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IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDIA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT **DOI No: 10.36713/epra17812** **Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra17812**

The outbreak of Covid-19 has affected tourism activities all over the world in 2020, with unexpected crisis on travel restriction. International government implemented stay at home rules and lock down imposed all over the world. Tourism in developing country like India play a crucial role in the economy. The present study intends to evaluate the effects of Covid-19 on India's tourist industry via the utilization of statistical data extracted from reliable sources. The present article explores the influence of Covid on local and international tourism, foreign exchange revenues, employment, and so on. It investigates government efforts aimed at assisting the sector.

KEYWORDS*: Covid-19, Tourism Industry, Pandemic Impact, Travel Restrictions, Hospitality Sector, Economic Impact, etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the World Health Organization received notification of an unknown cause pneumonia case in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The illness was named Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19). The Covid-19 pandemic caused significant worldwide humanitarian issues. Millions of individuals have been affected by the epidemic, and many have died. The tourist and hospitality sector, which contributes significantly to global prosperity, has not been spared by the epidemic, and it continues to grow despite external and internal problems.

India is renowned for its traditions, variety, and unparalleled hospitality. The tourism industry is a major source of employment and contributes significantly to the country's GDP. It includes hotels, guides, aviation, and other related sectors. India's tourism industry generates billions of dollars annually and is the fastest growing sector. However, the pandemic has caused disruptions, including the suspension of entry points and lockdown. According to the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) committee, this is the biggest calamity the sector has ever faced in history. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an influence on the worldwide economy. It has been projected that the global GDP will decrease by 5.2% in 2020. 'Unity in Diversity' and the Indian Federal Society: A Fertile Land for Tourism. India is a famous example of 'Unity in Diversity', and Indian federalism is seen as an appropriate system for accommodating variety in a political environment. With its multilingual and multicultural population, it is regarded as the world's biggest liberal democratic federation. India may draw international tourists from all around the world. It also promotes images of 'Incredible India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in front of the world

audience. It is known for having a 'Dev-Bhoomi', 'God's Own Country', and a number of other major sites that showcase India's natural beauty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted by many researchers and academicians on the diverse impact of Covid-19 on religious tourism in India. Some of them are presented below.

Mosier et.al (2020) in his article 'Crisis Management and The Impact of Pandemics on Religious Tourism' The study discusses how the pandemic may affect religious tourism and how shutting Holy Shrines to pilgrims might lead to a faster recovery once the virus has passed.

Saleh et.al (2020) in his article combines news from several organizations to provide an overview of literature on religious tourism and tourist management. This report reveals that Covid-19 has impacted religious travelers globally.

Rawat (2022) in his survey, He conducted to assess the economic impact of religious tourism in Ajmer City prior to the Covid-19 epidemic. The data was analyzed with SPSS 24. At first, Principal Component Factor Analysis was performed using the Varimax rotation approach. Also, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy test was performed.

Taruna (2023) in his book, Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage in India shows the religious tourism effect in our indian economy through using special SPSS software.

Kunwar (2021) in his paper he shows the effect of Covid 19 on pilgrimage tourism in Lumbini Nepal in accordance to Buddhism content.

Naidu and Ghanekar (2023) This study thoroughly examined the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on religious tourism in the states of Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi) and Maharashtra (Nashik and Pandharpur) by using hypothesis testing in this study.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to analyse the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian tourist industry.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present work is descriptive in nature. It is based on the secondary data. The study focused on the data of 2018-19 and 2019-20. In order to present correct scenario of the tourism industry quantitative data has been analysed in tabular form and percentage. The data has been collected from national and international agencies of tourism, research papers, magazines, journals etc. Websites of Ministry of tourism and international agencies also explored for this purpose.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The global tourism sector has faced unparalleled difficulties because to the Covid-19 pandemic, and India, a country renowned for its rich cultural legacy and stunning scenery, has not been immune to its severe effects.

The pandemic's ascent has caused the tourism sector's contribution to India's GDP to halt. India came in at number 34 out of 140 nations in the World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) study on the country's contribution to tourism. India's January 2020 foreign exchange earnings were 20,282 crore, compared to 18,079 crore in January 2019. India has seen the fastest growth in foreign exchange earnings during the last ten years. A significant portion of the nation's foreign exchange profits have come from the influx of foreign visitors. The government only offers hospitality services in this pandemic scenario to establishments that were designated as quarantine facilities and those that were housing visitors and others stranded as a result of the lockdown. Generally speaking, the growth in visitor arrivals and foreign exchange profits serve as indicators of tourism's performance. According to an estimate from the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industries of India (ASSOCHAM), the travel and tourism industry in India is expected to contribute US $ 26 billion in FEEs in 2015. According to the 2019–20 Economic Survey, there has been a slowdown in the expansion of the tourism sector, with fewer international visitors arriving and, as a result, lower foreign exchange profits from tourism. The best months to travel in Indian markets are February through May, when the weather is ideal. However, this pandemic was not the cause of this.

