

CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: A CONCEPTUAL BASED APPROACH

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ABSTARCT

The tourism and hospitality sector has been severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak globally and resulted great changes in each and every sector. This pandemic has transformed the whole scenario of the tourism and hospitality industry across the world. However, the aim of the present study is to investigate the factors influencing the tourism industry from diverse perspectives. This study reflects the widespread outcomes of the pandemic along with the strategies to cope with them. The nature of the study is the conceptual-based and descriptive approach. The findings of the study reflect that COVID-19 made the industry very weak and leave on ventilator. In contrast, some prospects came into the limelight by which the tourism industry might grow as earlier. Some technological and environmental reforms also took place during the pandemic. Moreover, some new forms like virtual tourism have also come to light during the pandemic period to reform the industry. Hence, this study reports all the dimensions related to tourism and COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, Tourism, Environment, Education, Hospitality industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 was promulgated as a pandemic in January 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). Almost each and every sector has terribly affected by this transmissible disease. Several precautions were prescribed by state and central governments to minimize the transmission of the deadly disease such as wearing masks, keeping social distancing, frequently washing hands, remaining their homes, avoid crowds and public gatherings, regularly clean all shared surfaces etc. Moreover, administrative authorities of particular countries have imposed lockdown in phased manner and cancelled international flights (Pandey et al., 2020). In spite of these preventive strategies, as of 25 April 2022, World Health Organization (WHO) reported 510,270,667 confirmed cases and 6,233,526 deaths worldwide, particularly, in India, the number of confirmed cases were 43,072,176 and 523,753 deaths so far (WHO, 2020). This pandemic proved as a curse for tourism and hospitality industry. All the tourism activities froze worldwide by this unprecedented outbreak. People avoid travelling and adopt safety protocols during such conditions to prevent this disease (Jaipuria et al., 2021).

India is an abode of rich cultural-heritage, unique traditions and unrivalled hospitality as well as marvelous destinations which attract national and international tourists from every corner of the world. India has considerable position in travel and tourism sector across the world. India has 3rd rank among 185 countries with respect to the contribution in GDP (Sharma et al., 2021). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) 2018, the Indian tourism sector has provided a substantial amount of employment i.e., created approximate 87.5 million jobs along with 12.75% of employment. Furthermore, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), India has obtained 34th position in travel and tourism competitiveness report 2019. Tourism is a major means of employment, tax collection and

earnings of foreign exchange. Hence, tourism sector is considered as a huge source of economic development and employment of a particular nation by which multiple advancement and development could take place. Unfortunately, COVID-19 pandemic has paralyzed the tourism and hospitality industry worldwide and leave on ventilator (Arshad et al., 2021). To deal with such crises occurred by the pandemic, there are multiple initiatives and prospects came into limelight to realign the industry.

