

Impact of Pandemic on Tourism and Service Industries & Recommendations towards New Normal: Insight from a Developing Country, India

Arpita Ghosh^{a*}, Puneet Sharma^a, Pradipta Patra^b

^aCentre for Sustainability & Environmental Management, Indian Institute of Management Sirmaur

^bIndian Institute of Management Sirmaur, Rampur Ghat Road, Paonta Sahib, H.P. 173025

*Corresponding author: arpita.ghosh@iimsirmaur.ac.in

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Research aims: The objective of the present study was to investigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on the livelihood of Hospitality and Salon sectors at a town at Himachal Pradesh, India. *Research findings:* Except for the hotels being used as quarantine facilities, the rest surveyed hotels suffered 100% losses during the lockdown and till consequent several unlocks. Amongst the salons surveyed, all of them experienced a 100% dip in their incomes and average guest occupancy during the lockdown.

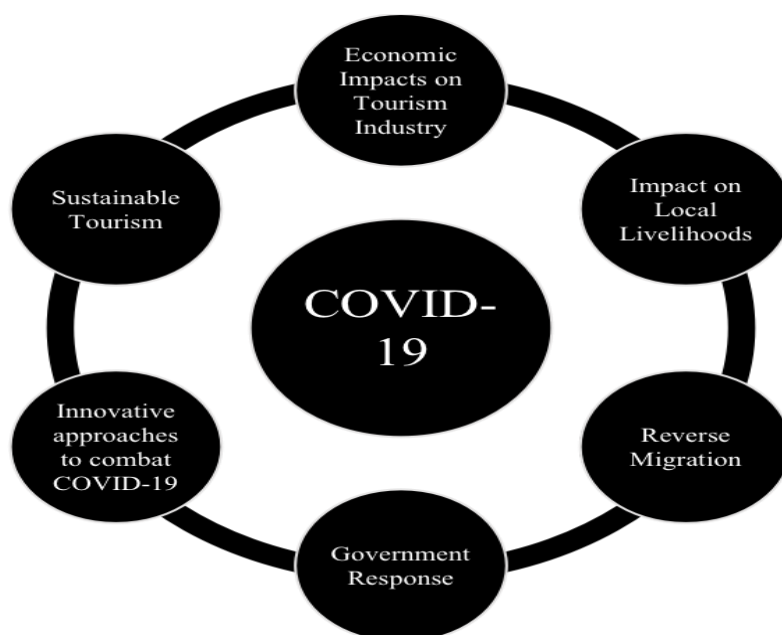
Approach: The findings have been corroborated using a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test by SPSS. Originality: There was no such study based on primary data conducted to understand the impact of COVID on livelihood at Paonta Sahib (gateway Himachal Pradesh).

Research limitation: Need of worldwide study and policy recommendation for future preparedness

Policy implications: A rudimentary review of the tourism sector suggests restructuring businesses and innovative business models may plausibly help effectively endure the crisis in new normal.

Keywords: - Pandemic; Livelihood; Economic loss; Entrepreneurs; (New Normal)

Graphical Abstract



Introduction

Himachal Pradesh, also known as the “The Land of Gods”, “Devbhoomi”, is a hill state popular for its picturesque tourist destinations. The beautiful valleys of Himachal Pradesh and its diverse cultures are home to spiritual, medical, and adventure tourism (Rishi and Giridhar, 2007). Known for its topographical and traditional diversity, pleasant surroundings, and holy places of worship, ancient memorials, and cordial and welcoming people (AC Nielsen ORG-MARG, 2012). The tourism sector is an important economic pillar of this state contributing 7% to the state GDP (ATTRI and KAUSHAL, 2019). The state witnessed an Indian and Foreign tourist influx of 16.83 million and 383,000 respectively, in 2019 (IBEF, 2020). The tourism industry braved any external shocks blown to them, but the aftermath and resurgence from the ongoing pandemic will be prodigious (Gössling et al., 2020; Karabulut et al., 2020). The ongoing pandemic has perpetrated economic and health shocks on an unprecedented scale (McKibbin and Fernando, 2020; Barua, 2020).

In an unfamiliar jolt dealt by coronavirus aftermath, it may drive 3.8 crore people unemployed translating to 70% of the entire workforce from the Indian tourism and hospitality sector (Economic Times, 2020). Amidst the initial stages of the pandemic, Vice President K.B. Kachru of Hotel Association of India's (HAI) stressed with no instantaneous initiatives employed to aid the industry, roughly 3.5 - 4 crore workforce from India's hospitality industry may become unemployed with a drop in earnings of around Rs 5 lakh crores in the financial year 2020-21 (IANS, 2020). Till December 2019, 3,679 registered hotels were having a bed capacity of approximately 1 Lakh and 2,189 homestays with a bed capacity of 12,181 in the state (Himachal Tourism, 2019). However, the absolute figures are likely to be higher. Roughly, there are over 8,000 hotels and over 4,000 homestay facilities in Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Dharamshala, Dalhousie, and Kasauli- reckoning a considerable size of the population dependent on this sector.

Tourists mostly visit Himachal Pradesh during summers, which specifically is a peak season for the hoteliers however, the pandemic shut doors for all the tourists. The unemployment number in the state is now close to 11 lakhs. Based on a report by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the travel and tourism chain in the country is estimated to incur a shortfall of around INR 5 lakh crore in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The first instance of COVID-19 in India was recorded in January last week and a full national lockdown was ordered on March 24th, 2020 limiting movement of the entire population, extending until the last week of May 2020. However, with the lifting of lockdown restrictions, certain relaxations were permitted in different COVID zones. The services were resumed in a phased manner and a series of unlocks started from 1st June 2020 (Unlock 1) for a month duration till November 2020 (Unlock 6). Private and public transport restrictions affected the domestic travel and tourism sector the most. Moreover, the hotel industry which was already facing losses had to spend additional costs on COVID-19 cleaning protocols causing an additional financial burden.

