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BALTIC JOURNAL OF LAW & POLITICS

A Journal of Vytautas Magnus University

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1 (2023)

ISSN 2029-0454

Cite: *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 16:1 (2023): 133-149

DOI: 10.2478/bjlp-2023-000009

A study of the impact of the Covid-19 on tourism in Ajodhya Hills (Purulia)

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Received: December 04, 2022; reviews: 2; accepted: January 04, 2023

Abstract

Introduction: The outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 commonly known as CoVid-19 pandemic has severely impacted lives throughout the world. Its effects on the socio-economic conditions of people, as well as their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, are yet to fully understood but it is widely accepted that many of the changes are likely

to be long-lasting or even irreversible. Tourism, a significant source of income and livelihood for many communities, is one of the sectors of business that has been particularly hit hard. **Objective:** This paper focuses mainly on the positive and negative impacts on the local hotel person at Ajodhya (Purulia) by highlighting the impact of the pandemic on the incomes of local people employed in the hotel business at Ajodhya, Baghmundi (Purulia, West Bengal) in the year 2020-21. **Data & Methodology:** The study is based on primary data. Data was collected from samples drawn from visitors, hotels and the local residents of Ajodhya. The sample size was 90. Analysis of data was done using univariate and bivariate methods with the help of analytical software (STATA-16). For mapping, QGIS3.14 was used. **Result:** Results show that Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism business at Ajodhya Hills. A large reduction in post-pandemic income was observed as compared to the pre-pandemic levels. The findings point to the need to improve the tourism benefits among the people at Ajodhya. **Conclusion:** The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the tourism business Ajodhya Hill has been significant. Most of the locals, of whom the STs are the majority, are employed in hotels. Besides high tax rates, the pandemic and the seasonal nature of the tourist business has created a stress on employment potential. The mean monthly income also showed a decrease due to the covid19 pandemic. This uncertainty has affected customer sentiment also. Satisfaction levels among tourists were found to be low because of poor quality of food at restaurants, lack of cleanliness in accommodations, unawareness of Covid-19 protocols, absence of proper medical facilities (especially for emergency care), and poor hygiene and sanitation in the hotels and restaurants. The findings point to the need for hotel owners and managers ensure food hygiene and observance of Covid-19 protocols. In addition, it is necessary for the Government to take appropriate steps for the betterment of tourism business at Ajodhya (Purulia).

Keywords

Tourism, COVID-19, Economic, Level of Satisfaction, Ajodhya Hills.

A study of the impact of the Covid-19 on tourism in Ajodhya Hills (Purulia)

Introduction

The effects of the pandemic are reflected in the socio-economic environment, political situation, and public health (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020). In 2019 world face a new pandemic situation which is known Covid-19 disease, It is a enveloped RNA viruses found in mammals mainly Human and birds (Singhal, 2020). The first cases of COVID-19 were detected on December, 2019, in the city of Wuhan (China) from where it spread uncontrolled to other parts of the world. Initial the sources of infection were stated with the seafood market (Huang et al., 2020). The first case in India was reported on January 30, 2020, Thrissur district (Rawat, 2020). Since then, over 11 million Indians have contracted the virus and

over 150,000 have died (<https://www.covid19india.org>).

In nearly all countries, the response of governments was to impose a lockdown on people movement, travel, and business activity with the aim of breaking the transmission of the virus. The economic damage has been substantial, including the near-total stoppage of global tourism (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020, Estrada et al., 2020). In many organizations, employees working from their homes ("work from home") became the norm. People were encouraged to wear masks, use sanitizer, and maintaining social distancing for prevention of the spread of the coronavirus (Sultana et al., 2020). The restrictions had harsh consequences for business and industry. All aspects of the travel and tourism were severely impacted. People were forced to cancel their travel inland as well as foreign plans. As a result, flight and hotel bookings were also cancelled. Hundreds of thousands of travelers were stranded away from their homes in all parts of the world (Marinko et al., 2020).

World over, the tourism industry has been suffered huge losses directly as well indirectly. People and communities living in tourist destinations were particularly hit because of loss of earnings and livelihood (Biswas, 2021). India's tourist sector, which contributes about 9% to the country's GDP, was also severely affected due to the restrictions imposed on travel (Dev & Sengupta, 2020). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, in 2018, India was ranked third among 185 countries in terms the contribution of the travel & tourism sector to GDP (PTI, 2020). India was ranked 34th in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019, published by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2019). It was estimated that the losses resulting from the disruption in medical tourism in 2020 were \$28 billion (Kumar, 2020).

