

## Recovery of Domestic Tourism during the COVID-19 Pandemic Context of Madhya Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

*The outlook for the tourism sector remains highly uncertain due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Domestic tourism is helping to recover from this blow, at least partially, and governments have taken impressive immediate action to restore it. There is a need to activate this sector more to protect jobs and businesses. Many countries are also now developing measures to build a more resilient tourism economy post COVID-19. These include creating plans to support the sustainable recovery of tourism, promoting the digital transition and moving towards a green tourism system, and rethinking tourism for the future.*

**Keywords:** - Recovery; Risk perception; Risk acceptance; COVID-19; Disaster Experiment

### I INTRODUCTION

This Covid-19 crisis is an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future. Tourism is at a crossroads and actions taken today will shape the tourism of tomorrow. We need to boost domestic tourism and consider the long-term effects of the crisis as well as promoting the structural change needed to build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism economy.

Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel freedom and tourist confidence, the tourism industry has focused on domestic and neighboring markets to ensure gradual recovery. Existing literature acknowledges that recovery marketing is important to accelerate a gradual return to normal (Lehto et al., 2008; Walters & Maier, 2012).

Being one of the few to consider long-term crises and disasters, Birman (2003, p. 8) reminds us that it is "a misconception that restoration and recovery marketing campaigns can only be implemented when a crisis is over". This knowledge gap in crisis marketing is particularly problematic in the event of a persistent global pandemic with multiple waves.

Widespread risk perceptions and physical difficulties crossing borders in the event of a prolonged global pandemic turn domestic markets into more readily available sources of immediate tourism recovery. It is well known that short distances may result in underestimations of true exposure or geographically over-extended perceptions.

With Covid-19, domestic tourism initiatives are especially important to reduce perceived risk and kickstart the global tourism industry through such domestic 'confidence-building strategies' (Matiza, 2020). The existing literature on tourism disaster recovery also indicates that repeat visitors to a destination may be relatively more likely to return than first-time tourists shortly after a disaster (Chacko and Marcel, 2008; Walters & Clulow, 2010; Walters & Maier, 2012). However, empirical evidence on

disaster recovery marketing effectiveness that specifically targets domestic tourists who have previously visited the destination is scant.

This paper analyzes and compares recovery marketing measures to reduce perceived risk or make risk more acceptable, and to re-visit a domestic tourism destination immediately after the most severe phase of a long-lasting public health crisis. Restores intent. In other words, this paper deals with recovery in a position between the 'intermediate' and 'long-term recovery' phases in Faulkner's disaster management framework (Falkner, 2001).

### II OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY

- (a) **Objective** - The COVID-19 crisis is a major blow to the tourism economy, causing severe impact on the livelihood of people, tourist destinations, people engaged in tourism businesses in various ways. Policymakers have presented a challenge for the future with plans to learn from the crisis to build a stronger, more resilient tourism economy. This study examines various ways and means for recovery of tourism in MP which has been adversely affected by Covid-19.
- (b) **Methodology** - A randomized experiment, in which respondents were randomly assigned to one of several scenarios, was adopted because this approach minimizes the effects of bias in responses and improves the validity of conclusions regarding causality.

Quantitative data was collected through an online survey that presented a scenario-based experiment to respondents. The qualitative part consisted of semi-structured interviews.

### III LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this research makes many contributions, it has its own limitations. The study design implemented a hypothetical scenario and focused on booking intentions which may differ from actual booking behavior. Limitations of the study also refer to the non-random recruitment of respondents, including the fact that respondents were voluntary. There may be other limits to the generalization of the findings. Despite the scenario-based approach, respondents were most likely to be influenced by local conditions at the time of data collection, including low levels of community transmission locally, but high and growing numbers of cases elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, this study is of great importance in contributing to the emerging understanding of tourism recovery marketing effectiveness in the context of the global pandemic and thus may form the basis for future research. Future research should be expanded to include multi-country analysis to accommodate greater variation in relevant factors. While the implemented research design is powerful in analyzing stated behavioral responses to contextual factors and recovery measures, future research is warranted to investigate the underlying determinants for the observed behavioral intentions (including trade-offs between health and experiential benefits). is encouraged. Larger sample sizes would provide greater power to estimate the effects of factors and to estimate potential interaction effects.

### IV OPTIONS AND PROMOTIONS

After COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh, we can support rural tourism to get a taste of authentic, traditional rural life by staying in homestays developed by the tourism board with the help of local communities. Tourists can help by promoting rural tourism, setting up homestays and tent camps, promoting local cuisine, developing arts and crafts, preserving forgotten cultural traditions and celebrating festivals, and protecting the environment. Along with providing employment to local communities in sensitive areas, attention should also be paid to training and skill development. This will help in recovering from the troubles caused during the Covid-19 disaster.

(a) **Stay in village homestay in Madhya Pradesh** - The homestays are designed by architects based on the personal taste of the hosts under the guidance of the tourism board and their team. Simple, sustainable and comfortable, the homestay also offers modern amenities including clean bathrooms. Apart from developing rural tourism, a lot of focus is also given to security and public health, infrastructure and waste management. As responsible travelers, by choosing to stay at homestays, we can have a great cultural

experience and immerse ourselves in the rural environment, as well as discover such tourist destinations and have a way of contributing to rural communities. can find a way.

