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IMPACT OF COVID-19 SCENARIOS ON TOURISM INDUSTRY AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of COVID-19 has distressed many industries; thus, the study tries to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry and social media usage and provides strategies to overcome its effects on the tourism industry. The study's objectives are to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry and examine social media usage, with the goal of making it a strategy to overcome negative effects on the tourism industry. The literature research gap shows a need to study the blend of tourism and social media together and find strategies to overcome negative effects. Desk research methodology was used in the study. The secondary data for the study has been collected from various data sources. The study's findings show that there has been a decline in international and domestic tourist arrivals and tourist visits since the outbreak of COVID-19. Social media has been widely used since the outbreak of COVID-19. Before the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown, people spent just over three hours per day, whereas usage between March 28 and April 3, 2020, was almost five hours per day. Briefly, we can conclude that the tourism business is in a challenging situation, but it is also an opportunity. In this kind of situation, social media will be a better tool to be in touch with tourists all around the globe.

Keywords: COVID-19, Social Media, Tourism, Lockdown, Coronavirus

INTRODUCTION

As we are aware, the outburst of COVID-19 has impacted almost all the happenings all over the world. Tourism is one of the businesses that have been affected the most. Tourism is people-intensive and requires a more significant movement of

individuals from one place to another. Nevertheless, the present scenarios have forced people to stay at home and move out only for emergency services. Covid-19 has restrained people from traveling for tourism purposes. As per the UNWTO world tourism barometer, there was a 22% fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020.

In March, monthly growth was -57%. According to UNWTO reports, by June, there might be 3% of international and 14% of domestic tourists who visit if there is a lifting of travel restrictions. We can also take clues from three recent crises, such as the September 11, 2001 attack, the 2003 SARS epidemic, and the 2009 Global Economic Crisis, to overcome the adverse side effects. As in the contemporary scenario, most people are staying at home, and the usage time of social media has increased compared to pre-COVID 19. This crisis is the time for the tourism industry to effectively use social media to retain and attract tourists to post-COVID 19.

Literature Review

Covid-19

When we look at the current COVID-19 crisis, we can think back to recent crises that happened recently. The September 11–2001 attacks, in which 2,977 died in the U.S. (Peter L. Bergen, 2003), the 2003 SARS epidemic caused 813 deaths (WHO, 2003), and the 2009 Global Economic Crisis have affected lives. The world has moved at a high development pace since the 2009 crisis and was stable until 2019.

In December of 2019, an epidemic of a novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19; previously recognized as 2019-nCoV) (Huang et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020) was first reported in Wuhan, China (Huang et al., 2020), which later affected more than 150 countries worldwide. In general, we can say that this is an acutely resolved viral disease (Xu et al., 2020), which is deadly and has caused 3,71,860 deaths worldwide as of May 31, 2020 (worldometers, 2020).

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism

The swift blowout of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), after the first incident arose in December 2019 in Wuhan, Mainland China, led to a substantial drop in virtually all global tourism (Ruiz Estrada, Park, & Lee, 2020). An epidemic like this can turn out to be the decisive catalyst of any tourism downfall. It distresses all humanoid happenings, like religious, social, artistic, athletic, sports, and cultural. Also, the outburst of the Corona Virus has shaken the tourism industry all over the world, as big hotel chains and online platforms for booking have been forced to cancel bookings of their customers (Folinas & Metaxas, 2020).

Many countries that are highly dependent on income and revenues from international tourism are likely to face enormous challenges because most employment opportunities are related directly or indirectly to tourism (Ranasinghe, Karunarathna, & Pradeepamali, 2020).

Social Media Usage

Social media use over the last decade by governments has shifted from the spread of propaganda to transparent communication and rendezvous with the public (Bonsón, Royo, & Ratkai, 2015). Government agencies can comprehensively use cloud computing and artificial intelligence to break down the public's demands and progressions during various emergency phases. Government through web-based media or social media can, accordingly, fulfill the needs of residents to the furthest degree through the arrival of redid emergency data (Chen et al., 2020) (Bonsón et al., 2015).

Kumar (2020) suggests that governments should take primary steps to overcome the recent slowdown in the tourism industry by examining the future impacts at the earliest. Supporting it, Kalyankar (2020) also expresses that it is essential to carefully change and revise the tourism sector, hone and enhance the tourism sector in any part of the world.