The Ministry of Tourism Department of India estimated that since January 4, 2020, revenues from tourism have declined by ₹ 50000 million with the brunt of the crisis borne by tour operators and travel agencies (WTTC, 2020). "WTTC figures show the severe impact [of the pandemic] on the Travel & Tourism sector with analysis suggesting that up to 50 million jobs are at risk in the sector globally". The total loss of revenue is projected to be US \$ 13.266 billion on account of impact of COVID-19 pandemic (Bhutia, 2014). The first case of COVID-19 in West Bengal was reported on March 17, 2020 (India Times, 18 march 2020). The World Travel and Tourism Council had estimated that Eastern India receives, on average, 4% of foreign tourist arrival in India. In 2000, the share International Tourists to West Bengal was 3.36%; in 2012, the share had increased to 5.88% (Chakrabarty, 2011).

West Bengal is in the eastern part of India. Besides the iconic Howrah bridge, there are several popular tourist attractions in the state — Darjeeling, Morgan (Kalimpong district), the Cooch Behar palace (Cooch Behar) Jaldapara National Park (Alipuduar), Gogumara National Park (Jalpaiguri), Hajardurai palace and Nizamat Imambara (Murshidabad), Adina Mosque, Gaur, Adina Deer Park (Malda), Santinikatan (Birbhum), Bisnupur Terracotta temple, Susunia hill and Mukutmanipur (Bankura).

West Bengal's capital, Kolkata, itself is home to several attractions: the Victoria Memorial, Belur math, Indian museum, the Birla Planetarium, Science City, and the Kalighat

temple. In addition, there are the Sundarbans in the South 24 Pargana, Digha and Mandarmani (Purba Medinipur), Joychandi Hills, Garpanchkot, Ajodhya Hill, Deulghata, Matha Hill, Baranti, Kharabera, Murguma Dam, and Duarsini (Purulia), as shown in Figures 1 and 2. This paper presents an assessment of the state of tourism condition at Ajodhya (Purulia) during pandemic. Ajodhya is situated in the Chota Nagpur plateau and has a thick forest cover. In 2006, Ajodhya hill was declared as a "Conservation reserve" by the State Wildlife Board. The Ajodhya Hills offers several sightseeing options for tourists, such as the Marvel Lake, several waterfalls, Dense Sal forests, a water reserve, and diverse flora and fauna. The indigenous Santal community has several unique cultural characteristics. These features of Ajodhya Hills are responsible for attracting tourists from both within and outside the state (Palit et al., 2020). Travel to Ajodhya Hill declined sharply during the pandemic, impacting earnings and livelihoods of people dependent on tourism. In this paper, the authors try assess the economic impact of the pandemic on hotel employees and local residents, as well as satisfaction levels of the tourists.

Literature Review

Duro et al. (2021) in their paper Covid19 pandemic has dramatically impacted in tourism and hospitality sector. In Spain, tourism to the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, the provinces of the Mediterranean coast, and Madrid, in which the state capital is located, present higher vulnerability to COVID-19. Researcher provide some result that can be help to policy makers to take the policy mitigation the tourism vulnerability of the study area.

Ocheni et al. (2020) discuss Tourism industry directly effect by Covid 19 pandemic and its change the present and future landscape of hospitality. GDP and foreign exchange earning parallely effected by pandemic because some of the country or tourist destination place depend on worldwide tourists.

Jaipuri et al. (2020) in their paper Covid 19 pandemic has significant effect on worldwide tourism industry as well as local and regional economy such as decrease foreign exchange, job loss, decreased regional development.

Patel et al. (2020) discuss covid 19 pandemic directly impact on tourism sector in world wise, due to tourist cancel their travels avoiding suspicious places and individual. In 2019, total 29,28,303 tourist arrive on e-Tourist Visa. The United Nations dedicated agency for tourism assumes that international tourist arrivals will be downcast by 20% to 30% in 2020 when compared with 2019

Sigala (2020) in his paper discusses her research study that, why and how the COVID-19 can be a transformational opportunity by discussing the circumstances and the questions raised by the pandemic. He identifies fundamental values, institutions and pre-assumptions that the tourism industry and academia should challenge and break through to advance and reset the research and practice frontiers.

