



## **Impacts of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry: A Comparative Review of Select Countries**

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### **Abstract**

This research compares the tourism status of select countries like USA, UK, Spain, Italy, India, China, and Saudi Arabia which are battling because of the Covid-19 pandemic like other countries of the world. Information from different sources such as newspapers, web articles, news channels, and social media was considered for the study, while data provided by respective governments and few reliable news websites were also taken into consideration to crosscheck the information availed in this research. Top COVID-19 pandemic affected countries were taken and discussed as well as their respective initiatives and action plans for minimizing the impact on the Tourism industry were also studied. The vaccination drive started in December 2020-January 2021 and countries try to be pulled back the operation but it is a time-consuming process and availability to everyone is a challenge. Frontline worriers, medical practitioners, and senior citizens are on the priorities in the process of immunization. It is expected that tourism of all countries will recover in a few years and be greater than before as people want to get out from their quarantine places.

**Disciplinary:** Tourism & Hospitality Management, Public Health.

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## **1 Introduction**

Tourism is an \$8 trillion industry, which played a crucial part in the economy of every nation and contributes 10.8% to the global economy [1]. But what if this industry collapses completely? Sounds a bit different, but the answer is yes, the entire industry collapsed in 2020 due to the spread of a virus. COVID-19 is the virus of the Coronavirus family. This virus becomes the first reason for

death in 2020. As per reports generated by WHO, over 3.25 million confirmed cases with 234 hundred death reported by the end of April 2020. After World War II, this is the first time that many casualties were reported all over the world. It affects the health industry but shut the tourism industry as most of the part of the world is under lockdown. Global revenue forecast by the travel and tourism industry is shifted to \$568.6 billion from \$711.94 billion with a declined rate of 20% already in the first quarter of the year. Nearly around \$3.4 billion loss in the US estimated as the country ban tourist in March 2020 alone, \$500 billion loss and around 6.5 million jobs will be diluted in the hotel industry [2].

The heart-warming forecast is by 2023, the entire industry going to be re-established. [3]

According to WTTC, it will be going to shrink the tourism industry & over 100 million jobs going to dilute due to pandemic all across the globe where the global business travel sector is feeling to hurt more than \$820 billion revenue and \$2.7 trillion loss in GDP. [1, 24]

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is the non-profit organization which finds US, UK, Spain, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, Italy, Canada and Switzerland, these countries as a top tourist attraction in the world. [3]

WHO monitors the pandemic and updates the list of Corona-affected people nationally and from that list, five countries are considered in this study to be discussed i.e. USA, Spain, Italy, UK, China & Saudi Arabia.

India is the second-largest populated country in the world and the Prime Minister of the nation score rank one as the global leader of the universe, according to an American research organization he has scored 68 point and has beaten other global leaders, due to this we consider India's initiatives to fight against Corona-virus battle [32, 33].

According to WHO, lockdown is a major precautionary measure taken by various countries to control the spread of this deadly virus. This paper discusses the expected loss and initiatives taken by six countries to fight against corona.

## **2 Background**

In 2020 as expected the situation is abnormal since its beginning. Started from the USA & Iran nuclear war expectations to rich uplift in the crude oil among the respective countries, the Australian Bush fire in February but what shattered everything is the spread of novel CORONA virus COVID-19. [26, 27, 45]

This pandemic has a very rich history, Athens in 430 B.C., Antonine Plague in 165 A.D. to 180 A.D., Cyprian Plague in 250 A.D., Justinian Plague in 541 A.D., Leprosy in 11th century, The Black Death in 1350, The Columbian Exchange in 1492, The Great Plague of London in 1665, First Cholera Pandemic in 1817, The Third Plague pandemic in 1855, Fiji Measles Pandemic in 1875, Russian Flu in 1889, Spanish Flu in 1918, Asian flu in 1957, HIV/AIDS in 1981, SARS in 2003, Swine Flu in 2012, Ebola in 2014, Dengue Fever in 2016 & now COVID-19 in 2019. [4, 6]

