



A Literature Review: Challenges and Opportunities in India's Tourism Entrepreneurship Passenger Perceptions of IRCTC Services

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.18130559

Abstract:

Tourism entrepreneurship has emerged as a transformative contributor to India's socio-economic growth, creating employment, boosting revenue, and enhancing travel experiences. With the rapid expansion of digital platforms, tourism services have witnessed a paradigm shift toward innovation-driven service delivery. Within this context, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has emerged as a significant facilitator of tourism entrepreneurship through its diverse platforms in ticketing, catering, package tours, pilgrim circuits, and hospitality-based offerings. As a public sector entrepreneurial initiative, IRCTC has played a pivotal role in democratizing travel accessibility and enhancing national tourism connectivity. However, passenger perception and satisfaction are critical determinants of IRCTC's sustainability as an entrepreneurial model. This paper presents a literature-based review analyzing the challenges and opportunities in India's tourism entrepreneurship landscape, with a specific focus on assessing customer satisfaction and perception toward IRCTC services. The review synthesizes findings from academic studies, industry reports, and public sector entrepreneurship frameworks to highlight key trends, constraints, growth drivers, and service experience determinants. The study concludes that digital innovation, enhanced service quality, and customer-centric strategies can significantly strengthen tourism entrepreneurship through IRCTC while addressing existing operational and experiential gaps. The literature further identifies a clear demand for sustained quality improvements and strategic opportunities in tourism-driven economic development.

Keywords: *Tourism Entrepreneurship, Passenger Perception, Passenger Satisfaction, Service Quality, Public Sector Innovation, Catering and Tourism Services, Challenges in Service Delivery, Opportunities in Travel and Tourism.*

Introduction:

Tourism entrepreneurship is rapidly emerging as a critical driver of India's economic development, fostering employment, infrastructure growth, and regional development. In a country with vast cultural, historical, and natural diversity,

opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures in tourism are abundant. The government's emphasis on "Dekho Apna Desh," "Incredible India," and digitalization initiatives has further enhanced tourism-based entrepreneurial ecosystems. Within this framework, the Indian Railway Catering

and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) plays a crucial role as a public sector entrepreneurial model that integrates tourism, hospitality, catering, and transportation services on a digital platform. Established in 1999, IRCTC has redefined the railway travel experience by offering online ticketing, tour packages, temple circuits, and catering services, contributing significantly to both travel facilitation and tourism-based revenue generation.

Passenger perception and satisfaction are central to the sustainability of such tourism entrepreneurship models. As service quality influences repeat usage, referrals, and market expansion, understanding customer satisfaction with IRCTC services becomes essential. Existing literature emphasizes the role of service innovation, digital accessibility, and customer-centric strategies in tourism growth. However, there remains a gap in understanding how IRCTC's entrepreneurial initiatives align with evolving passenger expectations and industry opportunities. This study aims to address this gap by reviewing literature on tourism entrepreneurship and passenger satisfaction in the context of IRCTC.

Theoretical Foundation:

The foundation of this study is supported by multiple theoretical frameworks that explain the evolution of tourism entrepreneurship, service quality perception, and customer satisfaction in public-sector enterprises like IRCTC.

Firstly, **Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation (1934)** suggests that entrepreneurship is driven by innovation, disruption of existing services, and the

creation of new market opportunities. In the context of IRCTC, digital ticketing, online tourism packages, and catering modernization represent entrepreneurial innovations in a traditionally bureaucratic sector.

Secondly, the **Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004)** emphasizes that value in services is co-created through customer interaction and perception. This implies that passenger satisfaction with IRCTC services plays a vital role in shaping the company's entrepreneurial success.

Furthermore, **Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's SERVQUAL Model (1988)** provides a structured understanding of service satisfaction through five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Applying this model helps evaluate how passengers perceive IRCTC's ticketing, catering, tourism, and hospitality services.

Finally, **Public Sector Entrepreneurship Theory (Klein et al., 2010)** highlights how government-backed organizations can act entrepreneurially by adopting innovative practices for societal and economic development. IRCTC exemplifies this model by bridging tourism entrepreneurship and economic growth.

These theoretical insights create a conceptual foundation for analyzing passenger perceptions and entrepreneurial opportunities within IRCTC.

Literature Review – Tourism Entrepreneurship:

Tourism entrepreneurship has gained substantial significance in recent years as a catalyst for socio-economic development, particularly in emerging economies like

India. Kundu and Rani (2019) highlight that tourism-based entrepreneurship contributes significantly to GDP, employment generation, and regional development by promoting business activities such as travel services, hospitality, and local cultural promotion. Entrepreneurs in tourism leverage geographical, cultural, and heritage resources to create value-driven services that cater to domestic and international travelers. According to Sharma and Bansal (2021), the rise of digital platforms has further revolutionized tourism entrepreneurship by enabling new business models, including e-tourism, online travel agencies, and experiential travel startups.