The impact of the second wave was mild in comparison to the first wave in the study areas as the businesses switched to digital services. However, the second wave has taken a toll on the health care infrastructure of the country, the record number of infections in the past few days has led to the

imposition of stricter restrictions around the country. This has again led to the derailing of the already slowing hospitality and tourism industry. It is facing a replica of a similar situation in 2020. This time business has been allowed to deliver food in the areas where lock-downs have been announced, additionally, the areas with milder restrictions have seen the number of tourists reduce drastically instead of the COVID-19 crisis. The economic blows dealt by the pandemic could last several quarters leaving businesses with no choice to shut businesses permanently if the same situation continues for a while. Since the pandemic began it has been the worst three quarters experienced until now over a hundred years and it is anticipated the situation would remain the same until the next few quarters till vaccination drives are completed across the countries. "Revenge Travel" is poised to help the sector get back on its foot once the situation becomes comparatively much safer for travel. The need arises in the current situation for retorting to Sustainable tourism to prevent pollution of water and soil. (Ghosh, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

The present study aims to scrutinize the effect of COVID-19 on the livelihood of the hospitality and salon sector in Paonta Sahib (an industrial town at Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh) during the lockdown and post lockdown. According to reports (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/tourism-sector-in-himachal-to-get-inr-16000-crore-investment/as73085306.cms>), tourism is the primary source of livelihood for the inhabitants of Himachal Pradesh. The industrial town of Paonta Sahib is not only an important pilgrimage site but is also known as the gateway to the entire state. The holy town attracts tourists from far-off places throughout the year. Thus the chosen site for our study may be treated as a cluster. Consequently, the analysis from the current study along with the observations and findings may be extended to a similar cluster of tourist hotspots in the country. Thus the insights drawn from our study may be generalized for other major tourist destinations. The research articulates major issues and challenges facing hospitality and salon sectors amid the prevailing pandemic and key learnings for the industry from an ongoing predicament.

Methodology

Study Area

The research survey for the present study was conducted locally in Paonta Sahib town, Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh, India. Paonta Sahib, located on the banks of river Yamuna, is a small industrial town with a hub of cement, white stone, and pharmaceuticals industries. The temporary campus of IIM Sirmaur is based at Paonta Sahib. It is located to the south of Sirmaur district, on National Highway 7. Paonta Sahib is a centrally located town and connected to different cities like Chandigarh, Dehradun, Yamuna Nagar, Saharanpur, and Nahan. Paonta Sahib is famous for its old Gurudwara, which has historic and religious importance among Sikhs. Paonta Sahib has witnessed an unhindered rise in population across the years, for trade and career choices people have migrated from different corners of the country. Being an industrial area, the region has experienced exponential growth leading to a sprawling up of demand for businesses such as hotels, retail and wholesale stores, salons, etc.

In this study, an attempt has been made to study the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the livelihood of hotels, guesthouses, and salons operating in Paonta Sahib.

Data Source

The study undertook the help of one-to-one interviews (face to face) of respondents (Managers, Owners, Staff workers) from Hotels and Salons located in Paonta Sahib. Research questionnaires were prepared for both sectors to understand the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on their livelihood. We approached almost 50 businesses but some were wary and apprehensive to provide data not directly stating any reasons for the same. A total number of 16 Hotels and 6 salons agreed for sharing primary data during the survey in December. We have used the data till the first wave of COVID-19 because afterward the businesses adjusted to the crisis by adapting to new technologies and solutions. The questions ranged from average occupancy, gross profit, and the total number of staff working challenges, and recommendations. The hotels and salons surveyed for the study were the popular and prominent ones operating for quite a few years. Face-to-face interviews are one of the qualitative research methods offering meaningful insights and in-depth information from the participants (Lavrakas, 2008). The interviews lasted from 10 minutes to 30 minutes depending on the time availability of the respondent and the level of enthusiasm of the participant. Initially few respondents especially big hoteliers resisted providing information related to average profits/losses incurred. The hoteliers cooperated after learning the data provided by them would be used purely for research purposes only. Microsoft Excel was used for plotting the graphs using the above-mentioned data. Moreover, data of COVID E-passes issued for inter-district and interstate movement during the lockdown, and consequent unlocks in Paonta Sahib were collected from the SDM office, Paonta Sahib.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data has been analyzed using statistical techniques via SPSS. Once the relevant data (no of guests, profit percentage, and no of staff) is loaded in SPSS we have verified the basic assumptions required for our analysis. The primary objective of our study is to study the impact of Covid 19 on the livelihood of people, particularly in the hotel and tourism industry. For this, we compare the measures of different parameters across different phases of lockdown – pre-lockdown, during the lockdown and different unlock phases. In other words, the different parameters (no of guests, profit percentage, and no of staff) need to be compared across multiple populations. For this, we propose to use one-way ANOVA. Once the data is loaded in SPSS, we first verify the assumptions of ANOVA – normality of population and equal variance across the population. For normality assumption, Shapiro-Wilk & Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical tests are used along with Q-Q plots. Levene test is used to check for the equality of variance assumption. These tests are executed using the Descriptive Statistics -> Explore option under the Analyze tab of SPSS. Since in the majority of the cases the statistical tests pointed to non-normal populations under study, we have used non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis instead of one-way ANOVA. This test is executed using the Independent Samples option under non-parametric tests in Analyze tab (SPSS).

Results & Discussion:

Table 1: Average E-passes/Day during different phases of Locked down and Unlocks

Phases	No. of average e-passes (Incoming & Outgoing)/Day at Paonta Sahib
Lockdown	250
Unlock 1	153
Unlock 2	131
Unlock 3	70
Unlock 4	Not issued
Unlock 5	Not issued

The data in Table 1 was made available by SDM Paonta Sahib. The purpose of collecting this data was to understand how many people/migrants were moving towards their hometown destinations. From this data, we can say that during lockdown 250 e-passes were approved in a day meaning almost 16,500 people moved in and out of Paonta Sahib. The possible reasons can be a resignation from their job or getting sacked from the job or mass reverse migration phenomenon observed during the pandemic. Many distressing stories over flooded media during the total lockdown innumerable photos and videos of masses of migrants grounded in several bus and train stations expecting to return to the respective villages, thousands of people walking hundreds of kilometers on deserted highways, railway tracks. The fear and insecurity caused due to the virus led to an unprecedented migration of workers and families from urban centers to rural India. Even the state governments made arrangements for food and shelter for the underprivileged but then also due to the fear and panic people risked their lives to reach their hometowns. They were willing to wait in long queues and wait even for days for their turn at the railway stations, bus stations to go back to their homes. Emotional breakdown and a sense of insecurity amongst the migrant workers led to an extraordinary migrant crisis.

