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INDIA – A PIVOTAL CENTRE FOR MEDICAL TOURISM

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Abstract

Medical Tourism is a developing exercise of crossing global borders to discover health care. It includes recreation, entertainment and relaxation as well as health and wellness. Medical Tourism in India is growing rapidly & numerous private hospitals are doing their best to take advantage of this opportunity. With a focus to scrutinize the scope of different aspects of medical tourism in India and to figure out the external factors influencing the Indian medical tourism, this paper is an attempt to evaluate the possibilities of Medical Tourism in India and identify the challenges occurring. In line with the objective of analysing the diversity of medical tourism in India this research article continues to discuss literature reviews on the topic and to clarify the research methods used followed by conclusion.

Introduction

Traveling for health reasons is nothing new. Ancient stories, legends and fables contain many stories of heroic journeys, these stories are for others, usually for the king or queen to find potions and medicines. The awards for the pursuit of immortality or eternal beauty are the same: this ambitious pursuit is not limited to one culture, but the pursuit of mystery and supernatural stories encompasses all cultures, can guarantee or obtain a comfortable lifestyle and wealth of happiness. This article briefly introduces the concept of medical tourism and mainly deals with procedures that require medical or surgical intervention. Also, a small attempt to analyse the supply and demand of these products in today's global environment. As the number of elderly people increases, so does the demand for affordable medical services, so various business opportunities can be created to provide and support this evolving and resilient industry.

What is medical tourism?

There is no uniform definition of medical tourism, but the widely accepted term refers to tourism activities that include medical procedures or activities that contribute to the well-

being of tourists, covering travel and tourism related to medical procedures, health and wellness.

Healthcare in India:

India is a country of 1.38 billion people and currently has the second largest population in the world (Pandey, 2020). The country is famous for its culture and traditions, which makes it a very interesting feature for tourists to visit in India. India has a wide history in various fields such as culture, architecture, tourism, etc. When it comes to tourism, India is one of the most famous countries in the world and attracts a large number of tourists every year. At some point, a new trend has emerged - medical tourism. India, as a republican constitutional nation, offers a wide range of medical facilities with excellent infrastructure at a very low cost. India offering the least expensive service in the field of medicine has led to the largest area of medical tourism.

These days, medical tourism is very common in India. Many patients of foreign and domestic tourists prefer the provinces of India for medical tourism. For example, liver transplants at a cost of US ₹ 1 similar crore in India will cost ₹ 20 lakhs (Vij, 2021). According to Soni, advanced medical technology invites many foreign tourists who love the country not only for its holidays, but also for its health care facilities. India as a nation offers a complete package of medical facilities compared to other countries around the world. Many foreign patients are drawn to Ayurveda. There are many private and public hospitals that provide patients with the best possible treatment regardless of their financial background (Soni, 2020). India's private medical industry offers the most advanced medical treatment and technology available in the world today. Patients can enter and enjoy deluxe accommodations and be treated by the best doctors with western medical training, all at low prices. In addition, patients are not expected to face any language issues as most people in India speak English. The government in the country supports the industry and, assisting hospitals in obtaining JCI accreditation and providing funding for repairs and additions, all they can do to improve the private and public medical sectors in the country. And if all of this is not enough, after receiving treatment and recovery, patients are free to continue traveling and enjoy a visit to India and surrounding countries.



Image Source: (Swamy, 2014)

Indian doctors provide services to more than 1,70,000 medical visitors each year. Traveling to India for medical treatment also gives tourists a trip around the country. Places like Taj Mahal, Backwaters, Red Fort, Gateway of India, Western Ghats, etc. can make the visitation

of medical visitors easier to remember. Medical systems, infrastructure and skilled workers are probably the waiting times that would be the first benefits of visiting India for treatment.

India has positioned itself as a medical centre. India's private hospitals have skilled doctors, nurses, and cooperative staff who attract medical tourists from all over the world. All of these factors are likely to increase the number of medical visitors to India. If the patient is from Africa or the Middle East one has to be culturally sensitive. Medical tourism is therefore a complex industry. Medical tourism plays a major role in the Indian economy. Many Indian Orthopaedic doctors are trained abroad. An orthopaedic visit to India can save up to 30% on costs. Medical spending in India was about 5.3% of GDP by 2020 (Pilla, 2020).

