

# Assessing the motives of the University Communities in India towards attending Fairs, Festivals, & other Socio-cultural events in Post COVID Scenario

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## Abstract

The deadly malady of COVID-19 is probably in its post prime phase with gradual resumption of various business activities including that of hospitality & tourism sector. But in these changed scenarios, we need to carefully assess the motives of the customers who are both anxious for returning to their usual practice of visiting out as well as apprehensive towards their safety. In this regard, a study was conducted in the capital city of Bhubaneswar, in Odisha, India amongst the students, faculty members and administrative staffs in two of the leading deemed to be universities where we were able to get a total of 654 numbers of responses. The feedbacks were obtained through a structured questionnaire majorly done through electronic mode during the months of November and December 2020 where questions were asked to capture their demographic profiles, lifestyles and behavioural data in both pre and post pandemic scenarios. Also their outlooks towards visiting practices and their willingness to return to their usual habits as practiced before the outbreak of the pandemic etc. were captured. The results revealed differential aspects towards the changed & changing lifestyles amongst the people where many have become more aware, conscious, as well as vigilante towards their safety and they certainly bear different expectations from the service providers before returning to their usual affairs. The findings of the study can definitely help the government, policy makers, and the business communities to incorporate the expected levels of provisions in their offerings as well as redesign their facilities and strategies to attract the customers as before.

**Keywords** – COVID 19, Event Tourism, University communities, Sustainability

## 1. Introduction

The concept of travel and tourism has evolved from the inherent human tendency to explore new horizons of opportunities and happiness in order to satisfy their urge towards knowledge, political and economic interests etc. (Sofronov, 2018). Over the years, it has become one of the leading industries in the world which is significantly contributing to the economies of both developed and developing nations (Manzoor et al. 2019). According to World Tourism Organization, (UNWTO), the total tourist's nos. stood at a mark of 1 billion people by 2012 which grew from a mere 25 million in 1950s with around 9% contribution to the world's GDP. Travel & Tourism is a key sector for economic development and job creation

throughout the world (UNWTO report 2012). In 2018, the sector's total contribution to the global economy reached US\$8.8 trillion (equating to 10.4% of global GDP) (IGC report 2019). Coming to the Indian panorama, it can be stated as a large market for travel and tourism with offers a diverse portfolio of various niche tourism products like heritage sites, cruises, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, eco-tourism, film, rural and religious places and many more (Joseph & Frederick, 2016). India has been recognized as a destination for spiritual tourism for domestic and international tourists. Total contribution by travel and tourism sector to India's GDP is expected to increase from Rs. 15.24 lakh crore (US\$ 234.03 billion) in 2017 to Rs. 32.05 lakh crore (US\$ 492.21 billion) in 2028. Total earning from the sector in India is targeted to reach US\$ 50 billion by 2022. In FY20, 39

million jobs were created in the tourism sector in India; this accounted for 8.0% of the total employment in the country. International Tourists arrival is expected to reach 30.5 billion by 2028. e-Visa facility was offered to 169 countries as of December 2019. During 2019, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India stood at 10.89 million, achieving a growth rate of 3.20% y-o-y. During 2019, FEEs from tourism increased 4.8% y-o-y to Rs. 1,94,881 crore (US\$ 29.96 billion). (IBEF Sectoral report 2019).

Some of the significant benefits provided by the travel & tourism sector can be listed as follows facilitation of employment, elimination of poverty, opening of channels of communication, social development, acquisition and transfer of new knowledge, technology, promotion of other industries like agriculture, food production etc., development of infrastructure, and to foster peace and brother hood between the host & the guest (Tsai et al. 2008; Yehia, 2019).

As the phenomena of tourism has seen multitudinous growth in the after years of world war II, it is repeatedly identified, projected, and managed as a sustainable industry that contributes to the economies in a bigger way. Worldwide, substantial Funds have been allocated towards tourism development; separate ministries have been established to manage the tourism activities, as well as various destinations are getting promoted to attract more and more no. of visitors towards them (Pulido-Fernández & López-Sánchez 2011). As the countries compete with each other to attract more no. of visitors towards them the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin 'Survival of the Fittest' comes to play that states to offer a product or service that is some way or other superior than the competition and it must also be sustainable over time (Khan et al. 2020). As the tourism sector is represented by the services sector, the task of its profitable functioning becomes more challenging in nature we need to keep a constant vigil to explore new avenues, offer new types of services, best in class quality, better services, processes and innovative ways to reach to the customers in order to differentiate from other options. And for this we need to focus on the alternative tourism techniques other than the contemporary avenues to attract and retain the guests. In this regard, the promotion of local fairs & festivals as an alternative mean to promote tourism & boost regional economy comes to prominence which has gained worldwide momentum in the recent years. In some cases, the existing local cultural & religious events have been revived or repackaged as tourism events, in other cases new festivals have been arranged, and promoted for a singular purpose of drawing new visitors to a city or a region. From a business prospective also, promotion and adaptation of these

