The impact of epidemics and pandemics tourism essay



Changes in the human behaviour and life style over the last century have resulted in an increase of epidemics and pandemics all around the world. The spread of infectious diseases among the population is commonly known as epidemics or pandemics. The difference between these two terminologies are related to the number of people which is affected, a pandemic is affected a far higher number of people (two fold) compared to epidemic. Swine flu is considered as pandemic, which affected very badly in 2009 most of the countries in the world especially in Mexico and United States. There are a number of incidents reported over the years such as the avian flu affected in 2006, 1968 Hong Kong flu, 1957 Asian flu and the 1918 Spanish flu; which is considered as the most infamous, killed around 40 million people around the world.

As we can see from the previous epidemics and pandemics affected the world, the number of people affected and died was not many as compared to other tragedies, just the fear about the panic among the society can produce a substantial impact on the global economy. For example the flu pandemic occurred in 1918 have estimated to kill at least 2. 5% of the world population. If we calculate this with the current population the result would shows about 170 million deaths worldwide. As a result of this most of the people limited their travelling with some other alternatives. The crisis very badly affecting the tourism industry thus the country's economy.

Also on the other hand due pandemic the population of a particular country will go down and a marginal decrease in demand will occur. If the demand is less than the price will go down, this will lead to a bad economic situation. This could lead to the shortage of employees on affected areas and will https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-essay/

directly affect the business revenue and the country's economy. To prevent the spreading of viruses and the treatments government need to invest money on the medical side to cover the cost.

http://www. wisebread. com/economic-effects-of-pandemic-flu-in-a-recession

http://web. worldbank.

org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPREGTOPHEA

NUT/0,, contentMDK: 20713527~pagePK: 34004173~piPK:

34003707~theSitePK: 503048, 00. html

HOW PANDEMICS AFFECT TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Tourism and hospitality industry around the world is very badly affecting by pandemics, because of the nature of the business which is always related to the travelling of people. As history shows, epidemics and pandemics has an immediate impact on the hotels and restaurants, airlines industries etc, due to the international travel restrictions, media alarmist tones and government measures. While people making a decision on whether or not to travel to a particular country, they also concerned about the health care systems at the destination.

On the other hand there are chances to face a shortage of employees if they affected, this might result in the organizational performance. Also the multinational organizations limits their business executive's travelling to the affected countries, this creates marginal decreases on the demand for hotel rooms and airlines. As we can understand from previous incidents, most of

the countries tighten their securities especially at the airports in terms of any pandemics reported.

http://www. wisegeek. com/what-is-the-difference-between-an-epidemic-and-a-pandemic. htm

http://www. wisegeek. com/what-is-pandemic-flu. html

TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MEXICO

AN OVERVIEW

Mexico is one of the dream destinations for tourists around the world, which is considered as a land of contrasts. Mexico has a historic tradition of more than 3, 000 years and a diverse in its climatic conditions, makes the country an ideal destination for both domestic and international tourists. The main tourism activities include beach tourism, adventure tourism, magic towns, social tourism, business tourism etc. Mexico has the world's seventh largest hotel industry with 10. 400 hotels or 430, 000 rooms. The income generating through the tourism seems to be increasing over the years since 1980.

IMPORTANCE TO ECONOMY

The industry experienced a huge growth over last one decade before the global economic recession and swine flu pandemic.

In 1994 7. 2 million foreign tourists visited Mexico, if we count the number of people who crossed the border zone the figure rose to 17. 1 million. During 1995 around 20 million people visited Mexico; united States contribute 80% of these travellers.

Based on the Mexico's Tourism Secretariat report, in March 2004 foreign travellers to Mexico generated revenue of more than \$ 1 billion revenue in one month. They also revealed there were 5. 2 million international tourists visited during the first quarter of 2004, an increase of 14. 6 % compared to the previous year. And the international tourism revenue for the year totalled \$10. 84 billion.

