

A Study on Shifts in Business and Marketing Trends of Local Tourism Based Business in Puducherry Union Territory before and Post Covid-19

Dr.L. Senthilkumar

Assistant Professor in Commerce
School of Commerce and International Business
Dr.G. R. Damodaran College of Science
Coimbatore – 641 014, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract: *During the COVID-19 crisis, marketing is faced with a major challenge. Research shows that local tourism based businessmen that apply a multichannel strategy, in which they combine offline and online channels, perform better in terms of share of wallet and in terms of revenues. The COVID-19 crisis has also made it painfully clear how dependent we are on foreign markets, on both the demand and supply side. COVID-19 indicates the need for critically evaluating the supply of services in the assortment. The study were focused by any possible changes to be consider to use of products and services in the post-COVID-19 time period. Personal approaches focused on 'how can we help you' give insight into the challenges faced by customers and offer opportunities to help them. The time is ripe for local tourism based businessmen to respond to the immediate, basic needs of their customers.*

Keywords: *Local based tourism, multi-channel strategy, supply of services, marketing trends, Covid-19.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

India's glorious traditions and rich cultural heritage are closely related with the development of tourism. Its magnificent monuments attract a large number of tourists from all over the world. The natural surroundings, the architectural masterpieces, the music, dance, paintings, customs and languages all these go to make India as tourist paradise. COVID-19 have been emerged from Wuhan has caused a serious impact on almost every society of the earth. Due to the problems caused by this particular health crisis all over the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it as a global pandemic. Not only that but because of its rampant spread countries were forced to stop international travelling as well as locked up them. Also, the lockdown has been recognized as the only method to control the spread of the pandemic and almost every country has adopted this method. Amidst the lockdown in Indian society, multiple issues related to social, educational, economic, political, agricultural, psychological levels and many more have been noticed which has created the devastating impact on the lives of the people.

In this aspect, the tourism sector is not being left behind. The pandemic has not only affected the foreign exchange earnings, but also affected various regional developments, job opportunities, there by disrupting the local communities as a whole.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The COVID-19 is the problem to which the whole world is yet to recover from. The global pandemic has made its impact on the global tourism industry and in turn the regional tourism based businesses. Such is the problem of almost all businesses in Puducherry. The pandemic has certainly made all business look at a very different year and all subsequent years to come. Impact of Covid-19 has been multiple and not only limited to society at large. The perspective of Indian economy both rural and urban has been impacted adversely.

So how does Puducherry and its local businesses change and adapt to the new norm? How has the pandemic affected the business trends? How do businesses look at the pandemic? How do customers react to the same and how are businesses effectively marketing in order to get ahead of their competition?

This research study and explores the effects of COVID-19 and the consequent shifts in business and marketing trends of local businesses in the union territory of Puducherry which stands out as it is a fast-growing tourist attraction. It provides a complete comparison between the before COVID-19 and post COVID-19 business periods.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

To understand the shift in trends to acknowledge opportunities of businesses and to understand the best suited marketing activities.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN:

Research design is the framework of Empirical research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The research is conducted with the help of a well-constructed questionnaire, developed and carefully validated before distributing. The questionnaires were constructed and distributed through an online application, Google Forms. The data then was collected and analyzed to derive the results accordingly.

The research is conducted on a sample space from Puducherry Union Territory, from a total of 150 respondents and all of them were business owners and entrepreneurs as the research is solely based on local tourism based businesses. The research used simple percentage as a tool for analyzing the data and results derived thereafter findings and suggestions for this research study.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Dekimpe and Deleersnyder (2018) have summarized the most relevant studies on the effectiveness of marketing efforts during downturns and upturns. However, this specific crisis, which will be followed by a recession, displays characteristics that differ from those associated with a recession. For example, as well as a fall in consumption due to lower consumer confidence, lower incomes, consumer defaults on loans and reduced financial means as a result of falling share prices, shifts in consumption are also occurring between product categories.

