A STUDY ON THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR OUTBOUND LEISURE TRAVEL TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AMONG RESIDENTS OF HYDERABAD, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: *"Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination." Today tourism is a global phenomenon, with people willing to travel the entire length and breadth of this globe for leisure. Travelling off late has become a hobby for many, people are travelling round the globe to explore places and some of them have even made travelling an ultimate goal in their life's. With growing awareness about destinations, added with disposable income a lot of Hyderabadi's off late have started travelling to Europe to fulfil their wanderlust.* **Objective:** *To explore the various reasons for the increasing demand for outbound leisure travel to European countries among residents of Hyderabad.* **Methodology:** *In this study, a quantitative research method was used and research data was collected through an interview with a leading travel agency in Hyderabad, India. It is an explorative research and a questionnaire was used for this research based on which the travel agent was able to give us data from the database of bookings done to Europe in the last 2 years.* **Results:** *The major reason for people travelling to Europe was for their Honeymoon, for which they have been saving up, for some of them it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel to Europe. The second category of travellers was the wealthy lot, who would travel along with their families. There is another category, the Solo traveller, who saves for an entire year to travel to one European country. A minuscule percentage of people do travel to Europe with their friends and some of them travel to Europe for adventure as well.* **Conclusion:** *With the ever-growing social media awareness, disposable income, budget airlines, hotels deals added with a completely customisable travel plans a lot of residents from Hyderabad are spending their holidays in Europe.*

Key Words: *Tourism, Leisure, wanderlust, Disposable Income, Solo Traveller*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business; also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours. The World Tourism Organization defines tourism more generally, in terms which go "beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only", as people "travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure and not less than 24 hours, business and other purposes".

India is now one of the fastest-growing outbound tourism markets in the world, second only to China. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) estimates that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. Despite the slowdown due to rupee fluctuations, the Indian outbound numbers have been growing at an average annual growth rate of 10-12 percent over the last seven years. The market for travel and tourism in India is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 7.23 percent during 2016-2021, as reported by TechSci Research report,2018. A growing, consumption-driven economy, a large and increasingly affluent middle class, and the ongoing liberalization of air transportation have contributed significantly to this growth in international outbound travel. Additional interest in niche tourism sectors such as medical, wellness and adventure tourism has also contributed to this growth. Increased Smartphone and internet penetration have also contributed to an increased number of online bookings. Indian spending outside the country while travelling abroad has doubled in the past 10 years, from $7.5 billion in 2005 to nearly $16 billion in 2015.

Hyderabad is the capital and largest city of the Indian state of Telangana and de jure capital of Andhra Pradesh. Occupying 650 square kilometers (250 sq mi) along the banks of the Musi River, located on the Deccan Plateau in the northern part of South India. The city once known for its Nizami lifestyle now is a leader in IT, ITES and Pharmaceutical industries. This city also has a lot of PSUs, educational institutes and financial organisations. Once famous for its Pearls, now is known for its International Airport and the world-famous Biryani.

Outbound tourism in Hyderabad has been always on top with a chuck of the population settled in the United States of America and the Middle East. People have been travelling for education, work, and business. But the latest trend is to travel to Europe for leisure.

The growing demand for travel to European countries is at an all-time high, a growing, consumption-driven economy, a large and increasingly affluent middle class, and the ongoing liberalization of air transportation have contributed significantly to this growth in international outbound travel. Additional interest in niche tourism sectors such as adventure tourism has also contributed to

this growth. Increased Smartphone and internet penetration have also contributed to an increased number of online bookings to European countries.

In India, spending time with loved ones is a key motivation to travel for Indians. They often travel in family groups. Mental well-being is also important. Needing a break is a common reason. Most of all, Indian outbound travellers are hungry to engage with the world – no matter how far they travel. Wanting to visit other countries to broaden knowledge was the highest-ranking motivator for travel among Indian travellers. The new-age Indian traveller is well aware of the world wants to experience something unique, which indeed helps them be proud of them. The demand has gone up as a lot of MNC's & PSU's are offering foreign travel to their bosses and their families as incentives. Some MNC's even taking their entire team for an incentive travel to Europe, where the entire bill is footed by the company. For an average Indian travelling to Europe is nothing sort of a dream come true, a lot of them splurge a substantial amount of their savings to travel to Europe. (PATA September 2015)

People have started travelling because it is challenging,one might feel they are stuck in a rut. Or yearning for something exciting and different. craving new experiences and new challenges. Travel is the ideal place to test oneself. It pushes people to their limits and gets them outside their comfort zone. Learning is also strong reason why people love to travel. They want to experience something unfamiliar and leave with new skills or knowledge.