This virus has a rich history, according to Dr. H.S. Bhargava, Coronavirus was investigated in humans in 1965. SARS in 2003 and H1N1 or 'swine flu' in 2009 [5] but 2020, this becomes the

synonym of fear, death, suffering, pain, and disaster. Doctors and health experts are unable to address the problem as the virus spread furiously in society. Scientists work day and night all over the world to find the treatment but till May 2020 there is no vaccine available, 20 research institutes work collectively overnight to develop the vaccine. More than 7000 technological suggestions are accepted by the Indian government on COVID-19. [6]

Countries like the USA, ITALY, SPAIN, GERMANY, UK & CHINA became the epicenter of the virus. Millions of people all across the globe are affected by COVID-19 with more than two hundred twenty-five thousand death reported and still counting. The most dangerous aspect is thousands of medical health experts risk their lives to save their citizens. Many of the doctors and nurses affected while treating their patients and a few of them died too. [7]

USA and ITALY have the most promising medical and health facilities in terms of equipment, expertise, and quality service but unfortunately, these two countries have maximum affected patients. [8]

When the supreme authority of the respective countries was not able to find a way to address this problem, they decided to lock down their nations. A lockdown, the term most of the countrymen have not even heard before, the logic is pretty clear and loud, stay inside and protect your life. According to WHO Social distancing is the only way out to avoid the infection but the problem arises for the most dynamic industry, an industry that allows the people to explore and experience the variety of different cultures collapse. [6]

An \$8 trillion industry does not find a way out from this pandemic. Countries shut their aviation, sea transport, and hospitality sector with zero tolerance. Cruise, airline, and trains everything single mode of transport is disrupted which hurt the economy badly. [25]

In the Economic Times article, industry experts found it as a global epidemic not just for one nation. People afraid of moving out from their houses and as the entire economy affects tourism get a big blow. [9]

The projected loss is over \$250 billion and before lockdown, IATI projected a minimum \$226 billion loss. Similarly, for the cruise business, the companies reported \$750 million in revenue in 2020 till date. Shares of the premium brands declined 60% to 70% and are expected to restart by July or August. [10]

## **2.1 USA**

The US Travel Association indicates 23% of Leisure & Hospitality jobs lost since February 2020 go double the industry with the next-worst job loss rate. The CEO of the US Travel Association found it “6-7 times greater than 9/11 attacks”. The industry which contributes a revenue of over \$2.6 trillion in economic and provides 15.8 million jobs in the US forecast it as the worst time ever. But the authorities feel that people have short memories and their desire will boast tourism again [11]. The US has not imposed a complete lockdown on the entire nation and the situation is getting worst. Being an economy-driven nation, the US keeps its businesses open and the virus spread drastically.

It is found that Americans have fewer beliefs than Asians [37]. The US is the only country where lockdown imposed state-wise with different dates i.e. in California 19 March; Clark Country, NV 20 March; Connecticut 23 March; Illinois 21 March; Massachusetts 24 March; Michigan 24 March; New York 20 March; Oregon 24 March; Wisconsin 24 March, etc. [28]

Initiative: Congress provides a \$2 trillion aid to support unemployed and business firms in this economic disaster. Vaccine and end of COVID-19 is the priority of the superpower. [12, 28] The vaccination program is started on December 15, and by the end of January 32.8 million people vaccinated whereas two different vaccines are using in this vaccination program named Moderna and Pfizer/ BioNTech. [47, 48]

## **2.2 Spain**

The situation in Spain is a lot more disheartening. The authorities find COVID-19 as a disaster like a tsunami. 11% of their GDP depends on tourism, which determines how deep this virus impacted their economy. Since the second world war the first time, the entire world is suffering in comparison with terrorism, natural calamity, or economic downturns. Since the lockdown forces, more than 10000 bars plug off. Tourism is also affected, as the first World Mobile Congress was canceled country forecast the loss of €500 million i.e. \$539 million approximately. People suffer from the virus as well as money as complete lockdown is imposed on the nation from 3 March 2020 and the lack of confidence to travel and moving out together. [13, 29]

