

Post-Pandemic Tourism: An Article on the Recovery Strategies

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www.ijrah.com || Vol. 3 No. 2 (2023): March Issue

Date of Submission: 21-03-2023

Date of Acceptance: 11-04-2023

Date of Publication: 21-04-2023

ABSTRACTS

The spread of the COVID 19 Pandemic has been a black-swan event (Yan, 2020), in the history of humanity. Having affected over 180 countries globally, the Corona Virus put a halt to the daily activities of mankind. Business, Trade, and the Overall Economy of the world went downhill due to this event. Today, we see people commuting to different countries and pursuing their endeavours after having been prevented from moving out of their homes for a good part of over a year. Manufacturing, Transportation, Warehousing, Tourism, Education, and Accommodation were among the highly impacted industries. In such turbulent times, the Information Technology (Rahul De', 2020) sector played a pivotal role in improving the overall operational standards of businesses across the world. The Tourism Industry especially, has had a massive setback primarily due to the restrictions on traveling imposed by governments across the world. This research paper will probe into the emerging trends and propositions by different organizations into improving tourism and making it sustainable for the future. It will further shed light on redefining destination marketing and promotion of domestic tourism as a recovery strategy to rejuvenate the industry and restore its pre-eminence in the economy.

Keywords- COVID19, Tourism, Recovery Strategies, Destination Marketing, Domestic Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism as an industry consists of both a product and a process (Smith, 1994). It is one of the lucrative prospects for countries to improve their income from foreign sources. Individuals visit different countries and enjoy their time in exotic locations. Countries try and improve a tourist's experience by being more hospitable and providing them the freedom of choice to spend their vacations to their satisfaction. Sustainable tourism (Liu, 2010) suggests a win-win situation that involves consideration of economic, social, and environmental factors whilst also focusing on the tourist's experience. The pre-pandemic situation had a monumental rise in tourists from across the world to countries like Maldives, Bahamas, UAE, British Virgin Islands, etc. However, the advent of pandemic has resulted in a significant decline in the number of people visiting these tourist attractions due to restrictions

imposed globally. Unsurprisingly, there is a sharp decline in tourist arrivals impacting their economic growth due to this unforeseen pandemic.

In 2022, one can observe the recovery of the tourism sector due to some of the emerging trends in the industry. The World Tourism Organization (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2022) reports that Tourism has reached 57% of pre-pandemic levels in the first seven months of 2022. Having recovered six-tenths of the initial state of the industry, there is an imminent need to understand the strategies adopted by countries and how they are pursuing this endeavour. One of the key points to note here is the blatant "work from home" strategy adopted by different professionals. As of January 2022, McKinsey (McKinsey & Company, 2022) suggests that over 36% of the US population works from home. Understanding this fact is critical to comprehend the strategies adopted by companies to promote tourism globally. The abundant time available for employees to

work where they please facilitate them to travel to different countries while working.

The tourism sector faced monumental backlash due to the COVID19 pandemic, and as such, has started recovering due to the recovery strategies adopted by countries. Since it has been lesser than 12 months since the decline in the number of individuals affected by the Corona Virus, this topic is slightly under-researched.

There is an imminent need to understand the trends adopted by countries and companies to improve their hospitality and accommodation services to the public. Rejuvenating the tourism sector isn't an easy task, especially with the threat of illness looming over one's head. This paper uses a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative studies to probe into the comparison between the state of tourism pre- and post-pandemic.

Tourists have a high propensity to visit countries like Spain, Italy, Mexico, the United States, and the United Kingdom (World Population Review, 2022). These are some of the countries that were affected monumentally due to the Corona Virus. This research paper will shed light on the pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic situation of Tourism as an Industry in different regions. It will probe into some of the emerging trends in the sector adopted by companies operating to provide hospitable environments to tourists from across the globe. Understanding the comparison between the pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic situation will help in interpreting the recovery trends adopted. It will further pave way to comprehending the future of tourism as an industry and what the sector can bring to the table for the global economy.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This paper aims to provide answers to a few questions. Here are some of the objectives of this research paper.

- 1) Provide a comparison between the pre- and post-pandemic situation regarding tourism as an industry.
- 2) Provide an understanding of the different strategies adopted by global economies to tackle the losses faced by the tourism industry during the pandemic.
- 3) Provide an understanding of what tourism as an industry holds for economies in the future to come.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is written for understanding the emerging trends in business, trade, and economy post-pandemic. It sheds light on tourism as an industry.

It is a paper that aims to analyse the state of the tourism industry in the current scenario. To achieve this understanding, the paper probes into different facts and figures provided by authoritative bodies with expertise in statistically analysing the tourism industry.

