

Impact of Covid-19 on India's Tourism: A Temporal Review

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a big source and always helpful in generating revenue and a mean of foreign exchange. Scenario in our country is not much different and tourism contributes to GDP of this country in a big proportion. However it's a deep matter of concern for all the stakeholders associated with tourism industry that tourism is the most affected sector in the world due to corona virus disease of COVID-19, in the beginning of 2020. COVID-19 is spreading rapidly at an unprecedented scale across continents and has emerged as the single biggest life threatening health risk in the world has faced in modern times. This paper focuses on the COVID-19 issue in India and its impact on the tourism industry, the paper has some significance, as the tourism and hotel industry greatly affected by the COVID-19 crisis worldwide. India is the 7th largest country of the world and rich with various tourism resources and millions of tourists arrive annually, which contributes to the country's GDP. The need of the hour is to take early steps to overcome the present slowdown in tourism industry by analyzing its long term impacts at the earliest.

Keywords:- Corona Virus, Covid-19, GDP, Tourism Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is getting affected in India and creating major impact due to corona virus. India is an important travel and tourism market. It offers a diverse portfolio of niche tourism products such as historical sites, cruises, adventure, sports, medical, wellness, MICE (Marketing, incentives, conference and events), film, rural, religious tourism and eco-tourism. India is recognized as a spiritual tourist destination for domestic and international tourists. Several branding and marketing initiatives launched by the Indian government, such as "Incredible India!" and "Athiti Devo Bhava" have given a targeted boost to tourism growth. The Indian government has also issued a new visa category - medical visa to promote medical tourism in the country. The incredible India 2.0 campaign was launched in September, 2017 and the "Incredible Indian Mobile App" was launched in September, 2018 to help the traveller to India and showcase their travel experiences.

Indian government has set a target of reaching 20 million foreign tourists (FTAs) in the coming years and also doubling foreign exchange earnings. At this juncture tourism business is getting affected and creating major impact due to corona virus.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that an unknown cause of pneumonia discovered in Wuhan, China, was first reported to the WHO National Bureau in China on 31st December, 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January, 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO). Corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause diseases ranging from colds to more serious illnesses.

Objectives:-

The Indian and world tourism industry is seen to be entering into a great crisis which is also establishing a stock market crash in all the segments. The purpose of this study is-

(i) To study the impact of tourism in India due to corona virus. India's and world's tourism industry is most affected as the visitors are not allowed to visit any country. The hotels, airlines as well as the cruise operations were stationary. This leads to the development of impact on the India's GDP as the virus can't be stopped from spreading.

(ii) To measure the impact of the occurrence of corona virus on the tourism industry in India and globally. Covid-19 is raising a global health alarm which is establishing the healthcare instability as well as impacting the economic breakdown of the activities.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this conceptual work is based on literature reviews from articles, and online news related keywords and research.

This research work has adopted a secondary research methodology and thus the steps to perform secondary research have been strictly followed.

(i) The first step of secondary research is to develop a research question on which the investigation study will be developed. Here, the research question is- *“What are the effects of emerging corona virus in the tourism industry in India?”*

(ii) The second step of this research is to detect the secondary data set.

(iii) The third step is evaluation of the secondary data set.

(iv) The forth step is to prepare and evaluate the secondary data to conclude. For conducting secondary research mainly the researchers perform literature reviews which include textbook reviews, encyclopedia, and journal article reviews. Besides this, news articles and web pages are also considered for these secondary data for the research study. To undertake research on the impact of the corona virus on the Indian tourism industry various published academic journals, government documents, and historical records as well as statistical databases are reviewed that support in gathering the required data for the study.

Tourism in India and hospitality industry:-

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry have occurred as one of the crucial drivers of development among the services sector in India. Tourism in India has noteworthy potential seeing the rich cultural and historical heritage, variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread crossways the country. Tourism is also having a great potential for employment generation besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the country. In 2019, FEEs were US\$ 29.96 billion registering a growth of 4.8 % year-on-year and reached US\$ 5.40 billion during January-February, 2020.

