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ASSESSING CURRICULUM INTEGRATION AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES OF REGENERATIVE HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

The hospitality industry is crucial to India's economy and cultural heritage. However, traditional hospitality education has often overlooked principles of sustainability and regeneration. This study aims to evaluate the degree to which regenerative concepts have been incorporated into hospitality curricula and pedagogical approaches across Indian institutions. A mixed-methods approach involved quantitative surveys of hospitality educators nationwide and qualitative interviews with select faculty and industry representatives. The findings reveal uneven adoption of regenerative hospitality concepts, with considerable variations among institutions. While some progressive programs have successfully woven sustainability and ethical tourism throughout their curricula, others still prioritize conventional business management teachings. Barriers to holistic integration include institutional inertia, faculty training gaps, and perceived tensions with industry expectations. The study highlights exemplary practices in experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community engagement that enable transformative experiences for hospitality students. Strategic curriculum reforms and innovative pedagogies are recommended to align Indian hospitality education with the emerging global paradigm of regenerative tourism. By prioritizing environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and cultural preservation, hospitality programs can nurture future leaders capable of driving meaningful change in this vital economic sector.

Keywords: Regenerative Hospitality Education, Curriculum, Pedagogy, India

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Introduction

India's hospitality education sector has grown significantly recently, with several universities now offering Bachelor of Hotel Management degrees (Goodman & Sprague, 1991). However, the focus must shift from theory-heavy curricula to courses emphasizing skills and preparing students for the workforce's needs. Several tactics can be employed to enhance the industry relevance of hospitality education and promote hands-on learning (Raghubalan, 2023). In the 21st century, the region's hotel and hospitality sector is experiencing significant expansion. People are exploring new destinations, locations, cuisines, and accommodations (Yadav, 2021). Before hospitality education was introduced as a diploma program, interested students would enroll in it as a secondary study alongside BCom, BBA, and other courses. Anyone who has completed their upper secondary education can apply for hotel management programs, regardless of their stream. Most of the employment opportunities available to recent graduates in hotel management were in hotels and restaurants. The education and recognition of its graduates' talents have led to employment in diverse service industries, including luxury retail, real estate, tourism, events, and more (Airey & Tribe, 2001). Conventional hospitality education has now transformed to include all major service sectors. The courses now primarily emphasize management through hospitality-focused marketing, finance, and human resources (Kim & Jeong, 2018). Several aspects of data and IT are also taught to keep pace with technological advancements. As the sector has grown and expanded, the perspective of young Indians on hospitality education has shifted. The landscape of hospitality education will continue to evolve due to its rapid expansion and technological advancements (Agarwal, 2022). The NEP 2020 has implemented a significant overhaul of the educational system to impact hospitality education positively. A parliamentary act designating certain institutions as "institutions of national importance" is currently being developed to boost their confidence (Sigala, 2004). This Act will provide a competitive edge in their offerings by incorporating industry-oriented research into the curriculum in keeping with the spirit of the new education strategy. Consequently, the research conducted by staff and students will likely reach a level where the industry is prepared to pay for the reports produced and seek their assistance with urgent issues (BW Hotelier, 2021). At its core, regenerative hospitality prioritizes preserving and actively regenerating the surrounding environment, community, and culture. Doing so transcends many current discussions on sustainability, which often focus on completing challenging international projects. Instead, it integrates local social, economic, and environmental needs into the hotel's design, business plan, and brand ethos to create a meaningful impact. Regenerative hospitality lies at the crossroads of several significant industry trends, including mindful travel (Santich, 2004), nature-based tourism, community-led tourism, and the quest for genuine local experiences. Here are four important concepts that hotel brands should remember as their influence grows and they redefine themselves to remain relevant (Huntly, 2023). The term "Regenerative Hospitality Education" describes a teaching approach that places equal emphasis on regeneration and sustainability. Generally speaking, sustainability seeks to preserve the status quo or lessen adverse environmental and societal effects. In contrast, regenerative approaches actively enhance and restore social, economic, and ecological systems.

This may involve educating students on how to have positive effects alongside minimizing the environmental footprint of hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality enterprises within the framework of hospitality education. Regenerative agriculture, the use of renewable energy, waste reduction, community involvement, and cultural preservation are some examples of techniques that could be incorporated into this. Regenerative hospitality education adopts a comprehensive approach that aims to enhance the well-being of all stakeholders, including the environment (Laurent & Martin-Rios, 2023), local communities, and future generations. It moves away from the traditional focus on efficiency and conservation and inspires students to

consider how hospitality can drive positive social and environmental change in innovative and creative ways.