India also has a friendly medical policy. Indian hospitals employ professionals from all over the world. Medical visits to India provide high quality medical care under the guidance of skilled surgeons, doctors and support staff at low cost. India is one of the top three medical tourism destinations in the world and treats millions of patients at an affordable cost. Large number of patients come from different corners of the globe. It highly commends India as a good healthcare provider for its superior operating systems.

Quality, range of treatment options, infrastructure, skilled staff, least time-consuming process, ease of access to appointments, affordable prices, robust quality assurance methods, reliable and highly critical treatment plans and programs, adequate doctors, nurses, and highly qualified emergency responders, culture, values, reminders, English language technology for doctors and nurses, 'M-Visa' treatment and 'MX Visa' for assistants, alternatives such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Homeopathy are the most important aspects of medical tourism in India.

Due to various covid-19 impacts, the Health Care crisis, economic downturn, travel restrictions, medical tourism will decline until next year (Akbiyik, 2020). But India is likely to regenerate much faster than other developed nations due to better management of the situation and alternatives such as yoga, Ayurveda in the post-covid-19 period. To some extent, the epidemic has also spawned in the Telemedicine / Tele consultation forum which brings India's AI opportunity for medical tourism.

Literature Review

Considering closing ten years of posted articles and devoted literature, there isn't but constant clinical facts to define, describe or prospect the data and records of scientific tourism. Most of guides are scientific journals, articles, case studies, attitude of scientific carriers and facilitators, posted displays and consequences of seminars, meetings or global congresses prepared via way of means of scientific tourism associations. There also are numerous books which trait the principle of this area of interest tourism, however we nonetheless want greater clinical contributions including statistical, techniques and monetary effect measurements.

Medical tourism has the advantage of providing effective medical care in partnership with the health care sector and the tourism industry for patients in need of treatment in a separate area in their hometown. Medical tourism therefore takes place through the integration of health and tourism services with travel facilities. The facts that have led to the growth of medical tourism are affordable and high-quality healthcare in one place and the availability of long lines of patients through the medical process and the high prices of regional care in one region. The result of these factors is the growth of medical tourism, which is leading to people moving to another area for health care.

India has historically been the centre of health care in neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and the Middle East. India has a

strong base of developing a unique treatment that was done by kings and merchants and others at a time historical period (Bhowmick, 2018). Ancient Indian literature such as the Upanishads, the Bahamas, and others strongly encouraged the amount of treatment and medication used adjusted mainly using herbs collected from nature. This beautiful land is a storehouse of health, as it has been for thousands of years. The Indians medical history dates back to the Atharva Veda - India's first medical textbook the history of medicine is awe-inspiring with its traditional healing methods such as Ayurveda and Unani, passed on for hundreds of generations.

Medical visits can be broadly defined as the provision of private expenses for health care collaboration with the tourism industry in patients in need of treatment and other specialized treatment options. This process is simplified by the corporate sector involved in medical care and the tourism industry - both private and public. In many developing countries it is actively developed by official government policy. The composition is based on recommendations made by the corporate sector in India and in particular from the “Health Care Transformation Policy Framework”, written by the Prime Minister's Advisory Council in Trade and Industry, led by Mukesh Ambani and Kumar Mangalam Birla (Bhowmick, 2018). Medical tourists in India often go for medical treatment, especially cardiac, orthopaedic procedures, nerve and spinal surgery, and cosmetic surgery. Dental treatment is one of the most popular service received by medical tourists in India. For health visits, the main attraction is a different drug as an ayurvedic spa. India also focuses on the development of blood bank facilities such as cord blood promises to make a significant contribution to many surgical treatments. Cord blood is blood that resides in umbilical cord after childbirth and is a rich source of stem cells. The development of blood banks is expected to be of great benefit to medical tourism in India.

