



Wellness Tourism in Post Covid-19 Scenario – Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Today's busy lifestyle and race for success have increased the stress levels among people thus increasing the importance of both physical and mental wellbeing. Outbreak of Covid – 19 pandemic forced people to be indoors due to lockdown and restrictions. The pandemic acted as a wake-up call for many people to understand the need of wellbeing and wellness. This precisely led many people to undertake wellness tourism activities post Covid – 19 pandemic. This study is conducted at this juncture to discuss the changes, impacts, challenges and opportunities of wellness tourism in post-Covid-19 scenario. Previous research articles were thoroughly analyzed for this purpose and the results showed that wellness tourism has got a great growth potential post Covid-19 as people have understood the importance of wellbeing and wellness tourism. Wellness tourism possesses the power to act as the vehicle for the recovery of tourism industry as a whole, which was effected by the pandemic. The tourism stakeholders need to improve the infrastructure and try to provide diversified wellness tourism packages to capitalize the growth prospect of this segment.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, wellbeing, Covid -19 pandemic

1. INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". The four components in holistic health are physical, mental, emotional, and social, and all need to function in harmony to achieve wellbeing [1].

Wellbeing is not a new concept as it has been widely discussed in the context of physical and mental health. Wellbeing is much larger than the concept of health as mental health influences the physical health and is totally linked to each other. There is no health without mental health as wellbeing is a state of positivity, where we feel good for oneself and wish well all around us as well [2].

Tourism is an important mode of leisure activity and a path leading to the wellbeing of people. By visiting places, engaging in recreational activities and contact with nature can improve the mental and social wellbeing. Travel experience can improve the wellbeing of people and an opportunity for leisure and relaxation [3]. Mueller and Kaufmann [4] defined wellness tourism as the act of travelling for the purpose of health sustaining or enhancing activities, including physical fitness, healthy nutrition, as well as relaxation and meditation. Wellness Tourism is a type of tourism which is associated with the pursuit of maintaining and

enhancing one's personal well-being. Wellness vacations include nature – based rural wellness tourism, ayurveda tourism, thermal tourism, spa tourism, yoga and meditation tourism, etc [5]. Other subsets of wellness tourism are indigenous medical therapies, rejuvenation therapies, panchakarma, spiritual and faith healing tours, etc [6]. Wellness will empower individuals to attain and sustain mental and physical wellbeing which are considered to be valuable assets during stressful uncertain conditions in life like Covid-19 pandemic [7]. Wellness cannot eliminate health problems but can definitely prevent them as it is defined as prevention without drugs. Wellness focuses on three factors that cause stress - physical, chemical and mental [8].

Wellness is an optimum state of being disease-free, whereas wellbeing is a multi-faceted state of physical, psychological, emotional and social wellbeing [9]. The terms wellness and wellbeing are used while measuring the health and mental status [10]. The growing demand for robust immune system and holistic health has made people realize the need for wellness and wellbeing [11].

During Covid-19 pandemic people were restricted to one place causing many psychological and mental illnesses. In post pandemic period people have started to explore the health, wellness and beauty solutions through online platforms and are gearing up to pursue wellness tourism activities [12]. People have realised that wellness tourism activities can play an important role in the recovery of mental wellbeing [13]. The choice of tourism destinations and packages has seen a paradigm shift after Covid-19 pandemic. Wellness tourism has become an emerging trend especially after Covid – 19, as people started preferring to achieve good health, fitness and to gain mental peace [14].

This paper is structured systematically with a section mentioning the previous studies and articles related to wellness tourism, followed by an account of the impact Covid-19 pandemic on wellness tourism. The second section gives an overview of research methodology, followed by selection criteria of articles, results, findings, suggestions, limitations and future scope of study and conclusion.

A. Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism is a type of tourism that consists of activities that help to improve body fitness, mental rejuvenation and wellbeing [15]. Wellness tourism comprises of travelling and activities that rejuvenate and detoxify oneself. Wellness travellers can be subcategorized into primary and secondary. Primary wellness travellers' main motive is to involve in wellness activity like visiting ayurveda and yoga centers, spa centers, etc, whereas secondary wellness travellers are those who undertake wellness activity while undertaking other tour and travelling activities [16]. The main objective of wellness tourism is to shape a good order of physical fitness, a healthy mindset and wellbeing of inner self [17].

Wellness tourism is a dynamic tourism sector that has gained exponential growth recently as people from all walks of life have started to pay attention to health and wellness issues due to the high-pressure environment they are living in. The recent shift of medical services from “disease- centered to health-centered has also fostered the popularity of wellness tourism [18]. The main motive of tourists for selecting wellness tour packages might be to escape from the monotonous routines of everyday life, for relaxation and relief from stress [19]. The Global Wellness Institute [20] stated that there are six dimensions of fitness that constitute

wellness tourism, viz., mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, environmental and social. While developing wellness tourism products these dimensions need to be taken into consideration. Wellness tourism carries the potential to transform travel into an opportunity for enhancing and sustaining our wellbeing [21].

