IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE TOURISM SECTOR OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT   DOI No: 10.36713/epra11762   Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra11762

The covid outbreak of this virus paralyzed the tourism industry by threatening both global and domestic tourist. The main purpose of this research paper is to study the impact of covid-19 virus on tourism industry especially Indian Tourism industry with statistical evidence, surveys and reports/ articles. This study also signifies the tourism sector importance in Indian economy and how it is dependent on the change in behaviour of tourists during and after the pandemic. This research paper aims at investigating the situation of Indian tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and tries to provide useful information to the tourism industry players to deal with the changed preferences of tourists in the new normal by finding out change in behaviour for tourism components, this research paper is descriptive in nature, and is based on primary as well as secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from various online sources such as websites, research papers, etc. The primary data has been used to analyse the change in domestic (Indian) tourists' preferences for tourism components such as duration, accommodation, mode of transport and other components. For this purpose, their preferences before the pandemic as well as after the pandemic have been gathered from the respondents. For collecting the primary data, a structured questionnaire was created. It is evident that people have intentions to use own vehicle or flight for a trip instead of using public transport such as railway train or state-run bus or even a private operator bus and it can be due to concerns with safety measures, i.e., hygiene and proper social distancing as well as adherence to other norms for a safe trip

KEYWORDS: *Coronavirus, global and domestic tourist, Tourism,*

1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of Coronavirus has impacted the tourism sector drastically all over the world. Be it aviation or hospitality, transportation, tour operators or eateries, every activity related to tourism has been adversely affected in an unprecedented manner. India has been no exception. During the first wave itself, the sector was affected the most among all other economic sectors. This grim scenario triggers a thorough understanding of the estimated losses at a granular level and how to recuperate in the coming days. A roadmap on recovery is a must not only because tourism is the largest contributor to the economy and employment, but also because a large chunk of the

population of the country is directly or indirectly linked to activities in the tourism sector. However, the implementation of any policy measures to support the tourism sector and the affected households requires a systematic estimation of the losses and requirements of relief. Thus, resilient policies are needed to address these challenges at all levels to put back the tourism sector on the path it was traversing before the pandemic. This study captures the economic losses resulting from the changes experienced during the entire period of the pandemic with the help of data from different sources that reflect changes over the said period. The study also probed the likely recovery phases of the tourism sector post the pandemic in order

to understand how the sector would regain its pre-pandemic position.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) threat originated from central China's Hubei province in Wuhan city in the month of December 2019 and continues to adversely affect more than 150 countries and claimed more than 50,000 lives globally. In a matter of weeks, over 100,000 of cases and thousands of deaths were confirmed.

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses belonging to the family of Coronaviridae, which infect both animals and humans. COVID-19 is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. It is part of the coronavirus family, which include common viruses that cause a variety of diseases from head or chest colds to more severe (but rarer) diseases like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Like many other respiratory viruses, coronaviruses spread quickly through droplets that you project out of your mouth or nose when you breathe, cough, sneeze, or speak. Covid- 19 symptoms are variable, but often include fever, cough, headache, fatigue, breathing difficulties, loss of smell, and loss of taste. Symptoms may begin one to fourteen days after exposure to the virus.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has triggered a concern worldwide in early January 2020, and by the end of March 2020, the outbreak has infected several people globally (WHO, 2020). On 24th March 2020, the government of India imposed a nationwide lockdown. India suspended all tourist visas from 13 March 2020 until 15 April 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism industry's employment loss is predicted to be 100.08 million worldwide. The pandemic has not only affected economically but as well as politically and socially. As the number of infected cases rising throughout the nation, and with the implementation of certain measures and campaigns like social distancing, community lockdowns, work from home, stay at home, self- or mandatory-quarantine, curbs on crowding, etc., pressure is created for halting the tourism industry/business. This change in the current system has led to the beginning of the recession and depression, seeking a transformational change in society.

