

# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

## DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Ravidat Parmar

Economics Policy and Administration  
Business Administration

Thesis title

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIAN TOURISM**

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### Objectives of thesis

This thesis is aimed at the evaluation of the current situation at the Indian tourism market according to the influence of the Covid-19.

### Methodology

The first theoretical part will be concluded as the basis for the primary data gathering. Therefore selecting different types of literature sources from different databases will be beneficial for the researcher to identify the major deliverables of this research as for gathering the secondary qualitative data.

The second part will be based on the collection of the primary data to analyse the opinions and travel intents of prospective travellers to India. This structured, undisguised questionnaire will be given to international travellers who intend to travel to India. Further, the result of the research will be analysed and evaluated. Upon this evaluation, final conclusion of the thesis will be stated.

**The proposed extent of the thesis**

60 – 80 pages

**Keywords**

marketing, market, tourism, Indian market, covid-19, public, stakeholders, travellers

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**The Diploma Thesis Supervisor**

Ing. Tereza Balcarová, Ph.D.

**Supervising department**

Department of Management

Electronic approval: 28. 2. 2022

**prof. Ing. Ivana Tichá, Ph.D.**

Head of department

Electronic approval: 28. 2. 2022

**doc. Ing. Tomáš Šubrt, Ph.D.**

Dean

Prague on 31. 03. 2022

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my master's thesis titled "Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Tourism" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master's thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 31 March 2022

\_\_\_\_\_Ravidat Parmar\_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank my guide Tereza Balcarová (Ph.D.) for guiding me during my research. This work could not have been completed without her meticulous scrutiny and insightful inputs. I would like to thank my course mates, who constantly motivated me to perform better. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their unwavering support and faith in me.

# **Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Tourism**

## **Abstract**

This report aims to study the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on India's tourism sector. As a first step, various theoretical frameworks are examined and discussed. The cover consumer behaviour models, tourism theories, integrated marketing communication model and corporate social responsibility model. These theories are then applied to the Indian tourism sector and how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected it. Finally, the consumer survey aims to find insights into opinions and intentions of potential tourists visiting India. Finally, there are recommendations on how Indian tourism industry can better respond to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Indian Market, tourism, Marketing, COVID-19, Public, Stakeholders, Travellers, Market

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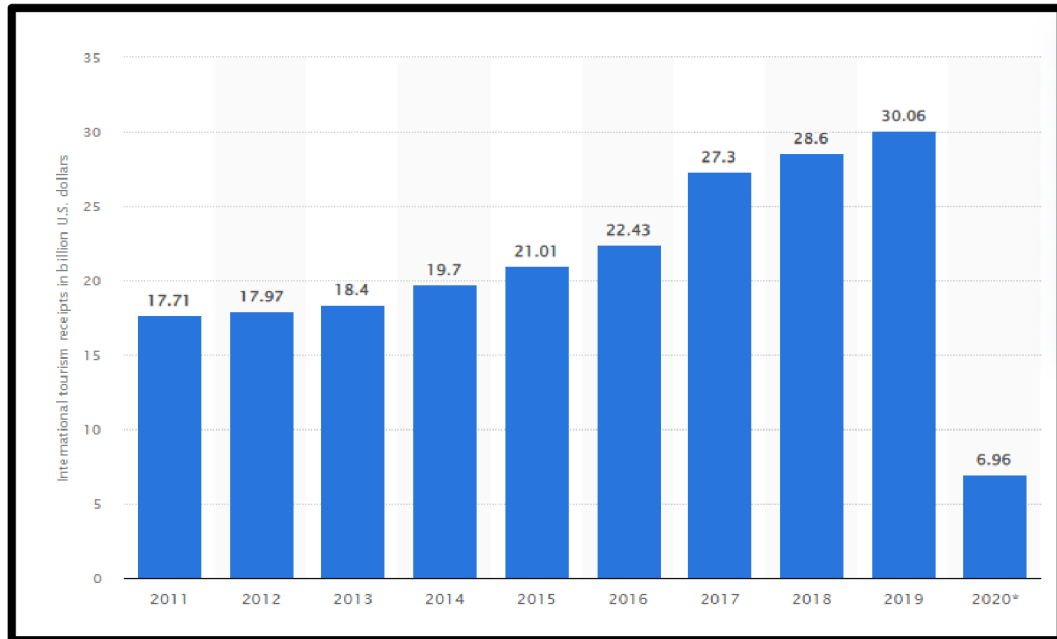
# 1 Introduction

The Covid-19 virus emerged as a global pandemic from the year 2020, and it ended up harming every realm of society and disrupting the normal way of life. From the educational sector to the tourism sector every organisational sector in the world was affected due to the global pandemic. India being the seventh-largest country in the world with the second-largest population in the world has been gravely affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As per the official data collected from *Worldometer*, it has been seen that the Covid-19 pandemic took away the lives of 487,719 Indian people and still counting. Thus, it is an evident fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has created havoc in the lives of the people. The fast-spreading virus wrecked the daily operations of people's lives and brought stagnancy in society. According to the *World Health Organisation (WHO)*, the spread of the Covid-19 virus can be limited by maintaining social distancing norms and by maintaining a high level of hygiene (WHO, 2021). Hence, the Indian Government took an immediate measure of imposing lockdowns and curfews, and by limiting all kinds of public activities from going to the restaurant to working from the office, and most importantly all tourism activities were curbed as travelling can cause rapid spread of the virus.

As per the reports of *The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)*, the Indian tourism sector generated \$194 billion and contributed 6.8% to the GDP of India in the year 2019. The tourism sector supports 39.8 million jobs. The tourism sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% which would escalate the GDP by 9.9% by the year 2028 (Sood, 2021). Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the dynamics of the tourism sector in India and caused a lot of losses and millions of job losses. According to Biswas, (2021), for two consecutive years, the tourism sector of India is experiencing a complete washout due to cancellations of the bookings due to a surge in the Covid-19 cases which led to losses up till Rs. 5 billion. It has been remarked by the insiders that the tourism sector will take a minimum of two years to recover it from such humungous losses. The tourism sectors along with the hospitality sector are amongst the worst hit sectors due to the pandemic. After a year of complete lockdown in the year 2020, and after a consecutive year lockdown and similar restrictions in the year 2021 India had to face similar kinds of problems and people started to cancel all their travel plans. It has been commented by Prabhulal Joshi, the president of the Tour Associations Organisers in Maharashtra that the tourism and travel industry has

come to a standstill after another year of infections which was the second wave of the pandemic (Biswas, 2021).

Image 1 A drop in the revenue of Indian international tourism in the year 2020



Source: Statista Research Department

According to the Statista Research Department, (2021), in the year 2019, India generated a revenue of 30 billion dollars in the year 2019 which became less than 7 billion dollars in the year 2020 which shows a steep drop in the profits. The figures make it evident how affected the tourism sector has been amongst all the other sectors. The lockdowns and the strict travel restrictions were some of the major reasons why international tourist changed their travel plans.

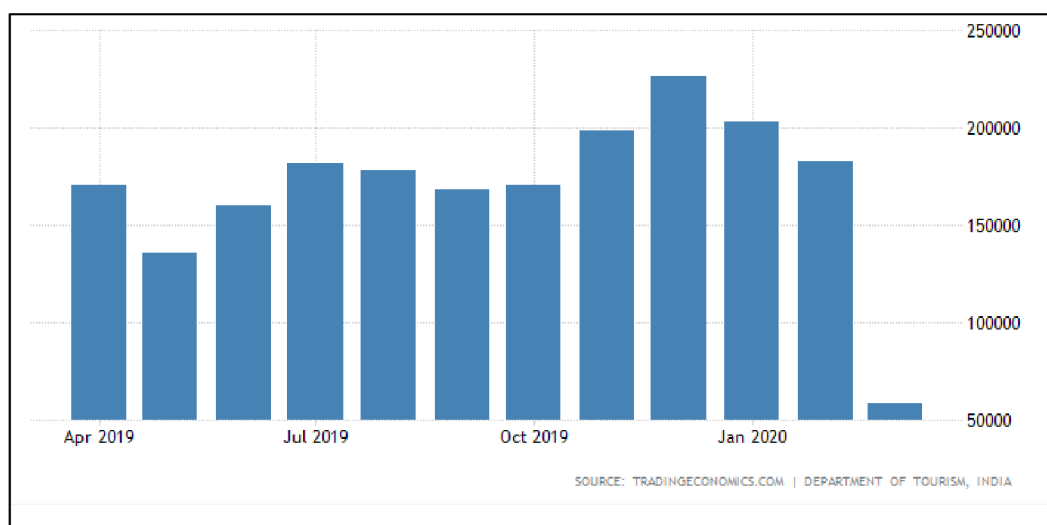
## 1.1 Background of the topic

According to Amitabh Kant, the CEO of NITI Aayog said the tourism industry of India has a multiplier impact on India's economy (Times of India, 2022). It is one of the sectors that leads to the creation of jobs and helps in the growth of the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic has been accounted as one of the fastest spreading viruses that are constantly mutating and taking different forms. The virus has taken a dangerous form and taken away the lives of millions of people. The only way to limit the spread of the virus is to keep the people restricted to their homes so that they do not go out and mingle with each other. Physical distancing is considered to be the only solution to stop the spread of the virus. Since travel

involves moving from one place to another so it had to be stopped immediately to prevent the virus from spreading and taking more lives. In the year 2020, the Government of India completely sealed the barriers of the country to the international tourists as well as to the tourists of the country. Domestic travellers were only allowed travel in case of necessity. All famous tourist spots like museums, national parks, sanctuaries, restaurants, hotels, and every site were ordered to keep close due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The flights operated with only 50% passenger capacity. In the first quarter of the year 2020, the country saw 14.5 million job losses from the tourism sector (Mathur, 2021). The tourism and the hospitality industry incurred major losses and they had to lay off people from both aviation and the hospitality industry.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to an economic slowdown in the year 2020-21 as a reason the Tourism direct gross value added (TDGVA) saw a steep fall by 42.8 per cent in the first quarter of the year 2020 (Ministry of Tourism, 2021). According to World Travel and Tourism Council, (WTTC), the travel and tourism industry of India holds the seventh rank in the world in terms of its contribution to the GDP of the country (Chaturvedi, 2017). In the year 2016, the travel and tourism sector generated \$208 billion US dollars in the year which accounted for the tourism sector's 7<sup>th</sup> largest sector in the world. Over the years the revenue generated from international tourism has also seen a rise up to 30.6 billion dollars in the year 2019 (Statista Research Department, 2021).

Image 2 Drop in tourism revenues



Source: Trading Economics, 2022

The reports collected from Trading Economics suggest that the tourism revenue of India decreased from Rs. 182810 in February to Rs. 58330 million in March (Trading Economics, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant drop in the arrival of the tourist which led to a drop in the expenditures of tourism during the time of the pandemic. The fear within the international tourist's interest to a significant level and they feared that it might lead to an escalation of the positive cases of Covid-19. As a result, the travel decisions of the international tourists changed and they made advance cancellations (The Hindu, 2021). It has also been accounted by one of the largest travel agencies of India MakeMyTrip the defendant had severe impacts on the sentiment of the consumers which had an impact on the travel demands and the willingness of the tourists to travel. This was a major cause why the hotels and Airlines in India operated at a lower service level in the year 2020. The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations (FHRAI) estimated that the hotel industry of India has faced losses of Rs.1 billion in the fiscal year of 2020 and 2021 (Khan, 2021).

The structure of the thesis starts with introducing the topic and then provides a background of the topic that helps in understanding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian tourism sector. The study then continues to elicit the aims and objectives of the research provides an insight into the research questions. Furthermore, the research continues to review the published literature, thereby finding a methodology for conducting research by analysing the primary qualitative data that can help to gather the opinion of the international travellers who travel to India and then finally the study concludes with the help of recommendations and conclusions.

## **2 Research Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Aim**

This study aims to provide an overview of the impact of covid-19 on the Indian tourism sector.

### **2.2 Research Objectives**

- To analyse the impact of covid-19 in India
- Evaluate the different types of issues faced by the tourism sector due to the highest-paid of covid-19
- To study the intent and opinions of prospective international travellers to India.
- To recommend a proper strategy for the Indian government to reopen the tourism sector in India after noticing less spread of covid-19.

### **2.3 Research questions**

1. What is the impact of Covid-19 on India?
2. To what extent has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the Indian tourism sector?
3. What affected the travel decisions of the international travellers to travel to India?
4. What are various kinds of issues faced by the Indian tourism sector?
5. What strategies can be implemented by the Government of India for reopening the tourist spots in India?

### **2.4 Research rationale**

The tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors of India. It has been projected that the tourism sector in India will reach US\$ 127 billion by the FY27 from US\$ 75 billion in the FY20. It has been estimated that the tourism sector is about to generate 53 million jobs by the year 2029, which makes it very evident that the tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world. However, the Covid-19 pandemic left a huge mark in the travel and tourism industry globally. As per the reports collected from The Economic Times,

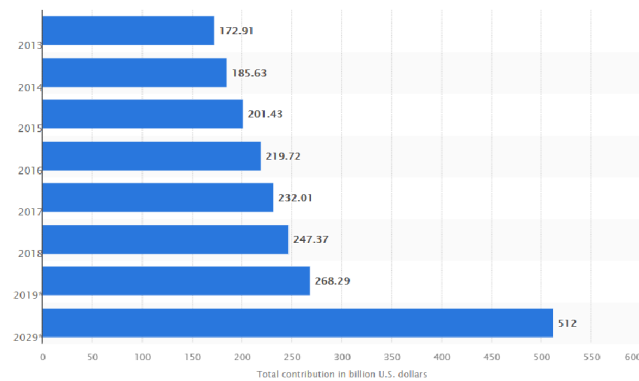
(2022), it has been reported that 21.5 million people who were involved in the tourism sector lost their jobs in India. A study conducted on the impact of the pandemic on the Indian Tourism sector showed that 14.5 million people lost their jobs during the first wave of the pandemic, 5.2 million people lost their jobs in the second wave, and 1.8 million people lost their jobs in the third wave (The Economic Times, 2022). These figures show the deep-rooted impact of the pandemic on the Indian tourism industry.

Out of all the other industries the tourism sector was one of the most affected sectors during the pandemic. The lockdowns, social distancing norms, and travel restrictions curbed people from making any travel plans. This caused millions of losses in the tourism sector. FAITH- (The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality) has estimated that Covid-19 has been a cause of losses of ₹15 trillion for FY21 (Tewari, 2020). This was a threefold loss than what was estimated in March. The tourism industry was found devastated due to the restrictions of the government and the rapid the spread of the virus. On a global basis the tourism industry has equally faced trillions of losses and caused a huge number of job losses. This study focuses on the grave impacts of the pandemic on the tourism sector with a primary focus on the Indian tourism sector.

## **2.5 Problem statement**

The Indian tourism sector is among the major factors that help the Indian government to get a better amount of revenue. Many people are coming from different countries to enjoy the better atmosphere and different iconic locations in India. From the travel and tourism industry in India, the Indian government that helps to enhance their GDP has occupied around 268.29 billion US dollars. India tourism had increased from 172.91 billion dollars in 2013 (Statista, 2021). Therefore, it can be debited that the Indian tourism sector is providing a huge share to the Indian economy to get a stable position.

Image 3 Tourism and hospitality sector's contribution to Indian GDP



Source: Statista (2021)

Covid-19 is among the major issues that have been faced by different countries due to their higher mortality rate. It created a huge impact on the tourism sector of this country. Due to the covid-19 issue, around 14.5 million people have lost their job in the first quarter of lockdown in the year 2020 (Mathur, 2021). Similarly, the foreign exchange earnings in this time have fallen by 76.3 % from their foreign exchange in 2019. Therefore, it can be debited that the Indian tourism sector has faced a huge issue at the time of the pandemic situation. As for the scenario, it is seen that 2.5 % of the GDP is coming from the tourism sector (Mathur, 2021). However, due to the scenario, the government body due to the lockdown of different destinations in India had faced a huge issue. Thus, this research is going to be conducted to provide a clear idea about the impact of covid-19 on the Indian tourism sector.

## 2.6 Significance of the study

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives of millions of people. People had to remain home bound for keeping themselves safe from the virus. However, the deadly effect of the virus cost millions of lives of people. This raised the concerns of the people, and they became conscious about making travel decisions. The people only preferred to travel out of necessity. This harmed the tourism sector of India and the country incurred millions of losses. Thousands of people lost their jobs due to the situation of the pandemic. The hospitality and the tourism sector are some of the worse hit sectors amongst all the organisational departments. This study provides a clear insight into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector of India and the way it affected the travel decisions of international tourists.

## **2.7 Scope of the research**

This study conducts an in-depth analysis of the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector of India. It also helps in finding out the solutions and answers to the research questions that help in understanding the extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the tourism sector. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the travel decisions of many international travellers as a reason many travellers deferred from travelling to India which has led to a considerable number of losses and economic downfall. Therefore, this study will help in assessing the major impacts of the pandemic on the international tourists and will find an answer to how the Indian government can formulate effective strategies for recovering the Indian Tourist sector from the effect of the pandemic.

