

GROWTH OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Medical Tourism means medical treatment provided by India to foreign customers. India become the hub of medical treatment at a cheaper cost as compared to others. Various types of treatment done in India at cheaper cost. The term medical tourism has been coined by travel agencies and the mass media to describe the rapidly growing practice of travelling across international borders to obtain hi-tech medical care. Various countries like Thailand, Malaysia, India, etc are promoting medical tourism aggressively. In 2015 India ranked 3rd in Asian countries for their best services. More and more patient come across other countries to India for their treatment. This is the fast growing industry over the world. This paper shows the growing structure/ strength of medical tourism in India in the recent years. What are the challenges faced by the customers. And what are the govt. steps to improve the medical tourism in India.

KEY WORDS: *Medical Tourism, Ayurveda.*

INTRODUCTION

Medical tourism is a most important and growing sector in India. India rank 2nd in medical tourism industry. In India various cities contribute their best in growing medical tourism. Chennai was on the top termed India's health capital getting an estimated of 150 international patients every day. Other cities like: Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad are considered as the hub of medical tourism in India. With the advent of globalisation and culture of consumerism, there is an increasing tendency among people to travel in search of better quality and affordable health options. Medical tourism includes medical treatments, wellness and alternative medicines

India currently holds around 18% of the global medical tourism market. According to Ministry of Tourism's figures, medical tourism in India has the potential to cross the \$ 9 bn-mark, accounting for 20% of the global market share by 2020.

India is now touted as one of Asia's fastest growing medical tourism destinations. Specialized healthcare professionals, state of the art facilities, high quality medical training, cost competitiveness and the rise of holistic and alternate healing practices developed from AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) have given rise to India's position in the global medical tourism industry. Low living costs, ease of communication and a strong pharmaceutical footprint have also been key catalysts of this evolution. There is an increasing influx of patients from South

Asian countries, the Middle East and Africa who visit India for healthcare needs such as cancer treatments, transplants and cardiac surgeries. According to a report by FICCI and IMS Health, over 500,000 foreign patients seek treatment in India each year. Visit our sectors page to know more about Healthcare Industry and Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India.

Ministry of Tourism has taken various steps to boost medical tourism in the country, like relaxing the e-visa norms for medical visits. The Government launched e-tourist visas in 2014 to ease the visa regime in the country, following which '**Medical and Medical Attendant Visa**' was introduced for medical tourists. The medical visa offers multiple entry and long term stay for medical care. Further, the Government is actively mandating accreditation for wellness centers and **Medical Value Travel (MVT)** facilitators. In an effort to boost the capacity of qualified health professionals and promote affordable medical education, the **Union cabinet recently approved the establishment of 75 new medical colleges in the country, which shall lead to the creation of over 15,000 MBBS seats in India.**

The top 5 hospitals provide better medical facilities to international patients are as follows:

Fortis (Fortis La Femma), New Delhi

Fortis was in New Delhi and provides a wide range of services to his customers. It can fulfill most of the needs of their foreigner patients in India. Its policies makes the customer comfortable. It provides various other services to their guests like: gift shops, canteen facility, hotel facility during their beloved are under treatment. It makes them more comfortable and attracts more customers within the capital city of New Delhi. It also provides travelling services to their patients so that they can easily reach in the hospital campus. It also helps in currency exchange. The hospital department takes cares of each and every need of their guests. The international visitor's page on the website provides extra information to assure you that you will have an excellent travel and hospitality experience from the moment you arrive. It also assures that there are accommodations for people traveling with the patient, and reassures that nothing but hospitality and premiere customer service await you and your family upon arrival. **Specialties:** Fetal medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, anesthesia, endocrinology, plastic surgery, mental health, gynecology, clinical nutrition, bariatric surgeries.

Rockland Hospital- New Delhi

Another famous and important healthcare hospital was located in India's capital of New Delhi. This is one of the private medical hospitals in India. It has many specialties. The hospital currently has 3 locations open for business and make the plans to expand in near future. Each hospital in different location has different specialties with high skilled doctors/ staff and with high technological machines & equipments. **Specialities:** Oncology, Cardiac Science, Neuroscience, Gastroenterology, Renal Sciences, Bariatric Surgery, Internal Medicine, Dental Procedures, Dietetics/ Physiotherapy, ENT/Cochlear Implants & Plastic Surgery.

