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Role of Commerce Education in Promoting Tourism
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Role of Commerce Education in Promoting Tourism Entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh



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Abstract

Purpose: Unemployment and limited entrepreneurial participation remain major challenges in Arunachal Pradesh despite numerous government initiatives such as Start-Up India, PMEGP, and the Chief Minister Paryatan Vikas Yojana. Despite its significant untapped potential, the state's youth continue to show low interest and readiness for entrepreneurship, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Methodology: This study investigates the role of business education in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and competencies among local youth in Arunachal Pradesh, with a focus on the Bomdila–Tawang tourist circuit, using primary and secondary data collected through purposive sampling from tourism stakeholders in the Bomdila–Tawang Tourist Circuit. Regression analysis was used to assess the causal impact of commerce education on entrepreneurship.

Findings: It is found that strengthening commerce education, skill training, and institutional support is essential for promoting local entrepreneurship, employment, and sustainable tourism development in Arunachal Pradesh.

Unique contribution to Theory, Policy and practice: The study provides insights for integrating business and vocational education into curricula to foster sustainable entrepreneurship and inclusive economic growth in Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: *Business Education, unemployment, Entrepreneurship, Youth Empowerment and Tourism & Hospitality*

JEL Classification: *I25, L26, L83, O15, R11*

Introduction

Unemployment among youth remains a critical economic challenge in India. According to the World Bank, unemployment data show a 4.6% unemployment rate in 2022, corresponding to approximately 44.85 million people remained unemployed in India in 2022 (CMIE, 2023). Over the past few years, the unemployment rate has been declining, but challenges still exist, including persistent high youth unemployment (13.3%), a high gender disparity in paid work (234 million more men), and a majority of agricultural employment remaining informal (World Bank, 2025). The World Bank 2024 noted that population growth, a mismatch between the skills of the workforce and industry demands, and an inadequate education system that doesn't provide practical, job-oriented training, etc. Furthermore, due to inadequate infrastructure facilities like roads, communication, power, healthcare and education, etc., and several issues related to awareness, accessibility, bureaucratic procedures, lack of proper training, and inadequate follow-up support, etc., compounded the issues. To address these challenges, the Government of India has come up with initiatives and policies such as Start-Up India, Skill India, Make in India, and the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), etc. The New Education Policy 2020 approach to sustainable development to combat educated unemployment by focusing on skill development, vocational training, and aligning education with industry needs to create a more adaptable and employable workforce, etc., has been introduced. Commerce Education is an important factor in promoting entrepreneurial activities among youths in countries like India, which provides a wide scope to business and society (Kumar & Das, 2021). However, despite these initiatives, interest and consistency in entrepreneurship is still a major concerns, which has led to a high unemployment rate in India. The new education policy is still emerging in the entrepreneurship literature only. Indian youth have consistently shown a strong preference for government jobs over entrepreneurial careers (Dalberg, 2021). The iQOO Global Quest Report 2024 reveals that only 9% of Indian Gen Z express an interest in entrepreneurship, while 19% are keen on advancing into leadership roles within large organisations. Both education and mentorship serve as critical enablers for achieving career aspirations (The Economic Times, 2024). A study reveals that a significant majority of youths, i.e. 89% prefer to join Government jobs or private jobs, while only 11% are inclined towards entrepreneurial activities (Gope, 2024). There is a need for more strategies to induce motivation and readiness for entrepreneurship (Harisandi & et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in generating employment, fostering innovation, and accelerating regional development. Entrepreneurship is the most powerful weapon in the hands of one to fight against poverty and unemployment (Santhi & Kumar, 2011). Entrepreneurship is more than the mere creation of a business. It requires energy and passion along with creative minds, to create a dream into reality (Tupe, 2019).