Methods and Materials

The study uses primary data which was collected through a pre-coded and

structured schedule. The survey was carried out at Ajodhya Hill (Figure 1).

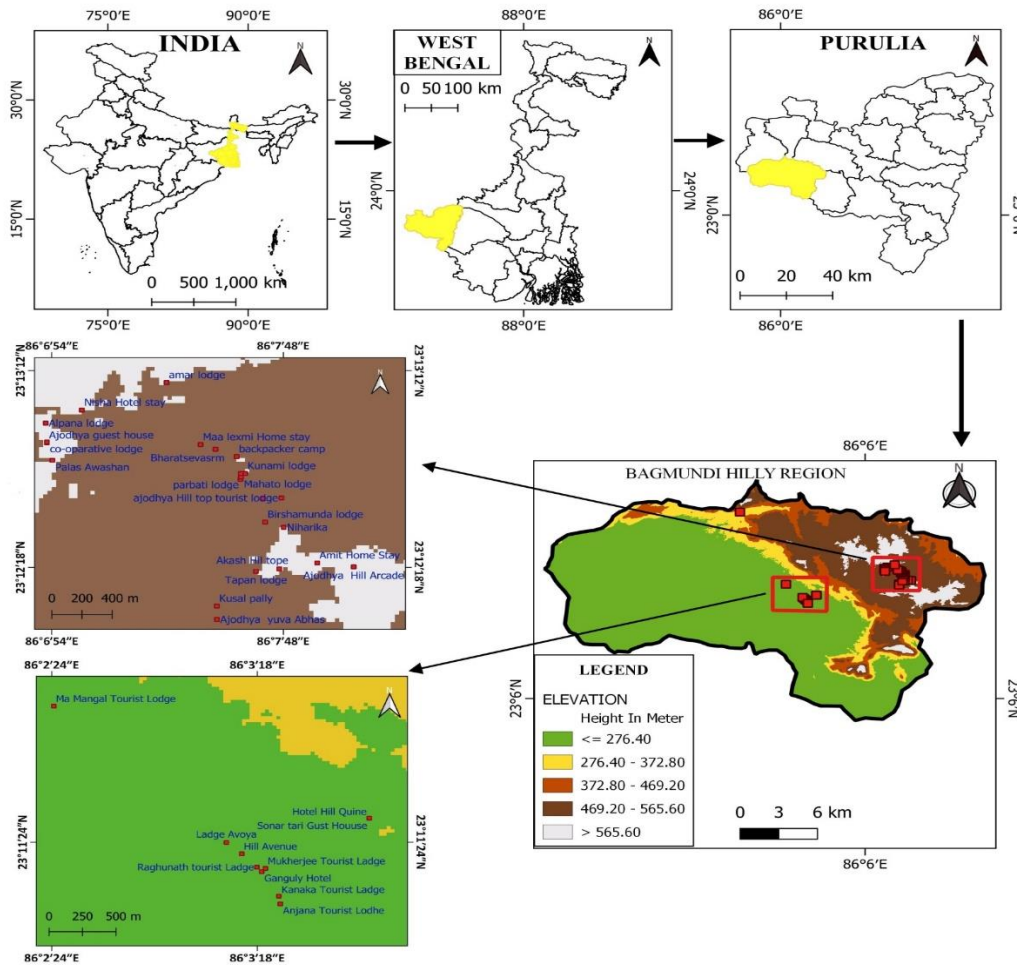


Figure 1: Location Map

Data was collected from a sample which comprised tourists or visitors, hotel workers and locals. A purposive sampling technique was used to identify respondents for the survey, which included 41 tourists and 49 locals and hotel workers at Ajodhya. A systematic and structured schedule was developed and used to collect primary data. Two sets of questionnaires were used: one for tourists (or visitors); and the other for hotel workers and local persons. Data was collected for several parameters: background characteristics of the respondents (gender, place of residence, age, category, religion, caste, educational attainment, income, etc.). Statistical techniques univariate, bivariate, rates, ratio, and percentage were used for analysis. Analyses and mapping were done using STATA-16 and QGIS 3.14 software.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 provides an overview of the background characteristics of the local