Wellness tourism is an environment friendly and sustainable tourism product that has a high impact on wholesome wellbeing of the people and also helps in the economic growth of the country [22]. The awareness of leading a healthy lifestyle, increase in non-communicable diseases, aging population is driving the demand for wellness [7]. The major motivation behind selecting wellness tourism is to escape from the daily life stress, to relax and rest, to feel refreshed, for recreation purpose, to attain spiritual growth and to be at peace with oneself which in turn help in improving the quality of life [23], [24].

Wellness tourism has an added advantage as it can be promoted throughout the calendar year as it is an evergreen recreation and wellbeing activity [25]. The new healthcare trends have acted as a catalyst for the growth of wellness tourism as it emphasizes on holistic method of wellbeing [26]. Jha [27] opined that people decide to travel to get a breath of relief from their busy stressful life. At times travel might lead to unhealthy practices like overeating, poor sleep, disturbing the regular fitness routines. But, wellness tourism is the right travel option as it rejuvenates tourists with healthy eating, staying connected with oneself and nature and providing a holistic authentic experience. Utama and Sukmana [28] stated that wellness tourism is showing an unprecedented growth in recent times both at global and regional level. Wellness tourism acts as an aid in sustainable tourism, reviving traditional healing approaches and preserving natural and cultural resources [20]. Asia is the fastest growing region in terms of providing wellness tours and trips, as they offer wellness tourism products like, yoga, ayurveda, spirituality, meditation, spa, thermal wellness, rejuvenation therapy, indigenous medicine therapy, etc [29]. Thailand, Singapore, India, Philippines and Malaysia play key roles in offering wellness tourism and are showing positive growth [30]. Koncul [31] stated that European countries mainly concentrate on wellness products such as spa, physical fitness, air, sunshine and sea whereas Asian countries concentrate on yoga, meditation, massage, etc. Ayurveda tourism is one of the sub-sections of wellness tourism. There are different techniques in ayurveda like dietary therapy, panchakarma, herbal medicine, etc. and these activities help to improve the immunity of human body and wellbeing as well. So, spas, domestic clinics, resorts need to include ayurveda wellness tourism in their tour package which will provide a holistic outlook to wellness [32].

India has made its mark in the map of world wellness destinations by providing services like ayurveda, naturopathy, meditation, yoga, etc. Kerala and Uttarakhand are the states that have marketed them as the prime wellness tourism spots in India. There are also spiritual wellness destinations in India like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Banaras, etc [33]. The advantage of wellness tourism is that it is all-season tourism activity that is not affected by seasonal fluctuations [34]. Wellness Tourism is here to develop throughout this century due to the fast paced lifestyle, increased stress and demand for personalized services [35]. Even though Asian countries pioneer in wellness tourism, each country in the world provides unique wellness products to tourists. (Table 1).

Table 1: Wellness speciality offered by various countries

SI No	Country	Wellness Products Offered
1.	Arizona	Destination Spas
2.	Argentina, Chile	Thermal Resorts
3.	Australia	Surf & Yoga Retreats
4.	Austria	Alpine Wellness Hotels
5.	Brazil	Thermal Water parks
6.	California	Weight Loss & Detox retreats
7.	Caribbean	Wellness cruises
8.	Costa Rica, Belize	Rain Forest Spa Retreats
9.	China	Hot Spring Resorts, TCM
10.	Egypt	Sand Baths
11.	Finland	Sauna
12.	France	Thalassotherapy
13.	Germany	Climatic health resorts
14.	India	Meditation, Yoga, Ayurveda Retreats
15.	Israel	Dead Sea Spa Resort
16.	Japan	Onsen and Supersento
17.	Korea	Jjimjilbang
18.	Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana	Safari Spas
19.	Malaysia, Thailand	Executive Checkups
20.	Mexico	Temazcal Beach resort spas
21.	Morocco	Thermal Hammams
22.	New York	Urban Healthy Hotel & Spas
23.	New Zealand	Hot Springs
24.	Norway	Nordic Wellness
25.	Russia	Sanatoria Banya
26.	Turkey	Turkish Baths
27.	South Africa	Health Hydros Yoga & Wine Retreats
28.	UK	Weekend Wellness Retreats & Bootcamps
29.	Zambia	Walking Yoga Safaris

Adapted from Wilaipan and Wipada [21].

