

# BOTT

## Business of Travel Trade

TOURISM | MICE | HOSPITALITY | AVIATION | LIFESTYLE  
BOTTINDIA.COM

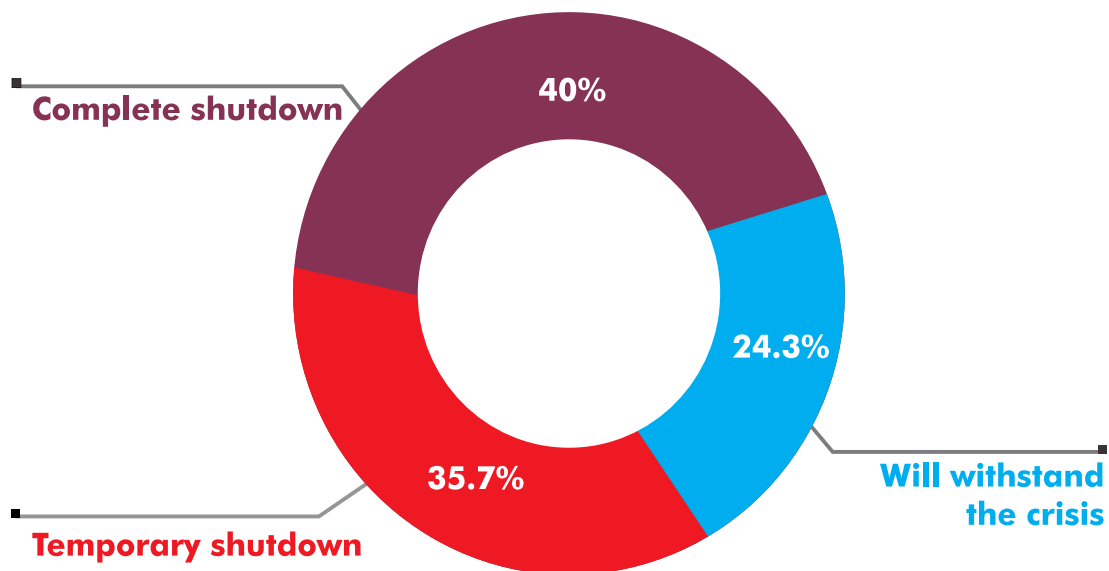
### 40% Travel & Tourism Companies stare at a shutdown

#### BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker

Supported by



What is the likely impact on your company/enterprise if things do not get better in the next **3 to 6 months**?



**Respondents:** 2350 Tourism & Travel Professionals  
**Profile:** Business Owners and Company Representatives  
**Note:** Respondents are members of 7 National Associations of Tourism & Travel Trade representing different segments

**Survey Period:**  
 May 10th - May 20th, 2020

\*T&C

EXPERT TALK

SHORT NEWS

FAB40s

GM SPECIAL

ASSOCIATIONS  
IN ACTIONS



(Jirang Buddhist Monastery, Chandragiri)

**15 Buddhist sites.** 6 Jain sites. 1,000 temples. 15 museums.  
11 beaches. 15 waterfalls. 8 lakes. 19 sanctuaries. 24 islands..  
**there's a surprise at every corner.**



**ODISHA**  
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET.



*Dear Friends,*

These are exceptional times – a time none of us would have expected, a time whose tales we will tell our grandchildren, a time when economy and businesses were low but spirits high and the complete focus was on “survival”. Many of us has been in a state of ‘lockdown’ for as many as 100 days now and there are many lessons one has learned during those times. We have all learned to be a bit more resilient, less complaining, more self-dependant or ‘atmanirbhar’ as many say and most of all, appreciative of small pleasures of life. Family time has taken an all new meaning and fun time has been completely redefined with in-house and online entertainment!

However, that does not mean that we have forgotten the losses at work, loss of life happening around the world and the severity of the effect on the tourism industry, which was the first to be hit and will probably be the last to recover. Not just the major players such as hotels and airline operators, the smaller stakeholders – the guides, the campers, those small shop owners in numerous hill stations who would be inundated with traffic during the summer season – all are fighting to stay afloat, in the hope for a better future, maybe next year now... when tourism will bounce back...

Because we will bounce back – there is no doubt about it. People are yearning to travel and as per the findings of the BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker, a good 60% of people are keen to travel once the curve of the pandemic has been flattened in India and around. Maybe the big fat Indian weddings and MICE segment will take some time to recover and maybe even the outbound travel will slowly crawl to normalcy but as for Domestic Travel – there will be no stopping people to pick their car and go to the nearest tourist joint / hill station / resort to enjoy a break.

So friends, sit back and hold tight, have faith and be assured – the good times will return. The world will surely travel once again and perhaps like

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



never before – the jobs will grow and so will the income bracket. This too shall pass... In the meantime, sit back and let BOTT take you on an interesting and incisive digital journey, keeping you abreast with all the latest happening in the tourism sector and also insightful interviews of some young tycoons from the industry. Thus, go through our digital copy and please feel free to share your criticism and feedback with us.

*Please do send us your feedback at [priyanka@bottindia.com](mailto:priyanka@bottindia.com)*

*Priyanka Saxena Ray*

# Contents

Editor  
Priyanka Saxena Ray

Assistant Editor  
Arushi Bajaj

Sub Editor  
Meghna Rai

Layout Design  
Jagraj Chauhan

Marketing  
Diptesh Singh

**Published and Printed by**  
Rai Umraopati Ray on behalf of More Media Pvt. Ltd.  
B6, Ground Floor, Kalkaji,  
New Delhi-110019.

**BOTT INDIA Head Office**  
C-16, LGF, LSC, Block C  
Market  
Paschimi Marg, Vasant  
Vihar,  
New Delhi: 110057

**Email:** info@bottindia.com  
**Phone:** 011-42750360

*Disclaimer:- All information is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. Opinions/ views expressed by third parties in abstract or in interviews are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the book cannot be reproduced in whole or in part(s) without express permission from publisher. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any loss caused by any delay in publication, error or failure of advertisement to appear.*

## Features

### p6-7 Short News

### p8-9 #Stay Positive

Industry veterans come forward and share their “positive mantra” with BOTT in an endeavour to keep everyone around them motivated and positive.

### p10-19 COVER STORY - PART I BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker

Phase-II of the BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker, which was conducted in partnership with India's top 7 National Associations of Tourism and Travel, unveiled the grim condition of our industry. Read on to know the findings of the survey...

### p20-22 EXPERT TALK

Girish Kwatra, CEO, Meetings and More and Hony. Secretary, ICPB, is a MICE expert who understands the industry better than most. In this section, he outlines what will be the “new rules” of the “new MICE” era...

### p23-25 FAB 40s

- **Ravi Gosain** is a dynamic person who has not forgotten his roots. In an exclusive chat he shares details of his childhood, his passion to be an entrepreneur always and his NGO through which he is giving back to the society.





# Contents



- **Siddharth Jain**, started his entrepreneurial journey right after school with small business assignments before entering a corporate world of travel and hospitality. Here's a look at his entrepreneurial journey...

## **p26-31 COVER STORY - PART II**

BOTT India decided to help the Travel Industry with a transparent and authentic Consumer Survey that presented a genuine picture of what awaits them when the lockdown will eventually open. Read on to know the findings of the survey...

## **p32-33 GM SPECIAL**

An Industry professional with over 20 years of experience, Ashwani Kumar Goela, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, is a thorough optimist, who believes in learning from every challenge life throws his was.

## **p34-35 HOSPITABLE HOTELS**

Shobha Mohan, Founder, RARE India shares how the hotel industry - especially mid-segment, has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## ITC Grand Bharat and ITC Rajputana prepare to welcome guests

As part of a phased re-opening, ITC Grand Bharat and ITC Rajputana prepare to welcome guests with the assurance of stringent health, safety, and hygiene measures. Reinforcing its globally acknowledged Responsible Luxury ethos, the two hotels open doors with ITC Hotel's 'WeAssure' initiative. "Keeping in mind the present circumstances, we have strengthened our service standards even further through the 'WeAssure' initiative. These assurance certifications will stand testimony to the rigorous hygiene protocol being put in place to ensure the safety of guests and associates at ITC Hotels across India," said Benita Sharma, Area Manager - North (Luxury Hotels) & General Manager - ITC Maurya.



## Shangri-La Group introduces enhanced hygiene protocols under "Shangri-La Cares"

The Shangri-La Group is introducing the "Shangri-La Cares" commitment which elevates its already rigorous hygiene and safety protocols for all properties worldwide. As people look to travel in the future, health, safety and sustainability will remain top of mind, particularly as the world continues to react and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Shangri-La Cares" reinforces the Group's commitment to caring for people, as well as its distinctive Asian hospitality as it begins welcoming guests back to hotels and resorts. All new procedures and protocols form the cornerstone of an ongoing commitment which will be introduced globally in June 2020 to ensure guests' safety.



## Lemon Tree Hotels announces its new initiative - Rest Assured

Lemon Tree Hotels announced the launch of their program Rest Assured, an initiative showcasing the company's commitment to creating an environment focused on health, hygiene, safety and wellbeing, in partnership with Diversey. Mr. Vikramjit Singh, President, Lemon Tree Hotels, stated, "The safety and wellbeing of our guests and team members is of the utmost importance to us, and we want everyone to rest assured that they are in safe hands. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and adapt, amend or enhance this initiative as the situation evolves." Under Rest Assured initiative, the company has executed a new set of house rules and preventive measures, to be followed by guests, visitors and team members.



## CapaJet to operate special repatriation flights on Mumbai-Sydney & Bengaluru-Christchurch

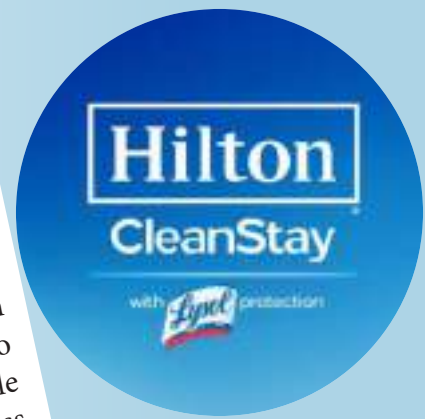
CapaJet is committed to provide high-end service and a comfortable flying experience to its flier. To ensure this, the company has selected Singapore Airlines to operate its long haul Asia and APAC repatriation mission. CapaJet is on track to repatriate over 5000 people by the end of June. While operating the repatriation flights, CapaJet will be ensuring & adhering to the latest international aviation guidelines - the aircrafts will be sanitized, temperature screening will be done for each passenger and the crew will ensure all these stringent guidelines are being followed.





### Hilton CleanStay brings new standard of cleanliness worldwide this summer

Hilton has begun a worldwide roll-out of a new program to deliver an industry-defining standard of cleanliness and disinfection to Hilton properties. Hilton CleanStay, created in collaboration with Lysol and Dettol maker RB and Mayo Clinic, includes new procedures to help Hilton guests enjoy an even cleaner and safer stay starting this summer. Hilton and RB have expanded this partnership to support the global portfolio of hotels and the trusted RB family of products will be used in multiple markets around the world. Hilton CleanStay will be implemented across Hilton's 18 brands by mid-July.



### Switzerland opens tourism; BLS Navigation starts selective operations of Boats

Switzerland, which currently is one of the safest countries, has announced opening tourism businesses with cautious optimism. BLS navigation, who own and operate boats on Lake Thun and Lake Brienz in the famous Interlaken region of Switzerland, announced selective resumption of operations for tourists from beginning of last week. Making the news, Mr. Kaspar Stettler, Head of Sales BLS Navigation said, "We are happy to resume our Interlaken Lake Cruise operations with necessary precautions and are operating our boats from various locations popular with tourists & local visitors, including restaurant services on the boats."

### Thomas Cook, SOTC launch 'Assured' safe travel programme with Apollo Clinics

Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. along with group company SOTC Travel Ltd., jointly launched 'Assured' - a comprehensive programme to safe travel in the COVID-19 era. The companies have partnered with Apollo Clinics - a member of the Apollo Hospitals Group, to jointly set a benchmark for safety in travel. Thomas Cook India and SOTC, have spent the last few months talking to their customers to understand their concerns and priorities when it comes to travel in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant 75 per cent of the respondents of the Thomas Cook India & SOTC Holiday Readiness Survey stated that health & safety was their overriding concern.



### Sri Lanka Tourism opens for international tourists from August 1, 2020

Sri Lanka is ready to welcome global travellers from all countries starting August 1, 2020, following the country's successful containment of COVID-19. Ms. Kimarli Fernando, Chairperson of Sri Lanka Tourism, announced; "Sri Lanka Tourism will provide international visitors with the highest standards of safety as we embrace tourists from across the world to experience the beauty of our paradise island once more. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has put in place all precautions recommended by global health and travel authorities to re-open the country to tourists."





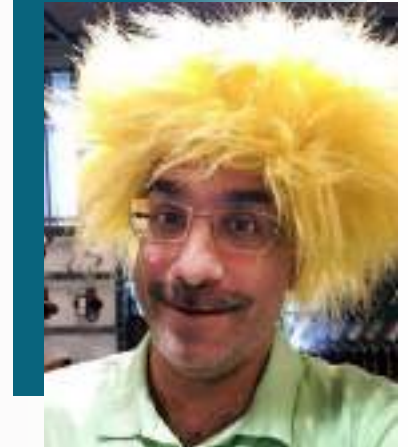
**Ankush Nijhawan,**  
MD, Nijhawan Group &  
Co-Founder, TBO Group

The opening of the Domestic flights and their smooth operations have given hope to the Tourism sector. It is a positive start where people are slowly and steadily becoming comfortable with air travel again. Seeing the trend, I am positive that International flights will also start soon (hopefully in July) and COVID-free regions will open their borders to each other. I am confident that travel will soon bounce back!



**Mr. Pronab Sarkar,**  
President, IATO

We have borne the maximum brunt of this pandemic and an industry of the size of Rs. 18 lakh crore is on the brink of collapse. Tourism industry was the first, which was affected even before the lockdown in the month of February, when the international flights and visa got cancelled starting with China, followed by Italy, Iran and Korea and then followed by all the countries. Lack of any mitigating announcement by the Finance Minister in the series of announcements made, only goes to show that government consider the entire sector not worthy of any attention. The neighbouring countries are already ahead of us in these measures and as and when inbound tourism starts we shall go down further in the wish list of travellers. We still hope the government would consider our plight and would come out with suitable measures alleviating our pain and would help to survive during the pandemic situation.