The study's theme is whether social media can act as a catalyst and supplement for the tourism business to overcome and maintain the ill effects of crises by going through all the studies.

Research Methodology

Desk research has been used in the study, as we can get the needed background. The data in this research is secondary data, so no primary samples are taken into consideration. The data sources are data published by UNWTO, Statista, and other sources. The study also referred to several research articles. So, the objectives of the study are

- To analyze the Impact of Covid-19 Scenarios on the tourism industry.
- To examine social media usage and make it a strategy to overcome negative effects on the tourism industry.

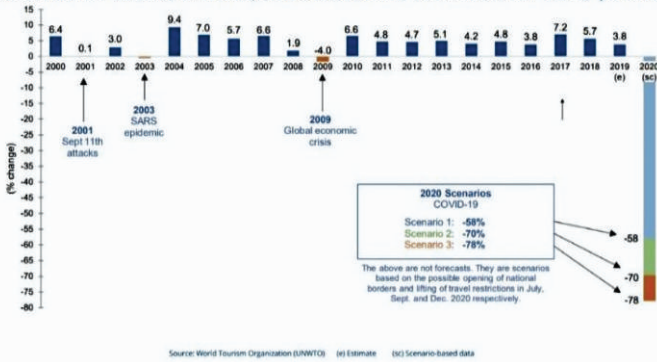
Data Analysis

Impact of Covid-19 Scenarios on the Tourism Industry

a. The arrival of International Tourist Comparison and Prediction

Arrivals could drop 58% to 78% depending on pace of normalization

International tourist arrivals, 2000-2019 and scenarios for 2020 (% change)

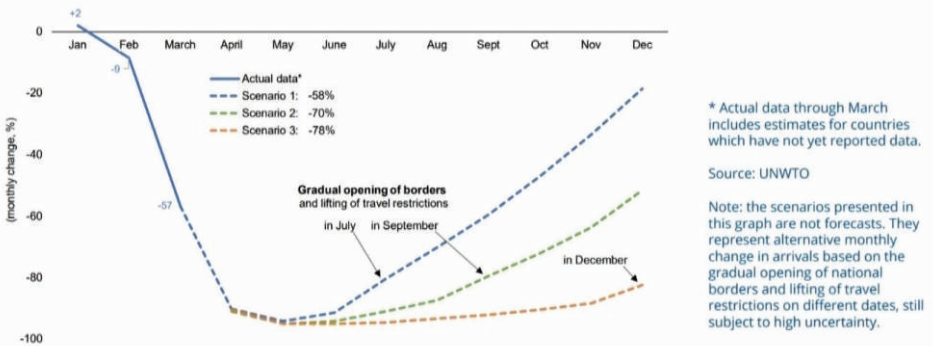


Source: U.N. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ("International Tourism and covid-19 | UNWTO," n.d.) Fig.1 Tourist Arrivals Comparison and Prediction

The above graph shows that the drop in tourism due to various crises that happened earlier. International tourists' arrivals in 2001 reduced to 0.1% and in 2003 almost 0% and in 2009 reduced to -4%. Nevertheless, if we see the current predictions, it has three scenarios. First scenario is -58%, secondary scenario is -70% and Scenario is -78%. The analysis shows there will be a huge drop in tourist arrivals.

Forward-looking scenarios depend on re-opening of borders

International tourist arrivals in 2020: three scenarios (YoY monthly change, %)



Source: U.N. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ("International Tourism and covid-19 | UNWTO," n.d.) Fig.2 Future Scenarios

The above graph depicts the three scenarios for International tourist arrivals depending on the re-opening of borders. The situation in April 2020 shows that there is a drop of arrival to -57%. If the opening of borders and lifting of travel restrictions open in July, the arrival starts with -58%. If it is in September, arrival starts with -70%, and if it is in December, arrival starts with -78% to move further to reach the upper ladder.

Table. 1 Global change in revenue of tourism and travel industry because of COVID-19

Forecasted changes in revenues from the tourism and travel industry because of COVID-19 Worldwide (in million U.S. dollars)	
2019	6,85,065
Original 2020 forecast	7,11,944
2020 restated	4,47,412
Loss as per forecast	264532

Source: Statista("COVID-19: global revenue of the travel and tourism industry 2020 | Statista," n.d.)