tourism in Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, and West Bengal. It is seen that most of them belong to the age groups of 30-34 and 25-29 year. The proportion of those aged less than 25 years is low. Most (81.4%) were married. In terms of educational attainments, most (46.9%) had studies up to Higher Secondary School level and 28.6% were graduates or higher. Only 8.2% were illiterate. The study area is predominantly tribal (65.3% of the total populations). Most (59.2%) had been residing in this area for 20 years or more. Only 16.3% had been residing in Ajodhya for less than 10 years. In 40.8% of the households, there were 5-7 persons, in 36.7% households the family size was less than 5 persons; and in 22.5% there were 8 or more. Slightly over half (51.0%) were engaged in a business, 42.9% people were labourers and the rest were teachers with the government. Joint families were the dominant family type in the study area (61.24%). Most families (67.4%) owned the houses they were living in. The rest were living in rented accommodations.

Table1: Percentage of distribution of various background characteristics of local hotel person at Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

Background Characteristics	Percentage (%)	Sample (N)
Age Category		
<25	8.2	4
25-29	20.4	10
30-34	26.5	13
35-39	18.4	9
40-44	8.2	4
>45	18.4	9
Marital Status		
Single	18.4	9
Married	81.6	40
Educational Attainment		
Illiterate	8.2	4
Primary to Upper	16.3	8
MP/HS	46.9	23
BA and above	28.6	14
Social Group		
Gen	10.2	5
SC	12.2	6
ST	65.3	32
OBC	12.2	6
Duration of residence		
<10	16.3	8
10-20	24.5	12
20 and above	59.2	29
Households size		
< 5	36.7	18
5-7	40.8	20
8 & above	22.5	11
Type of occupation		
Govt. Teacher	6.1	3
Business	51.0	25
Labourers	42.9	21
Type of family		
Nuclear	38.8	19
Joint	61.2	30
Type of House		
Own	67.4	33
Lease	32.7	16

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Assessment of Economic Aspects of Tourism

Table 2 shows the economic features of tourism and its impact on local hotel person and local people at Ajodhya, Purulia, West Bengal. On the positive side, 94.5% people reported that tourism increased employment opportunities in the area. All respondents reported that increasing tourist arrivals is a good sign for the prosperity of the residents. Among the one tenth respondents were reported that local people are equally engaged for income generating opportunities in this area.

Most (89.7%) also reported that their standard of living had increased because of tourism; and 75.5% said that tourism had brought investments. In addition, 69.4% also reported that tourism offers employment opportunities both during the peak and off seasons. It was perceived by 87.6% of the people that tourism creates new business opportunities for the local residents; and only 32.6% said that the state Government provided subsidies for improving business. Improvements in quality and quantity of services due to tourism were seen by 79.4%, and 69.3% people felt that tourism raised comfort and living conditions of the local residents. It was also reported by 77.5% of the people that tourism drives improvements in the local economy. 79.6% of the respondents reported that the residents are satisfied with the prices foods prevailing in the tourist area and 71.4% people said that public services were adequate. Only 38.7% of the local hotel persons and tourism were reported that improves overall tax revenue at Ajodhya hills. Most respondents (71.4%) said that tourism increases retail activity and 77.5% said that tourism increases communications and development of skills.

There were negative views too. The majority of the respondents (97.6%) felt that tourism benefits only a few people; 59.2% reported that in their view, tourism only creates more jobs for outsiders than locals. Most of the respondents (89.8%) also felt that the income and profits from tourism are mostly appropriated by organizations and individuals who do not belong to the area. The view that increased demand for goods during peak tourist season leads to local inflation was shared by most people (73.4%). Slightly over half of the respondents (51.1%) also felt that the local shops are more oriented to the demands of tourists than to serve local needs. Another area of concern which was shared by 42.8% of the respondents was that the seasonal nature of tourism heightened unemployment risks and thus, resulted in outmigration of the locals. There was also the perception among most respondents (95.3%) that tourism activities interfere with the routine economic activities of residents. Furthermore, 40.8% people also reported that high taxation rates have increased the cost of services. For the betterment of tourism industry, around 81.6 % of respondents were said that providing loans for owners of the hotels and resorts for developed the infrastructure, better facility, quality food and others amenities at Ajodhya.

