

Impact of Covid-19 on Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers: Situated Near the Ellora and Ajanta Caves World Heritage Monuments

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Abstract: Many factors depend on the tourist destination. Due to the closure of the tourist destination during the Covid-19 period, it has badly affected the economic condition of all the factors that depend on the tourist destination. After visiting any tourist place, the tourist buys a gift from the shop to remember that tourist place. Therefore, it is seen that such shops have started around all the tourist places.

The present research article analysed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Gift Shopkeepers and Other small shopkeepers situated near the World Heritage Monuments tourist places that are Ellora Caves and Ajanta Caves. For this primary data were collected through schedules. Before covid-19, these shopkeepers had an average of 99 tourists per day to buy goods, of which foreign tourists accounted for 12.37 percent. After Covid-19, on an average, 72 tourists come to buy goods. The proportion of foreign tourists is 9.23%. From this it is that, there has been a decrease in the total number of tourists coming to shops at the tourist destination and also in the number of foreign tourists. Before covid-19 Shopkeepers in the study area were earning an average monthly income of Rs 21650 whereas post- Covid-19 they are earning an average monthly income of Rs 15450. From this, the average monthly income of gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in the study area has decreased. The decline in the monthly income of the shopkeeper is statistically significant

INTRODUCTION

The Government of India placed a nationwide lockdown from March 24, 2020 to control the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic. This lockdown was gradually extended up to 31 May 2020. Throughout this period, there were restrictions on the movement of people from one place to another, also restrictions on various economic activity. Director General of Civil Aviation, had suspended all commercial international flights in March 2020. The ban has been extended till January 2021. Domestic flights, public and private travel were also banned. Although the phased unlock process has been in place since 8th June 2020, restrictions on many financial

activities remain. In the second wave of the Covid-19 epidemic, several States governments decided to place the lockdown, which adversely affected various sectors of the economy. The Covid-19 epidemic appears to have reduced the growth rate of National income; it's become negative. Growth rate of NNP at constant prices was -8.7 per cent in 2020-21. The growth rate in Trade, Hotels, Transport and Communications was to be the lowest growth rate (-20.2 per cent).

The nationwide lockdown has had its first and worst impact on the tourism sector. The closure of tourist places by the government has adversely affected on the economic situation of various sections depends on the tourist

places. Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves are two world heritage monuments in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district (Previously Aurangabad) of Maharashtra State. This is the only tourist district of India having two-world heritage monuments to its credit. Domestic as well as foreign tourists are visiting to these tourist places every year. Distance of Ajanta Caves and Ellora caves from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city is 103 k. m. and 31 k. m. respectively. Due to the availability of air, road and railway facilities, tourists can easily come to this city. Many small hotels, gift shops and other goods shops have been developed around these two tourist destinations, also tourist guides, rickshaw pullers, peddlers are getting employment. But both tourist destinations have been closed, due to nationwide lockdown. Therefore, it adversely affected the economic situation of various sections that depends on the economy of these tourist destinations. Present research paper has analysed the impact of Covid-19 on Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers situated near the of Ajanta and Ellora Caves.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar, V. (2020): The study focusing on the Covid-19 issue in India and its impact on the tourism and hotel industry, the paper has some significance, as the tourism and hotel industry greatly affected by the Covid-19 crisis worldwide.

Thams, A., Zech, N., Rempel, D., & Ayia-Koi, A. (2020): According to researchers, market players in all areas of the touristic value chain, i.e., airlines, tour operators, hotels, cruise lines, and retailers, have either minimized or even completely stopped their production for an undefined period of time, resulting in the sudden and total cut-off of their revenue streams.

Kumar, A. (2020): According to researcher, the tourism industry is suffering the most due to this because fear has seethed in people's minds and they will avoid going abroad. The lockdown has broken the back of the tourism industry across the country. This has created employment crisis in front of 38 million people associated with the industry.

Kumar, P., & Rout, H. B. (2020): Indian tourism industry is projected to record a revenue

loss of 1.25 trillion and 40 million of employment in the year 2020. The countrywide lock down, cancellation of transport modes, cancellation of VISA and above all the fear of Covid-19 infection has devastated the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. It is being estimated that, tourism industry may have to face challenges for longer period.

