

Tourism and Hospitality Sector - New Dimensions in a Post COVID-19 World: A Conceptual Analysis from an Academic Perspective

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Abstract *Recent years has witnessed loss of human life as well as the physical and mental strain to the large populations of the world, which could be termed as disastrous. Many researchers (Arasli et al., 2020; Rezapouraghdam & Karatepe, 2020; Lim & To, 2021; Karatepe et al., 2021) have demonstrated that COVID-19 had a significant impact on the economy and human life globally. In fact, the new coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic first appeared in the late December 2019 in China and then moved into other countries, before reaching India in March 2020. Further, the pandemic continued into 2021 & 2022 in the developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. Added to this, Governments are meeting the costs of dealing with the pandemic and supporting business and citizens. Therefore, we consider how both the pandemic and resultant economic issues have and will affect tourism and hospitality—specifically sustainable tourism & hospitality that will develop and sustain local communities in a balanced way for the benefit of future generations. In fact, beyond the immediacy of the situation and the management of the short-term consequences of the crisis, we must look ahead to the future, to the world of tomorrow, which will inevitably be different from all past societies and all past economies. This paper conceptually focuses on evaluating the potential effects of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry in India and post COVID-19 settings, recovery strategies and new normal and suggests the theoretical development and policy implication of this relationship.*

Keywords: COVID-19, Tourism, Economic, Sustain, Mental Strain

INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, the global tourism has been exposed to a wide range of crises, epidemics and pandemics such as the September 11 terrorist attacks (2001), the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (2003), the global economic crisis (2009), ‘Bird flu’ (2009), MERS (2012), and Ebola (2013-14), plague, cholera, swine flu, and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) have already afflicted humanity in different perspectives. However, none of them led to a long-term decline in the global development & growth of tourism, and some of them are not even notable, with only SARS (-0.4%) and the global economic crisis (-4.0%) leading to declines in international arrivals (World

Bank, 2020a, 2020b). The COVID-19 pandemic is a catastrophe taking an enormous toll on humanity disrupting lives and livelihoods globally. In fact, the COVID-19 is the most devastating/demoralizing one and still damaging the world. Paradoxically, it has disrupted the economic, financial, political and social systems of most countries. The COVID-19 has a profound impact on the philosophy of life, mode of human relationship and model of business. Two years ago, as the novel coronavirus spread across the world and most of the countries were implemented two major measures such as closed borders and social distancing, significantly, those of us who work in the tourism and hospitality industry began trying to understand the potential economic and social implications for this people-oriented industry. No doubt, worldwide sectors/industries/economies began to suffer

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from the COVID-19 pandemic but the most anxious sector was tourism & hospitality. According to UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (2021) prior to COVID-19, the tourism & hospitality industry was recognized as one of the world's largest as well as fastest-growing industry in terms of generating \$1.7 trillion revenue from 1.47 billion international tourists. Of course, every region of the world experienced increase in international tourist arrivals, revenue generation, employment creation and economic growth & development with tremendous growth about 26% of global growth was generated by Asia and the Pacific, with the Southeast Asia sub region accounting for over 70% of growth in the region in 2019. According to UNWTO, in 2018, 56% of the world's travel and tourism was driven by travelers seeking leisure, recreation, and holidays, followed by 27% traveling for visits with friends and relatives, religion, and health; 13% for business; and the remainder for other purposes. On the other hand, according to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) prior to the pandemic, Travel & Tourism (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.3% of all jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of global GDP (US\$9.6 trillion). Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to US\$1.8 trillion in 2019 (6.8% of total exports). WTTC (2021) estimates indicate that Travel & Tourism has lost almost US\$4.9 trillion in 2020 (-50.4% decline), which was increased by US\$1 trillion (+21.7% rise) in 2021. Similarly, in 2019, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 10.3% to global GDP which decreased to 5.3% in 2020 and 6.1% in 2021 respectively. It further reveals that the travel and tourism sector lost 62 million jobs in 2020 and 18.2 million jobs in 2021 globally. In India, prior to COVID-19 tourism and hospitality contributed 6.8% of total GDP and 8% of the total employment (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) reveals that in 2019 the Indian tourism and hospitality industry contributed INR 194 billion to India's GDP, generated 87.5 million jobs, 12.75% of total employment in 2018-19. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 on the global economy, this industry lost 40 million jobs (both direct and indirect) and about USD 17 billion in revenue (Ministry of Tourism, 2021).