## **2.8 Limitations and assumptions**

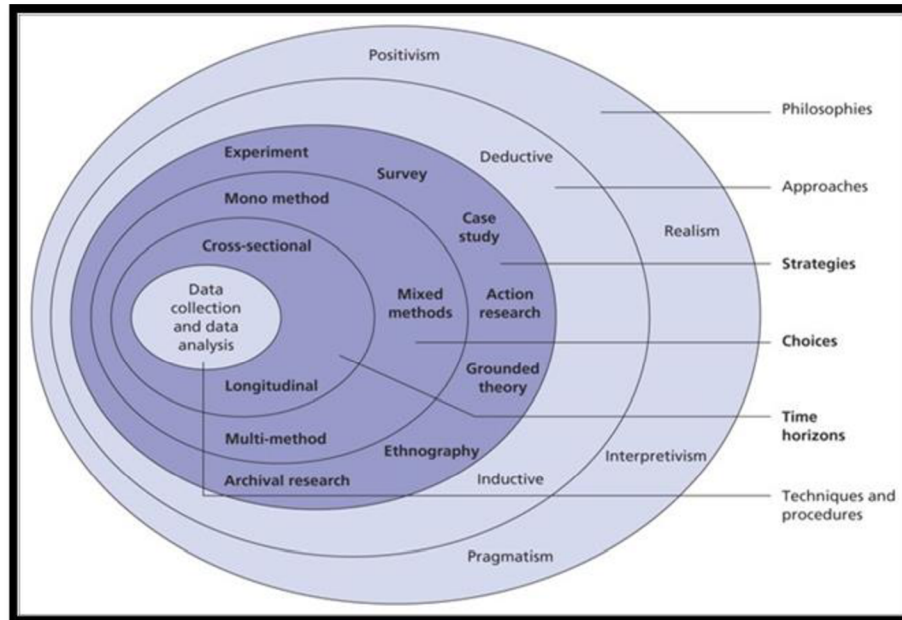
The research is mainly based on primary data. No secondary data have been collected in the study. Collecting secondary data would have helped to gather insights about the previous analysis. Moreover, the study only focuses on the viewpoints of international tourists it does not focus on collecting data from the domestic tourists who travel within the country. This will create a limitation in the research from knowing about the viewpoints of the domestic travellers how they have been affected by the pandemic and how it has impacted their travel decisions.



## 2.9 Research Methodology

### 2.9.1 Research Onion

Image 4 Research Onion



Source: Saunders, 2009

Covid-19 is among the major issues that have been faced by the people in the current situation. Therefore, during this time, collecting primary data through interviews and surveys will not be a better option for doing this research. Therefore, selecting different types of literature sources from different databases will be beneficial for the researcher to identify the major deliverables of this research. As analysed by Ruggiano and Perry (2019), Secondary qualitative data is beneficial for the researcher to compute the research within a less budget and time. For developing this research, it is required for the researcher to use positivism philosophy along with a deductive approach that helps to develop different types of hypotheses for conducting this research work. Similarly, for analysing the data, the thematic analysis will be better for identifying the major deliverables of this research work.

The study will also rely on collecting primary data to analyse the opinions and travel intents of prospective travellers to India. In this, structured, undisguised questionnaire will be given to international travellers who intend to travel to India. These respondents will be found on social media and online pages dedicated to travel to India. Sampling method will be convenience sampling, and sample size will be 50 respondents. The collected data will be

analysed using statistical tools like correlation and regression, and it will be done using MS Excel.

A secondary thematic analysis was also conducted in the study to make a further in-depth study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector globally and on the Indian tourism sector. One of the prime reasons for conducting a secondary thematic analysis is that the method flexibility allows a various range of analytical options. In this study various existing literatures were considered for conducting this study. The use of the articles, journals, newspaper articles, and information from the government websites were made for supporting the study with authentic data.

Thus, in this section of the study the research aims and the objectives were identified. Furthermore, the methodology section has pointed out the ways in which data will be collected in the study. In this study, both primary qualitative and quantitative data, and secondary thematic data was considered for the method of data collection.

### **2.9.2 Research Philosophy**

As per the research subject, *Covid-19* has resulted in massive job losses and a decline in revenues in the Indian tourism sector. In respect of such a relevant issue, enhancement and evaluation of positivity are highly essential. Furthermore, positivism philosophy complies with the view that only factual data and knowledge that is gained through observation, along with measurement can be considered trustworthy. As the topic discusses the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector in India, it has been necessary to shed light on the statistical facts and figures to ascertain the impacts of the pandemic on tourism businesses. Furthermore, there is also the fact that employing the positivism philosophy eliminates the provisions for human interests in the study (Park *et al.*, 2020). Although the research topic would require the insights of key people such as international travellers regarding the state of the Indian tourism sector, the focus has primarily been on the impacts of the pandemic on the business performance of tourism operators and the related hospitality chains.

### **2.9.3 Research Approach**

In this study, the *deductive approach* has been preferred over the other two alternatives as it helps a researcher to think logically and then make meaningful decisions by taking up a general assumption and subsequently turning it into a more specific action or idea (Pearse,

2019). Based on the deductive approach, the incorporation of certain theories is crucial to be applied in the context of *tourism staff motivation during the Covid-19 pandemic*. Along with this examination, the deductive approach has been followed to determine the results of the critical issues faced by tourism operators owing to Covid-19.

Apart from the above reasoning, there is also the fact that the deductive approach offers researchers the possibility of generalising the findings of research to a certain degree (Pearse, 2019). This has indeed been useful when it comes to investigating the impacts of Covid-19 on the tourism industry in India as the findings generated by the primary and secondary methods have been presented in a form by using existing theoretical models and theories. This is necessary for completing the study within the pre-determined deadline and in the most convenient manner possible.

#### **2.9.4 Research Design**

In the present study, the *descriptive design* has been chosen as it allows for an accurate and systematic description of the situation being investigated. This design has helped in verifying the particular subject that is based on the exploration of the *impacts of Covid-19 on the Indian tourism* industry. Additionally, descriptive design has helped considerably to allow the findings of the study to be presented in a manner that is succinctly clear to the audience (Atmowardoyo, 2018).

It might be further noted that descriptive research allows researchers to investigate in detail the background of the research problem before the further study can be carried out (Sileyew, 2019). As the focus of the study has been on investigating how Covid-19 has affected the tourism businesses in India, it has been necessary to shed light on the background of the sector and the extent to which the performance of businesses have been impacted. This has provided a direction for the study and mainly supported the rationale for carrying out the research activities.

#### **2.9.5 Research Strategy**

In this study, both *qualitative and quantitative strategies* have been chosen as this has helped in providing enriching information collected from first-hand and secondary sources. The *quantitative unstructured and undisguised questionnaire strategy*, in particular, has been interlinked with the deductive approach. In this study of the impact of Covid-19 on the Indian

tourism sector, the quantitative questionnaire strategy is related to employee management and business adaptation during the pandemic. This has allowed the researcher to collect reliable data from first-hand sources. The study has further focused on the quantitative analysis of secondary data to establish a relationship between the two variables – Covid-19 and the Indian tourism sector. This has helped in providing a detailed explanation of the pandemic influence on the concerned sector from various angles.

#### **2.9.6 Data collection methods**

In the present study, both *primary and secondary methods* have been used to collect valid and authentic information about how the Indian tourism sector has been impacted by the pandemic. The primary method has helped in collecting the perceptions of the international travellers who wish to visit India. The idea was to gather key insights about this population to shed light on how the Indian tourism sector is currently being perceived by the foreign travellers who seek to travel to the country amidst the pandemic. In this study, a *structured, undisguised questionnaire* has been used to collect first-hand insights from the concerned sample (*Refer to Appendix 1*). The intention was to collect and analyse the travel intentions and opinions of the foreign travellers who are looking to visit India amidst the pandemic. It has been possible to collect authentic and reliable information using the primary method, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the study.

The secondary method, on the other hand, has ensured that the research is completed on time and has a smaller budget (Sherif, 2018). A range of literature sources has been used that shed ample light on the impacts of Covid-19 on the tourism sector of India. The study has cited information from peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, newspaper articles, government websites and authentic websites. The secondary method has further made it possible to collect relevant insights about the background of the research problem, that is, the impacts of Covid-19 in the contemporary business market in India and the tourism sector in particular. The primary data found via the quantitative survey has been further supported with the help of secondary findings. An overall picture of the Covid-19 impacts has been therefore created using both primary and secondary methods.

#### **2.9.7 Data analysis tools**

Data analysis is crucial in research as it helps in making the interpretation and studying of data much more accurate and simpler. It goes a long way in engaging researchers to interpret

the data that they have collected throughout the study so that they do not leave anything out that might be instrumental in deriving key insights from the same. The tools or instruments that are generally used by researchers when gathering information about the subject of their study vary according to the strategy they choose (Islam, 2020).

In this study, the primary quantitative data has been analysed with the help of various *statistical tools* such as regression and correlation. It can be seen that the research topic consists of two variables, with Covid-19 being the independent variable and the tourism sector being the dependent one. The use of correlation and regression methods have therefore helped analyse the degree to which both of these variables relate to each other. *MS Excel* has been used for the appropriate presentation of the data. The rationale behind this choice is that these tools have helped in quantifying the strength of the relationship between Covid-19 and the Indian tourism sector and presenting this relationship in the form of an equation. Furthermore, the quantitative dataset that has been used for studying the strength or weakness of the relationship between the two identified variables has been collected from various academic papers collected between 2020 and 2022.

The analysis of the secondary data has been done with the help of a *thematic analysis framework*, with key themes related to Covid-19 and its impacts identified and subsequently analysed. It has been rather flexible when analysing the themes identified from a large amount of secondary data. In this respect, it has further involved searching across the secondary data set to identify, analyse and signify repeated patterns and further studying the same (Braun and Clarke, 2021). Key arguments related to the collected data has been incorporated in the analysis. Not only that but each of the themes has been analysed and interpreted with reliable data supporting the same. This has helped significantly in looking at the impacts of Covid-19 in the business environment and the tourism sector in particular in greater detail.

### **2.9.8 Sampling and population size**

The current study has used the *non-probability sampling strategy* and specifically, *convenience sampling strategy* as the subject of the research required collecting data from a group of people who can be contacted easily. As per the research topic, the primary data insights had to come from foreign travellers planning to come to India and it was important

that these people can be contacted without much hassle or time consumed. As such, convenience sampling has been relevant in the given context.

Furthermore, having a sample that represents the target population is vital for researchers so that they can generalise the results found from the said observations of the selected sample to the targeted population. Given the scale of the present study, it has been decided that the population shall be kept to a moderate size. The population size has been taken to be **50 respondents**, who are international travellers intending to visit India during the pandemic. These respondents have been found on websites and social media pages that discuss Indian tourism in general. Given the broad nature of the research subject that focuses on the impacts of the pandemic on Indian tourism, it was felt that a large sample size would be most suitable. Furthermore, the insights collected from the 50 respondents shall be most helpful when it comes to developing an understanding of their opinions as well as travel intentions to India.

### 2.9.9 Ethical considerations

It has been ensured that the current study involves *the informed consent* of all the participants and that they have the *right to withdraw* at any given point, mentioned clearly in the email sent to them to invite their participation. Furthermore, it has been made sure that none of the participants has been *harmed* during the research process. All the sources and authors whose work have been cited throughout the study have been duly acknowledged. The guidelines of the *Data Protection Act 2018* have been adhered to at every stage of the research process to avoid any possible copyright claims in future (legislation.gov.uk, 2022). Overall, it has been necessary to ensure that the data sources from where relevant information is sourced for the study are genuine and legitimate.

### 2.9.10 Timeline and Gantt chart

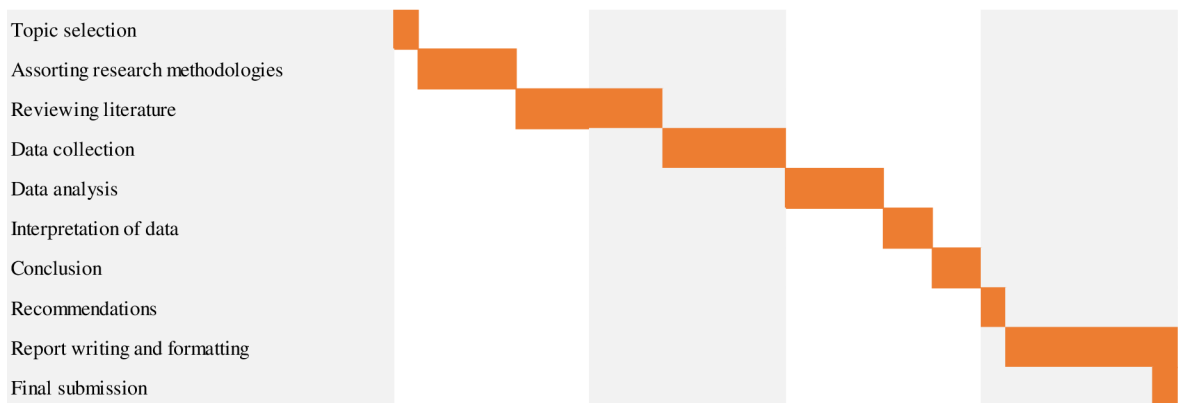
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>Duration (Days)</i>	<i>End Date</i>
Topic selection	25-10-2021	5	30-10-2021
Assorting research	31-10-2021	21	20-11-2021

methodologies			
Reviewing literature	21-11-2021	30	20-12-2021
Data collection	21-12-2021	25	14-01-2022
Data analysis	15-01-2022	20	24-01-2022
Interpretation of data	25-01-2022	10	03-02-2022
Conclusion	04-02-2022	10	13-02-2022
Recommendations	14-02-2022	5	18-02-2022
Report writing and formatting	19-02-2022	39	29-03-2022

Table 1 Time scale

Source: Own processing

Image 5 Gantt chart



Source: Own processing

## 3 Theoretical Part

### 3.1 Theories included in the Literature Review

#### 3.1.1 Keynesian theory

This literature review section critically examines the current scenario of the Indian tourism industry under the light of the global COVID-19 pandemic. It has been noted that the traditional approach of the tourism sectors of India towards the customers has been changed drastically after the abrupt outbreak of the novel coronavirus. COVID19's low-cost mitigators are the elderly and infirm. Thus, physically active individuals should be able to impose costs on those who are unwell, according to Coase's theory. Forcing individuals to stay at home or go into lockdowns results in tremendous inefficiencies since the costs are borne disproportionately by the high cost mitigators. A welfare economist, on the other hand, would not complete the investigation at this point since there is still a significant externality contributing to the waste. *Keynesian theory* believed that the level of demand had a significant impact on the supply of goods and services like tourism (Vhankate, 2017). It is even more vital that this shock - a decline in demand - be recognised and cured. In terms of demand, the hotel and tourist industries expectations matter. According to this theory, an increase or decrease in a person's disposable income has a direct impact on the number of items they require.

As a consumer's income rises or falls, so does the type of goods or services they desire. That means they will require less in terms of travel and luxury vacations. Trivial questions include whether the hotel and tourist industries' products and services are adequate. Products and services that are regarded as low-quality have higher-quality alternatives for people. The social connection between visitors and hosts is an example of cross-cultural contact. The bulk of visitors only stay in one place for a short time. They were distinct from other sorts of cross-cultural exchange, such as those involving immigrants and transitory sojourners, because of the reason for which they were travelling. During the Covid-19 People didn't have to adjust to the local culture like a regular tourist since they were in their little bubble. While tourists may suffer culture shock, this may be pleasant and exciting for visitors since it meets their desire to feel. As a result, they are better positioned to evaluate the host community from the perspective of visitors.



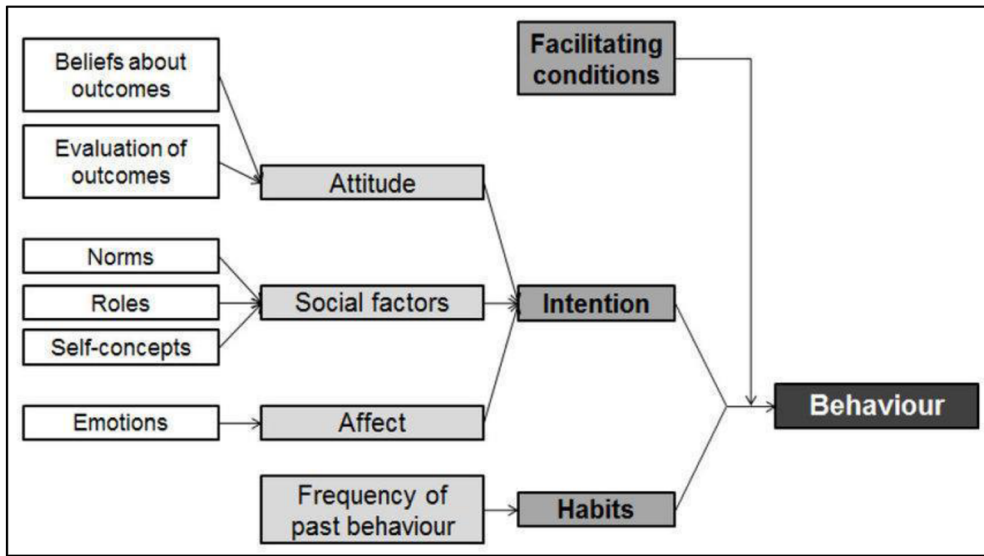
### 3.1.2 Cohen theory of tourism

*Cohen theory of tourism* (1972) created a four-part tourist typology as a basic study in the field of social contact between visitors and hosts (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). Travellers are divided into four categories based on their familiarity and novelty degree when they travel: mass tourists, adventurers, and drifters. The first two sorts of visitors are referred to as "institutionalised tourist roles," whereas the latter two are referred to as "non-institutionalized tourist roles." The environmental bubble formed by tourism is highly powerful for the original culture of the mass market. In this context, the presence of certain models related to customer satisfaction shall be discussed thoroughly.