In 2006 Mexico received 21. 35 international visitors, compared to 2005 a 2. 6% drop because of the lack of room availability due to the damaged caused by the Hurricane Wilma at Mexican Caribbean during late 2005. But the revenue generated during this season hit the record \$12. 18 billion, a 3. 2% growth compared to 2005 as a result of the excellent marketing strategy.

The revenue received from the cruises passengers also increased in 2006 to 458. 3 million dollars, compared to 452. 6 million dollars in the previous year.

In 2007 the total number of tourists visited in Mexico was 21. 4 million; this is a bit disappointing because the rate seems almost as same as the year 2006, instead of a forecast for 22. 03 million. Ministry of tourism evaluated the situation and a number of reasons behind this such as the current security situation because of the violence in the US border, which limited the cross border activities and the US economy, were slowly going down due to the global recession. Both of this limited the number of travellers coming from united sates.

In the first half of the 2008 Mexico survived from the last years set back, the first seven months of the year Mexico received \$8. 475 million foreign https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourismessay/

currency, an increase of 6. 3 % than the same period in 2007. During this time they received almost 14 million foreign tourists with an increase of 5. 2% compared to 2007.

Mexico Tourism Indicators Up for the First Half of 2008

Again unfortunately the tourism industry slowdown in the late 2008. The main reason for this is global economic recession particularly affected in America. Airlines cut back their schedules or reduced the frequency and increased the ticket price as result of the fuel price hike; this affected the Mexican tourism industry because most of the visitors are foreigners. This reflected directly in the hotel industry as well, also the business executives used to stay at the luxury hotels shifted their stay to a budget hotel and started to restrict their expenses.

http://www.spanish-mexico.com/tourism-mexico/

http://www. 1888pressrelease. com/mexico-s-international-tourism-revenues-reach-historic-high-pr-8r82w4eo15. html

http://www.euromonitor.com/Travel_And_Tourism_in_Mexico

http://www.marketresearch.com/product/display.asp?productid= 1792942

SWINE FLU

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A pandemic flu which affected many countries around the world in 2009, caused by H1N1 virus is referred as swine flu. Pigs are considered as the reservoirs of the flu. Initially the viruses only spread through direct contact with the pigs, also there is chance to spread it from person to person when it https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-

mutates. The virus is first detected in April 2009. The outbreak began at Veracruz, Mexico; also cases reported there had been ongoing epidemic for few months even before the flu was officially recognized. The Mexican government has closed most of the public and private facilities at Mexico City in order to prevent the spreading of viruses. But unfortunately the virus spread all over and affected different regions globally.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) report generated on 1 April 2010, 213 countries and overseas territories around the world have reported the pandemic influenza H1N1 2009, and 17483 deaths were officially reported. Still the virus is spreading in some regions of South East Asia. Thailand and Malaysia has continued to report a few cases in February 2010 as well. America and Europe reported a low level of virus continued to spread over regions.

Is Swine Flu Originated In Mexico or United States

Even after one year from the outbreak of swine flu which killed 14, 000 people worldwide, there are still allegations going on about where it originated either in Mexico or in United States. The Mexican public officials suspect the flu coming from United States through the Mexican tourists return to their country from America. It is very difficult to predict how it started. On 23 of April 2009 Canadian laboratory informed Mexico about the origin of virus, they told virus has a nature of animal origin and with pandemic potential, this is the same which identified in some children in California.