BLK Super Speciality Hospital

This is a super special hospital with 650 bed facility providing a wide range of services to all type of patients. It boasts one of the largest critical care programs in the region providing 125 beds to ICU care. BLK Super Specialty Hospital offers all services patients need right on site including a blood bank, CT scans, MRI labs, testing laboratory surgery facilities, MRIs, and X-Rays just to name a few services offered. Complete patient services are offered 24/7. **Specialties:** Cancer Treatments, Neurosciences, Digestive/ Liver Diseases, Kidney Transplants, Plastic/Cosmetic Surgeries, Pediatrics, Psychiatry & Rheumatology.

Primus Super Speciality Hospital

Primus Super Specialty Hospital is committed serving those who need care from across India, but from across the world. There is a strong desire within the Primus Super Specialty Hospital to uplift series of social issues affecting the world as a whole. Specialties in orthopedics, brain procedures, spinal surgeries, gastroenterology, cochlear implants, nephrology, and many other high staked procedures are offered. Primus Super Specialty Hospital also boasts a notoriously low infection and illness rates among patients in their care. Complex procedures such as organ transplants and brain surgeries are common, and they specialize in dialysis as well. Primus Super Specialty Hospital also offers premiere 24-hour emergency ambulance and pharmacy services on site as well. Primus Super Specialty Hospitals welcomes all international patients need various treatments as well. **Specialties:** Orthopedics, Spinal Procedures, Neurology/

Neurosurgery, ENT/Cochlear Implants, Urology, Kidney Transplants, Cardiology, Reconstructive Surgeries, GI/ Bariatric Surgeries, Dermatology & Oncology.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Laws (1996) in his paper "medical tourism as a travel from home to other destination". This shows that medical facilities in other countries improve their health condition as one type of leisure. It includes getting indigenous and alternative medical services. It also provide other form of tourism with the purpose of addressing a health concern.

Connell (2006) in their paper describes medical tourism as a popular mass culture. He told that most of the people travel to other countries to take healthcare facilities/ services such as medical, dental and surgical care. Due to the concern of every person regarding medical treatment they go to any country. Due to this it grows the opportunity to visit the tourist spots of that country in which they takes the medical treatment.

Carrera and Bridges (2006) has defined the medical tourism as travel which is systematically planned to maintain one's physical and mental health condition.

According to GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services), medical tourism is the second mode of trade in health services. Customers (patients) leave their home country to obtain health care services with high quality and affordable prices. For this they went to other countries where low cost treatment given to the patients.

Blouin (2006) and Monica (2007) explore that medical tourism occurs when international patients travel across boundaries for their healthcare and medical needs. It can be defined as provision of cost effective private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. They only went to those countries where they got low cost treatment and govt. support.

Bookman & Bookman (2007) in their paper defines medical tourism as travel with the aim of improving one's health, and also an economic activity that entails trade in services and represents two sectors: medicine and tourism.

Dhaene (2009) ask for looking for available quality combined with cost effective and low price health services while offering a similar level of safety to the patient. It has become 60 billion US dollar a year business with growing rate about 20% by a year which could increase to 100 billion US dollar by 2012.

Reddy (2000), from the recent studies, analyzes that the prospective of the healthcare industry has same challenges and development that the software and pharmaceuticals business which have shown in the previous years. Health care industry is emerging and largest service sector in developing countries as it shows the trade of approximately \$ 4 trillion and \$ 750 million is shared by the developing countries as compared to the developed countries.

Baxi (2004) and Pankaj Mochi (2013), the author analyzed that, the position of India in health care industry is increasing day by day. According to research that is been already conducted, global healthcare industry is increasing to the extent of about \$3-trillion due to the amenities and facilities it proposes and also by providing the brand equity of Indian healthcare specialized from corner to corner of the world. As compared to other countries in the world the medical expertise by India is finest in the globe and the job done by doctors in India is accepted all over. The main cause for India's coming

out as significant destination for healthcare is because of good reputation of Indian health center who are recognized worldwide. In US itself there are about 35,000 expert doctors of Indian origin. International tourists mostly like Indian nurses for their caring approach as they feel it is just like a motherly treatment

Rao (2005) examined that the cost of the medical treatment all over the world and found that quality is at its best and cost is very low as compared to other countries, due to which large number of foreign tourists are approaching India to benefit from health care services, mainly in the field of cardiology, joint replacement, cardiac surgery, pathology, ophthalmology and hence Indian system of medicines.