Initiative: Authorities want both the European Union and Spain to stand together for saving the jobs of their citizens as well as aid the businesses to afloat. Otherwise, the country would not survive [13]. While lockdown, police punish the people who flouted the lockdown, officers arrested 926 people and the fine varies from \$110 to \$658,000, according to the violation of the restrictions. All the schools, football grounds, and public places are closed during the lockdown. [29]

The vaccination drive started on 4 January and by the end of January 1.96 million people get vaccinated whereas the Moderna vaccine is used. [47, 48]

## **2.3 Italy**

According to global statistics, a huge downfall in the tourists' count of 28.5 million due to corona, trashes the entire tourism sector of the nation. It is found that the audience visit also depends on the previous experience [39] that is how only Veneto forecast a decrease of 4.61 million visitors where in Lombardy the count is of 3.87 million. Adding more to that, the expected loss to the nation is 7.7 billion Euros i.e. \$8.44 billion, if the lock-down lasts till June 2020. [14] According to Prof Robert Perotti, Bocconi University Milan, the nation will be in recession. He feels that tourism is collapsed for a year or two and the industry not heeled easily, also feels the economy depends on the US and Germany as they are larger. [15]

PM finds it as an economic as well as a social emergency for the nation. The nation is under complete lockdown from March 10. The expected loss in tourism is nearly \$22.01 billion. [16, 30, 34]

**Initiatives:** The official feels that European Union needs to support the country during this pandemic. The PM said “the biggest test after Second World War”. The country wants to collaborate with other European countries and make Corona bonds as financial aid. All schools, universities, and public attraction points are shut during the lockdown. [16, 30]

The vaccination drive started on December 27 and by the end of January, 1.96 million people get vaccinated. 2.09 million people get vaccinated whereas two different companies are providing vaccines named Moderna and Pfizer/ BioNTech. [47, 48]

## **2.4 UK**

The spread of coronavirus becomes the prominent distributor to the world but this fact disturbs the sleep of authorities in the UK. British airways suspend 36k staff members as of April 2, 2020. According to VisitBritain, 415k visits reported from China in the past 12 months, where Chinese travelers spent thrice more than the average visitor, so the UK hurt in both ways invitation hurt their health where restriction hurt their wealth. As all large-scale events have been postponed and the aviation sector is shut down, the tourism industry is expected to have a bigger collapse. The country imposed a lockdown from March 23, 2020. [2, 27]

Moris Johnson, UK PM, has recovered after testing positive from the virus, which shows that nobody is safe in this pandemic. The expected loss in tourism is nearly \$18.69 billion. [17, 35]

**Initiative:** British government has banned the gathering, no more than two people are allowed to move together and only essential transport is allowed on the roads to stop the spread. Major events like SOLT (Society of London Theatre) & UK Theatre venues, pubs, restaurants, and other public attraction points have also abundant their services to increase social distancing. But the government provides a Virtually London Guide for visitors, where they can enjoy online workshops, live performances, museum tours, and lots of amazing things. Challenges are found due to the external environment [38] and this corona pandemic is supporting the findings.

The vaccination drive started on December 13 and by the end of January, 10.14 million people get vaccinated whereas three different companies are providing vaccines named Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Pfizer/ BioNTech. [47, 48].

## **2.5 China**

Estimated 85% of sales declined in the aviation sector in March 2020, hurting the revenue by \$2.9 billion. According to Skift, a \$420 billion loss is expected in China, which is half of the global loss. In the survey of GBTA (Global Business Travel Association) business travel reported the maximum suspension to China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other Asia-Pacific countries. Industry group forecasts the \$560 billion loss in February. CEO of GBTA also believes that COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the tourism industry.

