

**COVID-19: A GREAT CHALLENGE FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

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*Post Graduate Student, School of Public Health, Asian Institute of Public Health, Bhubaneswar, Odisha***Article Info:** Received 10 January 2021; Accepted 20 February 2021**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32553/jbpr.v10i1.842>**Corresponding author:** Naushaba Akhtar**Conflict of interest statement:** No conflict of interest**Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of those disasters which caused massive damage to human and property. Most of the countries have faced their impact massively as it affects the people and business adversely. As this pandemic affected all the sectors, the tourism sector was not left behind. A major impact was seen in outbound tourism and both travel and tourism has equally faced a greater challenge than any other industry in most of the nations. This paper aims to investigate the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on Tourism industry during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID19; Tourism; Major challenges; Change in demand; Models review**Introduction**

The year 2020 has been marked with the Global pandemic scenario and one of the most fatal diseases the World had experienced in its last 30 years. The pandemic affected all major parts of the world like Brazil, India, Italy, Spain, the United Nations, France, South Korea and many other countries affecting its economy and development. The pandemic started in 2019 and is still sustaining in 2021 in many parts of the World.¹ The impact of the current pandemic has already surpassed the condition observed during the SARS epidemic and have crossed 100million by end of January Worldwide. Every sector of the world had to face consequences of the pandemic, especially the effect of lockdown & shutdown but the most affected sector was the Tourism and hospitality sector. As tourism has even been a major source of revenue and employment in many regions of the World. The demand for the tourism industry has been growing with time and strategic decisions taken by the nations in recent times for the fulfillment of the needs of tourists has increased the demand with time. The most strategic decisions taken by various

nations were to restrict outbound tourism.² There were also various decisions taken for transport, accommodation and Health management during the COVID 19 pandemic as cross-country travel case has been one of the reasons identified for the spread of the disease. The first case was identified in Wuhan, China and later in other parts of World because of which the World Health Organization has to declare it as an International emergency by January 2020. Since then the impact was seen worldwide and it is one-year already since the pandemic exists and it is very essential to measure the losses occurred to different sectors. The loss beared by different sectors can be a key component for bringing changes to the existing policies and for redesigning new policies.³

Worldwide Impact of COVID19

Covid19 resulted in December 2019 and was declared as a pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organization. It has been estimated according to the World Health Organization that there have been 107,838,255 confirmed cases Worldwide of COVID19 positive cases as of