Public sector involvement in tourism entrepreneurship is also gaining attention. Singh and Gupta (2018) noted that government-backed enterprises such as IRCTC have contributed to developing entrepreneurial ecosystems by providing accessible and affordable travel solutions, thereby stimulating tourism growth. The integration of transportation, catering, and tourism services under a unified digital model is considered a significant entrepreneurial innovation in India's travel sector (Choudhury & Dutta, 2020).

The economic potential of tourism entrepreneurship is influenced by infrastructure availability, government policies, and customer satisfaction. Nayak and Prasad (2021) argue that rail-based tourism in India plays a strategic role in domestic tourism expansion, especially through initiatives like pilgrimage circuits, luxury trains, and budget tour packages. Similarly, Verma and Kumar (2022) emphasize that entrepreneurship in tourism thrives when supported by digital

facilitation, customer engagement strategies, and quality service delivery.

However, tourism entrepreneurship faces challenges such as fluctuating demand, service delivery inconsistencies, high competition, and changing consumer expectations. Khurana and Sharma (2022) point out that sustainable tourism entrepreneurship requires continuous innovation, customer trust, and regulatory support.

Overall, literature suggests that tourism entrepreneurship in India is evolving rapidly, driven by digital transformation, increasing travel aspirations, and supportive government initiatives. IRCTC serves as a case example of institutional entrepreneurship in tourism delivery, providing a foundation for customer experience-based evaluations.

Literature Review – IRCTC & Service Innovation:

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has played a transformative role in reshaping India's transportation and tourism sectors through digital service innovation and entrepreneurship-driven strategies. According to Mishra and Gupta (2020), IRCTC pioneered large-scale digital ticketing in India, transitioning passengers from traditional railway counters to a user-friendly online booking platform. This innovation not only enhanced convenience but also positioned IRCTC as a successful model of public-sector digital entrepreneurship.

Researchers like Rao and Singh (2021) emphasize that service innovation in IRCTC extends beyond ticketing to include tourism, catering, and hospitality offerings

such as tour packages, hotel bookings, and luxury trains like the Maharajas' Express and Buddhist Circuit Trains. These diversified offerings demonstrate IRCTC's strategic focus on tourism entrepreneurship to capitalize on India's cultural and spiritual tourism potential.

The introduction of e-catering services further reflects entrepreneurial agility in responding to evolving passenger preferences (Dutta & Pathak, 2022). Through collaborations with private food chains, IRCTC has enabled customers to pre-order meals during journeys, enhancing customer satisfaction through improved food quality and variety.

Moreover, studies by Venkat and Iyer (2022) indicate that IRCTC's tourism vertical has promoted domestic travel by offering budget-friendly pilgrimage tours such as Jyotirlinga Darshan Yatras and South India Rail Tours. These initiatives have generated significant revenue and encouraged tourism-based entrepreneurship in allied sectors such as transport, accommodation, and local handicrafts.

However, literature also identifies challenges in service quality, website responsiveness, and customer grievance redressal (Patel & Sharma, 2023). Delays in services and inconsistent catering standards have occasionally affected passenger satisfaction, indicating the need for sustained improvements in customer-centric innovation.

Overall, existing studies highlight IRCTC as a dynamic public-sector entrepreneurial entity that has successfully leveraged digital innovation to promote tourism, facilitate economic growth, and

enhance customer engagement through diversified service offerings.

Literature Review – Passenger Perception & Satisfaction:

Passenger perception and satisfaction are critical components in evaluating the effectiveness of service entrepreneurship initiatives, particularly in public-sector organizations like IRCTC. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), customer satisfaction is determined by the extent to which service delivery meets or exceeds expectations. In the context of IRCTC, factors such as ticketing efficiency, catering quality, on-time services, hygiene standards, and user-friendly digital platforms are key determinants of passenger satisfaction.

Mishra and Sahu (2023) conducted a study on IRCTC users and found that online ticketing convenience and accessibility are the most valued features among passengers. The study also revealed that passengers rate catering services and tour package management highly when these services are reliable, timely, and customized to individual preferences. Similarly, Venkat and Iyer (2022) emphasize that the perceived value of IRCTC's tourism packages strongly influences overall passenger satisfaction and repeat usage.

Service quality frameworks, such as the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), are frequently applied to assess customer perceptions in transportation and tourism. The model's five dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—provide a comprehensive approach to measuring service effectiveness. Research by Patel and Iyer (2020) indicates

that tangibility factors, such as clean trains, proper signage, and functional online platforms, positively affect passenger perception, while lapses in responsiveness and grievance handling negatively impact satisfaction.

Furthermore, studies by Gupta and Verma (2022) highlight the importance of digital literacy and technical support in shaping passenger perception. Passengers who are confident in using online services report higher satisfaction levels, suggesting that digital inclusivity is essential for maximizing the impact of IRCTC's entrepreneurial initiatives.

In conclusion, the literature consistently indicates that passenger satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct influenced by service quality, innovation, and user experience. Effective management of these factors enhances the entrepreneurial success of IRCTC, driving tourism growth and economic development.