Since the pandemic has started, China has 95% of downfall in business travels. Where almost \$404.1 billion revenue loss from corporate travelers followed by \$190.5 billion loss just from Europe is expected, which will break the spine of the Chinese economy. As all this is suspended, tourism gets the bigger hit. [20]

As the virus was first seen in the nation, China became the first nation to impose lockdown on 23 January 2020 [31].

Initiative: WHO claims that over 70k people recovered out of 80k people, which be the greatest motivation for the rest of the world but China claims the new patients again. [6]

The vaccination drive started on December 15 and by the end of January, 24 million people get vaccinated where two vaccines named Coronavac/ Picovacc/ Sinovac and BBIBP-CORP. [47, 48]

## **2.6 Saudi Arabia**

The country is solely dependent upon the export of crude oil and the business is fell-down to zero due to corona-virus and lockdown. This happened worst in past 21 years the nation is witnessing and a \$9 billion loss is already depicted in the first quarter of the year. Saudi Arabia and Other oil-producing nations reducing the production of oil by 10 million barrels, which is 10 percent of the global supply. [40]

Up to 2,00,000 people may affect despite of lockdown and abundant aviation services. [41] [44] The country announced the lockdown on March 24 and movement is prohibited in the 13 states and not accepting any tourists from the world. [43] The virus did not decimate between the prince and migrants as the senior Saudi prince is quarantine and members of the royal family also sickened. A high alert is sent to the hospital for them. The entire royal family is expected to be quarantined. More than 150 royals are contacted with the virus which turned out to be a danger for the kingdom. [44]

Initiates: The government provides 9 billion riyals i.e. \$2.4 billion to pay the wages of countrymen. [40]. 7 billion riyals \$1.86 to the health ministry. [41] The country found it proactive to handle the pandemic and took massive steps to avoid the spread of the virus. On March 8 the government halts the transportation but the entry for Umrah Pilgrimage in the holy mosque of Mecca and the Prophet's mosque of Medina suspended by February 27 and the area of Kaaba also closed this not only control the spread but also set a benchmark to prioritize the lives ahead of religion, prayer and economy. [42, 43, 44]

The vaccination drive started on January 6 and by the end of January 0.440 million people get vaccinated whereas the Pfizer vaccine is used. [47, 48]

## **2.7 India**

The government of India took this matter very seriously as the nation is larger in population, the chance of spreading the virus is a lot higher. The PM imposed "JANTA CURFEW" on 22 March 2020. It was a single-day lockdown. Gradually the cases reached 519 due to which the complete lockdown was imposed by the government on March 24, 2020.

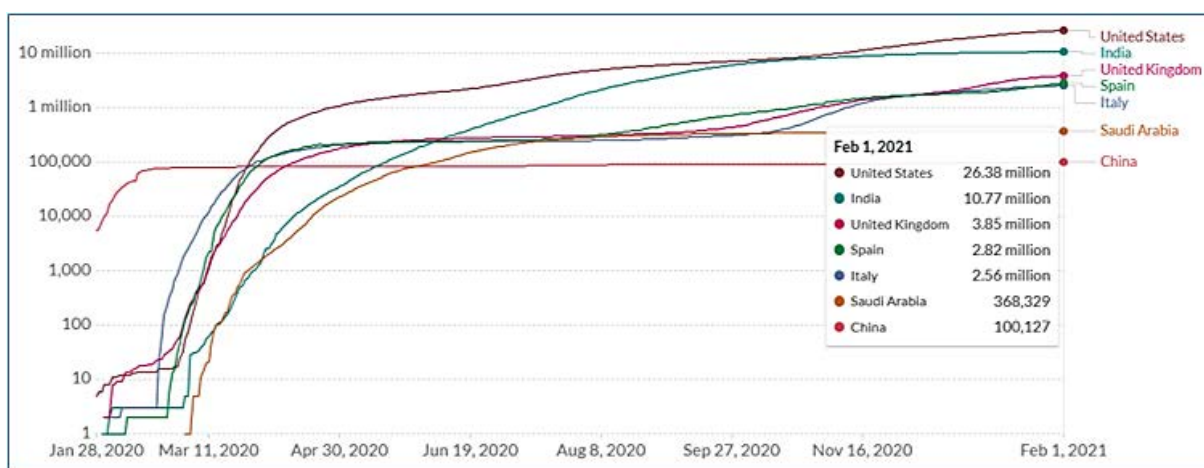
Initially, it was of 21 days but as India did not find any decline in the cases the lockdown extended to 3 May. The nation even celebrated its festivals without moving out. From Navratri to Ramadan, Temples to mosques, prayers are going on without violating the lockdown. [7, 31]