Janny C.Hoekstra and PeterS.H.Leefflang (2020) in his article, “Marketing in the era of COVID-19” the writers discuss the effects of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and elaborate on the consequences of this disruption for marketing strategies and marketing policies. The crisis shows similarities with changes in consumer behavior and the way marketing is carried out during economic downturns. However, it also displays characteristics which differ from down cycles, such as shifts in consumption between categories and the accelerated shift from offline to online behavior. This is forced by the re-evaluation of life priorities by final consumers.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

TABLE NO-1: NATURE OF BUSINESS

NATURE OF BUSINESS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	%
Hotels and Restaurants	23	15.33
Shopping Avenues and Handicrafts	42	28.00
Rental Automobiles	57	38.00
Recreational Activities	28	18.67
TOTAL	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above reveals that 38 percent of the respondents were engaged the business of Rental Automobiles, 28 percent of the respondents who was running their business of shopping avenues and handicrafts , 18.67 percent of the respondents were doing the business of Recreational activists and 15.33 percent of the respondents were running of Hotels and Restaurants business.

TABLE NO-2: NATURE OF CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHY

CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHY	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	NATIVES	%	TOURISTS	%
Hotels and Restaurants	28	18.67	18	12.00
Shopping Avenues and Handicrafts	46	30.67	37	24.67
Rental Automobiles	61	40.67	52	34.67
Recreational Activities	15	10.00	43	28.67
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly represents the demography of consumers to the various fields of businesses in Puducherry. 40.67 percent of the native respondent’s doing the business of Rental automobiles, 30.67 percent of the native respondents were running the business of shopping avenues and handicrafts, 18.67 percent of the native respondents were engaged the business of Hotels and Restaurants and 10 percent of the native respondents were doing the business of Recreational activities. Similarly the respondents who were tourist category, 34.67 percent of the e respondent’s doing the business of Rental automobiles, and 28.67 percent of the respondents were doing the business of Recreational activities, 24.67 percent of the respondents were running the business of shopping avenues and handicrafts and 12 percent of the respondents were engaged the business of Hotels and Restaurants.

TABLE NO-3: MONTHLY INCOME OF BUSINESS BEFORE AND POST COVID-19

MONTHLY INCOME [Rs.]	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID-19	%	POST COVID-19	%
Below 30,000	23	15.33	40	26.67
30,000 - 60,000	28	18.67	53	35.33
60,000 - 1,00,000	67	44.67	36	24.00
1,00,000 and above	32	21.33	21	14.00
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that, Monthly Income of study respondents before Covid-19, 44.67 percent of their income between Rs.60,000 to Rs.1,00,000, 21.33 percent of respondents monthly income above Rs.1,00,000, 18.67 percent of the respondents monthly income between Rs.30,000 to Rs.60,000 and 15.33 percent the respondents monthly income below Rs.30,000. Comparatively Monthly income of the study respondents Post Covid-19 period, 35 percent of the respondents monthly income between Rs.30,000 to Rs.60,000, 26.67 percent the respondents monthly income below Rs.30,000, 24 percent of respondents monthly income above Rs.1,00,000 and 14.33 percent of respondents monthly income above Rs.1,00,000.

**TABLE NO- 4
 AMOUNT INVESTED IN MARKETING PRACTICES BEFORE AND POST COVID-19**

INVESTMENT [Rs]PER MONTH	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID-19	%	POST COVID-19	%
Below 5,000	39	26.00	21	14.00
5,000 - 15,000	51	34.00	53	35.33
15,000 - 30,000	28	18.67	40	26.67
30,000 and above	32	21.33	36	24.00
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table reveals that, Amount Invested per month for Marketing Practices of study respondents before Covid-19, 34 percent of the respondents were invested to Rs.5,000 –Rs.15,000 per month for the purpose of Marketing practices, 26 percent of the respondents were invested to below Rs.5,000 per month, 21.33 percent of the respondents were invested to above Rs.30,000 per month and 18.67 percent of the respondents were invested to Rs.15,000 –Rs.30,000 per month for the purpose of Marketing practices. During the period of Post Covid-19 period, the amount invested for Marketing practices, 35.33 percent of the respondents were invested to Rs.5,000 – Rs.15,000 per month, 26.67 percent of the respondents were invested to Rs.15,000 –Rs.30,000 per month, 24 percent of the respondents were invested to above Rs.30,000 per month, 14 percent of the respondents were invested to below Rs.5,000 per month for the purpose of Marketing practices.

