

“Impact of Lockdown in Covid-19 on Hospitality and Tourism Industry of India- A Review”

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Abstract:

Travel restrictions rose due to COVID-19. It's having a huge impact on hospitality, travel and tourism sectors within India and around the world. The impact to demand for hospitality and tourism is greater than many other industries, but it is mixed among hotels, air and cruise lines, and restaurants. With both business and leisure tourists cancelling and revoking the planned trips and not scheduling any trip for the near future in the lockdown period of pandemic. This lockdown of covid-19 had great impact on business as well as employment of these industries. Tourism and hospitality is a backbone of economy for many countries of the world. 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. The crisis is already separating out conquerors and failures by those that had strong digital existences and strategies to drive up the business. The purpose of this study is to review the impact of coronavirus on hospitality and tourism industry.

Keywords: COVID-19, World Health Organization (WHO), Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Introduction:

“The outbreak of COVID-19 is an invasion of our businesses and personal lives in a manner as seen perhaps only in books on fiction or the movies. While the world is grappling with circumstances never experienced by the living population or the global political leaders in their lifetimes, the real extent of the damage wreaked by this pandemic still remains unquantifiable, despite several estimates made by various world bodies in light of its unprecedented impact on global economies. India is witnessing a nation-wide coordinated effort never seen before in an attempt to flatten the COVID-19 growth curve. The government's determination to deal with the situation in a country of our size and complexity is laudable and deserves to succeed. The hotels' sector, which is going to bear an enormous brunt on account of the consequential lockdown in the country, will require the government's economic assistance to help the sector recover from the devastation caused to all its multiple stakeholders,”

-Mandeep Lamba, President – South Asia, HVS Anarock.

COVID-19 has spread to all over the world. Huge number of territories and countries is suffering from this issue and try to deal this pandemic situation. The first case of the coronavirus infection is reported in India on 30th Jan 2020 in Kerala. First Lockdown is announced on 24th Mar 2020 by prime-minister Narendra Modi. The government trailed it up with lockdowns in 75 districts where COVID-19 cases had observed as well as all major cities. It has declared a global health crisis by world Health Organization (WHO) that had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. Not only the rate of contagion or infection and patterns of transmission of this disease threatens everyone's sense of action, but also the safety measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus also require social distancing by non participation from doing what is essentially human, which is to find comfort in the company of others. As a result, national and international tourism has been almost totally suspended, and domestic tourism curtailed by lockdown conditions imposed in many countries. “The tourism sector is currently one of the hardest-hit by the outbreak of COVID-19, with impacts on both travel supply and demand.” [1] “The number of tourists decreased as travel restrictions and bans were imposed by the Indian government.” [6] Because of travel restrictions in India for over 80 countries and most of the flights of major airlines being suspended along with 24 lockdowns in states of India till March 31, 2020, the Indian domestic as well as foreign travel and tourism industry is expected to witness a sharp negative impact in 2020. Hotels and restaurants are closed as this virus can be spread in community because of social contact. “The hospitality and travel

industry have perhaps been most hard-hit, with hourly workers facing potential devastating hardships.” [1]

As several countries including India remain in lockdown and continue to follow strict social distancing measures. After lockdown, travel restrictions and social distancing will certainly be advised to continue for some time. Consequently, businesses should adjust their procedures in order to ensure that regulatory compliance, safety and effective business operations are achieved in a seamless manner. Except essential services, currently all businesses are facing revenue and operational crisis, in particular, those in the leisure and hospitality sectors.

Since the middle of March 2020 when many countries are announced the lock-down and quarantine measures, it is noticed that millions on travel related jobs are unfortunately disappeared, hotels across the globe closed their doors, travel agencies faced a problem with flight booking cancellation, resorts and historically places are become isolated of visitors, workers at these places became with no jobs. Only few countries are benefited from such crisis like Turkey, Spain & Malta who is kept their hotels and airports opened for tourists and students from North Africa or Middle East countries which they are stuck in different European countries.

Impact on operations

The standard operating procedures will be significantly transformed to promote enhanced hygiene standards and to adopt technology to support social distancing policies. The number one consideration post Covid-19 will be on health and safety which translates into hygiene and sanitation issues of the hotel.

Some rules for hospitality and tourism industry are proposed by the government for the safety of people. The security will check for fever with a remote thermometer, shower a light sanitizer mist, and keep hand sanitizers at the reception, elevator lobbies and guest rooms. All staff needs to wear surgical gloves and masks to give confidence to the guests and maintain safety for themselves. Self-service is get encouraged in the period of lockdown and it is also preferred by customers even after post lockdown as it reduce human contact. Hotels and restaurants are recommended to have a maximum of 4 persons for 10 square metres which will provide the safety for the customers. Tables arrangements rule such that the distance from the back of one chair to the back of another chair shall be more than 1 m apart and those guests face each other from a distance of at least 1 m.

“Recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and social service robot technologies have enabled the use of AI technologies in service delivery and the Covid-19 pandemic may precipitate the popularity of such technology for public safety reasons. Therefore, it is crucial for hospitality researchers to investigate how AI device use in service delivery will impact operations, employees, and customers.” [4] “In the form of types of tourism, especially, religious, MICE, farm and adventure tourism social distancing should be strictly enforced, travel entry restrictions should be applied, frequent health monitoring to be conducted to ensure safety” [5]

Impact on employment

The pandemic is characterised by an almost unprecedented increase in unemployment, disguised somewhat by government support measures in some countries. “The country’s travel and tourism sector, more dependent than others on the free and confident movement of people, is staring at millions of disappearing jobs and a grey future.” [10] For this reason, the labour market is modelled assuming fixed wages for unskilled workers with all the adjustment occurring in the quantity of labour employed. For skilled workers, it is assumed that the adjustment occurs in wages, the standard closure. “As per data, the impact on the Indian hospitality industry could render a majority of the people in hospitality in India, jobless. As a result of this pandemic, the Indian tourism industry is looking at pan India bankruptcies, closure of businesses and mass unemployment.” [3] “In the present times travel and airline business staff is being sent on leave with no pay, which is not good for the industry and will create unemployment in travel and airline business.” [9]

Post Lockdown Scenario:

The world will never be the same again, and people will explore it a little more cautiously. In a quest to quench the wanderlust in the post COVID world, people will be stepping out of their routine, still would not skip on safe behaviour. More than before, they would seek for places that are safe and

hospitable. The responsibility thus is on the hospitality sector to revitalize the confidence among them and respond to the changing trends of tourism.

In India, the hospitality industry is evolving to the contemporary needs as they resume services after lockdown. The changes in relating to diet patterns are not unexpected. In particular, a reduction in consumption of meat and other animal protein-based food, and fresh fruits and vegetables, due to the non-scientific based fear that it might be a source of infection, is foreseen. Fear of contagion can also influence the way food is consumed and the frequency of consumption as evidenced by fewer visits to markets and restaurants, in favour of eating at home and food delivery. Although some destinations have started slowly to open, many are afraid of international travel or cannot afford it due to the economic crisis.

The central and state governments have issued standard operating procedures and the change is visible at the hotels, eateries and monuments. The security scan at entrances has thermal screening and sanitization added to the checks, the lobbies are being sanitized more often and the staffs are more cautious than before. Safety and hygiene will be the priorities for travellers who will travel to a destination only if they are assured that the place they are visiting, eating and staying at is virus free.

“The effects are going to remain for a longer duration and sectors that thrive on social contacts such as tourism and hospitality needs to embrace for tumultuous times ahead.” [7] “The current situation has also brought new business models and opportunities, for instance, new delivery concepts, human capital sharing platforms, initiatives in promoting the “staycation or holistay concept,” and the use of the less productive time to work on activities that were normally pushed back such as security plans, asset counts, defining standard operating procedures, social media plans, and others.” [2] “The efforts can be channelized in three dimensions namely—Confidence and Faith, Safety and Security, Implementation of Technology.” [8]

Post COVID-19, countries need to strike a balance between public safety and economic recovery. Many countries are trying to achieve this balance by restricting international tourism, setting their sights instead on domestic tourists. Whether it be accommodations with limited rooms (like bed and breakfasts) or private tour groups, tourism in the post-COVID world should start small. For instance, instead of cruises with thousands of people on a single ship, tourists may start seeking out charter boats. Or, rather than crowded theme parks, tourists may look for individual attractions. Likewise, tourists will probably prefer private transportation over public and vacation rentals over hotels. Such private options provide tourists more control over who and how many people they interact with on their vacation, limiting the risk of infection and increasing peace of mind.

Conclusion:

All sectors of the business have faced a financial crunch. During Covid-19, the tourism and hospitality industry have been facing massive loss due to no foreign arrivals, no air travel, less demand and booking of hotel rooms. The meetings, weddings, conferences and other events were cancelled and added up to the loss of revenue. During lockdown hotels delivered food from their restaurants through digital medium like Swiggy and Zomato in a way to balance the loss of revenue. However the corona cases kept rising, the ease on lockdown was enabled in order to save the economy keeping in mind the safety of the citizens. The lockdown ease was done gradually, and it also focused on tourism and hospitality services and food service sectors. The study acclaims live kitchens, frequent sanitization, standard operating procedures from social distancing to cashless transactions, protective gears for food handlers, etc. in food service sectors. As tourist prefers private transportation so it is having a great opportunity for the rental car or vehicle business like zoomcar.com in tourism industry.

Topic for future research:

The invisible, parasitic and micro in size virus has completely shaken the world in terms of health aspects. The newly discovered COVID-19 virus has drastically affected the world economy. The entire world is together to eradicate this dreadful virus. Almost all countries have imposed restrictions on travel, including complete bans on all travel in order to prevent further spread of coronavirus infection. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 worldwide, tourism and hospitality sectors are in great loss. The crisis has proved the weakness of these industries which emphasis future research to create frameworks which would help to overcome the economic situation during a pandemic. A systematic

and comprehensive review ought to be undertaken during this lockdown period in order to ensure that business recovery after lockdown occurs in a safe and efficient manner.

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