Most of the research works related to Impact of covid-19 on tourism economy are based on secondary data. Very few are dependents on primary data. Also research regarding this topic, are not focusing on specific tourist destinations. The present research paper is depended on primary data and also focusing on the specific tourist destination.

OBJECTIVES

There are following objectives of proposed research project

1. To study the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on the economic situation of Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers that depends on Ajanta and Ellora Caves.
2. To analysing the alternative ways adopted by Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers during the Covid-19 epidemic for their subsistence.
3. To suggest measures to improve the economic conditions of Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research paper is mainly depended on primary data. To find out the impact of Covid-19 epidemic on the economic situation of Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers which are situated near the Ellora and Ajanta Caves World Heritage Monuments, the schedules has been canvassed among 10 shopkeepers of both tourist destination.

Data of Pre- covid and During Covid -19 epidemic and Post Covid-19 Period economic situation of Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers has been collected through the schedules, to find out the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on their economic situation.

Secondary data related to tourist has India office, Circle Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar been collected from Archaeological Survey of Division (Previously Aurangabad Division)

Tourist Visited to Ajanta & Ellora Caves

Table 1: Tourist Visited to Ajanta Caves

Sr. No	Year	Indian Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Total	% of Indian Visitors	% of Foreign Visitors
1	2011-2012	411193	29132	440325	93.38	6.62
2	2012-2013	450702	30844	481546	93.59	6.41
3	2013-2014	390801	24008	414809	94.21	5.79
4	2014-2015	361541	24339	385880	93.69	6.31
5	2015-2016	398291	20159	418450	95.18	4.82
6	2016-2017	393985	21062	415047	94.93	5.07
7	2017-2018	395456	22183	417639	94.69	5.31
8	2018-2019	359154	26687	385841	93.08	6.92
9	2019-2020	273344	20056	293400	93.16	6.84
10	2020-2021	40187	58	40245	99.86	0.14
11	2021-2022	114917	450	115367	99.61	0.39

Source: ASI, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Circle

PROPORTION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURISTS VISITED TO AJANTHA CAVES

In the year 2011-12, out of the total number of tourists visiting Ajanta Caves (04 lakh 40 thousand 325), 04 lakh 11 thousand 193 were domestic tourists while 29 thousand 132 were foreign tourists. The ratio of domestic and foreign tourists to the total number of tourists who visited this cave this year was 93.38 percent and 6.62 percent respectively. During the period from 2011-12 to 2019-20, the number of foreign tourists visiting this cave was the lowest in

the year 2015-16 at 20 thousand 169. Its ratio was 4.82 percent of the total tourists visiting the cave this year.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the number of tourists visiting this cave was only 40245 in the year 2020-21. 40 thousand 187 of them were domestic tourists while foreign tourists were only 58. The ratio of domestic and foreign tourists to total tourists was 99.86 percent and 0.14 percent respectively. So, in the year 2021-22 this cave was visited by 01 lakh 14 thousand 917 domestic tourists and 450 foreign tourists.

Table 2: Tourist Visited to Ellora Caves

Sr. No	Year	Indian Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Total	% of Indian Visitors	% of Foreign Visitors
1	2011-2012	1330506	33954	1364460	97.51	2.49
2	2012-2013	1526717	36085	1562802	97.69	2.31
3	2013-2014	1341482	28832	1370314	97.90	2.10
4	2014-2015	1320931	28782	1349713	97.87	2.13
5	2015-2016	1409400	24169	1433569	98.31	1.69
6	2016-2017	1255581	46778	1302359	96.41	3.59
7	2017-2018	1334187	26689	1360876	98.04	1.96
8	2018-2019	1322524	26375	1348899	98.04	1.96
9	2019-2020	1255865	21407	1277272	98.32	1.68
10	2020-2021	120283	82	120365	99.93	0.07
11	2021-2022	348349	605	348954	99.83	0.17

Source: ASI, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Circle

Briefly, the proportion of domestic tourists is higher than that of foreign tourists among the total number of tourists visiting the world-famous heritage site Ajantha Caves, that is, the proportion of foreign tourists is less among the total tourists. Due to Covid-19, there has been a sharp decline in the number of foreign tourists in the following years.

