

# COVID 19 PANDEMIC & TOURISM IN H.P

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## Abstract

It's almost one and half years the corona virus pandemic has affected human life. Every sector is facing the problem of survival. The pandemic has not only affected the health, education, industries and other sectors but also affected various regional developments, job opportunities, thereby disrupting the local communities as a whole. The pandemic affected economically as well as and socially. Tourism is a major source of revenue and employment in many countries. It is a generator for employment for unemployed youth, women and local people. It also helps in tax collections and foreign exchange earnings. Due to Covid-19, tourism is highly affected sector triggering a global economic crisis. More over with the implementation of certain measures like social distancing, lockdowns, work from home, stay at home, self- quarantine, no gathering and travelling etc. the tourism activities almost come to end. Himachal Pradesh is small hilly state with natural beauty which makes it popular destination for tourist activities and tourism is the main source of income for local people. State also provides employment to people of other regions. Due to the adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic the tourism sector has contracted by over 81 per cent in the current financial year (2020-21). The other sectors associated with tourism like transport, laundry, catering, household, agriculture and construction sectors are also affected. About 3.7% drop is expected in per capita income. 9.2% contraction likely in hotel/ restaurant sector and 3.1% decrease is expected in agriculture sector. Hence, in this scenario, it is necessary to take some strategic measures and manage tourism activities so that economy may improve. We can plan to support tourism by adopting some innovative actions like for healthy tourism with yoga sessions and fitness camp can be arranged, slow tourism where people can stay for longer period at one place and learn and ecotourism stay in natural habitat. Home stay and small sector tourism with proper Covid standard operating procedures (SOP) like use of mask, maintaining distance, sanitization and avoiding crowding can be operated.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Corona virus, Tourism, Health Tourism, Slow tourism and Ecotourism

# 1.INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has become the biggest threat to human life. Today the globe is facing health, social, and economic crises. The pandemic has not only affected the health, education, industries and other sectors but also affected various regional developments, job opportunities, thereby disrupting the local communities as a whole. Tourism sector is also affected in many countries in these years after Covid 19. International tourist arrivals fell by 72 percent in January-December 2020 compared to the last year.

Now it is well known that Covid 19 disease is caused by corona virus which transmits from person to person. Therefore to minimize the infection rate many strategies have been adopted like lockdown, social distancing ban on festival celebrations etc. Many hospitality businesses, tourist activities and related sectors have been temporarily closed.

Tourism in Himachal Pradesh is a major contributor to the state's economy and growth. But in present scenario the state is also facing the same problem and without tourism activities the social and economy of state is greatly affected.

There is great loss in other sectors related to tourism like travelling, trade, woollen shawl industry, retail sector, local agriculture, laundry, housekeeping etc. As most of the people are engaged in these so they have lost their livelihood.

New forms of tourism would be more prevalent in post-Covid 19, including (1) slow tourism, which emphasizes local destinations and longer lengths of stay, and (2) SMART tourism, which uses data analytics to improve tourist's experiences (Wen, J.; Kozak, M.; Yang, S.; Liu, F., 2020).

## 2.AIM

- To review the impact of pandemic on tourism.
- To document some innovative ideas for implementation by the Government for increasing the economy through tourism.
- To create awareness among people to adopt new methods of tourism.

## 3.METHODOLOGY

For this paper secondary data has been obtained through the internet, books, online news, reports, and published research articles. Different papers on Covid 19 and its impact on tourism have been searched and many journals are accessed. Keyword like Covid 19, tourism, economy, social factors have been used.

# 4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Covid-19

4.2. Tourism in Indian context

4.3. Tourism in Himachal Pradesh

4.4. Challenges & Strategies

## 4.1. Covid-19

Covid-19, a new strain of SARS (SARS-CoV-2), has grown into a global pandemic and spreading across many countries. This is a transmissible respiratory disease, Covid-19 spreads through contact with other infected individuals, with symptoms such as fever, cough, and breathing problems.

Transmission can also occur from asymptomatic individuals, with up to 40% of infected persons remaining asymptomatic (Oron, D.P.; Topol, E.J. Scripps, 2020).

## 4.2. Tourism in India

India offers geographical diversity, attractive beaches, 30 World Heritage and biogeographic zones for tourist activities to flourish. It is a major destination for many international tourists, creating several employment opportunities and generating enormous taxes (Ahmed & Krohn, 1992).

India ranked 10th among 185 countries in terms of travel & tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2019. During 2019, contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was 6.8% of the total economy, about Rs. 13,68,100 crores (WTTC). Before Covid 19 it was expected that In India, the sector's direct contribution to GDP will grow by 7.1% per annum during 2018-28.

The Indian tourism industry has generated about 87.5 million jobs by providing 12.75% of total employment and contributing INR 194 billion to India's GDP (WTTC, 2018).

In India tourism activities are now focusing on developing medical, religious tourism adding more destinations and introducing foreign languages in tourist destinations to attract more tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism has framed a policy for development and promotion of caravan and caravan camping parks. Government is also assisting by providing free loans to deal with the crisis and revive the economy (DPIIT, ICE 360 Survey 2016).

## 4.3. Tourism in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal is in the western Himalayas situated between 30°22'N and 33°12'N latitude and 75°47'E and 79°04'E longitude with area of 55,673 square kilometres (21,495 sq mi), (Statistical Facts,2006).