Table 2: Assessment of Economic Aspects of Tourism and Its Impact on Local hotel person at Ajodhya, Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

Positive Impact	Percentage (%)	Sample (N)
Tourism enhances many employment opportunities	95.4	47
Increasing number of tourist arrival is the good sign for the prosperity of the local residents	100	49
Income generating opportunities are evenly distributed among the locals	12.2	6
Standard of living has increased because of tourism	89.7	44
Tourism causes increase in investment at the destination	75.5	37
Provide employment opportunities both at Peak season and Off season	69.4	34
Tourism creates more new business opportunities to the local residents	87.6	43
Government provides subsidy to establish and improve the business in this area	32.6	16
Tourism leads to changes in the quality and quantity of goods and services available in a tourist area	79.4	39
Growth of tourism enhances improvement of comfort and living condition of the local residents	69.3	34
Tourism provides incentives to improve local economy	77.5	38
Local residents are satisfied with the price prevailing in the tourist's area	79.6	39
People in this area are provided with adequate public services	71.4	35
Tourism improves overall tax revenue	38.7	19
Tourism increases shopping opportunities	71.4	35
Communication and skilled development	77.5	38
Negative Impact	Percentage (%)	Sample (N)
Tourism benefits only a few people in this area	97.6	48
Tourism creates job more for externals than residents	59.2	29
Income generated in the area goes to outside organization and individual	89.8	44
Demand for goods due to overflow of tourist sometime create local inflation	73.4	36
The area is losing a number of shops that served the interest of local people	51.1	25
Seasonal nature of tourism has created unemployment risk and migration among local people	42.8	21
Tourism development in the local area interferes with the residents daily economic activities	95.3	47
Cost of services are high due to heavy taxes	40.8	20
Demand for tourism activities have increased the value of loans	81.6	40

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Discussion

Monthly per capita income distribution during pre & post COVID-19

Table 3 provides information on the monthly income of the people during the pandemic and before (off and peak season) at Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, West Bengal. During the pandemic, off season income was higher (₹ 7180) for people in the age group of 25-29 years than those in the other age groups. In the peak season the income was higher (₹ 2211) for those aged 45 years than for those in the other age groups. In comparison, the earnings before the pandemic was highest (₹ 17569) for those in the age group of 30-34 years than in the other age groups. In the peak session, those aged 25-29 years earned the most (₹ 96400) as compared to the other age groups. In the Covid-19 off season, income was highest (₹ 6652) among those who passed MP/HS, while peak season income was highest (₹ 17185) among those who were graduates and more. Pre-pandemic off-season income was highest (₹ 16461) for those who had passed MP/HS, while peak season earnings were highest (₹ 87609) among those were graduates. Monthly incomes were higher during the pandemic as well as before (among were always high for general category people during Covid-19 and before Covid-19 off seasons (₹ 9900 and ₹ 19120 respectively) and peak season (₹ 27,100 and ₹ 317,400 respectively) as compared to the people from the other castes.

In the off-season and peak season periods during the pandemic, those who were residing in the area for 10 – 20 years earned more than those were living there for less than 10 years (₹ 20292 and ₹ 8417 respectively). Before the pandemic, the off-season for those who were living in the area was less than ₹ 20,000) and ₹ 148,417 for those who were residents for 10-20 year The income of residents who were in Government employment was always high in comparison (₹ 14,000 and ₹ 22,533 in off-season during and before the pandemic, respectively; and ₹ 22,533 and 520,000 in the peak season during and before the pandemic respectively). Off-season and peak season earnings during the pandemic were higher in large-sized families (eight or more members) ₹ 7,318 and ₹ 16,355 respectively when compared to earnings in smaller families. However, before the pandemic, households with 5-7 members had the highest earnings: ₹ 17336 in the off-season and ₹ 95,050 in peak season. Incomes were higher in joint families both before the pandemic and during (₹ 15,742 and ₹ 102,158) in the off-season and peak seasons before the pandemic, and ₹ 5,893 and ₹ 15,593 respectively during the pandemic). Off season and peak season earnings during the pandemic was highest (₹ 6,182 and ₹ 15,772 respectively) for those who had their own homes than those living in rental accommodation. Those living in their own homes also had higher off-season earnings before the pandemic (₹ 15,648) but in the peak season, those living in rented accommodation earned more ₹ 75,848.