PROPORTION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURISTS VISITED TO ELLORA CAVES

In the year 2011-12, 13 lakh 30 thousand 506 domestic and 33 thousand 954 foreign tourists visited Ellora Caves, totalling 13 lakh 64 thousand 460 tourists. This year the ratio of domestic and foreign tourists to total tourists was 97.51 percent and 2.49 percent respectively. After 2012-13, the number of foreign tourists visiting this cave decreased. 24,169 foreign tourists visited this tourist destination in 2015-16, which is 1.69 percent of the total tourists visited this year.

In the year 2020- 21 under the influence of Covid-19, 01 lakh 20 thousand 283 domestic and only 83 foreign tourists visited this tourist destination. Of the total number of tourists who visited the cave this year, the ratio of domestic and foreign tourists was 99.93 percent and 0.07 percent respectively.

From this, among the total number of tourists visiting the world-famous caves of Ellora, the proportion of domestic tourists is very high compared to foreign tourists. That is, the number of foreign tourists visiting this tourist destination is very less.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Near World Heritage Monuments Ellora Caves and Ajanta Caves there are many small shops selling gifts items and other items. Tourists who come to visit tourist destinations buy many items from these shops. To go to the Ajanta cave, one has to get down to the cave point first. Maharashtra State Transport Corporation buses are available from that point. These buses drop the tourists near the caves. At this place that the government has built small blocks for gift items and other small shopkeepers, these shops are available to the shopkeepers at a reasonable rent.

Tourists have to pass in front of these shops to peck-up the bus from bus stop., thus providing shopkeepers with customers. However near Ellora Caves, there are gift shops in private as well as encroached areas.

The shopkeepers had to keep their shops closed during the Covid-19 period. What has been the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial situation of Gift Shopkeepers (souvenir) and Other Small Shopkeepers in the both tourist destination? this has been analysed in this research paper.

(1) General Information of the Gift Shoppers and Other Small Shopkeepers

Age and gender of shopkeeper: An average of 42 years age is observed of the gift shopkeepers in Ellora and Ajanta Caves area. The minimum age of the shopkeepers in the study area is 18 years and the maximum age is 76 years.

Considering the proportion of men and women selling gifts and other small shop stalls in Ellora Ajantha Caves area, all male shopkeepers are seen in both the cave areas, no female shopkeepers are seen.

Education: 95 percent of souvenir shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in caves area are literate and 5% are illiterate shopkeepers. When considering the educational level of shopkeepers, 55% shopkeepers have completed secondary education, 30% shopkeepers have completed higher secondary education, 10% shopkeepers have completed education up to degree, while 5% are illiterate.

Number of family members: It is observed in the study area that 80 percent of the gift and other goods shopkeepers in the study area have 7 or less members in their families. While the remaining 20 percent shopkeepers were found to have 9 or more members in their families. Shopkeepers in the study area have an average of 07 members in their households.

(2) Before -Covid-19 Period

Business Experience: It is observed in the study area that the Shopkeeper of Gift items and other small shopkeepers are doing their business from last 23 (22.90). years in an averagely.

Type of goods sold: After analysed what types of goods sold by gift shopkeepers and

other small shopkeepers in the Ellora Ajantha Caves area, it is revealed that 45% sell gifts items, 25% handicrafts, 20% toys and the rest sell natural stones.

Household persons working in shops: In the study area there were 40 percent shops in which owner's, 01 family member are working as labourer before Covid-19. 35 percent shop have 02 & 20 percent shops have 3 family members are working in shop. In the study area in an average 2 (1.70) family members of shopkeepers were working in the shops.

Number of workers working in shops before Covid-19: It is observed in the study area that there were no single outsider staff work as labour in 65 per cent Gift shops and other small shops situated in the area of Ellora Caves and Ajanta Caves before Covid-19.