Wellness tourism was growing steadily before the pandemic struck the world. All types of tourism felt the heat of the dreadful pandemic. According to UNWTO [36] the wellness tourism sector is expected to grow even faster than the annual growth predicted for international tourism.

B. Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Wellness Tourism

During the Covid-19 pandemic tourism sector was the most affected industry globally. A proper coordination of all the stakeholders of tourism industry is needed to rethink on taking

practical steps to recover the tourism sector for a sustainable growth [37]. Viana, et al., [38] noted that Covid-19 pandemic has caused a disruption in everyone's life and have increased the anxiety, stress, depression and stigma among people. Hence, they proposed that a new concept of tourism namely "healing tourism" which concentrates on wellness tourism, eco-tourism, nature-based tourism, domestic tourism, etc. The pandemic has also forced the tourism stakeholders to review the existing principles in tourism sector and to adopt sustainable tourism development avenues, and wellness tourism is one among it [38].

Sánchez and Sánchez [40] studied about the impact of Covid-19 on the Spanish tourism sector and observed that people after the pandemic have become more aware of the importance of health and wellbeing. Now they are looking for trips and holidays that provide specific benefits for physical and emotional wellness. Pandemic has transformed the wellness tourism activities as a whole [34]. Manpreet et al., [41] noted that Covid-19 pandemic has caused large scale damage to humanity both physically and mentally which led to psychological distress, despair, and depression. They further stated that spiritual tourism, yoga, ayurveda and other wellness recreation and tourism activities will help people to cope-up with the challenges they have faced. Isolation, the inability to communicate and travel due to Covid-19 pandemic has increased the quest for wellbeing which is being provided by wellness tourism. After the pandemic, people have understood the importance of ultimate wellbeing and wellness [42].

The Covid-19 pandemic has raised public awareness towards the need of wellbeing and the different dimensions of wellness. Even during lockdown people started exploring the wellness activities at home like gardening, yoga, meditation, etc. There will definitely be an increase in travel to wellness tourism destinations once the lockdown gets eased [43]. The impact of Covid -19 has led to changes in the people's attitude, perception and expectation as more people prefer sustainable lifestyle and good mental wellbeing [44]. The quality of life, mental and physical wellbeing and travel for restoration of mind and soul have become the key area of interest for most of the tourists in the world [45]. Mayil and Bharathi [46] stated that travellers have started seeking more of wellness and spiritual tourism packages for rejuvenation and refreshment of their mind and body after an unprecedented period of unsettlement in their life due to Covid – 19 pandemic.

People have understood the need to lead a sustainable and healthy lifestyle post Covid-19 due to which wellness tourism is gaining popularity and many tourists are seeking for wellness tour packages [47]. Wellness tourism was considered to be a niche tourism sector pre-pandemic times, but now it has become mainstream because of the drastic change made by Covid-19 pandemic in people's lifestyle [48]. Phuthong et al., [49] stated that wellness tourism is a health activity without using a surgical knife. They further stated that wellness tourism was already a booming sector but became a trend after Covid – 19 pandemic. The pandemic has made the tourists feel that they not only need enjoyment and leisure in life but also a healthy mind and body.

Fernando [50] stated that tourism industry in Srilanka was deeply affected due to Covid – 19 pandemic and suggested promoting destinations and tourist spots through social media and online platforms, attracting joint venture and investment from foreign players and to prioritize spiritual, health, wellness, rural and ayurveda tourism which are the unique selling

point (USP) of Srilanka's tourism sector. Samridhi [51] noted that India, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, China and the Philippines are some of the major destinations for wellness tourism. Covid – 19 pandemic has adversely affected these destinations. Kumar, et al., [52] stated that the travel motivations among the people of Nepal have changed due to Covid-19 pandemic and the tourists focus more on improving immunity and health. They further stated that the tour and travel operators need to include wellness and rejuvenation packages to attract them. Aluculesei and Avram [53] opined that new normal created due to pandemic has forced the tourism sector to look for sustainable tourism products that allow tourists to enjoy their holidays along with leisure and maintain their health. They further suggested that tourism products like eco-tourism, wellness tourism, rural tourism and similar tourism products will serve this purpose. Rogerson and Rogerson [54] noted that Covid – 19 pandemic had a devastating impact on South Africa's tourism sector. The pandemic has reshaped existing consumer tourism demand pattern and intention, as they have started to understand the need of sustainability and wellbeing. Kirti and Hafizullah [55] stated that wellness travel to Rishikesh, India increased post Covid pandemic as it provided the tourists an atmosphere of rejuvenation, detoxification, body fitness and mental wellbeing. In India more people started to prefer traditional and alternate means of medical treatment and tourism like Ayurveda, Yogic physiotherapy and spiritual tourism for good mental health and wellbeing after Covid pandemic [56]. Laijawala, et al., [57] stated that one in five Indians in the age group of 15-24 years experienced depression during the lockdown period and people who survived the threat of corona virus have higher level of post traumatic disorder and depression. They further stated that people may undertake wellness tourism activities like yoga, spirituality, ayurveda and spa to seek inner peace, solace and mental harmony post Covid-19 havoc.