Mohanty and Madhav (2006) has found that the Indian health care businesses began to come out as a major destination for tourists coming for medical treatment as compared to other countries in the world is just because Indian Industry is upgrading its knowledge, skill, fasting better familiarity with many advanced medical practices and humanizing its picture in terms of eminence and price.

Pachanee. C. (2009) found about the Mode 2 trade in medical services in Thailand. The author founded the emergence of health care services in Thailand was commenced by the private sector. Multilateral and regional trade agreements are not included in it. With the help of excellent and high capacity of marketing strategies, Thailand becomes a primary exporter of health care services for overseas patients. The experiences from other countries should be introduced in Thailand for the promotion of Mode 2 (medical tourism) business in fitness services, which tells about the impact on the health schemes are banned, calculated and addressed.

Simon Hudson and Xiang Li (2012) they have focused on the literature on medical tourism which studies about the International medical tourism, where people travel to acquire best health care services. They also emphasize that not only foreign patients but there is increasing number of domestic patients who travel for health care services inside their own country.

Muralidar Trivedi (2013), the researcher has studied about the yoga and meditation in their research work. It has been more than 5,000 years ago the yoga has come into existence. Many group of students related to health care and

medical travelers approach India to be trained more on Yoga and other forms of natural and ayurvedic medicines. 2,500 years ago when Buddhism came to India, then it achieved a status as the center of Eastern artistic, divine, and therapeutic progress.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the strength of medical tourism in India.
2. To explore the govt. efforts to improve medical tourism in India.
3. To explore the challenges faced by the customers in India.
4. To explore the SWOT analysis of medical tourism in India.

This research paper based on literature Review including research papers, magazines, internet, thesis, GATS. This paper also helps in how we improve the medical tourism in India. It also shows the comparison table which compare the cost of medical treatment with other countries.

Data Collection

Secondary data is used for this paper to analyze the objectives.

RESULTS

Objective 1: To explore the strength of medical tourism in India.

The strength of India regarding medical tourism in India is as follows:

1. **Quality of services:** In India the biggest and reputed hospitals have standardized machines and well qualified and talented doctors and staff. The hospitals in metro cities plays a very important role in growth of medical tourism in India. They provide best and best facilities with special care to their patients. Most of the skilled doctors give their services worldwide. And India is strong in research and development regarding medical growth.
2. **Affordable cost:** The cost of treatment in India is very low as compared to other countries. The cost is 75 dollars as compared to other countries which is so low. This can suit to all customers who come across the boundaries for a better future.

S.no	Countries Name	Cost in Dollars
1	Brazil	\$ 947
2	Russia	\$ 993
3	South Africa	\$ 570
4	Turkey	\$ 568
5	Malaysia	\$ 456
6	China	\$ 420
7	Indonesia	\$ 99
8	India	\$ 75

3. Other services: With the medical services Indian govt. also focus on their services to their customers like:

- a. Visa services (Easy availability of visa and passport).
- b. Hotel facilities.
- c. Easy availability of hospitals.
- d. Safety and security to imported patients.

4. Policy support: India has the encouraging policies for the international patients. Indian govt. offers various strategies to the international customers so that they can afford the best services and praise our country.

5. Less waiting time: In India international patients wait less for services. Doctors give more and first attention to international patients with special care and policies. Hospitals have different policies, rules and regulations for international patients so that they become comfortable and satisfied with their services.

Objective 2: To explore the govt. efforts to improve medical tourism:

Indian govt. plans to bring out policies to promote medical tourism in India. It makes a attractive destination to attract more and more customers and improve medical

tourism. Govt. policies aim to promote integrated treatment with allopathic, yoga, homoeopathy (AYUSH) treatments etc.

Union Commerce Ministry: With their all ministers of tourism and health departments make full efforts to improve medical tourism in india. They make plans and strategies. They launched a portal (www.indiahealthcaretourism.com) in 3 languages: in Arabic, Russian and French. This portal provide comprehensive information to various medical travelers so that they don't face any problem and can easily get the medical facilities.

Medical tourism in India is projected to be a \$ 9 billion opportunity by 2020. Currently medical tourism industry is pegged at \$ 3 billion. And globally their market is estimated at around \$ 40- 60 billion.