Monthly expenditure on wages of workers: When studying how much was being spent on the wages of the workers working in the shops in the cave area, the minimum expenditure was 00 and the maximum was Rs. 18000 rupees. Outsiders were employed as laborers in 35 percent shopkeepers' shops in the study area. Those shopkeepers had to spend a total of 8000 to 18000 rupees on the wages of the workers. These 35 per cent shopkeepers had to spend an average of Rs 13,143 per month on wages of workers.

Before -Covid-19 Shop Rent: It is observed in the study that 15% of the shops are in premises owned by the shopkeepers, whereas 85% of the shops are in rented space. Shopkeepers in rented premises had to pay monthly rent ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 6000. Shopkeepers in rented premises were had to pay an average monthly rent of Rs 2250.

Customers arriving in stores before Covid-19: Considering the Before -Covid-19 customers arriving in the shops of gift and other small shopkeepers in the vicinity of the world-famous tourist destination of Ellora and Ajanta Caves had an average of 99 (98.70) daily customers. It was seen that at least 5 and maximum 400 customers are coming every day.

Before -Covid-19 Domestic Customers (Tourists): Considering the domestic customers among the Before -Covid-19 total customers, the shops in caves area had an average of 87 (86.75)

customers per day. It was seen that minimum 5 customers and maximum 350 customers were coming.

Foreign customers: Considering the number of foreign customers visiting to the shops in caves area Before Covid-19, there were an average of 12 (12.25) foreign tourist (customers) per day. It was seen that minimum 0 and maximum 50 foreign customers were coming. Before Covid-19 period there were 10 percent of shops where no foreign tourists come as customers.

The ratio of domestic customers was 87.63 percent while the ratio of foreign customers was 12.37percent in Before -Covid-19 period.

Income before Covid-19: Gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in Ellora and Ajantha Caves area were earning an average monthly income of Rs 21,650 from their business before Covid-19. Shopkeepers in the study area had a minimum monthly income of Rs. 6000 and a maximum of Rs. 40,000.

Table 3: Monthly Average Income From Business Before Covid-19

	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6000	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	8000	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	10000	1	5.0	5.0	15.0
	12000	1	5.0	5.0	20.0
	14000	1	5.0	5.0	25.0
	15000	2	10.0	10.0	35.0
	18000	1	5.0	5.0	40.0
	20000	2	10.0	10.0	50.0
	25000	3	15.0	15.0	65.0
	30000	6	30.0	30.0	95.0
	40000	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Average income = Rs. 21,650					

Source: Field Survey

Before -Covid-19 , all 100 percent of the gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in the Ellora and Ajantha Caves area were found to be survival from their business.

Before -Covid-19 Immovable Property: Considering the immovable property owned by gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in Ellora and Ajantha Caves area, only 75 per cent had own house, 15 per cent had own house,

plot and land, while 10 per cent had no own immovable property and live in rented house. It means that most of the shopkeepers in the study area did not have much real property before Covid-19 period.

(3) During Covid-19 Period

During the Covid-19 period, the government closed Ellora and Ajanta caves, so gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in the caves area also had to close their business. In this section, how the shopkeeper living in the Covid-19 period situation has been analysed. For that various questions like did the shopkeepers have to take any loan to support their families? Have they had to sold their property? etc. questions have been investigated.

Businesses during Covid: Shopkeepers at both these tourist spots had to close their business for 24 months. It is observed in the study that not a single tourist visited their shop as a customer. So, they could not get income from this business during this period.

Laid off the Labour During Covid-19: During the Before -Covid-19 period, 35 per cent of shops in the caves area were staffed by outsiders, 25 per cent of whom laid off all their workers. Shopkeepers in caves area laid off 01 to 03 workers working in their shops. After the lockdown started, shopkeepers were seen paying wages to their workers for a few months, but after few months they cut their wages completely.

Shop Rent During the Covid-19 Period: Gift shopkeepers in the caves area had to pay an average monthly rent of Rs 982 (985.50) during the Covid period. Since 15 percent of the shopkeepers in the study area are in own or encroach premises, they do not have to pay rent. The remaining 75 percent of the shopkeepers had to pay a monthly rent of Rs. 500 to Rs. 6000 during the Covid period.