India is one of the developing nations known for its uniqueness in its tradition, culture and unparalleled hospitality. It is a major destination for many international tourists, creating several employment opportunities and generating enormous taxes. Tourism is a major source of revenue and employment in many countries. It is a generator for employment, income, tax collections and foreign exchange earnings. The impact of the pandemic on tourism has been captured through the estimation of TDGVA for all the three quarters of 2020-21, and across the following aspects in such a way that the impact of the pandemic due to different types of shocks has been captured separately. Due to COVID-19, tourism is such a highly affected sector and may remain affected in the long term, i.e., approximately more than 1.5 years. Hence, in this scenario, it is necessary to measure the losses due to pandemic so that policies can be redesigned to manage tourism activities. The Indian tourism industry has created about 87.5 million jobs, with 12.75% of total employment, thereby contributing INR 194 billion to India's GDP.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is a land of rich history, cultural and geographical diversity in the World. India has one of the Seven Wonders of the World and its diversity makes India one of the best international tourist destinations. The worldwide eruption of Covid-19 has brought the world to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destinations these dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economics progress. Travel and tourism has been one of the most affected industries by Covid-19 and decreased 44% in 2020. International tourists' arrivals in April down by 97% in this pandemic situation. It translates into a loss of 180 million international arrivals and about US$ 195 billion in receipts. Current position point to declines of 58% to 78% in arrivals for 2020, depending on the speed of the containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of boarders, thus the outlook remains highly uncertain. Tourism industry is impacted by the inflow of foreign tourists, a drastic fall in foreign exchange earnings which was close to ₹2,10,981 crores in Q1-Q3 2019. Henceforth, this research study focuses on the challenges and issues of tourism industry during this Covid-19 period.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The covid outbreak of this virus paralyzed the tourism industry by threatening both global and domestic tourist. The main purpose of this research paper is to study the impact of covid-19 virus on tourism industry especially Indian Tourism industry with statistical evidence, surveys and reports/ articles. This study also signifies the tourism sector importance in Indian economy and how it is dependent on the change in behaviour of tourists during and after the pandemic.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

This research paper aims at investigating the situation of Indian tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and tries to provide useful information to the tourism industry players to deal with the changed preferences of tourists in the new normal by finding out change in behaviour for tourism components. Thus, the objectives of the study are:
a) To understand the importance of tourism sector for economic development

b) To study the impact of COVID-19 on travel and tourism sector and find out the hurdles for development of travel and tourism industry in India
c) To investigate the change in purpose of domestic people for travel and tourism activities due to the pandemic.
d) To analyse the change in preference of domestic people for duration of stay due to the pandemic.
e) To analyse the change in preference of domestic people for mode of transport due to the pandemic.
f) To analyse the change in preference of domestic people for accommodation due to the pandemic.
g) To find out the suitable measures to rescue the tourism industry in the current situation.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vineet Kumar (2020) in his research paper titled "Indian Tourism Industry and COVID-19: Present Scenario" has highlighted the issue of COVID-19 in India and its impact on the tourism and hotel industry, and the need of the hour, that is to take early action to overcome the slowdown in the tourism industry by analysing its long-term impacts at the earliest. He suggests that tourism enterprises can take certain measures to maintain their cash flow in the near future by suspending unnecessary or least important operational material purchases, by delaying outsourcing payments and by encouraging employees to take annual leaves and unpaid leaves, moreover tourism industry stakeholders can maintain business by other ways like adjusting their market mix and distribution channels. He also suggests that time can be utilized by making the employees adapt well in the contemporary digital environment.

Sanjita Jaipuria, Ratri Parida and Pritee Ray (2020) in their work titled "The Impact of COVID-19 on tourism sector in India" aim to predict foreign tourists' arrival in India and Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) using Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), and analyse the impact of COVID-19 based on four scenarios considering with and without lockdown in terms of loss and gain in FEE. The study disclosed that FEE is reduced because of foreign tourists' fewer arrivals in this pandemic outbreak. Therefore, instead of investing more in adding new resources, policymakers and stakeholders can think about making the existing resource more efficient and effective.

Mohammad Faisal and Devendra Kumar Dhusia (2021) in their research paper "Pandemic's (COVID-19) Impact on the Tourism Sector" examine the impact of the pandemic on domestic tourism sector in India through finding out the changes in preferences of domestic tourists due to the pandemic. The study revealed that the pandemic did not reduce the number of people who want to travel for tourism activities, however, approximately the same number of people want to travel after relaxations or vaccination and want to remain careful at the same time.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is descriptive in nature, and is based on primary as well as secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from various online sources such as websites, research papers, etc. The primary data has been used to analyse the change in domestic (Indian) tourists' preferences for tourism components such as duration, accommodation, mode of transport and other components. For this purpose, their preferences before the pandemic as well as after the pandemic have been gathered from the respondents. For collecting the primary data, a structured questionnaire was created.

7. STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

For the sampling unit, Indian nationals who are 18 years of age or above have been selected. For gathering the data, convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques have been used. For the collection of primary data, a structured questionnaire has been developed. Responses from 75 people were collected through the structured questionnaire created with Google Forms. For data analysis purpose, descriptive statistics, i.e., frequency distribution, percentage and cumulative percentage were calculated and the results were presented in tabulated form.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents –

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	36	48.0
Male	39	52.0
Age (in years)		
18-25	33	44.0
26-34	3	4.0
35-44	12	16.0
45-54	24	32.0
More than 54	3	4.0
Occupation		
Businessman/ Self Employed	8	10.7
Private Employee	22	29.3
Govt. Employee/ Public Sector Employee	3	4.0
Student	33	44.0
Other	9	12.0
Individual Monthly Income (INR)		
Less than 20,000	37	49.3
20,001-40,000	2	2.7
40,001-60,000	3	4.0
60,001-80,000	1	1.3
80,001-1,00,000	3	4.0
More than 1,00,000	29	38.7
Marital Status		
Married	37	49.3
Unmarried	38	50.7

The majority of the respondents in this study fall in two age categories which are 18-25 years (44%) and 45-54 years (32%) and together they have 76% respondents. Out of the 75 respondents, 39 (52%) are male and in regard to marital status, 38 out of 75 respondents are unmarried in this study. The respondent's individual monthly incomes (INR) as well as their occupation are also taken into consideration in this study for better insights. 37 respondents have less than Rs. 20,000 monthly income, followed by 2 respondents (Rs. 20,001-40,000), 3 respondents (Rs. 40,001-60,000), 1 respondent in the category of Rs. 60,001-80,000, 3 respondents (80,000-1,00,000 INR), and 29 respondents in the category of more than Rs. 1,00,000. 33 respondents are students, followed by 22 private employees, 8 businessman/self-employed, 3 Government Employees/Public Sector Employee, and 17 others. (Refer to Table 1)

Table 2: Number of people who used to travel before the Pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	70	93.3	93.3
No	5	6.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is clear that 93.3% people (70 out of 75) used to travel for tourism purposes before the pandemic. Only 5 people (6.7%) mentioned that they were never travelled for tourism purposes before the pandemic. (Refer to Table 2)

Table 3: Classification of Intention to travel according to relaxations or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	2	2.6	2.6
Yes, after full relaxations in restrictions on travel and tourism activities	8	10.7	13.3
Yes, after some relaxations in restrictions	14	18.7	32.0
Yes, only after taking vaccination or other protection from the virus	51	68	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is evident that overall, 97.33% people (73 out of 75) still intend to travel for tourism purposes but their intention varies according to the relaxations or vaccination (Refer to Appendix- Table 3). The largest proportion which comprises 51 people (68%) showed their intention to travel only after taking vaccination or other protection from the virus. 8 people (10.7%) mentioned that they will travel but only after complete relaxations in restrictions on travel and tourism activities and 14 people (18.7%) expressed their intention to travel after some relaxations in restrictions on travel and tourism activities. Only 2 people which is 2.6% of total respondents expressed their interest against travelling for tourism purpose at all (Refer to Appendix- Table 3) and there is not much difference between numbers of people who used to travel before the pandemic and who want to travel after relaxations or vaccination according to their criteria. (Refer to Table 2 and 3)

Table 4: Frequency of Travelling before the Pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Once in 3 months	27	36.0	36.0
Once in 6 months	27	36.0	72.0
Once in a year	15	20.0	92.0
Once in more than a year	6	8.0	100.0
Not applicable	0	0.0	
Total	75	100.0	

It is clear that 36% people each (27 out of 75) used to take a trip every 3 and 6 months, which is the largest proportion, followed by (20%) 15 people used to have a trip once a year, and (8%) 6 people used to have a trip once in more than 12 months. (Refer to Table 4)

Table 5 : Frequency of Travelling after relaxations or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Once in 3 months	19	25.3	25.3
Once in 6 months	21	28.0	53.3
Once in a year	24	32.0	85.3
Once in more than a year	8	10.7	96.0
Not applicable	3	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is evident that after relaxations or vaccination, 32% people (24 out of 75) want to take a trip every year which constitutes the largest proportion, followed by (28%) 21 people who want to have a trip every six months, (25.3%) 19 people want to have a trip every 3 months, and (10.7%) 8 people want to have a trip once in more than 12 months. (Refer to Table 5)

From Table 4 and Table 5, it is quite clear that there is increase in number of people who want to have a trip every year. These numbers in category "a trip every year" increased from 15 to 24. Number of people in category "a trip in every three months" came down from 27 to This shows that more people want to have a trip in a year after relaxations or vaccination instead of a trip at every three months which can be due to pandemic or increase/decrease in personal disposable income.

