

## CONTEMPLATING POST-PANDEMIC (COVID-19) EFFECTS ON HR PRACTICES IN RELIGIOUS TOURISM

### RITU MISHRA

Research Scholar- Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences. JSBS& C, Prayagraj.  
Email Id: mishraritu590@gmail.com

### Dr. ENID MASIH

Associate Professor & (HOD) in Management Department- Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences. JSBS& C, Prayagraj. Email Id: enid.masih@shiats.edu.in

### Dr. PRITI RAI

Ph.D, Assistant Professor- GL Bajaj Institute of Management; Greater Noida.  
Email Id: raipritiaxis1992gmail.com.

### Dr. SHANTI SWAROOP CHAUHAN

Ph.D, Assistant Professor- Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences. JSBS& C, Prayagraj. Email Id: shanti.chauhan@shiats.edu.in

### Abstract

The fervor for pastoral visits has been marked as a symbol of philanthropy. India is one of the prehistoric and comprehensive inclusions of different cultures, customs, values, and architecture that bind together a large population segment. Nevertheless, the past few years have been believed to be the worst quivering phase of the Indian era rise from 2020, leaving behind its imperishable marks eternally on us. Tourism industries are always viewed as the stand-by pillar to abatement economic income and boost the GDP (Gross Domestic Profit) in India and every developing and underdeveloped country. The study aims to enlighten the philosophical literature based on religious tourism and explore efforts led by HR management to improve the distorted shape of religious tourism after facing the severe wrath of the pandemic. Additionally, probe the contemporaneous and succeeding plans of action adopted by various organizational sectors to cope with it. The qualitative research approach gathers secondary data from tourist surveys, feedback, and people's reviews through different sources such as E-mails, magazines, journals, the internet, newspaper, and other print media.

**Keywords** -Rife, Catastrophic, Enormous, Gigantic, Redressal, Contemporaneous

### INTRODUCTION

Every nation has been dramatically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and cases can be sketched worldwide. A massive fall in tourism has imprinted in the past few years in national and international tourism. A total number of tourists' impulsive ruination has immensely influenced significant tourism segments and activities linked with religious tourism. The sudden closure of temples and religious activities due to the pandemic disaster has created instability in the economy and health. On the other hand, few researchers believe that its best suited period for restructuring religious service-providing institutions by golden handshake with trending HR practices as human resource management is the process of embracing procurement of human needs and resources and managing people at one common platform so

that the goals of every individual and the entire organization can be fulfilled in a very efficient and effective manner. HR plays an essential role in the tourism sector. It keeps customers delighted to maintain the excellent industrial reputation of the business. It allows customers to rejoice in it to the fullest by ensuring employees offer the best treatment. And to behave well under the requirements of company norms by ensuring skills, work expertise, and proficiency in utilizing sharp-witted tourism management software and the latest technology. Compared to the prevailing economic countries, India is considered solely among the rapidly rising economies in current years, as the mathematical data shared by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The year 2020 travel & tourism industry's benefaction in the GDP showed \$ 121.9 billion; it is assumed to get a hike of \$ 512 billion by 2028. In our country, the direct industrial benefaction to GDP is awaited to record an annual growth rate of 10.35% between 2019 and 2028. Over upcoming eras, India's travel and tourism GDP is awaited to reach an average of 7.8% annually, compared to 6.7% of our entire economy, to strike the target of Rs 33.8 trillion (U.S. \$457 billion) –contributing 7.2% to the whole economy.

The involvement of HR in tourism is an industrial strategic discipline to attract visitor's attention to a huge extent for specific locations. The prime motive beneath the HR tourism segment is to expand, advertise and reinvigorate religious tourism in a further, more sustainable way, leading the tourism sector to its peak. Furthermore, let it endure hard from cutthroat enemies, grab tourist attention, and create mass awareness. Various eye-catching religious tourism strategies like online Darshan, digital Aarti, and booking Prasad at home have transformed logistics in a new and convenient method. Another played role of HR practices involves the promotion of religious places to economically support tourism through various attractive sites, networked advertisements, promotional mail, and social media platforms. As we are aware that goods and services in every tourism highly rely on quality human capital, for which training organizations require a rapid approach with well-tasked strategies to render a quality labor force and encourage them by developing an urge of knowledge of religious education although applying advanced applications of intelligent technology, artificial intelligence.

