



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC: INDIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-COV-2) was first identified from Wuhan city in China and spread throughout the world within three months. On 11th march 2020 this epidemic disease declared as a global pandemic by World Health Organization. This current pandemic situation affected most industrialized countries as well as developing countries of the world. The pandemic has a major impact on India's travel and tourism sector. In addition, the study examines the implications for sustainability and resetting of tourism industry.

KEYWORDS: *Tourism, Sustainability, Covid-19, Pandemic, India.*

INTRODUCTION

According to WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) India ranked 3rd among 185 countries in terms of travel and tourism contribution to GDP in 2019. The World Travel and Tourism Council calculated that tourism sector generated Rs.16.91 lakh crore (US \$ 240 billions) or 9.2 % of India's GDP in 2018 and also supported 42.678 million jobs, 8.1% of total employment. This sector predicted to grow annual rate to 32.05 lakh crore (US \$ 450 billion) by 2028 (9.9% of GDP). There is also in medical tourism which estimated US \$ 3 billion in 2015 to 5-6 billion in 2020. The travel and tourism competitiveness report 2019 India ranked 34th out of 140 countries overall. The tourism sector projected to grow US \$ 7-8 billion by 2020.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON INDIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

The consequences of coronavirus 2019 on travel and tourism sector in India is unavailable and totally the growth of this sector is declining trend in nature.

1. The Indian tourism and hospitality industry is expecting a potential jobloss of around 38 million.
2. In the third week of March 2020 itself the hotel saw a decline of more than 65% in occupancy of travels as compared to the same period in 2019.
3. With international and domestic travel halt, demand of turbine fuel has substantially declined.
4. Indian association of tour operators (IATO) estimates the hotel, aviation and travel sector

together may suffer a loss of about Rs.85 billion.

5. Impact of Covid-19 felt on both white and blue Collar jobs in tourism sector.
6. India's outbound and inbound travel will witness at all the time low.
7. The restaurant industry in India is expecting almost zero revenue in the immediate term and drop off 50% in the month to come.
8. At least 30% of hotel and hospitality industry revenue could be impacted if the situation does not improve by the end of 2020.
9. There is a threat of jobloss of nearly 15% in the hotel and restaurant industry once the lockdown is lifted, as they will not see an immediate surge in demand.
10. Aviation industry in India could incur losses worth Rs.27000 crores (\$3.3 to 3.6 billion) in the first quarter of 2020-2021.
11. The passenger growth of airlines is likely to fall sharply to negative 20-25% growth for the year 2020-2021.

RECOVERY FROM THIS DISTRESSED SITUATION

Today India is preferred destination for both overseas and domestic travellers for its natural and cultural diversity. India provides facilities for tourists of international origin to understand and experience of cultural diversity. To continue this situation and after recover from Covid-19 Pandemic the following initiatives should be taken

First step to rebuild consumer trust and confidence: After Covid-19 Pandemic our neighbour country Maldives welcome back tourists and resorts



open from 15 th July 2020. Tourists can be ensure strict safety and hygiene standards to ensure safe reopening of the country to tourists from around the world when traveling instructions begins to ease. WTTC also launched 'safe travel stamp' which has been design to allow potential travellers to recognise and establishment around the world which adopt standardize health and hygiene protocols. India should be go ahead with Maldives and WTTC measures to maintain sustainable tourism after covid-19 pandemic.

Regional co-operation towards restoration: As a part of pandemic response to the Covid-19 crisis, The World economic forum regularly convinced a multistakeholder community of prominent holders, policymakers, regional expert group which meets virtually from July to design the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on travel and tourism and need to adopt recovery efforts.

The countries with large domestic market in the way of recovery journey. As India at an advantage since they will be able to create more favourable fiscal conditions for stimulating growth in the sector actively promoting local and regional level.

Most recently India and Maldives announced that they will be established a ' travel bubble' to strengthen connectivity and tourism ties. Such agreement are likely to come up with other countries in the Asian region as terms and conditions establishing safe travel zones are negotiated.

Niche tourism push: Travel and tourism competitiveness report published in 2019 attributes natural and cultural diversity along with price competitiveness for the emergence of South Asia's attractive natural tourists destination. For example India could explore an adventure tourism circuit with Nepal, Bhutan and Srilanka, where travellers get the experience the enthusing Himalayan landscapes, followed down a trip to South to explore of Srilanka's best surfing spot. Similarly spiritual tourism circuit could offer the tourists discover faith of historical manuments that bind the region together.

An opportunity that can be explored to bring back international travellers to India is the niche segment of medical wellness and Ayurveda tourism. In the pre covid-19 era, the medical tourism space would have touched \$9 billion. Adequate support from the government will be needed to further facilitate medical travel and safety protocols accross each stage of patient care continuum.

Long term measures: investment in the physical as well as technological infrastructure will be require to enhance the competitiveness of the sector of the region to generate more income and employment

opportunity in the tourism industry. The sector must be innovative measure to bounce back and build future resilience as composite lockdown get significant degradation.

Co-ordination with tourism facility: Close co-ordination among sector such as aviation, railways, Hostaliy and insurance will be needed to adopt for the rebuild of favourable tourism after this pandemic situation.

Some Key Suggestions: According to the FICCI report 2020 the following initiatives can be implemented

1. Direct support to taxi driver, waiver of taxes.
2. Offer hotel infrastructure status in order to give them access to greater sum of funds for increase infrastructure loan rates as foreign trade borrowings. It will also allow them to borrow from India financing company limited (IFCL).
3. Stimulus plan to include business salary help.
4. Clear aviation cash assistance (airlines, ground handling and airports).
5. Exception from parking and landing fees
6. Quick, interest free or low interest loans to reconstruction companies in the form of terms loans and working capital loans.
7. Create separate tourism fund with ministry of tourism, with it access for the industry as collateral free, a 10 years loan, interest free in the first two years and minimum interest rate for the remaining eight years, to help company stabilize in the time of crisis.
8. Aviation assist initiatives, travel agencies, tour operators, hotels, theme parks, the area of transport.
9. Encourage business travel, increases the no of trains, developed digital content, investment in emerging technologies and developed local skills.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a major part of many national economies and the broader economy is affected by the immediate and enormous shock to the tourism sector resulting from the pandemic of coronavirus 2019. The no of tourists decreased as travel restrictions and bans imposed by Indian government. Many countries are now entering a new phase in fighting the virus and trying to reopen the tourism industry simultaneously. Recovery is currently expected to begin later with the previous measures as well as travel restrictions and containment measures also be included. The recovery of demand site will also take some time, given in the combined affects of the economic and health crisis and the gradual easing



of travel restrictions although the longer pandemic affects of the economic and health crisis the more profound the consumer trust and travel behaviours will be affected. Finally, we are confident that together we can overcome this situation. The recovery might be slow, but we are sure, once we manage to control this virus infection, the tourism industry will be the first one to see major growth. After a very long time of no international travel, people would be looking forward to explore once again.

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