Table 3: distribution of monthly income during and before (off & peak season) COVID-19 at Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

Background Characteristics	During Covid-19		Before Covid-19	
	Off season	Peak season	Off season	Peak season
Age Category				
<25	6250	14250	13750	37000
25-29	7180	16090	13750	96400
30-34	6115	12385	17569	79308
35-39	5167	7166	10778	24222
40-44	4125	8425	10250	17750
>45	5167	22111	15389	42222
Educational Attainment				
Illiterate	5125	9250	12750	25000
Primary to Upper	5100	12138	12638	23750
MP/HS	6652	13104	16461	87609
BA and above	5107	17185	11907	36214
Social Group				
Gen	9900	27100	19120	317400
SC	5917	15250	12617	38833
ST	5275	10934	14441	24625
OBC	5333	16533	10667	34000
Duration of residence				
<10	4375	11688	20000	29000
10-20	8417	20292	16108	148417
20 and above	5166	11693	11866	27552
Type of occupation				
Govt. Services	14000	35333	22533	520000
Business	4860	12964	14444	28040
Labourer's	5824	11714	12795	26238
Households size				
< 5	4572	12344	9867	25889
5-7	6150	13700	16455	95050
8 & above	7318	16355	17336	40455
Type of family				
Nuclear	5737	15742	12084	102158
Joint	5893	12566	15593	29033
Type of House				
own	6182	15772	15648	75848
Lease	5113	9725	11313	19313

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Background characteristics

As seen in Table 4, tourists were overwhelmingly male (N=36 or 87.8%) and females formed only a small proportion (N=5 or 12.2%). Tourists aged 25 years or less formed 19.51% (N=8) of the sample. The proportion was the same for those aged 25–29 years, 14.6% (N=6) of tourists aged 30–34 years, 9.8% (N=4) of those aged 35–39 years, 19.5% (N=8) aged 40–44 years, and 17.1% (N=7) of tourists aged 45 years and more. Among the tourists at Ajodhya Hill, 2.5 % (N=2) had studied up to the upper primary level, 25% (N=10) till the MP/HS

level, and 72% (N=29) were graduates or higher. Unmarried tourists comprised 46.3% (N=19) of the sample; the remaining (N=22 or 53.7%) were married. Caste-wise 58.8% (N=24) of the tourists were from the general castes, 14.6% (N=6) were from the scheduled castes, 7.3% (N=3) from the scheduled tribes and 19.5% (N=8) from the Other Backward Castes. Most tourists spent 1- 2 days (82.5%, N=33) and the rest did not plan to stay there. Most tourists were employed with the government (39.0%); 17.1% were visiting on business, 9.76% were working in the private sector.

Table 4: Percentage of distribution of various background characteristics of tourists at Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

Background Characteristics	Percentage (%)	Sample (N)
Gender		
Male	87.8	36.0
Female	12.2	5.0
Age Category		
<25	19.51	8
25-29	19.5	8
30-34	14.6	6
35-39	9.8	4
40-44	19.5	8
>45	17.1	7
Educational Attainment		
Upper	2.5	2
MP/HS	25.0	10
Graduate & above	72.0	29
Marital Status		
Never married	46.3	19
Married	53.7	22
Social Group		
Gen	58.5	24
SC	14.6	6
ST	7.3	3
OBC	19.5	8
Religion		
Hindu	92.7	38
Muslim	4.9	2
Others	2.4	1
Length of Stay		
Not stay	17.5	7
1-2 days	82.5	33
Type of occupation		
Govt service	39.0	16
Business	17.1	7
Private Job	9.76	4
Dependent	34.2	14

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Level of Satisfaction

Table 5 depicts from various parameters were considered for measuring

the satisfaction. On their perceptions of cleanliness of accommodation, 32.5% were satisfied, 30.0% were moderately satisfied, 22.5% dissatisfied and 15.0% did not wish to comment. On the matter of security, 17.5% of the respondent tourists were satisfied, 30.0% were moderately satisfied, 37.5% were dissatisfied, 15.0% did not comment. With transportation facilities, 17.5% of the tourists were satisfied, 50% were moderately satisfied, 5% were dissatisfied and 27.5% did not want to comment. On the parameter of quality of food served in the restaurants of Ajodhya Hill, 52.5% of the tourists were satisfied, 27.5% were moderately satisfied, 5% dissatisfied, and 15.0% of the tourists did not want to comment.