The hospitality sector is facing a significant challenge regarding a skills gap that affects various critical areas, including customer service, technological competence, leadership, and specialized abilities (Legrand et al., 2024). Academic institutions must implement key initiatives to produce a highly trained workforce capable of meeting industry demands and adapting to changing visitor preferences to address this issue. Although the Indian hospitality sector has recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, academic institutions still feel the effects of widespread unemployment and the closure of several hospitality departments (Gerke et al., 2024). There is a need for increased industry-academia interaction on campuses and enhanced partnerships with leading hospitality businesses. This will help reduce the gap between the demand and supply of skills for recent graduates. Additionally, institutions must hold regular conclaves with all relevant parties, including industry representatives, alums, current students, parents, and faculty, and revise their curricula annually—up to 20% each year (Omar et al., 2024).



Figure 1 Integration place, nature, and Ecosystem

Source: Ibrahim & Ahmed (2022)

One issue is the requirement to adhere to specific regulatory rules (Raghubalan, 2023). However, strict compliance with standards may not support advancements in teaching and learning, particularly in culinary arts and hospitality courses that demand a more hands-on approach. Because the number of credits a student receives is often correlated with the time they spend studying in class, universities sometimes must hold six days of classes to meet academic standards. Instead, developing cognitive competencies, including technical and interpersonal skills, could enhance a student's employability (Thirugnanasambantham, 2023). The primary goal of NEP 2020 is to provide accessible, inclusive, and equitable education. The pedagogy must reflect an inclusive approach to help students connect what is taught in the classroom with the diverse perspectives and realities they encounter. Accepting multidisciplinary is crucial: a singular focus on learning in a specific field cannot fully comprehend the complexity and interrelationships of various components in causation, nor does it offer a long-lasting solution to problems. Consequently, NEP 2020 encourages multidisciplinary (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022). It is necessary to modify instructional methods to impart a multidisciplinary approach that helps students comprehend fundamental concepts, recognize and articulate challenges, and explore potential solutions (University Grants Commission, 2020). The primary aim of this policy regarding higher education is to

eliminate the fragmentation of the sector by transforming higher education institutions into large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges (Yadav, 2020).

This research paper seeks to examine the current landscape of hospitality education in India through the lens of regenerative principles, aiming to identify areas where the integration of current curricula and pedagogical approaches may be lacking. The study aims to identify gaps in understanding, implementation (Hussain, 2021), and perception by exploring relevant questions surrounding the incorporation of regenerative practices. Through rigorous analysis and empirical investigation, the paper seeks to illuminate areas where further development and refinement are needed, ultimately paving the way for more comprehensive and practical regenerative hospitality education in India (Luong et al., 2024).

- 1) How does India's current hospitality education curriculum integrate regenerative principles, and what are the key areas where regenerative practices are emphasized or lacking?
- 2) What pedagogical approaches are employed in regenerative hospitality education in India, and how do they differ from traditional hospitality education methods?
- 3) What are educators' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of regenerative principles in hospitality education in India? How do industry stakeholders view the readiness of regenerative hospitality education graduates to engage in sustainable and socially responsible practices within the hospitality sector?
- 4) What challenges and opportunities exist for further enhancing the integration of regenerative principles into hospitality education curricula in India, and what strategies can be recommended to address these?

Research Methods and Material

This paper employs a qualitative research methodology to analyze data extracted from 12 undergraduate and postgraduate hospitality curriculum syllabi in India. Two distinct data collection methods were utilized: one involving hospitality academicians and the other involving hospitality students. Each group was administered surveys tailored to their respective roles within the hospitality field (Fujishima, 2021). The study assesses the course and program outcomes of regenerative hospitality courses within these curricula. Data collection involves collaboration between hospitality academicians and students to comprehensively understand Regenerative Hospitality Education in India, specifically concentrating on curriculum integration and pedagogical approaches.

Through this methodological approach (De Martino et al., 2025), the study offers insights into regenerative hospitality education's current state in academic institutions across India. This study aims to fill knowledge gaps and prioritize areas for development by examining sustainability phenomena in the hospitality and tourism (H&T) sector from the perspective of various stakeholders, including students and industry practitioners (Zhang & Tavitiyaman, 2022). Through thorough interviews with hospitality institutions in India, the current study evaluated the value of sustainability education in hospitality curricula. The results indicate that the curriculum for hospitality courses needs to be modified to include sustainability as a subject (Mitra, 2022).