The regulatory authorities like World Tourism Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank have provided insights into the pre- and post-pandemic state of the tourism industry across the globe. These statistics have been shared and entered in this paper to provide a thorough understanding of how the comparison of the pre- and post-pandemic state of the tourism industry. The secondary sources of data have also shed light on the variables(factors) that influence a tourists' decision on travel. Furthermore, it provides holistic information about the synergy between industries like travel, accommodation, and hospitality along with the tourism industry. The research assumes a positive relationship between the following industries and focuses on analysing and extracting ideas from existing literature to provide reasonable solutions.

After having understood the differences between the pre- and post-pandemic state, this paper moves on to analyse the recovery strategies adopted by different countries. It probes into the present employment situation of multiple individuals globally and links this with the statistical sources that indicate their propensity to travel while working. This paper also analyses certain tourism-marketing concepts that were either long forgotten or not as effective in today's scenario. Furthermore, it probes into the advancements in the IT sector and speaks about the social media's influence on traveling.

This paper finally concludes with the analysis of government intervention across the globe to revamp tourism prospects for their respective countries. It analyses the countries that have adopted strategies to promote domestic tourism within the region. This paper concludes after analysing the following findings and suggests solutions that promote sustainability in the sector. It insinuates the prerogatives of the current employment situation globally and provides holistic insights into what the industry holds for the future. The methodology used in finding these concepts and solutions are supported highly by the few authors that have already researched in this domain and provided their inputs on the following matters. As such, this paper 5 conceptually suggests motives that help with the rise of tourism to its former glory by shedding light on the recovery strategies adopted and the figures provided by authoritative bodies.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Tourism industry is one of the industries that has been monumentally affected during the pandemic. Understanding the impact of the COVID19 situation involves reviewing literature delivered by different authors on concepts that help us comprehend the degree of impact. As such, this paper begins by reviewing the concept of tourism sustainability and the positive frameworks of this event. The paper by Claudia

Seabra and Ketan Bhatt on “Tourism Sustainability and COVID 19 Pandemic: Is There a Positive Side?” (Claudia Seabra) helps us understand the industry and the adverse impact of the pandemic. In accordance with the research objective, it provides a clearer picture into both the pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic state. The tourism industry collaborates with other industries to sustain and grow. These auxiliary industries have significant importance in the society. Industries like travel, accommodation, hospitality, etc., were also impacted immensely during the pandemic. As such, understanding this through existing literature like the paper by Anu Chaudhary, “Impact and Survival Strategy for Hospitality Industry after COVID-19” (Chaudhary, 2022), has helped us analyse the strategy adopted by auxiliary industries towards contributing to the overall economy of the tourism industry. It focuses heavily on the Indian market which plays a small but effective role in the market.

Understanding the impact of the pandemic answers the first part of our research objective. Analysing the recovery strategy requires further probing into the literature prepared by people with expertise in such matters. The paper by Yeh. S on “Tourism Recovery Strategy against COVID-19 Pandemic” (Yeh, 2020) provided a holistic understanding of the wealth brought by tourism to the global economy. It further highlighted the intervention of the governments of different countries to improve their domestic tourism for an expanded vision. The changes suggested and implemented have been thoroughly analysed throughout the rest of this paper to provide further clarity.

The final objective of understanding the growth prospects of the tourism industry post-pandemic isn't an easy question to answer. The primary reason behind this is the lack of material on the post-pandemic progress since it has only been one year in observance. Regardless, the reports provided by the WTO and IMF help in getting clarity on performance measures and growth prospects. The paper by Ulrika Persson-Fischer and Shuangqi Liu on “The Impact of Global Crisis on Areas and Topics of Tourism Research” (Ulrika Persson-Fischer, 2021) helps us understand the research perspectives of different authors engaging in this kind of literature. The scholars, authors, and researchers invested in this industry provide exquisite insights into the performance and prospects of the tourism industry. Finally, the paper by Jarkko Saarinen on “Critical Sustainability: Setting the limits to Growth and Responsibility in Tourism” (Saarinen, 2014) helps us analyse the growth prospects and compare them with the existing objectives of the tourism industry. It helps us understand the temporary deviations and movement towards virtual and sustainable growth. The literature cited in this article has helped this paper provide a comprehensive analysis of the tourism industry pre- and post-pandemic. As such, it has also helped in providing

insights for the analysis of the recovery strategies adopted.

V. COMPARISON OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY PRE- AND POST-PANDEMIC

Before delving into the emerging trends, there is an imminent need for readers to understand the comparison between the pre- and post-pandemic situation of Tourism as an industry. Tourism can be defined as a process where individuals travel to destinations other than their work/home environments. While the purposes for such travel may differ from one person to another, a simple fact is that people engaging in such activities contribute to the economy of the country they're planning to visit. Thus, tourism as an industry observes high returns in exotic locations across the world.