The respondent tourists were also requested to rate hygiene and sanitation in the hotels they stayed in. We found that 20% of the tourists were satisfied, 30% tourists were moderately satisfied, 20% were dissatisfied and 30% a significant proportion did not want to comment. About 65% of the tourists were satisfied with the hospitality of the local people, 12% were moderately satisfied, 4% were dissatisfied and 5% did not have any comment to offer. Similarly, in case of medical facilities, two third tourists (62.3%) were dissatisfied, 23.65% were moderately satisfied, and one tenth tourists were satisfied with medical facilities at Ajodhya [18].

Prices of accommodation and food were found to be reasonable by 42.5% of the tourists; 17.5% were moderately satisfied in this regard; 7.5% were dissatisfied; and 32.5% tourist had no comment to offer. Most tourists (82.5%) reported that the facilities at Ajodhya Hill offered good value for money. Of these 55% were satisfied; 20% were moderately satisfied; 7.5% were dissatisfied with the value proposition. On the view that the place offers good bargains for shopping, 62.5% of the respondents were satisfied; 17.5% were moderately satisfied and 20% did not comment. No respondent expressed dissatisfaction (Kumar, 2020).

Table 5: Percentage distribution of level of satisfaction of tourist's person at Ajodhya, Baghmundi, Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

Level of satisfaction of the tourists	Satisfied	Moderate	Dissatisfied	No command
Cleanliness of accommodation services	32.5	30.0	22.5	15.0
Security of the room	17.5	30.0	37.5	15.0
Level of local transport	17.5	50.0	5.0	27.5
Quality of food at destination's restaurants	52.5	27.5	5.0	15.0
Level of hygiene and sanitation overall	20.0	30.0	20.0	30.0
Hospitality of the local people	65.0	12.0	4.0	5.0
Medical facilities (included Emergency)	12.7	23.6	62.3	2.4
Reasonable price for food and accommodation	42.5	17.5	7.5	32.5
Good value for money	55.0	20.0	7.5	17.5
Good bargain shopping	62.5	17.5	0.0	20.0

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Migrant's scenario

Table 6 represents the information of in-migrants of tourists at Ajodhya Hill. Two types of in-migration stream were observed during the pandemic; one is intra-state another inter-state migration (Bhutia, 2020). Most tourists (85.37%) were from within the state. Only 14.63% were from outside the state. Among the intra-state migration, most were from Kolkata (26.83%, N=11) followed by Hoogly (19.51%), Bankura (9.76%), West Burdwan (7.32%), Howrah (4.88%), Durgapur (2.44%), Jhargram (2.44%), Medinipur (4.88%), South 24 parganas (2.44%), Coochbihar (2.44%) and South 24 Pargana (2.44%). Whereas, interstate migration were maximum from Jharkhand (4.88% from Bokaro; 2.44%, Tatanagar, Jharia, and Ranchi).

Table 6: Migrant's scenario of tourists in Ajodhya Purulia, West Bengal, 2020-21

MIGRANTS	Percentage	Sample
INTRASTATE	85.37	35
Kolkata	26.83	11
Hoogly	19.51	8
Bankura	9.76	4
West Burdwan	7.32	3
Howrah	4.88	2
Durgapur	2.44	1
Jhargram	2.44	1
Medinipur	4.88	2
South 24 Parganas	2.44	1
Coochbihar	2.44	1
S 24 Pargana	2.44	1
INTERSTATE	14.63	6
Bokaro	4.88	2
Tatanagar	2.44	1
Jharia	2.44	1
Dhanbad	2.44	1
Ranchi	2.44	1
TOTAL	100	41

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Income levels of the tourists

The average monthly income of a male tourist is ₹ 24,917 and that of a female ₹ 19,000. Tourists aged 40–44 years were earning the most (₹ 31,875) and those aged 25 years and less the least (₹ 4,000). The average monthly income those aged 25–29 years was ₹ 31,250; for those aged 30–34 years it was ₹ 27,000; and for over 45 years, it was ₹ 29,714 (Table 7).