The pandemic has raised the awareness among people about the importance of physical, mental and spiritual wellness. This paradigm shift has increased the potential of wellness tourism market as tourists have started to prefer local short trips and wellness tourism activities. So, the Government need to prioritize in creating a tourism model by giving necessary support by providing quality local and wellness tourism packages [58]. Wilaipan and Wipada [59] stated that the stakeholders and policymakers need to tap the growth of wellness tourism by continuously monitoring the changes in tourists' behaviour, demand and opportunities, to rebrand and promote wellness tourism destinations. According to Selko [60] the pandemic has increased the stress levels and mental strains among employees. Hence, employers and organizations must try to ensure their employees' safety and job security and should promote the workers' wellbeing by providing wellness tourism packages and mental health awareness programs.

Older generation people were the main consumer group of wellness tourism before Covid-19 pandemic. But, the outbreak of pandemic has increased the public awareness of healthy mind and body, so all age group consumers have started to pay attention to health and wellbeing and wellness tourism [61] Widarini, et al., [62] stated there is a shift in the mindset and lifestyle of millennials and younger generation post pandemic. These changes need to be capitalised by the tourism stakeholders while packaging wellness tourism programs and realise that pandemic is not to be the end of the tourism sector. The stakeholders need to offer tour packages with a touch of wellbeing and thus mental health tourism activities can help in

the holistic and sustainable growth of tourism sector as a whole. Wellness tourism is a niche form of tourism that is expected to reach greater heights as in the contemporary world people are yearning for healthy mind and body. This has pushed people to add wellness component into their travel and tour plans. This study looks into the challenges faced by wellness tourism sector and the opportunities provided in detail and the need to re-energize and re-strategize the competitiveness of wellness tourism and wellbeing.

2. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Type

Wellness tourism is multidisciplinary in nature as it is a combination of travel, wellbeing, leisure and wellness. The study is descriptive in nature and is based on secondary data. A thorough analysis of the existing research articles is done to understand the potentials, opportunities and future scope of wellness tourism industry and also to study how wellness tourism cater to the wellbeing of people.

B. Research problem:

Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected the tourism sector as a whole. Prior to the pandemic wellness tourism segment was showing a steady growth, but the importance of wellness tourism activities have increased tremendously post Covid-19 pandemic. As more people have understood the need and importance of wellness and wellbeing and hence are planning to conduct more such tours and travels. This study would help in understanding the direction of wellness tourism industry post- Covid-19 pandemic and accordingly plan the marketing strategies for promoting wellness tourism.

C. Research Question

What are the challenges faced and opportunities provided by wellness tourism sector in the post Covid-19 scenario?

D. Objectives

1. To evaluate the changes in the wellness tourism segment in post-Covid-19 era.
2. To study the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the wellness tourism industry.
3. To analyze the general perceptions of people about wellness tourism in post-Covid times.
4. To find out the challenges and opportunities of wellness tourism in post-Covid-19 era
5. To examine how the importance of wellbeing and wellness tourism has increased during post-Covid-19 pandemic.
6. To propose certain suggestions to Government, tour and travel operators and stakeholders for the improvement of wellness tourism sector.

E. Research Gap

The wellness tourism segment especially and tourism industry in general faced a dull period during Covid-19 pandemic. The importance of wellbeing and wellness has increased during pandemic time. So, wellness tourism is considered as the suitable segment that can re-promote and re-energize the tourism industry as a whole. Hence, it is considered worthwhile to investigate the challenges and opportunities pertaining to wellness tourism in post-Covid scenario by referring the research articles in the field.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of wellness encompasses a disease-free condition and a state of happiness. Wellness tourism is a sub-category of medical tourism through which people seek to achieve whole-body wellbeing [62]. Wellness tourism came to the forefront during the 21st century as people started to realize the necessity of physical and mental wellbeing for the longevity of life [63]. Wellness has become even more important in post pandemic time and tourists have started planning for tours based on spiritual and wellness concepts [64]. Considering the changes brought by Covid – 19, people’s interest towards health and wellness tourism activity has increased as it benefits mental health, relaxation and stress relief [65].

