

Revenge Tourism: an overview of the phenomenon in India

Miss. Aditi Joshi

Research Scholar & Assistant Professor

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth Department of Hotel Management Pune-37

Mrs. Manasi Sadhale

Research Scholar & Assistant Professor

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth Department of Hotel Management Pune-37

Abstract: Revenge travel is actually an expression of making up for lost time and that's what everyone has realized as the Pandemic ravaged our lives. Stepping out became difficult and travel was a distant dream and vacations were missed sorely. Reports suggest that revenge travel made headlines in Asia as early as the autumn of 2020 and now the world is calling it that. Expedia informs us that fifty four percent of tourists planned to spend more that they would have before the pandemic. This possibly is due to the reason that people saved money as they were not really able to spend during the lockdowns and restrictions. A hard-core business traveler is the new face of this revenge travel as he/she has been remotely working and wants to take that airplane as soon as possible. One of the most prominent reasons for this travel was the fatigue that set in when people were confined to their homes during the lockdown.

Key words– Tourism, Pune, revenge tourism, COVID-19

COVID -19 has left an indelible and unpleasant mark on most people. Thousands of families lost a family member, faced economic instability and irreparable health problems. Disruption took place in jobs, at school, family and corporate functions got postponed indefinitely. To add to the existing misery, the possibility to travel away from every day routine was curbed as restrictions to travel surfaced and flight journeys were cancelled. A condition called cabin fever similar to claustrophobia took over people as they were forced to stay in their homes. One of the prominent sectors which got severely impacted by the Pandemic was tourism and hospitality.

Travel curbs relaxation and doable guidelines for quarantine have got tourist community spirits high and people are booking travel with a vengeance. The concept of revenge spending has been experienced by the world, where people over-indulge and make up for the shopping they have missed and is seen as a retail therapy. Similar kind of behavior has been displayed by tourists around the world which is creating an interest for bounce back travel in tourists as well as experts of the tourism industry. The obvious cause of this kind of travel is related to the impending demand caused due to the lockdown and abrupt halt of almost every industry in particular the tourism industry which was a result of the efforts to contain the deadly Corona Virus. Revenge travel was encouraged also due to fatigue at work from home, feeling negative, over-dependency on unhealthy mechanisms like turning to anxiety medication in excess to cope with the situation, sleep problems and physical stress on the body.

According to (Smith, 2020) a brand new trend has surfaced among Indian travelers which are being called Revenge Travel. The name may be hard to comprehend at first or rough to imagine as tourism itself has different connotations or perceptions in every traveler's mind of enjoying traveling eating and citing different places to do, but Revenge Travel is the style of travel you are doing after getting tired of the lockdown.

(Ghosh, 2021) opines “Revenge travel or tourism refers to the phenomenon wherein people wish to break-free from the mundane routine that has caused the “new normal” to develop within the wake of the Corona virus crisis”.

(Joshi, 2022) states revenge, tourism is a reality. Traveling data suggests that as COVID-19 cases reduced and lockdown norms relaxed, aviation increased within the country as many tourist places like Himachal Pradesh, Shimla, Manali, Goa and at secular places like Tirupati, Shirdi, Kishangarh, and Prayagraj.

The number of domestic passengers in Goa is increased by 14 percent which is 815,935 within the month of December 2021 from 715,293 in December 2019. There is another trend during the relaxation of the lockdown of COVID-19 norms in tourism which show that individuals were keen to travel to secular places traveling by air or by driving to the destination. Both Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh and Shirdi in Maharashtra, two of the foremost popular religious destinations within the country – saw air passenger numbers surpass pre-pandemic levels of travel which means that individuals want tourism or considered tourism as a chance from the routine and revenge effect of the pandemic restrictions. In spite of the pandemic restrictions, most of the states in India shut temples, and both these temple towns, which depend upon religious tourism, were opened later amidst precautions.

According to (Parasa, 2021) the second wave of the Corona virus in India, is subsiding. Travel industry experts express an opinion that individuals are on 'revenge travel' mode after being confined in their homes for months together. Thanks to the fear of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns.

Many vaccinated people are especially looking forward to travel. Revenge traveling is bound to happen as people want to travel somewhere so desperately as many people were restricted to their homes for months.

