

Impact of Covid-19 on Private Bus Operators - A Study in Thrissur District

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Abstract: *The study named "IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS-A IN THRISSUR DISTRICT" conducted with the objectives such as to assess the financial stress experienced by employees of private bus. Then to understand the safety and health issues and to understand the change in travelling behaviour of travellers from the view of bus operators. Major findings of the study are employees mainly faced financial problems due to covid-19, unemployment is the main reason for financial problems. Many of them are aware about safety after lockdown ,and they finally reached in a conclusion that there is a great change in the Travelling behaviour of the people. Data is collected from bus operators in Thrissur district. Sample size is 31. Random sampling method is used to select samples. Data analysis is conducted by using simple statistical tools like percentage, graph, diagrams etc. In this time the support needed by private bus operators is very wide. This make this study more relevant.*

Keywords: covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic badly affect the global economy.it brings variety of social, economical and environmental changes. Transport sector is one of the area that is mainly affected by covid-19. especially covid-19 make several impact on private bus operators. Many of them lost their jobs. This sector experienced an incident of great unemployment than other sectors . Social distancing and the lockdown have changed the Transportation system. Travelling behaviour of the people also changed due to covid-19 . Government take many actions in that time. these are also severely affecting the transport sector.

The problems of private bus operators in the time of covid-19 was very wide. they affected with many of the problems like a financial problems, mental stress, physical problems and a family problems. Most of the bus operators are mainly affected with financial problems, because of losing the job many of them are in a need to search for new job. many people in that sector entered into another jobs. But they get only limited income from the new job and many of them are dissatisfied with the new job. mental stress is also and serious problem faced by bus operators, by analysing the medical report in that time we see that a number of the person who visit psychiatrist is very large. Apart from these problem the covid-19 badly affected the family of these workers. Everyone's living condition are out of tune in that time. Government take various measures to solve the problems of bus operators. Most of them become succeed to reducing some of the problem of the bus operators. however there is a need for some more assistance from government another major problem faced by the bus operators at the time of covid-19 is changes in the travelling behaviour of the people. Many of the people are reduced their dependency on public transport. this may lead to reduction in travel demand. Most of them use their own private vehicle to make travelling.

The support needed by private bus operators in this time is very wide. This makes this study more relevant. This research mainly focus to identify the financial stress experienced by private bus operators . Notably in the private bus operators in Thrissur district.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kerala buses are the most widely used the mode of public transportation, serving both Urban and rural area it enable people to get access to the place of education, employment,Health Care etc. the private bus operators faced a lot of problems due to the unemployment created by covid-19 lockdown. Unemployment is not only the major problem faced

by them. apart from this financial problem, mental stress and the changes in travelling Behaviour of people also make several impact on life of bus operators. Covid -19 made many problems on all the economy but among this private bus sector is the major area that is mainly affected with covid-19. It is essential to identify the major problems faced by the private bus operators due to this crisis because there is a need to getting more assistance from the government to this sector. To make this private bus transportation sector effective government must take various measures. This study is an attempt to analyse the impact of covid-19 on life of private sector bus operators with special reference to Thrissur district

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Silpa M.A & Dr Umesh (2021), in their study on “Impact of covid-19 on private sector bus employees with special reference to Irinjalakuda Municipality reveals that private bus operators were battling to restore service to pre-covid level. It results in bus employees being laid off. This study proved that financial problems, physical problems and mental stress are faced by bus employees due to covid-19. Unemployment, reduction in salary and increase in expenditure are the reasons for financial problem. Most of the employees have alternate job in the lockdown period, they get support from government. Government adopted some strategies like tax reduction, increase the bus fair which was helpful for public transport sector. The objective of the study is to understand the impact of covid-19 on the life of employees in private bus.

Munavar Fairooz Cheranchery and et.al (2021) conducted a study on “The impact of covid-19 on user perception for deriving policies and intervention areas for urban bus service in India”. The study aims to identify the impact of covid-19 pandemic on traveller’s perceptions and try to focus on new policies and intervention areas for improving the urban bus service. The attributes like social distancing, and hygiene are highlighted by this study.

Elizabeth A. Mark and Sicheng Wang (2021) conducted a study on “Impacts of covid-19 pandemic on transportation employment”. It states about the social, economic and environmental changes caused by covid-19 pandemic. This study examines the employment related impact of the covid-19 on the employees in transportation sector. The major findings of the study states that the transportation sector experienced more impact than other sectors due to covid-19. It analyses the unemployment trends as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on the transportation industry.

Junyi Zhang and Lawrence D frank (2021) conducted a study titled “covid-19 and transport: findings from a worldwide expert survey”. This study focus on impact of corona virus on the transport sector and policy measures taken by the government. This report is the executive summary of the results of the WCTRS covid-19 task force expert survey, which was performed globally between the end of April and the end of May 2020. The findings of the analysis reveals that our human society was unprepared for the pandemic. This analysis finds the policy implications and relevant future problems.

Kurniati and Valentino (2021) in their study on “The use of public transportation during covid-19 pandemic” reveals that nation wide lockdown have changed the whole scenario of the worlds public transportation system. Study tries to identify the use of public transportation and the factors that affecting the transportation at time covid-19 pandemic. Major findings of study focus on frequency of using public transportation before and during the pandemic. The test conducted under the study is between respondent’s characteristics and the frequency of using public transportation.