### 3.1.3 Consumer behaviour theories

While discussing the dramatic changes in the travelling behaviour of domestic and international tourists, certain consumer behaviour models like **Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour**, **Family Decision making model**, etc. are taken into consideration. As opined by Lien et al. (2018), the purchasing decision of a family is influenced by certain factors like- parenthood, the safety of the children, financial constraints of the family members, etc. Families from different social classes show different types of purchasing behaviour; the absence of any travelling history is noted in the case of low-income family backgrounds. On the other hand, the **Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour** implies that- apart from the presence of various social factors (COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in this case), the attitude of the customers towards the current social situation determines their travelling behaviour. As opined by Salonen et al. (2014), developing customer profiles from the angle of their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation helps to understand the patterns of customer behaviour. According to this model, an individual is neither completely automatic nor completely deliberative. Customer behaviour is majorly influenced by moral beliefs, and the outcomes are moderated by social limitations and emotional drives. The social factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemics are discussed thoroughly in this literature review section.

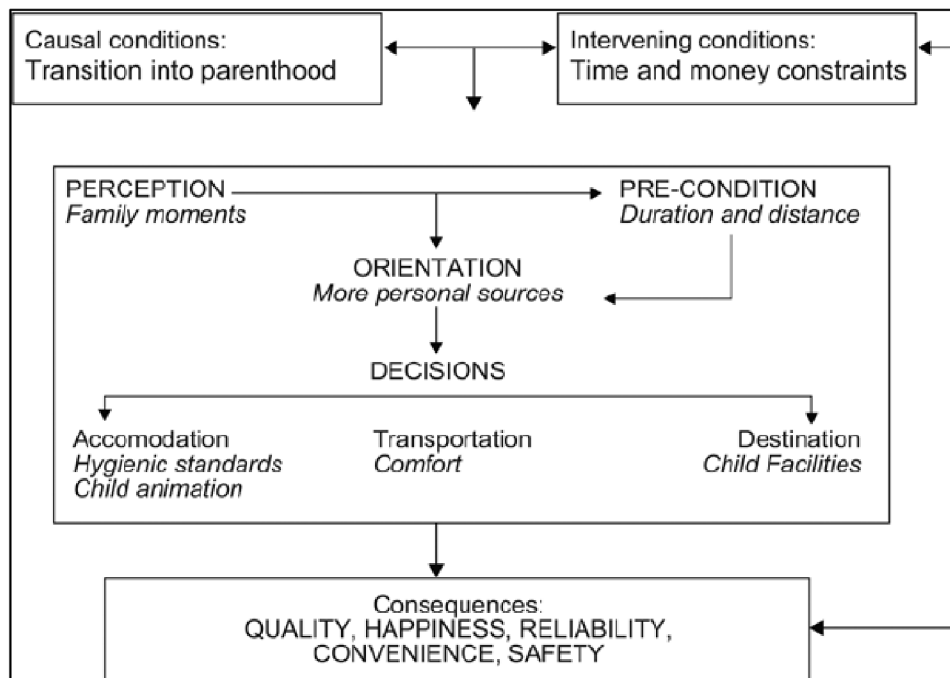
Image 6 Interpersonal theory of consumer behaviour



Source: Sung et al., 2019.

Additionally, the importance of the “**Family Decision making model**” can be mentioned in this segment that influences the travel-related decisions of parents. Considering the increasing risk for the families of the tourists being affected by the novel coronavirus, certain models can be taken into consideration to identify the determinants of family decision-making regarding the travelling behaviour.

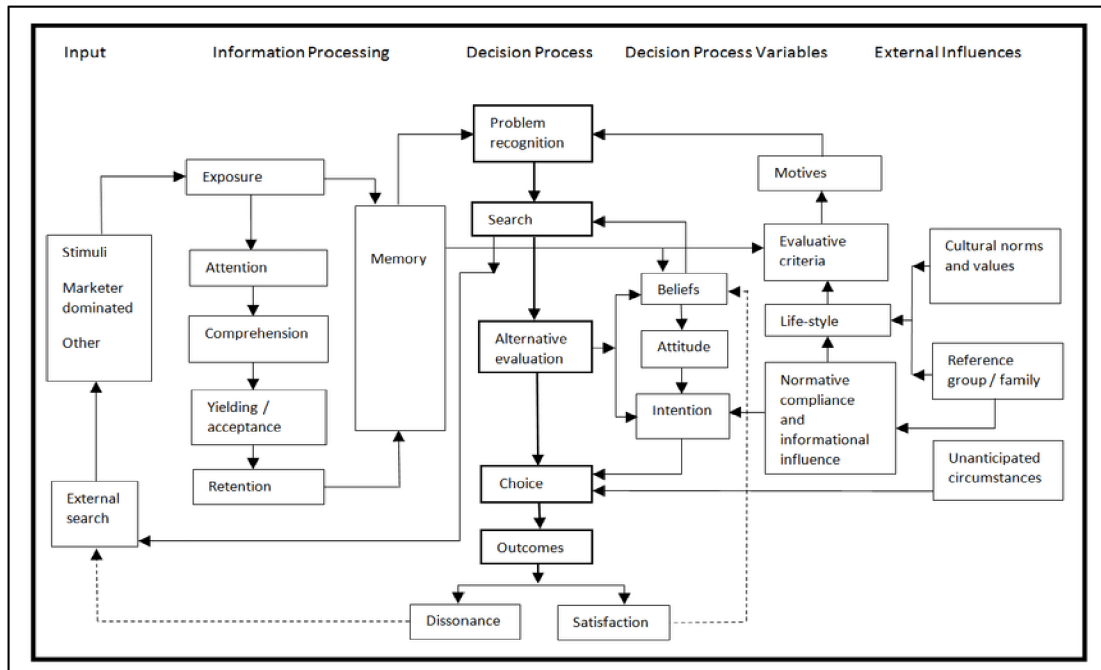
Image 7 Influence of Family Decision making model on tour planning



Source: Lalicic 2014

*Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer behaviour* has helped in the identification of the determinants of making decisions during the uncertain period of the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to cope with the economic loss encountered by the Indian tourism industry, ethical CSR strategies need to be formulated by the management authorities of the concerned industry.

Image 8 Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer behaviour

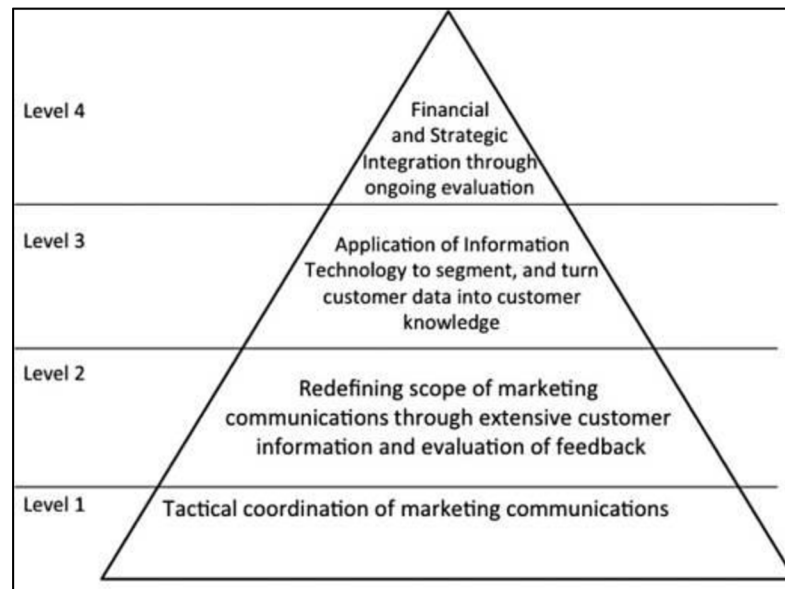


Source: Holland 2019

### 3.1.4 Integrated marketing communication model

Considering the negligence of the domestic travellers of India, the control measures of the tourism industry might be designed under the influence of the **Integrated market Communication (IMC) model**. As opined by Rosendahl and Gottschalk (2015), the four stages of the IMC model are identification of the target audience, development of a situational analysis, determination of communication modes (integrated media interaction approach, and industry approach), followed by the development of suitable strategies and tactics for integrated marketing and advertisement. In the case of the Indian tourism industry, the implementation of the IMC model might help to develop suitable measures to monitor the safe travelling behaviour of the customers.

Image 9 Stages of IMC model

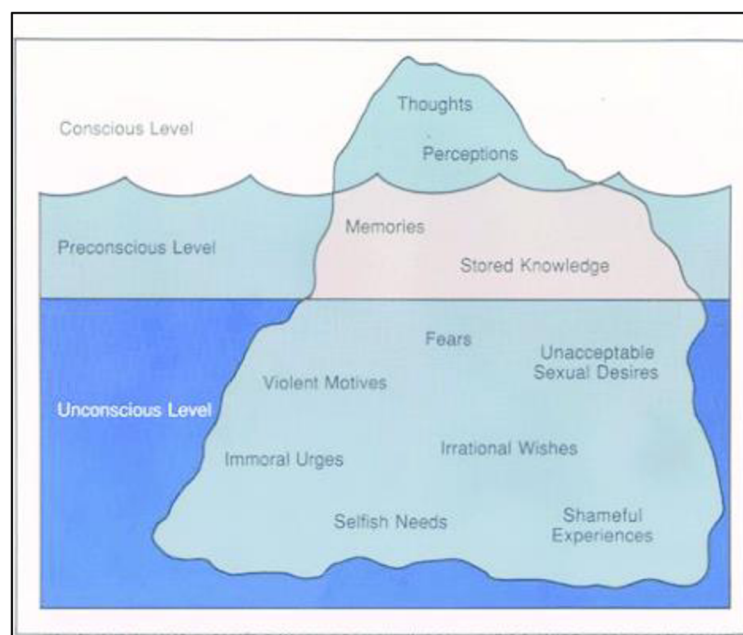


Source: Dahl et al., 2015

### 3.1.5 Freud's theory

*Freud's Theory* of consumer behaviour has been discussed in the literature review segment in order to justify the fear of travelling even during the post-pandemic era. Changes in travel-related decision-making have been noted among domestic and international tourists.

Image 10 Freud's Iceberg model of human personality

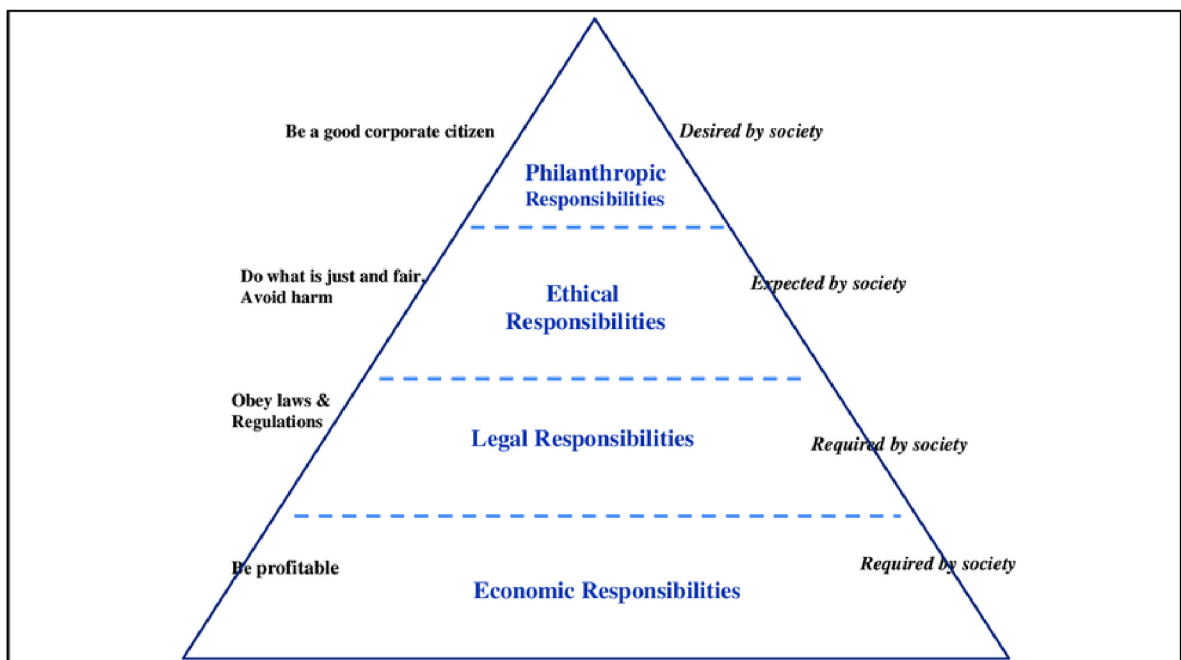


Source: Mohamed et al., (2013)

### 3.1.6 Carroll's pyramid of CSR

The framework of *Carroll's pyramid of CSR* will help the Indian tourism industry to fulfil its Economic, Ethical, Legal, and Philanthropic responsibilities during the post-pandemic period.

Image 11 Carroll's Pyramid of CSR

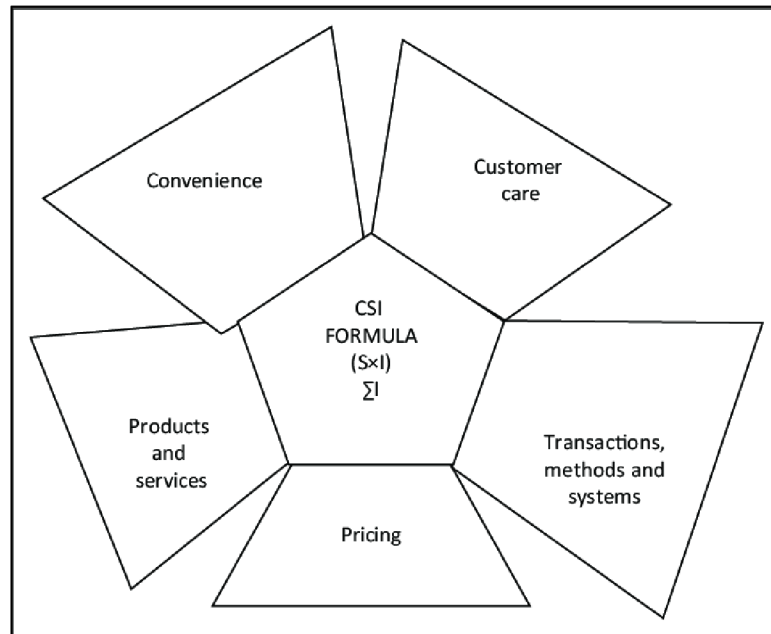


Source: Carroll 2016

### 3.1.7 CSI Model

The CSI model has been also considered in the literature review segment in order to understand the importance of customer satisfaction in the Indian tourism industry during the uncertain period of Covid-19.

Image 12 CSI model of Customer Satisfaction



Source: Musanzikwa and Ramchander, 2018.

These theories are closely examined and discussed in detail in the practical part of the research. In the discussion, each aspect of the theories is explained, and linked to the findings about the impact of Covid-19 on Indian tourism industry.

## **4 Practical Part: Results and Analysis**

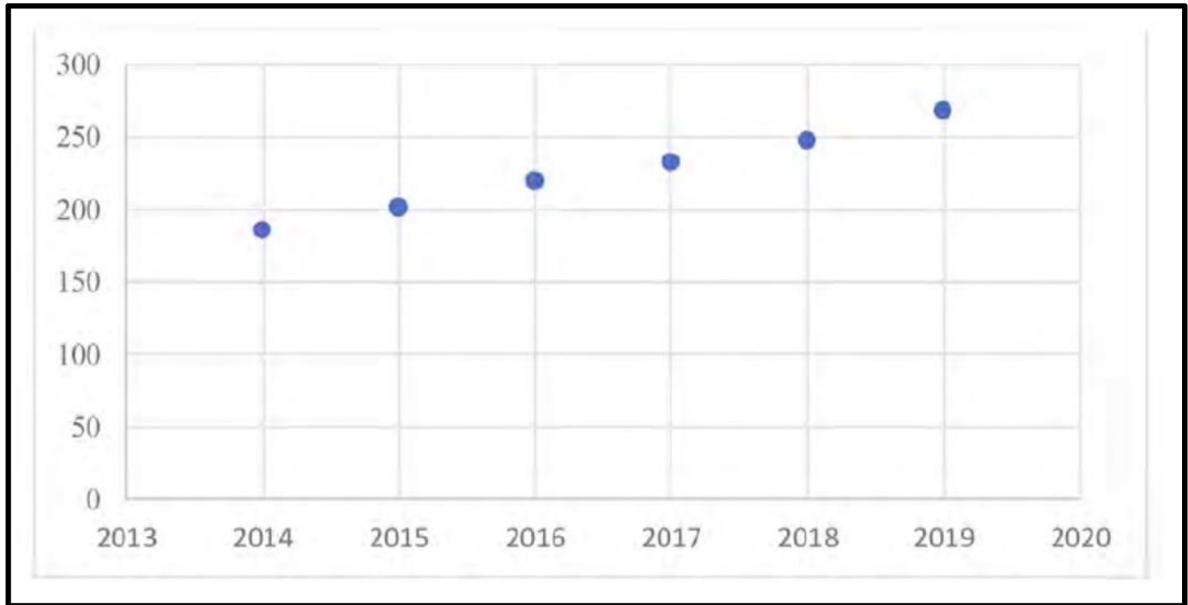
### **4.1 Application of theory**

#### **4.1.1 Impact of Covid on Indian Tourism**

Covid 19 impacted society in various regions; some of them include loss of jobs by migrants, education sector, family life and decrease in overall income sources in every household. As the travel and tourism sector also suffered due to lockdowns, the hospitality industry was impacted more due to the loss of hotel bookings and people being scared to stay in hotels due to safety concerns. The tourism theory of change can be applied here to analyse the impact of covid-19 on Indian Tourism. According to this theory, the tourism industry needs to be challenged often to have a significant impact in form of changes. The pandemic had a significant impact of tourism globally which forced India to change their planning and entire tourism landscape for the future. businesses were severely harmed because of one of the world's most restrictive curfews and travel restrictions. The lockdown stifled economic activity, leaving many migrant workers, particularly those paid daily, unemployed. India is a famous tourist destination not only due to its enormous size and diverse landscape but also because of its wealth of historical and cultural treasures. Tourists have provided most of the country's income and jobs for a long time. But the rapid introduction of (Covid-19) has impacted the tourism sector and has resulted in substantial changes in tourist preferences. According to Qarnain *et al.*, (2020) from February to March 2020, the number of international travellers dropped resulting in a huge drop in foreign currency income. Many nations including India had taken precautions, including cancelling all flights for sports events and other entertainment, as well as pilgrimages and conferences. Because the Flights going overseas declined by more than half, the tourist industry's staff were temporarily laid off and many experienced a decrease in salary. Travel industry subsidiaries like hotels and restaurants took a major blow. Due to a decrease in guests, many hotels had been converted into quarantine facilities when the cases were increasing, rendering it unsafe due to the prevailing germs even after proper sanitization. The hospitality and tourism sector encompasses a wide range of activities. The challenges with COVID-19 have had an impact on GDP and government income that will probably last longer than just a few months and will be deeper than the current drop. As a country's economy grows, tourism may have

setbacks, which can have a detrimental influence on the tourism business. The tourist industry leads to a rise in disease transmission as a result of variables such as climate change and poor per capita income.