Challenges in Tourism Entrepreneurship:

Tourism entrepreneurship in India, particularly within the railway and hospitality sectors, faces several critical challenges despite its growth potential. According to Khurana and Sharma (2022), inconsistent service delivery, such as delayed catering, unclean facilities, and technical issues in online ticketing platforms, can adversely affect passenger satisfaction. Additionally, rapid technological changes demand continuous digital upgrades, which require significant investment and skilled manpower (Sharma & Bansal, 2021).

The competitive landscape also poses challenges, as private players

increasingly offer specialized travel services, luxury packages, and online booking convenience, compelling public-sector enterprises like IRCTC to innovate continuously (Singh & Gupta, 2018). Furthermore, fluctuating demand during off-peak seasons, limited awareness of tourism offerings in rural areas, and the need for regulatory compliance create operational constraints. Addressing these challenges is essential for sustaining tourism entrepreneurship and ensuring consistent passenger satisfaction while contributing to economic growth.

Opportunities in Tourism Entrepreneurship:

Tourism entrepreneurship in India presents numerous opportunities, particularly for public-sector initiatives like IRCTC. According to Nayak and Prasad (2021), leveraging digital platforms enables entrepreneurs to reach a wider customer base through online booking, mobile applications, and personalized tour packages. The growing domestic travel market and increasing middle-class disposable income provide fertile ground for expanding budget-friendly, cultural, and pilgrimage-based tourism offerings (Verma & Kumar, 2022).

Furthermore, public-private partnerships (PPP) offer significant potential to enhance service quality, innovate catering options, and develop niche tourism segments such as eco-tourism, heritage tours, and wellness tourism (Choudhury & Dutta, 2020). The integration of AI-driven customer support, predictive analytics, and personalized recommendations can improve passenger satisfaction and operational efficiency (Dutta & Pathak, 2022). By

strategically exploiting these opportunities, tourism entrepreneurship through IRCTC can contribute to economic growth, generate employment, and promote regional development across India.

Research Gap:

Despite extensive research on tourism entrepreneurship and passenger satisfaction, a notable gap exists in integrating these perspectives specifically within the context of public-sector enterprises like IRCTC. While studies by Mishra and Sahu (2023) and Gupta and Verma (2022) examine passenger satisfaction with ticketing and catering services, they often focus on isolated service elements rather than a holistic evaluation of IRCTC's entrepreneurial initiatives across transportation, tourism, and catering sectors.

Similarly, literature on tourism entrepreneurship in India largely emphasizes private-sector innovations and start-up ventures (Kundu & Rani, 2019; Sharma & Bansal, 2021), with limited attention to how public-sector organizations implement entrepreneurial strategies to drive economic development. Furthermore, there is insufficient analysis of how emerging digital trends, service quality dimensions, and customer perception intersect to create sustainable tourism opportunities. Addressing this gap will provide a comprehensive understanding of IRCTC's role as a public-sector tourism entrepreneur and its impact on passenger satisfaction and economic growth.

Conclusion:

The literature review highlights that IRCTC serves as a unique model of public-

sector tourism entrepreneurship in India, integrating transportation, catering, and tourism services through innovative digital platforms. Studies indicate that passenger perception and satisfaction are key determinants of the organization's entrepreneurial success, influencing repeat usage, referrals, and overall revenue generation (Mishra & Sahu, 2023; Venkat & Iyer, 2022).

While tourism entrepreneurship offers substantial opportunities—including digital innovation, budget and cultural tour packages, and public-private collaborations—challenges such as service inconsistency, technological gaps, and competitive pressures persist (Khurana & Sharma, 2022; Singh & Gupta, 2018). Addressing these challenges through customer-centric strategies, continuous innovation, and enhanced digital accessibility can strengthen IRCTC's role in promoting economic development. Overall, the literature suggests that leveraging emerging trends in service delivery, coupled with effective passenger satisfaction management, is crucial for sustaining tourism entrepreneurship and maximizing its socio-economic impact in India.

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Abstract:

One of the most revolutionary technologies of the modern era is generative artificial intelligence (AI), which has developed quickly. High-quality text, images, audio, video, and synthetic data that mimic human-generated content can now be produced by generative AI systems thanks to developments in machine learning and deep learning. These tools enable increased creativity, automation, and efficiency across industries while drastically cutting the time and expense involved in content production. This paper compares twenty well-known generative AI tools, including GPT-4, ChatGPT, AlphaCode, GitHub Copilot, Bard/Gemini, Cohere Generate, Claude, and Synthesia, among others. Important characteristics of each tool are analyzed, including features, use cases, benefits, company origin, and accessibility. Additionally, the study emphasizes the technical underpinnings of generative AI, specifically GANs, VAEs, and autoregressive transformer models. The significance of generative AI in influencing global productivity, innovation, and the future of human-machine collaboration is discussed in the paper's conclusion, which also covers a wide range of applications across industries.