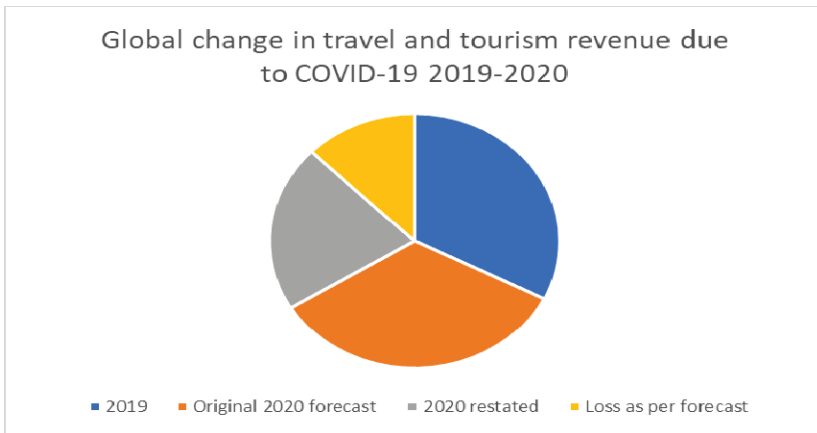


Fig.3 Global change in revenue of the travel and tourism industry due to COVID-19

As per the above data, the returns estimated on COVID-19 in 2020 for the tourism and travel industry expected to be 447.4 billion U.S. dollars. Nevertheless, this is a diminution of about 34.7 % compared to the preceding year. So, it yielded to loss of 2.6 billion U.S. dollars based on a forecast of 712 billion dollars.

4.2 Usage of social media and making it as a strategy to overcome negative effects for the tourism industry

a. Information about Media Consumption

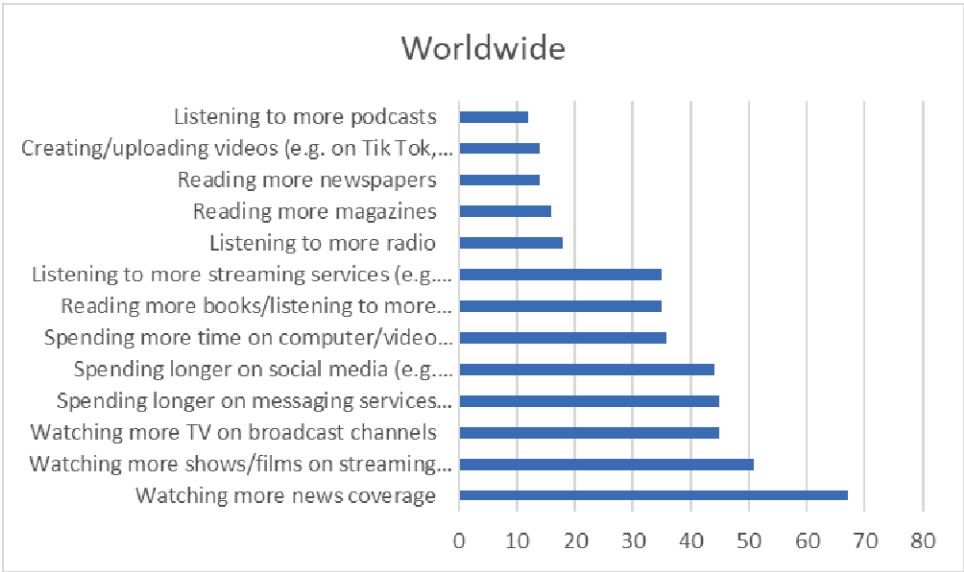


Fig. 4 Information on Media Consumption

Source: GlobalWebIndex (accessed by Statista)("Coronavirus: impact on media consumption worldwide | Statista," n.d.)