Survey of the previous studies on Wellness tourism during and after Covid 19 was performed. For selecting the articles, the researcher searched 3 databases namely, Google Scholar, Research Gate and ProQuest, and PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart endorsed by the Cochrane Collaboration [66], [67] was adopted to do the literature review systematically. The literature review articles were selected by following a systematic 4 step procedure:

- i. **Identification and search strategy:** Searched original articles and review papers in Google Scholar, Research Gate and ProQuest using Keywords: “Wellness Tourism and Covid-19”, and also “Wellbeing and Covid-19” in titles, keywords or abstracts.
- ii. **Screening:** The papers and articles were screened based on 4 criteria,
 - a. Articles published during 2020 – 2023 were only considered
 - b. With help of database the articles were sorted by relevance
 - c. Excluded duplicates, case studies, reports and company surveys
 - d. Only English articles were taken into consideration.
- iii. **Eligibility:**
 - a. Only full text research paper and with description of quantitative or qualitative methods.
 - b. Articles were excluded after reading the abstract.
 - c. Articles were excluded after full paper reading
- iv. **Included:** The papers and articles were included finally based on 2 criteria;
 - a. Sound methodology with proper aim and objectives of the study.
 - b. Good use of secondary source with appropriate citation.
 - c. Few papers were added after cross- referencing

Table 2: Overview of the Literature review steps of identification and selection

Identification and Search	Google Scholar	Research Gate	ProQuest
Number of Papers per database	1580	1000	1390
	Total articles identified from databases - 3970		
Selection steps	Resulting number of papers		
Articles published during 2020 – 2023 were only considered	3670 (300 excluded)		
Articles sorted by relevance with help of database	3413 (257 excluded)		
Elimination of duplicates, case studies, reports and company surveys	2834(682 excluded)		
Inclusion of only English articles	2256 (578 excluded)		
Only full text research paper and with description of quantitative or qualitative methods.	1687 (669 excluded)		
Articles were excluded after reading the abstract	1130 (557 excluded)		
Articles were excluded after full paper reading	702 (428 excluded)		
Sound methodology with proper aim and objectives of the study	239 (463 excluded)		
Good use of secondary source with appropriate citation	25 (214 excluded)		
Few papers were added after cross- referencing	32(7 added)		
Total Papers selected	32		