Table 2: Changes in gross profit% in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different hotels at Paonta Sahib

S. No	Hotels	Gross Profit %							
		Before Lockdown	During lockdown	Unlock 1	Unlock 2	Unlock 3	Unlock 4	Unlock 5	Unlock 6
1	Silver oak	80	20	20	30	40	60	70	80
2	Paontika	90	0	5	20	30	70	100	100
3	Hotel Yamuna	45	55	55	55	55	55	55	100
4	Pal Regency	70	40	50	50	50	50	30	30
5	Grand Riviera	80	0	0	20	20	30	40	40
6	VIP Resort	90	10	10	30	30	30	80	100

7	Royal Hilton	30	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
8	Hotel Star City heart	80	20	20	20	20	20	20	40
9	Hotel Rana Lodge	80	20	20	20	20	20	20	40
10	Walia guest House	100	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	Hotel City Heart	60	0	0	25	25	25	25	25
12	Hotel Brighton	90	0	0	0	0	0	10	10
13	Kaka Di Lodge	40	0	0	10	10	10	10	10
14	Guru Surbhi	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	RFC	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Ambience	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

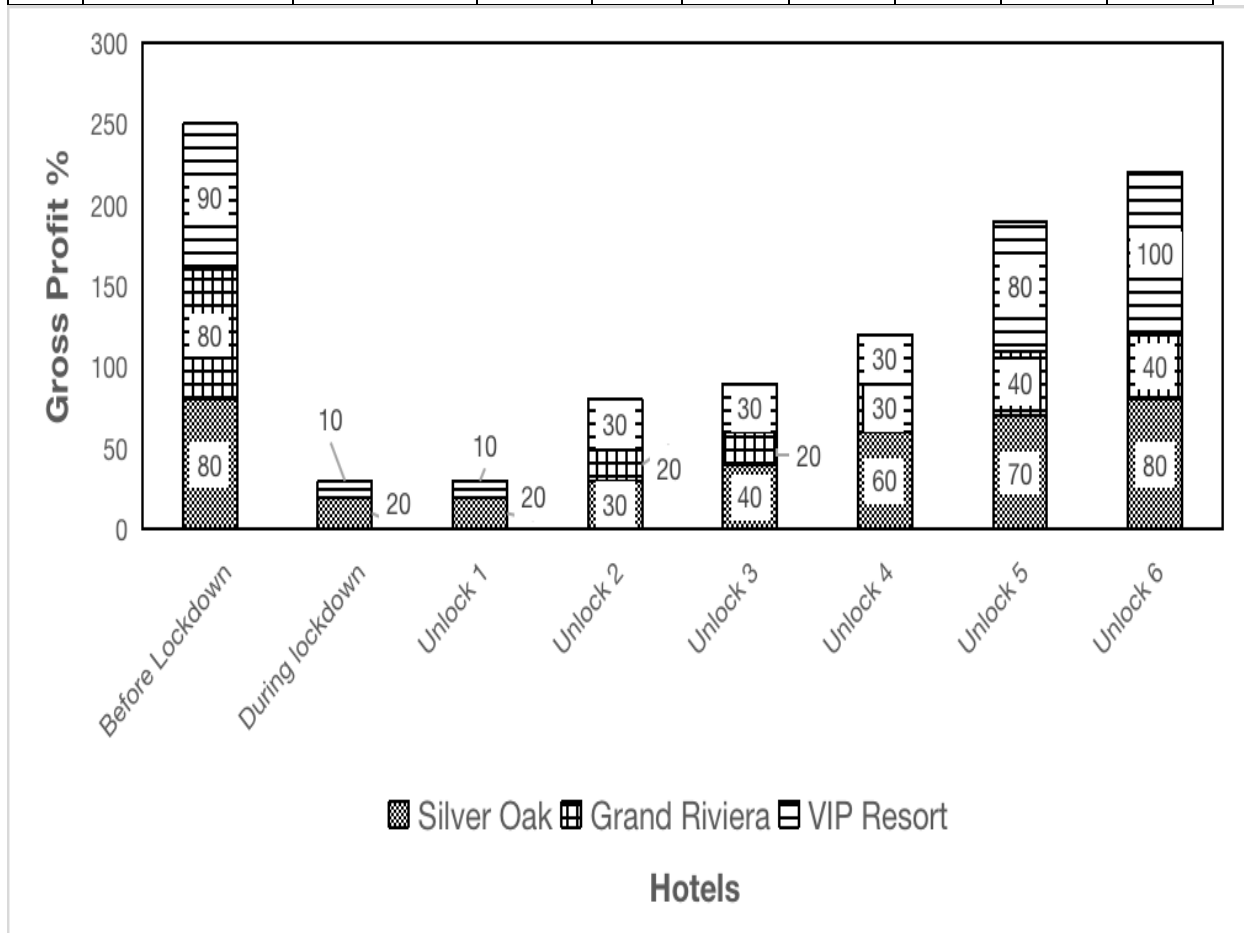


Figure 1: Changes in gross profit% in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different hotels at Paonta Sahib

Figure 2 Changes in average guests in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different hotels of Paonta Sahib