For the tourism industry, August to October is considered to be off-season for travel because of unsuitable weather within the monsoon season. March to July and November to January are typically the popular seasons for travel since many places within the country which have pleasant weather. In spite of the off-season, people are choosing to travel out of frustration after being locked up for long periods of time. People want to go to places of natural beauty and enjoy in outdoor activities. Industry experts say, when people travel with family, they are willing to spend more on accommodation to make sure that the stay is safe, the area is sanitized, and comfortable. Usually, there are three segments of tour markets first is luxury other being up market and the third being budget. Travel experts opine that they are seeing more tourists within the luxury category and up market though the budget market is yet to take flight. They say that tourists are more likely to stay in distant places with good accommodation facilities. The tourists want to will enjoy nature, relax and rejuvenate by a water body and spend time at a slow pace in an equally peaceful environment. Revenge Travel is also visiting friends and family with equal vigor. Small scale and large-scale industries are slowly encouraging corporate travel and its back across the globe, so international travel is slowly becoming an occasion while being restricted at an identical time. Currently, India has started air bubbles with countries like the USA, the UK, Tanzania, Germany, Japan, France, Canada, and more. Domestic travel is the most suitable choice for Indian travelers without delay as trends show many headings towards the hills to promote distancing from the crowds.

Tourists are researching the hotels that they need to stay at and ensure that these are sanitized and cleaned on a regular basis. Prior to the pandemic, tourists did not spend money on sight-seeing or on accommodation, all that has changed now.

The tourism industry is dynamic when it involves pricing. After the second wave, some travel agencies and hotels announced a visit price, but with the rise in the number of tourists, the costs have again soared to usual levels or became costlier.

While tourism is bouncing back, locals in tourist areas are anxious about new people coming from different corners of the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The local people are conscious about tourists coming from various places about ensuring that tourists wear masks and observe precautionary measures

International travel is yet to revive because of different travel rules in various countries that keep changing counting on the number of COVID-19 cases. Vaccination certificates and RT-PCR tests are compulsory for several of those destinations. According to (Bora, 2021) as the world goes into last quarter of the year, it is obvious that we are indeed in a very better place in India than we were last year.

In India, numbers of vaccinations have been exceptionally high, being administered to the population of the country. Tourists want to step out of their houses after being forced to stay indoors for such a long time, even if it is at the cost of their own safety. This aspect is seen as interesting and experts want to understand the reasons for this bounce back tourism.

Traveling physically is one experience that cannot be alternated with online medium which is the ultimate truth. People not only associate travel for travel's sake but it actually is the memories that they create during that travel that stay with them forever.

The experience of a travel is to be enjoyed in totality is the general feeling that tourists have and revenge travel seems to exhibit this trend again. Though the difference being people are still afraid to travel to places where mass tourism is a feature. Due to this a whole new set of tourism options have raised which have become equally popular in a short while. Nature and wild-life tourism seem to be preferred over historical places. Trips by road in one's own vehicles is most suited for families and young people. Short vacations on long weekends will see a rise. Places near to the city will see the people frequenting them. Staycations are another trend where people can work from home with a change in setting where the hygiene standards will be maintained.

Revenge travel is actually an expression of making up for lost time and that's what everyone has realized as the Pandemic ravaged our lives. Stepping out became difficult and travel was a distant dream and vacations were missed sorely. Reports suggest that revenge travel made headlines in Asia as early as the autumn of 2020 and now the world is calling it that. Expedia informs us that fifty four percent of tourists planned to spend more that they would have before the pandemic. This possibly is due to the reason that people saved money as they were not really able to spend during the lockdowns and restrictions. A hard-core business traveler is the new face of this revenge travel as he/she has been remotely working and wants to take that airplane as soon as possible. One of the most prominent reasons for this travel was the fatigue that set in when people were confined to their homes during the lockdown.

Travelling is an inborn quality in people and having spent time indoors everyone is waiting to explore more than before. People have now begun to look towards the tourism and hospitality sector to de-stress minds. The COVID-19 crisis is a chance to rethink tourism for the longer term and therefore the measures chalked today will shape the tourism of tomorrow.