**TABLE NO-5: TYPE OF BUSINESS MEDIA USED BY CONSUMERS COME ACROSS
 BUSINESS BEFORE AND POST COVID-19**

TYPES OF BUSINESS MEDIA	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID-19	%	POST COVID-19	%
Advertisements	23	15.33	32	21.33
Word of Mouth	28	18.67	18	12.00
Business Networks	47	31.33	47	31.33
Events and Exhibitions	32	21.33	10	06.67
Online Presence (E-Commerce)	20	13.33	43	28.67
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly stated that, different types of Business Media used by study respondents before Covid-19, 31.33 percent of the respondents were used by Business Networks to come across their business, 21.33 percent of the respondents were conducted an Events and Exhibitions to come across their business, 18.67 percent of the respondents were used by Word of Mouth as Business Media to come across their business, 15.33 percent of the respondents were used through advertisements as Business Media to come across their business and 13.33 percent of the respondents were used an Online Presence (E-Commerce) as Business Media to come across their business. Similarly, types of Business Media used by study respondents Post Covid-19 period, 31.33 percent of the respondents were used by Business Networks to come across their business, 28.67 percent of the respondents were used an Online Presence (E-Commerce) as Business Media to come across their business, 21.33 percent of the respondents were used through advertisements as Business Media to come across their business, 12 percent of the respondents were used by Word of Mouth as Business Media to come across their business and 6.67 percent of the respondents were conducted an Events and Exhibitions to come across their business.

TABLE NO-6
TYPE OF BUSINESS MEDIA LET CUSTOMERS TO KNOW OUR BUSINESS BEFORE AND POSTCOVID-19

BUSINESS MEDIA	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID-19	%	POST COVID-19	%
Social Media	23	15.33	67	44.67
News Paper Advertisements	28	18.67	19	12.67
Audio-Visual Advertisements	67	44.67	34	22.67
Bill-board Advertisements	32	21.33	30	20.00
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that type of business media let customers to know our business before Covid-19, 44.67 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Audio-Visual Advertisement as Business Media, 21.33 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Bill-board Advertisement as Business Media, 18.67 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business through News Paper Advertisement as Business Media and 15.33 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Social Media as Business Media. Likewise, type of business media let customers to know our business post Covid-19 period, 44.67 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Social Media as Business Media, 22.67 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Audio-Visual Advertisement as Business Media, 20 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business by using Bill-board Advertisement as Business Media and 12.67 percent of the respondent’s opinion that let customer’s to know our business through News Paper Advertisement as Business Media.

TABLE NO-7: AVERAGE NUMBER OF WALK-INS OR BOOKINGS THROUGH BUSINESS MARKETING PRACTICES BEFORE AND POST COVID-19

WALK-INS OR BOOKINGS THROUGH	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID -19	%	POST COVID-19	%
Social Media	20	13.33	78	52.00
News Paper Advertisements	31	20.67	21	14.00
Audio-Visual Advertisements	71	47.33	28	18.67
Bill-board Advertisements	28	18.67	23	15.33
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the average number of Walk-Ins or Bookings through Business marketing practices before Covid-19, 47.33 percent of the respondents Average Walk-Ins through Audio –Visual Advertisements, 20.67 percent of the study respondents Bookings through News Paper Advertisements, 18.67 percent of the respondents average Walk-Ins through Bill-board advertisements and 13.33 percent of the respondents average Walk-Ins through Social Media. Comparatively the average number of Walk-Ins or Bookings through Business marketing practices Post Covid-19, 52 percent of the respondents average Walk-Ins through Social Media, 18.67 percent of the respondents Average Walk-Ins through Audio –Visual Advertisements, 15.33 percent of the respondents average Walk-Ins through Bill-board advertisements and 14 percent of the study respondents Bookings through News Paper Advertisements.

TABLE NO-8
SALES FUNCTIONS THAT TO ATTRACT BUSINESS BEFORE AND POST COVID-19

SALES FUNCTIONS	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID -19	%	POST COVID -19	%
Discounts and Rebates	40	26.67	37	24.66
Package Schemes	21	14.00	58	38.67
Gift and Complimentary	33	22.00	22	14.67
Cash back offers	56	37.33	33	22.00
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table states that sales functions that to attract business before Covid-19, 37.33 percent of the respondents were to attract Cash back offers, 26.67 percent of the respondents were to attract sale functions of Discounts and Rebates, 22 percent of the respondents were to attract Gift and Complimentary and 14 percent of the respondents were to attract the sale function of Tour Package Schemes. Likewise, sales functions that to attract business Post Covid-19, 38.67 percent of the respondents were to attract the sale function of Tour Package Schemes, 24.66 percent of the respondents were to attract sale functions of Discounts and Rebates, 22 percent of the respondents were to attract Cash back offers and 14.67 percent of the respondents were to attract Gift and Complimentary.