Pre-Pandemic Situation

Tourism as an industry was one of the most lucrative prospects and priority sectors for the global economy pre-pandemic situation (Claudia Seabra). Before January 2020, the tourism industry contributed 10.4% to the global economic GDP. The World Tourism Organization happily reported that 2019 was the 10th consecutive year where tourism observed sustainable growth. The Middle East region observed the highest amount of growth in terms of arrivals. The top regions to observe growth in tourism earnings were the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. The Top Destinations for Individuals to visit in 2019 were France, Spain, The USA, China, and Italy. (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020)

As iterated earlier, individuals travel for different purposes. Some might have business motives, while others simply visit countries to relax and refrain from further engaging in stressful activities. Keeping such factors in mind, it is imminent to note that the pre-pandemic situation of tourism observed significant growth for over a decade as observed in the UNWTO reports. Tourism as an industry also affects other sectors like transportation, accommodation, hospitality, and food & beverages. It is safe to say that revenue in these auxiliary industries observed reasonable improvements due to the growth of tourism as an industry during the pre-pandemic scenario.

During Pandemic

The COVID19 Pandemic was one of the most unprecedented events in the history of mankind. The rapid spread of the CORONA Virus rendered humans vulnerable to contracting the disease even after protecting themselves with masks and sanitizers. During this period, almost all the countries across the world had a phase of lockdown where they prevented individuals from traveling unless and until it was absolutely needed. In the 21st Century, pandemics like H1N1, Zika, and the Ebola viruses have also impacted the world. However,

none of these pandemics were severe enough to cause lockdowns on a global scale.

The obvious part about these lockdowns is that tourism as an industry faces massive decline in growth. Individuals were not allowed to travel to different countries for whatever their endeavour might be. Thus, the industry also caused a spiralling decline in transportation, food & beverages, hospitality, accommodation, and many more. The global economy was in shambles and many people found it immensely arduous to keep up with such changing unprecedented imbalance. The International Labour Organization reports that 2020 observed a loss of over 114 million jobs globally (International Labour Organization, 2021). Industries that required individuals to socialize and travel started shutting down due to the restrictions imposed by governments on such activities. These events played a pivotal role in the decline of tourism and associated industries.

While international tourism obviously was frowned upon and banned by governments, domestic travel also became close to impossible. The World Tourism Organization reports that shutdowns on borders, and the fear of contracting the Corona Virus were the primary reasons why tourists refrained from traveling. The silver lining in this cloud can be observed in the form of reduced greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprints (United Nations Environment Programme, 2021). People also shifted to digital means for almost all activities. Starting from “work-from-home” to paying for groceries online, the Information Technology sector observed a huge growth. During this period, tourism as an industry faced challenges it had never seen before. The lack of clarity on the recommencement of travel became a significant question for everyone globally.

Post-Pandemic Situation

Normalcy returned across the globe during the 3rd and the 4th quarters of 2021. Countries began lifting their restrictions on travel. However, even today, many individuals continue to work digitally. This cultural shift in the workplace environment has proven to be a double-edged sword. Unlike the pre-pandemic situation where only a slight number of individuals pursued remote work, a press release suggests that over 25% of all professionals in the North American region will continue to work from home by the end of 2022 (Ladders Stock Club, 2021). IT professionals strongly believe that this activity continues to pose security threats for companies that are permitting such activities.

Tourism as an activity saw an excellent surge during the last quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022. The World Tourism Organization reports that over six-tenths of the industry has returned to pre-pandemic levels by July 2022. The World observed a 43% decline in International Tourist Arrivals as opposed to a 70% decline in 2021 (in comparison to 2019). The traveling industry also observed a huge surge in international travel with a whopping 264% increase as opposed to

2021 (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2022).

While these facts and figures provide holistic insights into understanding the resurgence of tourism as an industry after the setback during the pandemic, it does not inform the reader of the tools and strategies implemented. As such, the following section will shed light on some such brilliant efforts made by industry experts.

Recovery Strategies

With all the restrictions on travel and socializing, it is unsurprising that tourism was one of the industries that was highly impacted in a negative light. The unprecedented nature of such lockdowns getting imposed regularly after waves and waves of the CORONA virus posed questions to everyone as to when normalcy will return. The Tourism industry needed strategies that they could implement and change the game whilst also considering sustainable values. The industry finally came up with some strategies that helped with the recovery during the first two quarters of 2022. Here are some of the solutions that played a significant role in this process.

Destination Marketing

One of the definitions provided for destination marketing was in 1976, by Wahab et. Al (cited in Pike, 2014), and reads as follows. “The management process through which the National Tourists Organizations and/or tourist enterprises identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, and communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes, and dislikes, on local, regional, national, and international levels to formulate and adapt tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist’s satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objectives” (Muzaffer Uysal, 2011).