Arunachal Pradesh, the land of downlit mountains located in the easternmost part of India, has a population of 1.6 million, only 0.1 per cent of the country's total population. Despite having the lowest population density, the state's annual unemployment rate is 4.8 per cent, which is above the national average (NITI Aayog, 2025). In a resource-rich state like Arunachal Pradesh, sectors such as tourism, agriculture, horticulture, and handicrafts hold immense

entrepreneurial potential. Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh has shown a significant growth in tourist arrivals with 1.04 million in 2023, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 19% (Gombu, 2025). State's policies are focusing on community-based tourism, such as homestays, tour operators, farm stays, eco-tourism and rural tourism, etc. Furthermore, the State's new tourism policy emphasises segments such as farm tourism, spiritual tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, tribal tourism, border tourism and homestays (Kaul, 2025). State Government and the local community must work together to institutionalise tourism policy for a sustainable tourism business environment (Nongsiej & Shimray, 2017). However, local participation in these sectors remains limited and not satisfactory. One of the major factors contributing to this limitation is the lack of entrepreneurial skills and the absence of strong business and entrepreneurship education at the school and college levels. Business education equips individuals with knowledge of management, finance, marketing, and enterprise creation — all essential for successful entrepreneurship. Therefore, understanding the role of business education in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and competencies among the youth of Arunachal Pradesh is crucial for sustainable economic development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite its satisfactory participation in government initiatives such as *Start-Up India*, *PMEGP*, and *National Skill Development Mission*, Hunar se Rojgar Tak Yojana, Chief Minister Paryatan Vikas Yojana (CMPVY), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Yojana, CM Paryatan Siksha Yojana, etc., the stability of local youths participating in entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh remains a major concern. The economy of Arunachal Pradesh is still underdeveloped. There are multiple reasons behind low economic growth and development, and one among them is no industrialisation and entrepreneurship. Lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and exposure are one of the key factors for low participation in entrepreneurial activities. Most educational institutions focus on general or theoretical learning, with limited exposure to practical business knowledge. As a result, students often lack the confidence and skills to start their own ventures. Still, the state does not have a single dedicated institute for management or business education. Furthermore, none or very few schools or higher educational institutions offer business education-related courses, such as commerce courses, in their curriculum. Thus, the number of successful entrepreneurs remains relatively small. This study aims to investigate the current state of business education in Arunachal Pradesh. It also seeks to identify the extent to which business education influences entrepreneurial development and how its integration into the education system can promote local entrepreneurship in the state.

Review of Literature

Ravi (2025), in *The Hindu*, states that India is facing a huge talent shortage despite producing a large number of graduates, which calls for urgent reforms in the higher education system. The study states that India is confronting a serious skill crisis and suggests that higher education should move towards skill-oriented and industry-linked training or courses rather than traditional degree-oriented courses. Tupe (2019) highlighted that commerce education plays an important role in equipping individuals with an entrepreneurial orientation. Further, both

government and private entities take an active interest in nurturing commerce education and entrepreneurship as tools to relieve the stress of growing unemployment. Yalavatti (2024), in her report, states that entrepreneurial knowledge can be obtained through commerce education, as it provides a strong foundation for developing business skills. Thus, commerce education should be strengthened to contribute towards making India a strong economy. Praveenkumar (2021), in his study, indicates that entrepreneurial intention among students is shaped by personality, family, environmental, and curriculum-related factors, with exposure, training, and institutional support playing a critical role. The study highlights the need for entrepreneurship-focused education, role-model engagement, and skill-based training programmes to enhance risk-taking ability, innovation, and venture readiness among youth. Nongsiej and Shimray (2017) observed that tourism entrepreneurship is widely recognised as a catalyst for innovation, economic growth, and employment generation. The tourism industry, in particular, constitutes a significant driver of national economic development and increasingly depends on the adoption of innovative ideas and practices. The sustainable growth of tourism entrepreneurship necessitates sustained government support, comprehensive training, research, and strategic planning, ultimately contributing to improved livelihoods and broader socio-economic advancement. Similarly, Mohamad and Kulub (2016) found that an entrepreneurial tradition, including a family business background, significantly influences entrepreneurial behaviour. However, entrepreneurial competencies can also be developed through education and training. From this perspective, local governments should strategically redesign their promotional and support initiatives to nurture entrepreneurship effectively.