Tourism in Himachal Pradesh is a major contributor to the state's economy and growth. Shimla, Kullu-Manali, Dharamshala, Chamba, Dalhousie, Khajjiar and Kasauli are popular hill stations for both domestic and foreign tourists (The Economic Times, 2018).

The state received 31,70,714 domestic and 42,665 foreign tourists in 2020 compared to 1,68,29,231 domestic and 3,82,876 foreign tourists in 2019, a drop of 81.6 per cent and 88.86 per cent respectively.

Himachal Pradesh is likely to register a negative growth of 6.2 per cent in the current financial year 2020-21 (Economic Survey 2020-21). The per capita income at the current price is estimated to drop by 3.7 per cent to Rs 1,83,286 from previous year's Rs 1,90,407.

The other badly hit sectors include transport, mining and quarrying, forestry and construction. The agriculture sector is set to register a contraction of 3.1 per cent due to a decrease of 43 per cent in horticulture production. Fiscal deficit is estimated to be 4.65 per cent of the GSDP in 2020-21(TNS,2021).

Covid impact on tourism of Himachal has been observed in many ways as there is **3.7%** drop expected in per capita income, **9.2%** contraction likely in hotel/ restaurant sector, **3.1%** decrease expected in agriculture sector and **4.65%** of the GSDP will be the state's fiscal deficit.

## 4.4. Challenges & Strategies

### Challenges:

- The first case of the Covid-19 pandemic in India was reported on 30th January 2020, originating from China.
- The virus spread to various states and union territories including the state of Himachal Pradesh. The first case was recorded in the Himachal on 20th March 2020.
- Lockdown in all over India resulted in abrupt fall in all activities of hospitality. Closure of offices, banks, schools and work from home also closes the door to outside world.
- No transportation facilities in all over the country in the initial stage of pandemic blocked everything.

- Major challenges were the implementation of certain measures and campaigns like social distancing, community lockdowns, work from home, stay at home and self quarantine, etc.
- Loss of jobs in various sectors connected to tourism major loss of jobs in tourism and hospitality has been estimated to be about 70 % of the sector workforce (Radhakrishna, 2020).
- Development of effective vaccine as well as the distribution of vaccines on such a large population (1.3 billion). Fear of disease and approach of medical facilities.

- Safety and hygiene for tourism activities. People are likely to prefer private vehicles while travelling, avoiding big gatherings. Requirement of structural change in tourism supply for the ecosystem.
- While the pandemic brought the tourism industry to a halt, the government is now trying to begin with reviving domestic tourism. In November end, India introduced a graded relaxation of its visa and travel restrictions for more categories of foreign nationals and Indian nationals.

## Strategies:

- To overcome the loss of tourism in the pandemic we can make use of this crisis as opportunity to promote different forms of tourism like medical tourism, adventure tourism, slow tourism, domestic tourism, ecotourism and wedding tourism.
- Medical tourism also known as health tourism has emerged as one of the important segments of the tourism industry. Travelers can be provided services such as healthcare and quarantine facilities.
- Wellness tourism for maintaining good health and a sense of well-being can be projected in this pandemic time. With the knowledge of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy customers can be provided such facilities to improve their health and boost up immunity. It needs publicity and promotional activities

- For youth to channelise their energy adventure tourism activities include mountaineering, trekking, jumping, mountain biking, river rafting, and rock climbing could be provided.
- We can connect tourism with cultural heritage. Means visiting historical or industrial sites, religious travel or pilgrimages.
- Rural tourism supports rural life, art, culture and heritage of rural locations, benefitting the local community economically and socially.
- Eco tourism is travel to natural areas to appreciate the cultural and natural history of the environment, while not disturbing the integrity of the ecosystem and creating economic opportunities that make conservation and protection of natural resources advantageous to local people.
- Due to social distance, luxury hotels and luxury travel will still take some time to revive. At this time, domestic boutique hotels, accommodations, and homestays can maintain their social distance and reduce viruses' risk.

## **Proposals to the Government of India :**

The hospitality and tourism sector is endangering the employment of large numbers of people as the Covid 19 pandemic is negatively affecting India's economy. Some remedies need to be recommended to India's central and provincial governments for the sector to overcome the crisis (FICCI, 2020b). Government has taken actions to speed up tourism so that it could minimise job losses and recovery in 2021. Key policy priorities include:

- Restoring traveller confidence
- Supporting tourism businesses to adapt and survive
- Promoting domestic tourism and supporting safe return of international tourism.

- Strengthening co-operation within and between countries.
- Building more resilient, sustainable tourism
- Co-ordinated action across governments at all levels and the private sector is essential.
- Government needs to consider the longer-term implications of the crisis, while capitalising on digitalisation, supporting the low carbon transition for more sustainable and resilient tourism economy.
- Domestic tourism can boost sustainable tourism destinations and businesses, and will continue to be a key driver of recovery in the short term.

# Conclusion

In this pandemic period for improving the economy of country the tourism sector needs to adopt some innovative plans. Governments is also serious in taking actions to restore and re-activate the sector and protecting jobs and businesses. In Himachal Pradesh there is ample scope for medical tourism, ecotourism, adventurous tourism and slow tourism.

In all the activities of tourism proper covid standard operating procedures (SOP)like use of mask, maintaining distance, sanitization and avoiding crowding should be followed. Domestic tourism has restarted and is helping in the economy.

Appropriate behaviour of the tourists to the Covid 19 must be maintained while travelling and lodging. However, real recovery will only be possible when international tourism returns.



**THANKS  
HAPPY TOURISM  
TO ALL**

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