Table 6 : History of Coronavirus Cases and Choice of a Tourism Destination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	46	61.3	61.3
No	27	36.0	97.3
Not applicable	2	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It seems that the majority of the respondents (61.3%) mentioned that they will consider the history of a state related to coronavirus cases while choosing their tourism destination. 27 respondents (36%) said that the history of coronavirus cases of a state will not matter while choosing the tourism destination (Refer to Table 6). This shows that people want to travel for tourism purpose but they also do not want to have any risk related to health and perceive that it would be better if they avoid to visiting tourism destinations which have history of coronavirus cases.

Table 7 : Waiting period before taking the first trip –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Within 3 months	17	22.6	22.6
3-6 months	18	24.0	46.6
6-12 months	14	18.7	65.3
More than 12 months	20	26.7	92.0
Not applicable	6	8.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

The results in Table 7 makes it clear that 65.3% respondents have intentions to travel for tourism purposes within one year after relaxations (some or complete) or vaccination. Out of this total of 65.3%, 24% respondents (18 out of 75) in "3-6 months" and 18.7% respondents (14 out of 75) in category "6-12 months" have intentions to take their first trip. 17 respondents out of 75 respondents (22.6%) expressed their intention to take their first trip in within 3 months and 20 respondents out of 75 respondents (26.7%) have intention to take their first trip in more than 12 months. 42.7% combined respondents which is close to half of overall respondents want to have their first trip between 3-12 months (Refer to Table 7). This shows that people want to have tourism activities as soon as possible but without taking any risk and it may be a reason for majority of people not travelling in first three months.

Table 8 : Impact of the pandemic on Budget –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Decrease in Budget	21	28.0	28.0
Increase in Budget	15	20.0	48.0
No Change	30	40.0	88.0
Not applicable	9	12.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is clear that 36 out of 75 respondents mentioned that the pandemic impacted their budget. 21 respondents (28% of total respondents) said that their travel budget got decreased due to the pandemic and 15 respondents (20% of total respondents) mentioned increase in their travel budget. 30 respondents out of 75 (40% of total respondents) said that there is no change in their travel budget due to the pandemic (Refer to Table 8).

Table 9 : Purpose of Travelling before pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
For Leisure	21	28.0	28.0
For exploring new places and cultures	14	18.7	46.7
For improving and maintaining health	0	0.0	46.7
For spending time with family	17	22.7	69.4
For getting a break from routine	16	21.3	90.7
For business trip	4	5.3	96.0
Other	2	2.7	98.7
Not applicable	1	1.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

Table 10 : Purpose of Travelling after relaxation or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
For Leisure	21	28.0	28.0
For exploring new places and cultures	15	20.0	48.0
For improving and maintaining health	1	1.3	49.3
For spending time with family	17	22.7	72.0
For reducing the stress of coronavirus and lockdown	10	13.3	85.3
For business trip	6	8.0	93.3
Other	3	4.0	97.3
Not applicable	2	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

From Table 9, it is clear that leisure (21 respondents), spending time with family (17 respondents) and getting a break from routine (16 respondents) are the top three choices for the tourism purpose before the pandemic, followed by exploring new places and cultures (14 respondents). It is clear that leisure (21 respondents), spending time with family (17 respondents), exploring new places and cultures (15 respondents) and reducing the stress of coronavirus and lockdown (10 respondents) are the top choices for travelling purposes after relaxations or vaccination,

followed by business trips (6 respondents) and improving and maintaining health (1 respondent) and other purposes (3 respondents) (Refer to Table 10). Reducing the stress of coronavirus and lockdown and improving and maintaining health together form a niche market of tourism known as Health Tourism. This shows that industry players should focus on offering this tourism product with some additional value proposition such as enjoyment, to attract tourists.

Table 11 : Impact of the pandemic of choice of duration of stay –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	26	34.6	34.6
No	41	54.7	89.3
Not applicable	8	10.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

The figures in Table 11 make it clear that 26 respondents (34.6%) of total respondents said that the pandemic will cause a change in their duration of stay and 41 respondents (54.7%) said that the pandemic has

no effect on their choice of duration. This means that the pandemic has no effect on choice of duration of stay for majority of the people.