Objectives of the Study

This research study has been conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the current status of commerce or business education in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. To identify the current status of local participation in entrepreneurship in the Tourism and hospitality industry in the Bomdila-Tawang Tourist circuit
3. To identify the role of commerce education in promoting tourism entrepreneurship.

Significance of the Study

This research highlighted the importance of business education as a foundation for entrepreneurship promotion. It also emphasised the need for introducing specialised courses in entrepreneurship, tourism management, agribusiness, and commerce in schools and colleges. The study's findings will help policymakers, educators, and development agencies design targeted interventions to bridge the gap between education and enterprise creation.

Hypotheses

1. H_0 (Null Hypothesis): Business or Commerce education does not significantly impact entrepreneurship development in Arunachal Pradesh.

Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the role of business (commerce) education in promoting entrepreneurship among tourism stakeholders in Arunachal Pradesh, with specific reference to the Bomdila–Tawang Tourist Circuit. A descriptive approach is appropriate as the study seeks to assess the current status of business education and entrepreneurial participation, while the analytical component helps in examining the relationship between commerce education and entrepreneurial development.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. The population of the study comprises tourism-related stakeholders, including hotel owners, homestay operators, and tour operators operating within the Bomdila–Tawang Tourist Circuit. A purposive sampling technique has been employed, as the study specifically targets individuals directly engaged in tourism entrepreneurship. To test reliability of data, the present study employs Cronbach's alpha test which is most common measure of internal consistency ("reliability"). It is most commonly used when you have multiple Likert questions in a survey/questionnaire that form a scale and you wish to determine if the scale is reliable (Brown, 2002). The primary data were tested using appropriate inferential statistical tools such as Correlation, Regression test, t-test, and F-test at a 5 per cent level of significance to examine the influence of commerce education on entrepreneurship development.

The hypotheses were tested using appropriate inferential statistical tools such as Chi-square test, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation analysis at a 5 per cent level of significance to examine the influence of commerce education on entrepreneurship development.

Concept of business education and entrepreneurship

Business education involves teaching knowledge and skills related to management, finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship to prepare individuals for careers and self-employment. It aims to develop competencies in decision-making, innovation, and ethical business practices that contribute to economic growth and self-reliance (Okoli & Okoli, 2020; Nwabufu & Eze, 2018). Thus, Business education, a key component, equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in the business world. It focuses on understanding economic systems and prepares individuals for active participation as citizens, workers, and consumers (Abdullahi, 2002; Osuala, 2004).

Entrepreneurship is the process of identifying opportunities, organizing resources, and taking risks to create and develop new business ventures. It involves innovation, creativity, and the ability to turn ideas into marketable products or services that generate economic and social value. Entrepreneurs act as change agents who drive economic growth, job creation, and societal development (Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2017). Kuratko and Hodgetts, as cited in Mainoma and Aruwa (2008), see entrepreneurship as a dynamic process involving vision, innovation, and transformation, which requires energy and passion to generate and implement new ideas and creative solutions. Therefore, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in economic growth and societal progress by fostering innovation, creating jobs, and promoting self-reliance. It empowers individuals to transform ideas into viable ventures through creativity,

risk-taking, and strategic decision-making. By cultivating entrepreneurial skills and mindsets, societies can build sustainable economies driven by innovation and opportunity.

Status of employment and entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh and Bomdila-Tawang Tourist Circuit

Employment status in India is classified into three categories: self-employment, regular employment and casual employment. Educated youths, whether men or women, want jobs and aspire to stable white-collar jobs. Although overall educational attainment in India has increased, there appear to be sharp constraints on unemployment, i.e. highly educated youths taking up low-skill blue-collar jobs. Furthermore, there is a significant learning deficit at the school level and in general, and the quality of education imparted by institutions of higher learning remains poor. Although the Government's focus on apprenticeship training is a top priority, low apprenticeship enrolment is an issue of concern.