Image 13 Tourism Sector in India before the Pandemic



Source: Qarnain *et al.* (2020)

According to the Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, millions of jobs and livelihoods in the tourism sector have been destroyed since COVID-19 (UNWTO). ((The 2015 MIH))) The newest Coronavirus epidemic affected nearly every country on the world. All economic activity was suspended for an extended period of time. The tourist business has been thoroughly researched; however few studies have looked at how Coronavirus affects this industry. As the COVID-19 spread, it was getting increasingly difficult for travellers to accomplish the essential cross-country changes and journeys. Consumer Theory can also be applied here to analyse the impact of covid on the industry. According to this theory, consumers spend money based on individual preferences and budget constraints. During the pandemic, many people lost their jobs which made them rethink their everyday budgets. This in turn had an effect on the tourism industry since people refused to spend money on travel and other experiences. The post-pandemic life of many tourists has also been challenging due to several setbacks to their physical and emotional health. Because of the sudden loss of income and the uncertainty of future income, most people prioritize the most essential things and postpone vacation plans. India offers some of the most modern medical facilities in the world at reasonable prices, it has become one of

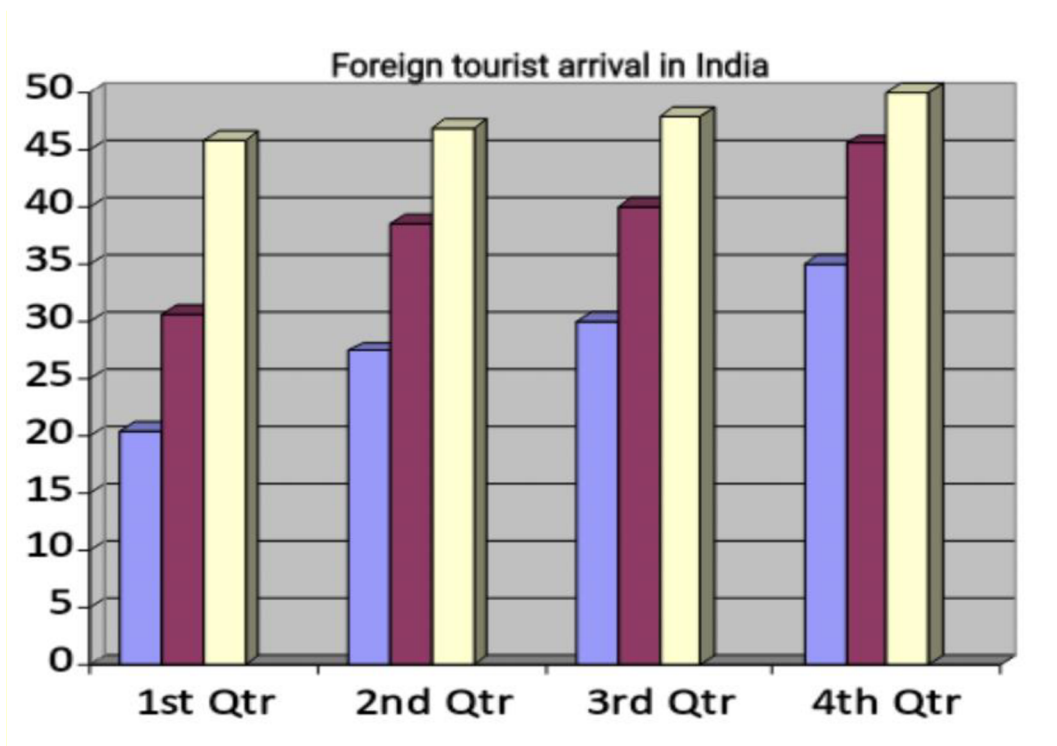


the most popular destinations for medical tourists. According to Gautam and Bhattacharjee (2019), 234,000 foreign visitors enter the nation on medical visas every year.

The coronavirus pandemic has a direct and significant influence on the tourism industry, it is harming the rest of the economy as well. Travel, commercial activities, and human-to-human contact have all been hampered as a result of unprecedented steps taken by governments throughout the world to contain the virus. Many countries like India are refocusing their efforts now that the virus has been contained, but they are still fighting it.

The crisis has lasted five months, and the prognosis remains bleak. A more sluggish and extended recovery is now anticipated. If any new outbreaks arise while the travel bans and quarantine restrictions are still in effect, reversals are conceivable. Even if supply chains resume normal operations, tourism enterprises will have limited capacity due to stricter health regulations. Rebuilding consumer confidence and travel habits will be more challenging in the aftermath of the present economic and health crises, especially when travel restrictions are relaxed gradually as the disease spreads. As a result, the economies of countries like India will suffer. Depending on the length of the recession and the rate at which it rebounds, travel and tourism may face a 60-80% decrease in 2020.

Image 14 Foreign tourist arrivals in India before Covid-19



Source: Hole and Snehal (2019).

Due to modern technology, it is becoming easier for visitors to India to plan their vacations, choose their destinations, and even take their vacations. Tourists from India, who are growing more middle-class in terms of size and affluence, are a stylised reality for the country's tourist industry. During the summer months, India's tourism sector sees a huge boost in revenue. Tourists from all over the world who had planned to visit Delhi and Amritsar between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 have to postpone or cancel their plans as a result. According to yearly tourism ministry estimates, between 40% and 50% of all summer vacation reservations are cancelled each year. These shockwaves have had an impact on enterprises, marketplaces, restaurants, and other tourism-related industries. Majority of people employed in the tourist business have lost their jobs and have returned to poverty. As a result of these concerning trends, India's economic development will suffer. In general, older people have a broader range of purchase impulses than younger adults. Understanding what piques the interest of the target audience is crucial to selling your product or service successfully. A person's behaviour may be influenced by socioeconomic and personal circumstances. Education, history, employment, and overall well-being are all influenced by class. This means that people from distinct socioeconomic backgrounds may have dramatically different purchasing patterns. People of different ages and socioeconomic backgrounds should be able to utilise the advancements offered by Indian tourism (Qarnain *et al.*,2020).

#### **4.1.2 Issues faced by the Indian Tourism Sector due to Covid**

Many people were unwilling to leave their houses, much alone travel, because of the epidemic and the implementation of social distancing measures. Most nations including India had restricted travelling policies beyond the country to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. As a result, there were fewer visitors in India and no foreign currency revenues. Many nations rely heavily on tourism for income and jobs and India is one such country. The tourism industry in India generates employment, taxes, and foreign currency revenues. Even after the lockdown was lifted, visitors were not permitted to attend any of the tour locations to prevent the coronavirus from spreading across the country and posing a danger to national security. Due to closed tourist attractions, there was a loss of cash, which impacted the maintenance of the tourism attraction points (Raj and Bahl, 2020).

Many travel guides and tour operators were unable to generate enough income due to the loss of tourists. Most hotels and resorts were unable to maintain their facilities and pay lease along with maintaining staff because there was a loss of income. The Indian tourism industry lost Rs. 1.25 trillion in income because of the closure of key tourist attractions, monuments, and historical sites. Registered and unregistered tour enterprises closed their doors and this had a significant impact on the profitability and productivity of the Indian tourist industry (Dash and Sharma, 2021). Due to Covid-19, the hotel employees returned to their homes and many hotels resulting in a shortage of human resources had to close temporarily. Promoting tourism during COVID-19 was a waste of time and thus many advertising agencies had no income for months which in turn resulted in the loss of jobs (Raj and Bahl, 2020). Foreign tourism fell by 9% in February compared to January and 7% in March because of the state-wide lockdown (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). The environmental bubble shields visitors from potential dangers like pandemics, unpredictability, or novelty. According to the *Cohen theory of tourism* mass tourism has affected how residents are perceived and during the pandemic, most masses were opinionated that travelling was not a safe option. Tourism and hospitality firms in India have seen an increase in foreign interest because of the country hosting an increasing number of international events because masses have predicted that travelling to such places was safe for a while. Conferences, rock concerts, and athletic events, among other things, have brought tourists from different countries to the city. This has resulted in greater income and growth for local businesses as well as the general economy of the masses.

As a result, the local community is isolated from the flood of tourists. Non-institutionalized visitors, on the other hand, aim to immerse themselves in the culture and depart with a lasting impression. They're looking for something for any purpose. A ban on large-scale international events and meetings also was a major issue for the tourism business because the lack of business travel on flights meant the airport food and drinks sector along with lounge rooms would struggle in maintenance. Hotel bookings, airline reservations, event cancellations, and workforce reductions as a cost-cutting tactic has emerged in India in recent years, potentially harming airlines, hotels, and travel agencies. Soon, value-cutting strategies that reduce the number of employees in the airline, hotel, and travel agency industries will have an impact on employment. The COVID-19 concerns have had a significant impact on restaurants and hotels. It should use technology to enhance the tourist

experience, implement green practices, personalize service for passengers, increase last-minute bookings, and increase the emphasis on health and well-being to recover from the economic loss during the pandemic (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). Although many hotels have closed because of the coronavirus, new rules and public expectations for health and safety will continue to be a problem for the hospitality sector. It is critical to understand what consumers desire and how they perceive hotel services. The hotel business must prioritize client happiness and the quality of its offerings. Visitors' opinions of the establishment's overall quality, cleanliness, service, and environmental stewardship are all crucial factors to consider. Customers have lost faith in hotels because of a lack of sanitation and hygiene, which must be addressed.

#### **4.1.3 Role of the government in Indian Tourism during the Covid**

The Indian government intervened to assist India's tourist industry, which was in desperate need of assistance. Efforts to halt the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) have had a significant impact on the tourist industry. Governments are also taking quick steps and implementing rehabilitation programmes to assist the tourist industry. Some of the issues that must be addressed include rebuilding traveller trust and resurrecting the tourism industry. A variety of steps have been adopted by governments throughout the world in an effort to halt the spread of COVID19. According to Kumar (2020) the government began by lowering the GST rate on lodging between INR 1000 and INR 7500 for a limited period and then lowering the GST rate by 18% on commissions paid by tour operators and travel agents for the provision of specific services. TCS, or Tax Collection at Source, which is collected when making payments to various hotels and airlines, was also considered for tax-saving strategies. These rules have a significant impact on people's travel patterns. Many people travel for a number of reasons, such as food buying or job hunting. A wide range of changes in the purpose, manner, distance, and frequency of journeys were noted prior to and throughout the development of the pandemic. The great bulk of people's travel during the pandemic was devoted to shopping, which explains why there has been a trend away from public transportation and toward private automobiles and nonmotorized means of transportation. Because they were concerned about the spread of the disease, many individuals preferred to go by plane rather than rail or bus. Several factors have to be considered while deciding on a style of operation during the epidemic. Gender and automobile ownership were among the characteristics considered, as were employment

position, distance travelled, primary objective, and pandemic-related concerns. This knowledge might be exploited by government officials to design sophisticated and partial lockdown strategies. This data might help taxi businesses and retail establishments improve their product selection and price by optimising their procedures.

Extending the deadline for the Input Tax Credit (ITC) for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 to March 31, 2021, alleviated some of the pressure on cash outflow for many businesses (Kumar, 2020). It costs a lot of money to develop tourist attractions, transportation, and hotels, as well as to promote them. It's difficult to predict how many visitors will visit a location. Forecasting tourist demand is essential for long-term planning for the Indian Government. The Tripura government and Info valley Educational & Research (P) Ltd. inked a public-private partnership (PPP) in October 2021 to run the Tripura State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHM). The state established the SIHM to offer training for prospective hoteliers to help the state's hotel economy to flourish. The Kerala government and Vythiri in Wayanad launched an immunisation program for all tourist and business participants in July 2021. The Gujarat government's Swadesh Darshan tourist program won \$24.2 million in financing from the Ministry of Tourism for three projects totalling Rs 1.8 billion (Chaudhary *et al*,2020). Tiruvallur's statue in Kanyakumari received new lighting as part of the Tamil Nadu state government's comprehensive mega tourism plan, which was supposed to be implemented in July 2021. According to Chaudhary *et al* (2020) Renovations at Poompuhar were also included, as were improvements to highways connecting to tourist attractions, spiritual places, and adventure tourism destinations. There will be more hotels and resorts built, as well as more government and private sector involvement in tourism. The fiscal year 2019-20 was a year of major government accomplishments. Swadesh Darshan projects were approved to get an extra Rs. 18.54 billion (US\$ 269.22 million) in 2019-20 (Patel *et al*,2020). Since November 2019, more than \$11 million has been collected for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's monument, known as the "State of Unity." All these collections made up for the losses faced during the travel restrictions in the pandemic. The travel and tourism business in India has enormous development potential. The extension of the e-Visa scheme, which is also expected by the government, would more than triple the number of visitors entering India post-pandemic. The Covid-19 has had an influence on every industry on the globe, and the consequences will be felt for many years to come. Hotel management needs to be financially healthy for a country's economy to stay stable.

#### **4.1.4 Understanding the changes in the consumer behaviour due to COVID-19 pandemic through various consumer behaviour models**

##### *Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour*

Within a few months of the pandemic, the tourism industry in different parts of the world, came to a standstill due to the heavy impact of the novel coronavirus on human lives. Particularly, the travelling behaviour of the humans have changed drastically after the Covid-19 pandemic. Travellers and tourists, being concerned about their health and well-being, reduced travelling in the post-pandemic era. As opined by Toubes et al. (2021), the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic might influence the tourists to delay their purchasing decisions until the very last moment. Prior to the pandemic, travel bookings and contracts used to be flooded without the risk of mass cancellation. However, after the pandemic, the risk of mass cancellation of the travel bookings has been increased as people are under the constant fear of getting infected by the virus while participating in various travel related activities.

Proceeding with the opinion of Gupta et al. (2021), a huge change in travelling mindset and consumer behaviour was noted among the domestic travellers of India. It was noted that the Indian population showed resistance towards travelling abroad due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Governmental policies of lockdown and abrupt closure of various industries, including the tourism and hospitality sector, had already created a stir in the economic situation of India. There is a higher chance that a huge percentage of the Indian population was reported to face unemployment during this global crisis. Travelling during these uncertainties may even seem like a luxury to the poor population of India and might put an additional financial burden on them. The changes in the travelling behaviour amongst the Indian population may be described by the **Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour (1977)**. Triandis noted social factors and human emotions play important roles in making decisions. This model consists of 6 components which are- facilitation of environmental resources, consequential beliefs about outcomes, evaluation of the potential outcomes, societal norms, role of the society, and previous behavioural aspects.

According to De Vos et al. (2021), the interpersonal theory of Triandis is closely related to the human behaviour of action and planning. In order to understand the possible changes in the human behaviour regarding travelling, the social factors and their possible impact on

human lives has been discussed by using the Transis interpersonal theory. It is noted that travellers all around the world have been showing resistance in travelling due to the negative consequences of the global pandemic. They have considered the **social factors** during the pandemic such as safe-distancing policies, frequent sanitization, health crisis reviews, etc, and critically evaluated the risk of health and safety during this uncertain period.

According to the study of Roman et al. (2021), the tourism industry in developed countries is expected to revive earlier as compared to the developing countries. India, being a developing country, may face delays in the revival of its travel and tourism industry. It was noted that after the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists are prone to choosing natural and rustic areas for travelling. This decision was influenced by the fact that the family members might get affected by the coronavirus due to travelling in congested urban places. It was also noted that the travelling expenditure in every country has been significantly increased after the pandemic.