World Health Organization (WHO) in June 2009 officially declared after 11 weeks from the outbreak, there were only 144 people killed due to swine flu, which is same as the number of people die of seasonal flu worldwide. At least a million people were killed in mildest pandemics of the 20th century globally.

http://www. forbes. com/2009/10/16/swine-flu-world-health-organization-pandemic-opinions-contributors-michael-fumento. html

http://sify.com/news/swine-flu-probably-originated-in-us-says-mexico-news-international-kd4kucahdig. html

ENVIORNMENTAL ISSUES

After the swine flu outbreak, there were panic among the people last for few months, and travellers limited their journeys in and around the Mexico these days. The main reason is that people worried about health and international travel issues. The World Health Organization (WHO) raised the level of alertness to level 6, which technically means the swine flu is declared as a pandemic. The prime reason for this was the increasing incidents reported in different parts of the world those days, especially in America, Canada, Spain and other parts of the Europe. The crisis primarily affected the tourism and hospitality industry and its environments because of most of the peoples living here depending tourism industry either directly or indirectly. Mexican government has taken some precautions immediately to limit the disease spreading. Even if during the first month after the swine flu reported in Mexico there were not that many cases reported, the reason for the flop of

the tourism industry is because it affected the countries like Canada and America from there most of the tourists arriving.

http://www. dowell-netherlands. com/2010/03/swine-flu-virus-mutates. html http://www. takepart. com/news/tag/affect-of-swine-flu-in-mexico

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SWINE FLU IN MEXICAN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

After the swine flu Mexican tourism and economy has faced a biggest drop in revenue in summer 2009, the prime reason is the panic created among the travellers rather than how badly it affected. The tourist especially from Canada and United States cancelled their trips. Also the Mexico City authorities closed many public places and put a ban on gathering of people. According to the reporters, the occupancy percentage at luxury hotels in the city down to 4% during this season.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the leading health authorities have not imposed any restrictions against people travelling to the affected countries. But some airlines and travel agents cancelled their trips towards Mexico. Example: – TUI travels, Thomas cook and Virgin holidays have stopped all their services and packages to Mexico after the swine flu outbreak

http://www. journeyetc. com/travel-news/swine-flus-impact-on-the-travel-industry/

The income generated through the tourism industry is the third largest source of Mexican economy; oil exports and remittance from people working https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-essay/

abroad are the main sources. Because of the global recession both of these industries has declined in 2008. But tourism industry managed to survive with a growth of 3. 5% during that time.

In hospitality and tourism industry has faced sharp drop especially countries like America, Spain and Mexico, which deepened the problems occurred due to the global economic recession. Mexico's battle against drug cartels has been obstructed due to swine flu because government focused more on the public health side. The better side is the government developed alternative actions immediately to approaching the crisis in an effective way. This includes educating the people about the flu and mask distribution etc.

http://news. newamericamedia. org/news/view_article. html? article_id= 348d565d198eedf724f2921340afb44f

According to the Mexican tourism secretary in the year 2009 the revenue from tourism sector dropped down by 10. 5% (\$1. 4 billion) compared to 2008(\$13. 29 billion). This is the worst year for the Mexican tourism industry because of global economic recession and the panic created among the travellers about the swine flu pandemic. The last few months figures show the country has overcome the situation. During the first 10 months of the calendar year country obtained \$9. 19 billion from the sector and hosted 17. 28 million foreign tourists, but in 2008 it was \$11. 06 billion and 18. 29 million respectively during the same period.

Rodolfo Elizondo said major tourism destinations in the country were back to the previous levels and peoples living style and occupations registered before the swine flu first detected in April 2009. The recovery experienced is https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-essay/

largely in domestic tourism compared to the foreign travellers. The investors are expecting a soon recovery in the industry, even the economy was upside down during the first 11 months of the 2009 the total number of rooms available in main tourist areas increased by 8000 with an investment of \$8000 million.

In the last five months of 2009 the unemployment level related to hospitality and tourism decreased to 4. 5%, which is similar to the period before swine flu outbreak.