**Rajeev Kohli,**  
CIS, CITP, DMCP  
Joint Managing Director,  
Creative Travel

Those of you who are predicting doom and gloom are about to be proven wrong. Reports are coming in from all over the world that indicate a strong desire for people to not only travel but also travel internationally. Some reports even have consumers stating India as a preferred destination. So there is business out there. We need to go out and fight for it. So rather than sit and wait, start getting your plans ready. Humans are strange animals. Unpredictable. Travel is in our DNA. Let's make it happen.







**Capt. Swadesh Kumar,**  
President, ATOAI

Adventure Tourism is the only economic activity, which brings income to the remotest parts of India - where the poorest segments of Indian society live. The collapse of this industry will spell a tragic future for these most downtrodden segments of our society who otherwise have a subsistent livelihood from most marginal farming, especially in the mountains.

We are all aware that the coming months will stay dry for the tourism and hospitality industry with no cash inflow and negligible fresh bookings and travel plans. Things can only move towards being normal once there is either complete eradication of the virus or a vaccine that can save us from its effect - both of which does not seem to be anywhere on the horizon at the moment. Thus, the only hope is the relief from Government's fiscal package - on which we have not given up completely.



**Himanshu Patil,**  
Vice President, OTOAI

Many services and sectors around us have cautiously resumed operations. However, we must realise that people will take some time to plunge in the world of travel yet again. There will be safety concerns regarding mode of travel, accommodation, sightseeing - everything, and as their travel service providers, we will have to keep ourselves informed and abreast to handle any query that may come our way. So use this time to increase your knowledge and be prepared for future challenges.

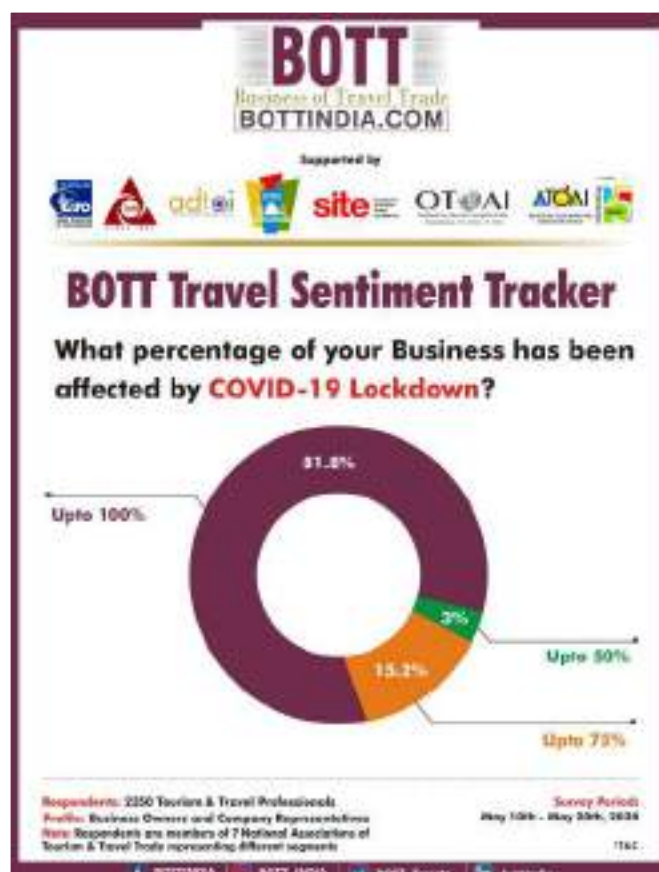
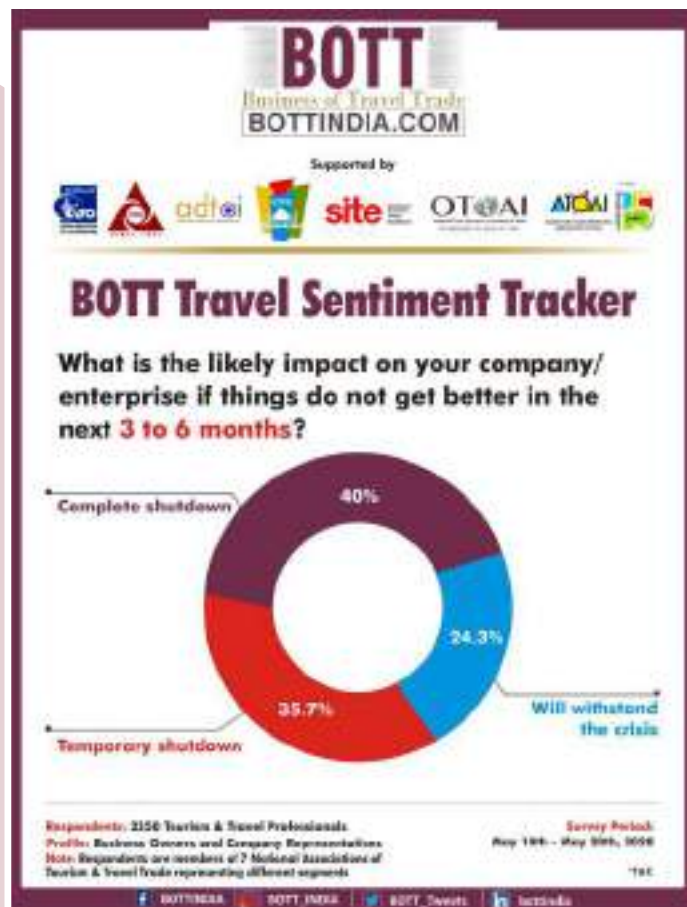


**Vineet Gopal**  
Joint Secretary OTOAI &  
Director Representation World

Hope is the one thing that sometimes keeps us going..... Hope can be a powerful force, especially in difficult times. Today, the world is facing the corona virus crisis, a pandemic that has changed life for millions of people. In times like these, hope can be a powerful source of reassurance for many who are locked at home, others who are working to help and prevent the virus, to many fighting their own battle of survival & to those fighting emotional ups & downs. It is one of the greatest trials our industry is facing in the midst of this global crisis. History has shown that the global tourism sector has always remained resilient. So we remain positive & hopeful that the tourism industry will survive this "we shall overcome this & confident that the sun will shine on us once again."

## 40% Travel & Tourism companies stare at complete shutdown in next 3 to 6 months

The BOTT Travel Tracker, which was conducted in partnership with India's top 7 National Associations of Tourism and Travel-IATO, TAAI, OTOAI, ICPB, ADTOI, SITE, ATOAI representing different segments, found that 81% travel and tourism companies have their revenue declined up to 100% due to COVID-19 impact.



### Key Highlights

**40%** Travel & Tourism companies face the risk of complete shutdown in the next 3 to 6 months while another 35.7% may go for temporary shutdown.

**81%** travel and tourism companies have their revenue declined up to 100% due to COVID-19 impact while 15% have lost revenue up to 75%.

**73%** Travel companies have gone for adjustment of workforce including pay cuts, deferment of salaries, termination of contracts, while 67% have gone for steps like reduction of overheads.

**About 38.6%** travel companies are going for job cuts and another 37.6% of the companies are considering the option.

**80%** of travel companies and professionals are not satisfied with Government's (Centre & State) efforts to address the tourism crisis created by Covid-19.



# BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker

**T**he Covid-19 pandemic has caused a complete havoc for the travel and tourism sector with as many as 40% of travel and tourism companies facing the risk of complete shutdown in the next 3 to 6 months while another 35.7% may go for a temporary shutdown. A recently concluded survey by BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker in partnership with — 7 National Associations of the country comprising IATO, TAAI, ICPB, ADTOI, OTOAI, ATOAI and SITE — has revealed that 81% travel and tourism companies have lost their revenue up to 100% while 15% of the companies have witnessed it slide up to 75%.

According to the BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker survey, where over 2300 travel and tourism business owners and company representatives participated over a period of 10-days, 38.6% travel companies are going for job cuts and another 37.6% of the companies are considering the option with uncertainty looming large.

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI (Travel Agents Association of India) says, “The Travel and Tourism sector is going through a very bad phase. It has taken a severe beating due to the COVID-19 outbreak with lakhs of people dependent on it suffering immense losses and job cuts. The survey has further confirmed our fear that travel companies are staring at partial and complete shutdown in addition to job cuts, adjustment of workforce in form of pay cuts, deferment of salaries and termination of contracts. This is an unprecedented situation and the government should extend some relief for the survival of thousands of companies.”



As per the survey, 73% Travel companies have gone for adjustment of workforce including pay cuts, deferment of salaries, termination of contracts, while 67% have gone for steps like reduction of overheads. About 49% are deferring their capital expenditures and interestingly, 41.6% companies are introducing new services. This clearly shows that companies are conserving cash in hand as business growth trajectory has come to a standstill.

As per the survey, 73% Travel companies have gone for adjustment of workforce including pay cuts, deferment of salaries, termination of contracts, while 67% have gone for steps like reduction of overheads. About 49% are deferring their capital expenditures and interestingly, 41.6% companies are introducing new services. This clearly shows that companies are conserving cash in hand as business growth trajectory has come to a standstill.



Stressing the need for immediate intervention by the government, Rajiv Mehra, Vice President, IATO (Indian Association of Tour Operators) says, “The pandemic has had an enormous effect on jobs and businesses in the sector and the travel industry is down totally with lots of uncertainty in the near future. It is the fight for survival for most of the travel companies. The Government should come forward to support the sector which provides employment to millions of people.”

About 78.6% of travel and tourism companies expect the Government to create a Tourism Relief Fund immediately, followed by 68.2% who want refunds of cancellations and advances of travel agents & tour operators from airlines. About 67.7% want the Government to lower the applicable GST rates by 5% and 54.2% and 49.3% of companies and professionals want a moratorium on repayment of EMIs of principal and interest for term loans for 12 months and deferment of TDS deposit for 1 year respectively.

**Amaresh Tiwari, Vice-Chairman, ICPB (India Convention Promotion Bureau)** adds, "The tourism sector is immensely impacted and the sector needs a little hand holding by the government during this crisis. Coordinated support from key stakeholders is the need of the hour along with support in form of access to working capital, easing compliances and funding support. We hope and pray that things get better sooner than expected."

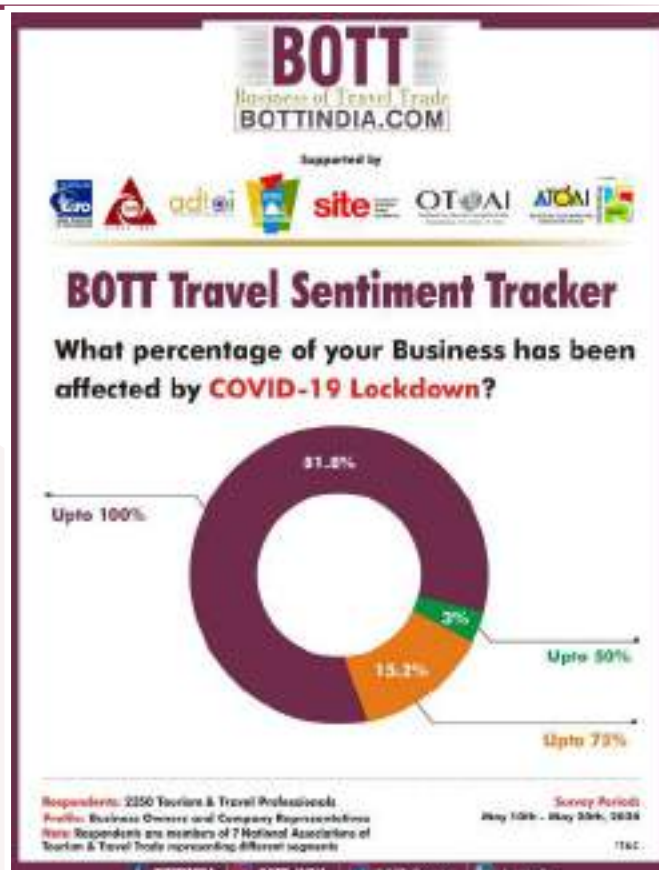


**Concurs Subhash Goyal, Chairman ASSOCHAM Tourism Council & Hony. Secretary, FAITH**, "I am seriously concerned about the small tour operators and agents and hope the Government does something fast before it is too late. We will definitely withstand the crisis because we believe that it is the darkest before dawn. Hopefully, with the starting of the domestic flights this month and international flights later in June, I see light at the end of the tunnel."

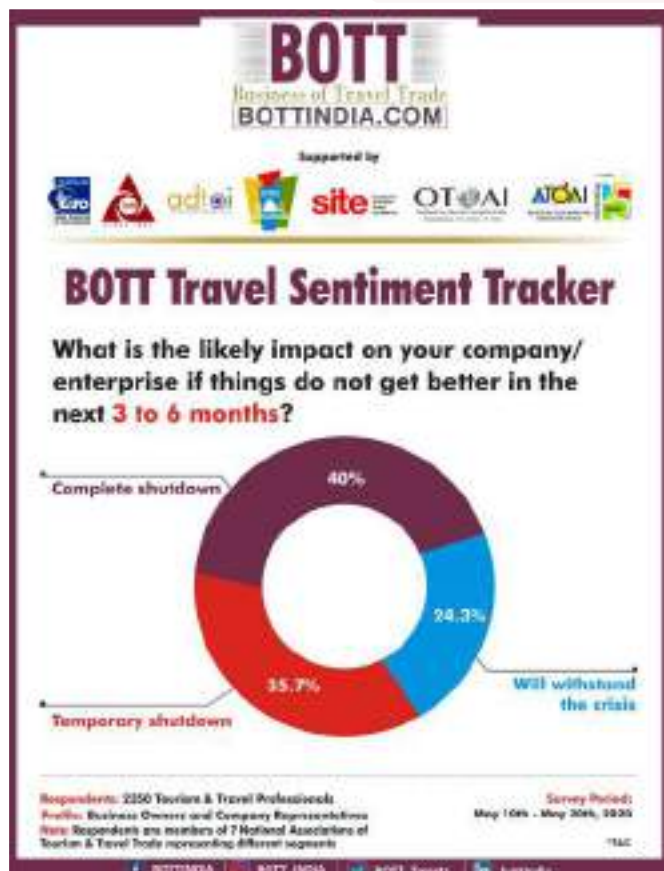
The survey also touched upon new travel trends like rise of solitary and Do-It-Yourself travel and innovations like popularity of touch-less technology, voice-activated services and more automation in the hospitality sector.