#### *Family Decision Making Model*

Concerns about financial constraints, safety issues during the travel, etc factors impact the decision-making process of a family before planning a tour. It is quite evident that travellers who are planning to travel amidst the COVID-19 pandemic will be worried about the hygienic standards of the accommodation and hospitality sectors. As opined by Fiapsm and Bar-Yam (2021), the pandemic situation of India can be described appropriately by the phrase "India is in denial about the COVID-19 crisis". Backed up by strict governmental policies of lockdown and safe-distancing, India seems to have acquired a successful preventive measure against the COVID-19 virus outbreak. In particular, strict travel restrictions, partial and full lockdowns in different states of India, stoppage of public transportation (flights, local trains, etc), rapid industrial production of masks and sanitisers, etc. might help the Indian Tourism industry to cope with the increased risk of being infected among the travellers.

#### *Freud's model of human personality*

According to Zheng et al. (2021), a rise in travel fear has been noticed among global tourists due to the high potential of being infected by the novel coronavirus by participating in travel activities or while travelling in an overcrowded public transport mode. It has also been noted that people from India and other countries are under the constant fear of being infected by

the virus, hence limiting their travel activities even during the post-pandemic period. As per the IBEF (2022) report, the governmental policies to boost the growth of the travel and tourism sector of India such as the Promotion of Caravans and parking camps, development of internal infrastructure of the travel industry, maintenance of the safe-distancing policy within the tourist spots, facilities to issue an online permit for travelling, etc. have the potential to attract the domestic and international audience after the reopening of the industry. It has been noted that trust in the government might be able to decrease the fear of the audience, but it limits the travel intentions of the citizens during the post-pandemic era.

The unconscious presence of the fear of the tourists can be explained through *Freud's model* of consumer behaviour. As per Freud's Iceberg theory, the human psyche can be divided into two parts: Conscious and Unconscious. As opined by Berger (2016), the psychoanalytical framework Of Freud states that around 15% of the decisions are taken consciously while the other 85% of human decisions are influenced by the feelings like ego, fear, selfish needs, etc. present in the unconscious mind.

In this case, the fear of being infected by the COVID-19 virus plays a major role in influencing the travelling behaviour of Indian tourists in the post-pandemic era. All of these socioeconomic factors have influenced the travelling habits and attitudes of the Indians as well as the foreign tourists. The Indian tourism industry must develop sustainable tourism management programs to survive shortly. To achieve this, identification of the factors affecting travelling decisions (including the choice of destination) is necessary. As the tourism industry thrives on human interaction, it is essential to maintain safe-distancing policies within the tourism premises in order to minimize the fear of the domestic and international tourists.

#### **4.1.5 Recommended prevention and Safety measures for the Indian Tourism sector during Covid**

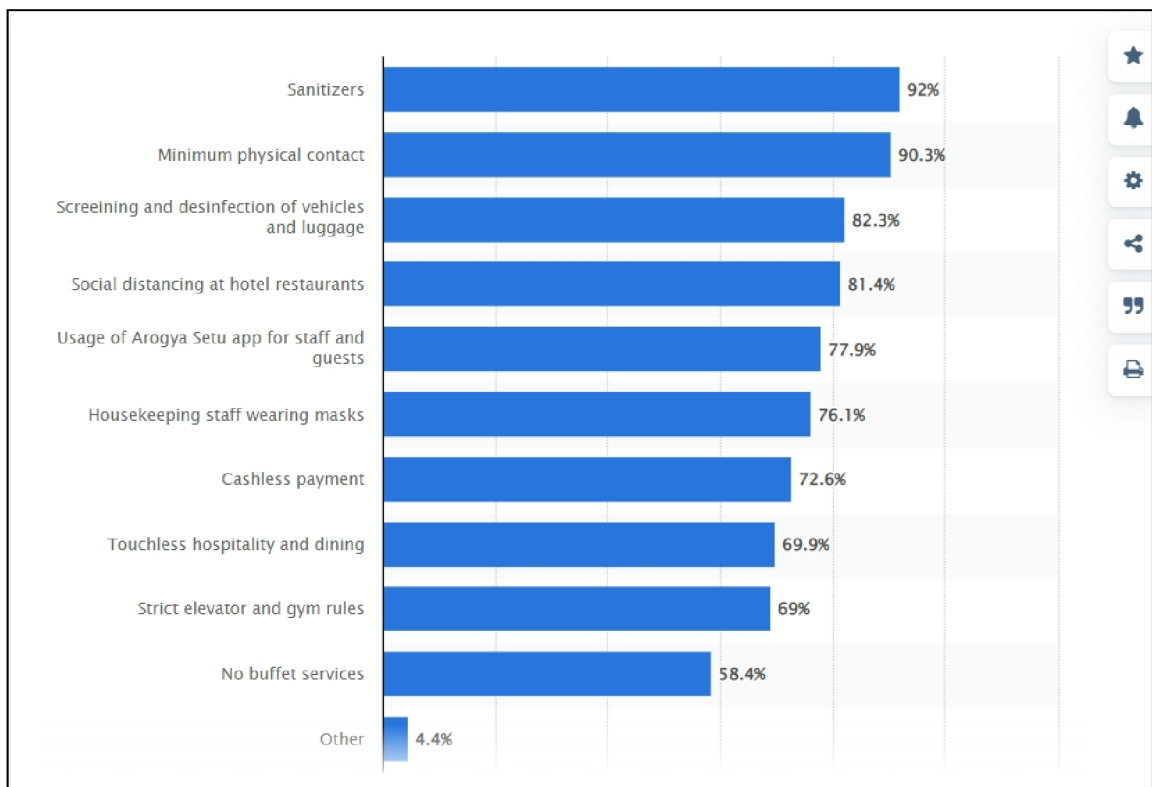
##### *IMC Model*

After the implementation of the partial and full-fledged lockdown by the Indian Government, the travel and tourism sector of India came to a standstill. Some of the small and medium-sized companies of this sector even encountered permanent closure. As opined by Kumar et al. (2020), the Indian government speculated that the primary plan to reduce the COVID-19



infection rate is to reduce exposure to the novel coronavirus. For this purpose, the Indian citizens were advised to avoid travelling to countries like China, Japan, etc. that were highly contaminated by the coronavirus. Necessary preventive measures like wearing surgical masks, regular hand washing, frequent sanitization of hands, avoiding public gatherings, maintenance of proper hygiene by every individual, etc. were practised by the Indian population throughout the pandemic. Negligence in wearing masks in some parts of India, especially the rural population who were unaware of the harmful consequences of the global pandemic situation might be an area of concern for the tourism industry. The tourism sector of India joined hands with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) to raise awareness about the Coronavirus outbreak and take necessary control measures to control the virus. However, after the tourism industry was slowly opening during the last trimester of 2020, effective safety measures were being implemented by every sector of the tourism industry.

Image 15 Share of hoteliers in India during the pandemic



Source: Statista.com 2021.

Screening and disinfection of the luggage of the tourists, strict safe-distancing policies inside the hotels, pubs, restaurants, gyms, strict policies of cashless payments, cancellation of buffet

services, frequent cleaning and sanitization of the public outlets, etc. are some of the measures recommended for the Indian tourism sector during the pandemic.

However, In the opinion of Choudhary and Priyanka, (2021), there is a chance that Indian population lowered its guard against the coronavirus and engaged in mass gatherings in different places of India. Preventive measures such as fine, imprisonment, etc. might be taken by different tourism spots of India in order to check the public gatherings at the popular tourist spots. However, the absence of enforcement of strict policies to control public overcrowding might increase the risk of being infected, especially in the rural areas of India. The public awareness messages must be spread through television, newspapers, and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Violation of the COVID-19 protocols by the Indian population might indicate the ignorance of the government to monitor the implementation of the safe-distancing policies. While discussing the **health and safety measures** implemented in the Indian tourism industry, it has been noted that the domestic population, as well as the government of India, are still in denial about the occurrence of the novel coronavirus (Choudhary and Priyanka, (2021). Considering the negligence of the domestic travellers of India, the control measures of the tourism industry might be designed under the influence of the **Integrated market Communication (IMC) model**.

Following the IMC model of marketing, the Indian tourism industry might consider unifying the elements of market communication such as social media advertising, public relation, awareness programs through distinct media channels. Control measures such as fines, imprisonment, etc. may be implemented by the tourism industry of India to check the irresponsible behaviour of the tourists.

#### **4.1.6 Travel-related decision making during the COVID-19 pandemic**

##### *Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour*

An in-depth analysis of the social risk has become prominent in the last few years, reflecting a growing concern associated with the global uncertainties. Especially in this unfortunate period, the tourists of India and many other countries are under the constant threat of being infected by the deadly virus during their travelling period (Holland 2019). The governmental policies of lockdown and travel restrictions have managed to control the spread of the virus

however, these governmental strategies imposed a negative impact on the economic aspects of the global travel and tourism industry. The presence of the risks of being infected by the virus has potentially changed the travel-related decisions of tourists from India and other countries.

In order to conduct a performance evaluation on any industry, it is essential to carefully examine the transformation of consumer behaviour in the concerned industry. As opined by Toubes et al. (2021), changes in consumer behaviour, especially in the tourism and hospitality sector, are closely related to the unprecedented health crisis which has resulted to cause a significant impact on the tourism industry. After the abrupt outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the travelling behaviour of domestic and international travellers was massively impacted. The changes in the way of choosing hotels, restaurants, and travel destinations were altered after the novel coronavirus pandemic. The framework of *Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer behaviour* can be discussed here as this helps the users to make important decisions by following stages of Awareness, Processing of related information, and Evaluation of the whole scenario.

According to Osei and Abenyin (2016), the Engel Kollat Model is considered one of the most important models in the field of consumer behaviour as this comprehensive model enables to identify the elements of making important decisions, particularly in the case of consumers.

As per the framework of the EKB model, the decision-making process of the consumers depends on five basic stages which are- recognition of the problem, searching for alternatives, alteration in the evaluation method prior to making any purchases, purchase, and outcomes. In the case of the Indian tourism industry, the domestic and international tourists have recognized the problems related to travelling which are safety issues, hygiene issues, risks of overcrowding in the popular tourist destinations in India, etc. As opined by Rahman et al. (2021), there are plenty of scopes to the travel and tourism industry to upgrade their service delivery system, distribution channels, patterns of transportation, maintenance of hygiene and safety, etc. in accordance with the changing requirement of the tourists for their health and safety purposes. Digitalization of the whole world has made it easier for global customers to evaluate the social situation of a country through different social media platforms. It is evident that consumers are able to recognize the travel-related problems during the time of COVID-19, hence limiting their travelling behaviour.

On the other hand, aspects like situational influences such as the financial condition of the customers also play an important role in travel-related decision-making. As per the Times of India (2021) report, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on India has been significantly disruptive as the economic condition of India declined heavily due to the unannounced economic recession. Travelling during the uncertain period seemed like a luxury for the Indian population. The decline in the economic situation of India also played a role in the travel-related decisions of the potential customers. As per **the EKB model**, some of the other variables that influence the purchasing decisions of the customers are social values and motives, family situation, the current lifestyle of the society, negative impact on the humans of the society, etc. Therefore, it can be implied that the uncertainties in the social values during the time of the pandemic, along with the poor infrastructure of the Indian tourism industry to provide safe services to the tourists influence the decisions of the travellers negatively.

#### **4.1.7 Role of Ethical responsibilities in the Indian Tourism Industry during the pandemic**

##### *Carroll's Pyramid*

Formulation of appropriate ethical codes and values ensures the presence of transparent communication among the related stakeholders and shareholders of the tourism industry, thus contributing to the development of sustainable tourism and the protection of nature. As per the UNWTO (2022) guidelines, Tourism Industry is one of the industries that acts as a genuine driver of the development of the whole society and maintains a sense of solidarity. Considering the uncertain social condition during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential for the Indian Tourism industry to keep generating better opportunities for growth and develop strategies to ensure sustainable growth of the industry. In order to develop a fundamental frame of responsible tourism, the Indian tourism industry must indulge in the development of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities) strategies to address the issues of safety and hygiene of domestic and international travellers.

Proceeding with the opinion of Kassem et al. (2021), prior to the reformation of the ethical guidelines in the tourism industry, it is essential to explore the requirements of the consumers and fill the underlying factors of the TSR (Tourist Social Responsibility) under the light of the coronavirus pandemic. The effectiveness of the TSR in the Indian Tourism industry can

be evaluated based on 5 different aspects which are - Maintenance of legal and social responsibilities during the pandemic, responsibility for the health issues of the COVID-19, responsibility of solidarity, Responsibility for supporting local businesses, and responsibility for imposing minimum impacts on the environment due to travelling.

As opined by Baden (2016), the CSR framework, named Carroll's pyramid can help business organizations to fulfil their responsibility in four different aspects: Economic, Legal, Ethical, and Philanthropic. The ethical responsibility of any industry goes beyond the normative expectations, laws, and regulations of society. Additionally, society expects business organizations to conduct business in a more ethical manner. Proceeding with the opinion of Manuel and Herron (2020), due to the abrupt stoppage of the global tourism industry, business trips and marketing tours were cancelled in many parts of the world. As opined by Carroll (2016), economic expectation is one of the main factors while developing CSR strategies.

The reason for the stoppage of global transportation was the absence of suitable protocols to check the contamination of the virus in overcrowded tourist spots. In order to maintain **ethical values** in the tourism industry, especially during the uncertainties of Covid-19, the officials of the hotels, and tourist spots must consider strategies that are socially responsible. The strategies may include- maintenance of safe distancing inside the tourist spots, mandatory use of masks and sanitizers for the tourists, submission of the vaccination certificates before taking bookings, RT-PCR test of the tourists before their date of travelling, etc. These strategies will not only help to maintain the ethical values of safe travelling but will also fulfil the legal policies of India such as safe distancing, maintenance of safety and hygiene, etc. As opined by Mitchell et al. (2021), the incorporation of CSR policies such as COVID-19 vaccine passports and immunity passports might moderate the responsibilities of the government while maintaining the ethical values of the tourism industry.

As the tourism industry is responsible for the generation of high impact on environmental issues and social conditions, the basic objective of the Indian tourism industry should be the development of efficient Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies in order to attract tourists from all over the world, thus maximizing the overall performance of the industry. As opined by Lee (2020), the traditional CSR strategies are no longer relevant after the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world. It was also stated that industries from all over the world

should restructure their CSR framework policies that will accelerate the recovery of the economic condition of the business firms. As the tourism and hospitality sectors are the hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic, CSR strategies should be formulated while maintaining ethical codes of traveling including the safety, hygiene, and well-being of the customers.

For the recovery of the Indian Tourism sector, governments and the management authorities of the industry must develop a phased approach in order to balance the economic requirements and the health and safety of the public. According to Kumar (2020), the Tourism sector is the backbone of India and many other countries of the world. The abrupt stoppage of the industry resulted in a poor economic scenario during this time of uncertainty. As per the framework of the **EKB model**, travel arrangements such as restrictions on international flights, promotion of domestic travelling, etc. will help the industry to overcome the financial loss encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic. These strategies might be able to fulfil the economic responsibilities of the concerned industry.

#### **4.1.8 Indian Tourism amidst the Covid from the perspective of domestic and international travellers**

##### *CSI Model*

A tremendous shock was instigated in almost every business sector all around the world by the abrupt outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. The travel and tourism sector across the globe that thrives on human interaction and hospitality, faced the cruellest consequences during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pandey et al., 2021). The governmental policies of lockdown and safe-distancing policies not only changed the daily lifestyle of the Indian population but also have dramatically changed the travelling behaviour of domestic and international travellers. Irrespective of the type of work, it is crucial for every industry to keep the customers happy and satisfied. Maintenance of customer satisfaction is essential for every business firm to build a loyal customer base as well as to retain maximum customers. As opined by Lee et al. (2016), the incorporation of certain models of customer relationship management such as the CSI model helps the tourism industry to analyse the satisfaction level of the target customers as well as develop innovative strategies to retain a maximum number of customers. The CSI model is based on the common assumptions that the level of customer satisfaction is influenced by certain factors like perceived value, the

image of the business firm, perceived quality, and the customer expectation level. The occurrence of certain irresponsible behaviour in the Indian tourism industry has significantly lowered the brand value of the whole industry. As per the framework of the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) model, the customers, irrespective of the type of industry, must be treated as valuable assets of the whole industry.

The unannounced withdrawal of the transportation services might have caused major problems not only for the Indian citizens but also for the domestic and international travellers who were already on the move during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the governmental implementation of lockdown and safe-distancing policies, many international tourists were forced to look for alternatives on their own. Any kind of disrespect to the tourists during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic might have lowered the customer satisfaction levels in the Indian tourism industry (Kour et al., 2020). Although it was observed that the tourists (domestic and international) found no difficulties while following the protocols of safe-distancing policies, they were expecting hands of support from the local communities of India. The case studies in the literature review segment indicates that the hosts of the tourism sectors of India displayed panic and irresponsible behaviour towards the tourists. Therefore, it can be speculated that the tourism sector was also feeling helpless, however, these kinds of situations have negatively impacted the long-term relationship between the Indian tourism sector and international travellers. In the case of the Indian tourism industry, the occurrence of these types of irresponsible behaviour might not only negatively impact the brand value of the whole tourism industry of India but can also generate a poor customer satisfaction level among domestic and international tourists.

Proceeding with the opinion of Kaushal and Srivastava (2021) the highly infectious coronavirus might be able to continuously threaten the tourism sector of India as well as managed to raise serious questions regarding the survival of this sector. Personnel working in different sectors of the Indian tourism industry should invest their valuable time for personal as well as professional skill development according to the requirements of the current pandemic scenario. They must show enough optimism towards the revival of the industry. For this purpose, they have to develop their sense of hygiene, as well as designed training sessions for the professional development of the employees.