Road shows for promotion of medical tourism

Road shows focusing on Medical Tourism is a continuous process and is organized in consultation with the Stakeholders from time to time. The last road show was organized in West Asia (Dubai, Riyadh, Kuwait and Doha) in October 2009 which was led by the Minister of State for Tourism.

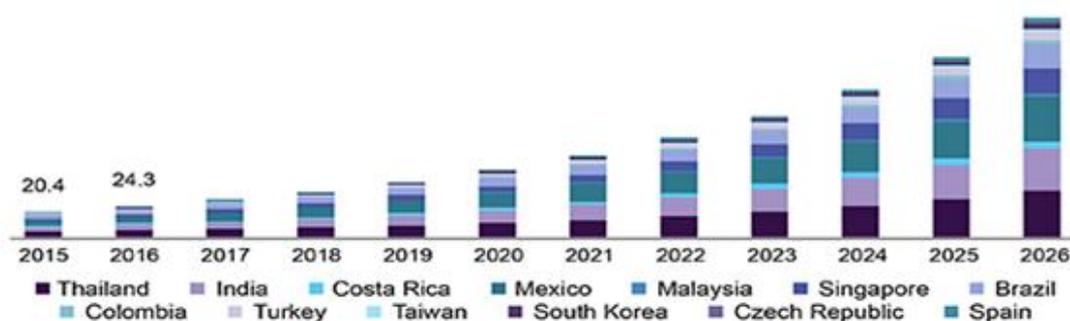
Fiscal incentives provided by ministry of tourism for development of medical tourism

For participation in approved Medical and other Tourism Fairs/Medical Conferences/Wellness Fairs and its allied Road Shows Ministry of Tourism provides Market Development Assistance. This scheme was extended to the Medical Tourism Service Providers and Wellness Tourism Service providers during the year 2009. Financial support under the MDA Scheme is provided to approved medical tourism service providers, i.e. representatives of Hospitals accredited by JCI and NABH and Medical Tourism facilitators (Travel Agents/ Tour Operators) approved by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and engaged in Medical Tourism.

MEDICAL VISA TO INDIA

Medical tourism in India is all about the progress these days. The industry is growing at a rate that was unimaginable for years, some share of credit goes to the government of India for introducing a medical visa for foreign nationals. A visa on arrival system is introduced for a few selected countries which allow the patients to stay for 60 days and get world-class medical treatments in India. Furthermore, two attendants allowed to travel along with the patient for which they have to apply for separate medical attendant visas. The validity of the attendant's Visa will be the same as for the patient.

Global medical tourism market size, by country, 2015 - 2026 (USD Billion)



Source: www.grandviewresearch.com

Objective 3: To explore the challenges faced by customers

- 1. Follow up problems:** Follow up problems means if the patient is not recovered by the disease in India then it is very difficult for the patient to go back to their home country. Because it is very expensive and difficult task to perform. This is the most growing challenge for all the countries. Every country do struggle with this high problem. And this affects the demand of the product in the market. Now every country do work on that to solve this tragic problem.
- 2. Language Barriers:** Language barrier is also a most powerful problem in medical tourism. Because each country has a different language. When customer reached to another country it is very important for them to understand the language of the reaching country. This problem arises due to lack of skilled professional in most of the countries across the world. If the doctors, staff of treating

country can't understand the language of the patient then it creates a huge trouble. They can't do the treatment well.

- 3. Brain Drain:** It means when the people think that in their home country they can't get the best treatment the brain drain arises. Like in India every one think that foreign countries give the best treatment because those countries have all the facilities and best than India. This is the major challenge arises due to retain in professionals.
- 4. Bad Behaviour:** Some time the patient not treated as much as in other countries. Doctors, staff behavior was not good towards their patient then they try to go to the another country for their treatment. This is also a major problem in medical tourism.
- 5. Legal Problems:** Different countries have different laws. This also a very serious problem arises during treatment. Sometimes customers can't get the visa to travel to another country because of legal formalities. This creates a difficulty in

customers mind. Sometimes it effects so much on customer treatment.

- 6. Difficulties in Promotion:** The under developing faced this problem so much in promoting

medical tourism. Various factors like pricing policies, better quality services effects in promoting medical tourism in another country. This affects the customers trust and beliefs.