## Survey Findings: 1

A humongous 81% Travel and Tourism companies and enterprises have lost up to 100% of their business/ revenue since the Covid-19 lockdown has started. Over 15% of them have lost up to 75% of their revenue since the outbreak. This clearly shows that tourism sector has been one of the worst hit due to corona and the survival of India's travel, tourism and hospitality industry is hanging by a thread.





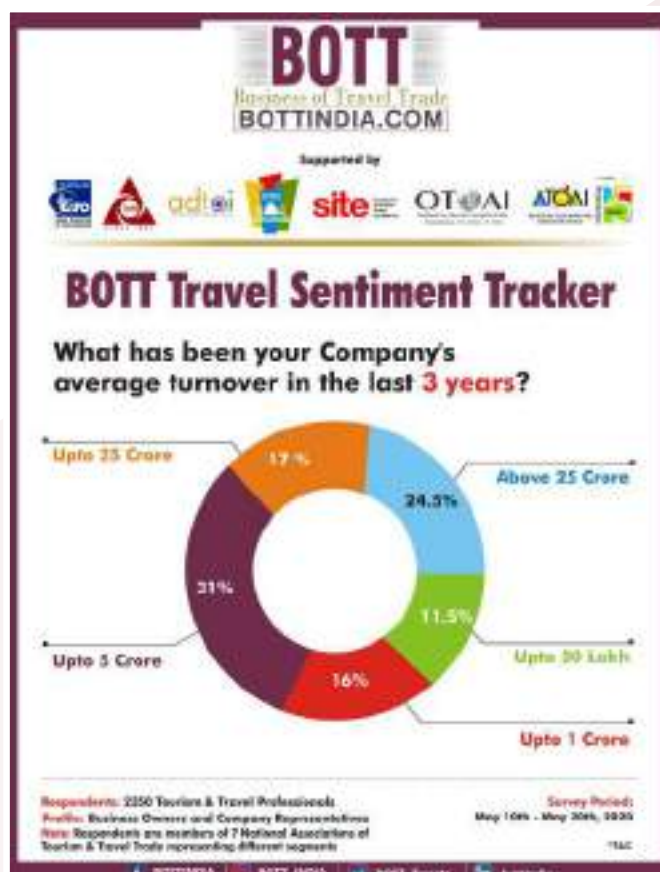


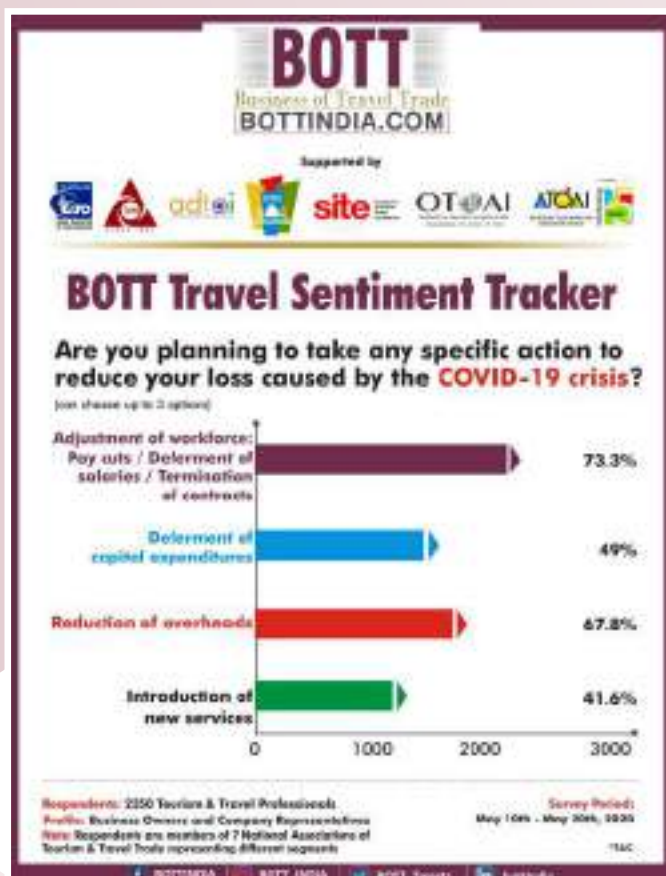
## Survey Findings: 2

According to the BOTT Survey, 40% travel and tourism companies and enterprises are staring at complete shutdown due to negligible revenue and depleting cash runway. Another 35.7% of them are considering for temporary shutdown till the market improves with no timeline in sight. About 24.3% of companies have geared up to withstand the crisis adopting various cost cutting strategies.

## Survey Findings: 3

Out of the surveyed companies and their representatives, there were about 24.5% who have an average turnover of above INR 25 crores in the last 3 years. About 17% who have up to INR 25 crores, 31% of them have turnover up to INR 5 crores and 16% and 11.5% who have turnover in the range of up to INR 1 crore and INR 50 lakhs respectively.



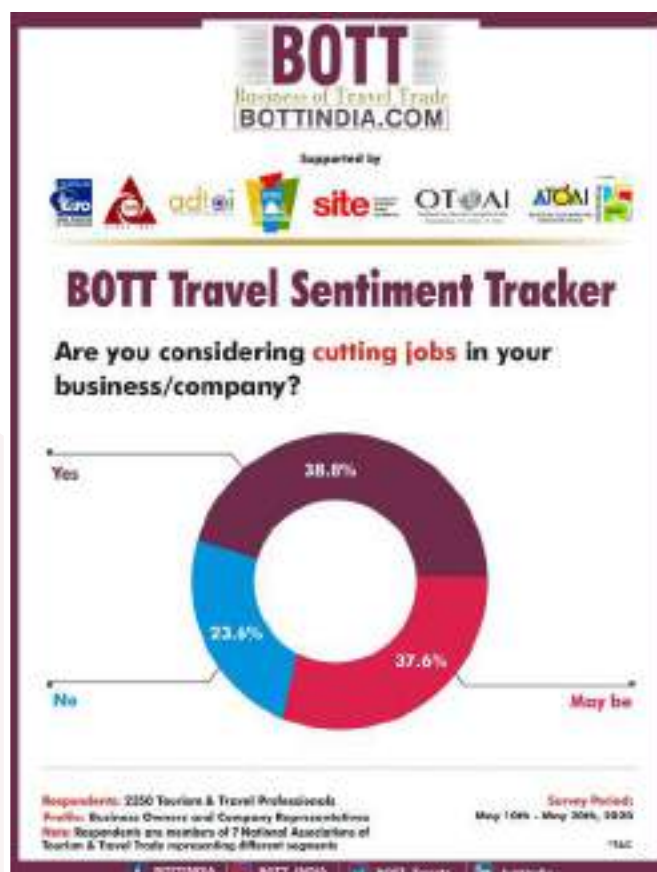


## Survey Findings: 4

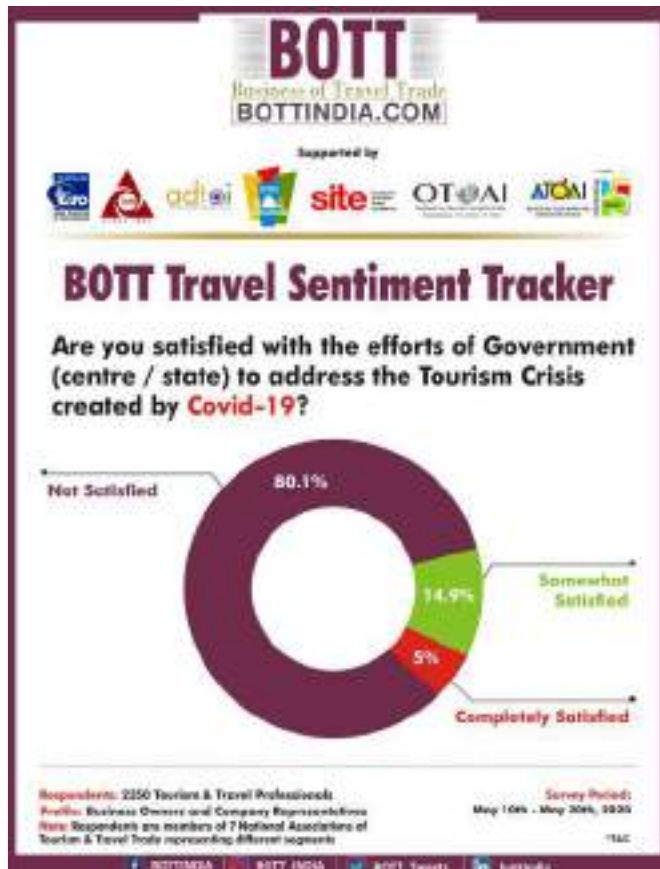
About 73.3% of companies and their representatives are taking steps like adjustment of workforce in form of pay cuts, deferment of salaries and termination of contracts. About 67.8% of them are reducing their overheads, 49% are deferring their capital expenditures and interestingly, 41.6% companies are introducing new services. This clearly shows that companies are conserving cash in hand as business growth trajectory has come to a standstill.

## Survey Findings: 5

About 38.8% of those surveyed are considering job cuts in their companies and enterprises, followed by 37.6% who may go ahead for this measure to manage the cash flows. A good 23.6% of them have no plans to cut the jobs for the time being.







## Survey Findings: 6

A huge 80% travel and tourism companies and professionals are not satisfied with the efforts of the Government (Both Centre & respective State) to address the tourism crisis created by Covid-19. A mere 14.9% of them are somewhat satisfied and a meagre 5% are completely satisfied with the actions of the government.

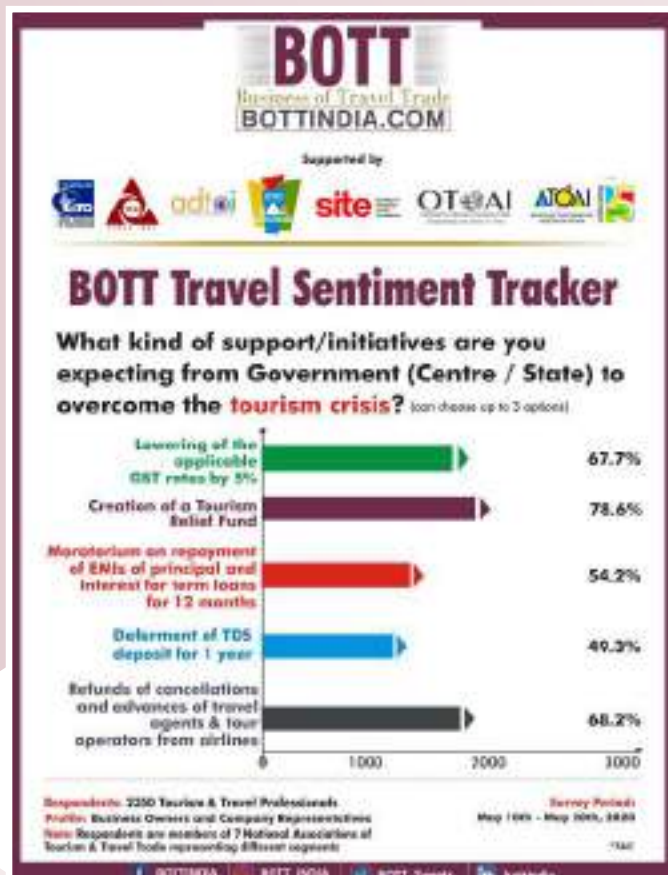
## Survey Findings: 7

About 41.1% of the travel and tourism companies are still hopeful that the Government (Centre & State) will come out with a relief/support package for tourism industry. Around 29.7% are somewhat hopeful and a similar set of 29.2% are not hopeful at all at this stage.



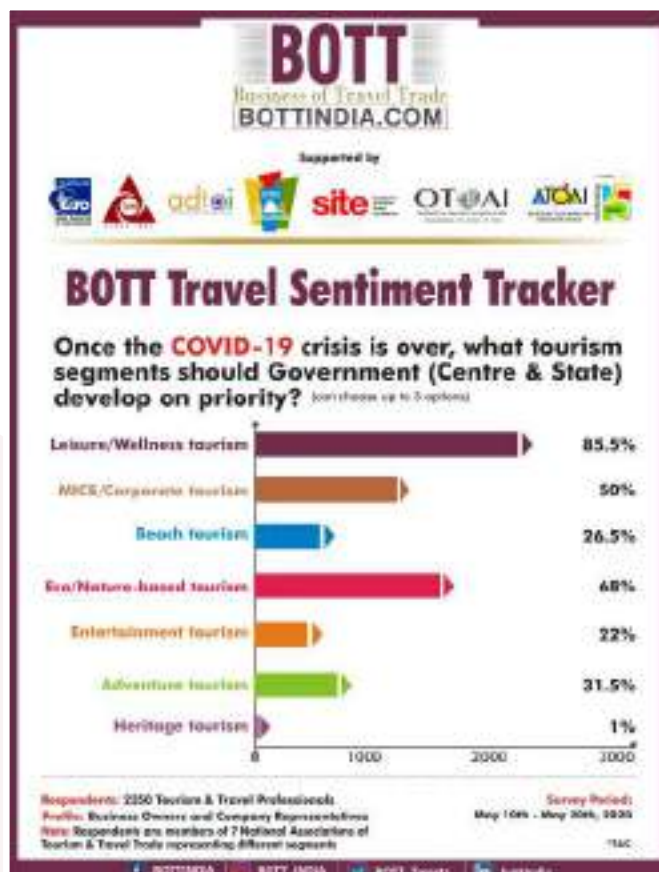
## Survey Findings: 8

About 78.6% of travel and tourism companies expect the Government to create a Tourism Relief Fund immediately, followed by 68.2% who want refunds of cancellations and advances of travel agents & tour operators from airlines. About 67.7% want the Government to lower the applicable GST rates by 5% and 54.2% and 49.3% of companies and professionals want moratorium on repayment of EMIs of principal and interest for term loans for 12 months and deferment of TDS deposit for 1 year respectively.