Medical tourism can be received from patients in advanced international locations through an extensive variety of health offerings (Javaid, 2015). In addition, patients with a rare genetic disorder may also receive medical visitation services as emerging medical centres have a better understanding of these treatments. Similarly, all forms of medical treatment (such as psychiatric treatment, recovery care and other therapies) will also be performed by medical visitors. Nearly 50 countries have identified medical tourism as their industry. Various medical agencies appear to be interested in assisting medical tourists with their medical tourism businesses. These agencies already provide medical and health services to medical tourists at affordable prices. In addition, they often provided medical visitors with the opportunity to visit places of interest in their own country.

Medical tourism has also provided medical visitors with access to medical facilities as they will have to wait longer if they are to be treated in their home country. Some of the features (better medical facilities, better technology facilities, more expert knowledge of surgeons and doctors, better facilities, better transportation and less waiting time) for developing countries the private sector also aims for medical tourism towards success (Javaid, 2015). It has been noted that governments of developing countries and the private sector have embarked on a joint venture of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) to develop medical tourism infrastructure.

It is recommended that countries seeking medical advancement will have to ensure that quality health services and treatment options are provided to medical tourists at very low prices. At the same time, they will also need to make sure that transparency is maintained. Therefore, it is important in developing countries' healthcare and healthcare sectors to develop modern therapies and facilities to meet the basic needs of medical visitors.

India is quick turning into the pinnacle vacation spot for scientific tourism. Medical tourism in India is anticipated to benefit momentum because of extra attention of opportunity medicine. Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Delhi are most of the maximum famous locations for scientific tourism in India (Velu, 2018).

Best Medical Tourism Locations in India are indexed below:

1. Chennai: One of the maximum famous remedy centres in India. Known because the fitness capital of India, Chennai gets approximately 2 hundred sufferers globally for bone marrow transplantation, coronary heart transplantation, eye surgical procedure, hip alternative and different treatments. To refresh your frame and soul at the same time as traveling the town for scientific motives you can need to go to Marina Beach or go to the Thalalankuppam Pier, Guindy National Park, Queens Land (Velu, 2018).

2. Mumbai: The quickest developing vicinity for scientific tourism in India, Mumbai has numerous specialised hospitals, an Orthopaedic Research and Testing Centre, and weight reduction surgical procedure. Mumbai is well-known for its beauty surgical procedure and Ayurvedic medicine. High-satisfactory scientific centres and numerous non-public hospitals have made Mumbai a fast-developing remedy centre. If you need to empower yourself, take a ride to the closest beach. You can go to Gateway of India and different pastimes withinside the vicinity round South Mumbai (Velu, 2018).

3. Goa: Foreign travellers regularly come to Goa to revel in themselves and it has now grown to be a scientific vacation spot as well. The herbal surroundings of Goa, its recognition amongst travellers and the help of the Government to sell fitness and wellness have additionally helped to grow to be a scientific centre as well. To refresh your frame and soul at the same time as traveling the town for scientific motives you can need to go to the seashores or Bonda Wildlife Sanctuary, etc (Velu, 2018).

4. New Delhi: The countrywide capital is domestic to numerous non-public hospitals that offer specialised offerings to overseas sufferers which includes fashionable surgical packages, Eye Surgery, Cardiac Care, and Neuro Surgery. While on the town for remedy if you may go to Jama Masjid, or Lotus Temple to refresh your thoughts and frame (Velu, 2018).

5. Ahmedabad: Another town that turns into a prime scientific vacation spot in India is Ahmedabad. Because of its contemporary hospitals, many non-residents favour to get hold of remedy in Ahmedabad. It is domestic to the Civil Hospital - one in all the most important hospitals in Asia, SAL, and others. To rejuvenate your frame and soul at the same time as traveling this town for scientific motives you can need to go to numerous lakes, Adalaj Stepwell, etc (Velu, 2018).