February 13th 2021 and 1381.424 cumulative total cases per 1,00,000 population.¹

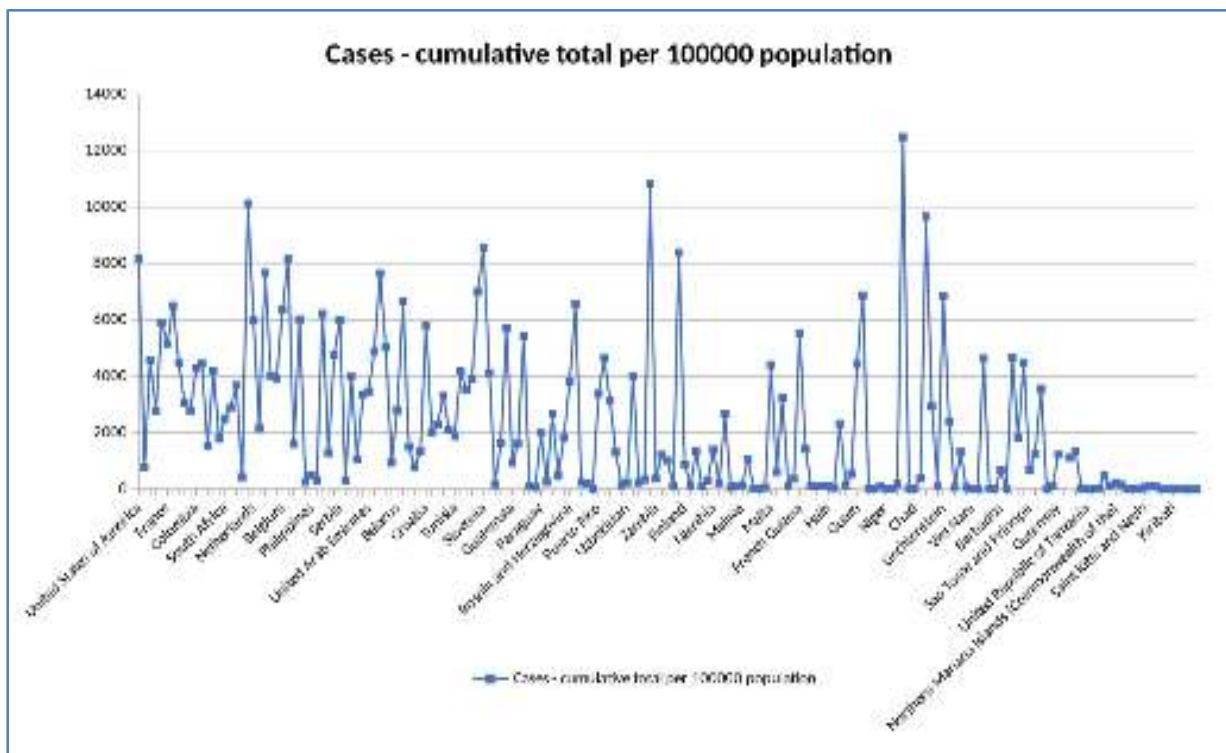


Figure 1: Shows the cumulative total number of cases per 1, 00,000 population

The changing scenario of COVID19 has been one of the major challenges for researchers and frontline workers. The number of rising cases with time is visible in various regions of the world and the death toll is equally rising. As tourism is one of the most profitable sectors and is responsible for the country's dynamic economy. Any impact on the tourism sector causes a direct impact on the economy.^{2,3}

Impact on Tourism Industry

The tourism industry has always been under a major source of loss in case of any disruptive events at macro level be it natural events or internal conflicts. These events have always affected the demand for tourism. In 2015 the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome was one of the major causes of the decline in economy and tourism in some major parts of the world. Other epidemic outbreaks which occurred in the past like SARS-CoV2, Ebola, Swine flu, etc. which even travelled across nations. This time in 2019 onwards it was Coronavirus also known as COVID-19 which has severely caused

massive damage to life and property across World. It was originated from Wuhan and was carried to the different parts of the world because of its high infectivity. It is one of those diseases which had a greater amount of fatality and it continues. And because of the pandemics, there were international travel restrictions and stricter guidelines and quarantine measures implemented by World Tourism Organization & World Health Organization. The travel restrictions started in early February of 2020 according to which 59 airlines companies were asked to suspend or limit flights to China and many other nations which includes the United States, Italy, Russia, Australia and about 93 nations from all over Asia, America, Africa and Europe issued their guidelines and decided to go for completed closures of their borders.⁴

The impact of pandemic during the lockdown & shutdown has been seen on different sectors and the various industries like Transports & Logistics, Airlines, Tourism & Hospitality, IT industry, Educational institutions and various other industry has suffered some serious loss apart from direct

impact to life and property. And tourism and Hospitality is one of that sector which has to bear some serious consequence of the pandemic. Though tourism has been one of the contributors to the number of COVID19 cases but the COVID19 also caused a massive and destructive impact on the tourism sector. There has been an estimation made by a panel of UNWTO according to which international tourism is implicated to suffer a loss of near 25% in the year 2021. The tourism industry is susceptible to bear losses of the pandemic because of restrictions in mobility and social distancing norms.¹⁻⁴

The impact on Airlines was seen as the virus travelled all across continents through various means of transport and this was one of the reasons for the breakdown of International Airlines. Many regions of the world completely closed border and suspended several international flights. The travel restrictions which had started in early February of 2020 and according to which 59 airlines companies were asked to suspend or limit flights especially to China. The industry-wise revenue fell by 70.6% year on year as of October 2020.^{5,6}

The impact on Hospitality was also affected as the availability or right to enjoy the facilities of hospitality has been ceased and had eventually shut down for international travelers. This unprecedented lockdown during the pandemic affected hospitality and tourism. The UNWTO has also started a debate on hospitality as a human right. As the rights of the consumer were affected because the suppliers could not meet the demand of the consumers. And due to the travel restrictions, the consumer could not reach the suppliers which caused huge losses to the hospitality industry thereby causing loss on both side demand and supply side.^{7,8}