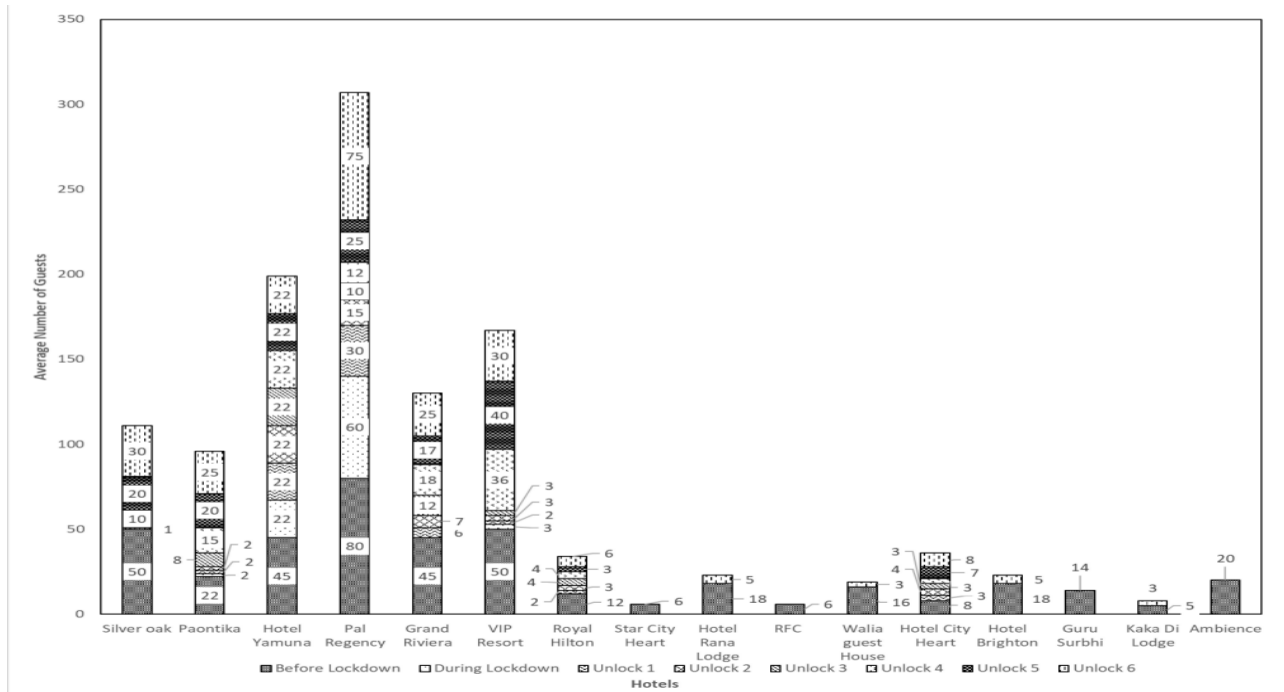


Figure 3 Percent Reduction in income during different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different salons

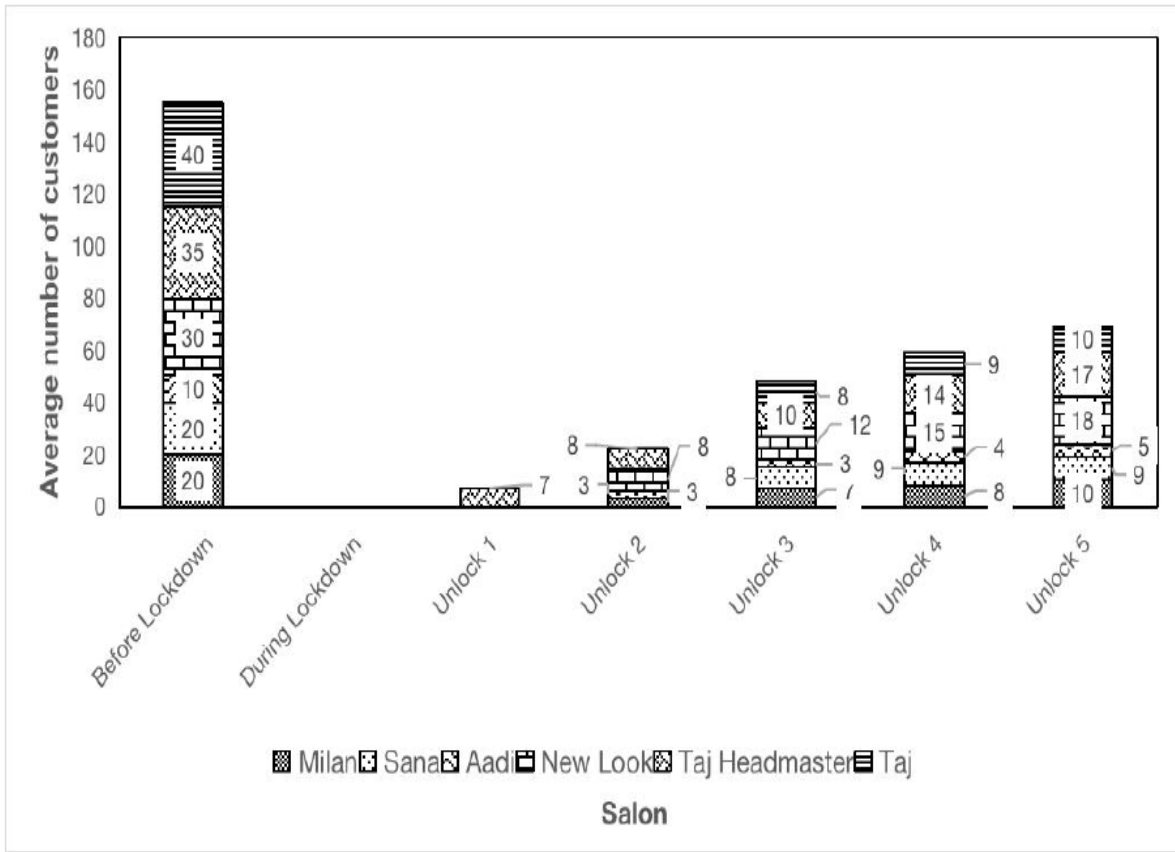


Figure 4 Changes in average customers in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different salons in Paonta Sahib

The data from Table 2 shows the variation in average profit/loss during different phases of lockdown and unlocks for surveyed hotels in Paonta Sahib. The majority of the hotels observed 100% loss during the lockdown and the trend continued until unlock 4. Only the hotels which were operating as quarantine centers were able to survive the unprecedented economic fallout. The hotels experienced a trend in the revival of profits starting from unlock 5. Nevertheless, the situation is much worse than pre-lockdown times. One of the local hotel owners reported during the survey that people are still in fear of COVID-19 and are hesitating on planning for a trip. Few hotels like Paontika, Pal Regency, and Hotel Yamuna were used as quarantine facilities during the lockdown and consequent unlocks, which provided much-needed revenue to survive during the lockdown. Hotel Rockwood was used as a quarantine facility but due to huge economic losses was later sold to Pal Regency Hotel group. Moreover, Hotel Paonta Valley also suffered huge losses and had to take the franchise of RFC group and renovate the hotel for the same. Hotels like Ambience, Guru Surbhi, and RFC (Formerly Paonta Valley) started renovation works after the imposition of the lockdown and were closed until lockdown 6. Owners were apprehensive about being able to keep paying rent, some owners who owned the property shared during the interview that the burden of not paying monthly rent was a big sigh of relief for them. Figure 1 shows the gross profit% of the surveyed hotels pre-lockdown, during the lockdown, and post-lockdown.