Another reason why people love to travel: it helps open one's mind. They realize that there's no one way to live life. Meeting people from other places will show that the world view isn't the same as everyone else's. Some of them travel because away to reflect on one's life. They get the needed time and space to let their mind wander and take stock. Travelling is one of the best ways to learn more about themselves. Every day travelling brings a new set of issues and opportunities. For a few travelling helps in building and strengthening relationship The shared experience of travel brings people together. A family getaway, a romantic trip, or a long weekend with the loved ones can strengthen important bonds. Travelling is adventure for many,conquering fresh territory is exhilarating – and one more reason why people love to travel. Humans crave new experiences and travel lets us tap into that craving. Travel provides a good escape,a demanding job. a bad breakup. The loss of a loved one. A lot of people travel so that they can benefit from a break from our usual diets of all work and no play. And then there are some who travel to landmark birthday or anniversary. A graduation. A wedding – or pre-wedding festivities.

In 2018, Indians applied for a record one million Schengen visas, The Schengen visa allows tourists to travel through 26 European countries—Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein,

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland—with a single document. India is listed as the third-largest source of Schengen visa applications in the world, data from the Schengen visa info show.(Y-AXIS Consultants 2019). Only Russia and China clocked more applications at 3.6 million and 2.8 million respectively. Though the state-wise statics is not available,but as per the travel agencies in Hyderabad, a substantial no. of tourists werefrom Hyderabad. Keeping this in mind, the objective of the present study was to identify the growing demand for outbound leisure travel to European countries among residents of Hyderabad, India.

METHODOLOGY

For the present work, an exploratory design was adopted for which a structured interview design was used, and these interviews were conducted via meetings and calls. The subjects were employees of 2 leading travel agencies in Hyderabad who were able to provide data by going through close to 1400 bookings done to Europe in the last 2 years. After an extensive search the data was collected and converted into tables and then based on the charts the following research has been complied.

RESULTS

After a round of interviews with the subjects, the following were the results, 47% of the bookings were done by travellers between the age of 25yrs-30yrs, most of them grew up with the Euro trip dream,46% of all the bookings were influenced by the movies and the exotic locations shown in movies. These travellers often come across blogs, vlogs, pictures, and posts either by their peer group, freelance travellers or even travel agencies showcasing their favourite location very often in this technology-driven world. This helps create craving to visit this particular location, this also leads to FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Someone glued to social media will always feel he/she is missing a lot of things in life, and this creates the desire to travel among this age group. Among the European countries, 38% of travellers preferred Switzerland, Snow-capped mountains, ravishing landscapes, and pristine waterfalls are the first thing that comes to mind when people talk about Switzerland, thanks to Yash Chopra and numerous Bollywood songs over the years that made the Alpine state a go-to destination for couples. 23% of the travellers, travelled to France and to be precise Paris, the city's romantic image, the stunning architecture, the Louvre museum, the iconic Eiffel Tower as well as the simple pleasure of sitting at a café terrace and watching the sunsets and a trip to Disneyland, which is a destination in itself. France has everything, from sandy beaches to snow-covered mountains and vast expanses of countryside. France also offers its famed gastronomic traditions and a few glasses of 'vin'. Due to which travellers want to travel to the world's food capital. France also boasts of its rich art, history and culture. The next popular

destination is Italy people often travel to Italy to witness the Roman architecture, well-planned cities, mesmerising villages along the seashore. Italy also offers a trove of UNESCO World Heritage sites and one can't miss the lip-smacking food served with the finest red wine. People also visited Greece, to witness the architectural marvels, to get a good sunbath along the beaches and of course the most popular of all the Santorini Island, the supermodel of the Greek islands. It is famous for dramatic views, stunning sunsets from Oia town, the strange white aubergine (eggplant), the town of Thira and naturally its very own active volcano. Another offbeat country which saw a sudden demand among travellers is the Czech Republic, the country recently did Road Shows in India and also invited a group of Social Media Influencers to promote tourism, needless to say, it worked out. The country offers thematic packages such as wine tourism, spa tourism, and pristine nature stays. A small number of people also chose to visit Hungary as its very economical and known for its world's finest thermal baths and of course the Balaton lake. A minuscule number of people do visit Norway to witness the mesmerising Northern Lights. The tour packages sold are generally sold in no. nights and no. of days, in Hyderabad 57% of travellers booked a tour package offering 8nights/9days,excluding the time taken to travel to &fro. 20% of the packages sold offered a package with 6nights/7days and the least popular package was 4nights/5 days package with 11% of booking done for it. Europe offers 4 seasons to a traveller, and 62% of travellers, travelled to Europe between December & February which falls in right during the Christmas break and also the wedding season in Hyderabad. During November-March,is off-peak Season in Europe,which works good for a traveller.The European seasons are classified as European Summer: The peak season runs from June to August. The summer months of June to August are the best season to go to Europe. The weather is warmer, the days are longer and the sheer level of activity and buzz is higher – but travelling to Europe during the peak season comes with certain caveats. First and foremost, crowdespecially in popular cities like Paris, Rome, Barcelona, and Amsterdam. In addition to the crowds, travelling during the peak seasons means that most aspects of your trip will be more expensive. European Off-Peak Season: The months before and after peak season – April to June and September to November – are a good choice. During this time the traveller has a certain level of flexibility. One can enjoy good weather and long days without the crowds of tourists that come during the summer, allowing people to maximise time in every city and have a more authentic experience. European Winter: The off-season runs from November to March and allows one to see a completely different side of Europe. This is the best time for a solo traveller, a budget-conscious adventurer or simply more flexible when it comes to travel, the cold months of winter are the best time to visit Europe. The months of November to March are the cheapest time to visit the continent. Besides, one will also have the opportunity to enjoy many tourist attractions and monuments thoroughly and at their own pace, without being crowded and overwhelmed by other tourists at every turn. Besides, one is likely to be able to do more with the same amount of