The incomes tourists are positively associated with their educational attainments. From table 7 it is seen that average monthly income of those who had studied up to the Upper Primary level was less than that were better educated. Average monthly income for a tourist who had studied up to the upper primary level was ₹ 15,000; for one who had completed MP/HS, it was ₹ 17,4000; and for

a graduate or higher, ₹ 27,414. The average income of a never married tourist was ₹ 20632, which is less than that of a married one (₹ 27,273). The average income was higher among the general castes (₹ 27,583) and the lowest among the Scheduled Tribes (₹ 12,000). Among the SCs and the OBCs, the corresponding incomes were ₹ 20,667 and 21,250 respectively. The average income for Hindu tourist was ₹ 23,658 (N=38), while that of Muslims was ₹ 32,500 (N=2). In the other religions' category, it was ₹ 28,000. Among the income earners at Ajodhya Hill, the highest average income was in government service (₹ 37,062) followed by business (₹ 27,143), private sector job ₹ 15,000, and others ₹ 10,643.

Table7: Average monthly income conditions of the tourist's persons (migrants) at Ajodhya, Purulia, 2021

Background Characteristics	monthly income	sample
Gender	24917	
Male	24917	36
Female	19000	5
Age Category		
<25	4000	8
25-29	31250	8
30-34	27000	6
35-39	21250	4
40-44	31875	8
>45	29714	7
Educational Attainment		
Upper	15000	1
MP/HS	17400	10
Graduate & above	27414	29
Marital Status		
Never married	20632	19
Married	27273	22
Social Group		
Gen	27583	24
SC	20667	6
ST	12000	3
OBC	21250	8
Religion		
Hindu	23658	38
Muslim	32500	2
Others	28000	1
Type of occupation		
Govt service	37062	16
Business	27143	7
Private Job	15000	4
Dependent	10643	14

Source: Authors calculation, Primary Field Survey, 2020-21

Conclusion

Analysis of data shows that the coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism industry at Ajodhya Hills. Most locals working in the hotel

business belong to the ST category and were married. It is also seen that most residents were engaged in the hotel business, thus showing their potential for improving livelihood opportunities. Thus, there is a need for local and government subsidies for the growth of the hotel business. There is also a need to reach the benefits of the tourism business to the residents of Ajodhya. The chief concern is the seasonal nature of tourism because of which there is a high risk of unemployment and the resultant tendency of people to migrate. Further, high tax rates are also discouraging the growth of the hospitality business. The pandemic has led to a significant decline in the monthly income of residents who are engaged in the hotel business.

Most tourists are males, graduate, and Hindus. The level of satisfaction of the tourists at Ajodhya Hills is low due to low quality of food at the restaurants, insufficient cleanliness of accommodation, unawareness of Covid-19 protocols, and poor medical facility (especially in an emergency), and poor hygiene and sanitation. Most intra-state tourists were from Kolkata, Hoogly, Bankura, and West Burdwan. Tourists from outside West Bengal were from Jharkhand (Bokaro, Tatanagar, Jharia, Dhanbad and Ranchi districts). In the pandemic situation, it is essential for hotel owners and managements to ensure that Covid-19 protocols are followed and food hygiene is maintained. The government is must also need focus raising awareness of the safety precautions that are necessary for visitors to Ajodhya Hills. Appropriate action is also necessary to improve the infrastructure.

Declaration Statement

Ethics approval and consent to participate: Not Applicable

Consent for Publication: Not Applicable

Funding: Authors of the study have not received any funding for this research. This is independent research.

Competing interests: The authors report no conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceived and designed the experiments: JG. Performed the experiments: KRK IA UKP & KP. Analysed the data: IA JG KRK AB. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: JG KRK UKP. wrote the paper: KP JG KRK UKP AB.

List of Abbreviations:

SARS-Cov2- severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.
STATA- Statistics and Data
ST- Schedule Tribe.
RNA- Ribonucleic acid
GDP-Gross Domestic Product
WTTC- World Travel & Tourism Council.
MP- Madhyamik Pariksha.
H.S- Higher Secondary.

BA- Bachelor of Arts.
SC- Schedule Caste.
OBC- Other Backward Caste.

Acknowledgment

We are immense to all the editorial board members of "Annals of Forest Research" for active engagement cooperation.

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