All the universities, colleges, malls, restaurants, and attraction points are now shut down with zero tolerance but with relaxation in the essential services. [21]

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh are having the maximum number of cases by the end of April. The biggest positive is that the environment of the nation AQI improved to a satisfactory level of 130 cities [22], and rivers like Ganga and Yamuna got cleaned as the industries are shut. [23] The expected loss in tourism is nearly \$65.78 billion. [36]

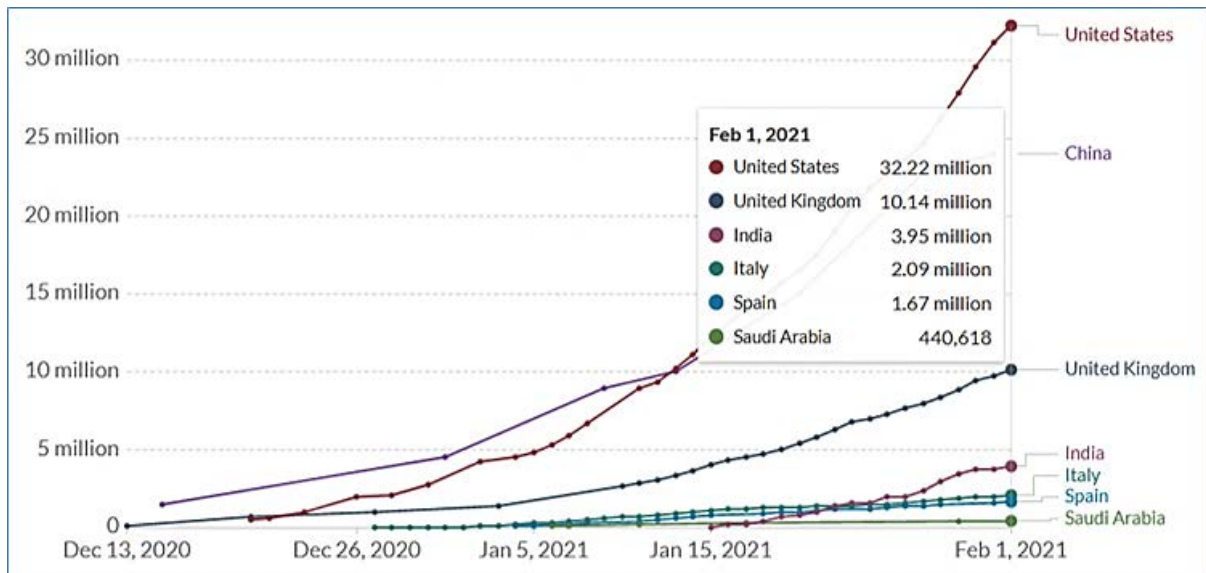
Initiative: Indian government announced to allocate a fund of \$2 billion for the health and safety of the citizens. India also sends medicines “paracetamol & hydrochloroquine” to the US, Spain & Germany, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Maldives & Bangladesh, Seychelles & Mauritius, Brazil & Dominican Republic, and Bahrain as medical aid to the world. Universities and schools have shifted to the online mode of education and provide online classes to their students. The grocery shop workers and corona warriors strictly maintain social distancing and consider taking the use of a mask to eliminate the risk of spreading the virus [23].