money. This season is most sought after as the Indian wedding season clashes with this season. Also this is Christmas break for some Indians, followed by employees tying use their leaves and also the companies willing to exhaust their budget allotted towards incentives and employee benefits.

Apart from the tour packages, one might end up spending on local transport, food, and shopping, etc. Most of them do payments via online transfers and some of them opt for the EMI option, which works well. A majority of the travellers go to Europe for their Honeymoon and others for once in a lifetime trip to Europe. 80% of them travel with their spouse, 15% travel with family and the remaining choose a solo trip or travel along with their friends, mostly to offbeat destinations and adventure activities. These travellers are the working population of the city, they are employees who have been saving up for the trip or are given incentive travel, which has picked in recent years. With a large no. of MNC's and PSU's offering foreign tours to best performers, this works for both the employee and the employer. Also the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad has helped the outbound traveller as it is one among the best airports and has a direct daily flight to London, other airlines offer interconnecting flight across Europe with one stopover either in Delhi, Mumbai, Istanbul, Muscut& Dubai. As part of the tour, some of them also visit Istanbul with the help of the Schengen Visa. Most of the travellers prefer travelling either by Emirates or Qatar airways. People going to Paris, prefer flying Turkish Airways as it is the cheapest and best carrier plying on this route.

Table 1: Results of data collected

S.No.	Particulars	Percentage
1.	**Age group**	
	25-30yrs	47
	30-35yrs	18
	35-40yrs	15
	40-45yrs	11
	45-50yrs	5
	50-55yrs	3
	55-60yrs	1
2	**Purpose of travel**	
	Honeymoon	53
	Leisure	21
	Incentive	17
	Adventure	5
	Culture,Food &Wine	4

S.No.	Particulars	Percentage
3.	**Choice of Country**	
	Switzerland	38
	France	23
	Italy	13
	Greece	10
	Czech Republic	6
	Hungary	9
	Norway	1
4.	**How did the traveller, know about the destination.**	
	Movies	46
	Magazines	3
	Social Media	23
	Travel blogs/vlogs	10
	Peer group	6
	Exhibitions	4
	Road Shows	8
5.	**Travel Companion**	
	Spouse	80
	Family	7
	Solo	10
	Friends	3
	Colleagues	3
6.	**Duration of the Trip**	
	2N/3D	0
	4N/5D	11
	6N/7D	20
	8N/ 9D	57
	10N/11D	12
7.	**Travel Months**	
	June-August	7
	September-November	12
	December-Feb	62
	March-May	19

S.No.	Particulars	Percentage
8.	**Average Spending**	
	50k-1L	0
	1L-1.5L	0
	1.5l-2l	5
	2.5L-3L	14
	3.5L-4L	56
	4L-4.5l	9
	4.5L-5L	4
	5L-5.5L	12
9.	**Mode of Payment**	
	Online Transfer	78
	Debit Card/Credit Card	18
	EMI	4

CONCLUSION

Travelling has become a major part of one's life and people are trying their best to travel to Europe at least one country. With the growing awareness, thanks to technology and social media a person is more aware. An average Hyderabadi travellers want to travel Europe and can afford it in today's day and age. European countries are spending money to attract tourists from India. When this marketing is done in the right at the right place people start aspiring for such things, this is what is happening in Hyderabad. The traveller here knows what he wants and the destination he wants to visit. With the ever-growing disposable income and dual-income families, finance isn't a problem. They can afford such tours and are ready to splurge the small fortune that they have saved. Honeymooners are the major chuck going to Europe for a perfect romantic gateway and for them it's a once in a lifetime experience. While some of them go along with their families to enjoy some time together and then some travel solo and for adventure. The sudden growth can also be attributed to better connectivity and affordable flights which are helping people witness Europe at its best. With strategic marketing, followed awareness, FOMO when added with disposable income and customisable tours, the dream Euro trip is becoming possible for many residents of Hyderabad.

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