Thus, the above discussion between COVID-19 and tourism & hospitality industry has revealed implausible changes and impacts on this industry. Moreover, global tourism & hospitality systems had been compelled to close/suspension and millions of employees whose livelihood depends on this industry had lost their jobs or forced to receive a portion of their salary. It is clear that COVID-19 is not a determined object which one can defend against instead its invisible but present globally. Therefore, this paper conceptually focuses on evaluating the potential effects of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry in India and post COVID-19 settings, recovery strategies and new normal and

suggests the theoretical development and policy implication of this relationship. After this introductory section, the paper presents literature review on evaluating the potential effects of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry and post COVID-19 settings, recovery strategies and new normal. The next section focuses on discussion, analysis and conclusion. Lastly, theoretical, policy and practical implications are provided for proposed research.

EMERGING THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES IN COVID-19 AND TOURISM & HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Evaluating the Potential Effects of COVID-19 on the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The COVID-19 is a relatively new concept in academic research and has started to attract academic attention after March 2020 as a new dimension in academic world. In fact, COVID-19 has seen as a more pronounced change agent than other disasters, terrorism attacks and pandemics/epidemics etc. significantly, it has vanished numerous human lives as well as the physical and given mental strain to the larger populations of the world viz-a-viz slowdown economies of all nations and in particular the tourism and hospitality industry. During recent years the scholars have been paying attention towards both individual as well as collective on COVID-19 and tourism & hospitality industry. Therefore, as the COVID-19 effects global hospitality industry the academic scholarship has proposed a new research agenda and probably focused on how researches will assist tourism and hospitality industry to sustain and develop in a balanced way for the benefit of future generation (Kapoor & Chand, 2021; Gössling et al., 2020; Wut et al., 2021; Zenker & Kock, 2020).

Chang et al. (2020) summarize that COVID-19 has changed the world forever in every imaginable way and has impacted heavily on international tourism and hospitality industry. COVID-19 has also had an impact on social as well as fundamental values in the community. Li et al. (2022) focuses on identifying fundamental values, organizations, and pre-assumptions related to travel and tourism revival and help academia and researchers to get breakthrough in initiating the frontiers based on research and practice.

Some scholars' state the COVID-19 pandemic has posed various challenges on coping of tourists with hospitality and tourism activities worldwide (Liu et al., 2021; Mubeen et al., 2021a, b; Ge et al., 2022). On the other hand, scholars argue that hospitality business managers and organizations'

owners are more inclined to discover innovative methods/approaches/models to revive tourism and hospitality activities amid the COVID-19 (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020). Bartika et al. (2020) explore the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on small businesses and results reveal that the financial fragility businesses after the COVID-19 had begun disruptions and businesses' expectations about the longer-term impact of COVID-19 as well as some relief programs from the government. In order to understand the travel behavior of the tourists Chan (2021) proposes a conceptual model and its hypotheses of the perceived tourism risks of natural and man-made disasters to explain the associations between the expected travel experience and ultimate travel behaviour post-COVID-19 Pandemic. Similarly, Suzan and Mohammad (2021) results indicate that tourists' revisit intention is positively and significantly influenced by DSR, destination reputation and their perceived trust.

Many scholars submit that COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on supply chain, leisure holiday, flights, human life, cancel or delay their trips, travel supply and demand, employment, education and many industries and perhaps it may continue, even after the end of this devastating pandemic (Kapoor & Chand, 2021; Uğur & Akbıyık 2020; Nicola et al., 2020; Chowdhury et al., 2020; Das et al., 2021; Kausha and Srivastava 2020; Kar et al., 2021; Obembe et al., 2021; Ćosić et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). Similarly, Kaitano (2020) investigates the impact of COVID-19 on the global restaurant industry using data from Open Table and other sources. Further, study indicates that COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented loss of employment and revenue, resulting in millions of jobs and billions of dollars in potential revenue lost. In similar vein, Jafari et al. (2021) study shows that the novel coronavirus has hampered the tourism & hotel sector in terms of economic gains, business and business closure. On the other hand, Chi et al. (2021) evaluated the behavior of management-level hotel employees' behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic and reported both positive and negative job outcomes. Pandey et al. (2021) state that the Indian tourism industry has been significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic and has altered the functioning of all the stakeholders in the industry.

Thus, the literature substantiates that the tourism industry is one of the most affected sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of travel supply, travel demand, cancellation of tours and delay in trips, hotel booking/reservation cancellation, flights cancellation, destination closer and devastating the whole hospitality chain.