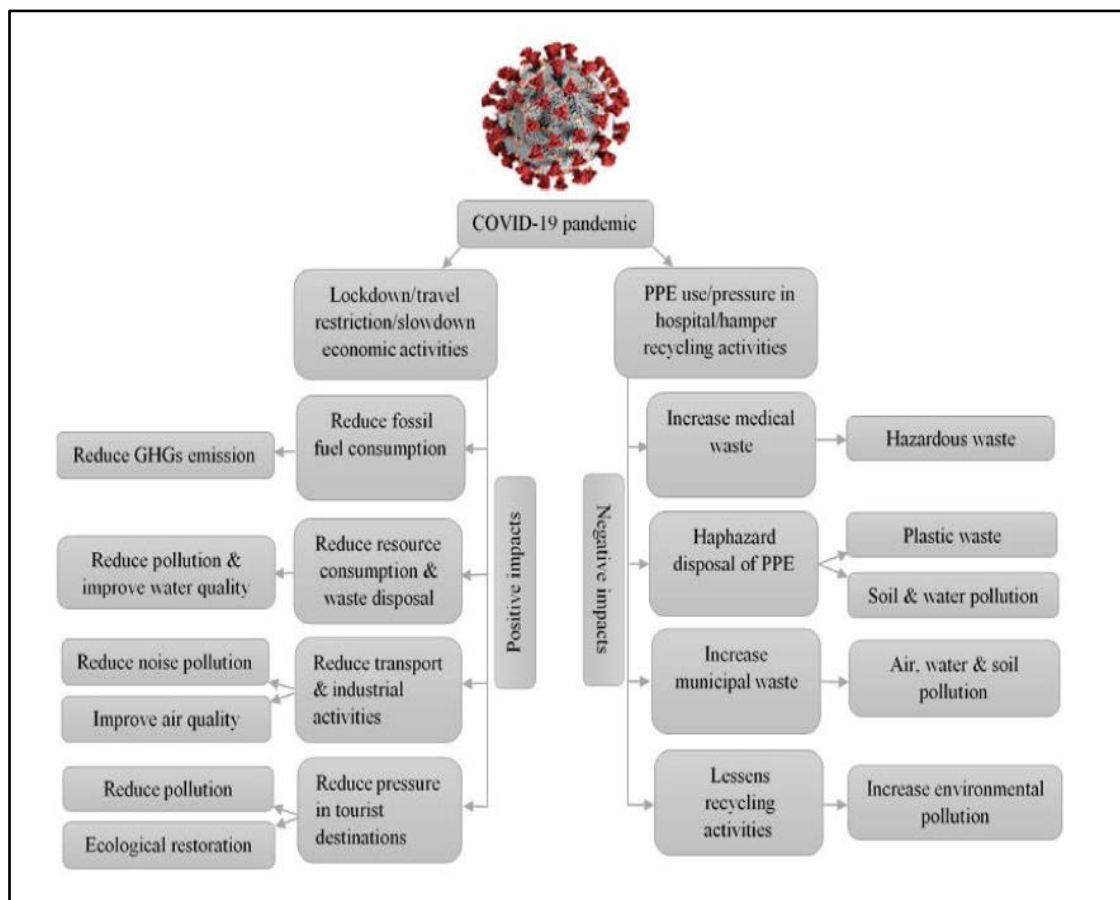


Figure 1. Positive and Negative Impacts of Covid-19 (Source: Rume and Islam (2020))

Despite the bearing of heavy loss by the tourism and hospitality industry, there are some prospects also carried out during such abnormal condition. Multiple alternatives and innovative approaches are introduced in order to explore a destination and travelling from one place to another .Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) reckoned that COVID-19 pandemic provides

opportunities to transform the traditional pattern of tourism towards new paradigm and sustainability. Furthermore, during the pandemic, few environmental advantages are taken places such as improved air and water quality due to less movement of people, reduce the emission of pollution because of the lockdowns and travel restrictions (Rume & Islam, 2020). Due to the staying home norm people enhanced the use of technological means during/post-pandemic, in which E-learning popularized that reduce paper consumption, resists the cutting of trees and leads to conserving the environment (Agarwal et al., 2021). Moreover, E-learning has the potential to significantly minimize energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions.

Virtual tourism is one of the types of tourism which highly emerge in the period of the pandemic (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Most of the people have experienced of virtual tourism during the outbreak. Virtual tourism is the form of tourism that is completely based on technology. “Virtual tourism is essentially a hybrid concept- it combines both the notions of virtual reality and tourism. In essence, virtual tourism facilitates a tourism experience, without actually having to travel anywhere”. Virtual tourism is a consumer-friendly phenomenon that provide virtual experience of a particular destination without leaving their usual environment (Abbas et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2022). Virtual tourism has proved as one the components that can reconstruct the tourism industry after post-pandemic. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2020), COVID-19 provides a chance to move from traditional pattern to novel paradigms which leads to sustainability.

Keeping in view of all the challenges and prospects of COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality sector, following questions have been proposed to conduct this study:

1. What is the influence of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry from diverse perspective?

2. Is there any post-pandemic prospect to rebuild the tourism and hospitality industry?

This study is an attempt to report the answers of the above research questions. The answers reveal the significance of the study and would be helpful for the academicians, industrialist and practitioners to formulate the policies on the basis of the findings of the study.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

People become much conscious about their safety during travel or explore a destination after the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, they avoid travelling without much need (Foo et al., 2021). Tourist movement has also affected by the natural disaster (earthquakes forest fires, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions) and infectious diseases (swine flu, plague, Ebola virus, corona virus). Minimize the health risk is the first and foremost priority of the people before travelling to a site (Jones & Comfort, 2020). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic completely changed the perception and priorities of tourist to explore a destination. Besides, the pandemic has introduced numerous alternatives to spend lives smoothly. One of them, E-learning is the most significant tool that proved a panacea for educational world and make teaching-learning more convenient. E-learning revealed remarkable consequences on public health and environment during/post pandemic period (Agarwal et al., 2021).

Due to the travel restrictions and other norms of governments, travel and tourism industry severely affected globally. There will be no revenue in the hotels, motels, or restaurants if there are no tourists or travelers in the area. Many cancellations were reported in the tourism industry and the business as a whole as a result of the pandemic limitations enforced (Jafari et al., 2021). Travel and tourism sector could be a major contributor to the rise in pandemic instances. Various transportation techniques are among the behaviors that aid in the spread of the epidemic.