The impact on Tourism destinations like the cultural places, theatres, museums and monuments were restricted for the traveler and these are the main reasons for the migration of tourists. The sporting destinations like beaches and parks were also closed for both inbound and outbound travelers not only this retails and non-essential services were also

closed and this lead to the closure of attractions and facilities.^{7,8}

The impact on Waterways has been seen since the history of epidemics waterways or the cruise ships have always been a source of infection because of its environment and cross country contamination nature. This time also had to suffer the loss of COVID19 pandemic and on every arrival, the ships or cruises had to go on quarantine for a week, which not only delayed the logistics but sometimes ports refused permissions to their seaports.^{7,8}

There were other socio-economic impact of COVID19 on tourism like, (i) Unemployment, which became a major challenge as demand for tourism were affected during the pandemic, (ii) Arrivals of international tourists, (iii) Economy, as foreign exchange is one of the major sources of economy in the tourism industry, (iv) Socio-psychological impact, as several tourists used to visit destinations for the spiritual and cultural purpose for the attainment of socio-psychological satisfaction.^{7,8}

Review of Literature

This paper has a literature review on the impact of COVID19 pandemic on tourism. There have been many studies conducted which shows the impact of COVID19 on different sectors of tourism, the change in demand for tourism industry the challenges due to lockdown and shutdown has also been reviewed in this paper. One of the studies shows the transmission of the virus through airways, which has been one of the issues under consideration these days. Some countries also closed their borders completely to restrict travel. The phases of lockdown and shutdown have been causing great damage to travel, hospitality, hotels, destinations, healthcare, sports events and employment in the tourism industry. The tourism industry is expecting a recovery in the year 2021 as the travel restrictions are being released and the ban on international travel has been removed for certain regions of the World. It was also estimated in 2020 by UNWTO that the international tourism decline would be lesser than 2019 and the year 2021 has been forecasted to show a substantial difference in decline in international tourists, which would be lesser than 2020.

Table 1: Review of literature from the past, showing the impact of COVID19 pandemic on tourism.

Sl.No	Author	Title	Models/Methods
1	Law et al. (2019). ⁹	Tourism demand forecasting: A deep learning approach.	Support vector regression and artificial neural network models
2	Liet al. 2018 ¹⁰	Tourism forecasting research: A perspective	General literature overview
3	Nicolides et al 2020 ¹¹	Hand-Hygiene Mitigation Strategies Against Global Disease Spreading through the Air Transportation Network	SIR Epidemic model
4	Scroll (2020). ¹²	India's Covid-19 lockdown may cause 38 million job losses in the travel and tourism industry	General literature overview
5	Singala(2020) ¹³	Tourism and COVID-19: impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research	Paradox research/meta-theory
6	Gössling.(2020) ¹⁴	Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19	A comparative study: Between COVID19 & previous epidemics
7	Tsionas MG (2020) ¹⁵	COVID-19 and gradual adjustment in tourism, hospitality, and related industries	Dynamic analysis
8	Polyzos S et al(2020) ¹⁶	Tourism demand and the COVID-19 pandemic: an LSTM approach	Artificial neural network-Long short term memory (LSTM)
9	Chinazzi M etal (2020) ¹⁷	The effect of travel restrictions on the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak	Global metapopulation disease transmission model
10	Smiianov VAetal(2020) ¹⁸	The Link Between Economic Growth and Tourism: Covid-19 Impact	Extrapolation model- ARIMA.

Conclusion

The industry of tourism has been drastically affected by the COVID19 pandemic, thereby affecting both inbound and outbound tourism. The revenue which was being generated by Foreign exchange of economy has caused a greater impact not only on the tourism industry but on the entire country's economy. A suitable change in the COVID19 guidelines related to social distancing restrictions and implement proper COVID19 precautions can be an effective method to restart international tourism. A strategic model can help in proper operational and planning at macro-level. This paper discusses the consequences of COVID19 on tourism sector which can be used by policymakers in remaking policies related to tourism.

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