Exemption from rent: Considering whether shopkeepers in Ellora and Ajantha Caves area got any discount in rent, 55 per cent shopkeepers did not get discount in rent. 20 percent shopkeepers got full exemption and 10 percent shopkeepers got partial exemption. The gift shopkeepers of Ajantha Caves are running their business in very small shops in the rented space provided by the

government, they are demanding that the rent of the shops be exempted during the lockdown period, but up to yet they have not got exemption during Covid-19 period.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF INCOME ADOPTING DURING THE COVID PERIOD

It is fiend out in the study that 80 percent of the shopkeepers tried to support their families by adopting alternative sources of income during the Covid-19 period. Most of them were worked as worker in agricultural or in other fields. In Covid-19 period, 60 percent of the shopkeepers who have adopting alternative sources of income have worked as workers in agriculture or other fields, 05 percent of the shopkeeper's work as coolie, 5 percent shopkeepers each were found doing alternative occupations like farming, auto rickshaw driving, fruit selling during the Covid period.

INCOME FROM ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS

On an average Rs. 6200 per month income from the alternative business that shopkeepers had started during the Covid-19 period or from the alternative source they have adopted for livelihood. In the study area 20 percent of the shopkeepers had not started any alternative business. Of the 80 percent who started alternative businesses during the Covid period, 60 percent of the shopkeepers' families were found to be making a living from the alternative business.

Infection with covid: In the study area 10 percent of shopkeepers or their family members were infected with Corona. All those infected with the disease were treated in private hospitals. 5 percent shopkeepers had to spend Rs 20,000 and 5 percent shopkeepers had to spend Rs 1,50,000 for Covid treatment.

Loans to be drawn during the period: It is observed in the study area that, 65 percent of the shopkeepers had to borrow while 35 percent of the shopkeepers did not borrow during the Covid-19 period. The shopkeepers in the study area who had to take loans had to borrow between Rs.10000 to Rs.1.50 lakhs. Considering only the shopkeepers who took out loans, they had to take out loans of Rs.47,083 on an average.

Property to sell during covid period: It is observed in the study that 20 percent of the shopkeepers had to sell their property for the survival of their families, while 80 percent of the shopkeepers did not have to sell their property in Covid19 period. Considering the nature of the property sold by the shopkeepers who had to sell, plots, gold and motorcycles accounted for 15 percent while 05 percent of the shopkeepers sold the stock in their shops elsewhere for the survival of their families. The value of property sold by shopkeepers during the Covid period was between Rs 20,000 to Rs 05 lakh.

Government assistance received during the Covid-19 period: Only 25 percent of the shopkeepers in the Ellora Caves and Ajantha Caves received government assistance during the Covid-19 period. It was seen that 20 percent of the shopkeepers got help in the form of grain and 05 percent of the shopkeepers got help in the form of money.

(4) After Covid-19 Period

Number of Customers Visiting the store: It is found in the study that per day an average of 80 (79.65) customers came to the shop for purchase in post Covid-19 period. Shops in the study area have a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 400 customers.

Among the customers coming to the shop after Covid-19, the number of domestic customers is 72 (72.30) and the number of foreign customers is 7 (7.35). From this, among the customers coming to the shop after Covid-19, the portion of domestic customers is 90.77 percent and the ratio of foreign customers is 9.23 percent.

It is found in the study that minimum 3 and a maximum 350 Indian customers and an average of 72 (72.30) Indian customers came to the shop for purchasing. It is observed in the study that 55 percent of the shops have no foreign customers in the study area, while the remaining 45 percent shops have between 02 and 50 foreign customers. It was observed that an average of 7.35 foreign customers visit the shop.

Monthly Average Income after Covid-19

Table 4: Average monthly income from this business after Covid

Valid	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	5000	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	6000	2	10.0	10.0	15.0
	7000	2	10.0	10.0	25.0
	8000	1	5.0	5.0	30.0
	15000	8	40.0	40.0	70.0
	20000	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
	30000	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
Average income = Rs. 15,450					

Source: Field Survey

Gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers in the Ellora and Ajantha Caves areas are found to be earning an average monthly income of Rs 15,450, in post-Covid-19 period. It is found that they are earning a minimum of Rs 5000 and a maximum of Rs 30000 on average monthly income.