Table 1 Research design with data collection tool

Research Approach/Design	Data Collection Tool
Qualitative Approach-Analyzed Regenerative Courses	12 Graduate and Postgraduate Hospitality Programmes with regenerative Courses were analyzed
Quantitative Approach-Hospitality Academicians	Survey/Questionnaire/Interviews with 63 Hospitality Academician done based on curriculum Integration and Pedagogy approaches of regenerative courses
Quantitative Approach-Hospitality Learners	Survey/Questionnaire/Interviews with 128 Hospitality learners on the parameters of understanding, applicability, and method of teaching by instructor

Literature Reviews

What is Regenerative Hospitality? Is It Limited to Sustainability Only?

The concept of "regenerative hospitality" is relatively new in the realm of hospitality. It can be characterized as an aspirational business strategy that focuses on positively impacting the environment, the community, and society. Regenerative hospitality strongly emphasizes environmental responsibility and sustainability, prioritizing both the preservation and conservation of the surrounding natural environment and actively contributing to the regeneration of the local ecosystem (Regenerative Travel, n.d.; Inversini & Saul, 2023). Regenerative hospitality sites allow hosts and staff to co-create meaningful experiences with their visitors, showing significant consideration not only for the community and the surrounding environment but also for the needs of individual guests. Realistic interpersonal and nature-based connections are supported by the well-coordinated emergence of social, cultural, and natural aspects surrounding the properties (Regenerative Travel, n.d.). This engagement aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the various issues that our environment and ecosystems face, including pollution, deforestation, climate change, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion (The Financial Express, 2023).

Regenerative Hospitality Education in India

Education in regenerative hospitality typically goes beyond sustainability. In contrast to sustainability, which aims to preserve resources for future generations and limit environmental harm, regenerative practices actively work to enhance and restore ecosystems and communities. Within hospitality education, this may encompass instructional strategies that mitigate environmental impacts and promote initiatives that improve nearby communities, customs, and economic systems. Regenerative hospitality education represents a sustainable development paradigm focusing on making hotels positive for the environment and society. It is a bottom-up approach that encourages hospitality organizations to integrate the local community's social, economic, and environmental needs into their brand, design, and business model (Regenerative Travel, n.d.). The hotel and restaurant industry significantly contributes to the overall growth of tourism in India, as it heavily relies on substantial natural resources, including energy and food (Yadav, 2022). The utilization of natural resources is crucial for the hospitality and tourism sectors. To maximize the profitability of its businesses and stakeholders, many visitors must visit its locations (Zhang & Tavitiyaman, 2022). The hospitality sector has historically influenced the environment by using solid waste, water and energy consumption, and procuring consumable and durable goods (Sharma & Srivastava, 2021). The hospitality industry recognizes the importance of sustainability, as the triple bottom

line necessitates addressing impacts on the environment, economy, and society (Sharma & Srivastava, 2021).

The process of teaching individuals and organizations how to minimize their environmental impacts, reduce waste, and manage resources sustainably is known as sustainability education. There are several ways in which sustainability education can benefit the hospitality sector. First, the industry can become more ecologically conscious with sustainability education by lowering its carbon footprint and overall environmental impact. Second, by improving industrial efficiency, sustainability education can save costs and boost profitability. Finally, by enhancing the industry's reputation, sustainability education can attract more environmentally conscious customers (Singh, 2023). Education can provide students with the knowledge, principles, and skills they need to comprehend the complexities of sustainability (Berjozkina & Melanthiou, 2021). An educated workforce will be essential for the hospitality and tourism industries to grow, making sustainability a crucial issue. College students' attitudes toward and understanding of sustainability and their desire to work in this field are key factors to consider (Kim, 2023).

How Can We Cultivate Sustainable Futures? Exploring Curriculum Integration & Pedagogy in Regenerative Hospitality Education

One standard description of curriculum integration is "forging connections" between various sources of information. However, teaching and assessment are two essential elements of every curriculum, whether integrated or not (Burke & Lehane, 2023). Curriculum integration (CI) involves combining elements from two or more disciplines when teaching a subject. This entails blending subject ideas, factual content, and competency development across various subjects within a topic (McPhail, 2020). Educational institutions use three communication systems to convey valued information: curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. The perception of what information is helpful for education in any civilization or community is influenced by location, power, and time (Hall, n.d.).