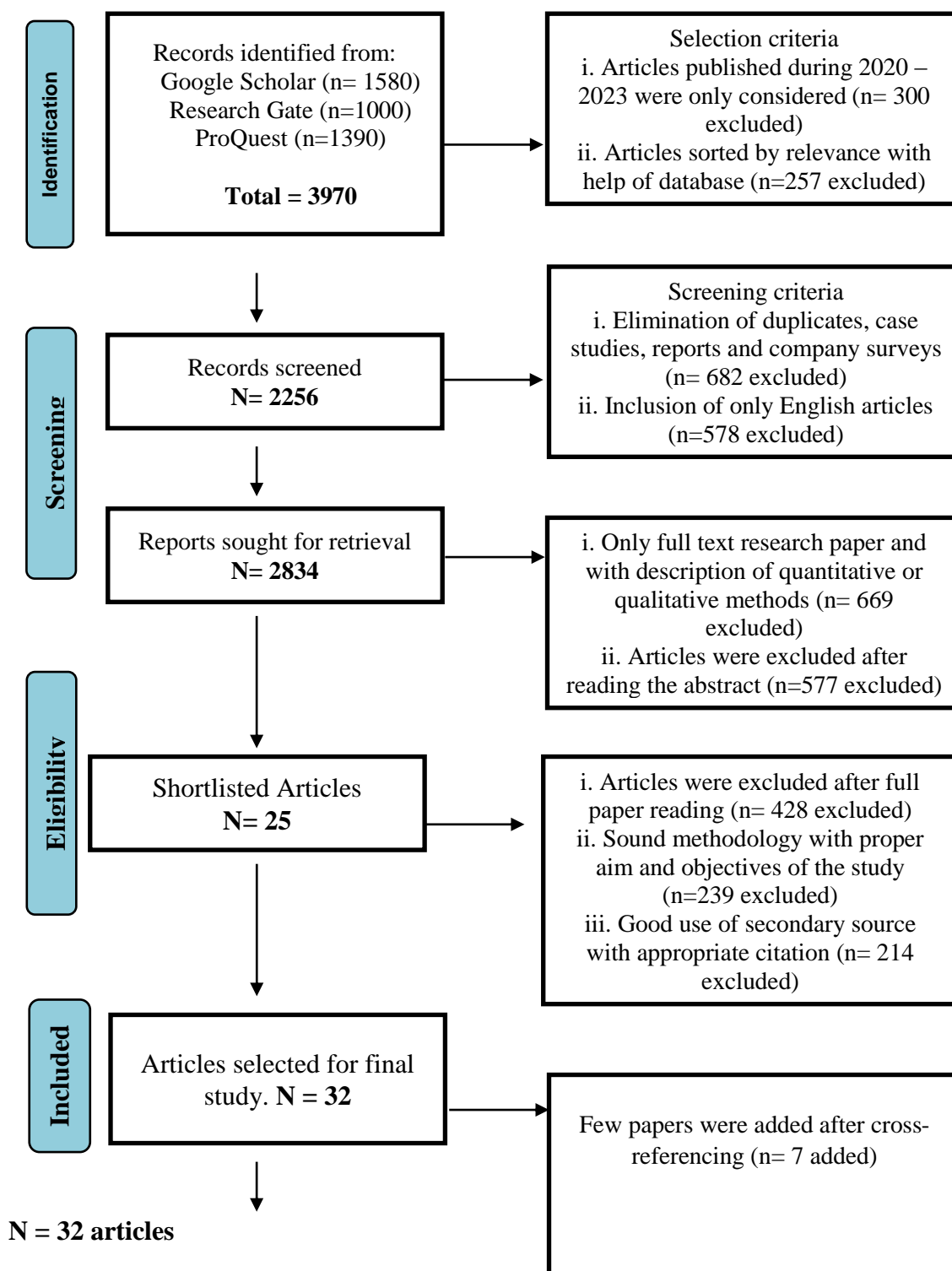


Figure 1: PRISMA diagram of systematic Literature review adapted from Page MJ et al., [68]

4. RESULTS

As a result of 4 stages filtering process, articles planned to be reviewed for literature survey has been reduced to 32 articles. The results of 12 selected pertinent studies are presented here in tabular form.

Author and Year	Title of the study	Purpose/Objective	Main Findings
Aruditya Jasrotia and Parvinder Kour (2023) [69]	Moving towards wellness in post covid-19 world: an analysis of travel intentions of millennials working from home	Analyse the travel intention of millennials working from home in post Covid-19 world and their perception towards wellness tourism activities.	The study revealed that Covid-19 have made wellness and health more important than before. The pandemic have significantly impacted the millennials working from home, like emotional disturbance, depression, stress and irritability which has to an upsurge in their inclination towards wellness tourism.
Bivek Datta (2022) [70]	Preferences and changing needs of wellness tourists: A study from Indian perspective post Covid-19	The study was conducted to find the preferences and changing needs pertaining to various variables of wellness tourism among tourists post Covid- 19.	The variables identified for the study were yoga, ayurveda, spirituality, pilgrimage, meditation, spas, hot spring baths, faith healing, cuisine, happiness and solitude. Popular wellness activities such as spa, meditation and yoga are getting lot of focus post Covid – 19. Yoga, ayurveda, spirituality and meditation have a strong impact on the satisfaction level of wellness tourists.
Jang Heon Han and KabSoo An (2022) [71]	Comparison of perceptions of wellness tourism in Korea before and after Covid-19: Results of social big data analysis	The study was intended to analyze the general consumer perception of wellness tourism before and after Covid-19 pandemic.	People were well aware of the wellness tourism programs prior the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. After the outbreak of the pandemic the importance of wellness tourism destinations increased as the desire to healing both body and mind appeared to be greater. The search for health, healing, wellbeing, wellness and spa increased in search engines after the outbreak of pandemic.
Hamzayini Pirashath (2021) [72]	Wellness Tourism: A high prospective niche market after Covid-19 in Srilanka	The main objective is to understand the competitive advantage of wellness tourism market in Srilanka	The pandemic situation has created a new paradigm shift towards wellness tourism, as there is much concentration on immunity boosting, healing therapies and spiritual retreats that can minimize stress, depression and

		post Covid -19 scenario and also to identify the positioning strategies as well.	anxiety. The wellness tourism has to be marketed based on age groups, targeting new markets, and by combining both segments of western medicine and traditional wellness tourism.
Widarini, P. S. I., Wijaya, M., and Albert Muhammad I.N (2020) [73]	Wellness Tourism Opportunities Amid Covid-19 Pandemic: Literature Study	The aim is to understand the condition of wellness tourism in Indonesia and what are the opportunities for wellness tourism after Covid- 19 pandemic	Wellness tourism is predicted to make a positive contribution to the tourism sector in Indonesia as the people’s habit changed to care more about their health. Wellness tourism has great opportunity for development post Covid-19 pandemic in not only in Indonesia but all over the world.
Li, C., and Huang, X (2023) [74]	How Does COVID-19 Risk Perception Affect Wellness Tourist Intention: Findings on Chinese Generation Z	The study is to understand the consumer behaviour of Generation Z tourists of China towards wellness tourism in the context of Covid-19 pandemic	Generation Z segments’ desire towards wellness tourism activities has rapidly changed post Covid-19 pandemic. They have started to engage with wellness tourism activities that help in providing physical and mental wellbeing, reduce stress and lifestyle diseases. Gen Z has also started to influence their peer groups to try out wellness tourism activities.
Sivesan Sivanandamoorthy (2022) [75]	Marketing strategies for empowering wellness tourism in the post Covid -19 pandemic era in Srilanka	The study intends to investigate the marketing related challenges faced by the wellness tourism industry in Srilanka in the post Covid -19 scenario	People have realized the need and significance of wellness tourism after Covid-19 pandemic. Marketing plan need to be re-strategized that can appeal to domestic wellness seekers. Diversification of wellness tourism activities with tailored and customized services, repositioning and rebranding of wellness tourism in Srilanka with the help of digital platforms, promote abroad by collaborating with private sector players and embassies are the suggested marketing strategies.
Bushra Choudhary and Abdul Qadir (2022)	Wellness Tourism in India During Post Covid-19 Era:	This study explores the opportunities and challenges of	Wellness has become the top priority of tourists in post Covid situation as people have become concerned of their