Analyzing this definition helps the reader get a general idea of what this strategy involves. During the pre-pandemic phase, destination market had become a saturated technique of promoting travel places. The primary reason for this stagnation is attributed to the overcrowded nature of certain exotic spots as opposed to some unexplored avenues. Thus, people stopped visiting a lot of tourist attractions that promoted itself using this strategy. However, since people stopped visiting these places altogether during the pandemic, destination marketing as a strategy has resurged and is making significant impact in the market.

Social media can also be highly attributed to the success of this strategy. Influencers, companies, tourist attractions, etc., use platforms like Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, among other social media sites, to promote their locations. A recent study held at Google suggests that over 70% of travelers use smartphones for travel research (Think With Google, 2016). Interested stakeholders use this statistic to improve their visibility on social media platforms and use an emotional hook to attract tourists with similar likes, dislikes, needs, wishes, and motivations. This strategy has a high conversion rate

and has promoted tourism at regional and international levels.

Exploiting “Work-From-Home”

The “work-from-home” policy adopted by professionals during the pandemic gave them an excellent way to work as well as stay at their home. This policy brought in many changes to the tourism industry. Individuals started traveling and working from cafés, restaurants, hotels, etc. The ability for people to add to their work whilst being on the move constantly isn’t entirely unprecedented. Granted, it is not one of the conventional techniques of working, it has been seen earlier. However, the rise began during the first few waves of pandemic, when the IT sector provided holistic tools to facilitate companies from pursuing their operations from remote locations.

A recent report from one of the world’s best accommodations providing companies suggests that in the final stages of the pandemic, one out of every five bookings were made for 28 days or more (AirBnB, 2022). This information does not outright suggest that all individuals working from home opted to tour and travel while pursuing their work. However, it does shed insights into how people began adapting to the “work-from-home” revolution.

In such scenarios, it becomes significantly easier for companies to provide access to high-speed wifis, relaxing environments, stress busting activities, etc., to promote tourism as an option for individuals interested in traveling while working. Business meetings, data entry, change in management, etc., are some activities that can be done through remote environments. The Tourism industry made massive use of this policy and has benefited monumentally through these changes in the workplace environment.

Domestic Tourism

Finally, countries that are heavily dependent on tourism for the overall economy have started promoting domestic tourism. The international monetary fund organization reports that countries like Thailand have provided soft funds to tourism agencies within the country and promoted domestic tourism and long-term stays. Another interesting move taken was in the case of Costa Rica. The government temporarily shifted national holidays to Mondays. This way, tourists had an extra day in their weekend to enjoy the sights and sceneries (Aleksandra Babii, 2021).

Strategies differ from region to region. Countries that are heavily dependent on tourism for their economic progress like Aruba, Maldives, British Virgin Islands, Bahamas, etc., need to start with simple strategies as proposed. An emerging trend in the industry is for government’s to promote domestic tourism through direct or indirect funding. They provide soft loans to agencies and companies offering accommodation, travelling, and hospitality services. This activity facilitates companies to recover from their losses

during the pandemic and improve their performance in the industry.

The reason behind promoting domestic tourism is its significance in the industry. Domestic tourism contributes at least 70% to the contribution of the Tourism Industry in the global GDP. Countries like Brazil, India, Mexico, China, etc., have excellent returns on their travel services, and as such, it is important to revitalize domestic tourism globally. Keeping such factors in mind, countries are making efforts towards recovering their domestic tourists with added vigour.

VI. CONCLUSION

As observed in our paper, the pandemic has played a monumental role in the lives of many individuals. It has also adversely impacted different industries. The Tourism industry is just one among the list of industries that the pandemic has rained down on. Associated industries like travel, accommodation, hospitality, etc., followed a downward spiral that led to the overall decline in the tourism industry as whole. However, with the advent of recovery in normalcy, the tourism industry is fighting its way back to it’s former glory.

Each country adopts unique strategies to combat the tourist’s reluctance in travel and provides incentives in unique ways to promote tourism within the region. The different strategies adopted have been analysed in this paper. Some solutions seem permanent while other options look like a temporary boost to promote the activity of touring domestically and internationally. Regardless of the intention, the objective of the solution is being met highly because of the reduced no. of pandemic cases and increasing number of work-from-home employees.

It is vital to note that some of these strategies might also have a role in the coming future as there are significant challenges for the tourism industry to conquer. As the pandemic was an unprecedented event, recovery from such a loss will also be unprecedented. Considering the economic factors that go into such strategies, countries offering tourist’s services should focus on strengthening these strategies and adopting virtual solutions that promote sustainable goals. Keeping in mind these factors will help the tourism industry advance in it’s endeavours vigorously. As such, the findings and evidences used from secondary sources in this paper contribute to a hypothesis that suggests the same.

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