

# **Impact of Covid 19 on Punjab Tourism**

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## **Abstract**

This research is based on analyzing the conditions of tourism in Punjab after the pandemic wave globally. As covid is a pandemic it has spread all over the world therefore no region in the world has escaped from it as India so is Punjab. Not only Punjab, but the entire world of tourism has also suffered from this pandemic, especially the European countries. Numbers suggest there has been a drastic fall in the number of tourists coming to the countries, more than 70% of tourists could not make it to Europe due to restrictions of covid as international travel was banned for more than 6 months. Punjab is a highly populated province of India in terms of population and is gifted with both artificial and natural tourist places. Such places are numerous in Punjab where tourists can easily visit and spend their vacations. However, new developments were being made for the promotion of tourism, all of a sudden a pandemic hit the region, and everything was stuck in the middle so was tourism. Punjab, the hub of tourism in India used to generate millions of dollars by providing spots to tourists but could only generate less than half of the generated amount in previous years. Conditions are getting better now, it is expected tourism will flourish again in Punjab and it will generate handsome revenue like before.

## **Objectives**

The research is carried out with the help of different sources to find out key points of Punjab tourism. However, the primary objectives of this research are listed below.

1. The first objective of this research is to find the impact of covid on the world tourism and Punjab tourism
2. The second objective of this research is to draw the conclusive pieces of evidence if covid has impacted Punjab tourism or there is no impact of covid at all

3. The third and last objective of this research is to compare the situation before covid and after covid in Punjab. Whether tourism in Punjab has suffered or thrived during the pandemic.

## **Review of the literature**

**Review 1:** According to literature 1 tourism in Punjab was doing well, the government had taken good steps to promote tourism which paved the way to bring international tourists to India. The pandemic may have hit tourism but it could not last long. Therefore it's just a phase that will pass on and everything will become normal. (Pillai, S. K. B., Kulshreshtha, S. K., & Korstanje, M. E. 2021)

It is not like that, because the suffering will last long. Traveling is not the same as traveling was before the pandemic. Now people have to take many tests or have to follow sops to be able to travel anywhere. Thus it may be true to some extent that everything will become normal but it's not true.

**Review 2:** According to literature 2 tourism in India particularly in Punjab is not doing well. If there is a pandemic or not it doesn't matter because the boost to the economy remains the same. Revenue generated from tourism in India is little or nothing because India has never promoted its tourism actively or has not spent the amount and effort to make it the highest visited country in the world. (Kumar, V. 2020)

It may be true to some extent that India and Punjab have remained an archived place like most of India but as of today there is quite an improvement and things are getting even better. International tourists have come to India in huge numbers and will increase even more because the efforts are being done so any foreign people can come to visit and stay here.

**Review 3:** According to literature 3 pandemics have a long-lasting impact on the economies. Once hit by any pandemic it will take years to come back to its original position. However, India is also a country having a low economy as compared to neighboring countries or other parts of the world. Tourism is already low in such states and when pandemics or other disasters hit, the industry just collapses. (Kaur, R., & Mittal, M. 2021)

To the most extent, it is right that the economy is really low and has fallen even more. Tourism in India and Punjab has drastically fallen. It had just started to improve.

**Review 4:** As per literature 4 it is a global problem no one can do much about that, small countries (in terms of economy) completely rely on big countries to develop the vaccine or a cure to this virus then things will come back to normal. (Chaudhary, M., Sodani, P. R., & Das, S. 2020)

The notion concerned big countries that they always come up with the solution or medicine is valid. At the time of such crises, a country advanced in science and technology has come forward to develop vaccines and quite successful vaccines have been developed in history by such powerful countries.

**Review 5:** Tourism, a leading industry has been hit by the covid. As far as Punjab is concerned tourism is in its early stages although Development has been made, and inaugurations have been done to promote tourism. The reason India and Punjab promoted tourism so late is that country has remained in the developing phase since independence while the tourist spots have been there since its independence. India has started to recognize its tourist spots therefore promotion of tourism is a must thing to do and facing pandemics while emerging is a sad thing to happen. (Kumar, A. 2020)

Yes, it is a difficult time for developing countries like India to survive during a pandemic but every country is helpless. They have to follow the guidelines otherwise even worse conditions are waiting to be faced.

**Review 6:** Pandemic has hit the world borders and no country has been left out. The entire world was locked down, during such situation tourism would drop to zero. Therefore there is no wonder if the tourism industry falls. The same happened with Punjab tourism and no people were allowed to tourist spots present in Punjab which harmed society. (Sidhu, G. S., Rai, J. S., Khaira, K. S., & Kaur, S. 2020)

It is right, the economy is still suffering from the aftermath of the pandemic, a bit recovered but there is a long way to go.

**Review 7:** The worst effect of the pandemic is on the tourism industry. No industry collapsed like the tourism industry. All the stakeholders and people linked with tourism were on the roads during the pandemic, Punjab where most of the people are poor and middle class could not stand against these restrictions and hundreds of people went jobless and homeless. (Sharma, P., Kaur, M., & Narwal, G. 2020)

One of the drastic effects of the pandemic is the poor and middle-class people lost their jobs even though they lost their homes.