Objective 4: To explore the SWOT analysis of medical tourism in India.

Strengths:	Weakness:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best quality services. 2. Affordable cost. 3. Well qualified doctors/ staff and personal touch by doctors. 4. Large no. of hospitals 5. Other services. 6. Well designed and technological labs with best machines/ equipments. 7. Visa structure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weak coordination among airlines, hospitals and hotel facilities. 2. Lack of Govt. support towards international patients.
Opportunities:	Threats:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased demand for medical facilities across boundaries. 2. Demand for other services like: hotel facilities, visa facilities and old age home. 3. Demand from countries with underdeveloped healthcare facilities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong competition among various countries regarding healthcare services. 2.

CONCLUSION

In 2015, India ranked as the third most popular destination for medical tourism, when the industry was worth \$3 billion. The number of foreign tourists coming into the country on medical visas sat at nearly 234,000 that year.

But in 2018 India ranked 2nd most popular destination for medical tourism at low cost.

Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata are the preferred destination cities for medical tourists arriving in India. Nearly 27 percent of India's medical tourists head to Maharashtra, out of which 80 percent go to Mumbai. Chennai attracts nearly 15 percent of the incoming foreign patients while Kerala handles around 5 percent to 7 percent.

From last few years India has become the most affordable and preferred destination for medical tourism. International patients from all over the world visit India to avail all the benefits of affordable treatment with best facilities. The facilities provided by India are as follows:

1. Urology.
2. Organ Transplant.
3. Ophthalmology.
4. Orthopedics.
5. Infertility treatment.
6. ENT.
7. Neurology.
8. Cosmetic Surgery.
9. Cardiology
10. Cancer treatment.
11. Ayurveda.
12. Dental Implants.

In comparison from other western countries India ranked 2nd in their services. All the international customers avail these benefits from Indian govt. India provide visa services to their customers so easily. E-Visa is divided into 5 sub categories:

- E- Medical Visa.
- E- Medical Attendant Medical Visa.
- E- Conference Visa.
- E- Tourist Visa.
- E- Business Visa.

Indian Health Minister also do efforts to promote medical tourism worldwide. They grow their medical facilities and

provide best facilities to their international customers. Now with changes some concept of treatment was also introduced in India. The one of the best treatment is through Ayurveda. Now it become more famous in India. In the last five years, these predictions have been down scaled because health is a difficult issue, and people make decisions based on a number of reasons such as culture, proximity or perception of care. These are not rational decisions based purely on economics. India is part of a global trend

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development describes medical tourists as those who "travel across international borders with the intention of receiving some form of medical treatment. Globally, around 14 million to 16 million patients traveled outside their home countries to seek treatment in 2017, according to Patients Beyond Borders, a medical travel advocacy group for consumers. The global medical tourism market is estimated to be around \$45.5 billion to \$72 billion.

In 2018, Max Healthcare, a chain of private hospitals, treated up to 50,000 foreign patients, with the majority traveling from the Middle East, central Asia and Africa.

Ayurveda is an ancient Hindu system of medicine based on the notion of balance within the body. It uses herbal treatment and yogic breathing. These all come under the Ministry of AYUSH, a government agency created in 2014 to improve access to and awareness of traditional methods. India's AYUSH industry was estimated to be worth around \$2.4 billion in 2014-15, according to a 2018 report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

Traditional Indian health practices such as Ayurveda, yoga, Unani, Siddha and homeopathy are now also being promoted to increase the numbers of medical tourists. Ayurveda is an ancient Hindu system of medicine based on the notion of balance within the body. It uses herbal treatment and yogic breathing. Siddha and Unani are similar in their holistic approach to finding harmony between the mind and body, with the origins of Siddha lying in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, while Unani can trace its roots back to the time of ancient Greece. These all come under the Ministry of AYUSH, a government agency created in 2014 to improve access to and awareness of traditional methods. India's

AYUSH industry was estimated to be worth around \$2.4 billion in 2014-15, according to a 2018 report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry. This traditional knowledge of health care, along with India's reputation in modern, Western approaches, is fuelling the country's rise in medical tourism.

At the last I can say that medical tourism helps the country to grow. It can promote the country also. With the best efforts of govt. towards increase in medical facilities by treating with friends is the most important part of the country.

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