Covid-19 or Corona virus Disease-19:-

The most serious threat to global health is the current outbreak of respiratory disease, the WHO Chinese National Bureau has been informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause, recently named COVID-19 (Corona virus Disease-2019), which was recognized in December, 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) draws public attention to COVID-19. It is a contagious disease caused by a new corona virus introduced into humans for the first time. It spreads among people mainly through droplets that occur when a person speaks, coughs or sneezes, these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of nearby people, these droplets are too heavy to fly far in the air - they travel only about a meter and settle on surfaces. This is the reason human to human spread is happening mainly between close contacts, and the exact time of survival of the virus on the surface is not yet known. The World Health Organization (WHO) mention the most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. COVID-19 infected over 10 million people and caused the deaths of over 500,000 worldwide by June, 2020.

Standard recommendations by WHO to prevent the spread of infection include washing hands regularly, either with alcohol-based rub or soap and water. Avoid close contact with anyone who has symptoms of respiratory disease such as cough and sneezing and when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow.

Impact of Covid-19 on tourism sector:-

The pandemic is estimated to have a debilitating impact on the Indian travel and tourism sector, which includes hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, destinations, family entertainment venues, restaurants and air, land and sea transportation, amongst others. Overall, losses are estimated to total up to USD 16.7 billion. Being a large employment generator for the country, 40-50 million jobs will be at risk in 2020, both directly and indirectly employed in the industry. The Ministry of Tourism has constituted a National Tourism Task force, to be headed by the Minister of State for Tourism to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19 and will include state tourism ministers, joint secretary level

officers of the concerned central ministries, and representatives from associations, such as FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM and WTCII, as well as heads of tourism and hospitality associations. With large scale cancellation of travel plans by both foreign and domestic tourists, there has been a drop in both inbound and outbound tourism of approximately 67% and 52% respectively from January to February as compared with the same period last year. The aviation sector, which contributes 2.4% of Indian GDP, is among the worst affected sectors due to COVID-19. The spread of the pandemic across the country, in the last two months, has led to a 57% decline in the passenger traffic. Following the lockdown in March, airlines have been incurring parking charges as nearly 650 planes of Indian carriers are now grounded. These airlines are liable to pay a lump sum amount of INR 6 million of parking and housing charges. Airlines are also refraining from increasing prices for the summer season. According to the Centre of Aviation (CAPA), the Indian aviation industry could bear losses up to USD 3.6 billion during April-June, 2020 alone.

The outbreak of COVID-19 presents the tourism sector with a major and evolving challenge. In response; most countries have closed their borders to visitors and tourists. While the full extent of the outbreak's economic ramifications is still unknown, India's tourism and aviation sector has been one of the first few industries to be hit. If media reports are to be believed, this crisis is a greater threat than 9/11 and the financial meltdown of 2008-09 and India's tourism and aviation sector faces the peril of its very survival. Closer home, travel and tourism contribute to around 8.1 per cent to India's employment, or 42.7 million jobs. The World Travel and Tourism Council warned that the COVID-19 pandemic could cut million jobs in the travel and tourism sector as travelling is expected to significantly drop worldwide in 2020. Four of the top 10 countries- China, Germany, U. S. A. and U. K. that contribute to about 65 per cent of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India feature among the top 10 countries reporting the maximum COVID-19 cases. Similarly, the top states contributing to domestic tourism both in origin and destination are impacted. These states include Maharashtra, Kerala, U. P., Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. The focus needs to move to encouraging domestic tourism since international tourism will also depend on multiple factors.

In response to the virus outbreak and the imposed social distancing, many World Heritage properties were closed, this has a social and economic consequence on the communities that live in and around these sites. Covid-19 has also suspended many intangible cultural heritage practices with significant consequences for the social and cultural life of communities around the world.

Although this situation makes tourism highly vulnerable, the sector is also in a unique position to contribute to broader and just recovery plans and actions. All over the world, tourism represents development opportunities, promotes solidarity and understanding beyond borders, while domestic tourism also helps to foster cohesion within nations. Besides, the sector plays a crucial role in leveraging efforts to preserve and promote natural and cultural heritage. All this makes the support of the global tourism sector even more indispensable both in this moment of crisis and when societies will enter the recovery phase. This is particularly relevant as the global community has only ten years to reach the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda. If responsibly managed, tourism, which is generally linked to only some of the indicators and related targets, can emerge from the current crisis as an even more critical contribution to the SDGs, supporting livelihoods and creating new opportunities for people around the world.