Post COVID-19 Settings, Recovery Strategies and New Normal

In order to understand the COVID-19 message and ensure a balanced preparation and avoid problems of COVID-19

like disasters, crises, epidemics and pandemics etc. all voices from different stakeholder groups must be heard and respected. In fact, the scholars, industry professionals and government should develop a mechanism that will assist the society, industry, businesses and government to control or minimize the impact(s) of COVID-19 like pandemics. This session is devoted to evaluate various devices suggested for new settings, recovery strategies and new normal post-COVID-19.

Since spreading of COVID-19, the academic world has become more inclined towards examining, appraising COVID-19 impacts and suggest remedies to overcome or minimize such effects on society as well as businesses globally.

Yan-Kai Fu (2020) proposes several recovering strategies for the hospitality such as to establish a risk warning mechanism, strengthen risk and crisis awareness training and anti-risk capabilities beside monitoring, identifying, diagnosing, and rectifying the strategic and execution management of the hotel. Maria et al. (2020) suggested that for resilient and strong leadership in healthcare, business, government and wider society, immediate measures need to be implemented and adjusted for those that may fall through the cracks. José and María (2020) suggest that the industry should be focused on building trust in tourists, reinforcing their brand and adapting their operations to the so-called "new normal". On the other hand, Michael Haywood (2020) emphasized the role that academicians are urged to embrace, especially through action research, curriculum change and creation of 'daring classrooms for the future of tourism'.

Oliver and Andrea (2021) suggest a framework which includes diversification of tourism products; adoption of innovation/technological advancements, taking care of the environment and labour; localization of control/ownership; inclusivity and adopting a community basis for ownership and control of ventures for reviving tourism and hospitality industry. Similarly, Chugh (2021) attempts to draw attention of tourism planners and to devise strategies to deal with the changing travel preferences post-COVID-19.

Dileepand Nair (2021) pointed out that the 'back to normal' philosophies are fuelled by the past global crises and the exceptional bouncy characteristics of the tourism sector to recover. Álvaro et al. (2021) emphasize on creating a favorable environment for small-scale business development and supporting the provision of resources and capabilities to enhance destination competitiveness and innovation, stimulating cooperation and networking post pandemic. Shih (2021) demonstrates that both open communication system is pivotal to successfully combat pandemic and government-sponsored loans are crucial to the survival of tourism industry. Sharma et al. (2021) identified four prominent factors for building resilience in the tourism industry such as government response, technology innovation, local belongingness, and

consumer and employee confidence. Similarly, Raymond et al. (2021) proposes justice framework to examine four key dimensions of justice such as ‘recognition’ ‘procedural’ ‘distribution’ and ‘restorative’ to be taken for an equitable and justified future.

Interestingly, scholars opined those collaborative approaches are more consequential in post pandemic. Jun Wen et al. (2021) provides a brief overview of the intricacies of interdisciplinary work with diverse challenges and benefits of cross-disciplinary research. They further, suggest interdisciplinary research collaboration opportunities regarding post COVID-19 in tourism and hospitality. In similar vein, Stephen et al. (2021), focus on argument that tourism scholars should not solely focus on assessing the technical merits of knowledge, instead must grapple with what might constitute a ‘reasonable dissent’ in the context of the “wider habitual in tourism and its scholarship”. McCartney et al. (2022) suggests an interdisciplinary collaborative approach between Community Pharmacists and the tourism sector to craft a sustainable pathway to recovery from COVID-19 and future pandemics. Similarly, Nikos et al. (2022) developed a novel Business Resilience Composite Score, which enables academics, practitioners and policy-makers to draw comparisons between tourism and hospitality industry resilience and other economic activity in urban locations. On the other hand, Yi and Wenjie (2022), suggest framework that provides organizations preliminary guidelines to establish a longitudinal preventive strategy to strengthen employees’ work resilience. Ironically, human resources’ competencies are crucial tool to conquer crises. The evidence of this is well reported by Eda and Çağıl (2022) establishing the fact that hotel managers were caught unprepared for the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, they managed to control the crisis process well with their knowledge, skills and experience.

The above review of literature demonstrates that tourism & hospitality as a system has been resilient to tolerate and swallow external shocks. However, there is much evidence that the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be unprecedented.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

It is now clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to the second great economic and financial crisis of the 21st century and is likely to have long-term structural repercussions. In fact, tourism and hospitality is recognized/ considered the backbone of many economies, has been badly hurt by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Since release from lockdown in June 2020, most of the economies have taken various measures to restore their

industries—especially tourism and hospitality. However, all efforts have gone in vain when second wave started rapidly expanding in Sept/Oct 2020. Of course, new tourism concept “tourism of the mind” i.e., imaginative and virtual travel has become popular among the travelers instead “tourism of the body.” Interestingly, year 2021 was the turning point to fight with COVID-19 when India launched COVID-19 vaccine on Jan 16, 2021. According to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2021) 326.4 million people in India (23.4% of the population) had received the first dose of the vaccine, and 85.4 million people (6.1% of the population) had received the second dose by the end July 20, 2021.