Results of statistical analysis from the non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test also corroborate these findings. The test is used to check for significant differences in profit percentage of hotels in pre-lockdown, during the lockdown and the 6 unlock phases in the post-lockdown era. The Kruskal Wallis test result turns out to be significant indicating the profit percentage in the hotel industry is not the same across the different phases (please refer to figure 5). Pairwise comparisons using Post-Hoc analysis reveal that there is a significant difference in profit percentage between pre-lockdown and during lockdown phases. Also, this trend of significant difference continues during the unlock phases – Unlock 1, Unlock 2, Unlock 3, Unlock 4 and Unlock 5 (please refer to figure 6). However, there is no significant difference in profit percentage between pre-lockdown and Unlock 6, indicating that the financial condition of the hotel & tourism industry seems to have recovered significantly during Unlock 6.

Table 3: Changes in average guests in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different hotels at Paonta Sahib

S. No		Before Lockdown	During Lockdown	Unlock 1	Unlock 2	Unlock 3	Unlock 4	Unlock 5	Unlock 6	Total Rooms
1	Silver Oak	50	0	0	0	1	10	20	30	16
2	Paontika	22	2	2	2	8	15	20	25	12
3	Hotel Yamuna	45	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
4	Pal Regency	80	60	30	15	10	12	25	75	20
5	Grand Riviera	45	0	6	7	12	18	17	25	21
6	VIP Resort	50	3	2	3	3	36	40	30	34
7	Royal Hilton	12	0	2	3	4	4	3	6	16
8	Hotel City Heart	8	0	3	4	3	3	7	8	8
9	Hotel Rana Lodge	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	16
10	Hotel Brighton	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	14
11	Walia guest House	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9
12	Star City Heart	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
13	Kaka Di Lodge	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7
14	Guru Surbhi	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
15	RFC	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
16	Ambience	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18

Above Table 3 shows the total number of rooms and the changes in the average number of guests pre-lockdown, during the lockdown, and post-lockdown for the surveyed hotels. All the hotels were completely shut during the lockdown except for those operating as quarantine facilities for the visitors

and suspected COVID patients (symptomatic and asymptomatic both). The situation was almost the same until unlock 4. Besides, some of the hotels suffered huge financial losses forcing them to completely halt their operations, some tied up with different hotel franchises and some even had to be sold. Some hotels like Ambience, Guru Surbhi, and RFC (Formerly Paonta Valley) started renovation works after the imposition of the lockdown and were closed until lockdown 6. There was a drop of almost 100% in terms of average guest occupancy during the lockdown and the situation has recovered only up to 40 – 80% occupancy rates for the surveyed properties. The graph in Figure 2 displays the average guest occupancy of the surveyed properties before lockdown, during the lockdown and during consequent unlocks.

Results of statistical analysis from the non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test also confirm the above findings. The test is used to check for significant differences in no of guests staying at hotels in pre-lockdown, during the lockdown and the 6 unlock phases in the post-lockdown era. The Kruskal Wallis test result turns out to be significant indicating the no of guests/boarders in the hotel industry is not the same across the different phases (please refer to figure 5). Pairwise comparisons using Post-Hoc analysis reveal that there is a significant difference in the no of guests between pre-lockdown and during lockdown phases. Also, this trend of significant difference continues during the unlock phases – Unlock 1, Unlock 2, Unlock 3 and Unlock 4 (please refer to figure 7). However, there is no significant difference in the no of boarders between pre-lockdown and Unlock 5 as well as pre-lockdown and Unlock 6, indicating that the hotel & tourism industry seems to have recovered significantly during the latter stages of unlock phases.

Table 4: - Change in staffs’ number in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different hotels at Paonta Sahib

Hotels	Staff before locked down	Staff left the job due to locked down	Staff kept at half salary	Staff sacked	Current staff (November 2020)
Silver oak	30	15	2	0	25
Paontika	4	3	0	0	3
Hotel Yamuna	14	0	0	0	14
Pal Regency	25	15	10	0	25
Grand Riviera	21	6	0	0	15
VIP Guest House	15	0	0	0	15
Royal Hilton	30	2	19	10	22
Star city heart	2	2	0	0	3
Rana lodge	8	8	0	0	6
Rajasthan Food Centre (RFC)	30	27	0	0	3
Walia guest house	4	0	0	0	4
Hotel City Heart	2	0	0	0	2
Hotel Brighton	9	0	0	9	0

Guru Surbhi	9	7	0	0	2
Kaka Di Lodge	4	2	0	0	2
Ambience	15	8	7	0	10

The above Table 4 shows the change in staff’s number during different phases of lockdown and consequent unlocks in different hotels of Paonta Sahib. It shows that before lockdown there were around 25-30 working staff in medium scale hotels whereas around 10 working staffs were there in small-scale hotels. Both medium and small-scale hotels were affected by the lockdown forcing most of them to lay off or keep their staff working at half salary during the affected time. Some of the staff left their job during the pandemic to go back to their hometown, following the trend of reverse migration observed all over the country. In most of the hotels surveyed almost 50% of the staff either left their job or got laid off during the lockdown. Most of the workers do not have any financial support from their family and some owners divulged concern that they will not be in a position to sustain the businesses in the coming times if the conditions remain the same. Few of the owners mentioned during lockdown they faced difficulties in paying rent and 1/3rd was not in a position to pay rent beyond one or two months. The workers leaving the job felt that it was plausible that their employers would employ them again after the situation became normal. Owners interviewed told they did not plan to lay off any staff but the uncertainty when businesses would be able to reopen forced them to sack, keep them at half or no salaries until restrictions lifted. The main concerns, which the owners had about reopening, were a) Health & Safety of both employees and customers; b) Reduced customer base; c) Reduced Income.

For statistical analysis on the no of staff employed by the hotel industry across the different phases, we have considered pre-lockdown, during the lockdown and all the unlock phases together as post-lockdown. The Kruskal Wallis test result turns out to be significant indicating the no of staff employed in the hotel industry is not the same across the different phases (please refer to figure 5). Pairwise comparisons using Post-Hoc analysis reveal that there is a significant difference in the no of staff employed between pre-lockdown and during lockdown phase as well as between lockdown and post-lockdown phase. However, there is no significant difference in the no of staff employed during the pre-lockdown and post-lockdown phases (please refer to figure 8). This indicates that even though the no of staff employed by the hotel industry decreased during the lockdown, the situation seems to have improved considerably in the unlock / post-lockdown phases.