According to (K.C., 2021) As lockdowns restrictions were lifted in several parts of the country, many people felt the need to travel, which was also a relief for the tourism sector, and therefore the brand new term — 'revenge tourism' started in the market for certain, popular destinations all over India and in Karnataka state haven't been left behind by the trend. The tourism sector is witnessing huge footfalls within the State of Karnataka. In fact, most stakeholders agree that the response post the

second wave lockdown is much over what was seen after the primary wave restrictions were lifted. Ravi, vice-president of Karnataka Tourism Forum, said tourist accommodations in popular destinations within the State, especially resorts, were booked to capacity till the long weekend of August. "Many properties are 100% occupied such as home stays in Sakleshpur, Chikmagalur, and Kodagu are seeing good tourist footfall. This certainly can be called the term revenge tourism,"

Mr. Hulikere, one amongst the owners of home stays within the Karnataka districts mentions that Revenge tourism isn't an appropriate term to describe the new trend in tourism. He mentions that it just that "People were occupied and constrained at home with house hold chores and work from home concept for more than 1 year and that is the reason they were frustrated. They needed a break from this dull routine to be happy. Therefore, the response is overwhelming. We are even seeing many extending their stay, especially family travelers. Revenge tourism isn't precisely the term to use. After being holed up in apartments, with the second wave being so bad, it led to frustration.

According to the (Girish, 2021) due to the COVID-19 pandemic tourists desire to travel was constrained as strictly enforced nationwide lockdown policies, work from home, do household work, lead to the low tourism demand and therefore tourism industry was severely affected, and its revival was difficult. Frustration, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic created the unexpected phenomenon of revenge travel within the travel and tourism industry.

Despite the prevailing pandemic the situation, revenge travel was reported in numerous countries such as India, the USA to name a few. Perception of constant fear of missing out owing to the pandemic or other reasons or the following a lockdown may deliberately lead tourists to become involved in last-chance tourism. Travelers are experiencing restless moods.

This phenomenon of revenge tourism must not be ignored, and exploring the possible reasons behind revenge travel is critical to plan for future necessities and demands associated with tourism. According to the (Choudhary & Kittu Manda, 2021) The concept of over-tourism gives rise to "Revenge Tourism," which is taken into account hazardous within the present pandemic scenario. Revenge travel started unfolding from June onwards as Indians come out of their homes after months of lockdown, and it's dangerous with the fight against COVID-19 still underway. So, when Indian states started opening up after the slight decline of the second wave of COVID-19, people headed en masse to beachside, hill home stays, or perhaps just a resort within sight. The reason behind traveling was months of rigorous lockdown in the course of performing from home, doing or conducting classes online, and being unable to fulfill close relatives created boredom. Budget-friendly hostel chain such as OYO, and Airbnb, the net marketplace, saw twenty five percent to eighty percent surge within the reservations. Hill properties in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir are witnessing seventy percent to eighty percent. Researchers conducted a survey shows that 69 percent of respondents weren't complying with proper use of masks, whereas compliance to physical distancing norms was utterly missing in 63 percent, while 24 percent showed limited compliance.

As the obvious reasons for revenge travel are apparent, so are the challenges. People may want to travel as soon as possible but it is dependent upon many conditions. From the guest point of view like one cannot book too far both in distance and in time as the government regulations may get altered at any time. Another challenge from the industry angle is the task of maintaining the protocols along with standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Thirdly, finding staff that have to be trained and developed new skills around the management of hotels is going to be a challenge. This problem not only would trouble for small as well as bigger brands who will have to put money and efforts to maintain the hygiene and cleanliness of their properties while going contact-free.

References

1. Bora, S. (2021, September 8). Revenge travel? People are yearning to explore and travel more than ever before. *Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/travel-tourism/revenge-travel-people-are-yearning-to-explore-and-travel-more-than-ever-before/2346336/>
2. Choudhary, N., & Kittu Manda, V. (2021). Revenge Travel or the Road Less Traveled? Opting for a Suitable Option in Pandemic Times. *International Journal of Advance and Innovative Research*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/83BCG>
3. Ghosh, R. (2021, July 12). What is revenge travel? *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/lifestyle/travel/story/what-is-revenge-travel-1827119-2021-07-12>
4. Girish, V. G. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of revenge travel. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 35(10), 125–129. <https://doi.org/10.21298/ijthr.2021.10.35.10.125>
5. Joshi, A. (2022, February 4). Revenge tourism is for real! *Money Control*. Retrieved from <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/trends/travel-trends/revenge-tourism-is-for-real-7986541.html>
6. K.C., D. (2021, July 19). ‘Revenge tourism’ makes its presence felt in Karnataka. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/revenge-tourism-makes-its-presence-felt-in-karnataka/article35401695.ece>
7. Parasa, R. (2021, August 26). Revenge travel’ is here: How tourism has changed with the pandemic. *The News*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/revenge-travel-here-how-tourism-has-changed-pandemic-154413>
8. Smith, J. (2020, November 5). What is Revenge Travel and why do we do it? *Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/things-to-do/what-is-revenge-travel-and-why-do-we-do-it/as79049110.cms>