



MARKET: INDIA

25th May 2020

CHALLENGES

- Inspire and encourage travellers once the situation improves that it's safe to travel
- Uncertainty is the biggest challenge and we don't know when the travel eco system will be up and running
- Communication of which borders are open & where is it safe to travel is likely to be a challenge as things improve
- If the airlines & hotels may end up being more expensive than earlier, it will pose a new challenge
- Getting refunds for cancelled bookings is continuing to be a challenge. Either the refunds are stuck with airlines or with some aggregators & one or both may file for bankruptcy
- Rescheduling future holidays to the same destinations

BOOKING SITUATION

- Depending on the situation by July or August, **we may see travellers planning their holidays from September to December**
- We have done a small research to find out if customers are enquiring about their holiday plans. The response we received was that they are even though it may account for only 25-30% of their enquiries as compared to normal years. Though most enquiries now account for domestic or geographically closer destinations, **we are expecting enquiries for Europe to pick up by September**
- There has been a sentiment of domestic travel picking up in July & we may see international travel pick up by August to places like Mauritius, Middle East, Maldives & Sri Lanka. Europe is only likely to pick up by September. As Central Europe has been badly affected, there is a **growing sentiment about Scandinavia being safe & travellers will consider it**. Products around winters particularly Christmas & New Year along with Northern Lights could be popular

BORDERS & TRAVEL ADVICE

- India closed borders for all international flights, except cargo, **until May 31**
- On March 17, India had suspended issuing visas to citizens of France, Spain and Germany until further notice. **This will be reviewed in the first week of June.**
- Domestic flights are likely to start in early June
- The Indian government stepped up **tougher border control measures** to combat the Covid-19 outbreak as the number of patients is rising mostly from travel history to affected countries. The fresh restrictions both for outbound and inbound travel now include major European countries including France, Spain and Germany
- An advisory has been issued for all **incoming international passengers returning to India to self-monitor their health** and follow the recommended “DOs and DON’Ts”
- The advisory also calls for passengers with travel history to China, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, Malaysia, France, Spain and Germany to **undergo self-imposed quarantine for a period of 14 days from the date of their arrival**, and their employers to facilitate work-from-home for such employees during this period

OTHER

- The world post COVID-19 would be a different place & the travellers may have changed consumption or travel patterns forever. **Travelling as FITs or with small family & friends' groups for longer duration** or self-drive may be some of the new trends to watch out for. Travel packaging would undergo a complete change. Focused on **conscious, sustainable & environment-friendly holidays** may become more important than ever before
- **The travel fraternity in India has been extremely positive.** They have communicated in videos or social media to stay safe for now. There have been a lot of creative videos engaging them to dream now and travel later. The airlines are already waiting to launch campaigns with attractive promotions once the situation is normal
- We are trying to make the most of the given time and situation by conducting **destination training webinars and online sessions for our travel trade partners.** The idea is to enhance their knowledge & skills, keep them active & motivated and future-ready to be able to grab opportunities as soon as the market picks up. We are targeting to train in excess of 2000 travel professionals by the end of July
- The COVID-19 has provided us with this **one opportunity of additional time and detailed training sessions.** While typically a training session lasted an hour in normal situations, today, we have had deeply engaging training sessions for up to 4 hours

OTHER

- Tour operators are introducing some packages for solo destinations that may allow minimum air travel, longer stay, less check-in check-out & hence, make them feel safer
- Group travel may see a trends with a full-size bus with 50% occupancy that allows social distancing & safe travels
- For early bookings to Norway, it will be imperative for us to create a strong communication that sounds both welcoming & that we are ready to receive them



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