### **Background of the Study**

These not the first time the human race has been struck by such devastating situations, which have put a full stop to huge gatherings, chanting, and employment of a big part of the population bounded to face food, economic and social crises rising from COVID-19 which has ramified the religious tourism industries collaborating with tour organizer, hotels booking, transport sectors, religious visitors, tour guides and nearly every tourism service industries. Moreover, adversely resulting, all of a sudden, this speedy running business ended due to a rife pandemic that had swallowed millions of lives. Furthermore, it gave wounds of enormous economic and human loss that cannot be filled eventually. Although religious tourism is linked with multiple segments of organizations involved in the composition of the immense diversity, including the hosting advertisement by the multiple sections offering among many other services. Moreover, religious tourism's most critical fragment products are lodging and proper health supplements and service without compromising their faith and belief in their religion. Taking problems as

opportunities, a few organizations emerged by employing modern techniques along with HR practices, putting forward a new reality and offering new opportunities to be experienced by the tourism sector. Furthermore, within the considerable departmentalization of tour- travel, and hospitality, there is an enormous variety of skilled jobs created, compared with the technical standards set by the enterprises and skills" demands of the customers. While religious tourism carried forward itself as the world's largest spreading industry along with the bulkiest contributor to GDP. However, it is also experiencing a gigantic crisis after the pandemic created a scarcity of service quantity and quality of HR. One of the prime issues is to overpass the delay in requirement and provide trained staff members to attract and retrieve customer interest back in tourism and give a hike in national income, contributing to the economy. The implication of COVID-19 for pilgrimage to religious sites is enormous and has altered the visions of people. The Investigation relies on the research plotted straightly due to people's opinions on the quality of religious services rendered, core capability, and resources available for utilization in India's religious tourism sector by considering catastrophic pandemic effects accompanying HR measures of its redressal. So the only motive behind this paper is to keep in mind the discussion above that religious tourism can contribute to an all-new level of perspective and converse if HR practices and religious tourism can conjointly play a positive role in restructuring a convenient and monetary value-covering pattern of religious services and practices for religious groups to manifest occurring of any future pandemics and highlight challenges encountered by visitors and measure adopted to cope with it.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In their research analysis, (Rajeev Singh Chandel , Shruti Kanga,, 2021) showed the sudden plummet in the number of tourists visiting Rajasthan, both domestic and international. And the reason was the pandemic lockdown which snatched food and money from thousands of people and forced them to starve. Along with the challenges of COVID-19, they have also embraced techniques to cope with this disaster. (Victoria G. Hranovska, 2021) Highlighted the strategic priorities of tourism development to cope with the current problems and prospects of investment support for tourism. Modes for improving its efficiency in tourism industries in Ukraine lie in attracting investment resources, practical and rational use of tourist requirements, and recreational and natural resources redevelopment for shaping a t new face of tourism. (Jiří Vaniček1, 2021) Investigated tourism students' perceptions of online studies with the issue of concentration on this new method of teaching as now a day's every school at the global level has put an end to offline direct education and copied the criteria of online education. And the problems they had gone through by losing their jobs and near ones, and their future development viewpoint of tourism industries. (Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, 2020) Identified the strength and weaknesses of the Human resources determinants like training and retraining workforce prevailing in tourism industries, concluded that to reach the expectations of our society and amalgamate them with the arriving future must obtain coincidental results from the way of solutions such as the emergence of the saggingness of associated topics on tourism labor forces. Simultaneously, it is required to have strong cooperation allying with the stakeholders engaged by agencies, its components, and ministries in the implementation. (Dr. S.

PraveenKumar, 2014) Incarcerated his Investigation into the issues and expectations of human resources in the Indian tourism sector, mainly focusing on the demand and service offered to the tourist. Issues related to grasping the interest of skilled people in India. Although this research limits it's finding to the trading travel and tourism industries, ignoring hospitality concepts, including other areas. Some other serious concerns discussed in his research are the lack of proper infrastructure in conveyance like road and airport maintenance, comfortable resting hotels and motels, imposing massive tax structures, and incompetent staff at each stage of services. Apart from the above-discussed problems, there is an intermitted connection between the tourist expectations and the service they get in return. That gives birth to a few momentous questions about the industry's sustainability. (Przytuła Sylwia, 2020) Studied the Covid-19 impact on HR practices of management as the biggest challenge was restructuring the workplace and preparing a well-developed strategic plan and policies to build the new reality of the organization. It gave others a benchmark for restructuring their HR policies to survive the turmoil of the pandemic. Also, targeting the education system and recruiting employees with the most predictable competence skills. (Raj. R, Griffin, K, 2020) Fore-grounded that the pandemic is appearing as the leading test of the tourism industry in over half a century, exceeding the downturn of the various attack terrorists. And then the worse calamity of the COVID-19 pandemic was founded to be the new biological war in the knowledge of the entire world. However, on the other side, imposing government restrictions gave birth to new and digitalized forms of spirituality and worship, leading to the rise of alternative religious beliefs. Their research clarifies the collision of COVID-19 on the religious tourism industry, thrashing out the challenges encountered by visitors of religious targets. (Atul Kumar Sharma, Prof. G. AnjaneyaSwamy\*, 2019) Focused on the opportunities and threats to the development of the pilgrimage tourism industries in India. According to them, religious tourism is expanding, and alongside, sites urgently awaiting financial support streaming for accounting and growth.