For the year 2010 the country is targeting total revenue of \$13 billion from tourism industry and expected to receive 23 million foreign visitors, which is same in year 2008 before the pandemics.

http://www. thaindian. com/newsportal/business/mexico-tourism-revenues-drop-105-percent 100289525. html

http://news. bbc. co. uk/1/hi/8099100. stm

Cancun an Example

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Cancun is a region in Mexico; tourism is the only revenue source in this area, famous for beach tourism. This place has been recorded a huge growth in receiving international tourists since 1970. Immediately after the swine flu reported, the number of international tourist arriving Cancun was dropped by 82% and the domestic tourists also down by 40%.(According to the Sara Latife Ruiz Chavez, secretary of tourism for the state Quintana Roo which includes Cancun area. She says 22 hotels were closed down temporarily due to lack of business. More than 10, 000 employees depending on the tourism https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-

and hospitality industry were lost their jobs. Even though the threats were fades after two months, we can see that still the industry is fighting with circumstances.

http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php? storyId= 104095754

But after almost one year, during the first three months of 2010 the Cancun tourism industry is recovering very quickly. During the February 85% of its total 28, 000 rooms were occupied. They are expecting a faster growth during the spring season. According to a report generated by tourism officials, expecting 25, 000 spring breakers to arrive this year compared to 20, 000 last year to visit the newly rebuilt beaches and its facilities.

http://www. travelvideo. tv/news/mexico/03-03-2010/cancuns-tourism-industry-recovering-quickly-and-is-ready-for-march-break

Apart from the airlines and hotel industry, there are many businesses associated with the tourism industry also affected by the swine flu. Public areas such as theatres, cinemas, museums, and art galleries were closed down. Many countries like America, Cuba and Argentina have suspended flights to Mexico during the season. Also there is a substantial fall down among business travellers; National Business Travel Association (NBTA) published a survey about the business travel shows 61% of the travellers were cancelled immediately after Mexico reported the outbreak.

http://www. journeyetc. com/travel-news/swine-flus-impact-on-the-travel-industry/

REDUCING THE SPREAD OF SWINE FLU IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

With the usage of appropriate safety measures and action plans we can prevent the spreading of disease from person to person. The people working in hospitality and tourism industry should be very much aware of this because they always need to contact with the guests from different parts of the world. Some of the safety measures that might be followed by the managers and employees in hotel industry are

Personal Protective Equipments (PPE):- All the employees, especially if they are in direct contact with the guest should wear PPE's such as masks, gloves and aprons. Because the proper use of these equipments will help to prevent spreading to a certain level. Employees must change their working cloths (uniforms) before leaving the premises. Food handlers and must use PPE's even if they are not contacting directly with the guests.

Employees must require washing their hands especially before and after preparing the food, after using the toilet, coughing and sneezing. They can also request to the guests to do the same in a polite manner.

The workers who clean guest rooms should also use an apron and gloves when they are cleaning the rooms occupied by the ill guest. Wearing a mask is not necessary if the guests are not in the room. The changed room linen should be placed in a separate bag instead of leaving them open in the corridor. They should ventilate the room by open the windows.

To prevent the spreading through the used PPE's among the colleagues, dispose it after use.

Telecommuting:-This allows employees to work at home, thus we can reduce the risk of contaminating the disease. In hospitality industry this is only applicable at the executive level because all other areas needed a personal service.

Actions to be taken by the managers

There are a number of steps to be taken by the managers in advance against the pandemics to improve the organizations safety control measures and guest safety.

Because there are chances the circumstances may lead to the political and legal aspects such as compensations and claims.

They should maintain a moderate list of medical facilities available in and around the locality, in case of any illness reported from the guests or staffs.

Update the staff contact details.

Develop an alternative plan to meet the staff requirements in case of an above absence level.

Ensure they have got enough stock of cleaning materials and also check the hand washing facilities are working properly.

Ensure the staffs are aware of the relevant procedures.

Ensure all the areas especially door handles, taps, and Kitchen areas are spotlessly cleaned rather than normal days.

Encourage guest to cover their mouth and noses with napkins when coughing and sneezing.

Review the action plans and train the staff in advance regarding the steps to be taken in case of an emergency

Review the reservations made and encourage the guest not to travel if they are affected.

Check all the guests staying in the hotel are having the scheduled meal at the food and beverage outlets.