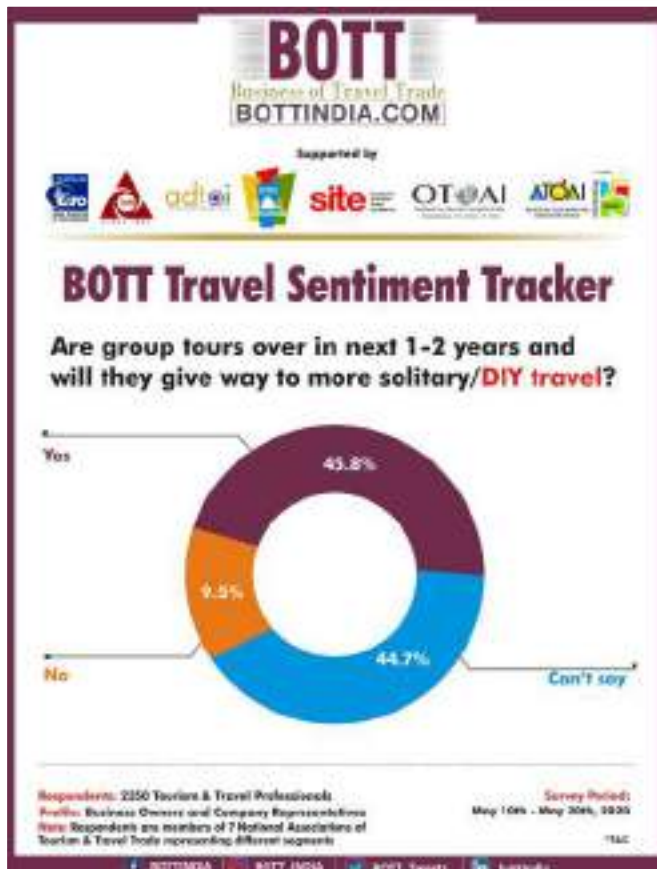


## Survey Findings: 9

About 85.5% of travel & tourism companies and professionals want the Government (Centre & State) to develop, promote and support Leisure and Wellness Tourism followed by 68% who wants Eco/Nature-based tourism. About 50% want to focus on MICE & Corporate tourism, 31.5% would go for Adventure tourism, 26.5% for Beach tourism and 22% for Entertainment tourism.





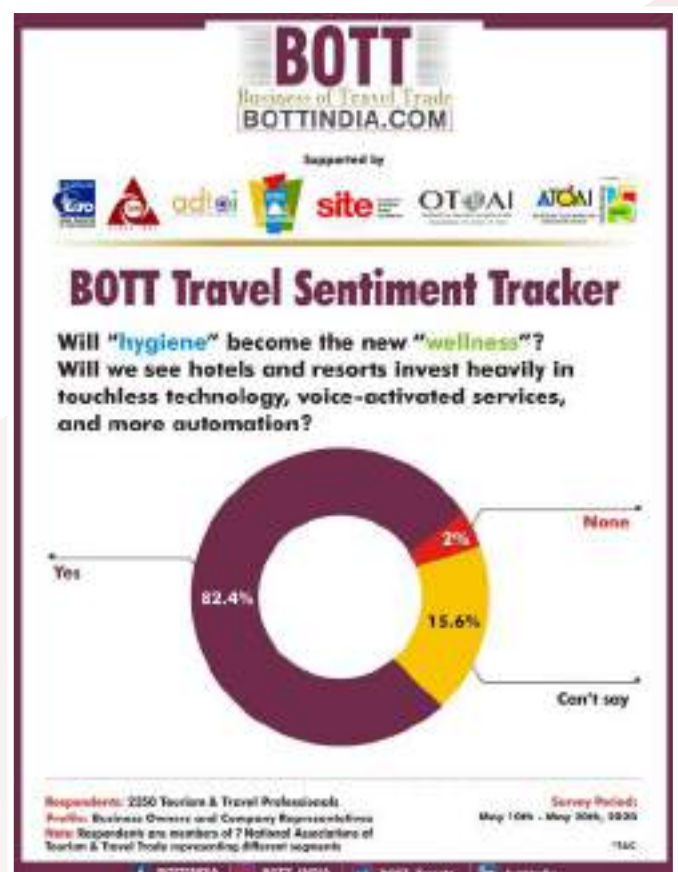


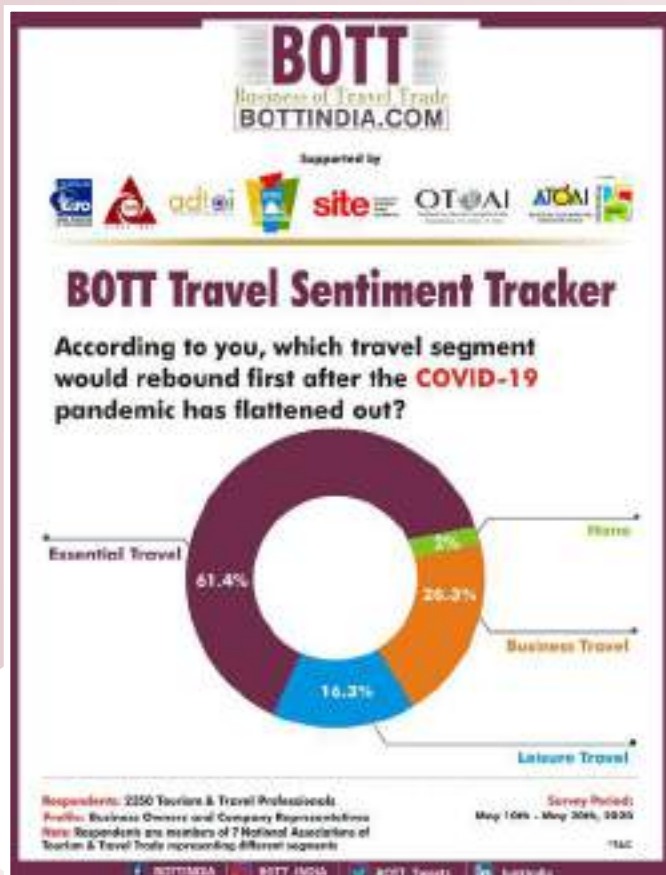
## Survey Findings: 10

Around 45.8% respondents feel Group Tours would be over for the next 1-2 years due to the Covid restrictions and precautions giving way to more solitary and Do-ityourselves travel. While about 44.7% of them cannot say at this moment since the future is uncertain but a mere 9.5% of them think that Group Tours are not over.

## Survey Findings: 11

About 82.4% of travel and tourism companies believe that hygiene will take precedence over everything and hotels and resorts will invest in touch-less technology, voice-activated services and more automation.





## Survey Findings: 12

About 61.4% of respondents feel that Essential Travel will happen first once the Covid-19 lockdown is over followed by 20.3% who believe that Business Travel will pick up. About 16.3% of them said that Leisure Travel will rebound first

### Why BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker?

The Covid-19 has cast a gloomy spell on the world that has stretched beyond geographical boundaries. The first half of 2020 would be remembered as one unique period where the spring colours were not enjoyed, the school exams and results per decided on partial performance, blanket ban on travel visas, the airplanes remained grounded and birds had the sky to themselves and an era where mankind came to a standstill – locked and confined in home with only talks of future to keep them motivated. One of the worst hit industries across the world has been travel and tourism. It's also one of the largest industries in the world, with \$5.7 trillion in revenue. It is responsible for an estimated 319 million jobs, or roughly one in 10 people working on the planet. Similarly, the Indian travel industry has already taken a huge hit due to travel restrictions and canceled trips for both business and pleasure with India being under national lockdown since March 24th, 2020. Amidst

this ambiguity and uncertainty, BOTT decided to take an innovative approach to gauge the sentiments of people with respect to travel and tourism initiating the first-ever, pan-India, Travel Sentiment Tracker in the country. The core objective behind BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker is to showcase a genuine picture of what is the ground reality in Indian Travel & Tourism sector.

### BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker — Phase I

BOTT (Business Of Travel Trade) had recently launched its BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker with the sole purpose to gauge and analyse the travel pulse of the country — the Ground Zero scenario. The First Report of BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker, which was to seek the mood of actual consumers/ travellers (those not directly related to the travel sector) gained a lot of traction and was well received by not only the travel trade tourism professionals but the Government of India, mainstream media and



policy makers also.

In our first BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker, we had approached about 8000+ verified BOTT readers and subscribers, in the age-group of 20 yrs – 60 yrs with keen interest in travel & tourism but are not associated with travel and tourism companies. This was done purposely to avoid any bias in the final results as a decent chunk of our readers are from travel and trade sectors. There were other markers as well like the profile, income levels, location, occupation segment, and age groups. We conducted the survey for over a period of 3-weeks, starting April 7 to 27, 2020. After cleaning the data using standard data analytics tools, we mined responses from over 5000+ verified respondents.

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker — Phase II

Following the success of its First Report, BOTT decided to commence Phase-II of its “Travel Sentiment

Tracker’ – this time with the travel trade of India. The goal of the survey is to assess the short and long term scenario of the travel trade tourism industry as well as their demands and action plans to thrive and revive post COVID-19 pandemic. We partnered with India’s top 7 leading Travel Trade Associations representing different segments of the industry to have wider representation, more comprehensive sample and pan-India connect.

The effort paid off as we received around 2400 + responses and after cleaning the data and verification, we had a very healthy sample of data.

Respondents: 2350 Tourism & Travel Professionals  
Profile: Business Owners and Company

Representatives Note: Respondents are members of 7 National Associations of Tourism & Travel Trade representing different segments Survey Period: May 10 – 20, 2020



## GIRISH KWATRA

## ‘Conferences will happen more in examination style rather than theatre or cluster style’

*The COVID-19 pandemic has left the world in a dire and grim state. Businesses – big or small have all been affected severely. However, the tourism sector has taken one of the biggest blows and MICE – Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions will take a long time to recover. Given the norms of “new normal” where social gatherings are a complete no-no, it will be quite a while before “meetings” will go back to the way they were. Girish Kwatra, CEO, Meetings and More and Hon. Secretary, ICPB, is a MICE expert who understands the industry better than most. In a detailed chat with BOTT India, he outlines what will be the “new rules” of the “new MICE” era...*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**Could you share with me a broad picture of your company operations – what is it that you specialise in?**

Meetings and More a PCO (Professional conference organizer cum Destination management company), with a Pan India presence in – Gurgaon – New Delhi – Chennai – Mumbai – Hyderabad – Bangalore – Kolkata. We provide avenues for people to engage, interact and exchange knowledge and we specialise in organising conferences, incentives, exhibitions and events. Our experience ranges from arranging small board meetings to large global events. We specialize in venue selection, contracting and negotiations with vendors, conference management, exhibition management, and global event planning. We tailor our services to the particular needs of each client. We are an impressive team of MICE professionals and give immense importance to attention to detail; continuous budget control and endless creativity to help you explore new venues and new ways to impress your clients or employees. Our professional team encompasses a variety of skills that make everything possible. Team M&M has handled conferences with participation from 50 to as many as 15000 delegates. Meetings & More is one of the very few PCO with ISO accreditation and with membership of ICPB, ICCA, SITE and IAPCO. Under the umbrella of Meetings and More, we have a specialised cell, where in we handle association management services (AMC) where we





*"Future of tourism is domestic (which is a huge segment), atleast for the next one year, as international meets will be very small in size, not only because of fear of travel, but also because of financial crisis."*

not only assist associations in managing routine affairs but also act as a catalyst in the growth of an association.

**How severely has your business been affected by COVID crisis?**

Just like everybody us is, we are also at zero business today. Most of the meetings are either being deferred or cancelled. We were running smoothly and did successful meetings up till March 1, 2020. However, the meetings from mid-March till September are not happening anymore. We had a mix of both National and International meetings lined up during this period, which are either called off by the clients for the moment or deferred. However meetings, post October are still on the books, we are in discussion with clients on hosting conferences, but it depends on the situation in next couple of months, we together with our clients, will take a call on this.

**We are in the midst of the "opening" phase where on one hand cases are growing and on the other hand, facilities are opening - in such a scenario, what future do you foresee for tourism in India?**

We hope and pray that the number of COVID cases comes down in next two months' time and the meeting spaces will open for conducting conferences from September 2020 onwards. We may start initially with state level meetings followed by zonal, and then national meetings could open, and thereafter as borders open, then international meetings may be opened.

Future of tourism is domestic (which is a huge segment), atleast for the next one year, as international meets will

be very small in size, not only because of fear of travel, but also because of financial crisis

**MICE Industry is the one that deals with crowds. How will that work given the restrictions of "social distancing"?**

We certainly feel there will be a big challenge in conducting the conferences in the 'New Normal way'. We, as a company, had to do several brainstorming sessions internally and were then able to form new processes and systems, wherein we will be able to do meetings while following the new normal way of hosting conferences, taking in to consideration safety of everyone – the client, attendees and our employees.

**What, in your opinion will be the "new normal" of MICE? What points would companies / organisers have to consider before hosting a meeting?**

This pandemic will also affect the participation of the delegates in the conferences, even when they start to happen. Conferences will happen more in examination style rather than theatre or cluster style. The proposed role of the professional conference may capture the below activities, as the lock down opens:

- Organising virtual meetings for clients, till the time no physical meetings are permissible, as per law of land, for different countries.
- After the lock down, opens, for first few months... Organising physical meetings with limited number of delegates and faculties, following the new normal way of meeting (following the physical distancing)

- Transmitting the same physical meeting on online platform. PCO will coordinate with those meetings and people who can't attend meetings, will send them a paid link, through which they can attend the conference from their own places through Live Transmission.
- The soft copy of the registration badges will be sent through an email and would have to take the printouts and get in to the conference. All lanyard with pouches will be placed at the common area, thereby NO ONSITE REGISTRATION at the venue, and avoiding all kind of physical contact.
- The meals will not be served in buffet, rather packed food will be distributed, from fixed counters, following physical distancing pattern.
- Providing safety kit at the conference venue that will include sanitizer, safety mark and one pair of gloves.
- Every delegate / visitor / staff to be treated as Corona positive, therefore thorough checking will have to be done, such as, using Robotic Thermal Scanners for Detecting body temperature at entrance to ensure the safe and risk free event.
- Medical Emergency desk to be must for very gathering, with all required medical facilities.

**What changes would the "Venues" be required to undertake in order to make the conferencing a "safe" experience?**

Venues will have to rework on their convention areas. They would need to provide a safe Conference environment and to ensure that people are not exposed to risks in terms of their health and safety. They will have to ensure that the event is safe and secure for all the staff and attendees.

- In the Post COVID era, venues will have to work on social distancing style of seating also with gap of 8 – 10 ft.
- They should have a separate entry and exit.
- They will have to prepare a sanitising tunnel as a mandatory aspect for entry to the convention areas.
- The meals will not be served in buffet, rather packed food will be distributed, from fixed counters, following physical distancing pattern.
- Safety kit at the conference venue that will include sanitizer, safety mark and one pair of gloves
- Every delegate / visitor / staff to be treated as Corona positive, therefore through , using Robotic Thermal Scanners for detecting body temperature entrance to ensure the safe and risk free event.
- Medical Emergency desk to be must for very gathering, with all required facilities

**Many MICE venues, globally, seem to be opening in a gradual manner. When do you think India will be ready to get into the MICE game again?**

Currently, we are assuming that MICE will start from September/October 2020. But in smaller numbers and following the new normal ways, as because of new meeting norms, venue would not have huge spaces to conduct big size meetings, however, we hope that vaccine will be out in the market by end of this financial year, and then, we will be able to do normal meetings.