After discovering the growing power of the medical and health categories, several medical visits companies / promoters that promise end-to-end medical tourism services have emerged across the country. Undeniably, medical tourism is an economic tool for a nation like India to grow its economy directly benefits such as increased income, job opportunities, investment in tourism, etc. indirect benefits including spill over effects that lead to growth in other industries (Bhowmick, 2018). Although the benefits may be apparently facing a small face, the effect of the ripple is able to affect countless sectors in the economy, namely, rising tourism-related living standards, the need for education, the need for related education studies, growth in the auxiliary industry and many more.

Objectives of the Study

1. To scrutinize the scope of medical tourism in India.
2. To evaluate the situations of medical tourism industry in India.
3. To figure out the influence of external factors on the Indian medical tourism.

Methodology

Research methodology is partially illustrative, partially investigative and partially informal. For this study particulars and materials has been collected with the assistance of Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Research Articles, Journals, E-Journals, UNWTO Report, Report of Ministry of Tourism, Report of World Travel and Tourism Council and also from the website <http://www.indiahealthcaretourism.com/>.

Data Analysis and Discussion

1. Current Scenario of Medical Tourism in India:

Medical tourism proves to be one of the quickest developing sub-sectors of the tourism industry. India's healthcare centres and surgical methods are relatively greater first-class than different South-Asian nations. India located to be the 1/3 maximum desired vacation spot for medical tourism among 184 international locations of the sector and the GDP developing via way of means of 7.9 percentage in line with annum (Research, 2020). The Quality of offerings furnished in India become plenty low budgeted with admire to the western economies. The fee differential for diverse clinical methods furnished via way of means of India, Malaysia, Thailand and U.S.A has undoubtedly found out the financial gain presented to the overseas patients.

The fee disparity among India and different overseas international locations for distinct clinical process famous that India possesses an extra monetary gain. For instance, coronary heart pass surgical operation fee 18 instances greater withinside the United States and about two times in Thailand which famous India's comparative gain over different overseas destinations. India proclaims itself as the worldwide centre of clinical tourism via means of imparting opportunity ayurvedic remedy to coronary bypasses and beauty surgical operation. Institutes inclusive of Breach Candy, Hinduja, Fortis Escort, Apollo and Yashoda Hospitals alongside Hyatt, J.W. Marriot, Ayurvedic Village, Carnoustie Ayurveda and Wellness Resort in Kerala are widely recognized for their high-give up healthcare services at Pan-India and international stage for safety, and excellence.

2. Growth:

The vitality of the medical tourism industry not only has a huge impact on medical patients, but also leads to inclusive growth in the social, economic, commercial and medical sectors of the economy. Tools of medical tourism help to shape the development of the national society, and help developing countries improve sanitation facilities, improve infrastructure, and increase income and employment opportunities. On the other hand, developed countries are developing their advantages as a popular tourist destination. Medical tourism is not limited to any specific sector. On the contrary, it extends a wide range of interests to other areas, namely business and economics. Medical tourism is the main contributor to foreign investment, information technology services and commercial exports, while foreign investment, information technology services and commercial exports are currently the largest and most obvious source of the country's GDP. In India, from 2016 to 2026, the contribution of tourism and medical services to GDP are expected to get increased by 7.9% annually (Research, 2020).

3. Merits of Medical Tourism:

Medical tourism has many blessings. First, medical tourism has turned out to be a rewarding commercial enterprise for plenty personal businesses in India. Since hard work is reasonably-priced in addition to the price of living, in spite of the low fee for remedies, personal organizations are making massive profits. Furthermore, despite the fact that health tourism offerings are achieved within the country, “India’s National Health Policy has deemed it to be legally an ‘export’ and ‘eligible’ for all economic incentives prolonged to export earning”.

With the authorities catering to and promoting medical tourism, private businesses are incentivized to begin fitness care centers geared closer to foreigners. In the subsequent six years, analysts estimate that India’s \$17 billion-a-year fitness care enterprise ought to develop at a price of 13% per year. Even the opposition for overseas sufferers amongst vacation spot nations brings expenses down. Treatment in vacation spot nations additionally affords privacy and anonymity for the customers. Additional blessings of scientific tourism to the purchaser are quick ready intervals and availability of remedies are now no longer but authorized.