**Review 8:** According to literature 8 international and domestic tourism both have their importance. International tourism can't survive alone without domestic tourism being promoted. Therefore loss in domestic tourism would eventually be the loss of overall tourism. Therefore the pandemic affecting Punjab tourism is not only for Punjab but it has affected Indian tourism. (Chandel, R. S., Kanga, S., & Singh, S. K. 2021)

This is the right approach because domestic things or products hold the same value as international products. Most of the time domestic things even matter more. The same for tourism, domestic tourism getting affected is not a good sign for the economy.

**Review 9:** According to literature 9 COVID-19 has impacted the entire world and especially tourism. Countries have faced serious results and crises. Survival had become tough. The people related to tourism got affected heavily, and the workers associated with Punjab tourism were also got affected. Most of them lost their jobs. (Mubarak, N., & Zin, C. S. 2020)

This literature refers to drastic changes brought by COVID, especially in the tourism industry. India is a developing country most people are middle class and lies on the poverty line. Therefore COVID has heavily affected such a class of people linked with Punjab tourism.

**Review 10:** This literature refers to the infrastructure that has been built in Punjab because of tourism. International and local citizens come to visit Punjab for their facilities, good infrastructure and arrangements, and a good revenue spent on infrastructure. Therefore the industry has not returned the investment yet and COVID hit the country. (Singh, M., & Kumar, S. 2021)

In short, a lot of spending has been done in the tourism industry, especially in Punjab but it has not returned that spending. It will generate good revenue if no restrictions are imposed.

## Introduction to the topic

- 1. About Covid 19:** Covid 19 is an infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2-virus. Originated from animals and spread to humans within no time. Coronavirus is the latest pandemic that has hit the world so badly, expanding its roots all globally. Coronavirus is the reason for locking down the world, because of this virus the entire world faced the lockdown. Everyone got confined to their homes, and all the industries and outdoor activities were called off because this virus spreads from person to person. The virus attacks the lungs and immune system, affected people to feel the mild or high temperature, faces difficulties in breathing, and sometimes loses consciousness. A corona-infected person is the carrier of the virus wherever it goes, can spread the virus and this is the reason it spread all over the world from one part of the world. However, to counter coronavirus vaccines are being developed and most the scientists have got success but unless the vaccine is developed everything was closed or restricted partially. Unlike other viruses congo, dengue, or Zika virus coronavirus has a less mortality ratio but it spreads by touching and contacting, therefore, it can be fatal for kids and old age people because such age groups have a relatively weaker immune system. Not only kids and old people but it can take the lives of young people as well, so this virus could not be taken for granted at any cost. Hence measures were taken to stop the propagation of this virus until its vaccine is fully prepared and scientists have become successful so far because many vaccines have been developed and are quite effective as well. (Lokhandwala, S., & Gautam, P. 2020)

- 2. Impact of Covid on tourism:** While every industry got hit by covid 19 massively, the tourism industry got struck the worst. Most countries are heavily dependent on tourism because tourism generates loads of money for the economy but when coronavirus emerged the first thing to get banned was tourism. Borders were closed, international flights were canceled, and no one was allowed to travel from one place to another place even though domestic travel was banned. During such situations, the tourism

industry got heavily impacted, and countries relying on tourism faced a drastic fall in the economy. For more than a year international borders were closed making things more difficult for tourism tourists. Although no travel restrictions are eased still vaccination, masks and preventive measures are mandatory for travel. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2020 from Jan-dec, there was a fall of 69% in the tourism industry in Europe. A fall of 68% in America and a fall of 86% in Asia and the pacific. In Switzerland, almost 700k people visited during January 2019 while during January 2020 only 100k people visited the country. Such drastic is the impact of covid on the tourism industry. (Kour, P., Jasrotia, A., & Gupta, S. 2020)

**3. About Punjab Tourism:** Punjab is one of the most populous provinces of India, more than 30 million people live there and it has 23 districts, 7 big cities are present here, the majority of the people living here are Sikh and Punjabi. Punjab consists of 22 cities having a population of 100k or more, having so much diversity in Punjab it has got everything. There are mountainous areas, ice-covered areas, water bodies, and plain areas so the scope of tourism in Punjab is great. Numerous historical sites are present in Punjab in different cities including Ludhiana, Amritsar, and Patiala. Many historical places are present in Punjab such as Golden Temple Amritsar, Jalianwala Bagh Amritsar, Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, Wagah border, and Maharaja Ranjit Singh War Museum. There are numerous places to visit that people from all over India and all over the world come to visit in Punjab. According to the Punjab tourism official website, on an average 30 to 40 million tourists visit Punjab annually including 500k to 600k foreign citizens. (Ghosh, A., Nundy, S., & Mallick, T. K. 2020)

**4. Tourism in Punjab before and after covid:** For the two years covid had taken the world in a storm that stops everything. All the industries, markets, shops, offices, even schools, and colleges were closed due to this pandemic. How come the tourism industry could progress rather it has fallen in every part of the world. In the past, sometimes things are getting better with the emergence of vaccines and preventive measures like isolation have helped to reopen places. Tourists have also gotten the green signal to travel around the world including India, especially Punjab. Let's analyze the situation of Punjab tourism before and after covid. Before the pandemic on average 30 to 40 million people used to visit Punjab annually including 500k 600k foreigners, during the pandemic only 10 million people visited Punjab including just 300k foreigners. The tourists' percentage dropped by more than 60 percent during the pandemic.