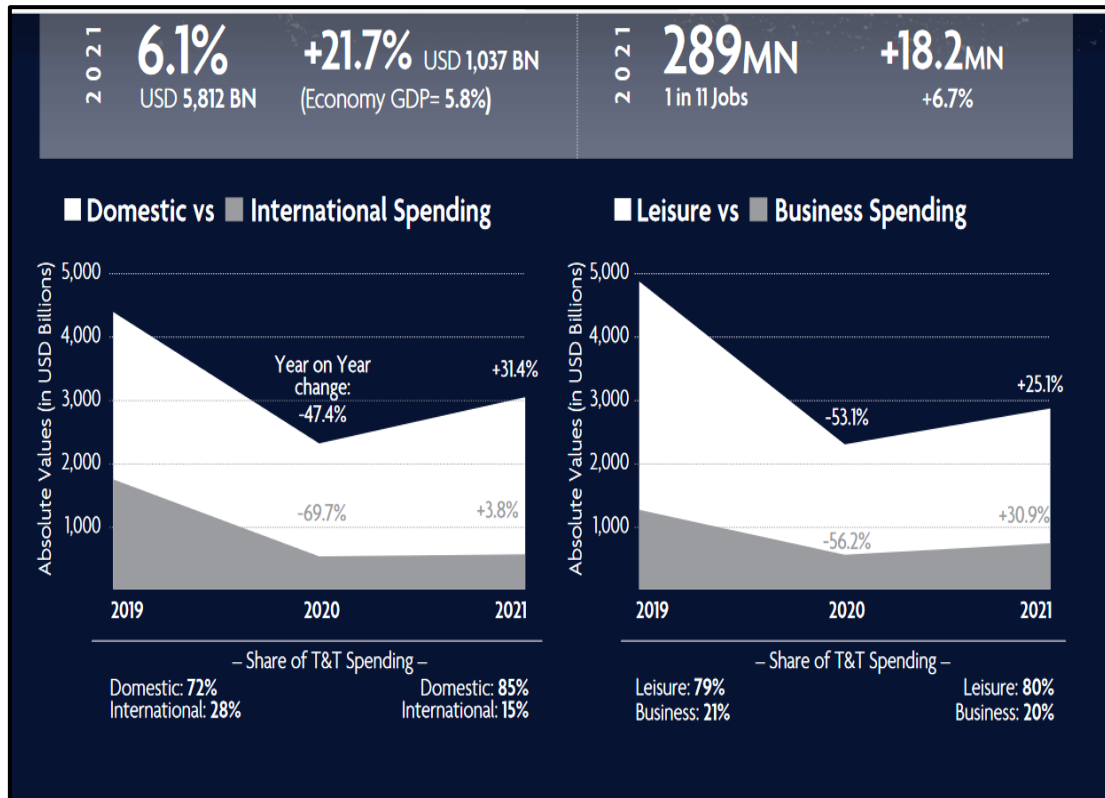


Figure 2. Share of Spending on Travel and Tourism (Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022)

Actually, movement of people national or international level can be the key sources of spreading an infectious disease globally. In the eye of researcher that is limited, no another fastest alternative which might be a source of spreading a disease except travel and tourism (Duro et al., 2021). Table 1 exhibits the pandemics that have been spread earlier worldwide in twentieth and twenty-one centuries. Whenever pandemic happened in any corner of the globe, world faced crises particularly, travel and hospitality sector highly affected (Aronica et al., 2022).

Table 1

Contribution in GDP and Employment in the years 2019, 2020 and 2021

| Years | Contribution in GDP | Contribution in Employment |
|-------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2019 | 10.3% (USD 9,630 BN) | 333 Million (1 in 10 jobs) |
| 2020 | 5.3% (USD 4,775 BN) | 271 Million (1 in 12 jobs) |
| 2021 | 6.1% (USD 5,812 BN) | 289 Million (1 in 11 jobs) |

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, 2022

Table 2

Pandemics, and their Remedial Measures

| Year | Name of the Disease | Coverage Area | Mortality Rate | Remedial Measures |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1918–1920 | Spanish flu (Influenza) | Global | Around 100 million | World Health Organization developed special Pandemic influenza preparedness framework’ to combat it |
| 1957–1958 | Asian flu (Influenza) | Global | 1–2 million | Early introduction of vaccine and government policy measures |
| 1968–1969 | Hong-Kong flu (Influenza) | Global | 1–2 million | Reducing exposure of humans to infected poultry, segregation of water supply and strict import measure of poultry products |
| 1960–till date | HIV/AIDS | Global | 35 million | Social and economic reforms along with advanced medical programme and government interventions to control the disease |
| 1961–till date | Cholera | Global | 143,000 | Targeted sanitation strategy, mass vaccination, clean drinking water supply, educational awareness programmes |
| 1974 | Smallpox | India | 26,000 | Organized effort and government policy along with |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1994 | Plague | India | 56 | sustained efforts with vaccine Introduction of vaccine along with travel restrictions and tetracycline or doxycycline for adults and sulphonamide for kids between the age group of 8 years |
| 2002– 2003 | SARS | 37 Countries | 774 | Vaccine under development international travel restricted |
| 2009 | Swine flu | Global | 284,000 | Community mitigation interventions to control the disease |
| 2014– 2016 | Ebola | Africa | 11,235 | Experimental treatment along with vaccine is available |
| 2015–till date | Zika | Brazil | 50 | Treatment under development |
| 2016 | Dengue | Global | 38,000 | Hygiene and sanitation protocols along with medical treatment to cure the patients |
| 2019– present | COVID-19 | Global | ---- | Social distancing, vaccination, limited mobility with restricted travel options |