The comparison between numbers of foreign tourist arrived during 2018-19 and 2019-20 at the time of Covid pandemic:

Table-1 The Effect of Covid-19 in Respect of the Domestic Tourist Visit during 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

State	Domestic Tourist Visit during 2018-19	Domestic Tourist Visit during 2019-20	% Change
West Bengal	92366025	28841732	**-68.77**
Jharkhand	35580768	2574704	**-92.76**
Sikkim	1421823	316408	**-77.74**

(Source: Compiled by the researcher from the State/UTs Tourism Department, Govt. of India)

Observation: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel patterns is seen in Table 1, which shows a notable discrepancy in domestic tourist trips throughout India's states and Union Territories (UTs) between 2018-19 and 2019-20. A thriving travel environment is reflected in the substantial numbers of domestic travellers that some states recorded in 2018-19 and 2019-20, however, the data shows a sharp decline in domestic tourist foot traffic throughout the majority of regions amid lockdowns and travel restrictions put in place to stop the spread of Covid-19. With major ramifications for local economies reliant on tourism, this reduction highlights the pandemic's disruptive influence on domestic travel practices. The difference in visitor numbers between the two years highlights the states' and UTs' continued struggles and the varied recovery paths.

Table-2 The Effect of Covid-19 in Respect of the Foreign Tourist Visit during 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

State	Foreign Tourist Visit during 2018-19	Foreign Tourist Visit during 2019-20	% Change
West Bengal	1656145	463285	**-72.02**
Jharkhand	176043	490	**-99.72**
Sikkim	133388	19935	**-85.05**

(Source: Compiled by the researcher from the State/UTs Tourism Department, Govt. of India)

Observation: Table 2 presents a comparative analysis of foreign tourist visits to different Indian states and Union Territories (UTs) in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The data emphasizes the significant influence of the Covid-19 epidemic on global tourism. 2018-19 saw a notable influx of international visitors to numerous states, demonstrating India's popularity as a travel destination worldwide. However, the data for 2019-20 shows a sharp decline in the number of foreign visitors arriving in the majority of locations, which is consistent with the global travel bans and border closures imposed in reaction to the epidemic. This decrease highlights the serious disruption that the epidemic has caused to India's tourism sector, affecting income sources and regional economies that significantly depend on foreign tourists.

5.1 Foreign Exchange Earnings from the Tourism Industry from 2009-10 to 2019-20 in India

Following our analysis of the shift in the number of foreign visitors, we examine the pattern in foreign exchange profits both prior to and during the epidemic. Table 3 displays the percentage change in India's FEEs during a three-month period from 2009-10 to 2019-20.

Table-3 Foreign Exchange Earnings in India from Tourism from 2009-10 to 2019-20

Year	Rs. (in Crore)	% Change	US$ (in Billion)	% Change
2009-10	64889	------	14193	------
2010-11	77591	19.60	16564	16.70
2011-12	94487	21.80	17737	7.10
2012-13	105836	12.00	18133	2.20
2013-14	120083	11.50	19657	6.60
2014-15	126211	2.30	19676	2.80
2015-16	155650	15.10	23.15*	9.80
2016-17	180379	17.00	27.69*	20.80
2017-18	194892	9.60	28.59*	4.70
2018-19	210981	8.30	29.96*	4.80
2019-20	44203	-15.60	6.16*	-17.10

(Source: Compiled by the researcher from Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)

Observation: The data in Table 3 will show that, in comparison to previous years, there was a robust growth of 21.80% in foreign exchange earnings from other nations in 2011-12. However, during the ten years between 2001-10 and 201-20, this percentage share has varied. Additionally, it is discovered that there was negative growth in 2020, when the FEEs decreased by -15.60 percent compared to 2018-19. The proliferation of Covid-19 is the primary cause of this reduction. The decrease in FEEs from 2018-19 to 2019-20 was brought on by the closure of accommodations and the suspension of visas in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused travel patterns, economic stability, and social dynamics all throughout India to be disrupted, posing previously unheard-of hurdles to the tourism sector. The striking difference in domestic and foreign visitor arrivals between 2019 and 2020 highlights the severity of the impact, with notable

drops in foot traffic and revenue streams for tourism-dependent enterprises. The tourist industry had a severe decline in the economy, with hotels, tour companies, and associated services suffering the most from lower travel demand and operational limitations. Socially, the epidemic made communities that depend on tourism for a living and informal labourers more vulnerable, emphasizing the need for inclusive recovery strategies. A more resilient and sustainable tourist sector will be developed in India through stakeholder collaboration, infrastructure investment, and proactive governmental interventions as the country navigates its recovery. India has the potential to overcome the epidemic by capitalizing on its rich cultural legacy and stunning natural surroundings. This would secure a more promising future for the country's tourist sector and make a larger contribution to socio-economic development.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following Covid-19, India's economy and tourism need to be revived through a multimodal strategy that takes care of the country's urgent recovery requirements and establishes the foundation for long-term prosperity. Comprehensive immunization campaigns must come first in order to protect the public's health and restore trust among both local and foreign travellers. In order to aid in the recovery and operational resilience of tourism firms, especially small and medium-sized ones, specific financial support and incentives should be provided. Repositioning India as a secure and alluring travel destination can be significantly aided by strategic marketing initiatives conducted both locally and abroad. India may gain a competitive advantage in the global tourist market by showcasing its eco-friendly initiatives, unique cultural experiences, and adventure tourism prospects. These can appeal to a wide range of traveller groups. To this end, creating public-private partnerships and working with international tourism organizations might help in exchanging information, training personnel, and investing into sustainable tourism activities. These involve a focus on conserving nature, responsible tourism promotion, and enabling village population to achieve an even distribution of income from tourism. By implementing these recommendations with a coordinated and proactive approach, India can position itself as a resilient and dynamic tourism destination, fostering economic recovery, job creation, and inclusive growth in the post-pandemic era.

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