b. Media Consumption Country wise

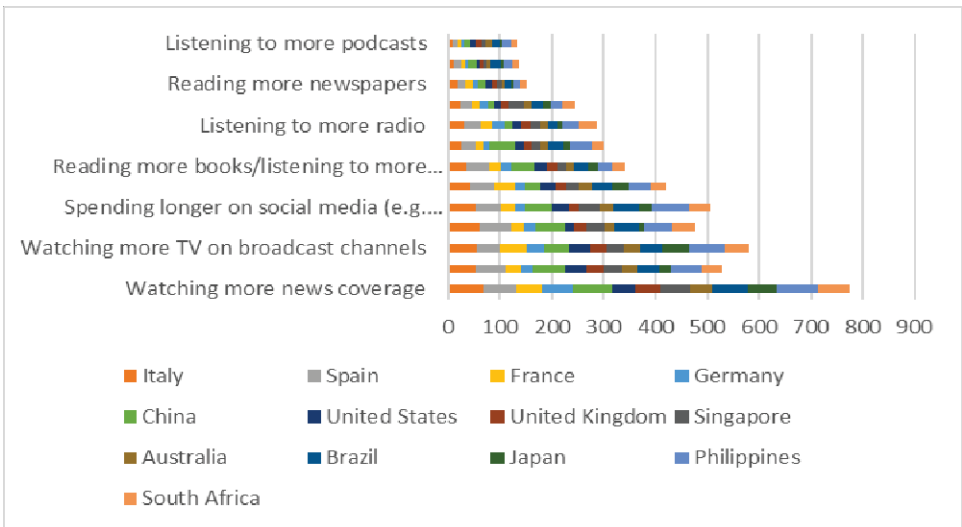


Fig. 5 Media Consumption Country wise

Source: GlobalWebIndex (accessed by Statista) ("Coronavirus: impact on media consumption worldwide | Statista," n.d.)

A survey led in March 2020 of several nations uncovered that Covid impacted in-home media utilization around the globe. The survey consequences demonstrated that 35% of the complete respondents read more books or tuned in to more audiobooks at home. 18% of respondents tuned in to the radio, where over 40% spent time on social media and messaging services. Fascinatingly, at any rate, half of the respondents in many nations reacted that they were observing more news inclusion. Given the circumstances, figures for Australia and the U.S. were lower, lessening to only 42 and 43 percent, separately.

a. Social Media users in India

Table. 2. Social Media users India 2015-2023

Social Media users India 2015-2023 (in millions)	
Year	Users
2015	142.23
2016	168.1
2017	296.3
2018	326.1
2019	351.4
2020	376.1
2021	400.3
2022	422.7
2023	447.9

Source: (Statista) Statista Digital Market Outlook ("Social media users in India | Statista," n.

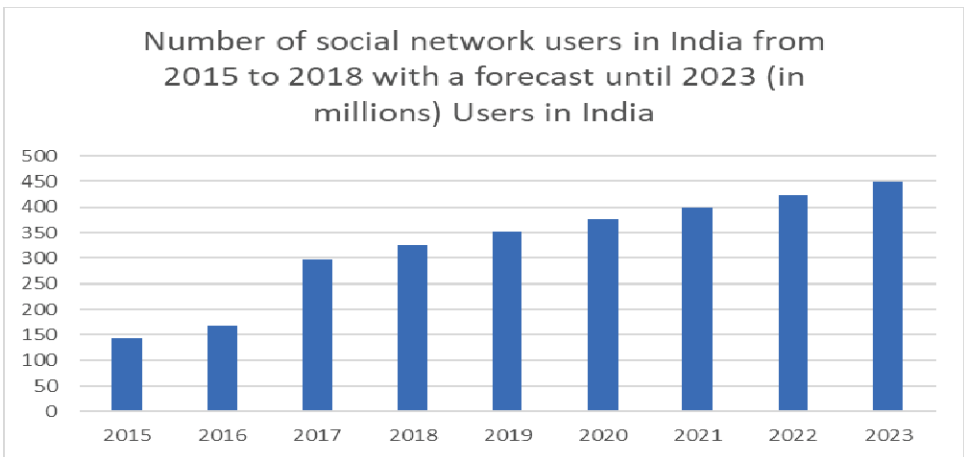


Fig. 6 Social Media users in India 2015-2023

The above data shows that year by year, and social media users were also in 2018, it stood to 326.1 million. The increase in users is comparatively lower as related to the progress which arose between 2016 and 2017. However, by 2023 the number of social media users in India is nearly 448 million.

a. Weekly time spent using social media in India

Table 3. Impact of COVID-19 on weekly time spent using social networking apps India 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on weekly time spent using social networking apps India 2020	
January 13- February 2	3.13
March 21- March 27	4.34
March 28- April 3	4.39

Source: BARC; Nielsen (accessed from Statista)("India - COVID-19 impact on weekly usage of social networking apps 2020 | Statista," n.d.)

