


Chapter 7

An Analysis of Tourism Opportunities and Challenges Post COVID–19 Between India and Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

This chapter attempts economic analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the economies of Southeast Asia and India. The impact on tourist footfalls, tourism revenues, national GDPs, and employment will be focused on. The challenges thrown by COVID-19 relating to safety, hygiene, mindshare, and digital tools could help evolve a structurally different tourism landscape in the post-COVID-19 world. Long haul travel may not happen soon, and the countries must develop products incorporating proximity tourism, vaccine tourism, and domestic tourism. Intra-ASEAN travel will have to be developed further to offset the losses caused by the curtailment of long-haul travel. Historical and cultural linkages between Southeast Asia and India should be leveraged to extend Intra-ASEAN travel to the Northeastern States of India. This would create a win-win situation for Southeast Asia as well as India. Targeted investments and subsidies aimed at confidence building of travelers and other stakeholders will go a long way to minimize the economic impact of external shock caused by COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020 (ILO, 2020). Thereafter, COVID-19 spread quickly

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through areas of China before spreading to other countries in Asia and the Pacific region and ultimately reaching global scale. The global spread of COVID-19 led to many lockdowns and restrictions which while affecting the flow of people across countries challenged the economies in umpteen ways.

Lockdown and restrictiveness is studied in detail by the *Oxford Coronavirus Government Response Tracker* (OxCGRT) project, which calculate a Stringency Index, a composite measure of nine of the response metrics. The nine metrics include: school closures; workplace closures; cancellation of public events; restrictions on public gatherings; closures of public transport; stay-at-home requirements; public information campaigns; restrictions on internal movements; and international travel controls.

The OxCGRT project also calculate a Containment and Health Index, a composite measure of thirteen of the response metrics. This index builds on the Stringency Index, using its nine indicators *plus* testing policy, the extent of contact tracing, requirements to wear face masks/coverings, and policies around vaccine rollout. Table 1 gives an overview of these indices for selected countries. It is clear that in June 2021 India, Vietnam and Philippines had imposed stringent lockdowns compared to Brunei, Thailand and Malaysia.

Table 1. Stringency Index and Containment and Health index

Country	Stringency Index		Containment & Health index	
	22 Jan 20	17 Jun 21	1 Jan 20	17 Jun 21
Brunei	11.11	40.74	3.57	50.71
Cambodia	0	66.2	0	
Indonesia	8.33	68.98	0	71.01
Laos, PDR	0	74.07	0	72.98
Malaysia	11.11	53.7	0	65.6
Myanmar	0	72.22	0	62.38
Philippines	0	71.76	0	73.63
Singapore	19.44	58.33	3.57	73.21
Thailand	0	53.7	0	52.38
Vietnam	0	77.31	0	71.25
India	0	81.94	0	79.92

Source: www.ourworldindia.org

This chapter is an attempt to analyze the challenges arising out of these lockdowns and restrictions along with responses of the governments from the viewpoint of impact on travel and tourism sectors in India and the South-East Asia. Given this background, the purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, it aims at pointing out the macro-economic impact of COVID-19 on the global economies. The analysis is mainly based on quantitative data on parameters like GDP, inbound/ outbound tourists, foreign exchange earnings from travel and tourism sectors. Second, it uses both quantitative and qualitative data to provide specific impact of COVID-19 on travel and tourism sectors of South-East Asia and India. To develop an understanding of impact on specific South-East Asian countries, country specific studies incorporating challenges and opportunities are also presented. Third, the chapter provides a detailed analysis

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