alternative means of tourism also possess immense importance as they can act as the tools of the recovery operations at times of severe economic crises such as stagnation and downfalls. We can quote regarding the severe economic recession during 2008, when the countries like Canada and Britain used it as an integral part of their recovery strategies by increased funding to the sector which helped them to recover from the losses incurred.

Therefore, within the scope of that cultural tourism, the festivals and events can be counted as important tools to re-develop the economies. Like the period of worldwide recession between the years 2008-2009, a similar situation or worst has currently prevailing all across due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which has severely dented the world's economic scenario. To curb the menace of this deadly malady, worldwide, the governments have taken many measures such as total lock down, shut down of operations, businesses, including tourism activities, discouragement of social gatherings & travelling, imposition of travel restrictions etc. which has ultimately affected their economies in the worst possible manner. As currently we are in the gradual reopening phase of the business ventures, careful assessment and adaptation of multidimensional strategies are necessary in order to revamp the tourism scenario of the state. In this regard, again the concept of fairs & festival based to tourism endeavors comes to the centre stage that will help this recovery process faster and more meaningful. With this in background, we have tried to capture the views of people working and studying in university setups in state of Odisha, in India regarding their willingness to return to their usual lifestyles which includes the practice of attending various types of fairs, festivals, and other socio-cultural events.

## 2. Literature Review

Worldwide, all social and economic activities have been severely disrupted due to the prevalence of COVID-19 disease which was initially detected at the Wuhan province of China during December 2019 and soon spread like a wild fire all over the world in the subsequent period (Samal & Jena 2020). The apex body of World Health Organization (WHO) first declared it as a public health emergency of international concern in January 2020 and soon declared it as a pandemic by March 2020 considering the virility of the disease (Cucinotta & Vanelli 2020). With more than 78.7 million reported cases all over the world till December 2020, along with more than 1.73 million deaths it is one of the deadliest universal catastrophe in the recent human history (WHO Situation report Dec 2020). The common symptoms of this contagious ailment are cough, difficulties in breathing,

fever, and loss of smell and taste etc. which may develop to severe levels of pneumonia and other acute respiratory distresses resulting in the multiple organ failures & even death of the patients (ecdc 2020). Whenever the infected person breaths, speaks, sneezes the fluids in form of small droplets and aerosols can spread rapidly amongst the close contact persons apart from spreading directly through the contaminated surfaces and direct contact (cdc 2020). The recommended preventive measures includes practising social distancing of at least 6 feet, avoidance of large gatherings, use of facial masks, proper ventilation and air filtering systems, frequent hand washing practices through soap & water, hand sanitizing on regular intervals, maintenance of oral hygienic practices, disinfecting the surfaces & premises supplemented by regularly enhancing the awareness levels amongst the local people (WHO 2020; cdc 2020; HMS 2020; Wiersinga et al. 2020).

The Governments all across the world have tried their best to combat the pandemic through measures through imposing restrictions on travel, increasing testing and contact tracing measures, routine lockdowns & shut down practices in the contaminated zones as well as closures of all types of facilities & institutions as & when necessary, postponement & cancellation of various events, adaptation of hazard controls processes at the workplaces, shift duties assignments etc. and many more (ecdc 2020). These efforts have resulted in shortage of various commodities including the most essential supply of food items due to panic buying practices, disruption in job sectors including that in agricultural avenues, spreading of misinformation & discrimination through various social & mass media, xenophobia, increase in crime rates across the globe etc. world over catastrophic situation like disruptions of economic and social activities have come up including the largest of global recession since the Great Depression during 1930s (Donthu & Gustafsson 2020; Sahoo & Sahoo 2020; Chaudhary & Das 2020).