What is apparent is that religious sites are eye-catching to a vast audience as part of individuals. Necessitate belonging, to relate, to mull over worship, to grow as spiritual and conscious beings or to maintain substantiation of all as sites that are central, comparatively sturdy, protected physically (except in times of strife and disruption), and finally to emotionally attached you with your values, norms, and culture.

### **Problem and Covid-19 Challenges Faced By Religious Tourism**

For about a decade, our world has encountered several significant epidemics/pandemics, and neither was as disastrous as COVID-19, which had severe consequences on the worldwide economy. Although it is not as contagious as chicken pox, typhoid, or cholera does not kill contaminated humans as "The Black Death: Bubonic Plague," which spreads the virus in people a few days before symptoms are visible (incubation period) (Bai et al., 2020; Rothe et al., 2020), (Andreas Kronbichler, 2020) Same as in result COVID-19 contaminated humans transmit the virus to others even before they become indicative of infection or start following deterrent procedures such as self-quarantine, maintaining social distancing, and wearing a mask. A few challenges are discussed below:

- **Providing the tourists with an aggregate tourism experience**

The tourism industry is undoubtedly the chief sufferer of the pandemic, and its enormous signs can be spotted clearly in religious tourism. Religious places of countries and ceremonial sites situated in the world are always the center attraction of journeys promoting pilgrimage worship, spiritual well-being, and visitation. Visitation to the leading world religious sites has been growing, and conflicts have continued regarding the significance of religious journeys and the emergence and development of the pilgrimage. As it had bridged a link to huge religious gatherings, wide of the contaminants virus reached its highest. Even WHO has declared COVID-19 a global pandemic? So the fundamental responsibility of government and organization is to provide medical care and safety to visitors.

- **Contravention of fetching people adequacy.**

When it comes to religious and ceremonial sites around the world have been focused on the journeys upholding pilgrimage worship, spiritual welfare, and visitation. However, the arrival and development of pilgrimage had not interrupted any major disputes or conflicts. COVID-19 ended religious tourism and bounded visitors to avoid journeys and mass gatherings. These challenges have left holy sites and religious heritage places with significant challenges. As from which to recover is the only way left to survive is to maintain distance, wear a mask, and maintain proper hygiene.

- **Avoid plastic and waste management.**

Avoid disposable plastic packaging, cutlery, plastic straws, and other single-use plastics. The waste management issues had, although inflamed, as science and technology flourished to usher us into the 'era of plastic.'

- **Well Trained HR nursing and skilled Staffs**

HR practices for religious tourism destinations require well-trained staff. However, most visitors are attracted to these destinations only because they like studying old cultures, the evolution of practices, and research. We are not breathing into a techno-savvy world, and now relying on blind faith may not be the attraction to these sites. These are also an enabler in gaining attention to the non-religious strata. Even the traditional dances, music, and theatre related to the religious shrine must be constructed into the itinerary. In addition, the discourses on the essence of beliefs, workshops on yoga, and ayurvedic practices can add immense value to religious tourism, so the entire reframing structure of religious tourism has required immense training and development.

### **HR Measures to Cope With Covid -19**

The excruciating wrath of the pandemic was being encountered among all majority groups regardless of different states, customs, creeds, ages, or economic statuses. Being aware that the COVID-19 virus spread from international boundaries government imposed limitations and controls on the worship and visiting of people in any religious site. They have opened a new track for HR to introduce a new design of connecting spirituality and worship through online



mode. These led to the expansion of alternative religious thinking such as Online Darshan, Online daan, and Aarti, getting Prasad through courier, and maintaining proper distance and hygiene in Religious Places. All these practices offer a new vision to people and tourism industries. A few religious gatherings controlled and guided under government norms and regulations working together with innovative Hr Practices are listed below.