**As ICPB Hon'y Secretary, how supportive, in your opinion, has the Government been in listening and implementing upon your requests / demands with regards to COVID crisis?**

As an ICPB office bearer, we are doing Knowledge sessions for our members, not only for current MICE business, but also on managing finances, general safety of homes and offices and surviving during these difficult times etc.

Most importantly, we have to understand that India is a very complex country wherein the primary agenda is to feed people, sending them to their respective home places, etc. However, we strongly believe that Government will provide us solutions in the long run. We have been doing sessions with Ministry of Tourism and are very confident that MoT is considering our requests and our demand and will definitely provide some relief to the MICE Industry as well as ICPB members. Not long ago, MoT has already launched champion sector scheme in these difficult times, which will be a big boost to international tourism business, as the borders are open for global meets.



## “There is no shortcut to hard work in life”

Priyanka Saxena Ray

**B**orn and brought up in Gwalior, the entrepreneur bug bit this young lad early in life. Always a good sports player – especially cricket, Ravi was clear from the start that he did not want a career in “services” like his father who was in the Air Force. “Saluting, no matter at whichever position you are because there is always a senior was a concept that never appealed to me. I wanted to be my own boss – be responsible for my own success and failure and not be bound to a hierarchy. As soon as I entered college and started my graduation in economics, the urge to become an entrepreneur started gripping me,” he reminisces.

He started a stock-broking company with a friend in this third year of college and it took off well. Ravi even came to Delhi for a few months to gain experience of working with a proper stock broker. A little later, the then Union Minister Tourism, Government of India, Late Madhav Rao Scindia announced the opening of the first IITTM in Gwalior and inspired the then impressionable Ravi to enter the world of tourism. “I did my master’s degree in tourism from Jiwaji University, Gwalior. The University would take us on study trip to West, North, South etc. and it was then that I decided to build a career in tourism.

Those were the times when we would be very fascinated with the foreigners.

I always loved talking to them and listen to their tales of travels – it gave me an insight into their lifestyle and culture,” he shares.

Ravi came to Delhi in early 1996 and worked for a couple of years in a tours and travel company before forming his very own – Erco Travels, starting with inbound business. From a small rented office of 2 people to now a staff of close to 40, it has indeed been quite a journey for this dynamic entrepreneur. Over the years his company has won two National Tourism Awards for FY – 2007 – 2008 and 2012 – 2013. Sharing his thoughts on entering the associations’ sphere Ravi says, “I was always an active member of the associations that I was a part of but it was in 2011 that I got elected as an EC member of IATO for the first time. In 2013 I became the joint secretary and then elected as Treasurer unopposed in 2018,” adding, “Going forward, I want to maintain what I am doing and I want to do more social work.”

Not many would know that Ravi manages an Uttarakhand based NGO called Nav Jyoti aur Samridhi Samiti, under which he runs a school for over 150 children since 2009 and a handcrafting centre for women. He is also the founder and President of an association called UTPA – Uttarakhand Tourism Professionals Association that currently has 250 members and was founded in 2016. The move was taken with the sole aim to develop tourism in Uttarakhand.

A complete family man, Ravi is an absolute fitness freak who loves to stay fit.



*He is unlike many other 40-something men that you would see in the travel trade – a teetotaller, humble, a man of limited words, firm beliefs and great values. Hailing from a small town, Ravi Gosain, MD, Erco Travels and Treasurer IATO, is a dynamic person who has not forgotten his roots. In an exclusive chat with BOTT India, he shares details of his childhood, his passion to be an entrepreneur always and his NGO through which he is giving back to the society.*



## “The ones who survive will be the ones most adaptable to change”

*Priyanka Saxena Ray*

**B**orn and brought up in Delhi, Siddharth is the youngest sibling out of 4 children, with a firm set of values in places instilled in his joint family upbringing. A sports lover from the start, he is well known in his family and friends' circle to be

the adventurous one who is always the first to come up with out of the box ideas. Creativity, they say, is his middle name!

Talking about his entry in the “working” arena he says, “My first Job was a month long summer job assignment, which I did during

*Born in a traditional ‘Baniya’ family where business acumen is instilled in the DNA, Siddharth Jain, CEO, Sapphire Ventures; Director, Chalo DMC and Director, Kazin Travel Consultants LLP started his entrepreneurial journey right after school with small business assignments before entering a corporate world of travel and hospitality. With the ever effervescent smile and positive attitude, Siddharth has indeed come a long way with a life partner to match his zeal. BOTT India is delighted to feature him in the Fab 40s section and share his journey with you...*





*Today, a consumer is spoilt for choice – be it online, offline, a traditional group tour operator or a personalised service agent/ consultant. Each segment has grown and given a growth opportunity to each and every person and this trend will continue for a very long time.*

summer holidays of my 12th class as sales boy of an automotive product and earned a small paycheck of Rs. 3000. My real earning was an interesting experience which motivated me to take up my next job immediately after 12th Class in the hospitality world as a language translator on Haj flights which were then operated by Tower air jointly with Air India. This particular job gave me insight into travel and hospitality world and finally decision to choose a career in the same. Also, I can't deny the fact that the glamour and opportunity to explore the world was an added attraction."

Back in 1997, Siddharth was fortunate to have a computer with an internet connection at home during college days, which is what exposed him to a world full of possibilities. Ideas started building up while he was in just first year of college and in 1999, he conceptualised a vision of building up his own travel website. "Soon I pooled in all my recourses and personal savings to build my travel website to serve foreign tourist coming into India. Believe it or not I started getting queries but soon realised my mistakes and lack of operational knowledge. Its then I decided to first learn the subject and enrolled for an IATA course in Mumbai. I was so obsessed that I decided to enrol without telling my family and against the odds and will

of my father, I started my journey in this industry. After completion of my course in 2000, I started my career in the travel industry to attain skills in all fields of the trade, be it operations, sales or business development. I was fortunate to work with few of top brands, such as, Carlson Wagonlit, HRG Sita, Air Sahara and Travel Guru. In 2007 I along with my wife Shalini decided to venture out to build our own brand and passionately created a retail agency – Click2travel. in," he reminisces. The company is now solely being managed by Shalini, his better half and in the last five years, he has completely shifted to B2B space with focus on selective destinations.

A forever optimist, Siddharth feels that the market has grown and so has the cake, which is now large enough to feed everyone in the industry. The technology has undoubtedly changed the complete dynamics of travel bookings but it has also filtered down to various market segments. Today, a consumer is spoilt for choice – be it online, offline, a traditional group tour operator or a personalised service agent/ consultant. Each segment has grown and given a growth opportunity to each and every person and he is certain that the trend will continue for a very long time.

"One of the biggest challenges we

face today is of our mind-set. Many tour operators and consultants have stopped believing in their ability to position themselves innovatively to distinguish demand their fee. Many of us have started to treat travel business as a commodity selling business where as it's all about experiences, Experience for a customer starts from buying process till he returns with happy memories," he asserts.

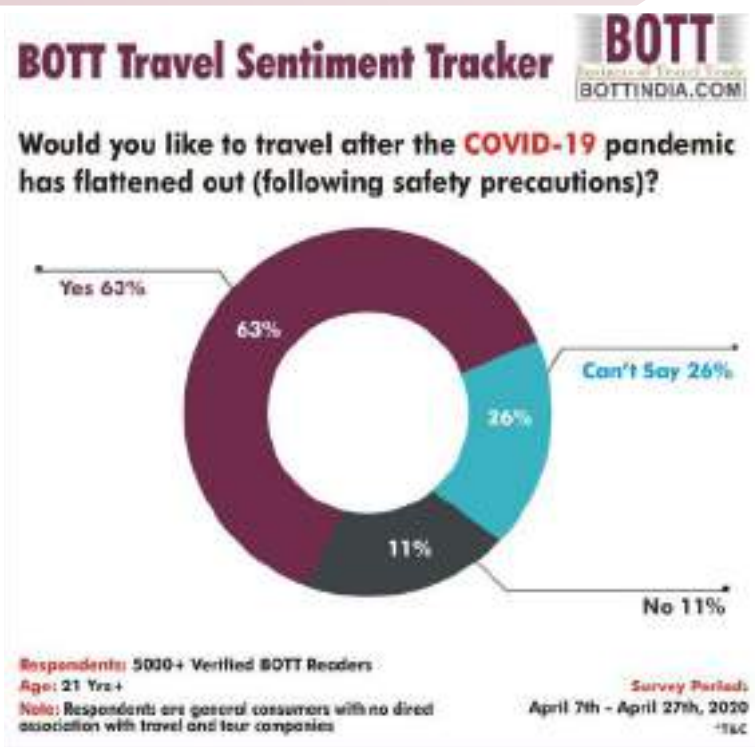
Given the COVID scenario, all future plans have indeed gone topsy-turvy but he has not lost hope. "My short term goal right now is to stay home stay safe and plan things for a comeback. As for the long-term, I have firm plans to grow my B2B product portfolio. But for now, I am making the most of this time with my family – my soulmate Shalini is my partner in crime, in whatever I do. My daughter Suhani is now 14 and great in contemporary dancing and son Sachit is 9, passionate with creative DIY and making best out of waste, he shares, concluding, "This is the time when neither the strongest of the species will survive; nor the most intelligent ones. The ones who survive will be the ones most adaptable to change. Our industry will bounce back soon, with a stronger come back. We all have gone through a realisation process – it was the time that required us to make changes. Situation has given us enough indications to adapt to long term and ethical models."

## 63% Indians are willing to travel after COVID-19 curve is flattened

Amidst this ambiguity and uncertainty that exists today because of COVID-19, BOTT decided to take an innovative approach to gauge the sentiments of people with respect to travel and what will be the new “normal” of travel when the lock down gets over and operations resume. The core objective behind BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker is to showcase a genuine picture of what is the ground reality in Indian Travel & Tourism sector.

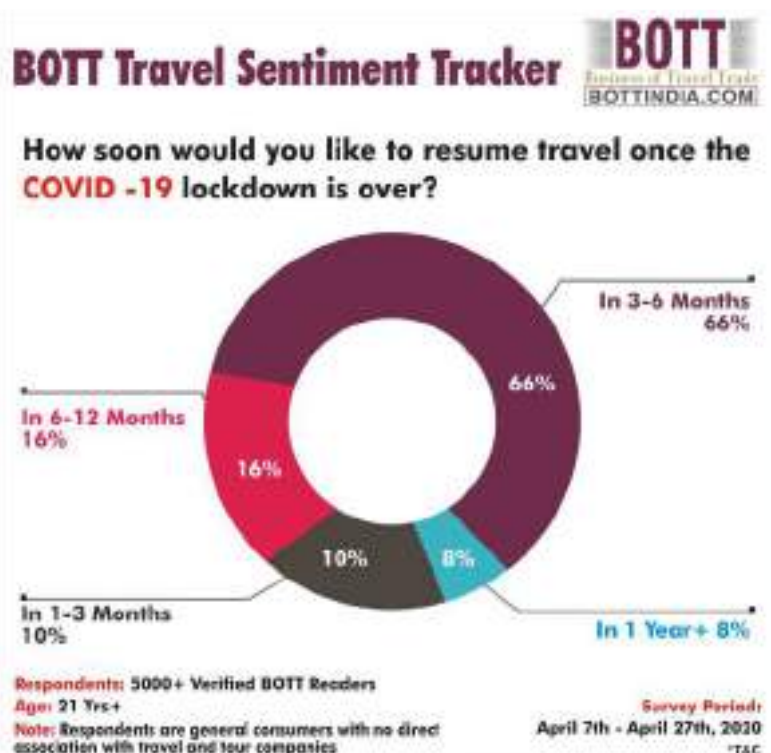
### 1. Key Findings

The Indian Travel and Tourism sector may be down but not out as 63% Indians are willing to travel after COVID-19 pandemic has flattened out.

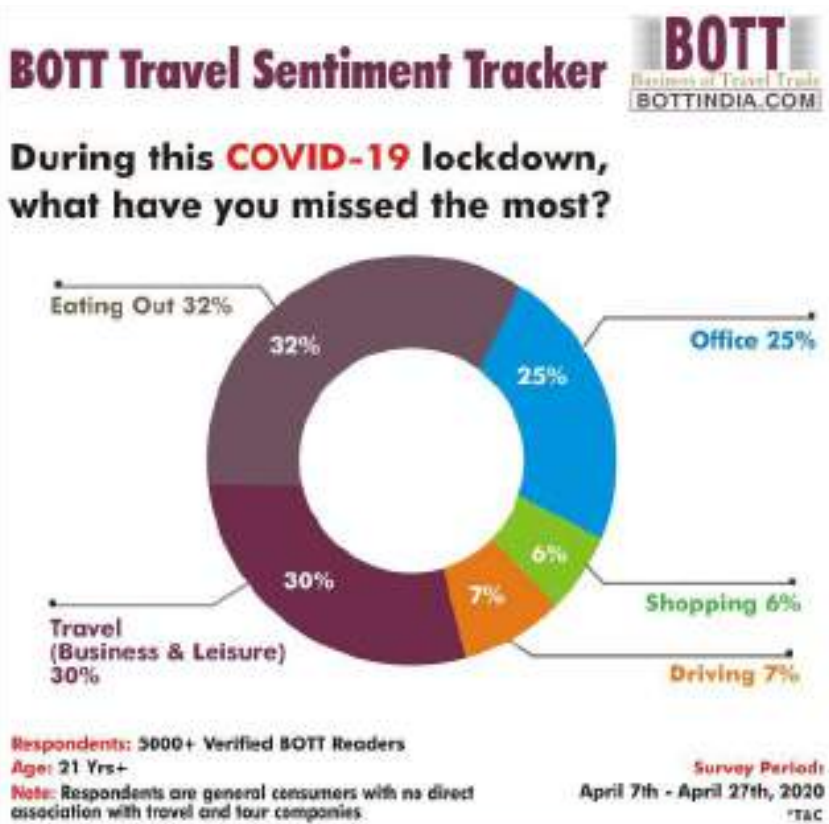


### 2. Key Findings

About 66% Indians are ready to resume travel in the next 3 to 6 months after the national lockdown is over.