But as such a scenario has prevailed since around a year, and with the effective vaccination are in the horizons, eventually governments all across the world gradually started to establish a balance between safety of their citizens and starting up of the economic/commercial activities to survive by gradually opening of various business activities (Hatami et al. 2020; Gupta, & Yadav 2020). Coming to the India, with more than 135 crore population, it had become the hot-spot of the disease with highest number of confirmed cases in Asia and second highest numbers in World only after USA. With more than 10.1 million reported cases and with over 1,47,000 deaths till end of December 2020,

India too has witnessed a very turbulent period (mohfw 2020). To curb the deadly spread of the disease, and build up the health care facilities, India initiated a public curfew on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 followed by mandatory lockdown of the entire country from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2020 on an extension basis (Kanitkar 2020). From June 2020 onwards, gradually, it started the much awaited un-locking process, through various phases as the lock-down has severely affected the economy and forced to witness high levels of negative growth rate (Khurana 2020). Currently, as the businesses are in a re-opening phase and all sectors are opening up including that of accommodation & food services, aviation & other means of transportation, arts, entertainment, & recreation, educational services, retail, financial, realty, and automobiles etc. they need to take utmost care of both their employees & customers by adopting to all the prescribed precautionary modes of the World Health Organization such as sanitization of facilities, reducing the traffic, maintaining social distance between people, regular health checkups of the employees, adaptation of highest standards of safety etc. But after all these measures, it is eventually up to the customers / visitors, how they are responding to these new normal scenarios and their willingness to return to their usual activities.

### 3. Objectives

The objective behind this study was to investigate upon the changes in the lifestyles, and behavioural patterns during the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic amongst the targetted group of university communities which includes students, faculties, other academic and administrative staff members. Also their intentions towards returning to the usual practices of visiting different fairs, festivals, and events as before including their concerns in these changed circumstances were mapped.

### 4. Materials and Methods

For generating unbiased views from different stakeholders of socio-cultural events, we have conducted a cross sectional study at two of the leading deemed to be universities at the capital city of Bhubaneswar, in Odisha, India. An online questionnaire was floated and a total number of 880 numbers of respondents were contacted through emails as well as various WhatsApp groups. In total, we got reply from 654 respondents that includes the students, teaching and non-teaching staffs belonging to various streams like Agriculture, Architecture, Dental, Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism Management, Law, Management, Mass Communication, Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy and other administrative departments. The collected data were analyzed and the results are discussed in the following section.

## 5. Analysis and Interpretations

### Demographic Profiling

Table 2			
Variables	Parameters	Nos.	Percentage
Gender	Male	373	57.03
	Female	281	42.97
Role	Students	401	61.31
	Teaching Staffs	161	24.62
	Non-teaching Staffs	92	14.07
Stream	Medical	65	9.94
	Dental	61	9.33
	Nursing	53	8.10
	Pharmacy	44	6.73
	Management	55	8.41
	Law	38	5.81
	Agriculture	63	9.63
	Engineering	152	23.24
	Hospitality & Tourism Management	47	7.19
	Architecture	32	4.89
	Mass Communication	25	3.82
	University Administrative Department	19	2.91
	Areas of Origin	Urban	321
Semi Urban		219	33.49
Rural		114	17.43
Marital Status	Married	208	31.80
	Unmarried	431	65.90
	Widower / Separated	15	2.29
Age	Between 17 to 25 years	401	61.31
	Between 26 to 35 years	89	13.61
	Between 36 to 45 years	77	11.77
	Between 46 to 55 years	45	6.88
	More than 55 Years	42	6.42
Religion	Hindu	412	63.00
	Muslim	109	16.67
	Christian	70	10.70
	Sikhs	47	7.19
	Others	16	2.45
Family Structure	Joint Family	475	72.63
	Nuclear Family	179	27.37
Monthly Household Income	Less than Rs. 30000 PM	89	13.61
	Between Rs. 30001 – 40000 PM	103	15.75
	Between Rs. 40001 – 50000 PM	88	13.46
	Between Rs. 50001 – 60000 PM	110	16.82
	Between Rs. 60001 – 70000 PM	129	19.72
Place of Leaving (Before the Disease Prevalled)	More than Rs. 70000 PM	135	20.64
	Own House	103	15.75
	Rented House	240	36.70
	Hostels / Messes	311	47.55
	Diet	Vegetarian	119
Mix		535	81.80
Staying updated with news & events	Yes	601	91.90
	No	53	8.10
Source of News updates & general awareness (Asked to those who stated Yes in the previous question)	Newspaper (Physical)	155	25.79
	Radio	62	10.32
	TV	249	41.43
	Online sites	106	17.64
	Social Media like Face Book & You Tube etc.	385	64.06
	Others	49	8.15
Exercise	Yes	291	44.50
	No	363	55.50
Current work / teaching Status	Not going to work	19	2.91
	Working from home / Attending & Conducting Classes Online	334	55.50
	Going to work	301	46.02

Source: Primary data

The Table no 1 depicts the various demographic profiles as listed below.