The vaccination drive started on 16 January 2021, and the frontline workers and the senior citizens are the first who get benefitted from this vaccination drive. India trained 2360 participants, 61000 program managers, 2 lakh vaccinators, and 3.7 lakh vaccination team members at state, district, and block-level for this vaccination program, which reflects that it would be the largest vaccination program in the world [46]. Two vaccines named Covishield and Covaxin are approved for the vaccination [47, 48].



**Figure 1:** Corona positive cases of selected countries on February 1, Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

Figure 1 According to the report, On February 1 the corona outbreak is disastrous over the globe in USA 26.38 million, In India 10.77 million, in UK 3.85 million, in Spain 2.82 million, in Italy 2.56 million, In KSA 0.368 million and China 0.100 million people found corona positive. [47]



**Figure 2:** Total number of Covid Vaccination of selected countries on February 1, Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

As per Figure 2, till 1 February, 32.22 million people get a vaccination in the US, followed by China 24 million, the UK with 10.14 million. In the world's largest immunization program India is racing for the top. In just 15 days, 3.95 million Indians get vaccination whereas 2.09 million citizens of Italy, 1.67 million of Spain & 0.44 people of Saudi Arabia get vaccinated. [47]

According to the Corona vaccine tracker, 251 vaccines are under development while 61 in the clinical trial and 11 vaccines are authorized by WHO. [18] Vaccine manufacturers are providing doses as per their promises and authorities are monitoring sharply to get the optimum amount of vaccine to meet the country's demand. [46]

### 3 Conclusion

Corona-virus or COVID-19 has affected the entire world and over 200 countries suffering from it. The entire globe is working collectively to get rid of this pandemic. A significant downfall seems to have happened in the world economy, but the tourism sector is crippled to the extreme instant. The 24x7 working population is locked up in their houses. The temples, mosques, churches are closed, and people are praying from their homes to get the situation better soon. All the major airlines have almost shut their doors, water transport is also abundant, and roads are open only for the corona warriors and few emergency services. People across the world are apprehensive about moving out as they felt it is not safe to travel until and unless it is very urgent. Leaders of different countries taking this situation in different ways. Few find it short-term loss while others find it as long-term recovery. But everyone agreed to one point that this is the biggest loss the globe ever thought of. All the countries are working collectively, some countries are investing in making PPEs (Personal Protection Equipment) and first-aid medicine, others are making ventilators and medical equipment while few are investing in vaccination. During all this threatening news, some positives are also being monitored such as the ozone layer is healing, improvement in Air Quality Index, rivers are seamlessly clean and pollution-free.



But, according to observation, this Corona virus has negative impacts on society and has immensely trashed the tourism industry. Small countries found it more problematic as the countries facing economic as well as medical disasters. Leaders of those countries are seeking help from European Unions, Australia, the USA, and other developed countries. For the USA, Brazil and India the situation becoming worse as the situation is not under their control at all and the numbers of infected persons and related deaths go higher and higher every day and these countries are not in a position to impose the Lockdown as it has already affected the economy badly and also hit the unemployment at his highest level. China is affected badly, as the global media and world leaders are blaming the nation behind the spread of the virus, American and European companies moving out their businesses from the china to some other countries and the emerging market after China is India, Malaysia, and Indonesia so it can turn out to an opportunity for Indian, and other countries to grab the opportunity. The Indian government helps other countries by supping medicine as a token of friendship. It is also found that the people start spending time with their families and the earth is heeling. The bigger the nation, the more the problems need to address, where the smaller the nation, the limited resources need to be utilized amicably. Pandemic happened once in a century and remedy of every problem is present. People need to stay positive, accept the change and try to stop the spread without getting affected. Perhaps it will be turned out to be an opportunity or not, but the world wants to overcome this pandemic as early as possible. In the end, we can say that this pandemic 2020 has destroyed the tourism sector badly and affected sectors are Airlines, Hotels, and related services which have seen a huge loss of jobs and a big decline in revenue.

The vaccination program has been started and hope to get the situation to mornal and it is envisioned that tourism will be grater than before as people want to get out from their quarantine places.

## 4 Availability of Data and Material

All information is included in this article.

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