Source: Bloom and Cadarette (2019), Pandey et al. (2021)

Among all the pandemics, COVID-19 has long period as from December 2019 to till date and it has recorded highest death rate ever across the world. COVID-19 pandemic has proved as a key factor in massive dropdown of tourist arrivals, heavy loss in GDP contribution, fall in foreign exchange earnings, and highly impactful on fall of employment (Zhang et al., 2021). Such impacts have seen worldwide while some areas were much affected i.e., tourism and hospitality industry. Due to this COVID-19 outbreak, approximate 100.8 million jobs (31% of total jobs) have lost in tourism industry (WTTC, 2020).

Therefore, COVID-19 pandemic has severely damaged the entire tourism and hospitality industry all over the world. In contrast, few strengths and opportunities also came to light during the pandemic such as reduction in CO₂ emissions, emergence of virtual tourism and increasing the awareness of information technology among tourists (Chirisa et al, 2020). Environmental benefits are also came forth amid the period of pandemic. Most of the

countries recorded the minimum percentage of air pollution which has declined due to the 'lockdown' and 'stay at home' strategies. Hence, COVID-19 has proved a curse for human lives and a benediction for environment. Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive insight into the consequences of the recent pandemic and reports the strategies to cope with them effectively.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a conceptual-based that adopted a narrative approach. The review of literature extends with past pandemics, their mortality rate and remedial measures. This study reports the detriment as well as benefits (if any) of the pandemic and suggests sustainability recovery measures for industrialists, practitioners, and stakeholders the tourism and hospitality industry. The literature has been extracted from the Scopus and Google scholar published in the most sensitive years (2020, 2021, 2022) of COVID-19. The keywords 'COVID-19' and 'tourism industry' have been used in searching for the literature.

4. RESULT

Because of COVID-19, the industry became extremely fragile and had to be put on ventilators. On the other hand, several opportunities that might allow the tourism industry to develop as it did in the past emerged into the spotlight. a number of technological and environmental factors reforms were also carried out throughout the pandemic that was going on. In addition, during the pandemic time, various novel kinds of tourism, such as virtual tourism, have surfaced, which are helping to reform the business. Tourists have prioritized safety and health concerns before planning to explore a destination. Travellers choose places to visit near their homes for staycation or vacation. Eco-tourism, rural tourism and other nature-based activities have been popular among travel choices because of the travel restrictions. A sense of local hood, sustainability and authenticity have been developed

among consumers. The youth is showing great interest in travelling while travel plans are being put on hold by senior citizens and retirees.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite numerous hurdles and issues seen in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism and hospitality industry has earned many opportunities to reform. The inclusion of the information technology is an important aspect of the development of the industry. Virtual tourism is also a determinant of information technology, making possible tourism activities virtually accessible while sitting in their homes during the pandemic. “Virtual tourism is the use of technology to artificially enhance or create a tourism experience.”. Besides, most countries are planning to encourage sustainable transformation keeping in mind the pandemic results. People became more cautious about their health after the pandemic which resulted in sensitivity in choosing the tourist destinations. Environmental benefits have been seen during/post-pandemic such as improvement in the quality of air and water and reduction of the emission of pollution. Eco-friendly tourist destinations are being prioritized by tourist. Besides, a new reform has come in education sector i.e., emergence of technical instruments which assist in teaching and learning. Besides, new reform has come in education sector like the emergence of technical instruments which assist in teaching and learning. E-learning has proved a very effective tool during the pandemic for making teaching-learning convenient without violation of the pandemic norms. Furthermore, COVID-19 has completely changed the travelling behavior, preferences and habits of tourists. Organizations and managers are suggested to pay attention at the time of formulating policies and strategies to deal with such unprecedented conditions.

6. LMITATION AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This piece of work also has few limitations. First, this study has been conducted with secondary data (research papers, articles, annual reports etc.), empirical study (primary data) could be applied for future research. Only two database Scopus and Google Scholar have been used for data extraction. For future research, other database like Web of science and EBSCO could be used with different keywords. The present study has only considered the tourism industry, other service sector could be chosen for further research.

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