Table 12 : Preference of duration of stay before the pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Less than 5 days	27	36.0	36.0
6-14 days	44	58.6	94.6
15-30 days	2	2.7	97.3
More than 30 days	0	0.0	97.3
Not applicable	2	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

From Table 12, it is clear that before the pandemic, a little more than half of the respondents (44 or 58.6%) used to prefer to stay at the destination for 6-14 days, followed by 27 respondents (36%) for less than 5 days

and together they have 94.6% share of the total. The other two categories (15-30 days and more than 30 days) do not hold a large part in overall share and together, they just share 2.7% share.

Table 13 : Preference of duration of stay after relaxations or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Less than 5 days	42	56.0	56.0
6-14 days	27	36.0	92.0
15-30 days	2	2.7	94.7
More than 30 days	1	1.3	96.0
Not applicable	3	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is evident that after relaxations and vaccination, more than half of the respondents (42 respondents or 56%) mentioned that they will prefer to stay at the destination for less than 5 days followed by (36%) 27 respondents who will prefer to stay for 6-14 days, and together they have 92% share of the total. The other two categories, i.e., 15-30 days and more than 30 days, are preferred by just 2 respondents (2.7%) and 1 (1.3%) respondent, respectively, and does not represent a large part in the overall share (Refer to Appendix- Table 13). It is clear that more people want to stay at the destination for less than 5 days and it is the only category which registered more preference

(from 27 to 42) than before. The categories 6-14 days, 15-30 days and more than 30 days registered the decrease in preference. (Refer to Tables 12 and 13).
This means that respondents still may have concerns regarding their safety for longer periods of time or may have constraints of personal disposable income. Market players should raise their safety standards as well as offer coupons, discounts, combo offers etc. to eliminate the safety concerns and disposable income constraint respectively so that tourists can have a budgeted trip for longer periods of time, which would, in the long run, benefit the tourism industry and the economy.

Table 14 : Impact of the pandemic on choice of accommodation –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	36	48.0	48.0
No	35	46.7	94.7
Not applicable	4	5.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

The figures in Table 14 clearly show that 36 respondents (48%) of total respondents said that there will be change in their preference for accommodation type due to the pandemic and 35 respondents (46.7%) mentioned that the pandemic would have no effect on their choice of accommodation type.

Table 15 : Preference of type of accommodation before the pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
2-3 star hotel	9	12.0	12.0
4-5 star hotel	58	77.4	89.4
At friend's or relative's place	3	4.0	93.4
Government tourist' rest house	1	1.3	94.7
Local guest house	0	0.0	94.7
Other	1	1.3	96.0
Not applicable	3	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

From Table 15, it is evident that before the pandemic, 4-5 star hotels were top preference with highest number of response (58 out of 75 or 77.4%) for staying at the destination, followed by 2-3 star hotels (9 out 75 or 12%). Friend's or relative's place (3 out of 75), government tourists' rest house (1 out of 75) and other (1 out of 75) occupied last positions as an option for staying.

Table 16 : Preference of type of accommodation after relaxations or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
2-3 star hotel	6	8.0	8.0
4-5 star hotel	49	65.4	73.4
At friend's or relative's place	13	17.3	90.7
Government tourist' rest house	1	1.3	92.0
Local guest house	1	1.3	93.3
Other	3	4.0	97.3
Not applicable	2	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is clear from Table 16, that after relaxations and vaccination, 4-5 star hotels (49 out of 75 or 65.4%) and friend's or relative's place (13 out of 75 or 17.3%) got top preference with highest number of responses, along with 2-3 star hotel (6 out of 75 or 8%). Government tourists' rest house (1 out of 75 or 1.3%), local guests house (1 out of 75 or 1.3%) and other (3 out of 75 or 4%) are preferred less for stay purposes. From Tables 15 and 16, it is evident that people started preferring friend's or relative's place more after relaxations and vaccination as a stay option due to safety concerns. Friend's or relative's place might be considered as a safest choice as people can stay there according to their will without having extra burden of following the norms as well as reducing the contact with other people, which they cannot do with other stay options. Ultimately, it will lead to reduction in fear of catching the virus and will increase their satisfaction.

Thus, market players should come up with policies such as minimal contact, self-service of picking mattresses and changing them on its own, encouraging digital payment, doing necessary cleaning or other work in the absence of people in the room to avoid contact by receiving permission in advance so they can assure the safety of their important belongings, etc. to attract tourists.