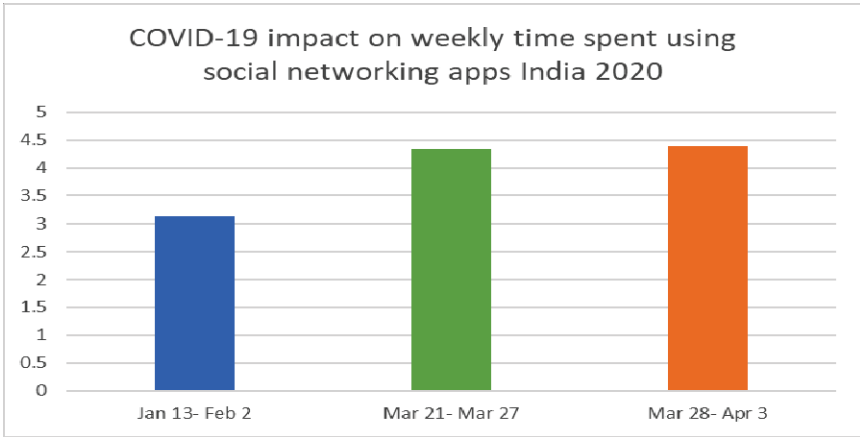


Fig. 7 Weekly time spent using social media in India 2020

The data from the above survey shows the effect of Coronavirus on media use across India. It shows an unexpected flood in the use of online media stages in the principal period of lockdown. Regardless, it balanced out in the next weeks, with social media users answering to have utilized for right around five hours between March 28 and April 3, 2020. However, users already before Covid lockdown just went through more than three hours.

Findings of the study

The above data findings show a decline in international tourist arrivals and domestic tourist arrivals after the outbreak of COVID-19 – the predictions of data

based on lifting of restrictions and opening borders with three scenarios. In July, the scenarios are scenario-1, allowing to -58%, Scenario-2 in September to -70%, Scenario-3 in December to -78% compared to present downfall of -57%. The global tourism industry yielded a loss of 2.6 billion U.S. dollars based on a forecast of 712 billion dollars.

Social media have been widely used after the outbreak of COVID-19. All over the globe, it has accounted for third place behind news channels and streaming services. In countries like the U.S., Australia, India, and a few other countries, usage has increased rigorously. In India, it is expected to be almost 448 million in 2023, based on predictions. It can note that there stood a sudden surge in the usage of social media platforms in the principal phase of lockdown. However, users previously before coronavirus lockdown just spent over three hours, and between March 28 and April 3, 2020, usage has been almost five hours.

Discussions and Conclusions

Conclusions

Briefly, we can conclude that the tourism business is in a challenging situation, but it is also an opportunity. In this kind of situation, social media will be a better tool to be in touch with tourists all around the globe. When you are in constant contact with your customers, they will be delighted. So, the tourism business should try to convert this threat in the present scenario to an opportunity in the future. Tourism businesses can use online platforms for advertising and creating awareness about the tourism process and destinations.

Theoretical Implications

The study helps academicians and researchers in tourism understand the problems faced by tourism industry. Also study helps the tourism enthusiast to use this as a theoretical phenomenon for the similar things which may happen in the future. Also, it helps to use this as a base study for future research.

Practical Implications

Based on the above findings, it can note that the tourism industry is in big problem. To overcome this, many measures need to take by stakeholders of tourism. To create awareness and promote destinations, government, and tourism operators, and related services industries can use social media as a platform. The increase is because, in the present scenario, the usage of social media has increased. So, by

having more deliberations and advertisements on social media, the tourism business can be in touch with tourists. Destination marketing organizations and the locals who are dependent on tourism can have virtual interactions with tourists by displaying attractive images and videos on live to tourists.

Limitations and Future Research

The study is limited to secondary data only. Future research can be done using primary data through qualitative or quantitative research methods such as content analysis, and studies can also be focused on the impact of Metaverse and immersion technologies on tourism growth.

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