The integrated pedagogy paradigm encompasses self-regulation, practical skills, and theoretical knowledge. An integrated curriculum emphasizes common concepts and crosses subject-matter boundaries to create connections across various areas of study (Boyd, 2023). A new pedagogy for teaching innovation in higher education has been developed using a grounded theory approach. Through a systematic approach of interdisciplinary, problem-based, and experiential learning, multidisciplinary students are guided to develop creative solutions to address conflicting issues in the hospitality sector. The National Education Policy (NEP) states that all educational levels will include experiential learning as a standard pedagogy. This encompasses experiential learning, education that integrates the arts and sports (Bhatt et al., 2024), and teaching that centers on storytelling. Additionally, there will be a shift in classroom interactions toward competency-based teaching and learning.

While there is no ideal methodology for teaching sustainability, it is generally agreed that it should be participatory, interactive, and active. These instructional strategies must engage students and influence their comprehension, reasoning, and capacity for action (Parv, 2021). Students who receive instruction focused on environmental awareness inevitably experience a noticeable shift in their perspective on sustainability and the environment. This approach broadens their understanding and equips them with the means to devise plans for improving the environment (The Financial Express, 2023).

In Outcome-Based Education (OBE), Course Outcomes (COs) assessment is critical to enhancing educational quality. Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs), Programme Outcomes (POs), and other criteria determine the COs for each course. Different interpretations of the OBE concept have led to varying PO attainments depending on the COs (Premalatha, 2019). Evaluating learning outcomes is a fundamental aspect of outcome-based education (OBE). The assessment of course results is essential for raising the standard of education. Learning

outcomes are specific, formal statements outlining what students should learn in a course. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes students should possess after completing the course are program outcomes or POs. Course Outcomes (COs), broad statements indicating the knowledge and skills acquired after the course, can be used to quantify POs (Kumar et al., 2021).

Data Analysis and Result

The data collected evaluates the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches and curriculum integration for regenerative hospitality education. Table 2 focuses explicitly on gathering insights from hospitality academicians regarding various parameters related to teaching methods, experiential learning opportunities (Conway, 2010), interdisciplinary approaches, active learning techniques, industry collaboration, assessment methods, incorporation of indigenous knowledge, use of digital technologies, and consideration of cultural and regional factors (Farabaugh & Castillo, 2024). This data provides a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the current pedagogical strategies employed in regenerative hospitality courses. Table 3, on the other hand, likely delves into aspects of curriculum design, content structure, learning outcomes, and the extent to which regenerative hospitality principles are integrated across different modules or subjects within the curriculum (Verheijen et al., 2024). Together, these two datasets offer a holistic perspective on both the instructional approaches and the curriculum framework, enabling a thorough evaluation of how regenerative hospitality education is implemented and delivered to students (Cardoza, 2023).

Table 1 Data Collected by Academicians on Pedagogy Approach

Pedagogy Approach				
Questions		Parameters (In %)		
Q1	How would you rate the effectiveness of the current pedagogical methods in teaching regenerative hospitality principles?	Very effective	Moderately effective	Ineffective
		42.7	31.5	25.8
Q2	To what extent are experiential learning opportunities, such as field trips or hands-on projects, utilized to teach regenerative hospitality concepts?	Extensively	Occasionally	Rarely
		38.2	27.6	34.2
Q3	How often do you incorporate interdisciplinary approaches (e.g., combining environmental studies with hospitality management) in teaching regenerative hospitality?	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
		46.9	23.4	29.7

Pedagogy Approach				
	Questions	Parameters (In %)		
Q4	Do you believe active learning techniques (e.g., group discussions and role-playing exercises) effectively engage students in understanding regenerative hospitality principles?	Yes, I strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
		35.6	39.1	25.3
Q5	Are there sufficient opportunities for students to collaborate with industry professionals or engage in internships related to regenerative hospitality practices?	Yes, plenty of opportunities	Limited opportunities	No opportunities
		44.8	36.5	18.7
Q6	How well do assessment methods (e.g., exams, projects, presentations) evaluate students' understanding of regenerative hospitality concepts?	Very well	Moderately well	Poorly
		40.3	32.9	26.8
Q7	Do you believe there is a need to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and practices into regenerative hospitality education?	Yes, I strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
		33.1	41.6	25.3
Q8	How effectively are digital technologies (e.g., simulations and online platforms) utilized in teaching regenerative hospitality?	Very effectively	Moderately effectively	Not effectively at all
		37.5	28.4	34.1
Q9	Are there any cultural or regional considerations that should be considered when designing pedagogical approaches for regenerative hospitality education in India?	Yes, I strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
		45.2	21.6	33.2