Before Covid Punjab used to generate \$5 bn annually, during the pandemic it generated only \$2bn revenue generated by tourism dropped by more than 60 percent facing the lockdown and other restrictions. (Narmadha, V., & Anuradha, A. 2021) (Nhamo, G., Dube, K., & Chikodzi, D. 2020)

## **Research Methodology**

This chapter follows the same research and research methodologies that are followed by most the researchers in the world. Both the research method and research methodology are acknowledged and discussed in this chapter. The research starts with a proper introduction to the research, its basics, and core ideas, as the topic is divided into sub-topics both quality research and quantitative research are done to collect the information. The information is collected from secondary sources including journals, publications, and the internet and most of the information is accurate and comes from authentic sources. Following the rules of research methodology facts and figures are referred to authentic or primary sources even if they are collected from secondary sources and still are interlinked with primary sources.

The research methodology is not a survey or a questionnaire form, rather it is obtained from different sources of different sectors. For example, getting the information from the Kartar Pur visitors who visited Pakistan also stayed in Punjab India. The embassy played a crucial role in providing information to visitors. Both the Indian and Pakistani embassies were approached to provide authentic information and details of the people who have been issued the visa or applied for the visa. The data was collected by the Punjab government and then forwarded to the Punjab tourism department and concerned departments. The information inserted in this research has come from different secondary sources so the data is authentic or not to prove this it is analyzed carefully and the entire process of research comes from both qualitative and quantitative research.

The research in which information and data are collected other than Kartarpur comes from local departments. The departments that are directly involved in delivering the data of tourists coming from various parts of the country are the railway department, restaurants and resorts department, shopping malls, banks and ATMs, toll plazas, etc. This data refers to national tourists that visit Punjab from other

states of India and they specially visit Lodhi Fort, religious places like Golden Temple, historical places like Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, and Maharaja Ranji Singh war museum, and industrial places like textile mills. The research done to find the condition of tourism is conducted with a set of methods from surveys to questions, person to person information, extraction of databases everything has helped to collect the data. At first, the railway department sent the data to the Punjab government then it was sent to the tourism department. Restaurant and resort owners were approached by the government to deliver the records of tourists that stayed there. This has helped a lot in finding the results before the pandemic and after the pandemic as per survey reports presented by the Punjab tourism department tourism has fallen by more than 60% during the pandemic due to various reasons.

## **Findings**

- Punjab is rich in tourist sites.
- Punjab attracts most of the domestic and international tourists in India.
- The diversity of Punjab is the key to high tourists outcome.
- Pandemic and viruses can affect the economy of any country.
- Domestic tourism is equally important as international tourism.
- Historical places attract tourists.
- Religious places attract even more tourists.
- Archaeological sites also attract tourists.
- Domestic Tourism should also be promoted to boost the economy.
- Punjab is one of the largest populous provinces of the country and has the most tourist sites which attract the most tourists as compared to the rest of the country.



## Conclusion

- As per the research, the first conclusion we got is that tourism is linked with various factors. The factors can be the economy of a country for example any developed country with a good economy must have a well-performing tourism industry, another factor that is directly linked with economy and tourism is security and peace. If a country is peaceful then it is an automatic choice for tourists to visit. Therefore besides other states, Punjab has also high revenue-generating tourist sites because the government has worked on administration and tourist spots.
- When any country has better tourist sites or has so much to offer to tourists, then loads of tourists will visit the country which will eventually boost the economy.
- A good administration and management of tourists will make them feel good and it will compel them to come back again. With this, the name of the country will make a mark in tourism.
- When the economy is good everything is good. The economy depends on various indicators like high exports, fewer imports, production capacity, per capita income, and peace. Security and peace is the most important indicator of the economy. If the country is peaceful it will bring foreign investments, business, tourism, etc.
- Domestic tourism is also crucial, it may not bring the dollars but it will help eventually to highlight the worth visiting places of a country. Golden Temple works like a jackpot for the Punjab government; they advertise it to bring more and more tourists.
- Historical places work like a magnet to attract tourists. Therefore governments like the Punjab government need to invest more to restore such archived places.
- Apart from historical sites, Punjab is home to many great places. Religious sites are also tourist pullers that too present in Punjab.
- There are many archaeological sites in Punjab which become the center of attraction for tourists.
- Domestic tourism also plays an important role in bringing the international tourism
- Punjab covers more than half of the revenue generated in India. The reason behind this is the diversity of Punjab, it has got everything: hills, plains, archaeological sites, religious sites, mines, etc.

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