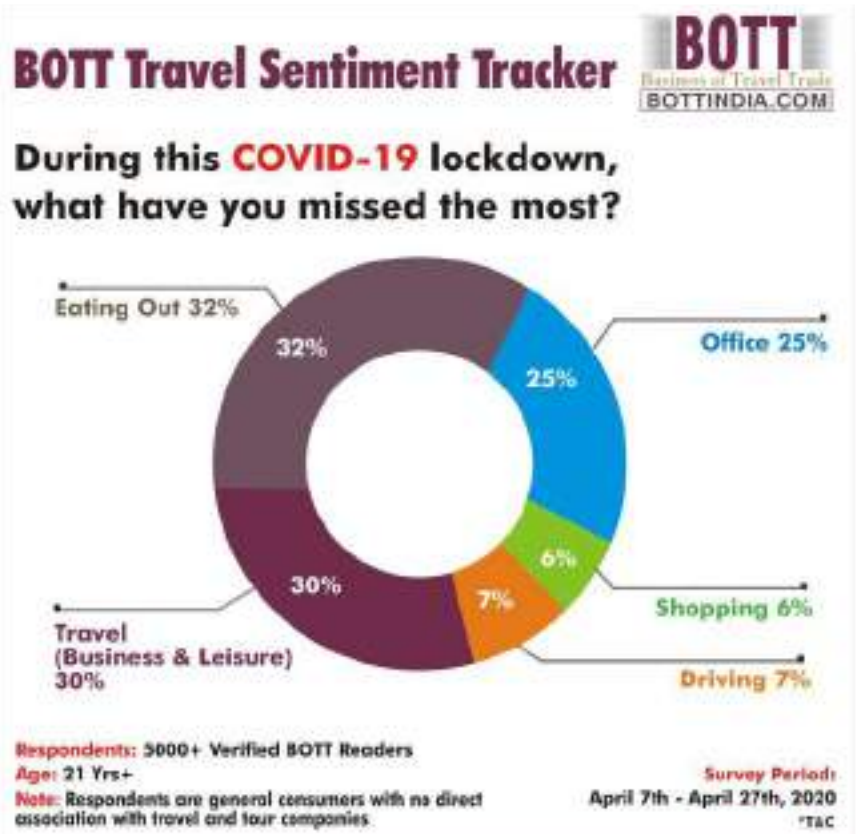


### 3. Key Findings

As many as 30% Indians are missing Travel during this lockdown.

### 4. Key Findings

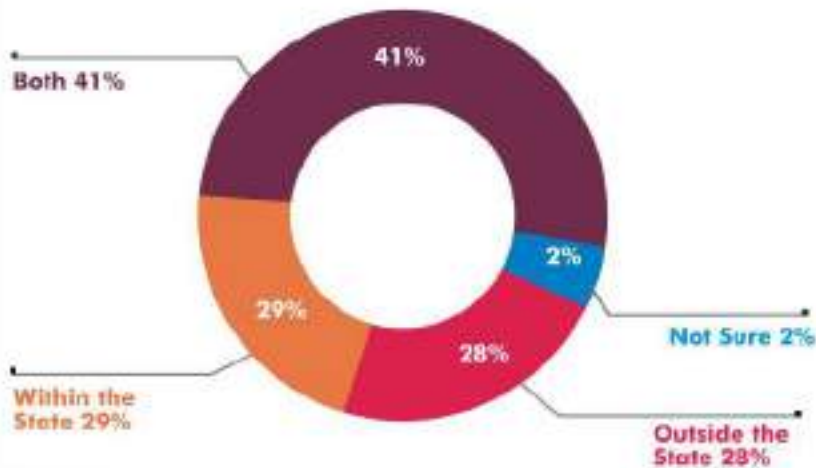
About 30% Indians would undertake Business Travel and 22% and 18% shall go on Leisure Travel and Family Vacations respectively. As many as 30% Indians are missing Travel during this lockdown.



## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



Would you like to travel within your state or outside your state after the **COVID-19** lockdown is completely lifted?



Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers

Age: 21 Yrs+

Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

Survey Period: April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C

## 5. Key Findings

Around 41% Indians are ready to travel both within their states as well as outside their states. While 29% will only travel within their state.

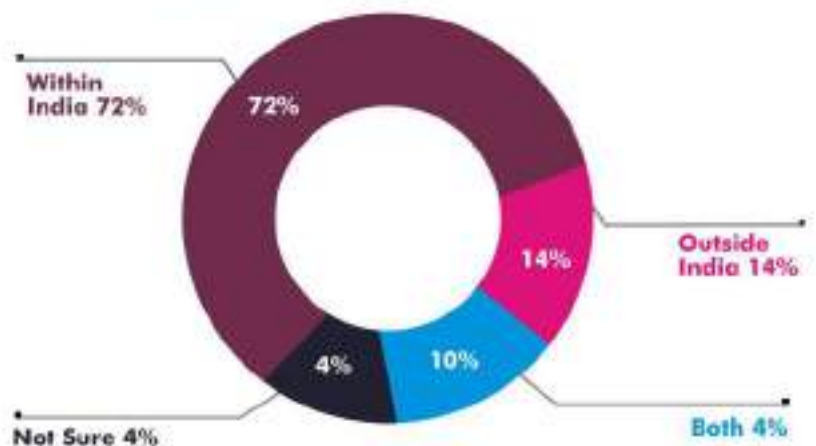
## 6. Key Findings

A huge 72% Indians are ready to travel within India while 14% are ready to travel outside India after the restrictions are lifted. About 66% Indians are ready to resume travel in the next 3 to 6 months after the national lockdown is over.

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



Would you like to travel within India or outside India after the **COVID-19** restrictions are completely lifted?



Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers

Age: 21 Yrs+

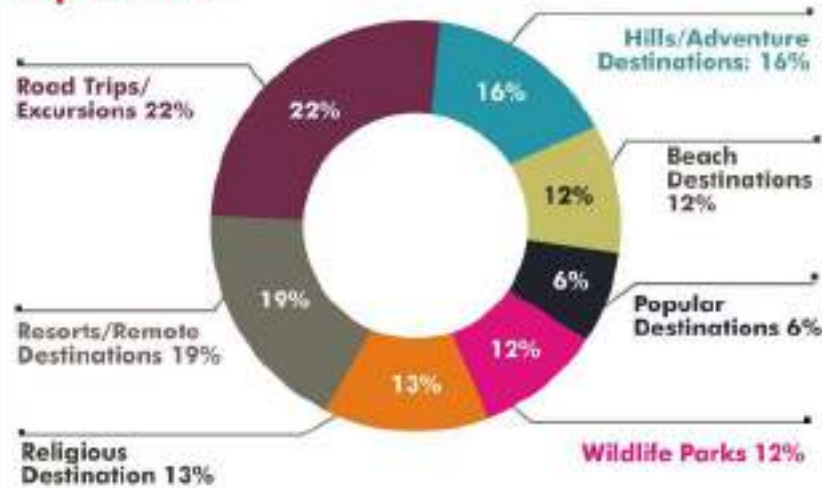
Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

Survey Period: April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



Where would you like to go on your trips/tours?



Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers

Age: 21 Yrs+

Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

Survey Period:  
April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C

## 7. Key Findings

About 22% Indians would like to go on road-trips and excursions; 19% to resorts and remote destinations and 16% to Hills and Adventure locations

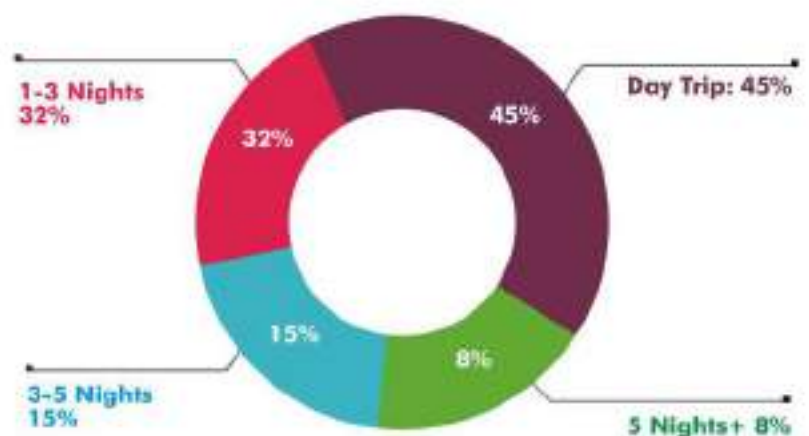
## 8. Key Findings

A good chunk of 45% Indians would like to go for day trips followed by 32% who would undertake trips for duration of 1-3 nights.

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



How long a trip/tour would you like to take?



Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers

Age: 21 Yrs+

Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

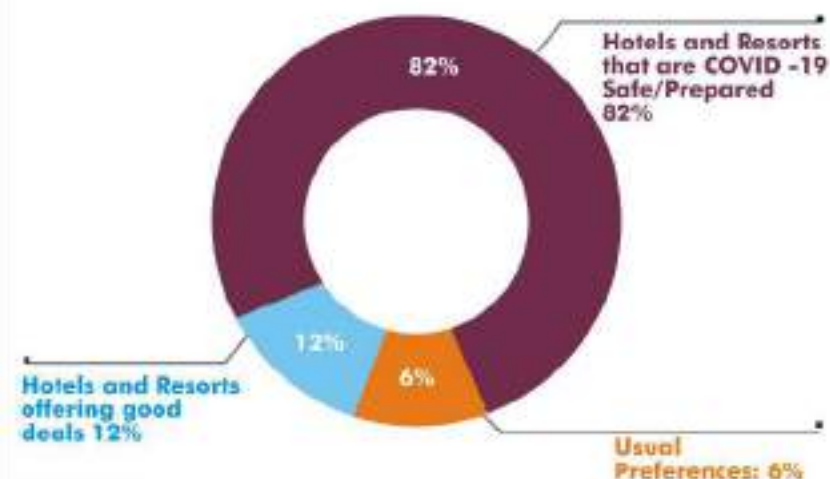
Survey Period:  
April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C



## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



What kind of **Hotels** and **Resorts** would you like to opt?



Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers  
Age: 21 Yrs+  
Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

Survey Period:  
April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C

## 9. Key Findings

About 82% Indians would go for Hotels and Resorts which are COVID-19 safe or prepared offering amenities such as Masks & Sanitizer kits.

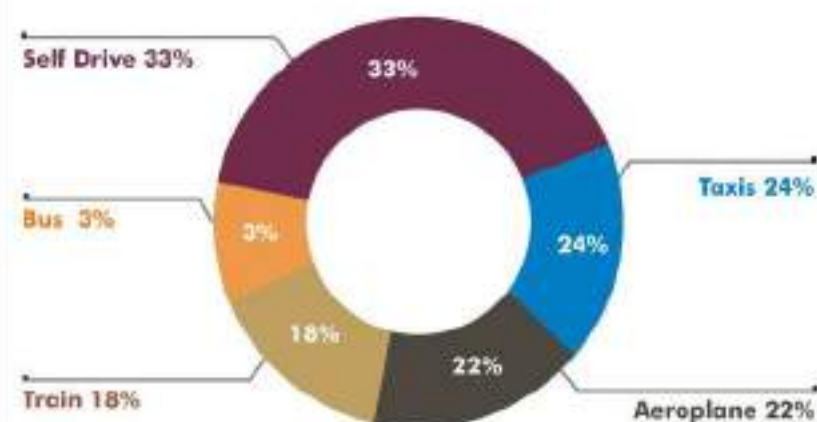
## 10. Key Findings

Around 33% Indians would prefer self drive; 24% will opt for taxis followed by 22% for aeroplanes and 18% for trains as their mode of transportation in the next one year.

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



What mode of **transportation** would you be comfortable undertaking a journey in the next 1 year?



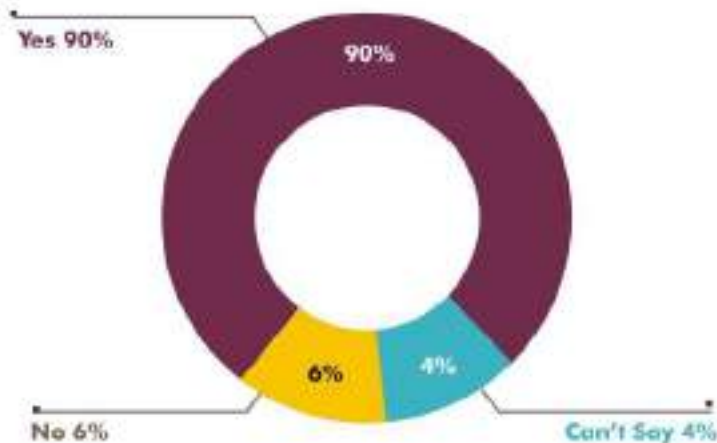
Respondents: 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers  
Age: 21 Yrs+  
Note: Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

Survey Period:  
April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
\*T&C

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



Would you be comfortable undertaking an air and train journey if they are **COVID-19** Safe/Prepared?



**Respondents:** 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers  
**Age:** 21 Yrs+  
**Note:** Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

**Survey Period:**  
 April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
 \*TAC

## 11. Key Findings

As high as 90% Indians would be comfortable taking an air or train journey if they are COVID-safe.

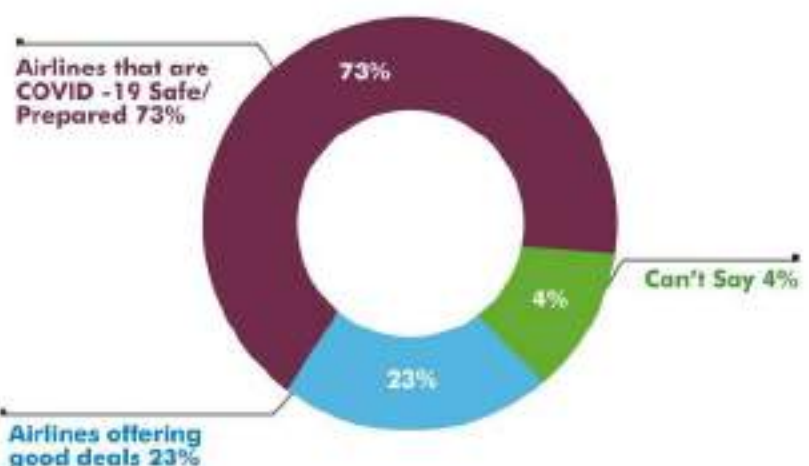
## 12. Key Findings

About 73% Indians would opt for Airlines, which are COVID prepared followed by 23% Indians who would go for Airlines that are offering good deals.