The above described factors are some of the steps need to practise each hotelier within the organizations. In broader point of view hospitality organizations in a particular country or region has to group together with different strategies and develop some emergency alternatives in order to face any future circumstances in advance.

Example: – In Middle East, the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Dubai health Authority have organised a presentation to create awareness among the people and hoteliers about the swine flu in August 2009. In five months after the outbreak reported in Mexico, Middle East reported seven deaths and 2187 cases affected across 18 Arab countries. We can see the changing attitude of hoteliers, as more than 400 hoteliers participated in this DTCM presentation. Due to the increasing response DTCM is planning for other periodic presentations.

http://www. hoteliermiddleeast. com/5660-hospitality-industry-unitedagainst-swine-flu/

http://www. 4hoteliers. com/4hots_fshw. php? mwi= 1722

LEGAL ISSUES

The main legal issues faced by most of the organizations are directly related to the business disruptions due to the pandemics. Apart from the employees, business partners, suppliers and their families are affected by the diseases the government also takes a number of steps to prevent the enormous spreading of the disease. State and local authorities can put a ban on travellers crossing the bounty of the nations, international movements of goods, a control over accessing the facilities and commodities, public may restricted to access some places such as theatres and malls etc.

Shareholder Claims:-After significant financial losses occur in the business due to epidemics and pandemics, there are chances the shareholders make claim against the company.

Communication:-A hospitality organization has to communicate very urgently with all stakeholders and provide the relevant, clear and timely information's. This is a challenging job because the situation is unpredictable, how it will affect. Information should accurate and try to avoid confusion, means communications with the employees should cover when to return to work and all other policies related to them.

Human Resource and Employment:-The legal issues need to focus by human resources are mainly related to the following areas

Levels of absence of the employees and company leave policies (Family and Medical leave Act)

Work place safety requirements

Forced leave and medical benefit

The workers compensation scheme (Regarding the illness at work)

These all factors vary from place to place according to the government regulations and company policies.

HOW TO PREVENT SWINE FLU

To know what are the signs of swine flu: - The symptoms look like normal flu; high temperature, body pain, cough, sore throat, head ache etc. But the flu can be identified only through testing the respiratory specimen.

Make sure you are in good health:- be physically active, avoid stress, drink plenty of water, take nutritious food etc. If you have a good health the immune system protects you from viruses to a certain level.

Personal hygiene: – use a tissue while sneezing or coughing, wash your hands frequently by using a disinfectant or soap especially after sneezing or blowing the nose.

Don't share utensils or drinks: - This should be completely avoided especially in cafeteria settings, if there any risk of flu.

Wearing a facemask or Respirator instructed by authorities:- The proper usage of a mask or a respirator will help to prevent spreading of viruses.

http://www.wikihow.com/Prevent-and-Prepare-for-H1N1-(Swine-Flu)

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SWINE FLU

Vaccinate ourselves against the pandemic flu, human body will have little or no immunity against the new viruses.

Stock up: - make sure that you have the basic health supplies thermometer, face mask, sanitizers, medicine to relive fever etc.

Plan ahead:-plan for some activities in advance in case of school dismissed, one of your family members becomes sick, or what to do in case of transportation disturb etc.

Talk to your employer:-Check with your employee how the business will continue and the working in case of pandemic.

Using technology: - reduce human to human contact by sending an email or making a phone call to the client or other departments.

IS SWINE FLU OVER

Federal health officials of US say on 5 February 2010, for the last four weeks no states had reported a widespread flu activity. The swine flu cases have been declining since October in US. Dr. William Schaffner, an expert at Vanderbilt University said the epidemic has "one foot in grave".

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35259765/

US surgeon general Regina Benjamin reported on March 29 2010, H1N1 virus has remained in south east regions and states are experiencing a more local

activity than regional. US officials said that the reason is vague and the situation may because they had not been immunised. And also Georgia reported they had more than 40 hospitalizations in the last week and the third week in a row.