✓ 57.03 % of the respondents were males followed by 42.97% females.

✓ Amongst the respondents, 61.31% were students belonging to different streams of studies followed by 24.62 % of teaching staffs and 14.07 % of the non teaching staffs working

at the universities.

- ✓ When their streams of study & work are assessed, engineering stream came up with maximum perused by 23.24 % of the respondents followed by medical with 9.94%, Agriculture with 9.63%, Dental with 9.33%, Management with 8.41%, Nursing with 8.10%, Hospitality & Tourism Management with 7.19%, Pharmacy with 6.73%, Law with 5.81%, Architecture with 4.89%, Mass Communication with 3.82% and administrative department of the universities with 2.91%.
- ✓ Around 49.08% of the respondents were from the urban areas where as 33.49% of them were from the semi urban and 17.49% from the rural areas.
- ✓ When their marital statuses were enquired, 65.90% were unmarried followed by 31.80% who were married and only 2.29% were either widower or separated from their partners.
- ✓ On the Age parameter, around 61.31% of the respondents were in the age group of 17 to 25 years whereas 13.61% of the respondents were in the age group of 26 to 35 years, 11.77% in the age group of 36 to 45 years, 6.88% in the group of 46 to 55 years and 6.42% in the more than 55 years age group.
- ✓ Taking their religions as a parameter, Hindus dominated the scenario with 63% followed by 16.67% who were Muslims, 10.70% with Christianity, 7.19% with Sikhism, and 2.45% with other faiths.
- ✓ Family structure wise, 72.63% of the respondents belonged to joint families followed by 27.37% who lived in nuclear families.
- ✓ When their monthly household incomes (MHI) were assessed, 20.64% of the respondents' family incomes were in the more than Rs.70,000/- per month category whereas around 19.72% percent were in the range of Rs.60,001/-to Rs.70,000/- per month, 16.82% were in the range of Rs.50,001/- to Rs.60,000/- per month, 15.75% in the range of Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000/- per month, 13.61% in the group of less than Rs.30,000/- per month, and 13.46% in the group of Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000/- per month.
- ✓ When asked about their place of stay in the pre-COVID times, 47.55% mentioned about staying in various hostels and (or) private messes, followed by 36.70% who used to stay at rented houses and 15.75% mentioned about staying at their own houses.
- ✓ When asked about their preferred diets, around 81.80% percent revealed themselves as omnivorous whereas only 18.20% marked themselves as pure vegetarians.
- ✓ When asked them about their media habits, 91.90% mentioned in affirmative that they regularly keep themselves updated with the latest news, events, and developments around.
- ✓ Going deep into their media habits, social media platforms like Face book, YouTube, Whats App, etc came up as the primary source of getting news updates & general awareness

with 64.06% mentioning about them followed by 41.43% mentioned about television, 25.79% mentioned regarding the news papers, 17.64% mentioned about other online sites, 10.32% mentioned about radio broadcastings, and 8.15% mentioned about other sources.

- ✓ Around 44.50% mentioned about their involvement in different types of physical exercises where as 55.50% denied their association with them.
- ✓ When asked about their current work & study statuses, 51.07% mentioned about the online modes for their studying / teaching / working activities, followed by 46.02% who were working from the institute and only 2.91% percent mentioned that they were not going to their work places or study.

### Effects of COVID -19 on their Lifestyles

When the effects of prevalence of the COVID -19 disease on their lifestyles were assessed, the following revelations were acquired.