SUGGESTIONS

(i) Ensure that all hotels will inform the District Authorities about each and every visitor from the affected countries / areas. Further in case of containment no one from outside will come and stay in the containment zone and if the person is already staying in the hotel in the containment zone he will not go outside till 28 days of positive case of that area. Maintain a list of all travelers with phone, email IDs and address who have a travel history of traveling in the n-Corona affected countries, are arriving in the Hotel/resort/home stays/lodge in Haryana. Concerned medical office should be informed about these travelers and ensure the surveillance of these travelers. All the travelers included in the list shall be in isolation in their current place of Stay as directed by the concerned medical officer.

(ii) Any staff or other guests with no symptoms but with history of close contact with Corona confirmed traveler or affected countries returnee after 15th February should be kept in isolation for a period of 28 Days. If symptoms develop, the same should be communicated to the concerned medical officer.

(iii) Rooms, Vehicles used by the guests with symptoms should be disinfected.

(iv) Multi-language "Dos" and "Don'ts" leaflets with helpline Numbers should be given to all travelers and also hospitality staff.

(v) Convene meeting with Resorts, Hotels, Restaurant associations and groups to do capacity building. Establish a cell at their department to facilitate the activities. Cleanliness and disinfection should be ensured. Adequate arrangements for the same shall be made.

(vi) Create awareness on Corona do's and don'ts of the n-Corona should be displayed on all the tourist places.

Mitigation Measures:-

(i) In the short term, protecting people and maintaining a healthy tourism industry are important. Appropriate social protection can often prevent the worst effects of any type of shock, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Casual and self-employed workers are common in tourism related sectors and should be helped where possible. Governments should protect workers. Where some enterprises are unlikely to recover, wage subsidies should be designed to help workers move to new industries. Governments can further assist tourism enterprises that may otherwise go bankrupt, such as hotels and airlines.

One approach for financial relief is low interest loans or grants. Although support is needed urgently, this requires a thorough analysis of the costs and benefits of support to specific sectors. The data have shown, the economic effects are not only directly in the tourism sector but spread across many sectors. Most governments have limited means to support or underwrite a major industry. Some programmes such as the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can offer short term debt reliefs to some of its members. The key issue is whether the industry will bounce back once restrictions are removed. This is an unprecedented shock and requires urgent action to prevent wiping out entire sectors that are likely to recover in the hopefully not so distant future. The international community should support access to funding for the most heavily affected countries.

A key issue for tourists is the need for post-pandemic quarantine on arrival. The need for arrivals to self isolate for two weeks would be a major barrier to travel. Several countries have lifted this requirement already. This needs a careful and coordinated approach between source and destination countries. A common set of rules related to departure and arrival procedures and sanitation requirements for air travel would be highly beneficial.

(ii) In the medium and longer term, governments should support economic diversification where possible. A high dependence on one sector increases vulnerability. For some countries diversification away from tourism may be difficult. Avenues for economic diversification may include increased regional integration, education and training programmes in targeted economic sectors to boost resilience and mitigate the cost of shocks.

CONCLUSION

Major finding from the analysis is that the GDP effects are much greater than the loss of tourist expenditure because of the indirect effects through the supply chain. Is the modeling under or overstating the effects? In the short run, the effects are probably understated because it is assumed that capital and labor can be employed in sectors other than tourism. This is unlikely to be the case because tourism is not the only sector negatively affected. Therefore, there are limited opportunities for re-employment of displaced workers and capital. In the long run, the WTTC anticipates that the international tourism sector will likely return to pre-pandemic levels within a 19-month period. Depending on the duration of the pandemic and the measures to contain it, the model presents the effects in three time periods – from a 33 per cent to 100 per cent reduction in annual tourism spending. As the world slowly reopens its economies for tourism, it remains to be seen which scenario will be the most applicable. The damage incurred in the tourism sector goes beyond cancelled flights and hotel bookings. There is a strong case to be made for governments to intervene and cooperate at an international level to protect the lives and livelihoods around the world.

The corona virus outbreak will lose tourist traffic from other countries to India, affecting tourism and related industries; this has a major impact on the tourism industry. This study is about the impact of Indian tourism on corona virus and delivers helpful information on COVID-19 and preventive measures. The government should take immediate steps to overcome this outbreak and give tourism its original shape.

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