#### **4.1.9 Literature Gap**

In this segment of literature review, authentic and reliable research articles and journals have been studied thoroughly to gain an understanding of the current scenario of the Indian Tourism sector under the influence of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Some deficiencies have been found during the research work that needs further investigation. It was noted that the hosts of the tourism sector of India showed panic and mistrust towards the guests severely impacting the guest-host relationship. This literature review does not mention any measures implemented by the Indian tourism sector to sustain the guest-host relationship after the pandemic will come to an end. It was also noted that the travelling behaviour of the Indian population was severely impacted by the sudden outbreak of coronavirus. The absence of any kind of governmental policies to monitor the travelling behaviour of the Indian population was noted. It was speculated that the Indian population might have overcrowded the popular tourist spots and religious pilgrims immediately after the relaxation of the governmental lockdown restrictions. The absence of any kind of control measures by the Indian government was noted to check the mass gatherings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4.1.10 Summary**

This literature review has helped to gain in-depth knowledge about the current scenario of the Indian Tourism sector as well as helped to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the concerned sector. The Cohen Theory of tourism has been taken into consideration to understand the relationship between the host-guest relationship in the Indian tourism industry during the uncertain period of Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, the CSI model has helped to understand the importance of customer satisfaction in the Indian tourism industry. In order to identify the determinants of the changed travelling behaviour of the domestic and international tourists, Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour, Family Decision making model, etc. has been discussed thoroughly. Additionally, theories of consumer behaviour like Freud's model, Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer behaviour, etc. helped to determine to factors of making travel-related decisions during the pandemic. After analysing the changes in the travelling behaviour of the Indian population as well as the international tourists, it can be implied that the tourism industry needs to revive itself after the reopening of the sector by focusing on the sustainability strategy. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector of India has encountered a huge loss during the uncertain period of pandemic, the collaborative approach of the Indian government and the tourism



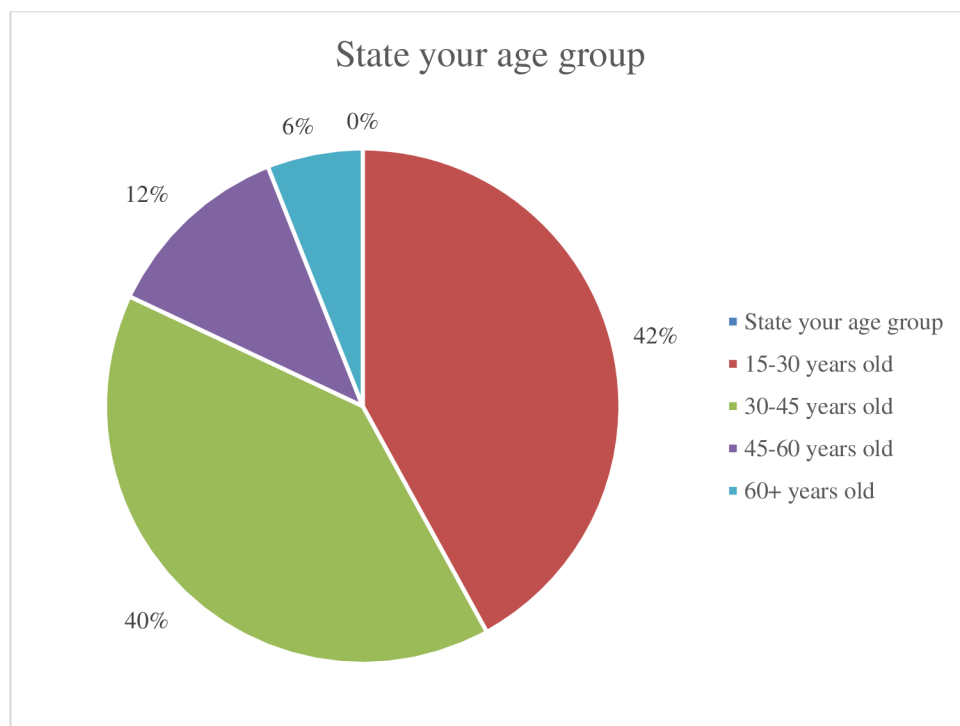
industry might help in the revival of the industry by implementing suitable safety and hygiene standards. However, further research is needed to identify the causes for the continuous surge in COVID-19 cases in India despite the implementation of travel restrictions and safe-distancing policies.

## 4.2 Survey Findings and Analysis

In this section, the findings are developed from the survey questions that have been conducted through Google forms. The data collected from the survey has been presented through the statistical presentation with a clear graph that indicates international tourists' intentions to travel to India in the COVID situation. Research findings help to develop the data as per the opinion of the respondents about the issue based on the survey.

### QUESTION 1: State your age group

Image 16 Age group composition

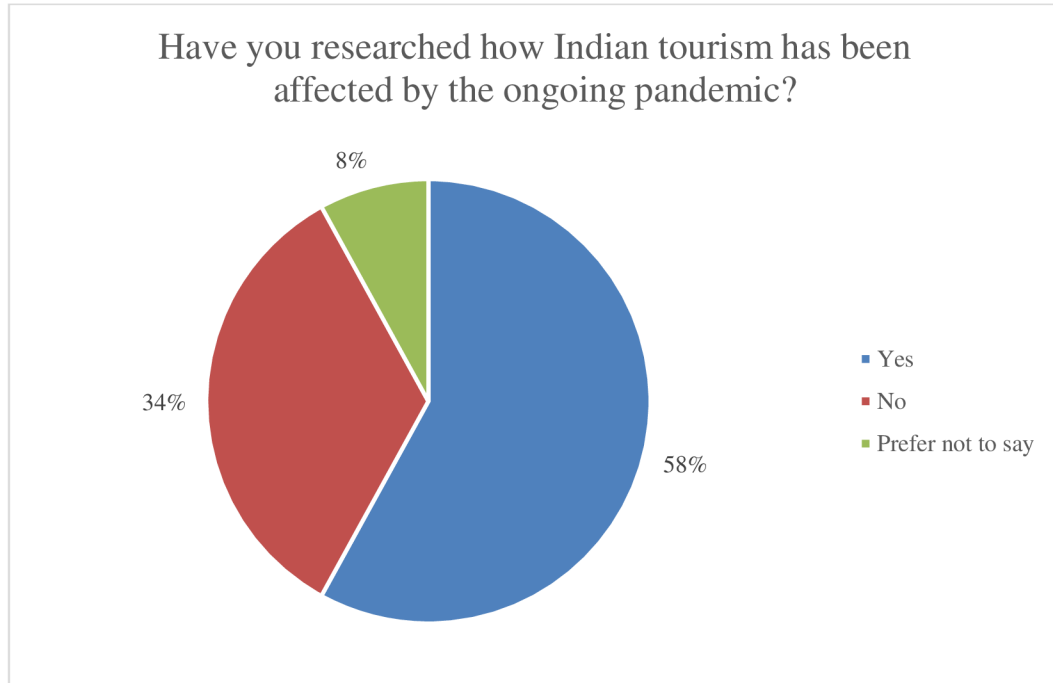


(Source: own findings)

From the above statistical features, it can be said that 42% of respondents belong to the 15 to 30 years age group and 40% respondents are from 30 to 45 years old age group. On the other hand, it can be also said that only 6% of respondents are 60 years old which indicates senior citizens try to avoid international travel due to the COVID pandemic. The negative impact of covid-19 has impacted the senior citizen people that create fears among the aged people, and they try to maintain government rules and regulations regarding COVID (Bhardwaj, 2019). The intention of travelling has been seen among the young people in the pandemic situation that can create positive impacts on the Indian tourism industry.

**QUESTION 2: Have you researched about how Indian tourism has been affected by the ongoing pandemic?**

Image 17 Level of research on pandemic's impact on Indian tourism

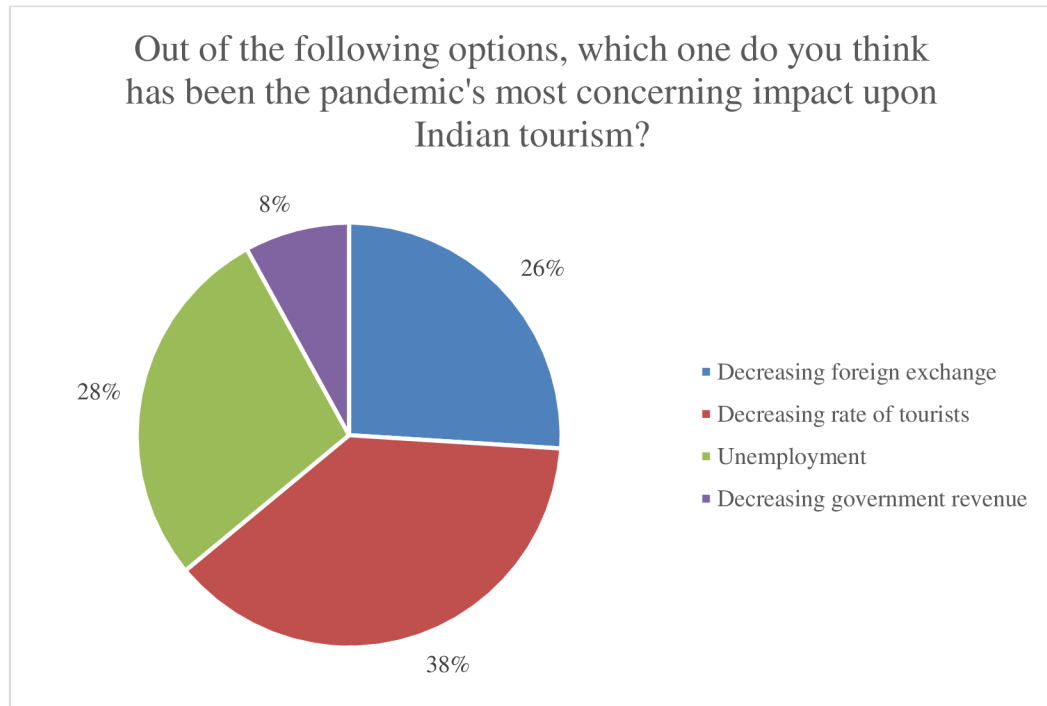


(Source: own findings)

From the above figure, it can be said that 58% of people are agreeing that the covid situation makes a negative impact on Indian tourism. The pandemic situation has decreased the tourists' rate in the country that decreases the profit rate of this industry. It creates challenges to maintain economic sustainability in the industry that also decrease the growth of the organisations. It is very difficult for the industry to maintain effective development in the organisations (Gupta and Sahu, 2021). It can be said that the industry has to adopt some effective strategies and solutions to overcome the situation and attract more customers to the country.

**QUESTION 3: Out of the following options, which one do you think has been the pandemic's most concerning impact upon Indian tourism?**

Image 18 Breakup of impacts on Indian tourism

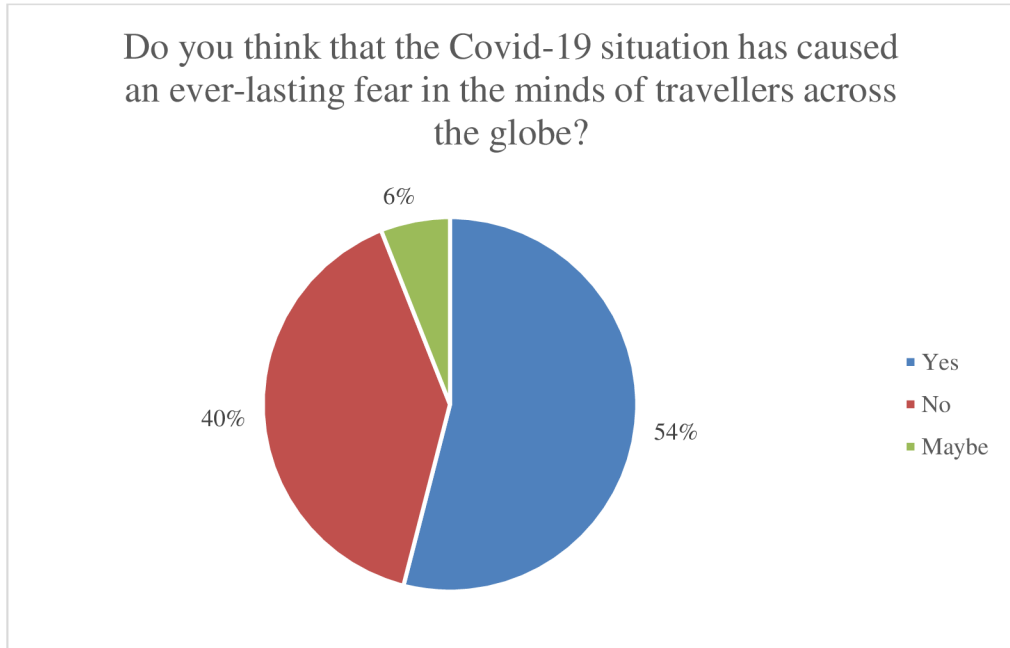


(Source: own findings)

From the above statistics, it can be said that the decreasing rate of tourists and the unemployment rate is the most concerning impact upon Indian tourism. Indian tourism has lost 18% revenue in recent years due to the COVID situation. The decreasing rate of tourists due to lock down and governmental restriction develop challenges in the industry. Due to the lockdown, the tourism organisations face a huge loss that increases the unemployment rate in the country. Indian tourism has lost 11% of skilled employees due to Extreme loss in business that creates economic challenges in the country (Jaipuria *et al.*, 2021). It has been also said that the increasing unemployment rate decreases the social quality that become the biggest challenge for the Indian government.

**QUESTION 4: Do you think that the Covid-19 situation has caused an ever-lasting fear in the minds of travellers across the globe?**

Image 19 Opinion about ever-lasting fear in the minds of travellers

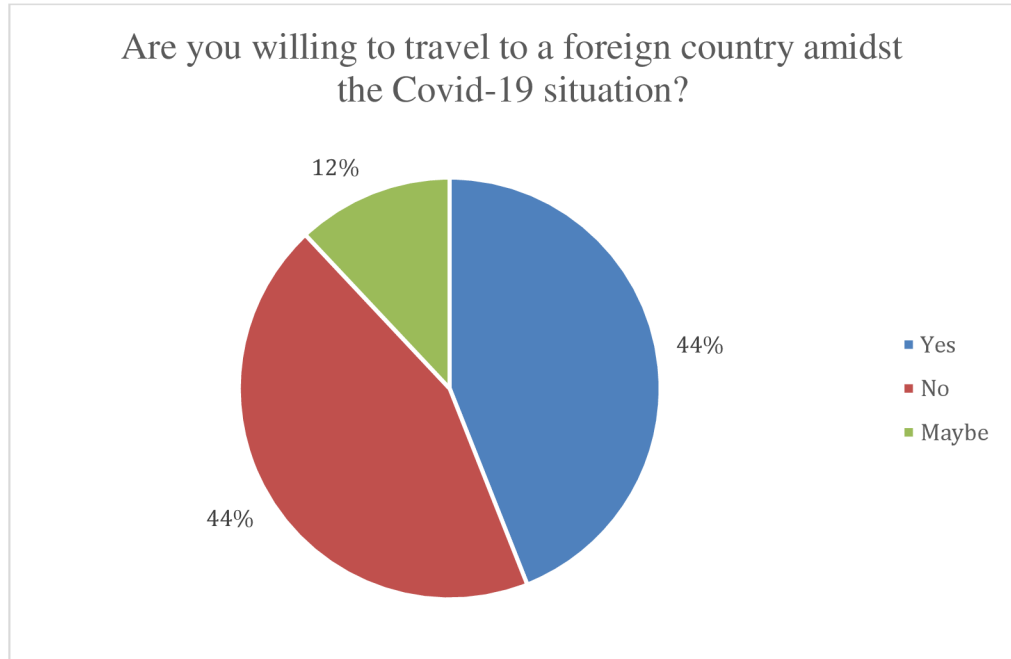


(Source: own findings)

According to the above statistics, it can be said that COVID has made negative impacts in tourists' mind as 54% respondents agree about their fear of travelling. The government has introduced lockdowns and restrictions to avoid COVID contamination and mortality rate in the country. The increasing mortality rates create fear among tourists and the avoidance of travel in different countries (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). Tourists prefer to stay at home than travelling in recent years that create challenges in the tourism industry. The profit rate has decreased due to this situation that creates problems in maintaining operational systems and enhancing the customer service facility.