- ✓ 79.82% of the people said that the prevalence of COVID -19 pandemic has affected their usual lifestyles to certain extents followed by 13.35% mentioned in denial of any effect whereas around 7.03% were not sure regarding the side effects of the disease on their lifestyles.
- ✓ Those respondents, who gave affirmative answers on the effects of COVID-19 on their usual lifestyles, around 62.07% mentioned that their lives have been majorly affected by the pandemic whereas around 22.22% said they were moderately affected and 15.71% mentioned about getting somehow least affected in the pandemic scenario.
- ✓ When we tried to record their experiences during the preventive lock down & shut down processes, 76.45% mentioned that they were in a anxious state, followed by 72.63% of people who explained it as a tensed period, 69.11% said they were depressed, 60.70% were in fearful condition, 54.89% became bored & frustrated, whereas only 17.13% enjoyed the situation as they got full opportunity to remain at home with their families and friends. 8.10% remained neutral from mentioning any type of experiences during that period.
- ✓ When we tried to list down the various activities in which the people were engaged during the lockdown & shut down processes, 84.10% mentioned regarding spending time with family members followed by other activities like use of social media platforms with 83.79% mentions, engaged in online classes & official works with 75.08% mentions, watching movies with 69.88%, involvement in daily household works with 53.82% mentions, exercising with 49.08%, taking rest with 44.19% mentions, playing online games with 30.12% mentions, reading books with 17.28% mentions, indulged in other indoor games (offline) with 15.44% mentions, and indulged in hobbies like paintings,

- gardening etc. with 14.07% came up.
- ✓ When the effects of COVID-19 pandemic & subsequent situation on their relationship forms were assessed, around 71.87% of the respondents accepted that their relationships with the family members have somehow improved during the time whereas their relationship with friends, neighbours, and colleagues have mostly remained neutral if not worsened or improved significantly.
- ✓ In terms of behavioural changes due to the pandemic, 70.03% mentioned in affirmative manners whereas 16.67% answered in negative notions and 13.30% were not sure about the behavioural changes.
- ✓ Those who acknowledged their behavioural

changes during the prevalence of the pandemic, 80.13% said that they have become more health conscious and shop accordingly, followed by 78.38% who mentioned to start the practice of limiting the food wastages, 66.16% preferred to practice shopping in neighbourhood vicinities, 59.17% said they have started the practice of bulk buying so that they don't have to repeatedly go out, 50% mentioned about becoming more cost conscious, 43.01% said to have reduced the frequency of shopping activities, 38.86% stated to have adopted the online modes for their shopping activities whereas 12.88% said they have tried to reduce their consumption pattern & quantity.

Table 2

Variables	Parameters	Nos.	Percentage
Has the Prevalence of COVID-19 affected your usual lifestyle over the last 10 months	Yes	522	79.82
	No	86	13.15
	Don't Know / Can't say	46	7.03
If Yes up to what extent? (Asked to them, who said Yes in the Previous Question)	Least affected	82	15.71
	Moderately affected	116	22.22
	Majorly affected	324	62.07
How was your experience during the lockdown period	As usual not much difference	53	8.10
	Depressed	452	69.11
	Anxious	500	76.45
	Bored & Frustrated	359	54.89
	Tensed	475	72.63
	Fear	397	60.70
	Joyful	112	17.13
Activities indulged in during the lockdown period	Spending time with Family members	550	84.10
	Sleeping Sufficiently	289	44.19
	Watching movies	457	69.88
	Use of Social media platforms	548	83.79
	Playing Online games	197	30.12
	Indoor gaming	101	15.44
	Reading books	113	17.28
	Indulged in hobbies like painting, gardening etc.	92	14.07
	Cooking & Cleaning activities	352	53.82
Relationship Status during lockdown / shutdown processes (Relationship with Family)	Indulged in Exercises	321	49.08
	Online Classes / Official works	491	75.08
	Worsened	11	1.68
	Slightly worsened	22	3.36
Relationship Status during lockdown / shutdown processes (Relationship with Friends)	Remained neutral	151	23.09
	Slightly improved	287	43.88
	Significantly improved	183	27.98
	Worsened	77	11.77
Relationship Status during lockdown / shutdown processes (Relationship with Neighbours)	Slightly worsened	146	22.32
	Remained neutral	184	28.13
	Slightly improved	151	23.09
	Significantly improved	96	14.68
Relationship Status during lockdown / shutdown processes (Relationship with Colleagues)	Worsened	55	8.41
	Slightly worsened	101	15.44
	Remained neutral	261	39.91
	Slightly improved	169	25.84
Any behavioural changes happened due to prevalence of COVID -19	Significantly improved	68	10.40
	Worsened	61	9.33
	Slightly worsened	153	23.39
	Remained neutral	252	38.53
If Yes, can you list down such changes (Asked to them, who said Yes in previous Question)	Slightly improved	116	17.74
	Significantly improved	72	11.01
	Yes	458	70.03
	No	109	16.67
	Don't Know / Can't say	87	13.30
	Reduction in consumption patterns (Quantity)	59	12.88
	Reduction in frequency of shopping activities	197	43.01
Limitation of food wastages	359	78.38	
Have become more health conscious and shop accordingly	367	80.13	
Have become more cost conscious and shop accordingly	229	50.00	
Shopping in closer neighbourhood vicinities	303	66.16	
Online Shopping	178	38.86	
Bringing in items in large quantities	271	59.17	

