



STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA'S HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality and tourism industry is widely regarded as the backbone of economic development, particularly in developing countries. This lucrative industry, however, is especially vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters. This study examines the influence of the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease-2019) pandemic on India's hospitality and tourism industry, taking into account critical factors such as current conditions, obstacles, and future prospects. The research was conducted using secondary research methods. The hotel reservations and aeroplane tickets have been cancelled. A large number of people in the industry have lost their jobs. This epidemic has had a significant impact on the country's economy as well as the well-being of its citizens. As the intensification of the COVID-19 is being thought to cause a long-term impact, this study could be relevant to the decision-makers in regards to the crucial task of reviving the sector.

Keywords: COVID- 19, hospitality, tourism, India, lockdown, post-pandemic

I.INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourist industry is widely acknowledged as a major contributor to the green economy by promoting a more sustainable development strategy (Wilkes & Reddy, 2015). In today's global economy, it has been the most important and dynamic sector. In 2019, it directly and indirectly provided 330 million jobs, accounting for around 10.3% of global GDP. Despite surviving crises and calamities at various times in the past, the global economy has had such a big and good impact.

Armed conflicts, environmental hazards/pollution, and pandemics are the most common types of crises that affect the hotel and tourism industries. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the Asian tsunami of 2004, the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the Indian drought of 2015/2016, and Avian flu were among the major occurrences. Furthermore, pandemics have often presented the hospitality and tourism industries with unprecedented obstacles, such as limiting demand (freedom of movement, fear of infection, etc.) and supply-side capacity (closure of accommodation and leisure facilities, etc.). As a result, it's difficult to forecast how the tourism industry will fare at this time. Tourism aspects that match the modified standards owing to the COVID-19 pandemic require in-depth analysis, early intervention, and marketing strategies. This necessitates extensive investigation into its effects, modifications, and awareness.

The worldwide economy has been impacted by the COVID -19 epidemic. Global GDP is expected to shrink by 5.2 percent in 2020, according to forecasts. The hotel and tourism business is one of the economic sectors in developing countries like India that has been hit the hardest by the pandemic. Due to attempts to reduce the

infection rate, many hospitality establishments have been temporarily closed. Lockdowns, social distances, house orders, travel bans, and travel limitations are among the measures that have been used. In addition, demand for enterprises that are permitted to continue has drastically decreased. In a nutshell, the fear of COVID 19 has caused confusion and chaos in the hospitality and tourism industries.

In India, as in other developing nations, the hospitality and tourist sector is a critical component of long-term economic development.

In the year 2019, it provided 6.8% of total GDP and 8% of total employment. Domestic travel income is the most profitable source of money in India. However, the sector is seeing a substantial downturn as COVID-19 spreads towards the start of 2020. The lockdown began on March 25, 2020, and lasted until May 31, 2020, taking into account the lockdown's prolongation. The lockdown in the hospitality sector was lifted on June 8, 2020, allowing hotels, restaurants, temples, and tourist spots to reopen. Despite this, it is impossible to quantify the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the sector because the outbreak's course and length are still unknown. Because people's lives and health are still on the line, it's unlikely that good signals in this area will be restored very soon. In this context, a comprehensive study and analysis of COVID-19's impact on India's hotel and tourism industries is required.

II.IMPACT ON INDIA'S HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTOR

COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the hospitality and tourism sector in India. In the following subsections, the impacts on the airline, hotel, and pilgrimage sectors are elaborated.

III.IMPACT ON THE AIRLINE SECTOR

The Indian airline industry is likely to be the hardest hit by the COVID19 outbreak. The expansion of low-cost airlines is predicted to boost domestic tourism in 2019. The aviation business in India has significant fixed costs of around 35-40%. Leasing, rentals, worker wages, and interest are all included in these prices. Low-cost flights under the UdeDeshkaAamNaagrik (UDAN) scheme are expected to connect the country's regions and encourage domestic tourism. India's airport authority also wanted to open 250 airports across the country by 2020. In India, there were 132 airports in operation as of 2019.

Domestic and international airline passengers in India climbed by 14.1 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively, in 2018-19. The number of passengers passing through Indian airports is estimated to reach 450 million by 2020. During COVID-19, airline service has been considerably disrupted. For airlines suffering from low profit margins, liquidity issues, fixed costs, and mounting debt, the two-month shutdown was catastrophic. The percent change in passenger demand in India was predicted to be reduced by around 49% as a result of COVID-19 [24]. During the lockout, the Indian aviation sector is losing \$9-12 million a day.