Table 2 Data Collected by Hospitality Academicians on Curriculum Integration

Curriculum Integration					
Questions		Parameters (In %)			
Q1	How would you rate the integration of regenerative hospitality principles into the current curriculum at your institution?	Excellent 35.20	Good 24.7	Fair 18.9	Poor 21.2
Q2	How effective do you believe the current curriculum prepares students to apply regenerative hospitality practices in real-world settings?	Very Effective 29.6	Somehow Effective 31.4	Not Very Effective 15.8	Not Effective at All 23.2
Q3	To what extent are regenerative practices emphasized in course materials and lectures?	Extensively 38.7	Somewhat 19.5	Minimally 27.3	Not at All 14.5
Q4	How often are regenerative case studies and examples incorporated into teaching materials?	Frequently 32.8	Occasionally 26.4	Rarely 22.1	Not at All 18.7
Q5	Upon graduation, do you believe students are prepared to apply regenerative concepts in real-world hospitality settings?	Yes, absolutely 41.2	Somewhat prepared 17.6	Prepared but not able to apply 25.8	Not at All 15.4
Q6	Are there specific areas within the hospitality curriculum where regenerative principles are notably absent or underrepresented?	No, they are well integrated 36.9	Yes, in some areas 23.1	Yes, in many areas 20.5	Some areas are neglected 19.5
Q7	Do you think there is a need for additional faculty training or professional development in regenerative hospitality practices?	Strongly Agree 30.2	Disagree 28.6	Maybe 21.8	Neutral 19.4
Q8	How receptive are students to learning about regenerative hospitality practices?	Very receptive 34.7	Moderately receptive 25.3	Maybe Receptive 17.9	Not receptive at all 22.1

The current pedagogical methods for teaching regenerative hospitality principles are viewed as moderately to very effective by most respondents (74.2%), while 25.8% find them ineffective. Although active learning techniques (74.7%) and opportunities for industry collaboration (81.3%) are perceived as effective, there is a need to enhance experiential learning because 61.8% report only occasional or rare utilization of field trips and hands-on projects. Interdisciplinary approaches are frequently incorporated by 46.9% of respondents, while 53.1% do so occasionally or rarely. Assessment methods are generally considered adequate (73.2%) in evaluating student understanding. However, gaps exist in integrating indigenous knowledge, with 25.3% disagreeing on the necessity of this integration, and digital technologies, such as simulations, are utilized moderately effectively or ineffectively by 62.5% of respondents. Notably, 66.8% strongly or somewhat agree on considering cultural and regional factors when designing pedagogical approaches for regenerative hospitality education in India.

The data reveals a mixed picture regarding integrating regenerative hospitality principles into the curriculum. While over 58% rate the integration as excellent or good, and nearly 60% find regenerative practices extensively or somewhat emphasized in course materials, a significant portion (around 40%) still perceive gaps in integration across various areas. Similarly, although most believe the curriculum prepares students to apply regenerative concepts in real-world settings, about 40% disagree or feel that students cannot effectively apply these concepts after graduation. Including case studies and examples is moderate, with around 60% utilizing them frequently or occasionally. However, there appears to be room for improvement in faculty training, as nearly 60% strongly agree or disagree on the need for additional professional development in this area. Overall, while efforts have been made to integrate regenerative principles, the data suggests that opportunities remain to enhance consistency, depth of integration, applied learning experiences, and faculty preparedness to deliver a comprehensive curriculum that effectively equips students with the knowledge and skills to implement regenerative hospitality practices in their future careers.

Conclusion

Integrating regenerative hospitality principles into the curriculum presents a mixed picture, with strengths in some areas but significant gaps in others. While course materials and emphasis on regenerative practices are moderate, around 40% of respondents perceive a lack of consistent integration across various curriculum areas (Alnoor et al., 2024). The curriculum's effectiveness in preparing students for the real-world application of regenerative concepts is viewed as adequate by most, but a substantial portion (around 40%) disagrees. Incorporating case studies, experiential learning opportunities, and interdisciplinary approaches requires improving applied learning experiences.

Faculty training and professional development in regenerative hospitality practices are identified as areas needing attention (Rahman et al., 2024). Curriculum reviews and revisions are necessary to ensure the consistent and comprehensive integration of regenerative principles across all relevant areas. Increasing case studies, field trips, hands-on projects, and interdisciplinary collaborations can better equip students with practical skills and a holistic understanding of regenerative hospitality. Investing in faculty training programs (Alhitmi et al., 2024) and professional development opportunities focused on regenerative practices is crucial for enhancing the quality of instruction and curriculum delivery. Moreover, incorporating indigenous knowledge, cultural considerations, and regional contexts (Becken & Kaur, 2022) into the curriculum can enrich the learning experience and prepare students for diverse real-world scenarios (Cloete et al., 2023).

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