Source: Primary data

## Feedbacks on their views towards Fairs, Festivals, &amp; Other Socio cultural events

Table 3			
Variables	Parameters	Nos.	Percentage
In the Pre-COVID times, how frequently, you used to go out for attending various fairs, festivals & other socio-cultural events	Very Frequently	412	63.00
	Frequently	79	12.08
	Occasionally	55	8.41
	Rarely	35	5.35
	Very Rarely	21	3.21
	Never	52	7.95
Reasons for visiting the fairs, festivals & Other Socio-cultural events in the Pre-COVID Times (Those who mentioned about going out in previous question)	Socialization (with friends / family members)	379	62.96
	Novelty / Uniqueness	285	47.34
	Rest & Relaxation	309	51.33
	Educational value / intellectual enrichment / knowledge	189	31.40
	Enjoyment / Excitement/ thrills	328	54.49
	Cultural exploration / Appreciation of history, art, and traditions etc.	111	18.44
	Others like shopping etc.	72	11.96
Average Amount spent per visit in Pre-COVID Times (Those who mentioned about going out in previous question)	Less than Rs. 500	80	13.29
	Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000	263	43.69
	Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000	182	30.23
	Rs. 2001 to Rs. 3000	51	8.47
	More than Rs. 3000	26	4.32
Are you ready to go out for attending fairs, festivals etc. as you used to in Pre-COVID times, after vaccination & when things will improve	Yes	527	80.58
	No	92	14.07
	Not Sure	35	5.35
If yes, then what are the expected precautionary measures the organizers need to adopt (Asked to Those who said Yes in Previous Question)	Maintenance of optimal levels of cleanliness & personal hygiene on ground	452	85.77
	Mandatory hand washing and / or sanitizing practices in regular intervals	503	95.45
	Regular Sanitization Practices throughout the premises through frequent cleaning & disinfecting practices	387	73.43
	Maintenance of distances between people as per the norms	509	96.58
	No Contact Policy in case of exhibition, serving, & transactions processes	364	69.07
	Proper, Safe, & Secure handling of items	353	66.98
	Instituting contactless ordering & delivery mechanisms	380	72.11
	Ensuring Proper Ventilation System	413	78.37
	Physical Barriers to separate large gatherings	391	74.19
	Provision of spacious seating arrangements in open places	359	68.12
Are you ready to pay few extra amount in order towards ensuring your safety & Security	Yes	139	26.38
	No	301	57.12
	Not Sure	87	16.51

Source: Primary data

When the usual practices of the respondents regarding attendance of various types of fairs, festivals, and other socio-cultural events were assessed, the following information was obtained.

- ✓ In the pre-COVID times, around 92.05% of the respondents mentioned that they used to go out for attending various fairs, festivals & other socio-cultural events whereas only 7.95% stated that they were not attending such events. The frequency of visit varied with 63% mentioning the visits as very frequently, 12.08% mentioned as frequently, 8.41% mentioned it as occasionally, 5.35% mentioned it as rarely and

3.21% mentioned it as very rarely.

- ✓ When the reasons for visiting various fairs, festivals, and events were assessed, 62.96% mentioned about socialization with friends and family members, followed by 54.49% who mentioned the reasons of feeling enjoyment / excitement/ thrills, 51.33% mentioned about rest and relaxation, 47.37% mentioning about novelty / uniqueness of the event, 31.40% mentioned about seeking educational value / intellectual enrichment / knowledge, 18.44% mentioned regarding the reasons of Cultural exploration / Appreciation of history, art, and

traditions etc. and 11.96% mentioned about other reasons like shopping for household decors, essentials etc.