Table 5: Percent Reduction in income during different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different salons in Paonta Sahib

Name of the Salon	% Reduction in income					
	During Lockdown	Unlock 1	Unlock 2	Unlock 3	Unlock 4	Unlock 5
Milan	100	60	60	40	30	30
Sana	100	80	60	50	50	50

Aadi	100	100	70	70	60	50
New Look	100	100	90	80	60	50
Taj Headmaster	100	80	80	70	60	50
Taj	100	100	100	80	80	70

Above Table 5 illustrates that during lockdown all the six salons surveyed experienced a 100% dip in their incomes. In Unlock 1 salons were allowed to open but with certain conditions and restrictions. About 50 % of the salons interviewed hesitated to open in Unlock 1 and waited for further time hoping for the pandemic to fade away. The graphs in Figure 3 represent the reduction in income the surveyed properties suffered during and after the lockdown. People were also hesitant in going to the Salons due to which businesses suffered huge losses. However, with the gradual opening of the economy through different unlocks losses started to decrease but still have not reached pre-lockdown levels. The table above showcases a decreasing trend observed in percentage reduction in income. Moreover, businesses had to mince out extra expenses for sanitization and safety purposes leading to additional expenditure. Also, to cover up the losses mounted during the lockdown salons had to increase their prices.

Table 6: Changes in average customers in different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different salons in Paonta Sahib

Name of the Salon	The average number of guests						
	Before Lockdown	During Lockdown	Unlock 1	Unlock 2	Unlock 3	Unlock 4	Unlock 5
Milan	20	0	0	3	7	8	10
Sana	20	0	0	0	8	9	9
Aadi	10	0	0	3	3	4	5
New Look	30	0	0	8	12	15	18
Taj Headmaster	35	0	7	8	10	14	17
Taj	40	0	0	0	8	9	10

Data from Table 6 highlights the plight salon owners experienced during the lockdown. The average number of guests dropped to almost 0% and at the time of the survey, visitor frequency was observed 50% in comparison to pre COVID-19 times. The above table affirms the similar trends observed during the complete shutdown of the economy. The graph in Figure 4 compares the average guest occupancy observed pre, during, and post lockdown. The average occupancy rates in salons before and after lockdown shows a remarkable decrease mainly due to safety concerns and fear of infectious disease. Vulnerable populations like senior citizens, people with medical conditions due to safety concerns avoided visiting the salons, moreover, some preferred to call the dressers to their homes only.

Table 7: Change in staffs' number during different phases of lockdown and unlocks at different salons in Paonta Sahib

Name of the Salon	Number of staff						
	Before Lockdown	During Lockdown	Unlock 1	Unlock 2	Unlock 3	Unlock 4	Unlock 5
Milan	5	0	0	3	3	3	3
Sana	7	0	0	0	2	2	2
Aadi	3	1	0	2	2	2	2
New Look	6	0	0	2	3	3	4
Taj Headmaster	8	0	4	4	4	4	4
Taj	5	0	0	0	3	3	3

Table 7 shows during lockdown 84% of the salons either laid off the staff or sent them on unpaid leave. In unlock 6 the situation hasn't revived forcing them to reduce the number of employees. The economic fallout dealt out due to the pandemic forced small businesses to even completely shut down even after the unlocking of the economy started.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of profitpercent is the same across categories of phase.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Guests is the same across categories of phases.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Staff is the same across categories of Phase.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.				

Figure 5: Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for different measures (guests, staff & profit percentage)