IV.IMPACT ON THE HOTEL SECTOR

COVID-19's lockout wreaked havoc on India's hotel industry as well as the country's overall economic progress. From 2013 to 2017, 1.43 million individuals worked in India's hotel business [31]. In India, the Carlson Group, an international hotel brand, now has 94 properties and expects to add another 30 by the end of 2023. When looking at the growth rates of various industries during the lockdown, the manufacturing industry shrank by 39.3%, the commercial, hotel, transportation, and telecommunications sectors shrank by 47%, and the construction industry shrank by 50.3 percent. The agriculture industry only grew by 3.4 percent during the monsoon season in 2019, compared to the previous year [23]. Between April 2000 and June 2020, the hotel and tourist sector received a total of US\$ 15.48 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI). The negative impact on the hotel sector is due to Indians' national and international flight cancellations, rail cancellations, hotel reservation cancellations, travel agency closures, transportation halts, and artisan showroom closures.

As of December 2020, The majority of hotels in India are still under construction. Hotel brands like Trident and Hyatt are attempting to raise user numbers by providing discounts of up to 60%. [34]. According to K.B. Kachru, Vice President of the Hotel Association of India (HAI), over 40 million workers in India's hospitality sector may lose their jobs as a result of COVID-19 (The New Indian Express, 2020a). Due to the lockdown imposed by COVID-19, the TATA Group's luxury hotel network is likewise cutting costs. "The sector has never suffered such a fall in revenue in the last 100 years," said Puneet Chatwal, Chief Executive Officer of Indian Hotels Co Ltd. [2]. The TATA Empire's famed Taj brand, which manages The Pierre in New York City, has not slashed hotel employment but has restructured its workforce [2]. In the six months ending September 30, 2020, the company lost US\$ 51 million. Treebo, a budget hotel operator, has adopted a 60 percent wage cut for its founders and management, as well as a paid voluntary resignation scheme for its 400 employees. As of April 15, the hotel chain Oyo had slashed 5,000 workers [11].

V.IMPACT ON PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

Pilgrimage tourism is a blend of traditional shrine tours and cultural excursions organised, guided, and timed by religious organisations or for religious purposes. In India, there are many different religions, and many people follow them. As a result, the number of pilgrims visiting India for religious pilgrimages is increasing, not only among Indians but also among foreigners. Pilgrimages are frequently (primarily) undertaken by followers of major faiths. Pilgrimage, for them, is about pursuing tremendous moral meaning over the course of a protracted journey. Islam, in particular, requires that you make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in your life. Other religions share similar beliefs, and pilgrimages are still popular. In recent years, however, the method of participation in pilgrimage tourism has shifted from a large group to a small group. Foreign travellers bring in a huge amount of money for the Ministry of Tourism [29]. Rather of focusing on the economic impact, Hinduism and other religions place a greater emphasis on the socio-cultural and psychological consequences on the community. Important and well-known festivals have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown. As a result, it has had a negative influence on festival-goers [28].

VI.CURRENT STATUS AND IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN INDIA

India has a total of 38 World Heritage Sites that are protected. More than 170,000 daily-based workers operate on World Heritage Sites solely for a daily wage. Many tour guides, porters, and photographers, for example, work in those locations [6]. Daily-based workers have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, and they are attempting to find other positions, yet there are none available. COVID-19 is also wreaking havoc on their family's lives. In most urban locations, the employer's job is inextricably linked to his or her family. When an employer loses a job, he or she is forced to return to their hometown or village [35]. However, because data for the COVID-19 has not yet been published, it is difficult to determine the exact number of workers who have returned to their original residence. The effects of lockdown and post-lockdown on daily-based workers' health, particularly psychological health, are significant. Furthermore, the closing of schools and kindergartens has a significant impact on the education of children and pupils.

VII.CHALLENGES AND REMEDIES AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 epidemic has been extremely damaging. Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on the world economy, wreaking social and financial disaster [17]. The aftermath of such a pandemic is likely to be more dangerous to various businesses' existence and sustainability [37]. Hospitality industries like the aviation and hotel sectors are in trouble? As previously stated, the aviation sector will be the most adversely affected, with a loss of US\$ 84.3 billion in 2020, the greatest loss in the aviation sector's history [2] [24]. In Asia Pacific countries, more than three out of four tourism employees are employed in informal jobs, making them particularly exposed to the COVID-19 dilemma [11].