In spite of Government initiatives, local participation in tourism entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh is limited and remains a major concern. One of the major factors contributing to this limitation is the lack of entrepreneurial skills and the absence of strong business and entrepreneurship education at the school and college levels. The educational institutions in Arunachal offer general and theoretical courses only, limiting exposure to practical knowledge for students. Notably, the state lacks a dedicated institution for management or commerce education. Within the Bomdila–Tawang tourist circuit, which spans two districts, there is only one senior secondary school offering the Commerce stream and a single college providing a B.Com programme. Commerce education in higher educational institutions should be considered as a facilitator for promoting entrepreneurial culture among individuals, as it can teach entrepreneurship and impart theoretical knowledge to potential entrepreneurs (Chauhan, G. 2016). Although the tourism subject has recently been introduced at the school level as a foundational subject, its integration remains nascent, with no dedicated tourism or management courses available for students at either the school or undergraduate levels.

In agricultural entrepreneurship, it has been observed that the exploitation of local resources arising from the rapid expansion of agricultural entrepreneurship by non-indigenous people has emerged as a significant concern for both the community and the government. The increasing involvement of outside entrepreneurs, often equipped with greater financial capital, advanced technology, and wider market access, tends to intensify the use of land, water, and forest resources beyond sustainable limits. This not only exerts pressure on the ecological balance of the region but also raises serious questions regarding the equitable distribution of benefits derived from such activities. In many instances, local indigenous communities, who traditionally depend on these resources for their livelihood and cultural practices, may find themselves marginalized or deprived of their rightful access and control.

Despite the protective provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR), 1873 and the Inner Line Permit system that protects indigenous people, Arunachal Pradesh's economy—such as transportation, restaurants, hardware, and consumer durables—remains largely dominated by non-local, which draws an urgent need to strengthen local entrepreneurship.

Thus, the gradual rise of dominance in local entrepreneurship and economy by non-indigenous may further lead to rising unemployment and social distress in the near future. Further, it has been observed that resource exploitation due to extensive agricultural entrepreneurship by non-indigenous people is a major concern that the community and the government have to ponder upon.

Moreover, the situation may lead to socio-economic disparities, as profits generated from resource-intensive agricultural ventures are frequently concentrated in the hands of non-local actors, with limited reinvestment in the local economy. This can further weaken traditional livelihood systems and erode indigenous knowledge and practices that are inherently sustainable.

Table 1: Percentage of Shops Owned by Local and Non-Local People

District	Non-local Ownership (%)	Local Ownership (%)
Tawang	70	30
Bomdila	80	20
Dirang	80	20
Bhalukpong	80	20
Average	77.5	22.5

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher.

The above table reveals that local individuals are either not actively engaged in entrepreneurship or are involved at a minimal level. Most entrepreneurial activities appear to be small-scale, informal, and subsistence-oriented rather than growth-driven or innovative. This supports the earlier observation that entrepreneurship in the region is largely necessity-driven, arising due to lack of alternative employment opportunities rather than proactive opportunity recognition. At the same time, it is observed that a few locals are gradually participating in homestay businesses as a source of livelihood, which is a positive and encouraging sign. However, this emerging opportunity is also accompanied by a critical challenge. Local entrepreneurs are facing stiff competition from non-local entrants, who are increasingly entering the homestay sector, thereby gaining control over business operations, marketing, and customer networks. This creates an uneven competitive environment where locals, due to limited education, a lack of business skills, and weaker financial capacity, struggle to compete effectively.

Moreover, despite the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) of 1873, which aim to protect commercial interests and local administration of local residents through

"Inner Line permit" in Arunachal Pradesh, the area remains wholly dominated by non-local people. Many entrepreneurial sectors, including transportation, restaurants, hardware, and consumer durables, among others, are wholly controlled by outsiders. This highlights the urgent need for targeted measures to enhance local entrepreneurship.