TABLE NO- 9
SHIFTS IN BUSINESS AND MARKETING TRENDS AFFECTED BUSINESS BEFORE AND POST COVID-19

BUSINESS AFFECTED	NO OF RESPONDENTS			
	BEFORE COVID -19	%	POST COVID -19	%
Positively	70	46.67	38	25.33
No Significant difference	39	26.00	28	18.67
Negatively	41	27.33	84	56.00
TOTAL	150	100.00	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that Shifts in Business and Marketing Trends affected business before Covid-19, 46.67 percent of the respondents were opined that positively affected in Business shifts and Marketing trends, 27.33 percent of the respondents were opined that negatively affected to shifts in Business and Marketing trends and 26 percent of the respondents were opined that No significant difference to shift in business and Marketing trends. On the other side Shifts in Business and Marketing Trends to affect Business Post Covid-19, 56 percent of the respondents were opined that negatively affected to shifts in Business and Marketing trends, 25.33 percent of the respondents were opined that positively affected in Business shifts and Marketing trends and 18.67 percent of the respondents were opined that No significant difference to shift in business and marketing trends.

7. FINDINGS :

- The majority (38%) of the respondents' nature of business as Rental Automobiles.
- The majority (40.67%) of the respondents' nature of consumer demography as native doing the business as Rental automobiles, similarly 34.67% consumer demography as tourist also doing the business as Rental automobiles.
- The majority (67%) of the respondents average monthly before Covid-19 between Rs.60,000- Rs.1, 00,000 but Post Covid-19, the Majority (35.33%) of the respondents monthly lies between Rs.30,000 – Rs.60,000.
- The majority (34%) of the respondents amount invested in Marketing Practice before Covid-19 between Rs.5,000 - Rs.15,000 but Post Covid-19, the Majority (35.33%) of the respondents amount invested in Marketing practice Rs.5,000 – Rs.15,000.
- The majority (31.33%) of the respondents' type of business media used by consumers to come across business both before and post Covid-19 period.
- The majority (44.67%) of the respondents let customers to know our business using Audio-Visual advertisements as business media before Covid-19 and Post Covid-19 period the majority (44.67%) of the respondents let customers to know our business using Social Media.
- The majority (47.33%) of the respondents' average number of Walk-Ins through business practices before Covid-19 using Audio-Visual advertisements and Post Covid-19 period the majority (52%) of the respondents average number of Walk-Ins through business practices as Social Media.

- The majority (37.33%) of the respondents' sales functions that attract business before Covid-19 were Cash back offers and Post Covid-19 period the majority (38.67%) of the respondents sales functions that attract business were Package Schemes.
- The majority (46.67%) of the respondents' shifts in business and marketing practices that affected Positively before Covid-19 and Post Covid-19 period the majority (56%) of the respondents shifts in business and marketing practices that affected Negatively.

8. SUGGESTIONS:

- Local businesses could start investing into themselves becoming brands of the native and present and open themselves to the whole internet driven world by taking advantage of social media platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram and many such.
- Standalone websites for companies could make local business easily accessible to tourists.
- Starting easy with small amounts of investments into digital marketing tools can go a long way in making the brand. Usage of tools like Adsense, Facebook business, WhatsApp Business, Shopify marketing are all good places to start.
- Characterization of the business's target audience should be more specific to attract continuous business opportunities and the content should be more target audience relatable.
- B2B tools of businesses could be useful to local handicraft businesses and also helps reach a wider range of audience.
- Business wise, it is important to keep innovating and looking at new avenues to reach out to customers and also to solve problems.
- Many subsidiary businesses to the tourism industry have faced losses but many have taken the help of the marketing tools to stay alive and have maintained adequate cash flow (though minimal) during and post the COVID-19.
- Traditional and way too common sale/marketing activities have been replaced by new ones and are accepted and used gracefully.
- Puducherry's local businesses have become more welcoming and future ready towards tourists and are turning into a tourism driven market space.

9. CONCLUSION :

To conclude, this modern era offers many opportunities for marketers to demonstrate their value for Business which either hurt by COVID-19 or are doing well by facilitating how we deal with the pandemic. The same holds for marketing scientists who study transient and permanent effects of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and how marketing strategies and marketing policies can be adopted by business organizations.

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