[76]	Opportunities and Challenges	wellness tourism in India in the post-COVID-19 times.	health and wellbeing. The demand for wellness activities is expected to increase and this is the right opportunity for India to create its distinguished brand of wellness tourism products.
Aluculesei Alina-Cerasela and Avram Daniel (2020) [53]	The opportunity of developing rural wellbeing tourism in Puglia region, Italy in the time of Covid-19 pandemic	The study analyzes the potential of Puglia region, Italy to offer rural wellbeing tourism package by blending spa and thermal centers in rural areas.	Both rural and wellness tourism is a specific tourist product and blending both into rural wellness tourism has a great prospect and could thrive as it offers the visitors an opportunity of spending their free time in nature away from polluted area. Rural wellness tourism activity creates a good impact on guest's health and wellbeing.
Widarini, P. S. I., Wijaya, M., and Albert Muhammad I.N (2022a) [61]	Wellness Tourism Promotion Media in Solo in the Middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic	The main aim of the study is to know the role of new media as a medium for promoting wellness tourism in Solo in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.	The online and social media platforms were considered as the most cost effective promotional tool in the midst of pandemic as it helps to reach wider audience. Tourism stakeholders can consider increasing the budget for online promotion after Covid-19 pandemic, as it is considered to be an effective avenue.
Agustina Ni Ketut Wiwiek and Yudhistira Putu Gde Arie (2021) [77]	Analysis of Tirta Empul development strategy as wellness tourist attraction in new normal era	The study was conducted with an aim to analyze the development strategies of Tirta Empul location related to wellness tourism	Wellness tourism has become a trend after Covid-19 pandemic as it helps them to maintain physical and mental fitness. Wellness tourism can act as a suitable strategy to re-promote tourism industry in Indonesia. Proper promotion through online and social media platforms is required for wellness tourism in Tirta Empul location.

Widarini, P. S. I., Wijaya, M., and Albert Muhammad I.N (2022b) [78]	Wellness and Herbal Tourism Based on Local Wisdom as an Alternative to 'New Normal' Tourism	The study looks into the marketing communication strategy for tourism stakeholder in Solo to promote wellness and herbal tourism based on local wisdom as an alternative to new normal tourism	The demand for wellness and herbal tourism is increasing in new normal conditions. Wellness and herbal tourism program would provide fresh air in the new normal. Effective marketing communication through social media platforms and with proper marketing strategy needs to be developed to reach the right audience in the most effective manner.
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5. FINDINGS

A. General

- Covid-19 pandemic has jolted almost all sectors including tourism segment. To overcome this situation new approach has to be adopted by tourism sector for sustainable growth. Wellness tourism presents this opportunity.
- Tourism activities and programs are in a phase of transition after the pandemic as it is changing from mass tourism to more of sustainable tourism activities like wellness tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, etc.
- Wellness and wellbeing has become necessary in everyone's life, but instead of treating it just as a trendy marketing label the stakeholders in tourism sector need to embrace the real essence of it and provide quality wellness tourism packages and activities to tourists.
- Wellness travellers can be subcategorized into primary and secondary wellness travellers. Primary wellness travellers' main motive is to involve in wellness activity like visiting ayurveda and yoga centers, spa centers, etc, whereas secondary wellness travellers are those who undertake wellness activity while undertaking other tour and travelling activities
- Older generation people were the main consumer group of wellness tourism before Covid-19 pandemic.

B. Challenges

- Covid-19 pandemic did lead to downfall in the demand for wellness tourism segment.
- Even though the prospect of wellness tourism is bright, there is an urgent need to improve infrastructure of wellness tourism destination to fully reap the benefits.
- Credibility, trust and quality service will be the vital factors to maintain the customers in the long run even during difficult times [79]. Government and policy makers need to implement policies and activities related to wellness tourism.
- There is a need for the proper balance between promotion and commercialization of wellness tourism. Over commercialization of wellness tourism products might lead to negative results and bad practices in the industry [77].