According to the 40 percent shopkeeper of the study area that, their business has recovered in Post-Covid-19 and 60 percent responded their business has not recovered post-Covid-19.

Workers working in shops in post-Covid-19: It is observed in the study that in an average 0.40 workers are working in the shops, apart from family member of shopkeeper after Covid-19. Minimum 01 and maximum 02 workers were working. 75 percent of the shops where no outsider was working in the shops.

Expenditure on Wages of Workers: In Post-Covid-19 period, shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers an average of Rs 2100 is being spent on labour wages. Considering the 25% of shops where outsiders were working as laborers apart from domestics, they are spending Rs.6000 to Rs.12000 on the monthly wages of the workers.

From this it is clear that most of the gift shops and other small shops in Ellora and Ajantha Caves area are driven by domestic persons. This shows that both the size and the transactions of the shops are small.

It is observed in the study that , 20 percent of the shopkeepers rehired the workers while

15 percent of the shopkeepers did not rehire the workers.

Monthly Rent of Shop: Gift shopkeepers in Ellora and Ajantha Caves have to pay an average monthly rent of Rs 1712 in post-Covid-19. 20 percent of the shops in the caves area are either in their own premises or in encroachment premises, so they do not have to pay rent. Shopkeepers in rented premises pay a monthly rent between Rs 500 and Rs 6000 for the rent of the shop premises.

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the income of gift shopkeepers and other small shopkeepers

t-test has been used to examine the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on the monthly income of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Small Shopkeepers in the vicinity of the Ellora Caves and Ajanta Caves

world heritage monuments. The shopkeepers of these two world famous cave areas were getting an average monthly income of Rs 21,650 before Covid-19 but after Covid-19 they are getting an average monthly income of Rs 15,450. This means that there has been decrease in monthly income of shopkeeper after Covid-19 with compare to Before -Covid-19 period. Whether this decrease in the income, is statistically significant or not is analysed with the help of t test as follows.

H_0 = There is no significant difference in monthly income of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Small Shopkeepers Before Covid-19 and After Covid-19.

H_1 = There is a significant difference in income of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Small Shopkeepers in cave Before Covid-19 and After Covid-19.

Table 5: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Average monthly income from business Before Covid-19	21650.00	20	9218.260	2061.266
	Average monthly income from this business After Covid-19	15450.00	20	7897.201	1765.868

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Average Monthly income from business before Covid-19 - Average monthly income from this business after Covid	6200.000	7878.017	1761.578	2512.974	9887.026	3.520 19 .002

Source: Field Survey
 $V = 19$, $t_{.05} = 2.093$
 Calculated value of $t = 3.520$
 $t > t_{.05}$
 $3.520 > 2.093$

The calculated value of t is greater than the table value of t at 5 percent level of significant and $v = 19$ (degree of freedom) the null hypothesis is rejected.

It means that, there is a significant difference

in the Before Covid-19 average monthly income and After-Covid-19 average monthly income of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Small Shopkeepers in the surrounding area of the Ellora Caves & Ajantha Caves. It means that, the decline

in income of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Small Shopkeepers in Post-Covid-19 period is statistically significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made to improve the financial situation of Gift Shopkeepers and Other Shopkeepers in the study area.

1. World heritage sites such as Ellora and Ajanta Caves should be advertised at the international level, so by increasing the number of tourists, the number of customers of Gift Shops and other Small Shops will also increase.
2. The price boards of various items should be placed in front of the shop so that the tourists will not feel cheated.
3. Shopkeepers at tourist destinations should be trained frequently on how to deal with tourists.
4. Government should build good quality shops in the Ellora Caves area like Ajanta Caves and make them available to shopkeepers at reasonable rent.
5. As the financial condition of the shopkeepers in the both tourist destinations has worsened due to Covid-19, loans should be made available to them at subsidized rates of interest for a long period.
6. As all the shops in the cave area had to be closed during the Covid-19 period, the demand of the shopkeeper in the government rented premises in the Ajanta caves area for exemption in rent for the Covid period should be accepted by the Government.
7. The area of the shops should be clean so that the tourists should have a feeling of shopping there.

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