Pairwise Comparisons of phase

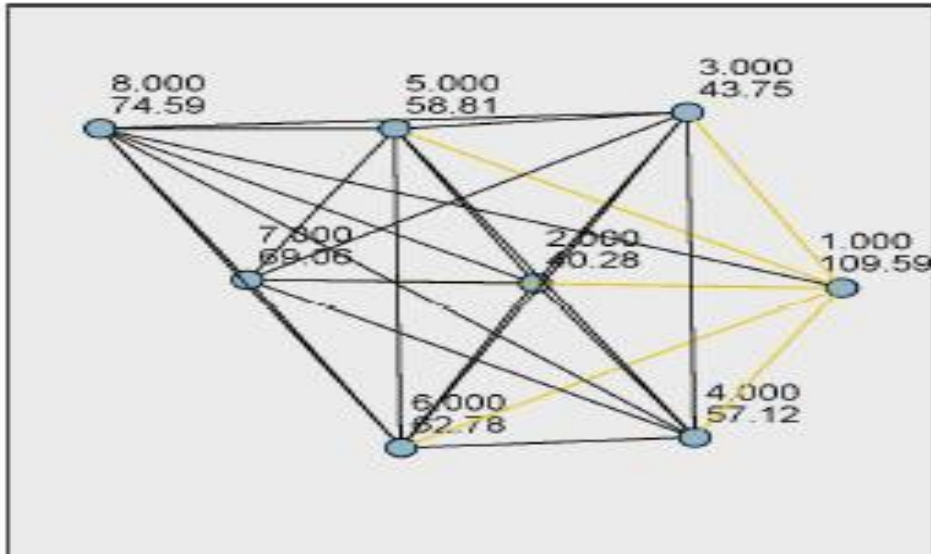


Figure 6: Pairwise comparisons between different phases for profit percentage

Pairwise Comparisons of phases

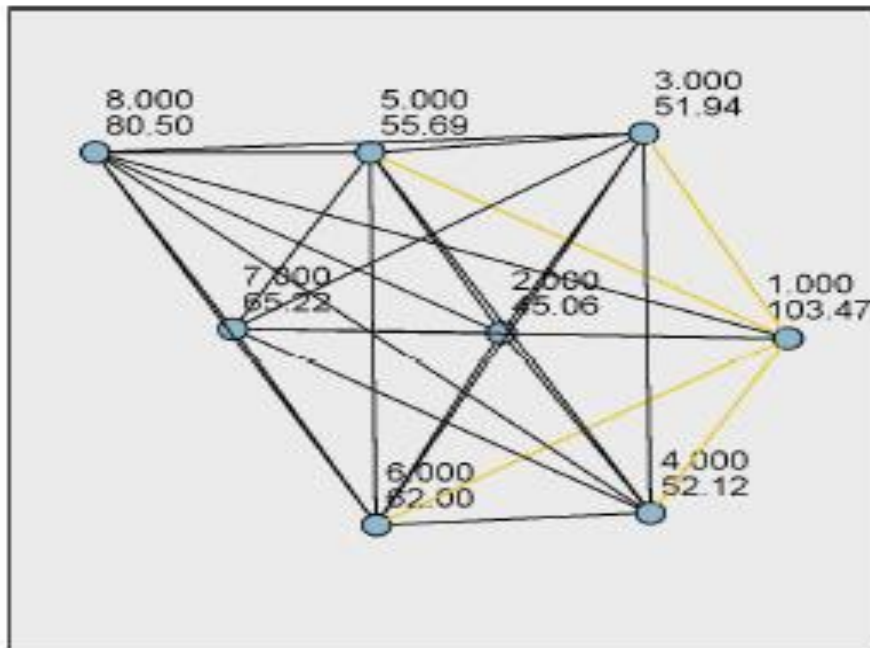


Figure 7: Pairwise comparisons between different phases for guests/ boarders

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj.Sig.
2.000-3.000	-15.125	4.891	-3.092	.002	.006
2.000-1.000	20.688	4.891	4.230	.000	.000
3.000-1.000	5.562	4.891	1.137	.255	.766

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 8: Pairwise comparisons between different phases for staff employed

Recommendation

Table 8: Descriptive Information on Findings and Recommendations

S. No	Place	Objective	Findings	Recommendations	Reference
1	Indonesia	To explain changes in the tourism sector as a result of COVID-19	Pandemic pushed the tourism industry into hibernation, the stakeholders who suffered losses, migrated to other sectors and sought alternative employment	The tourism industry must be creative and imaginative while strengthening its ability to adapt to change to deal with future pandemics.	Kristiana et al., 2021
2	Ghana	To investigate the socioeconomic and environmental effects of the COVID-19 on Ghana's eco-tourism sector	The loss of livelihood was the pandemic's most significant socioeconomic impact. The environmental effects, on the other hand, were mixed — both positive and negative.	Local businesses affected by the pandemic be offered prompt measures, such as stimulus packages. Efforts should be made in the long run to diversify the local economy and boost domestic tourism in the country.	Soliku et al., 2021

3	Kashmir, India	To study unprecedented socio-cultural and economic repercussions Kashmir's tourism industry is experiencing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic	Stakeholders have shifted their sources of income from tourism, to other possible sources. Pandemic had varying impacts on tourist destinations causing severe consequences for the economic development of Kashmir Valley	Recognizing the early effects of COVID-19 and collating estimates of the loss to the tourism business during the lockdown and beyond is critical to reviving tourism activities in Kashmir, which are critical to people's livelihoods.	Singh et al., 2021
4	England	Conducted surveys of tourism-dependent companies in English towns to investigate perspectives of adaptability in the crisis	tourism-dependent businesses were particularly vulnerable due to temporal contextual factors such as seasonal demand fluctuations, longer lockdown durations, and more unclear restarting timeframes, which would imply longer-term frailty for tourism-dependent businesses.	Developed a novel Business Resilience Composite Score, that allows scholars, professionals, and legislators to compare the resilience of the tourist and hospitality industry to other economic activities in metropolitan areas.	Ntounis et al., 2021
5	Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan	To investigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural mountain areas	Financial insecurity, drop in income, fear of losing jobs, and food shortages are some of the key issues that mountain communities involved in tourism are facing as a result of the coronavirus outbreak in the region.	Short-, medium-, and long-term strategies are needed to alleviate the effects of the pandemic and restore Gilgit-mountain Baltistan's economy.	Ali et al., 2020
6	Malaysia	To examine the impact of COVID-19 on	COVID-19's outbreak has had a significant and negative impact	Provision of the economic stimulus package to help the	Foo et al., 2020

		the tourism industry in Malaysia	on Malaysia's tourism business, with travelers from all over the world canceling bookings and delaying travel plans to Malaysia due to fears about the virus. Furthermore, the number of tourists has decreased as a result of Malaysian government travel restrictions and bans.	tourism industry stay afloat during this difficult time.	
7	India	Provides a multi-approach to solving the tourism industry's impending issues	Suitability, affordability, convenience, and understanding of the changing character of the tourist industry after Covid-19 are all important factors in attracting visitors. Hotels, airlines, tour operators, and government agencies must work together to harmonize priorities for long-term tourism sustainability.	A framework for tourism growth was created, along with a practical action plan focusing on safety and hygiene; government financial aid, boosting local handicrafts, developing standard protocols, utilization of digital services, etc.	Dash and Sharma, 2021
8	Spain	To assess Spanish domestic tourism's ability to alleviate the national tourist industry's crisis	The findings suggest that, while domestic tourism in Spain is likely to decline by 42.64 percent in 2019 due to lost revenue and travel anxiety, but still can generate 33 percent of pre-pandemic occupancy if 50% of	When incoming tourism drops to zero, relying on local tourism and reorienting outbound travel can be a successful approach for helping the tourism sector survive the crisis.	Arbulu et al., 2021

			outward tourism can be redirected to the domestic destinations		
9	India	To examine the effect of Covid-19 on the Indian tourism business.	The predicted loss of foreign tourists' arrival (FTA) for the following three quarters is around 2 million, 2.3 million, and 3.2 million, respectively.	The government can use the findings of this study to link foreign exchange acquired and employment and design measures to revitalize and promote hospitality and travel industries accordingly.	Arshad et al., 2021
10	Vietnam	To investigate how the tourism business in a developing country has been harmed as a result of many COVID-19 waves	All tourism businesses looked to be experiencing a rapid decline in the number of clients, tourism revenue, service facilities as well as workforce attrition, but the severity of the decline varied across the businesses studied. When compared to other stakeholders, travel agents and the lodging industry have suffered the most economic losses.	Key stakeholders' roles at various stages of the pandemic, for the development of a strategy and integrative framework for dealing with pandemic repercussions at various phases of the pandemic	Huynh et al., 2021

The COVID-19 emergence is now amongst the most consequential and catastrophic pandemics of the contemporary world. There is an urgent need to contemplate the revival course for the salon industry especially, the tourism industry is no stranger to crises affected by a disease. It has braved such like emergencies in the past; however, the present situation has been severely damaging. The sector won't be much the same after the pandemic ends and it requires special efforts from both industry and government to push recovery efforts.