In order to recover from the COVID-19 disaster, stakeholders must select the path of least resistance by lowering losses rather than focusing on revenues. When the economy tries to rebuild after the epidemic, it will be more difficult if their industry has no employment. As a result, it is suggested that some measures should be taken, and that the sector's employees should not be restructured. Assume that personnel in the hospitality industry are infected with COVID-19 and migrate to other industries once the pandemic has passed. In that circumstance, there is a chance that the economy will take longer to recover due to a lack of workers. Another issue for the end of the pandemic is that the tourism sector needs to be carefully preserved for employees working in the hospitality sector to start up smoothly [6].

When the Covid-19 pandemic has passed and the tourism industry has recovered, it needs to be boosted. It is important to assess the future of the tourism industry in terms of building confidence among travellers and other stakeholders. The process of preparing to welcome visitors should begin as soon as possible. This necessitates tourism-related loans, support, and careful planning. The stakeholders might then build a variety of tourism circuits with friendly bordering countries. Tourists come from all over the world to visit India for medical tourism since it is still a popular destination. However, because to the pandemic, medical tourists are presently on hold. With visitors arriving from all around Europe, the Middle East, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the United States, the medical tourism industry is unlikely to be put on hold for long. It's because India is less expensive than other countries when it comes to cutting-edge technology, medical devices, and services. Low-cost wellness tourism, alternative treatments, and cosmetic surgery may also be available through the Indian medical tourism market [7]. It is expected that reviving fully Indian medical tourism, which has nearly ceased since the pandemic, will be a major issue in the future.

VIII. LITERATURE REVIEW

Epidemics and pandemics have long influenced social and economic shifts [9]. The nature of such alterations, however, is selective. That is to say, in some circumstances, the changes are minor, while in others, they are significant [9].

According to reports, the COVID-19 is responsible for not just a significant percentage of the health issue, but also a worldwide economic order that is about to be restructured [5] [18] [22] [30]. The World Bank has forecasted long-term socioeconomic consequences [36]. Many countries and regions have had to modify their GDP projections because to a severe reduction in domestic demand and service supply. Similarly, the International Labor Organization [11] has noted country and regional blockades. Non-essential products and services have seen a surge in output. Export-centric countries' economy have been damaged by falling goods prices, which has resulted in a reduction in employment in these industries [12]. As a result of trade imbalances and huge capital outflows, debt repayment for vital goods and services, particularly in developing economies, has become problematic. One of COVID-19's most visible effects in the hotel and tourism industry has been on the airline and transportation industries. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourist sites including as Venice (Italy), Barcelona (Spain), and Kyoto (Japan) were experiencing overcrowding to the point of over tourism. The commencement of COVID-19 had an impact on the tourist and hospitality industry, as domestic and international travellers began cancelling planned vacations. As COVID-19 progressed, practically all countries implemented border crossing restrictions as part of their national emergency plans [10]. Employees of airlines and transportation businesses around the world have been encouraged to take paid or unpaid leave and accept lower pay. COVID-19 has had a big impact on the hotel industry as well. To prevent the virus from spreading further, local and federal governments have enforced bans on pubs, cafes, and hotels. In Europe, around 33% of hotel company losses are expected [4]. Hotels in the United States are facing cancellations, which are likely to result in the loss of four million jobs. Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibits (MICE), for example, are severely impacted, cancelled, or postponed throughout the region. Nearly 30 airlines, including German Airways and Thai Airways, filed for bankruptcy as the pandemic reached its zenith. Many airlines, including Indigo and Emirates, had to cut salaries and lay off employees (The Indian Express, 2020). Revenues from airlines around the world are dropping 44% year over year in 2020 [33].

In India, as in other nations throughout the world, the COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on the hotel and tourism industries. It can be seen in the country's inbound, outbound, and domestic tourism industries. Around 70% of the employees in tourism and hospitality could lose their jobs, according to estimates [28]. In India's tourism sector, estimated losses of \$150 billion are expected [8]. At the start of the epidemic, the lockdown procedure was initiated. Alternative tactics such as social distancing, mask-wearing, and avoiding gatherings have been advocated since COVID 19 daily incidences have decreased (from September 16). These policies have boosted economic activity in the hospitality and tourism industries. However, with the uncertainty of effective vaccines and therapeutics, as well as vaccine distribution to such a vast population (1.3 billion), even if the vaccine is developed, the sector's positive influence will be delayed.