Status of Business or Commerce education in the Bomdila-Tawang Tourist circuit

The Bomdila–Tawang tourist circuit is one of the most prominent and frequently visited destinations in Arunachal Pradesh. In 2024, the circuit accounted for more than 16 per cent of the total tourist footfall in the state, underscoring its significance within the regional tourism landscape (Gombu, 2025). Tourism entrepreneurship holds significant potential in the Bomdila–Tawang tourist circuit for livelihood enhancement and employment generation. The expansion of tourism-related enterprises not only creates employment opportunities but also contributes to economic growth and an overall improvement in the standard of living of the local community. Aligned with the UN SDGs 2030 and the Pakke Declaration 2047, it aims to position Arunachal Pradesh as a model of sustainable tourism development; recently, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh launched the tourism policy 2025-30 to focus on community-centric tourism, environmental sustainability, infrastructure enhancement, and digital promotion (Department of Tourism, 2025). It emphasises eco-tourism, community-managed enterprises, and skill development as mechanisms for socio-economic advancement. Recent significant growth in tourist footfalls and changing travel preferences indicate that Arunachal Pradesh can emerge as a tourism-driven economy. Local participation in tourism entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh remains constrained, primarily due to a lack of entrepreneurial skills and exposure reasons the limited integration of business and entrepreneurship education at the school and higher education levels.

Table 2: Number of educational institutions offering commerce or business education in Bomdila-Tawang Tourist Circuit

District	HS Schools having Commerce stream	Under-graduate having Commerce course
Tawang	Nil	Nil
West Kameng	01	01

Note. Data as of June 2025.

Source: Data compiled by the researcher from relevant educational records.

The table reveals a significant lack of commerce education infrastructure in the districts of Tawang and West Kameng. Tawang has no higher secondary schools or colleges offering commerce education, while West Kameng has only one institution at each level. This educational gap has important implications for the development and nature of entrepreneurship in the region.

Thus, to successfully implement the Tourism Policy 2025–30 in Arunachal Pradesh, the state needs to introduce the commerce stream in all senior secondary schools and establish specialised higher education institutions offering programs in tourism and management to foster entrepreneurship and strengthen local participation in the tourism sector.

Role of Commerce Education in the Development of Tourism Entrepreneurship.

Growing business opportunities and globalisation have made commerce education or business education a significant part of our daily life. Commerce education fosters innovation and idea generation. Entrepreneurial orientation is nurtured by business and commerce education, as it creates awareness and enables individuals to understand and tap unexplored opportunities in modern competitive markets. A stakeholder's perception on role of commerce education in promoting tourism entrepreneurship has been tested using suitable tools.

Reliability Test

Reliability analysis measures the internal consistency of a scale or questionnaire to ensure it accurately and consistently measures a specific construct. The present research employs Cronbach's alpha test. The Cronbach's Alpha indicates value ≥ 0.70 is reliable for academic and social science research.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Entrepreneurship & Commerce Education Items	8	0.814

Source: Computed data

The Cronbach's Alpha value is estimated at 0.814, indicating good internal consistency, confirming that the Likert-scale items are statistically reliable for further analysis.

Statistical Test results

To examine the role of commerce education in promoting entrepreneurship, correlation and regression analyses were employed. These statistical techniques were used to assess the strength, direction, and predictive relationship between commerce education and entrepreneurship development. The analysis was further supported by t-test and F-test to determine the statistical significance of the estimated relationship and the overall regression model.

Table 4: Statistical Result

Variables	Correlation (r_s)	Significance (p-value)	F-value	Estimated Regression equation
Commerce Education & Entrepreneurship	0.780	< 0.01	14.02	$Y = -0.900 + 1.507X$

Source: Computed data

The correlation analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between commerce education and entrepreneurship ($r = 0.780$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that respondents with greater exposure to commerce and business education tend to report higher levels of entrepreneurial orientation and capability. The strength and statistical significance of the relationship provide empirical support for the proposition that commerce education is relevant to entrepreneurship development.

The finding is consistent with Tupe (2019), who emphasised that commerce education contributes to the development of entrepreneurial orientation. It also supports Yalavatti (2024), who highlighted the importance of commerce education in developing business knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. Similarly, Praveenkumar (2021) found that curriculum exposure, training and institutional support play an important role in developing entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the strong positive correlation found in the present study corroborates the existing literature and provides empirical evidence in the context of Arunachal Pradesh.