The local hoteliers and salon owners during the survey expressed their pain in firing employees, shutting their property down, selling their businesses, etc. Moreover, during discussions received some recommendations for the economic recovery and revival of the businesses. The hospitality

industry wants some kind of buffer from the government to cover their operating costs and retain employees until the vaccination drive is concluded (T3 News Network, 2020). The tourism industry suffered the worst setback in over 100 years and the situation is yet to normalize even after a year of the outbreak of the pandemic. Provide hoteliers demand temporary respite on EMI, GST, PF, and subsidies for power and water charges until the conditions improve. The surveyed businesses almost on the verge of bankruptcy appealed to the government for launching schemes for providing interest-free loans for working capital (Huynh et al., 2021; Arshad et al., 2021; Foo et al., 2020; Soliku et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021) (Table 8). Already such loans exist for SME sectors, which requires more outreach and publicity. Moreover, people were not aware of where to get the required information, and few required special assistances in filling up the concerned forms. To meet COVID sanitation protocols and guidelines, small-scale enterprises require additional funds and support from the Government. The hotels in addition to fine dining should also start focusing on online delivery platforms and salons provide home services on-demand to lessen the impact of any future shocks. The hotel industry staff employed are from Himachal Pradesh or migrants from neighboring states like Uttarakhand, Haryana, and Punjab who come for employment opportunities. The workers were already poorly paid and the outbreak of pandemic furthered more economic difficulties on them. The sudden shutdown of the economy left workers struggling due to a gap in income generation, particularly the ones in sole-income earner families or the ones with relatives who lost their job during the pandemic. The workers do not have any kind of job security in comparison to public sector employees. In developed countries, employees sacked get unemployment allowances and benefits but that is not the same in India. For workers from poor families, economic burden overrides the health and safety risks, work is a necessity rather than a choice. Governments around the world have been showering in aid to boost local economies. Tourism industry warrants viable response from government to trigger market optimism and taper the threat from COVID-19 (Ntounis et al., 2021). Government's responsibility during these challenging times is to provide economic stimulus in the economy with the help of subsidies and also to boost sustainable revival and amelioration. Governments around the world launched interest-free loans, experimental financing alternatives, lax mortgages to support businesses facing acute working capital shortfall. Besides spending on upgrading health infrastructure, government should keep outlay for boosting tourism destinations.

Tourism industry and Salon industry need to be cautious in redressing and revival strategies. The situation concerning COVID-19 is still unfolding and the scenario is fairly unprecedented, so this study is inductive. Despite the government, arranging shelter and food for the migrants but then also migrants' emotions retorted to flee back to their hometowns even barefoot to cover hundreds of kilometers to reach their hometown.

Important learning that emerged was multiskilling of employees provides a prospective solution for employee retention in the long run. Employees should be skilled for unforeseen emergencies and preparedness in terms of maintaining a contingency fund are some pivotal learnings that need to be adopted from available studies (Jauhari et al., 2009). Focus on domestic tourism in the present times be more than ever and promoting eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, homestays. Tourism can emerge from the current crisis after reflection and recalibration to grow again and to grow better for people and the planet. As suggested by several hoteliers, in Paonta Sahib there is a huge potential for

recreational activities such as rafting, boating, recreational parks which will add to the number of tourists influx into the city.

The hotel and Salon industry exemplify a flourishing industry composed of small, medium and large businesses. COVID-19 has had damaging ramifications on both sectors and affected employers and employees alike. As the gradual reopening of the economy has already begun these both sectors will require not just innovative approaches to safeguard the healthiness of employees and customers but also adequate financial assistance to recommence sustainably. The current times showcases an opportunity to restructure the industry to make the sectors susceptible to any future shocks as this pandemic is only just a trailer, as suggested by various experts who warn for such outbreaks frequently in the near future. Businesses should:

- a) Follow comprehensive health and safety guidelines;
- b) Improve brand building with the help of social media (Facebook, Websites, etc.);
- c) Use visual marketing infographics to attract new clients;
- d) Get listed on Google my business, booking.com, make my trip, zomato, fatafat apps which will help potential new customers to find them online for the services provided
- e) Forming new partnerships and deals attracting new customer base;
- f) Use Referral schemes for word-of-mouth marketing
- g) For salon industry online appointments, be made the new normal to prevent overcrowding in the Salons.

Conclusion

The current study aims on investigating the socio-economic impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the livelihood of Hospitality and Salon sectors at Paonta Sahib, a small industrial town of Himachal Pradesh. The study undertook the help of one-to-one interviews (face to face) of respondents (Managers, Owners, Staff workers) from Hotels and Salons located in Paonta Sahib. A total number of 16 Hotels and 6 salons were surveyed for collecting primary data for the current study. The average guest occupancy of the surveyed hotels and guest houses experienced a dip of almost 100% during the lockdown restrictions. The occupancy rates till the time of the study had not yet reached the levels experienced before the pandemic. Except for the hotels being used as quarantine facilities, the rest surveyed hotels suffered 100% losses during the lockdown and till consequent several unlocks. Almost 50% of the staff working in the hotels either left and or got laid off from their job during the lockdown. These findings have been corroborated using statistical analysis using SPSS software. Amongst the salons surveyed, all of them experienced a 100% dip in their incomes and average guest occupancy during the lockdown. Tourism industry and Salon industry need to be cautious in redressing and revival strategies. The situation concerning COVID-19 is still unfolding and the scenario is fairly unprecedented. A precise determination of the financial repercussions of the ongoing unparalleled COVID-19 pandemic crisis for the travel, tourism and hospitality sector is therefore not possible. The current study is also important from the perspective of sustainable development goals: No Poverty (SDG1) along with Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG8). In other words, our current study tries to assess the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on these goals with respect to the tourism & hospitality industry.

To lessen commercial risks industry should look towards flexible pricing, and more innovative ways to attract customers. Renovating and refurbishing the premises to add extra layer of safety and steady shift towards implementation of technology to restrict contact. To cope up with unforeseen and unanticipated risks, insurance services provide some kind of relief to the businesses. Government's responsibility during these challenging times is to provide economic stimulus in the economy with the help of subsidies and also to boost sustainable revival and amelioration. Interest-free loans, experimental financing alternatives, lax mortgages will support businesses facing acute working capital shortfall during these challenging times.

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