- (b) **Support local communities through social enterprises** - Local communities are at the core of the rural tourism project promoting sustainable travel in Madhya Pradesh and they are also led by the community itself. Social enterprises and NGOs working at the grassroots level are giving initiative and support to the local communities and equipping them with self-defense skills by training them along with discovering and developing their latent skills. Although most of these initiatives support women empowerment, it was really encouraging for the community to know that women are taking the lead as social entrepreneurs. As responsible travelers, we can support local communities by working with them.
- (c) **Buy responsible souvenirs and local arts and crafts** - Souvenirs are an important aspect of every trip, but their importance increases when you buy them directly from an artisan or even learn how to make them. Madhya Pradesh Tourism also focuses on development and promotion of local handicrafts, training of artisans and design and development of souvenirs. As mentioned earlier, Savini's Pashupakshi is one of the initiatives supported by Madhya Pradesh and she trains local artisans in skills like pottery, block printing and other techniques to make responsible souvenirs.
- (d) **Destinations are not a dumping ground** - Dirt should not be spread at tourist places; dustbins are not kept in Japan. As travelers, we leave behind all kinds of junk, not to mention the fact that we tend to think that every beautiful landscape is an open dustbin for us. Please do not litter. The floor is not your dustbin. Having said that one of the responsible tourism initiatives of MPT is focused on solid and liquid waste management, therefore it is incumbent on all of us as responsible travelers not to litter the landscape.
- (e) **Respect local cultures and traditions** - Every travel gives us something or the other to experience and realize that in order to get acquainted with new cultures, traditions, people and stories, we must learn to respect local cultures and be sensitive to the lives of different communities. While trying to learn about new traditions and customs, we must understand that the living traditions of a people are not museum exhibits. We cannot put cameras on their faces or enter their homes without permission. "Your everyday life is someone else's adventure" We need to learn to be culturally sensitive and respect boundaries. These are just some of the ways to be a

responsible traveler and support grassroots initiatives. Small changes can make a big difference. But it is also important to understand that each traveler has a responsibility towards tourism.

## V RESULTS

Domestic tourism is expected to benefit and grow with a boost as people prefer to stay local and visit destinations in their own country. Domestic tourists are often more location and price sensitive and have a lower spending pattern

- (a) There will be a need to restore the confidence of the passengers, which has taken a heavy blow due to the uncertainty. This is bound to lead to a decline in demand and tourism consumption, which will continue long after the initial shock.
- (b) Safety and cleanliness have now become major factors in the selection of tourist destinations and tourism activities. People prefer 'private solutions' while travelling, avoid large gatherings and prefer private modes of transport, which can have an adverse impact on the environment.
- (c) More skills will be needed in the tourism sector, because many new areas will emerge and new technology will be developed.
- (d) Maintaining the quality of the tourism offer and promoting sustainable recovery will require proactive policies and government involvement to encourage and restore investment in the tourism sector.
- (e) Digitization in tourism services is now expected to increase further, including greater use of automation, contactless payments and services, virtual experiences, real-time information provision.
- (f) Tourism policy will need to undergo a change, making it more reactive and in the long term, it will move towards more flexible systems, which will be able to rapidly adapt to changes in policy focus. Crisis management will be a special area of focus. Safety and health policy issues as well.

## VI DISCUSSION

It is too early to say what the long-term impact of the crisis will be on tourism, but a return to business as usual is likely to be gradual. The tourism sector will be very different compared to 2019. The longer the crisis lasts, the more businesses and jobs will be lost, the greater the

impact on traveller's behaviour, and the more difficult it will be to rebuild tourism economy. This brings challenges to the sector, but also opportunities to encourage innovation, drive new business models, explore new areas/markets, open up new destinations and move towards more sustainable and resilient tourism development models. Presents some of the potential long-term effects that could arise, and their policy implications.

## VII CONCLUSION

This paper presents a study on the effectiveness of domestic tourism promotion measures that a tourist destination can undertake to encourage domestic tourists to visit during or shortly after a public health crisis. This study not only advances research on recovery marketing (Mayer et al., 2016), but also has implications for broader ideas about how tourists deal with risk (Sonmez & Graff, 1998; Williams & Balazs, 2013); Wong and Yeh, 2009). Incorporating multiple recovery and risk mitigation strategies into it makes the effectiveness of different strategies directly comparable. It provides governments and tourism managers with strong causal evidence relating to the relative merits of different approaches to increase booking intentions in domestic tourism markets in the face of a pandemic.

However, contrary to theoretically driven expectations, this study did not find unanimous evidence supporting the effectiveness of increasing domestic tourists' "perceived control" over pandemic risks. While flexible cancellation policies along with stricter measures to ban international tourists showed strong effects on domestic tourists' booking intentions, examining the potential trade-off between increasing control over pandemic risks and reducing associated experiential tourism benefits. Of course, this is an important avenue for future research and will be important in applying general risk perception/acceptance models in the context of tourism.

## REFERENCES

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