The finding is particularly relevant to tourism entrepreneurship. Nongsiej and Shimray (2017) identified tourism entrepreneurship as an important contributor to innovation, employment generation and economic development and emphasised the importance of training and government support. In Arunachal Pradesh, where tourism provides opportunities through homestays, hotels, tour operations, restaurants, transportation and other allied activities, commerce education can provide essential knowledge of accounting, financial management, marketing, taxation and business planning.

Table 5: Coefficients Table

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	-0.900	-1.095	0.302
Commerce Education	1.507	3.744	0.005

Source: Computed data

The regression analysis further supports the relationship. The estimated regression equation is:

$$Y = -0.900 + 1.507X$$

where Y represents entrepreneurship development and X represents commerce education. The regression coefficient of commerce education ($\beta = 1.507$) is positive and statistically significant ($t = 3.744$, $p = 0.005$). This indicates that an increase in exposure to commerce education is associated with a corresponding increase in the predicted level of entrepreneurship development. The overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 14.02$), indicating that commerce education significantly contributes to explaining variations in entrepreneurship development.

This finding further corroborates Mohamad, Zaleha and Kulub (2016), who observed that entrepreneurial competencies can be developed through education and training. It is also consistent with Ravi (2025), who highlighted the need to move towards skill-oriented and industry-linked higher education to address the emerging skill gap. The present study extends these arguments by providing empirical evidence that commerce education is significantly associated with entrepreneurship development within the tourism context of Arunachal Pradesh.

Thus, we reject the null hypothesis H_0 : Business or Commerce education does not significantly impact entrepreneurship development in Arunachal Pradesh, and accept the alternative hypothesis that commerce education plays a significant and substantive role in promoting entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh since the relationship is strong, positive, and statistically significant.

Recommendations

1. **Introduction of Commerce Stream:** Introduce Commerce streams in government higher secondary schools in Dirang, Rupa, Kalaktang, Bhalukpong, Nafra, and Thrizino to improve access to business and entrepreneurship education and encourage local entrepreneurship.
2. **Dedicated Professional Institution:** Establish a specialized higher education institution in the Bomdila–Tawang region focusing on Tourism and Agricultural Entrepreneurship, with programmes aligned with local economic opportunities.
3. **Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Training:** Establish Entrepreneurship Development and Skill Training Centres at the subdivision level to provide practical training in tourism, agriculture, food processing and small-business management.
4. **Support for Indigenous Entrepreneurs:** Strengthen policies that provide priority access, opportunities and institutional support to indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly in sectors with significant external participation.

5. Sustainable Resource Management: Strengthen monitoring and regulatory mechanisms for land and agricultural resource use to ensure sustainability and prevent exploitation of local resources by external entities.

Conclusion

The study concludes that strengthening commerce and entrepreneurship education, along with practical skill development and institutional support, is essential for increasing local participation in tourism entrepreneurship in Arunachal Pradesh. Integrating commerce, tourism, and management education with vocational and skills-based training can equip youth with the knowledge and competencies required for self-employment, business creation, and value-added enterprises in tourism, agriculture, and related sectors. The study identifies significant gaps in the existing business education curriculum and highlights the need to introduce Commerce at the senior secondary level and establish specialised higher education institutions focusing on tourism, management, and entrepreneurship. Such initiatives can promote local entrepreneurship, employment generation, and inclusive economic development while supporting the objectives of self-reliance and entrepreneurship development envisaged under the Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Policy 2025–26. Furthermore, accessible short-term skills training, institutional support, and government handholding are necessary to address labour-market skill gaps and mismatches. These measures can enhance youth employability, encourage local participation, and contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and locally driven tourism development in the state.

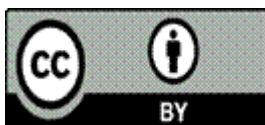
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