Biswajithpaul and subirsarkar(2021) in their study on “The contagion effects of covid-19 and public transportation system concept, conceptualizing the shifting paradigm in India” reveals that covid-19 pandemic affect the transportation sector in multiple ways. it may lead to change the transport behaviour of the people. Many of the economic activities are either directly or indirectly affecting transportation system, transport related activities are also badly affected. The study focus on the impact of covid-19 on the Indian public transportation system during and post lockdown period using some statistical tools and figures. This paper reveals that there is a reduction in demand for mass transportation modes to get around the fear of spreading the virus and lockdown policy.

Fumagalli and et.al (2021) conducted a study titled “Challenges for public transportation: consequences and possible alternatives for the covid-19 pandemic through strategic digital city application”. Which reveals about the difficulties of public transportations in all municipalities. It also focus on the impact of covid-19 on the public transportation. Major findings of the study provide help to improve local public services efficiency and to improve citizen quality of life.

Subbarao & Raghuram kadali(2021) conducted a study on “Impact of covid-19 pandemic lockdown on the public transportation system and strategic plans to improve public transportation ridership”. This study aims to identify the various challenges to operate public transportation and the emergency relief plans proposed by various countries to make the public transportation system more sustainable by integrating it with active transport mode such as cycling and walking. They focus to develop some plans that might help to make effective & safe operation of the public transportation system after lockdown.

Mukti Advani and et.al (2020) in their study on “Impact of covid-19 on the transport sector and measures as well as recommendations of policies and future research” discusses the implications of various phases of lockdown as well as unlocking phases aimed at the gradual ramp up of the economy during the covid-19 pandemic in India. This study aims at improving the transport sector after covid-19. The major findings of the research are the pandemic influence on freight transportation as well as road safety.

2.1 Objectives:

- To assess the financial stress experienced by employees of private buses.
- To understand change in travelling behaviour of travellers from the view of bus operators.

2.2 Research Methodology

Data analysis is conducted by using simple statistical tools like a percentage graph, diagram, mean extra. Tables and graphs are used for presenting the data. The data for the study is collected by using both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire from the bus operators in Thrissur district. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, articles and internet etc. Random sampling method used for sampling. 31 is the sampling size.

III. DATA ANALYSIS:

Table 1: PROBLEMS DUE TO COVID-19
(source primary data)

Problems	No of Respondents	percentage	Mean
Financial problems	25	80.6%	.806
Physical problems	2	6.5%	.06
Mental stress	1	3.2%	.03
Family problems	3	9.7%	.096
Total	31	100%	1

Interpretation

The above figures shows that most important problem faced by respondents due to covid-19 is financial problems. Because they lost their job. 6.5% have physical problem. family problem are also arises because of covid-19. 3% are faced mental stress due to covid-19.

Table 2: REASONS FOR FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Reasons	No.of respondents	Percentage	Mean
Unemployment	20	64.5%	.645
Reduction in salary	7	22.6%	.225
Increase in expenditure	4	12.9%	.129
Total	31	100%	1

(source primary data)

Interpretation:

The above table shows that 64.5% of respondents feels that unemployment is the main reason for financial problems. 22.6 % of respondents said that the reduction in salary is the reason for financial problem. According to some respondents increase expenditure is also an reason for financial problems.

Table 4: CHANGES IN TRAVELLING BEHAVIOUR

Opinion	No of respondents	Percentage	Mean
Yes	27	87%	.87
No	1	3%	.32
May be	3	10%	.97
Total	31	100%	1

(source primary data)

Interpretation

87.% Respondents state that there is a change in the travel behaviour of people. And remaining things that there is no change travel behaviour of the people.

TABLE 5 : EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN TRAVELLING BEHAVIOUR

Effects	No of respondents	Percentage	Mean
Less depends on public transport	16	51.6%	.52
More private vehicles	6	19.4%	.19
Reduction in travel demand	9	29%	.29
Total	31	100%	1

(Source primary data)

Interpretation

51.6% of respondents state that there is a trend towards less dependents on public transport by the people. 29% have an opinion that there is a great reduction in travel demand by the people. 19.4% people are depend on their own vehicles.

IV. FINDINGS

- The most important problem faced by respondents due to covid-19 is financial problems. Because they lost their job.
- 64.5% of respondents feels that unemployment is the main reason for financial problems. 22.6 % of respondents said that the reduction in salary is the reason for financial problem.
- 87 % Respondents state that there is a change in the travel behaviour of people. And remaining things that there is no change travel behaviour of the people.
- 51.6 % of respondents state that there is a trend towards less dependents on public transport by the people.

V. SUGGESTIONS

- Government have to give more assistance to the bus operators.
- Tax must be reduced .
- Increased bus fare is another help needed by them.
- Provide various insurance claim facilities to them.
- Give them more financial assistance
- Reduce the price of fuels.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to know the impact of covid-19 on private bus operators. Bus sector was severely affected by covid-19. People in this sector faced lot of difficulties in that time. unemployment and financial problems was the major problems faced by bus operators, due to unemployment they find difficult to satisfy their family. it is badly affect their livelihood. Many of the people are switched into alternative jobs but most of them are dissatisfied with their job. May be they doesn't get any satisfaction from that job. Many of the respondents are point out the need of the government support. Government provide assistance to them but the true fact that majority of the bus operators are not availed it and they are not aware with this. This study also state that during covid they experienced unemployment, physical problems, mental stress and family problems. Financial problems was the major problem affected them.

Reasons for financial problems are many like unemployment, reduction in salary, increase in expenditure etc. news paper reports in that times shows that few of them committed suicide because of the uncertainty about the future. When analysing their cautiousness after lockdown, many of them are very cautious about the safety. because they have awareness about the serious situation. Travelling behaviour of the people was totally changed. they try to avoid travelling in public transport. travel demand is reduced. More assistance from government is an important need of the bus operators. This will help them to reviving the public transport system and avoid their problems.

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