**QUESTION 5: Are you willing to travel to a foreign country amidst the Covid-19 situation?**

Image 20 Willingness to travel abroad amidst Covid-19

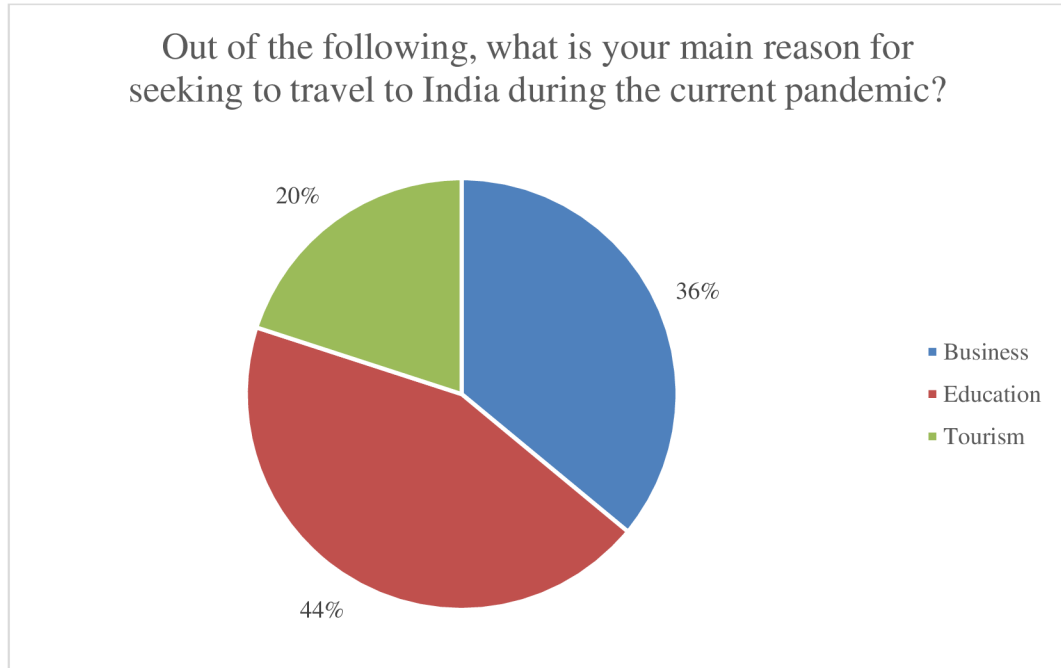


(Source: own findings)

According to the above statistical figure, it can be said that 44% respondents do not want to travel to a foreign country in the COVID-19 situation. COVID develops fears among tourists because it increases the mortality rates and serious cases in the world. Most people do not want to travel in this pandemic situation and try to maintain government rules and regulations to avoid COVID contamination and other problems regarding this virus. However, on the other hand, 44% of respondents prefer to travel in this situation because of their emergency works and business purposes. It is very important for people to maintain their business during this crisis period to overcome the economic condition.

**QUESTION 6: Out of the following, what is your main reason for seeking to travel to India during the current pandemic?**

Image 21 Breakup of reasons to travel to India during the pandemic

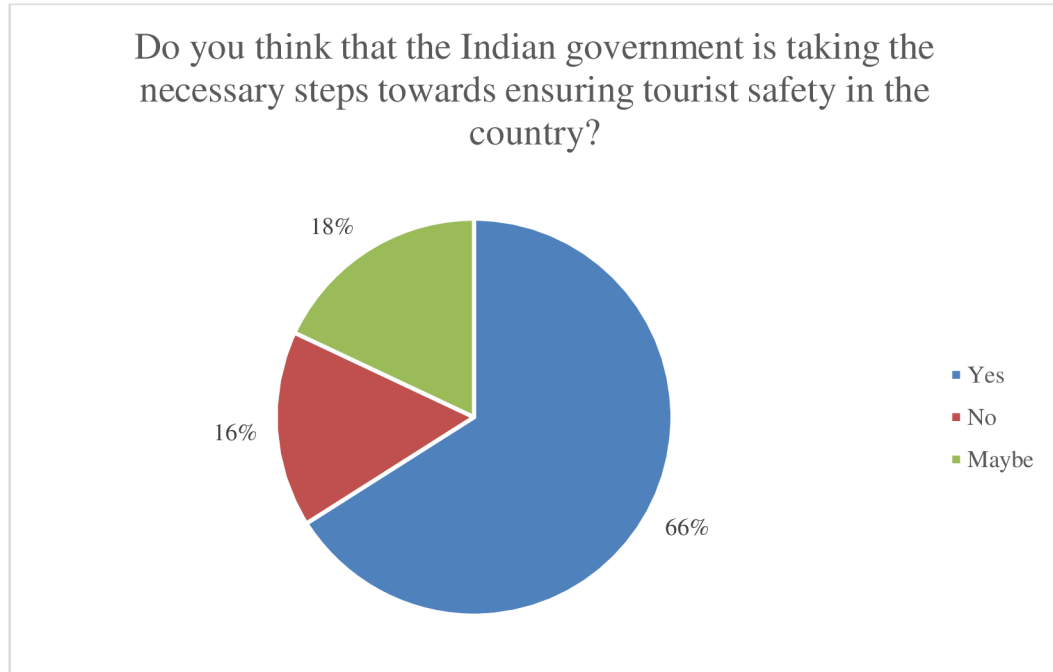


(Source: own findings)

According to the above statistical figure, 36% people are travelling to India during covid pandemic for their business purpose. The COVID has heat all kinds of businesses and many people lost their job in this situation. Many of the people have to travel in different countries for explain their businesses and earned profits to maintain economic sustainability in the organisations. 44% people travel to India because of their higher education in the situation. In this situation, many students in their skills to get a good job and get success in their professional life. By developing different skills, the students can develop the leadership and management quality that can help to get a job in this crisis (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021).

**QUESTION 7: Do you think that the Indian government is taking the necessary steps towards ensuring tourist safety in the country?**

Image 22 Opinion about Indian government's steps



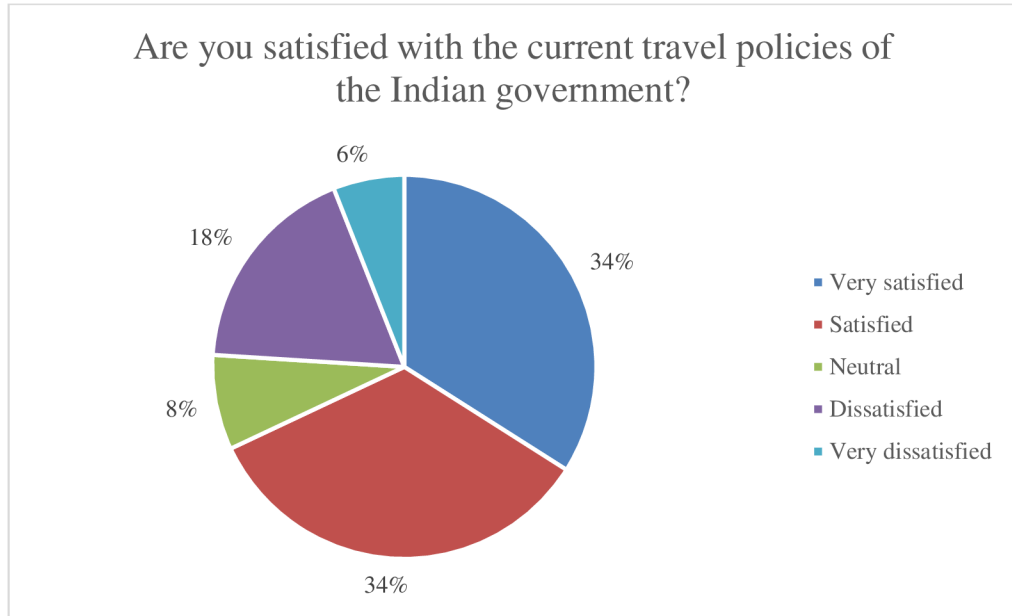
(Source: own findings)

According to the above statistics, 66% people are satisfied with the governmental policies that help to ensure tourist safety in the country. The Indian government has provided economic support and adopt necessary measures to develop effective revenue growth in the tourism industry. To ensure safety in this country, the government has inquired about the COVID-19 and provide proper medical support to the international tourists that help to reduce COVID contamination and mortality rate. The government also adopt different test system to ensure security and safety to the tourist that satisfy the international tourist and attract more visitors in the country (Jaipuria *et al.*, 2021). The government of this country has also developed technological advancement to detect COVID virus to reduce their fear and maintained effective health facility in the country.



**QUESTION 8: Are you satisfied with the current travel policies of the Indian government?**

Image 23 Satisfaction level with Indian government's travel policies

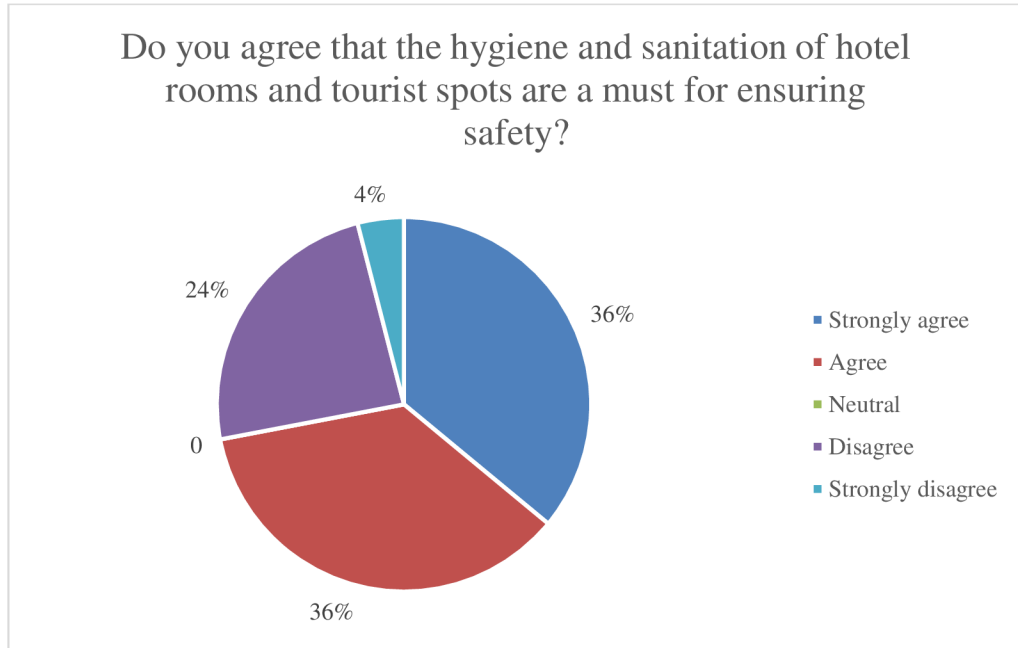


(Source: own findings)

According to the above figure, 68% people are satisfied with the current travel policies of the Indian government. The government has introduced lockdown and several regulations for reducing COVID contamination and mortality rate in the country. The government has also introduced several restrictions in air force and railway stations to examine COVID affected people and provide proper treatment to the tourist. This high-quality health support satisfies the foreign tourist and reduces their fear in travelling in India. These policies are also helpful for the tourism industry as it helps to attract more travellers in the country that help to increase its revenue growth and profit rate.

**QUESTION 9: Do you agree that hygiene and sanitation of hotel rooms and tourist spots are must for ensuring safety?**

Image 24 Opinion about hygiene and sanitation of hotel rooms and tourist spots

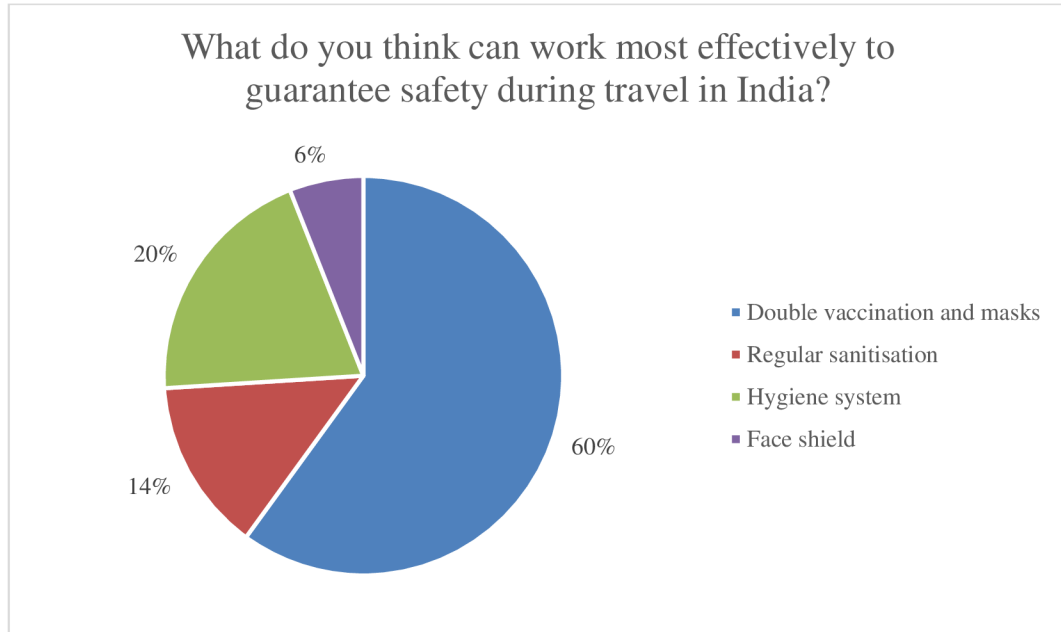


(Source: own findings)

According to the above statistics, it can be said that 72% people are agree that the hygiene and sanitation process in hotel rooms and tourist spots can ensure safety and security for the tourists. In the COVID situation, it is very necessary to maintain hygiene and sanitization in hotels and restaurants to reduce the fear of the customers. The hotels and restaurants have to maintain social distancing and proper sanitization process to reduce COVID contamination. By developing effective sanitisation process, the tourism industry can attract more tourists in the country and increase their profit rate (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021). The sanitization process also ensures a healthy environment that can help to satisfy the customers and fulfil their demands in an effective way.

**QUESTION 10: What do you think can work most effectively to guarantee safety during travel in India?**

Image 25 How to guarantee travellers' safety in India



(Source: own findings)

As per the above statistical figure, it can be said that 60% of people believe double vaccination and wearing mask can improve the situation and reduce COVID contamination in India. By taking vaccines, people can build immunity that can help to create antibody against COVID virus that help to decrease the mortality rate. Mask is most important thing in this pandemic that help to reduce COVID contamination and can protect people from serious illness in this pandemic situation (Jaipuria *et al.*, 2021). By incorporating double vaccination and mask wearing measure, the Indian government has developed the trust of the international tourist and attract more visitors in the country.

## 4.3 Thematic analysis

### 4.3.1 Theme 1: The effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the global tourism industry

The Covid-19 virus originated as a pandemic in the year 2020 and it created a devastating effect on all people around the world. It harmed millions of lives and left thousands of people unemployed. As per the reports collected from *Worldometer*, there are 5,858,921 lives harmed due to the pandemic. The pandemic created havoc in the lives of the people as a reason everything else came to a standstill. All organisational sectors were heavily affected as they could not operate in a normal way. According to renowned organisations like WHO, the only way to contain the spread of the virus is to remain homebound, avoid travelling and maintain a safe physical distance from the people which means travelling is the primary thing that needs to be avoided in order to remain safe. Hence, the major impact of the pandemic was upon the tourism industry which led to a huge number of financial losses and a lot of job losses. According to the Economic Impacts report of 2020 of the World Travel and Tourism, it has been pointed out that there has been a loss of US \$ 4.5 trillion on the global tourism industry (WTTC, 2020). Millions of people approximately 61.6 million people lost jobs in the tourism industry.

The travel and tourism industry originated as one of the most prospective sectors before the Covid-19 pandemic. This industry contributed 10 percent to the Global GDP and above the 320 million jobs across the world. In a world of interconnectedness the global pandemic, Covid-19 wreaked havoc and disrupted the entire industry. Countries that majorly depend on the revenues earned from tourism also experienced a lot of economic setbacks. Countries like India saw loss of 38 million jobs. According to the reports collected from the International Monetary Fund, (2020), there was a drop in tourist arrivals by 65 percent (International Monetary Fund, 2020). African countries whose GDP is heavily dependent on tourism have shrunk by 12 percent. A 12 percent decline in GDP has also been experienced by the Caribbean nations. This shows the major impact of Covid-19 on the global tourism industry (International Monetary Fund, 2020). However, as the regulations on containment and lockdowns eased the tourism industry gradually started looking up. Countries like Seychelles and Thailand laid down regulations that would allow tourists from less affected countries. The Indian government also gradually opened its borders for international tourists.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: The effect of Covid-19 pandemic on Indian Tourism**

The Coronavirus which was also known as the Wuhan Virus spread rapidly to the nearer countries and it gradually found its way to the country of India from there the virus spread in 185 countries by the month of May in the year 2020 (Kumar, 2020). As per the reports of World Travel and Tourism, in respect to the travel and tourism industry, India holds the 3rd rank among 185 countries and greatly contributes to the global GDP. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report of 2019, India holds the 34th rank in terms of the travel and tourism competitive industry. For limiting the spread of the virus the Government of India has been forced to shut down its borders and impose travel restrictions. The regulations on travel restrictions sparked fears within the largest economies of the world. The Covid-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of a huge number of travel plans by the local as well as the foreign tourists. The country saw a drop in the outbound and inbound tourism of 52% and 67% respectively (Kumar, 2020). The covid-19 pandemic is also one of the main causes of job losses. World Tourism as well as the Indian tourism entered a great period of prices which also led to the crash of the stock market. The citizens of the country were not allowed to travel to any country, and this usually impacts the GDP of India.

According to UNCTAD reports it was estimated that globally the tourism industry can make a lot of \$4 trillion of GDP in the years 2020 as well as 2021 (UNCTAD, 2021). The reports collected from status also point out that the Indian travel and tourism industry employed 12.95% people in this sector which was usually impacted due to the virus. The Indian companies on travel and tourism had undergone a measurable journey due to cancellations in bookings from the traveller which led to the paralysis of the Indian tourism market. The situation became worse during the period February and March of the Year 2020 when the government had laid down international travel bans which brought the Railways and a line to a standstill.