C. Opportunities

- Wellness and wellbeing has become a significant factor in post-Covid scenario.
- The demand for Wellness Tourism has increased tremendously post Covid-19 – pandemic
- Wellness tourism was considered to be a niche and costly affair in the pre-Covid era. This has changed after the outbreak of pandemic and health awareness has increased among all age group consumers and has started to pursue wellness tourism.
- Previously the tourism operators and stakeholders concentrated more on foreign tourists for wellness programs. As Covid-19 pandemic has made people more health conscious, targeting domestic tourists while focusing on international tourists will be a better option.
- Tourists are looking for customized wellness tourism packages, which tour and travel operators need to provide.
- Blending of other tourism activities with wellness tourism will garner more tourists and will lead to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector as a whole.

6. SUGGESTIONS

A. For Government and Policymakers

- Government and officials need to thoroughly understand the need and importance of wellbeing in every walk of life and need to implement policies and activities related to wellness.
- Government officials and tourism authorities must support community-based wellness tourism activities in remote areas which have long-lasting development prospect for wellness tourism sector.
- Government and policy makers need to implement policies and activities that would avoid bad practices in wellness tourism segment.
- The demand for wellness tourism need to be complemented by providing proper infrastructure, proper accreditation facility and promoting it using latest marketing platforms.

B. For Travel and tourism operators and stakeholders

Travel and tourism operators and stakeholders can create new tourism packages and products such as

- Creating wholesome wellness tourism packages and activities,
- Add-on benefit packages which consists of wellness programs,
- Offering healthy organic food and wellness recreation activities
- Introducing exclusive wellness tourism themed tours that appeal all age group tourists.
- The stakeholders of tourism sector can reform and upgrade wellness tourism by developing recreation, leisure and cultural wellness activities designed in parks with natural environment.

- Many would prefer wellness trips on weekends with limited budget, so tailor-made wellness packages suited for different segments need to be offered by the stakeholders.
- Also need to explore the option of combining wellness with culinary exploration which might attract more tourists.

C. For Marketing Strategists

- Advertising and promoting the positive effects of wellness tourism like healing and wellbeing in social media platforms can increase the number of visitors to these destinations [80]. Can recommend wellness tourism activities to target audience as the activity that promotes sustainability and that helps to protect and restore mental and physical wellbeing.
- There is high competition in this field and hence there is always a need of providing diversified wellness tourism activities to sustain this competition; failing to do so, will adversely affect the segment.
- Aging population is well aware of the wellness tourism avenues, but the younger generation are not much aware. So, proper usage of marketing communication strategy need to be implemented to reach them in an effective manner.

The pandemic has made the people aware of the importance of wellness and wellbeing and prefer wellness tourism activities. The prospects for wellness tourism have become very much bright; hence the government and stakeholders in the field need to capitalize this prospect in the best possible way.

7. FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

Tourism stakeholders and academicians have begun to pay more attention to the development and growth of wellness tourism. However, more studies need to concentrate on the sub-categories of wellness, like ayurveda, unnai and naturopathy, etc. This study contributes to the existing literature review on wellness tourism. The study also recommends the need to rebrand and re-strategize wellness tourism segment matching the needs and expectations of the tourists.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There is need to conduct both qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and quantitative research survey among tourists and stakeholders to get a broader overview of the topic. For this study, research articles and papers from Google Scholar, Research Gate and ProQuest databases were only referred. Other databases need to be referred to get a wide range of insights regarding this area.

9. CONCLUSION

Wellness is a disease-free state whereas wellbeing in addition has got emotional and psychological components. Covid- 19 pandemic took a heavy toll into the people's wellbeing, which can be recovered to an extent through wellness tourism activities. Wellness tourism need to be understood at a boarder level as it is an amalgamation of travel, wellbeing, leisure and wellness. Wellness tourism is a travel done to enhance the wellbeing of an individual. Wellness tourism is a niche form of tourism that has shown great growth in recent times. The pandemic has changed the mindset of tourists who are now more health-conscious and are seeking for sustainable and health tour packages. Wellbeing and wellness combined

can create a value for tourism that need to be capitalized by the tourism stakeholders by providing innovative wellness tourism packages. The pandemic has made us understand the importance of wellness and wellbeing and the need to go back to our roots to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Wellness activities such as yoga, ayurveda, spa and spirituality proved to be the most successful healing methods. Wellness tourism can act a vehicle for recovering, rejuvenation and rebranding tourism industry as a whole post Covid-19 pandemic. These recent developments have helped wellness tourism segment to become a high-earning industry.

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