4. Demerits of Medical Tourism:

Though many sufferers are trying to find hospital treatment overseas, a loss of coverage portability discourages a few potential customers from obtaining remedy in growing international locations. Even if a specific process might cost a little much less and be extra effectively to be had overseas, coverage won’t continually cowl it due to the fact the coordination among personal health care centers in India and coverage agencies within the advanced international locations is now no longer prevalent. Fortunately, that is changing. Several coverage agencies (e.g., United Health Care, Aetna, WellPoint, and Health Net of California) now have medical journey and scientific tourism packages. Insurance agencies are understanding the financial savings potential. Weak malpractice, legal guidelines in growing international locations also can present problems.

An extra downside of medical tourism, particularly in India, is local as opposed to affected person-focused. Medical tourism in India changed into worth \$333 million within the early 2000s, it is anticipated that medical tourism in India ought to generate \$2.1 billion revenues by 2025 (Research, 2020). In a BBC article, Indian doctors claimed that even as the wealthy get handled for his or her ailments, the negative humans of India who’re in maximum want of right fitness care are ignored. India spends much less than 1% of its GDP on healthcare for the not unusualplace character that’s one of the lowest tiers of public fitness care spending within the world. India has a -tiered fitness care machine that offers expensive, personal care to the elite who can come up with the money for it even as the negative acquire low excellent public-funded fitness care. Medical tourism has distorting outcomes and additionally increases questions approximately the inequality of resources.

5. Other Factors:

The various factors are roughly divided into country choice, hospital choice and doctor’s availability. A potential medical tourist’s choice of a country is determined by the economic situation and the political situation of the chosen destination. The choice also depends on the cost of the medical procedure calculated from a medical perspective and the reputation of the available medical facilities. Finally, the third medical factor/availability of doctors is the most important comfort factor for medical tourists traveling abroad. There are recommendations from doctors and general practitioners with special experience in the medical field. Therefore, the combination of these three factors directly affects India’s medical tourism industry.

Conclusion

Medical business enterprise in India has emerged as a result of the fastest developing section of business enterprise in spite of the international monetary downswing. Republic of India is presenting terribly low fee remedies currently not simplest to Indians but in addition to the foreigners. Patient from USA and UK, are returning to India looking for change and fee-powerful destinations to induce their remedies done. The Indian medical tourism is presently at a florescence stage, but includes a large ability for destiny increase and development. India's medical tourism region is foreseen to expertise Associate in Nursing annual increase worth of half-hour, creating it a Rs. 9,500-crore enterprise with the help of victimization by 2025. Estimates of the value of medical tourism in India cross as excessive as \$2 billion year.

In merely five years, Medical tourism in India has created an excellent operate within the international healthcare map and is known as acknowledged fitness soul resort area all-aroundinternationally. India is a part that offers knowledgeable fitness practitioners, fluent English talking clinical employees, a tremendous stuff of flavouring, natural, allopathic, and chance appliance of medicines. Private/Internationally accredited and super specialty hospitals of India are serving international fitness soul with their specialized services.

In line with a datum, with the help of victimization the handover of the year 2012, India can acquire of spherical 1,000,000 fitness soul with a compound annual increase worth (CAGR) of 28.09% over the year 2025. In India a fitness soul needs to pay abundant less on exceptional surgical procedures in analysis to totally different advanced countries. Medical tourism in India is rising as a prime healthcare enterprise. Holidaymaker should be granted quicker visa or visa on arrival to form hassle unfastened tour. Acknowledging the importance of clinical enterprise, Government has granted many reductions, exemptions and tax incentives to the suppliers. There's likewise a need to expand helping infrastructure consisting of transport, accommodation, and communication and records channels to facilitate medical tourism.

Limitations

- i. The study is primarily based on secondary information which might not be reliable.
- ii. Organization of information is itself a very tough task.
- iii. However, in spite of barriers I anticipate to be able to generate legitimate facts for the practise of this research study.

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