## BOTT Travel Sentiment Tracker



What kind of **Airlines** would you prefer?



**Respondents:** 5000+ Verified BOTT Readers  
**Age:** 21 Yrs+  
**Note:** Respondents are general consumers with no direct association with travel and tour companies

**Survey Period:**  
 April 7th - April 27th, 2020  
 \*TAC

# ASHWANI GOELA : “We believe in open and direct interactions to build trust”



*An Industry professional with over 20 years of experience including six years of experience as General Manager with pre-opening hotel stint and running complex hotels in one of the most competitive hyper location in the world, Ashwani Kumar Goela, General Manager, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, is a thorough optimist, who believes in learning from every challenge life throws his way. Here is a detailed interview with him in our BOTT GM Series.*

**Priyanka Saxena Ray**

**What was your first job and how did you climb up the ladder? How many hotels have you worked with and in what capacities?**

I started my career as a Management Trainee with IHG and the erstwhile InterContinental Barakhamba Road, which is now renamed as The LaLiT. I have worked with only 03 brands in last 02 decades. InterContinental Hotel group (IHG), Radisson Hotel Group (RHG) and The Imperial. I believe in stability and be with one company as long as I feel challenged professionally. I have been able to climb the ladder of success due to the mentorship of leaders, I found across my journey who assisted me to better my craft.

**How long have you been attached with Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport? How has your experience with the property been?**

It's been 25 months since I joined Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. I must say it has been an astounding journey to have worked with the world's top hotel chain. When I stepped into the shoes of a General Manager of the hotel, I knew for sure that I have to work with all my heart and soul to maintain the long legacy of the hotel while implementing contemporary ideas. Like any other general manager, I have had my own share of challenges and achievements during this tenure. Some major challenges faced by us as a hotel was that of declining revenue, declining guest feedback, high attrition rate and low profitability. I was able to overcome these challenges by finding the root cause of every issue and was able to bring the best out of the team to perform better. With the support of an exemplary efficient sales team, I conducted detailed research of the market to make sure that we tap each and every account in the market. This resulted in a 10.1% increase in occupancy, a 17% increase in total revenue and a 12% increase in RevPAR. Despite the presence of a lot of hotel brands in Aerocity, we were able to turn around the hotel by ensuring that our feedback scores continuously go up. This was only possible by meeting more number of guests, using technology and aggressiveness of the team members.



Today I can say that I am proud to be a General Manager at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport.

**What special changes would you now be implementing in light of the pandemic? How severely has your business been affected?**

Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport is waiting with bated breath to serve our guests once again with the same zeal and fervour. We will be introducing a special safety plan - WE CARE for all our patrons and employees where we will be taking essential steps to protect ourselves from COVID-19 by adopting the safety and health guidelines laid down by the government.

At Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, we have taken all the steps to ensure the entire eco system of our hotel is well sanitised, clean and safe. We have left no stone unturned in ensuring the safety of the guests. The hotel leadership team has brainstormed extensively to create constructive strategies to combat the effect of COVID-19 on our business. From the time the guest will land at the airport and sit in our car till he is dropped back to the airport, we have ensured that all touch points of a guest are 100 % safe, secure and sanitised. We have visual depictions in place giving the much needed confidence to any guest while choosing to book with us or for our teams to be working with us.

The following steps will be undertaken as mandatory steps to ensure the safety and health of our patrons:

- All trolley bags and handling linen is thoroughly washed daily.
- The laundry floor, walls and the equipment in the area are sanitized twice a day.
- Sanitizers installed everywhere.
- HEPA filters in the air condition system.
- Disinfectant sprays provided in the gym.
- Sanitisation of machinery and yoga mats.
- Thorough cleaning of the swimming pool and sterilisation.
- All staff wear a mask.
- Disinfection sprays in the washroom.
- Alarms to remind staff to wash hands.
- All kitchen utensils and equipment sanitised twice a day.

- Table set up to be done 2 ft apart and only to seat two.

**Do you have any new plans or policies or initiatives in the pipeline that you would be introducing in the near future?**

While the entire world is in shambles to fight the pandemic crises of Covid-19, we need to stay calm and positive. Everybody is coping in their possible way to fight these difficult times. Like every other industry, the hospitality industry has also borne the brunt of coronavirus and seen a downward push in the progress graph.

We at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport are doing our best to get over these tough times. We are building pragmatic and successful strategies to come back stronger in our second innings while keeping a close watch on the dynamic business policies and customer behaviour worldwide. In the interim we have launched some additional revenue streams that may not be too big in terms of revenue, but keeps our cash registers ringing. We may never be able to recover the lost revenue but we can ensure we are prepared for the future.

Some of the initiatives are food delivery, take away menu, laundry service to our guests at their home and also facility and sanitisation management for office.

**How is your Hotel handling the lockdown? Any special steps you took to handle the situation?**

The pandemic has left the world standstill. The team of Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport is fighting this battle with more power and courage. Our guest's safety and security have always been our immediate concern and highest priority.

During these challenging times, we have ensured we live one of the beliefs of RHG which is "We believe in open and direct interactions to build trust" and continue to remain transparent and involved with the team in every decision that the hotel is taking which could impact them either directly or indirectly. We have done mass survey on what should the hotel be doing in terms of mitigating costs, and improving revenue and I must say I have been able to benefit a lot by getting some out of the box suggestions from the team. We have been doing e town hall, virtual department communication meetings, virtual trainings and personal calls to each and every team member to ensure that we are One Team. I am thankful and grateful to my ownership who have supported us in this time of need.

## “We are looking at a loss of anywhere between **25 – 40%**”

*RARE India offers advocacy, market intelligence, distribution, sales and marketing support to a wide spectrum of hospitality clients. The RARE India Community currently consists of 66 conscious luxury boutique hotels and travel experiences spanning three countries (India, Nepal & Bhutan), 16 States in India alone and 53 hospitality brands. In an exclusive chat with BOTT India, Shoba Mohan, Founder, RARE India shares how the hotel industry – especially mid-segment, has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### BOTT DESK

#### **What has been the impact of COVID-19 on independent and boutique hotels?**

As the lockdown was announced when many hotels of the RARE India Community were at the end of their inbound season, some hotels lost about two months of their peak season revenue while for others, especially those in the hills, the forthcoming summer season has been wiped out completely. We should be looking at a loss of anywhere between 25 – 40% of this year's turnover.

#### **How are RARE India hotels sustaining themselves during this crisis?**

Many hotels of the RARE India Community are small, owner driven and dexterous. When most of these hotels closed for the summer, the staff was sent back to their villages. The members of the staff who stayed back helped in repairs, upgrades, training, etc. Many of our partner hotels are great case studies for sustainability, which has been a part of their overall business strategies for a long time. It is the right way of doing business and is keeping them afloat. We have a lot of stories coming in from the hotels, lodges and cruises, which are positive and tell you the story of how our Community survived the COVID lockdown together.

#### **What would be the post COVID-19 travel preferences that can be naturally found in this community?**

Some of the key features of the RARE India hotels are the quality of staff and the number of keys. RARE



India hotels have small teams, usually from the local communities, which are manageable in terms of training and tracking. Many of the hotels are located in off-beat places that are close to green zones. And also since the rooms and cottages are spread out in large acreage, guests have their own unique spaces.



## Sustainable travel is said to come into perspective much stronger post COVID-19. What are the key sustainability practices that hotels should include in their DNA?

Sustainable travel is the hope as well as the challenge. There is a need to look for business innovations that address climate change, challenges of biodiversity destruction as well as some of the issues of tourism like over tourism, habitat destruction and losing the integrity of the tourist destination. Sustainability will be the obvious business choice to achieve these goals. However, when you hear about 'bounce back' and the post COVID-19 protocols, with 'one use and throw' solutions and over stress on cleaning chemicals, one wonders how this enthusiasm towards sustainability will pan out in real time.

### Some easy to incorporate practices would be as follows:

- Have a robust reuse policy
- For a virus against whom the best defense is soap and water, don't look at complicated solutions
- Streamline purchasing so that it is as local as possible, thereby reducing contact points and carbon footprints
- Redefine your hospitality idea, for long luxury has been about excesses. It can now be about experiences, learning and transformation

### How do RARE India hotels address hygiene checks to ease the clients?

Every hotel has a unique set of health and safety regulations that they are following. Training and



self-regulation to ensure that everyone on the property is checked for health and hygiene are some of the measures being taken. All of us follow accepted international protocols set out by organizations like WHO, MOT and SG Clean as well as some that are unique to the landscape of the region.

### When do you foresee travel going back to normal?

This is not very easy to predict. Novel Corona virus by nature spreads and it is a reality that eventually all of us will have it in our lifetime. There is a huge fear factor attached to COVID-19 and also many myths. The best bet to predicting normalcy will be based on a tested vaccine. Actually, it is tough to go back to 'normal' after this lockdown as the COVID-19 has thrown a lot of chinks in the business. One question glaring us in the face is how is it that the government hasn't taken cognizance of an industry that contributes to so many jobs and a sizeable percent of the GDP? And

most importantly, what kind of business is this that none of us, big or small, have been able to sustain at least 3-6 months of business closure. It's really time to rethink the travel business.

### How have you handled the challenges of lockdown and lack in business at your company?

We just huddled and continued with what we are good at, which is creating opportunities and value for our partner hotels. We also looked at our business model and relooked at ideas to take it to the next phase. Most importantly, we have been keeping the team positive, busy and together. Our Destination Discovery Series, which are zoom sessions and InstaLive programs, have been helping people in lockdown know more about our hotels and their ideologies. We ran a two-day event called RAREfied during the first phase of lockdown, which kind of set a pace for online engagements with the hoteliers, travellers and tours operators alike.

# Resorts all around the country are deploying the necessary safety measures

*As the hospitality industry starts operations, in almost every city in the country, there is no doubt that the journey ahead is not going to be a smooth one. Laced with its own set of challenges, the hospitality industry will have to undertake a plethora of measures to remain relevant. Narendra Prabhu, GM, Signature Club Resort, pens down his views from the resorts' perspective.*

**Narendra Prabhu**

As the hospitality industry starts operations, there are a set of challenges that needs to be addressed. From the resort perspective, I'm listing down the challenges that requires attention as we go about doing business.

- Manpower planning
- Allocating / planning/budgeting various over heads, such as, OPEX, S&M cost, personnel expenditure, etc.
- Keeping the work force occupied with productive work
- Organising sufficient cash flow to oversee day to day operations
- Salary and manpower rationalising
- Delivering and maintain the same quality standards that brand is known for, with available man power
- Additional expenses related to COVID safety measures that has to be incurred without knowing / generating confirmed business / revenues
- Keeping the internal customers' morale intact



- Business forecasting and framing strategies to achieve the budgeted revenues
- Implementing cost effective measures, because some operational aspects require a certain expenditure to be spent but it will not justify the revenues being generated

Once the aforementioned factors are thoroughly revisited, another most significant factor is the safety and hygiene measures that have been implemented by resort operators to ensure all round safety of the guests as well

as the employees. The assurance of guest's well-being will be integral for businesses to grow and sustain long term growth. Resorts all around the country are leaving no stone unturned in deploying all the necessary safety measures including SCR. In collaboration with Gemstol protection, the hygiene initiative has been developed with inputs and SOP's issued by MHA & BBMP. Additionally, we take expert advice and guidance from the Infection Prevention and Control team at SPIC (South India Pest Control) that further enhances cleaning disinfection protocols.



Some of the safety and hygiene protocols we shall see are as under;

- Room Seal to indicate that guest rooms haven't been accessed since they were cleaned and before closing fogging will be done using accelerated sodium chloride solution
- Extra disinfection of top 10 high touch points in guest rooms including light switches, remote controls, telephone, key tag holder and door knobs
- Increased cleaning frequency of public areas
- Guest-accessible disinfecting wipes at entrances and high foot fall areas
- Enhanced cleaning for Gym's (Once government relaxes the regulations and allows us to open)
- Reduced paper amenities (like pads, in room menus and guest directories) in rooms, they will be replaced with digital in room dining menu and online directory's
- Enhanced cleaning and other changes to buffets, in-room dining and meeting spaces
- Contactless check-in and check-out with UV treated key
- Enhanced team member safety and well-being with personal protective equipment and enhanced training and protocols

Soon after the internal factors are revised and necessary steps have been implemented to welcome back guests, business will pick up. Resorts all around are maintaining

the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Given the effects of COVID-19, additional measures are being developed in consultation with FSSAI, MHA, and respective state government departments such as BBMP (in case of Bangalore) will only help boost customer's confidence.

**Some of the additional measure are captured below that are practiced at resorts including SCR;**

- Teams are receiving ongoing training, briefings and enhanced standard operating protocols
- Increased frequency of cleaning our public areas (including lobbies, elevators, door handles, public bathrooms, etc.) and have continued the use of hospital-grade disinfectant
- Continue to adjust food and beverage service in accordance with current food safety recommendations issued by FSSAI
- Increased deployment of hands free leg operated sanitizers

**A lot of things we did when we travelled will take a drastic turn resulting in operators such as us taking certain precautions;**

1. Social Distancing: Social Distancing continues to be recommended or required practice in public settings. During your stay, please be mindful of other guests and Team Members and maintain the suggested six feet distance at all times and in all areas.
2. Masks and Other Protective Equipment: On arrival with your

safety in mind, body temperature will be checked at the entrance and will be provided with disposable masks, gloves and hand sanitizer. As such, we recommend bringing one with you. The reception desk will adjust check-in and other processes to allow for limited contact with Team Members for continued safety as few initiatives have already been explained above.

3. Resort Services and Amenities: For guests' safety, some services or amenities such as pool, spas, fitness centres and daily housekeeping may be modified or suspended.

4. Food and Beverage Services: The F&B outlets are reorganised as per the guidelines issued by MHA & BBMP (in case of Bangalore), where social distancing, contactless menu ordering and online payments have been initiated.

With all the above in place, from the business perspective, resorts can expect a good response from FIT and MICE segment in the first few months as most of the corporates have enforced work from home. To add to that, with leisure segment, the advantage is one will have throughout the year requirement from various activities such as a product launch, trade fairs, weddings or social gatherings. So for the next three month at least, from Signature Club Resort point of view, we will greatly rely on MICE and FIT business. Other major factors that will influence or benefit resorts is relaxing / allowing international flights to operate, which will greatly impact the occupancy percentage, RevPAR, and other top line aspects.