- ✓ When their average spending in each visit to such events were assessed, around 43.69% mentioned about spending between Rs.501/- to Rs.1000/- followed by 30.23% who mentioned about spending between Rs.1001/- to Rs.2000/-, 13.29% mentioned about spending less than Rs.500/- per visit, 8.47% mentioned about spending within Rs.2001/- to Rs.3000/- and 4.32% who mentioned about spending more than Rs.3000/- per visit.
- ✓ When we tried to capture their willingness towards indulging in the practices of visiting various fairs, festivals, and events in post-COVID times around 80.58% of the respondents gave us affirmative answers where they were ready to return to their usual lives including the events attendance ones whereas 14.07% stated answers in negative notions. 5.35% were unsure about their choices.
- ✓ When we asked about the expectations to those respondents, who gave us affirmative answers regarding starting the practice of visiting to various fairs, festivals, and events in post-COVID time, 96.58% mentioned about ensuring the prescribed amount of distances between people as per the norms, followed by 95.45% mentioning about adaptation of mandatory hand washing & sanitizing practices in regular intervals, 85.77% mentioned regarding ensuring optimal levels of personnel hygiene on duty, 78.37% mentioned about ensuring proper ventilation systems, 74.19% asked for putting up of physical barriers to separate larger gatherings of people, 73.43% mentioned about initiation of regular sanitization practices throughout the premises through frequent cleaning & disinfection measures, 72.11% advocated for instituting contactless ordering & delivery mechanisms, 69.07% expected no Contact Policy in case of exhibition, serving, & transactions processes, 68.12% asked for ensuring provision of spacious seating arrangements in open places and 66.98% expected proper, safe, and secure handling of items.
- ✓ When the respondents were asked whether they were ready spend some extra amount for ensuring their expected safety & security measures in the post-COVID visiting scenarios, only about 26.38% gave us affirmative answers whereas around 57.12% recorded their unwillingness to spend anything extra and 16.51% were not sure about their views.

## 6. Discussion

The key issues revealed through this study can be listed as follows.

- ✓ The different types of social media platforms like Face book, you tube, twitters, instagrams etc. have

become dominant source of getting news updates as well as development of awareness towards different events and circumstances amongst the youth much ahead than other mediums like television, newspapers, & radio etc.

- ✓ People have become aware towards the benefits of physical exercises whereas when it comes to actual practice of them, however they were somehow lagging behind.
- ✓ Majority of the people accepted that the pandemic of COVID-19 has majorly affected their lifestyles and has initiated certain levels of changes in their behaviors. During the lockdown phase most of them were in the anxious, tensed, depressed, & fearful state of minds.
- ✓ The lock down & shut down phases provided them with an opportunity to remain close to their family members which helped them towards enhance their relationship status, whereas their relationship with other peer members like friends, neighbors, & office colleagues remained mostly neutral.
- ✓ Most of them adopted the online mode to get involved in their teaching learning activities and official works that points towards adaptation of new normal circumstances.
- ✓ Majority of the respondents accepted that the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic has initiated behavioral changes amongst them as they have become more conscious towards health, safety, & hygienic aspects. It also has taught them lessons like limiting food wastages, savings for the future, decreasing the shopping activities, going online for purchasing the essentials etc.
- ✓ When the data regarding their visit to various types of socio-cultural events were assessed, socialization came up as the dominating factor that provokes a person to visit various fairs, and festivals followed by other reasons like enjoyment, excitement, rest, relaxation, seeking novelties etc. Similarly, their spending practices in various types of events remained at a moderate level of Rs.501/ to Rs.1000/- Only.
- ✓ Majority of the respondents gave affirmative answers when asked about their intentions to visit various fairs, festivals and socio-cultural events in the post-COVID scenario.
- ✓ Their expectations towards ensuring personal safety included provisions like ensuring physical distances between people, initiation of regular hand washing& sanitizing practices, conforming cleanliness, personal hygiene, and proper ventilation systems, Instituting contactless ordering & delivery mechanisms, enacting upon no contact products and services delivery systems, and provisions of spacious seating arrangements etc.
- ✓ Though their expectations were certainly higher than the usual times, but they were found to be reluctant for spending any extra amount for ensuring the additional precautionary measures.

## Way forward

This never heard of pandemic of COVID-19 has taught us all a very tough lesson and reminded us about our limitations in a huge manner. It will take quite a bit of time to return back to the usual social lives but with adequate precautionary measures, effective surveillance, and continuous efforts towards ensuring cleanliness will certainly help in accelerating the process. Therefore, serious efforts has to be made in indentifying the expectations of the customers in these changed scenarios and sincere brainstorming has to be ensured upon them to come up with plans & programs towards the effective recovery processes.

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