism education, skills and the future of work*. World Tourism Organization.
 - Solnet, D., Kralj, A., & Baum, T. (2022). Talent management in hospitality: Contextual challenges and strategic responses. *Tourism Management*, 89, 104408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104408>