Table 17 : Impact of the pandemic on choice of mode of transport –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	36	48.0	48.0
No	37	49.3	97.3
Not applicable	2	2.7	100.0
Total	75	100.0	

It is apparent from Table 17 that 36 respondents (48%) said that the pandemic will affect their preference for mode of transport, and 37 respondents (49.3%) mentioned that the pandemic has no effect on their choice of transport type.

Table 18 : Preference of type of mode of transport before the pandemic –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Percent of Cases
Own Vehicle	37	29.8	49.3
Railway Train	23	18.6	30.7
Private Operator Bus	8	6.5	10.7
State Operated Bus	1	0.8	1.3
Flight	50	40.3	66.7
Other	0	0.0	0.0
Not applicable	5	4.0	6.7
Total	124	100.0	165.4

(Note: Total numbers are more than total respondents as multiple responses were allowed for this question)

From Table 18, it is quite clear that flight and own vehicle used to be the more preferred modes of transport among all the available options. 66.7% (50) respondents and 49.3% (37) respondents mentioned flight and own vehicle, respectively, as the modes which they preferred before the pandemic for travelling. Railway train as a transport mode comes third in the list as 23 (30.7%) respondents mentioned it followed by Private operator bus (8 or 10.7% respondents) and State run/operated bus (1 or 1.3% respondents).

Table 19 : Preference of type of mode of transport after relaxations or vaccination –

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Percent of Cases
Own Vehicle	49	45.8	65.3
Railway Train	7	6.6	9.3
Private Operator Bus	4	3.8	5.3
State Operated Bus	1	0.9	1.3
Flight	42	39.2	56.0
Other	1	0.9	1.3
Not applicable	3	2.8	4.0
Total	107	100.0	142.5

It can be seen from Table 19 that 49 (65.3%) respondents which is more than half of the respondents mentioned that their own vehicle as one of the more preferred modes of transport among all the available options after relaxations or vaccination. (56%) 42 respondents and (9.3%) 7 respondents mentioned Flight and railway train, respectively, as the next preferred modes for travelling. Private operator bus as a mode comes fourth in the list as 4 (5.3%) respondents mentioned it followed by State run/operated bus with 1 (1.3%) respondent. It becomes apparent that only own vehicle as a mode of transport showed increase in numbers as a preference from 37 to 49 after relaxations or vaccination. Flight as a mode gets similar numbers of response and there is not a major decrease in numbers (50 and 42) and emerges as second best. Railway train saw decrease in numbers from 23 to 7 as a preferred mode of transport among all the options (Refer to Appendix- Table 18 and 19).

It is evident that people have intentions to use own vehicle or flight for a trip instead of using public transport such as railway train or state-run bus or even a private operator bus and it can be due to concerns with safety measures, i.e., hygiene and proper social distancing as well as adherence to other norms for a safe trip. Market players should formulate and implement new policies as well as adhere to the norms of government in its full coverage to gain the trust of people regarding mode of transport provided to them.

9. CONCLUSION

This research study explored the pandemic impact on domestic tourism sector and revealed that the pandemic does not necessarily reduce the number of people who want to travel for tourism activities. However, approximately same number of people want to take tourism activities after relaxations or vaccination, but want to be remain careful at the same time. So, more than half of the people want to wait for some months after relaxations or vaccination or longer than that but not more than a year which shows that tourism sector will start recovering, but full recovery might take 2-3 years as people also prefer to wait till vaccination to travel for tourism purposes. On the other hand, the pandemic has influenced the tourism sector by altering the preferences of people regarding the various components of tourism industry, i.e., accommodation, mode of transport, duration of stay as well as influencing their budget. In addition of it, they also want to have short stays with safe and reliable

options of 4-5 star hotel or friend's and relative's place for stay instead of 2-3 star hotel and local guests house, and own vehicle and flight for transport instead of railway train, private bus and state bus for safety and hygiene reasons. The study also discloses that many people expressed health improvement including stress reduction as a purpose for engaging into tourism activities which can be seen as a first step in emergence of domestic health tourism market as people are becoming more aware about their physical as well as mental health. This niche health tourism market could be a key for starting Indian tourism sector as this sector does not require mass gathering of people at a place at the same time and pays attention to the cleanliness and hygiene conditions. Offering coupons, discounts, giving them full and accurate information about destination rules, organizing a virtual tour for people to become sure about standards and protocols as well as hygiene at destination will help attract more tourists and gain their trust as well. The results of this study may help tourism market players including the government to modify or develop tourism products which are in accordance with the changed preferences of tourists due to the pandemic and serve a more enriching experience.

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