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Different measures taken by the Indian Government to support Indian tourism industry**

The Indian government has supported the Indian tourism industry in the COVID situation by taking effective measures. The Indian government has introduced lockdowns and restrictions in the country to decrease the COVID contamination and mortality rate. However, this lockdown and restrictions create challenges for the travel and tourism industry

of this country. The profit rate of the industry has dropped up to 60% in recent years creating economic challenges (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). To enhance the revenue growth of the industry and to maintain economic sustainability, the Indian government has decreased the GST rate by 18% which help to maintain the operating system in the industry (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2020). The government has also decreased the GST rate for hotel organisations up to INR 7500 to increase the profit rate and to support the tourism industry. As a COVID measure, the Indian government has introduced tax-saving strategies that help to decrease the Tax amount as well as extend the deadline for the input tax credit. This strategy helps to maintain the cash flow in the industry and reduce the economic burden from the tourism organisations. The government also provide economic support to attract tourist by developing the transportation system, hotels, restaurants that can satisfy customers' demands. The government has provided £17.96 billion in revenue to ensure effective sanitization systems and hygiene in the hotels and restaurants to avoid COVID contamination (Dash and Sharma, 2021).

The Indian government has also introduced restrictions in travelling without getting a double dose vaccine certificate and masks to avoid COVID contaminate decrease mortality rate of the country. The tourism industry incorporated technological development to maintain social distancing and sanitization in the hotels and organisations. These measures help up and determine security in the hotels and restaurants that help to increase the profit rate. The government also offers extension of the easier schemes that increase the number of tourists as well as enhance the revenue growth of the industry. The government has also offered £24.2 million revenue to establish technological development in the COVID situation to increase the security process and to avoid COVID contamination (Deshpande, 2021). Renovations at Poompuhar were also included, as were improvements to highways connecting to tourist attractions, spiritual places, and adventure tourism destinations. There will be more hotels and resorts built, as well as more government and private sector involvement in tourism. The fiscal year 2019-20 was a year of major government accomplishments. Swadesh Darshan projects were approved to get an extra Rs. 18.54 billion in 2019-20 (Islam, 2020). All these collections made up for the losses faced during the travel restrictions in the pandemic. The travel and tourism business in India has enormous development potential.

#### **4.3.4 Issues faced by Indian tourism sector in national parks during Covid-19**

As mentioned above, Covid-19 has wrecked havoc in the tourist sector in across the globe and India is no exception. One of the important but unconventional tourism segment in India is tourists visiting the national parks, biosphere reserves and wildlife sanctuaries to see the elusive flora and fauna specimens. There are 2types of tourists visiting in these protected wildlife areas- a) The usual tourists, and b) Wildlife enthusiasts and wildlife photographers. Tiger tourism and birding are two most popular tourism trends in the wildlife tourism sector. Almost 42% of the budget spent of wildlife conservation is generated through the tourist traffic footfall especially, on the weekends and national and summer holidays (Usui *et al.*, 2021).The visiting trends in these national parks are generally comprises of heavy expenditure and stay of less than 5 days. The tiger tourism in central and south India has become so much popular amongst Indian and foreign tourists that there exist 114 jungle resort chains in India (Waithaka *et al.*, 2021). Almost 70% of the tourists visiting these areas are Indian while 30% of them are foreigners mainly, from Europe. The average expenditure per night during a wildlife trip in India is \$600 per family (Narmadha and Anuradha, 2021). Most of the local people have homestays or humble guest houses that serve low-budget tourists or backpackers. The prime income (~74%) of the town and village communities in these areas comes from wildlife tourism (Behera *et al.*, 2022).

As soon as the Covid-19 hit, all the protected wildlife areas were closed immediately; Tadoba National Park and Kabini Tiger reserve- the two highest revenue generators in this tourism segment were closed last. The protected areas were opened briefly for 3 months and then, had to closed down again due to the arrival of delta wave. All the advance bookings were cancelled by the government but instead of refunding the tour operators were instructed to rebook their safaris and tours at a later date (Narmadha and Anuradha, 2021). Owing to a complete international flight ban in India, all the foreign tourists asked for refunds to the tourist operators and those operators had to pay them from their own pockets deteriorating the financial condition of those operators even further. According to the statistics, 31% of the total accommodations near jungles closed down permanently unable to bear the costs and pay salary of the employees (Waithaka *et al.*, 2021). All the top resort chain (4 stars, 5 stars) had to furlough around 30% of their staff and many of them downsized by 25%. As a direct consequence, many people lost their livelihood mainly, the naturalists and wildlife tours guides (Behera *et al.*, 2022). Many of those naturalists are residents of the local

communities and they have no other significant employable skills other than serving as a wildlife guides. They were hit the worst from this global pandemic. Those guides and safari drivers who are directly under the central or state government employment contract, faced no such brunt. It is estimated that around 20-25% of the total wildlife tour operators in India are opting for a parallel income to feed their families (Behera *et al.*, 2022).

The next part encompasses around the birding and safari tours. These tours in India are usually seasonal and most of these tours are tailored made to cater only a handful of people at a time. It is due to the reason that these tours are mostly available by serious wildlife photographers and fauna enthusiasts. Around 82% of these special tour operators are local sometimes ethnic minorities and have no other source of income (GUTHRIE *et al.*, 2021). Most of these tours are expensive and endemic in nature. Foreign wildlife photographers visit India to take these tours owing to the extremely rich biodiversity of India when it comes to avifauna. The Covid-19 lockdown has pushed these indigenous these tour guides to the brink of extinction of their business. Even after the lockdown was lifted, the unsure and ever changing train schedules and repeated emergency flight cancellations in India resulted in wariness amongst the visitors and most of these people refrained booking any birding or safari trips (Hailu, 2021). Most of these trips entailed stays at offbeat places where the visitors were hosted by the local people in their humble homestays and served them local cuisines. The complete operational shutdown resulted in these local people moving back of the life of poverty and local agricultural suppliers and eateries were detrimentally affected too (GUTHRIE *et al.*, 2021). However, the wildlife toys operators in India still hope that business will pick-up as the public develops herd immunity and the citizens receive double vaccines and booster doses.

#### **4.3.5 Impact of Covid-19 on India's adventure tourism sector**

Adventure tourism in India particularly, trekking sector has boomed in the decade. It has been estimated that there are 589 trekking companies officially registered with trade license (Nepal, 2020). Most of these trekking occurs in the Himalayas and Western Ghats where regional people serve as guides and porters. With a dash of adrenaline and garnish of perfect photographic moments, adventure tourism has experienced a tremendous boost in the country with the millennial generation at its toe to try out new touristic adventures. As Covid-19 spread across the nation, all the trekking companies closed down and this has resulted in



economic devastation for the regional people who served as guides and porters. Also, most of the trekkers spent heavily in the cafes of the mountainous towns from where these treks generally started or ended. As a result, those trendy and funky cafes became a collateral damage of this global pandemic. Statistics reveal that around 80% trek companies are owned by urban people but are run by local trekking guides (Tilak, 2021). Most of the treks usually take place in national parks or biosphere reserves or high altitude mountain passes hence, it is not feasible to arrange for trekking unless the government of India provides official written permission. Trekking tours depend on train schedules, long distance bus timings and camping site availability. As uncertainty still looms around Covid-19 wave resurge, many of the trains remain cancelled indefinitely, bus timings have become inconvenient along with significantly reduced frequencies and these have added to the woes of the trekking tourism companies (Tilak, 2021).

The village and town councils near and in the trekking areas as per the order from the state and central government cancels the camping sites bookings at a moment's notice and this is serving as a deterrent factor for the trekking tourists who are reluctant to take any financial losses or risks (Umukoro *et al.*, 2020). In the remote villages, trekking camps brought in extra penny for the villagers and now suddenly, their livelihood has deteriorated exceedingly. Most of the trekking porters belong from poor families and they have very limited option of exploring other careers in their home town or villages due to lack of infrastructure, development and industry. Many young people from the Himalayas have opened their own trekking companies in the hope of uplifting the economic condition of their localities and families, are now facing constant threat of bankruptcy. Most of these youths availed bank loans from rural or Cooperative Banks to build their companies and are unable to pay their monthly payable monetary instalments and interest back to the banks (ERTAŞ and YAĞCI, 2020). Another major concern is that trekkers huts where most of the tourists stay are being neglected for the past 2 years and even if normalcy is resumed, it would take another 5-6 months to renovate those camps and huts which in turn, would only prolong the economic disaster the trekking tourism sector is currently facing.

India has a record of hosting most number of paragliding world championship in the world in small, sleepy town called Bir Billing. Paragliding has emerged as one of the top contenders in adventure tourism sector of the nation along with scuba diving. Both these adventure sports have become a popular tourist activity in the past decade. Average wage of a scuba

diving tourist instructor in India is 200-300 INR per hour while paragliders charge 300-400 for 30 minutes (Yuspeh, 2019). Scuba diving and paragliding instructors are paid handsomely in this country unlike their trekking counterparts and almost 90% of these instructors earn solely from adventure tourism (Yuspeh, 2019). and all of them have taken a massive financial hit during Covid-19. Many of the instructors work on either freelance basis or have short-term contracts with the tourist operators and adventure tourism companies. Hence, most of these instructors have faced complete loss of livelihood as there is no question of furloughing. As a result, their standard of living have fallen down the economic slope very steeply and most of them are trying to live through their monetary savings in the hope that the future will bring better times (Nandan, 2021). Overall, as of now, Indian adventure tourism sector is lurking amongst the greatest economic recession this industry has experienced since, its inception.

## **5 Discussion and Recommendations**

This study gives an overall idea of the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism sector of India. The instilled fear of the virus within the minds of the international travellers has been one of the biggest reasons for the fall in demands in the tourism sector of India. However, focussing on primary data collection from the domestic travellers would have helped in knowing their travel choices and the ways how their travel decisions can be influenced. Therefore, some recommendations have been made so that the tourism sector of India can bounce back and continue to make profits.

Trying to restore the confidence of the travellers by stimulating the demand with clean and safe labels in the tourism sector. Information applications for the visitors must be used and campaigns on promoting domestic tourism must be held, a comprehensive plan for tourism recovery for rebuilding destinations and try to encourage investment and innovation. Lifting the restrictions on travel and working with the businesses for accessing liquidity supports, applying safe and healthy travel protocols can help in diversifying the tourism market. Domestic tourism would offer the main chance towards driving support and recovery of the sector of tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the travel preferences of domestic travellers and try to make domestic tourism more feasible for them. This will be the first step towards the recovery of the tourism sector. It is also necessary to build more sustainable and resilient tourism. Furthermore, an attempt must be made on providing clear information to the tourists and uncertainty must also be limited to an extent possible. Moreover, response measures must be evolved for maintaining capacity in the tourism sector and the caption supports must be addressed. A focus must be made on strengthening cooperation between and within the country. For the recovery of the tourism sector solutions like flexible policy are needed for enabling the economy of tourism to survive alongside the pandemic in the medium and short term. The government must take lessons from the crisis and bring the necessary changes. The gaps that have been identified in the tourism industry must be fulfilled and the long-term implication of the pandemic must be considered by the Government.

## **5.1 Linking with the objectives**

### **5.1.1 To analyse the impact of covid-19 in India**

This objective of the study was attained by making a detailed discussion on the deep-rooted impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the global tourism sector with major focus on the Indian tourism industry. For attaining this objective a theoretical study has been conducted on the existing literatures in the literature review section where the use of various theories like *Triandis Theory of Interpersonal Consumer Behaviour, Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer behaviour, Integrated Communication Model, and the Freud's Model* was used for analysing the changing behaviour of the travellers. The study has pointed out how the virus has developed fear within the minds of the consumers that led to the change in the behaviour of the consumers which had a grave impact on the tourism sector.

### **5.1.2 Evaluate the different types of issues faced by the tourism sector due to the highest-paid of covid-19**

The objective above has been attained by pointing out the ways in which the travellers faced the fear of making travel plans mainly due to the social distancing measures. For focusing on the issues faced by the tourism sector in India and for the attainment of this objective the strict travel restrictions that were introduced by the Government of India have been discussed. The steep drop in the demands of the travellers had impacted the travel industry and it was the main reason behind the issues faced by this sector. A reference has been made to the *Cohen theory of tourism* to show how mass tourism had been affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic losses and the cancellation of the various concerts took place due to the pandemic. For the attainment of this objective various issues faced due to this pandemic had been pointed out.

### **5.1.3 To study the intent and opinions of prospective international travellers to India.**

The attainment of this objective was done by analysing the intent of the travellers for travelling to India. It was analysed in the study that most of the Travellers visited India for tourism, education, and business purposes. The role of the Government of India has also been pointed out during the Covid-19 pandemic. However the restrictions due to the pandemic impacted the intents of the travellers to a greater extent to travel to India. In fact,

many Travellers face difficulties when they chose to travel to India during the pandemic. This impacted the decisions of the travellers.

#### **5.1.4 To recommend a proper strategy for the Indian government to reopen the tourism sector in India after noticing less spread of covid-19.**

For attaining this objective some recommendations were made that can help the Indian government to reopen the tourism sectors in India after noticing a drop in the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Various frameworks and strategies were suggested like maintaining social distancing norms, following proper sanitization and hygiene measures. It was assessed that the tourism industry was responsible for the generation of high impact social and environmental issues, therefore, suggestions were made on the inclusion of Corporate Social responsibilities (CSR) strategies for attracting tourists from all over the world so that the overall performance of the industry can be maximized. Furthermore, with the application of the EKB model, it was shown that the travel arrangements like the restrictions on international flights, the promotion of domestic travelling can help the industry to overcome the challenges of the tourism sector.

Thus, it can be concluded that all the objectives of the study have been attained by making the needed study on the various theoretical frameworks.

## **6 Conclusion**

The Covid-19 virus developed into a pandemic that affected every stratum of life thereby bringing everyone's life to a pause. The Covid-19 virus was detected as one of the most contagious viruses that could only be contained if people remained home-bound. Physical distancing and lockdown were the only solutions identified by the government of all countries for managing this vulnerable situation. However, these factors had a profound impact on all industrial sectors especially the tourism sector as it rests on the travel decisions of the passengers. An acute drop in the demand to travel resulted in grave losses in the tourism sector worldwide. Reports gathered from various studies in have pointed out the extent to which the pandemic affected the tourism sector on a global scale. People who were associated with the tourism sector faced millions of job losses due to the pandemic. The tourism sector has been estimated to be one of the potential growth sectors that greatly contribute to the global GDP. Concerning the Indian tourism sector, it was seen that the Indian tourism sector is a growing industry, and it is estimated to grow over the coming years where millions of people will be employed that will contribute to the GDP of the country. However, the pandemic changed the roadmap of the tourism sector and ended up affecting millions of jobs of the people, thus, affecting the tourism sector to a greater extent.

From the conducted study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Indian tourism, it was seen that the government of India had totally sealed the barriers of the country to the international travellers as well as the domestic travellers. In order to contain the spread of the virus people wear only allowed travelling when necessary. Tourist attractions like national parks, museum Hotels, restaurants were instructed to be shut down to avoid any kind of gathering. This was the only solution deemed by the government of India for preventing the virus from spreading. The flight capacity and the passenger capacity in the flights were also reduced. All these factors but the tourism industry to a standstill and companies started to witness an immense number of losses that were beyond recovery. Several studies have also suggested that the virus had cropped up fear within the international tourists as a reason most of the travellers changed their travel plans. As a result, the renowned travel agencies of India suffered huge losses. In this study on the collection of primary qualitative and quantitative data with the help of surveys and questionnaires, it has been seen that international travellers are quite satisfied with governmental policies introduced by the Government of India for maintaining the safety and hygiene of the

travellers. Most of the travellers also agree to the point that for maintaining safety it is necessary for them to follow strict sanitisation and for maintaining hygiene and continue to wear masks as a precautionary measure. The results of the primary data from the travellers made it very clear that the travellers have become quite alert about the entire situation. The majority of the travellers also expressed their desire not wanting to travel to India during the Covid-19 pandemic which portrays the fear that is instilled within the travellers.

In regard to the thematic data, a further study has been conducted on the topic with the help of various existing literature that has been collected from journals, published newspaper articles, and government websites. The collected information has shown the grave impact of the pandemic on the Global tourism sector and the tourism sector of India. The collected data from various newspaper articles and government websites have pointed out towards the fact that millions of people had to suffer due to the impact of the virus. Thus, it can be concluded from the study that the Covid-19 pandemic had such an impact on the travel industry that it is difficult for the travel industry to recover from it immediately. This pandemic has instilled fear within the minds of the people.

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## **8 Appendix**

### **Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire**

#### **1. State your age group**

- 15-30 years old
- 30-45 years old
- 45-60 years old
- 60+

#### **2. Have you researched about how Indian tourism has been affected by the ongoing pandemic?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

#### **3. Out of the following options, which one do you think has been the pandemic's most concerning impact upon Indian tourism?**

- Decreasing foreign exchange
- Decreasing rate of tourists
- Unemployment
- Decreasing government revenue

#### **4. Do you think that the Covid-19 situation has caused an ever-lasting fear in the minds of travellers across the globe?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

#### **5. Are you willing to travel to a foreign country amidst the Covid-19 situation?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

#### **6. Out of the following, what is your main reason for seeking to travel to India during the current pandemic?**

- Business
- Education
- Tourism

#### **7. Do you think that the Indian government is taking the necessary steps towards ensuring tourist safety in the country?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**8. Are you satisfied with the current travel policies of the Indian government?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

**9. Do you agree that they hygiene and sanitation of hotel rooms and tourist spots are a must for ensuring safety?**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**10. What do you think can work most effectively to guarantee safety during travel in India?**

- Double vaccination and masks
- Regular sanitization
- Hygiene system
- Face shield