**Table 1**

Religious Site	Organisation	Link for Online Darshan
Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanasi(Uttar Pradesh)	Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Webpage	<a href="https://www.shrikashivishwanath.org/online/live_darshan">https://www.shrikashivishwanath.org/online/live_darshan</a>
Gangotri Dham and Yamunotri Dham(Uttarakhand)	Tourist care Uttarakhand	<a href="https://registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in">registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in</a>
Baba Khatu Shyam Mandir (Rajasthan).	Khatu Shyam Temple	<a href="http://shrishyamdarshan.in/">http://shrishyamdarshan.in/</a> <a href="http://www.shrishyamdarshan.in">www.shrishyamdarshan.in</a>
Shirdi Sai Baba Temple(Maharashtra)	Shri Sai baba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi	<a href="https://online.sai.org.in">https://online.sai.org.in</a>
Golden Temple, Amritsar(Punjab)	Live Kirtan Darbar YouTube Channel	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjydC5TIqbc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjydC5TIqbc</a>
Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaari Temple	Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam	<a href="https://tirupatibalaji.ap.gov.in">https://tirupatibalaji.ap.gov.in</a>
HAJI ALI DARGAH	HAJI ALI DARGAH TRUST	<a href="http://hajialidargah.in">http://hajialidargah.in</a>
Goa catholic Church(Goa)	Immaculate Conception Church, Panjim	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzwJ1HK9-XI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzwJ1HK9-XI</a>

## METHODOLOGY

The entire data purely based on secondary data for this research paper is gathered from government websites of tourism, related articles, newspapers, religious magazines, and journals covering knowledge together with sustaining stories and evidence skewing towards being Indian and religious-centric how these communities have reacted to efforts by government and HR to combat this pandemic.

## Summary

"Religious tourism is attached to a religious manifestation of human" The study relies on some critical HR practices adopted by tourism industries to increase income. A commonly known fact is that tourism is a highly complex sector to analyze. The biggest challenge before tourism after COVID-19 is to improve the quality of religious tourism, retain customer interest, and look through their health and safety together. This research investigates the service quality factor and the involvement of HR practices to improve religious tourism industries without hurting their sentiments. The impact of a pandemic on income generated from tourism is being highlighted. The result generated from the collected Secondary data shows the relation between

digitalized religious service performance offered to tourists and the service quality gaps, which need to be fulfilled by adopting new strategies with the latest technology to serve the religious visitors' wants. In the religious tourism industry, young, energetic, passionate, and motivated staffs are crucial for enhanced service quality deliverance. However, the study found few similar results resulting in better and enhanced service delivery and tourist satisfaction through perceived online service quality. Hence research is a never-ending process. Many new strategies and plans yet need to be vested for the expansion of religious tourism industries in the upcoming future.

### References

1. Ahmed, Q.A. & Memish, Z.A. (2020). The cancellation of mass gatherings (MGs)? Decision making in the time of COVID-19, *Journal of Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101631>
2. Al-Lami F. et al. (2013). A pattern of morbidity and mortality in Karbala hospitals during Ashura mass gathering at Karbala, Iraq, 2010, *East Mediterranean Health Journal*, 19: S13-S18
3. Baker, D. (2014). The Effects of Terrorism on the Travel and Tourism Industry, *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 2(1), doi:10.21427/D7VX3D, 58-67
4. British Library (2020). Pilgrimage by Proxy, Available at: <https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2020/03/pilgrimage-by-proxy.html>
5. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Considerations for Communities of Faith - available online at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faithbased.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faithbased.html).
6. Collins-Kreiner, N. (2018). Pilgrimage-Tourism: Common Themes in Different Religions, *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 6(1), Article 3, 8-17. doi:<https://doi.org/10.21427/D73428>
7. Rajeev Singh Chandel, Shruti Kanga, Suraj Kumar Singh. Impact of COVID-19 on tourism sector: a case study of Rajasthan, India [J]. *AIMS Geosciences*, 2021, 7(2): 224-243. doi: 10.3934/geosci.2021014
8. Raj, R. & Griffin, K. A. (2020). "Reflecting on the Impact of COVID-19 on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol.8:Iss.7,Article2.doi:<https://doi.org/10.21427/8f916z16>Availableat:<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol8/iss7/2>
9. UN News (2016). Nearly one billion travel abroad in first nine months of 2016 – UN agency, *UN News*, 7 November 2016, available online at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/11/544742-nearly-one-billion-travel-abroadfirst-nine-months-2016-un-agency>.
10. UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) (2020). International Tourist Numbers Could Fall 60-80%, [www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020](http://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020), (accessed 8/5/2020)
11. UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) (2020b). International Tourism Down 70% As Travel Restrictions Impact All Regions, *UNWTO News* available online at: <https://www.unwto.org/news/international-tourismdown-70-as-travel-restrictions-impact-all-regions>
12. World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) Key Planning Recommendations for Mass Gatherings in the context of COVID-19, <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>. (accessed 12/5/2020)