Studies on the COVID-19 epidemic can be found in the hospitality and tourist literature. [14] did a study to investigate the influence of a pandemic on hotel marketing and management practises. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cited authors discovered that various forms of artificial intelligence may open up distinct study streams at the intersection of health emergencies and hotel management. In addition, the study advises that researchers explore beyond standard opinions on the causes and implications of hotel hygiene and cleanliness to investigate guests' perceptions of the cleanliness of individual hotel surfaces. [38] investigated the impact of hotel safety leadership on staff safety behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the role of belief restoration as a mediator and perceived risk as a moderator of the relationship between safety leadership and behaviour. The findings demonstrated that hotel safety leadership had a favourable impact on staff safety behaviour, with belief restoration mediating the effect of safety leadership on safety behaviour. [15] conducted a study to see if job insecurity, as experienced by hotel employees, has a significant impact on job engagement and turnover intentions. Employees in hotels were found to be less engaged as a result of their employment uncertainty, according to the research. Employee involvement can also aid in the reduction of employee turnover. [16] looked at mental health issues as an intervening variable in the influence of COVID-19 as a stressor on nonadherence behaviour and life satisfaction. According to the findings of the study, employees who are at risk of catching COVID-19 have a greater likelihood of mental health difficulties. As a result, these personnel engage in absenteeism and have low levels of life satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction with corporate COVID-19 replies impacted the effect of corporate social responsibility on psychological capital among hospitality employees, according to [21]. In addition to the aforementioned investigations, the existing literature summarises the results of different aviation sample studies. For example,

[26] sought to determine the viability of leveraging loyalty programmes in times of airline industry crises. The framework of American Airlines' Advantage loyalty programme, according to the cited authors, can be utilised as a model for understanding how airlines might enhance their loyalty bases in order to renew travel enthusiasm and use these programmes as safety nets in the event of future crises. Another study by [27] summarises the findings of a national survey of 439 Aruban tourism and non-tourism workers. In comparison to non-tourism employees, the findings suggest that employees' views are often negative, and their anxieties about the future are far worse. The data imply that employees' perceptions of the COVID-19 crisis' perceived well-being and anticipated duration have a significant negative impact on their feelings. [19] conducted another study to assess customers' views of the risks of using shared accommodations such as Airbnb before and after the COVID-19 epidemic. Travelers' risk assessments of social, physical, performance, and convenience increased during the epidemic. Individuals who were more conscious of the pandemic in terms of concern and anxiety experienced bigger alterations in their risk assessments, which is unsurprising. In addition, risk perception differed depending on the passengers' previous experience with the product. The consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak on the tourism behaviour of Turkish travellers were investigated by [13]. Their findings revealed that during the COVID-19 outbreak, the pandemic had a significant impact on tourists' lives, work, and travel intentions, while the impacts on individuals' inclination to travel, leisure trip preferences, and public hygiene concerns varied. [32] study.'s focused on the problems and potential for visiting national parks after pandemic, both in general and in the context of Southern Utah in particular. The findings of the cited authors highlighted the various challenges that parks and gateway communities face as a result of COVID-19, including changing visitor patterns, adaptive measures, and alternative forms of unit management, as well as their impact on the future management and marketing of national parks for tourism. [3] investigated the behaviour of hotel management during the COVID-19 epidemic. Working from home has both positive and negative job effects, according to the findings of this study. [1] obtained data from hotel visitors in another empirical study. According to their research, hygiene management was revealed to be the most important predictor of future hotel choosing behaviour. In a study done by [25] a total of 759 new and repeat cruisers were surveyed (2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, their research provided significant visitor impressions and behaviour data, supporting cruise firms in resolving challenges. [20] looked at how consumers accessed information sources and planned future travel during the COVID-19 pandemic in a study conducted in the United States. The authors discovered that three types of stress (health, personal, and financial) had distinct effects on the use of information sources and, as a result, on reservation proclivity.

IX. CONCLUSION

The author of this report discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian hospitality and tourism industry, as well as its current state. It has been verified that the epidemic has had a considerable impact on the Indian tourism industry, particularly the airline, hotel, and pilgrimage tourism sectors, as well as daily-based workers in the local community. Furthermore, the tourism sector's businesses and employees are under peril as a result of the lockdown and travel restrictions. Furthermore, not only in India, but throughout the world, this unusual situation exists.

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