## ICPB busy conducting webinars to keep MICE afloat

India Conventions Promotion Bureau (ICPB) has been in constant touch with the Ministry of Tourism, Niti Aayog and Ministry of Finance to help develop an 'action plan', which can help facilitate in the phased opening of the MICE Venues and events. After much research and deliberations, ICPB, with inputs from hotels and venues has submitted proposed guidelines for the approval of MOT/ Ministry of Health. In addition to this, plans are also afoot for making of a 'MICE film', which will resonate with the positive message to uplift the mood of the MICE Industry in India.



Additionally, ICPB has been busy hosting a series of Webinars / Talks with industry experts ever since the lockdown has been implemented. It's most recent webinar, held on June 16, was focussed on 'Roadmap for recovery of MICE – post lockdown / COVID-19 Crisis' with Mr. Suman Billa, Director Technical Cooperation & Silk Road, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); Mr. Ashwin Gunasekaran - Asia Pacific Chapter Chair - International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and Mr. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer - The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) as panellists and moderated by Mr. Nakul Anand, Chairman - Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH); Executive Director - ITC Limited was one of the most well-attended webinars hosted by ICPB. It saw participation by over 500 industry people.

*"ICPB is continuously working towards the grown of MICE sector in India and while we understand that the present times are extremely challenging, we will have to find ways and means to stay afloat. Through a series of webinars, SOPs and more, ICPB office bearers are in constant touch with the various ministries to help address the issues of the sector," shared Mr. Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB.*

## TAAI in touch with MoT, MoCA, MoF seeking relief for agents

In its endeavour to seek relief for the travel agents, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has written Ministry of Tourism/Ministry of Finance to support fund / contribution majorly for salaries and establishment costs including electricity for next 6months minimum. They are expecting minimum salary contribution by the Government to the tune of 33.33% up next on agenda is complete waiver of statutory liabilities for the next 12 months, such as, GST and Instant Income Tax Holiday effective FY 2019-20 for up to March 2021.



- Additionally, TAAI has also reached out to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) regarding refunds of cancellations with waivers and advances of travel agents and tour operators from all Airlines / IATA (especially National Carrier-Air India are not waiving of cancellation charges and are not refunding monies back to the agents/customers). TAAI is seeking relief on the following points –
- IATA agents to be allowed to sell expatriation flights on AI and other international airlines through website/GDS and be protected by 5% commission
- Regulated that all international airlines which when they start operating regular flights will give bank guarantees to the government to protect the money of the travel agent/business transacted in India
- Upload advance money with low cost airlines to be refunded in the bank of the travel agent and all credit shells of refunds to be credited to travel agents to be utilised for any traveller and sector
- All refunds up to May 31 to be processed without cancellation due to lockdown

*"TAAI always believes in sitting down and ironing out all issues with our stake holders. We have been in constant communication with the airlines MOCA & IATA and have great faith in the Judiciary and MOCA and also our various supplier. We are confident that we will come to a solution soon. Some airlines have adhered to our request to refund," said Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI*

### OTOAI meets Tourism Minister; hopeful to get some relief

In continuation of its efforts to highlight the issues and concerns of the outbound industry to those in office of power, Riaz Munshi, President, Outbound Tour Operators of India (OTOAI), met up with the Honourable Tourism Minister, Sri Prahlad Singh Patel to discuss the woes of the tourism sector. At a detailed meeting held in the Ministry of Tourism Office, the Presidents of few leading Travel Trade Associations enumerated their demands / relief they are seeking from the Government to help sail the travel fraternity through this tough time.

OTOAI, since long, has been advocating a five-point agenda, comprising - roll-back of the TCS, not make Pan Card mandatory for foreign remittances for foreign nationals and non-resident Indians, grant relief from GST, allow outbound tour operators to take interest free loans and expansion of working capital.



**“The Tourism Minister listened patiently to all that we had to say and was extremely sympathetic and understanding regarding all the issues. He has assured us that roll-back of TCS, not making pan card necessary for foreign remittances and allowing outbound tour operators to take interest free loan are some of the issues that will be taken up with the government on priority. The honourable Minister is hopeful that all the three issues will have a positive outcome and that relief on these fronts will be announced soon. We are also keeping our fingers crossed for the same,” said Riaz Munshi.**

Another issue which was also discussed during the meeting was about the capital inducement for the MSME, which is currently only available for the existing customers who are availing overdraft or loan facilities.

---

### ADTOI proposes MoT to make 2020-21 “Domestic Tourism Year”

As people continue to work from home, sell their products online and even take lectures and classes on the Internet, the one sector that remained shut throughout was Tourism. However, now with the limited domestic flights being operational, the travel and trade industry is hopeful for revival, fully understanding that the road to recovery will be a slow one. In such a scenario, the obvious sector which will pick up power in the immediate near future will be Domestic Tourism.

Keeping the same in mind, the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) is in continuous talks with Industry leaders and officials at Ministry of Tourism to help figure out a way to overcome the existing roadblock.



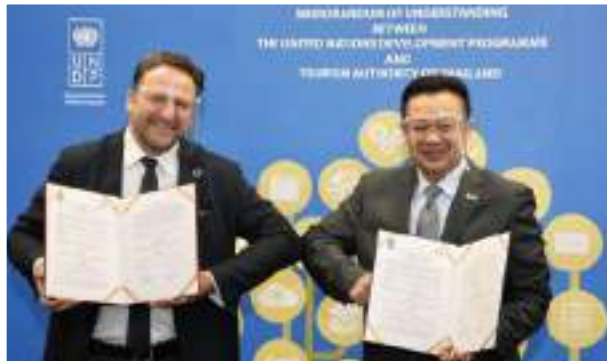
**“We have recently met up with the Honourable Minister of Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh and have laid out our requests to him. He has assured us of his complete cooperation and has guaranteed that he will look into our demands on an urgent basis with a promise to get back to us soon with a solution to the same,” said P. P. Khanna, President, ADTOI.**

The fact the Tourism sector was completely ignored and overlooked in the Bailout Package announced by the government, ADTOI has not lost hope and has reached out to the Ministry with the following demands –

1. ADTOI requests Government to make 2020-21 Year of Domestic Tourism
2. Set up a National Tourism Task Force on Domestic Tourism
3. There should be Comprehensive Study on Domestic Tourism
4. ADTOI / MOT approved Tour Operators to do LTA / LTC packages
5. Tax Free Holidays on Domestic Tourism
6. Moratorium on Interest charges



## TAT - UNDP team up to strengthen sustainable tourism in Thailand



The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) teams up with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a long-term sustainable tourism strategy. The move will pave the way for the Thai tourism industry to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the post-COVID-19 crisis context and make sustainable, inclusive and community-based tourism the “new normal”. With regards to same, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between TAT and the UNDP on the World Environment Day, June 5, 2020, by the UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand, Mr. Renaud Meyer and the TAT Governor, Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn. This is one of the highlights of a wider event marking TAT’s 60th anniversary this year. The MOU provides a platform for collaboration to integrate sustainability as a fundamental principle for tourism in Thailand and share Thailand’s experience in sustainable tourism with other countries, building on UNDP’s presence in 170 countries and territories around the world. The MOU is in line with TAT’s over-arching objective to strengthen confidence in the Thai tourism industry with a series of “Restore and Reform measures”, which include the following objectives:

- To drive TAT’s operation in accordance with the SDGs.
- Promote sustainable tourism in accordance with the SDGs across the Thai tourism industry.
- Share experiences of sustainable tourism management in Thailand with other countries.
- Exchange knowledge and experts in the dissemination of knowledge of sustainable tourism.



## Kandima Maldives launches the first ever fully immersive virtual platform - D.I.V.E

Looking to plan your next romantic escape, or downtime with family, or an adventure with friends? D.I.V.E. gives you a little taste what you are in for and lets you reimagine your favourite tropical paradise with just the click of a button. All you need to do is sit back & relax in the comfort of your home and we’ll take you to our snow white beaches, dip your feet into clear blue waters, let you sunbathe on the deck of your water villa or soak in the amazing vibes at all the Kool places around the resort. Explore our oh-so-exotic 3 km long island as we tell you our story. Seeing is believing!

If you too want to join the D.I.V.E., simply visit [Kandima.com/dive](http://Kandima.com/dive) and take an exciting digital plunge into the amazing world of everything at Kandima Maldives. D.I.V.E is a multi-sensory journey through an interactive 360 degree virtual world that takes customer engagement to a whole new level. D.I.V.E. is available for viewing on any device including VR headsets, desktops, smartphones or tablets, with a multi-dimensional sound experience as you swim through **#YourKindOfPlace!**

Mr. Brett Castleman, General Manager for the resort says, “Kandima Maldives has been the first mover in terms of new and innovative lifestyle experiences in the destination, D.I.V.E. is yet another remarkable virtual platform that will help our trade partners to be future ready. Our partners can experience and conduct the virtual tours remotely throughout the property.”

## AirAsia India to launch safe door to door baggage service - 'FlyPorter'

AirAsia India becomes the first domestic airline to launch safe door to door baggage service for its guests, branded AirAsia FlyPorter. The revolutionary FlyPorter service gives guests flying with AirAsia India the luxury of doorstep baggage



pick up as well as the option to continue their journey to their final destination within the city on arrival with the freedom to travel without baggage. The door to door baggage delivery service entails FlyPorter picking the baggage from the guests' home and delivering it at their doorstep.

This convenient service starts at an introductory price of R500 for one-way delivery to or from the airport and is available in Bengaluru, New Delhi and Hyderabad as part of the first phase of launch with Mumbai coming shortly as well.

Speaking about this initiative, Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer said, "At AirAsia India, with our values of safety always and being guest-obsessed, the convenience and comfort of our guests has always been a priority in introducing new products and services. While guests are adapting to the new normal with air travel, we have been doing everything we can to make the flying experience safe and comfortable. This industry-first introduction of our FlyPorter service is designed to ensure that guests can travel without worrying about their baggage with a doorstep to doorstep delivery model. AirAsia has always been a pioneer in using technology to transform air travel and we are hopeful that our guests will benefit from this unique service."

The AirAsia FlyPorter service can be availed up to 24 hours prior to the departure of the flight. It also includes an insurance of R5000 per baggage item for the contents and container.



## Cleartrip introduces TravelSafe across markets in Middle East, India

Cleartrip recently announces that it was introducing a new product offering called "TravelSafe" across all its markets in the Middle East and India. The company said this new product offering was soft launched in late last month and provides customers curated information around travel trends, travel planning, safety measures and protocols to be adhered to during travel, and new airline and regulatory policies.

Cleartrip said TravelSafe will take into account various changes announced by governments, airports and suppliers in the country.

Stuart Crighton, CEO, Cleartrip said the pandemic has had a significant impact on customer behaviour and safety will be a primary determinant of travel plans. "We have built TravelSafe with the objective of providing a curated view on all safety concerns that customers may have around travel. We will continue to update the content frequently and bring it in a richer form to further simplify it for our customers," he added.

Balu Ramachandran, global head – Air Product at Cleartrip said airlines, airport and state governments have come out with their own set of regulations some of which are dynamically updated. "This can be overwhelming for our customers and in an attempt to cut through this complexity we have come out with TravelSafe. TravelSafe provides customers curated information in one location that can help answer questions ranging from travel statistics, quarantine rules, airport and airline policy thus simplifying safe air travel for our customers," he said.

TravelSafe provides customers curated information in one location that can help answer questions ranging from travel statistics, quarantine rules, airport and airline policy thus simplifying safe air travel for our customers," he said.



# Towards a **Healthy Nation** through the Power of **Compounding**



## **National Health & Hygiene Intervention Program Fighting Anaemia**

A CSR initiative of Global Human Foundation supported by  
Responsible Corporates & Conscious Citizens

**04 States | 50+Locations | 25,000+Beneficiaries | 100+ Donors | 1000+Volunteers**

India is one of the countries with very high prevalence of anaemia in the world. Nutritional anaemia is a major public health problem in India and is primarily due to iron deficiency. The National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3) data suggests that anaemia is widely prevalent among all age groups, and is particularly high among the most vulnerable — 56 per cent among adolescent girls (15–19 years), 30 per cent among adolescent boys and around 80 per cent among children under 3 years of age, nearly 58 per cent among pregnant women, 50 per cent among non-pregnant non-lactating women. Our National Health & Hygiene Intervention Program is a one of its kind programme that aims at a two pronged approach of both Anaemia Screening & fortification in schools and communities and Health IEC on Hygiene & Sanitation (Swachh Bharat). The beneficiaries are screened for haemoglobin levels and supplemented with elemental iron and folic acid for two months along with Health IEC.



**Join us in**

**Our Fight Against Anaemia  
Global Human Foundation**

**ghfdirector@gmail.com; 011-42750360  
www.globalhumanfoundation.com**



## DISCOVER THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY THAT INSPIRED A NATION.

The National Salt Satyagraha Memorial (NSSM) at Dandi, Gujarat, recreates the spirit of the 1930 Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhi and 80 of his fellow Satyagrahis. NSSM is a Net Zero Energy project reflecting the ethos of self-sufficiency, with a unique blend of technology, innovation, art and architecture.

Come, learn of the great struggle and inspirational history of the Mahatma.

### DANDI MEMORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Incredible India

#### Wangmaji Centre

It has a library, a book shop, an auditorium, and an activity space.

#### The Gandhi Statue

A 5m high bronze statue of the Mahatma, by the renowned sculptor Sadashiv Sathé.

#### Crystal Trees

Pyramid of light formed by a 40m steel A-Frame with glass crystal.

#### Salt Making Centre

Salt making centre for visitors with 14 electric pans.

#### Solar Trees

41 solar trees with a capacity of 100KVA for self-sufficiency.

#### Artificial Lake

14,000 sq.m artificial lake created with a pathway around.

#### Narrative Murals

Various events from the salt march depicted through 24 narrative murals.

The Salt Marchers: 81 life-size  
silicon bronze sculptures of  
salt marchers by 48 sculptors  
from 9 countries.



**Get in touch : +91 73036 78412**  
**ashishverma20@gmail.com**  
**www.safehealthworld.com**

# **Give your hotel guests the much-needed Trust & Confidence**

**Get Your Brand  
Recommended by  
a National Health  
Organisation**

**Health Audit by Panel of Healthcare Experts**  
**Ensuring Disinfection Activity is Effective**

**Get On-site Swab Testing**

**Certified Covid-Safe Health Kits**

**Health Helpline**

**Medical Waste Collection Service**