As of now we understood that the outbreak of COVID-19 since March 2020 which has impacted countries at different times, in different ways and in varying degrees. Yet, around the world, its consequences are still prevailing and impeding/hampering the economic and social growth of many countries.

In addition, the crippling effect of COVID-19 on economic performance may differ and depends on the industry’s pre-pandemic characteristics and strategies. The literature confirms that tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most disrupted industries from the impact of COVID-19.

According to UNWTO (2020) across all regions there has been a strong and widespread policy response to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and 167 countries have reported specific measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis and accelerate recovery measures such as fiscal and monetary policies, policies to support jobs and training. Most of studies provide guidelines for tourism businesses to effectively cope with the unprecedented pandemic with appropriate strategic directions with their available resources and capabilities. Some authors have found huge changes in travel behaviour of the tourist and stated that these changes will demand innovation-based responses from destinations and tourism companies. No doubt, the pandemic circumstances have given new concept of ‘perceived personal risk’ and it is crucial in order to provide better services to the tourists. In other words, the pandemic has increased and accelerated the use of new technologies also to practice alternative forms of tourism.

In the past few years, India has been focused on ensuring equitable inclusive growth and self-sufficiency by major structural reforms such as ‘Gati Shakti National Master Plan’ and the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission, the National Infrastructure pipeline and National Monetization plan to boost infrastructure development. This wide-ranging development agenda supports initiatives across multiple sectors including tourism and hospitality to enhance the robustness and vitality of its economy (World Economic Forum, 2021). According to IATO (2022), the industry has asked the government to consider a waiver of e-visa fees for

all foreign tourists in the financial year 2022-23 to support a revival of travel and tourism. It also wants tourism earnings to be treated on par with exports. Industry players are looking forward to the government strategizing a sustainable long-term plan to help revive international travel which is currently disrupted by ongoing waves.

Many researches opined that the COVID-19 Pandemic has changed travel habits to become more independent i.e., tourist typology tends to lead to explorers and drifters. Tourists want to visit unfavorable tourist destination which are blended with a new environment. This will have a profound impact on destination managers' planning and adjustment with tourist behavior, characteristics, typology and motivation of tourists while actually operating package tours.

Based on the research studies, it is conceivable to say that COVID-19 pandemic crisis styles differ from country to country and industry to industry. Interestingly, the above literature confirms that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected socio-cultural, economic as well as psychological on various tourism & hospitality stakeholders for a longer period, and they will suffer from the adverse effects for a longer time. Thus, this COVID-19 pandemic has offered an opportunity to devise a new framework for the tourism and hospitality scholars to conduct researches from different perspectives with diverse research methodology and methods.

POST COVID-19 STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

The previous literature confirms that most of the countries have restarted domestic tourism in 2022 as an immediate measure in this context and which has a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening tourism and hospitality industry. However, we should look ahead to the future of tourism & hospitality industry and how to make it more resilient and sustainable as before COVID-19. Certainly, this remains important for the revival, self-reliability and sustains of hospitality industry but especially in view of the COVID-19 which has not yet seen its end, the following strategies and measures should be viewed as important in our new dimensions in a post COVID-19 tourism and hospitality industry:

- Strategic crisis management planning,
- Vaccination maximization,
- Health & security and hygiene,
- Changing market dynamics,
- Tourist preferences,
- Redesigning and mapping tourism product,
- Social distancing,
- Ability of businesses and destinations to adopt new experiences travellers,

- local coalitions/collaboration,
- Flexible and imaginative financing,
- Regeneration of local environment,
- Virtual market,
- Optimising tourism resilience strategies,
- Sustainability conscience travellers.

RELEVANCE OF PRESENT RESEARCH

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unparalleled lockdown, travel restrictions and stay-at-home which resultants disruption of global economy and tourism industry badly. This has changed the educational system and inspired the academic researchers. Evidence of the academic research especially in tourism and hospitality shows enormous publications during 2020-2022 periods.

Some researchers have become particularly noticeable during the pandemic to provide timely information to the stakeholders. Most of the researches have emphasized on both theoretical and empirical implications which could be influential in helping stakeholder's better understanding of the COVID-19 crisis apart from providing immediate industry solutions. The present research highlights the importance of Post COVID-19 Settings, Recovery Strategies and New Normal that may be useful to enhance relevance and dialogue between academia and industry to plan mutually beneficial collaboration for post COVID-19 management.

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