According to CDC report, an estimated 12, 000 people has killed and more than 265, 000 hospitalised because of swine flu. Normally seasonal flu kills about 36, 000 people in the United States and puts 200, 000 people in the hospital every year.

http://www. reuters. com/article/idUSN2910307020100329

NHS reports on 5 February 2010 indicates swine flu in the United Kingdom is over, the incidents reported have consistently been decreasing for past few months. And the swine flu levels are currently below the baseline. They warning the society those H1N1 viruses likely to return during the next winter as well and the people who are vaccinated will not affect in the future.

http://www. telegraph. co. uk/health/swine-flu/7145592/NHS-flu-line-being-switched-off-in-sign-outbreak-is-over. html

ACTIONS TAKEN BY HOTELIERS OR GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO TRAVEL

Because of increasing incidents like spreading of swine flu and bird flu, authorities of different nationals have forced to take more inclusive view of risk and liabilities.

Do not think in terms of a small cause: – As tourism industry is depending on the world of travelling, a hospitality professional have to focus on many https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-epidemics-and-pandemics-tourism-essay/

factors that that motivates peoples to travel. The travellers always concerned about their personal, economic and social needs and the level of security before they made decision. So all these to be key factors to be considered for promoting tourism especially when there is pandemic situation

Obtain and provide most accurate information possible: – provide information about the local area with the help of a medical professional to the public. While doing so try to avoid the exaggeration of the medical emergency and health issues. The information should be accurate, prudent and timely.

History is not predictive science: - We can use the historical data for analysing the current situation, but don't think would be the same kinds of situation. This will help to develop an alternative solution in case of an emergency.

Do not believe that pandemics are one-times events: – There are chances that the same or a different kind of pandemics may affect in the future. So hospitality or tourism professionals need to focus on how they can provide safe and secure travel in the future.

Developing a safe tourism board: - develop a tourism board for each particular country or a nation, the members should be from different professions such as medical field, law, media etc. The board members should meet periodically to discuss and evaluate the current situations.

Act rather than react: - The health department need to inspect the tourism areas and hotels and provide adequate information and training such as importance of washing hands frequently and, don't come to work if they are sick etc.

Use any current or previous situation to review all of medical and other risk management procedures: – All the guests should be well informed about the medical services, its availability and the cost of service etc. Hoteliers need to manage and update a detailed list on these facilities. These records might also be useful in other situations as well, because guests always need assistance from you.

Marketing: - This should be very effective especially in similar kind of situations. The hospitality is all about caring people. So the marketing strategy should be in focusing of market the message that how the company will take care of them and how secure they are.

Develop money back guarantees: - Due to the competitive nature of the business peoples have to have made their bookings in advance. While making reservations people also worried about the pandemics and the economic loss that might occur. So a hoteliers need to make an effective cancellation and refunding policy to customers in case they are not travelling.

By Dr. Peter Tarlow, Tourism Tidbits

http://www.eturbonews.com/9110/how-travel-and-tourism-industry-should-respond-swine-flu-threat

CONCLUSION

There have been a number of epidemics and pandemics reported throughout the human history. Most of them was very badly affected and created significant impact on the government and the human society, especially at the countries where they affected. Even though the government and other public organizations have taken a number of actions against the pandemics, the causes for some of them where still unknown. In the past days most of the epidemics affected only in a particular region or country. As a result of globalization now days, immediately after the outbreak epidemics and pandemics are spreading all over the world. Also in the past the incidents and deaths reported mostly among the elderly group, but now which is affecting a more important group of people "healthy young adults". (According to John Mackenzie, WTO).

As mentioned early, tourism and hospitality industry professionals, government and health care professionals need to work together in case of any future pandemics threat. Tourism board should conduct a periodic review on the current global situations on pandemics and epidemics. Based on this analysis they should take precautions and necessary actions to reduce the impact.

http://in. reuters. com/article/worldNews/idlNIndia-47690220100414